



Parks for People
Phase 2 Engagement Outcomes Report
Tench Reserve, Penrith

February 2021

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All care has been taken to prepare this
report for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.
If you have any queries regarding this
report please get in touch:

John O'Callaghan, Director
+61 0400 471 469
john@jocconsulting.com.au
jocconsulting.com.au

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Acknowledgement of Country

This document acknowledges that Penrith is on Aboriginal land where the traditional custodians, the Dharug People, have been caring for Country for more than 70,000 years.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the continued rich culture and heritage of all Aboriginal people on this land.

"Integrating art into these spaces will add a lot of value and really contribute to making Tench Reserve a unique community space... tapping into the history of the area and landscape, especially its Aboriginal connections. Think about how to not just make it a space for the community to visit but for us to feel connected, emotionally attached to it."

– Social Pinpoint Participant

Executive summary

The New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) has commissioned JOC Consulting to assist with the delivery of community engagement for the upgrades to Tench Reserve (the Park) as part of the Parks for People Program.

The community's input during the first phase of engagement (September 2020) helped to shape a vision for the future park and guided some of Australia's best designers and landscape architects to create a draft Concept Design (see below). The Design builds on the existing assets of the park and the diverse natural, cultural, and social features of the area.

Figure 1: Draft Concept Design presented to the community during phase 2 community engagement



The second phase of engagement asked the community for feedback on the draft Concept Design. An online survey and a Social Pinpoint Ideas Wall was open to the public between 11 and 31 January 2021. This Engagement Outcomes Report presents the results from the second phase of consultation.

"This should be an area for a break from the city noise and busy lives."
– Online survey participant

What we heard in Phase 1

Phase 1 of engagement was held entirely online in September 2020, capturing feedback through an online survey, an interactive Social Pinpoint map and social media.

The most popular vision statements were:



A peaceful place to relax and wind down



A fun place with lots of different activities and play equipment



An exciting and adventurous discovery through natural landscapes

The key main priorities for the community were:

1. A cool space that is a gateway to Penrith's natural landscape and the Nepean River
3. A dynamic and flexible space that balances active and passive recreation opportunities to support community health and wellbeing.
 - o Improve walking trails and cycling paths
 - o Create a cool park for respite on hot days
 - o Increase the natural shading in the park
 - o Create nature themed play spaces
 - o Install amenities and street furniture that will ensure Tench Reserve is safe and well-lit
 - o Improve connections in, across and out of Tench Reserve via foot and cycle paths

We heard from:

567

Community members

Ranging from 18-75 years of age

71% female, 28% male

91% local residents

200

Social media contributors

184

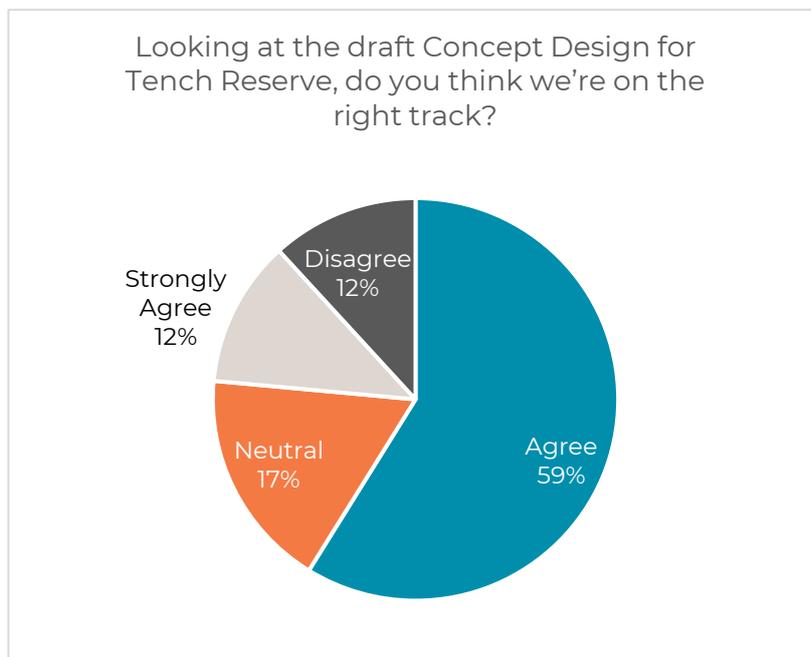
Interactive map participants

183

Online survey responses

What we heard in Phase 2

Overall, participants confirmed that the design team is on the right track, with only four participants disagreeing with this statement. Most participants felt the ideas raised by the community had been incorporated into the design but questioned whether the design maintained the existing mature trees.



Most importantly, all participants felt that the proposed design gave appropriate consideration for greater river access, areas to facilitate social interactions and spaces for the whole community. The particularly high regard for nature was a prevailing theme further emphasised participants' preferences for river stories to be told in the design of public art and play spaces within the Park.

However, some participants wanted to see more detail in the draft Concept Design. Participants also raised that the money allocated to the project should be used to upgrade the surrounding area, seeing the park as an opportunity to connect to a wider network of walking and cycling trails.

We heard from:

92

Community members participated

11,940

visits

4,471

unique visits

Ranging from under 18 to 75 years of age

50% female, 50% male

9% local residents

46% living within 10 minutes' walk of the site

46% care for another person

56

Design Board participants

35

Online survey responses

1

Written Submissions

"Trees"

"Water"

Popular words used in the Design Board

Feedback on Design Features

Design feature and description	Community Support	What did the community like?	Additional ideas from the community
<p>Precinct 1 – Wharf and play</p> <p><i>A new riverfront plaza, nature plays pace, large lawn, picnics areas and flexible event spaces.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 10</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities to interact with the River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain access to the jetty, including pedestrian and road access (including emergency access) Incorporate a water play area close to the water's edge along with swimming and play access to the river Consider facilities for bus and coach parking Regular weekend maintenance Additional lighting to activate the Park at night Free up parking facilities currently dedicated to 'cars with boats' to general private vehicle use
<p>Precinct 2 – Jamison Road</p> <p><i>A new entry into the Park that will offer glimpses of the water and a space to play, relax and enjoy the River.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 9</p> <p>Down Votes: 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for waterplay near the River 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A waterpark with views of the river Mature trees to provide shade Additional lighting to activate the Park at night
<p>Precinct 3 – Nepean Avenue</p> <p><i>Improving the northern entry to the Park with areas to rest, access to the river and continue the new River Walk.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 6</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leverage the existing landscape Maintenance of the peaceful atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of existing park flora (particularly the Redwood trees along Memory Walk, and the mulberry trees) More facilities and seating Provision of a wheelchair- and pram-friendly pedestrian bridge Additional lighting along paths to activate the Park at night Maintenance and weeding of the area Create areas to view the river and access points at water's edge
<p>River Lawn</p>	<p>Up Votes: 21</p> <p>Down Votes: 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abundance of open space allowing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased shading by planting mature trees Swimming and play access to the river Incorporate a water play area close to the water's edge

Design feature and description	Community Support	What did the community like?	Additional ideas from the community
<i>A large lawn area with views to the River that can function as a place for community events or family picnics.</i>		sufficient room for activities and events i.e. open air cinema, live music, markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Webbing to facilitate greater access for people needing wheelchairs ▪ Incorporate outdoor gym equipment ▪ Additional seating
<p>The River Edge</p> <p><i>New pedestrian access points that make it easier for people to enjoy the river.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 21</p> <p>Down Votes: 0</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater access to the river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Greater access to the water via access ramps and sand banks ▪ Additional facilities enabling water sports such as kayaking and canoeing ▪ Adequately sized boardwalks to avoid crowding ▪ Incorporate a passenger drop off/pickup zone
<p>A new River Walk</p> <p><i>Realigning the River Walk to offer a more scenic, waterfront and parkland experience.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 18</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An upgrade and extension of the walking tracks ▪ Opportunities to interact with the river 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend the River Walk to both sides of the Park ▪ Connect the Park with the wider area (i.e. a path up Factory Rd) ▪ Incorporate a boardwalk made of natural materials ▪ Planting trees for shade and colour (i.e. frangipanis, jacarandas) ▪ Planting fruit trees to encourage healthy eating and for informal learning opportunities ▪ Wheelchair friendly walking tracks
<p>The water story</p> <p><i>A series of designed watercourses that collect rainwater from the surrounding areas to reveal the site's water story</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 17</p> <p>Down Votes: 2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An to opportunity extend the Nepean River into the Park. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the strategic placement of water features to improve access and comfort ▪ Incorporate sand to create a beach-feel ▪ Interactive water features for play

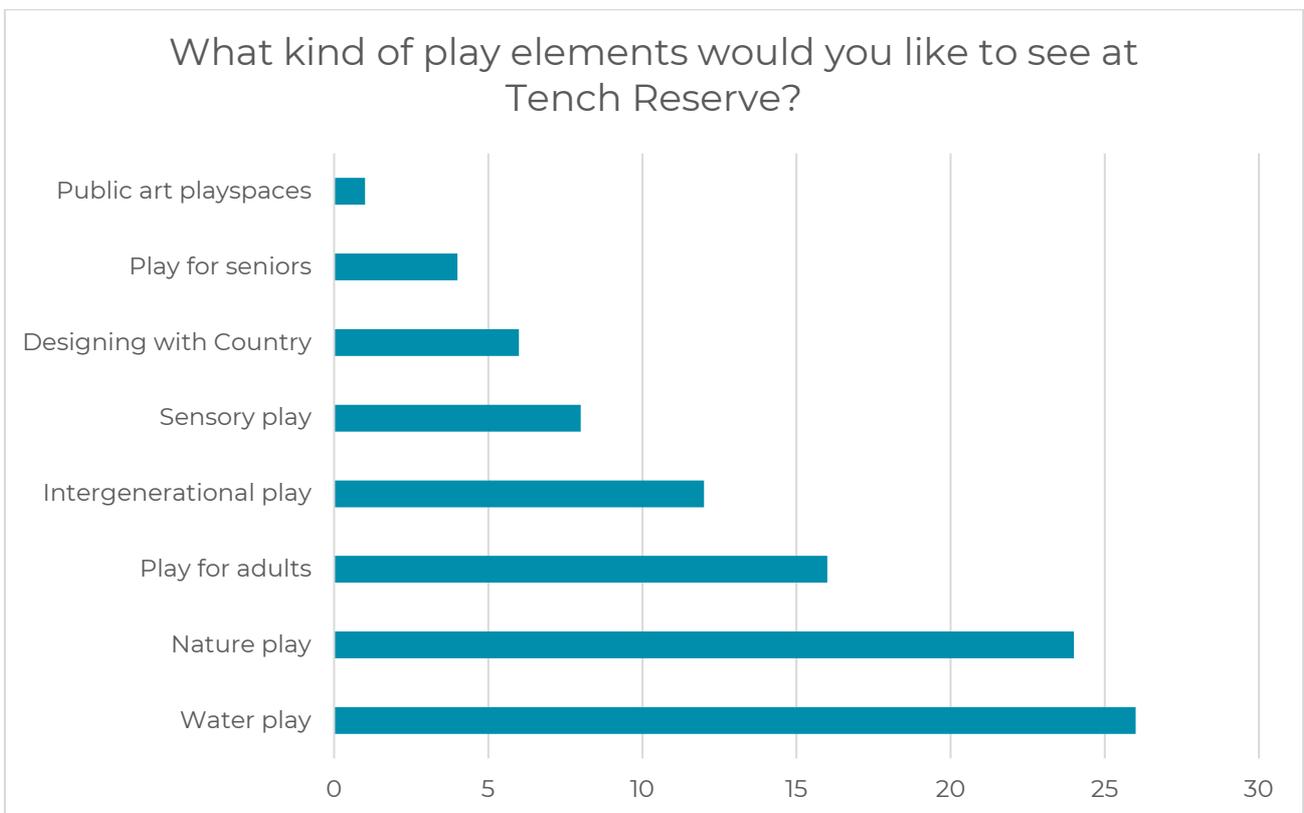
Design feature and description	Community Support	What did the community like?	Additional ideas from the community
<p>History and culture</p> <p><i>Interpreting the area's unique history through materials, landforms, public art and story-telling</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 16</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integration of art into public spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feature artworks from local artists Feature works that celebrate the history, landscape and people of Penrith
<p>Nature Play</p> <p><i>The new inclusive play space will incorporate the natural landscape and include different experiences for everyone to enjoy.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 13</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A play space that encourages exploration A play space for all ages An additional play space to ease pressure on the existing playground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate play for all ages Limit the use of bark and sand to enable greater access for wheelchair users Incorporate activities for wheelchair users Increase shading Incorporate outdoor gym equipment
<p>New park entries</p> <p><i>Enjoyable for everyone, that could include plazas, feature plantings, signs and public art.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 13</p> <p>Down Votes: 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paths that allow people to 'choose their own adventure' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of mature trees Breaking up the park into different zones to help with navigation and wayfinding
<p>Feature landforms</p> <p><i>A series of mounds and sculpted landforms that define entries, frame views and become features within the park.</i></p>	<p>Up Votes: 11</p> <p>Down Votes: 4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to highlight the natural features of the park and wider Penrith area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a 'natural' and 'untouched' look with minimal concrete Use of natural materials

Feedback on play elements

Overall, 'play' was the fourth most common park element mentioned in the survey, following river access, nature, and park access. When discussing specific park elements, playgrounds ranked higher in Phase 2 of engagement compared to Phase 1 where playgrounds were identified as the 6th most important element needed to improve Tench Reserve.

Generally, participants are enthusiastic about the proposed increase in play spaces in the draft Concept Design, reporting that additional space will ease the pressure on existing play spaces and address congestion within high-use areas of the park.

The comments highlight the value participants place on practicality and this is reflected in what they want for a park - a park that is practical and functional above all. While commenting on the play elements themselves, Phase 2 engagement participants also identified the need for suitable amenities and facilities in close proximity to play spaces. This echoes the findings from the Phase 1 engagement, where the community reported the need to have play spaces co-located with other facilities and amenities.



Play that embraces nature

When asked to nominate which play elements they would like to see in Tench Reserve, *Water play* and *Nature play* were the most popular preferences, receiving 26 votes and 24 votes respectively (a point of view that closely mirrors the original insights captured during the phase 1 engagement). This desire was also captured in the Design Board, where both elements received high levels of support; however, participants detailed that the inclusion of these elements should not limit accessibility, or opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy the space.

Bringing the Nepean into the Park

Water play was popular all-around, frequently mentioned in the survey and Social Pinpoint comments, and was equally popular with both male and female survey participants. Participants reported wanting water play elements to be incorporated throughout the park along the edges of the river. They see water play as a way to extend the Nepean River into the park itself. Mirroring what we heard in Phase 1, participants also acknowledged and appreciated the cooling function of waterplay in the Penrith area.

Play considerations for all ages, such as *Play for adults* and *Intergenerational play* were the next most popular options though play for seniors was considered to be less important. The number of men who nominated play for adults as an element of play they'd like to see at the Park was almost double that of women. Play for all ages was also a common theme across the Social Pinpoint with users commenting that children are not the only people who play and the importance of creating a space that caters to all levels.

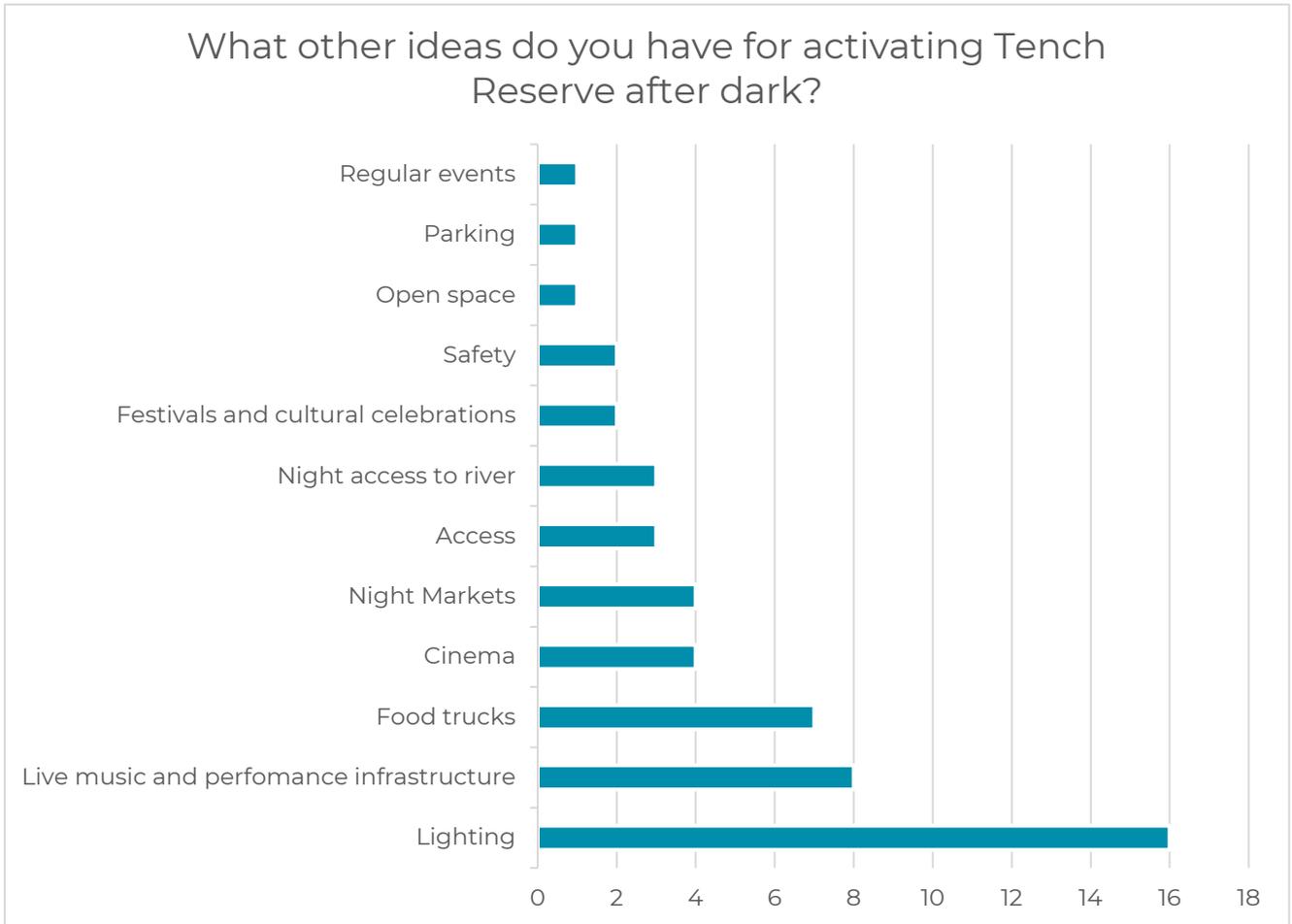
The comments throughout the survey and the Social Pinpoint highlight the need to create accessible play spaces fit for all members of the community. A quarter of comments relating to nature play on the Social Pinpoint emphasise the need for wheelchair friendly spaces.

Ideas for improvement:

- Mature trees to provide natural shade and cooling
- Limit the use of bark and sand to enable greater access for wheelchair users
- Incorporate activities for wheelchair users and mobility impaired individuals
- Greater consideration of adult facilities
- Incorporate a water play area close to the water's edge

Feedback on night-time activations

Most participants were enthusiastic about greater night-time activation. Responses to the survey identified **lighting** as the top priority, receiving 16 mentions (double the mentions of the next most popular idea). Lighting was distantly followed by live music and performance infrastructure (8) and food trucks (7).



People reported that more lights would be beneficial at park entrances, pathways, and the densely bushed areas to promote night-time activation. A number of respondents advocated for eco-friendly lighting as to not affect the existing wildlife in the area.

Lighting was equally popular amongst both men and women but was a particular concern for people aged 45 years and under. Interestingly, live music and performance infrastructure and food trucks were far more popular with women, with more than double the number of women than mentioning these elements in their responses.

Creating a safe and welcoming atmosphere

Lighting was mentioned throughout the Phase 2 of engagement in two aspects, as part of a show or activation event, and in relation to **safety**. While safety was only explicitly mentioned three times, further analysis of the participants' comments revealed that lighting was linked to their sense of safety in the park.

All survey participants who explicitly mentioned safety also mentioned lighting, but a number of survey participants also reported appropriate lighting is necessary to encourage use of the park after dark (i.e., for walks and runs). This was echoed by Social Pinpoint participants who reported needing more lights to facilitate activities like walking and jogging after dark, to create greater visibility and to minimise any potential trip hazards.

This mirrors what was said in Phase 1 of engagement where safety was often linked the provision of lighting in Tench Reserve. Participants ranked places for safe night time activities 7th out of 15 for elements for park improvement during Phase 1 of engagement but the need for more lighting was a recurring theme.

Ideas for improvement:

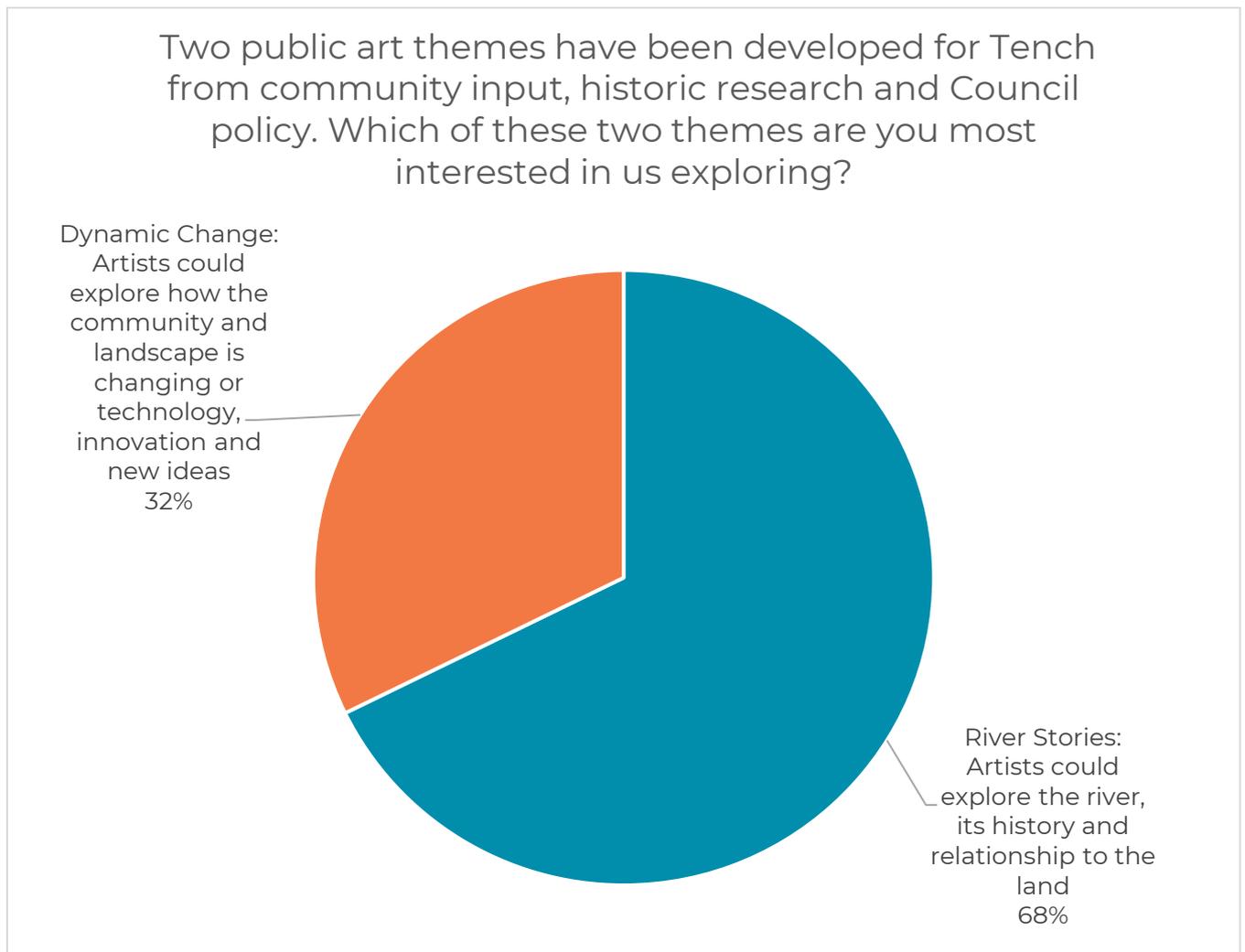
- Eco-friendly lighting as to not disturb wildlife
- Solar powered lights
- Lighting along the path and tree-dense areas
- Appropriate infrastructure for food trucks
- Appropriate infrastructure markets
- Appropriate infrastructure open air cinemas
- Public shuttle bus to the park

Feedback on public art

When asked to indicate their preference between two public art themes developed through community input, historic research, and council policy, River Stories were by far more popular with participants. A total of 21 participants nominated **'River Stories'** compared to the 10 participants who chose 'Dynamic Change' as a public art theme for the upgrades to Tench Reserve.

The desire for a greater connection to the Nepean River has been a consistent theme through both phases of engagement with people wanting stories of the river to be told by local artists.

Support for River Stories was wide spread among participants but support for 'Dynamic Change' was concentrated to women aged 36 – 45 (5 votes), men aged 26 – 35 (3 votes) and 36 – 45 (2 votes).



When participants were asked to select which three examples of public art best reflect the type of art that excites them the most, image 1 was by far the most popular (see below).



Image 1 speaks to the participants' sense of practicality and functionality. They want art that reflects and highlights the landscape while also serving a more functional purpose (mirroring Phase 1 feedback). This is highlighted when considering the three next most popular images (2 - 12 votes, 7 - 11 votes and 6 - 10 votes).

The top four (4) images ranged in materials and motif, but all provide a sensory experience. Images 1, 2 and 6 seem to be made with natural materials and serve to complement the natural feel of an area. While Image 7 is not seemingly made with natural materials, it uses a neutral colour and also blends into the landscape. Accordingly, the quirkier, more eye-catching images were the least popular (5 - 5 votes, 8 - 7 votes, 3 - 7 votes)

The four most popular images reflect the participants desire for a cool space that leverages the unique natural landscape of the park and uses natural materials (echoing the original insights from Phase 1).

The community prioritising water play and nature play (see above) can be also leveraged to create playable public art that extends the river into the park.

Ideas for improvement:

- Natural materials for public art
- Neutral colour scheme as to not detract from the landscape
- Multi-purpose and functional art that can also be used for seating
- Extend the river into the park

General issues and considerations

The following issues have been identified for the design team to consider when finalising the draft Concept Design:

- **Retention of mature trees:** A number of comments, particularly those on the Social Pinpoint, expressed some confusion about the impact of the upgrades on the existing landscape of Tench Reserve, particularly the mature trees. Participants very strongly felt that the mature trees should not be touched and for the planting of more mature trees.
- **Linkages out of the park:** Various participants raised the issue of outside linkages to the park. A number of participants emphasised the importance of good active, public and private transport infrastructure in the wider area to create a safer experience getting to and leaving the park. For pedestrians, the lack of a footbridge or safe crossing across a busy highway is a major concern.
- **Traffic and parking:** There have been some mixed comments on the Social Pinpoint around Precinct 1 – Wharf and Play. While the participants agree with the upgrade on principle, they also ask greater consideration be given to the impact on traffic and parking. One comment expressed that the play space is too large and would place further pressure on parking while another reported that the general car park is already often filled to capacity.
- **Access to the Jetty:** A submission was received asking for greater detail on Precinct 1 – Wharf and Play. It raised the issue of access to the jetty where the Nepean Belle Paddlewheeler docks. The submission highlighted that the jetty should have both pedestrian and roadway access, as well as facilities for bus and coach parking – noting that emergency services would also use these facilities in case of an emergency.

Where to from here

The vision and draft Design Concept for the upgrades to Tench Reserve have been well received by participants. Through the course of community engagement, valuable feedback on the draft park was captured along with additional design ideas and elements for consideration.

Next steps

The findings from this report will be used to inform the final Concept Design for Tench Reserve. In 2021, the final design will be presented to the public, highlighting how community input has helped shape the design.

"It is really important to me to have open, natural spaces to be active. I would like to see places where people can walk and cycle safely without interfering with each other, and places where kayaks and canoes can launch safely."

- Online survey participant

"Covid has certainly changed our world! It would be great to see multiple, smaller play stations for children rather than one large one. The parks are currently always crowded."

- Online survey participant

"Integrating art into these spaces will add a lot of value and really contribute to making Tench Reserve a unique community space. ... Think about how to not just make it a space for the community to visit but for us to feel connected, emotionally attached to it."

- Social Pinpoint participant

Appendix A – Online Survey Analysis

Overview

A total of 35 people participated in the survey.

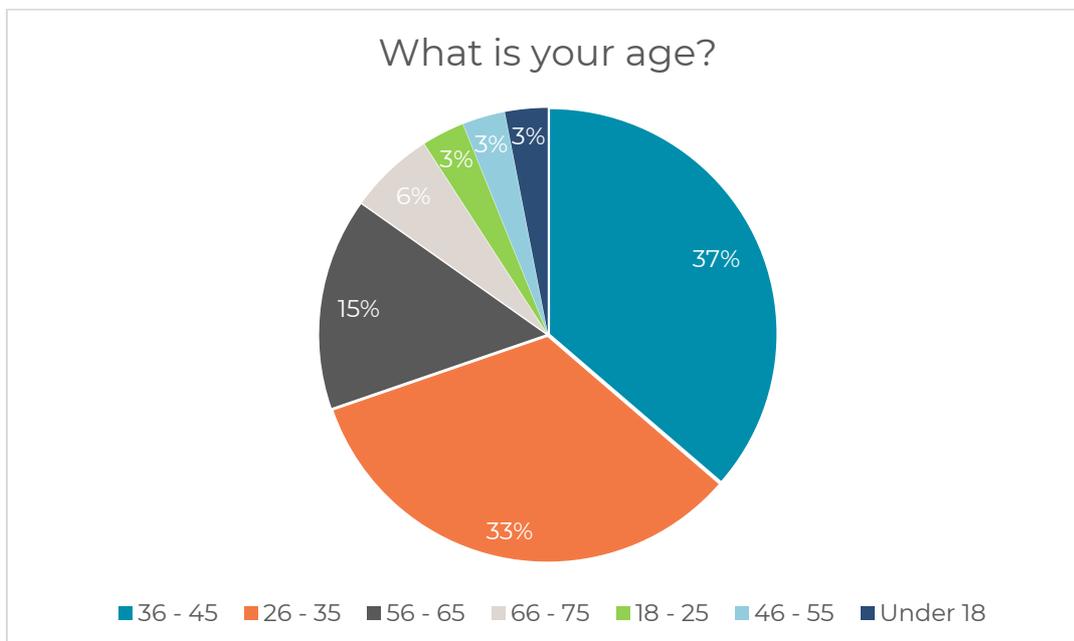
Demographics

What is your gender? (Q15)

There was an even number of males and females. No participants identified as non-binary.

What is your age? (Q12)

The largest age group among participants was 36 – 45-year-olds (37%). 33% of participants were each aged 26 – 35 and 15% 56-65. 2% of participants were aged 66-75, and 3% were each aged under 18, 18-25 and 46 - 55.



Where do you live? (insert suburb name or postcode) (Q13)

The vast majority (91%) of the 35 participants live in the Penrith LGA. Of the three people that don't live in Penrith, one lives in Blaxland, one in South Windsor and one in Glenbrook.

Do you live within 10 minutes' walk of the Park? (Q14)

46% of participants live within 10 minutes' walk of the Park.

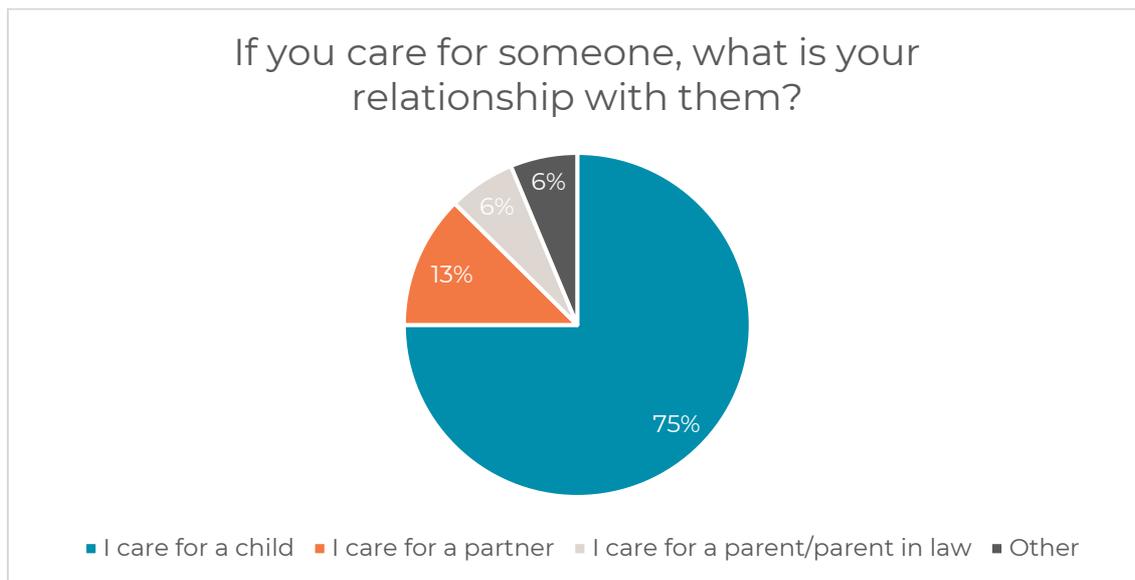
Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Q17)

No participants identified as Aboriginal.

If you care for someone, what is your relationship to the person? (Q19)

46% of participants care for someone. Out of these participants who identified as caring for someone, 75% care for a child, 13% care for a partner, 6% each care for a parent/parent in law and other (unidentified).

Over a third (34%) of all participants cared for a child.



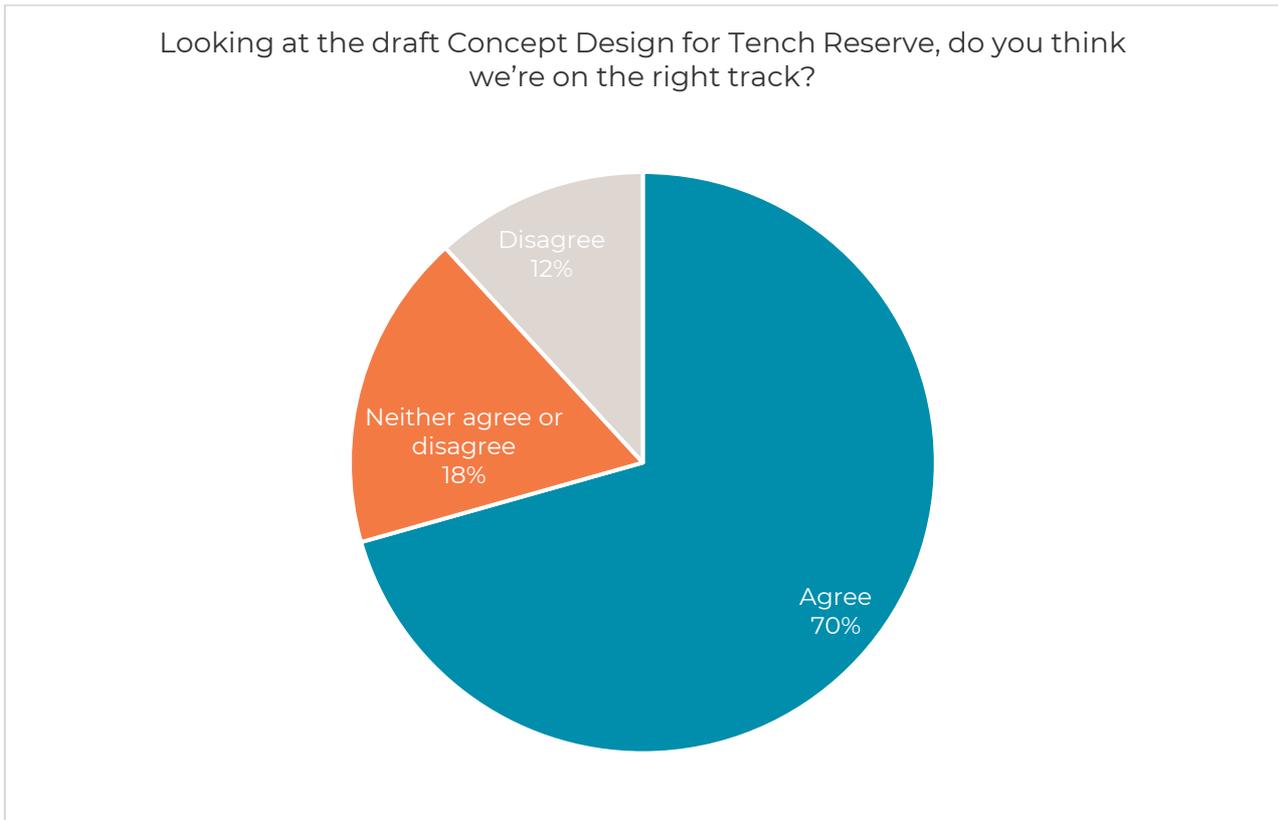
Do you speak a language other than English at home? (Q16)

5 participants spoke a language other than English at home. One each reported speaking Mandarin, Farsi, Marathi and Auslan while one did not specify.

Community aspirations

Looking at the draft Concept Design upgrades to Tench Reserve, do you think we're on the right track? (Q2)

24 participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Six participants were undecided, and four participants disagreed or strongly disagreed.

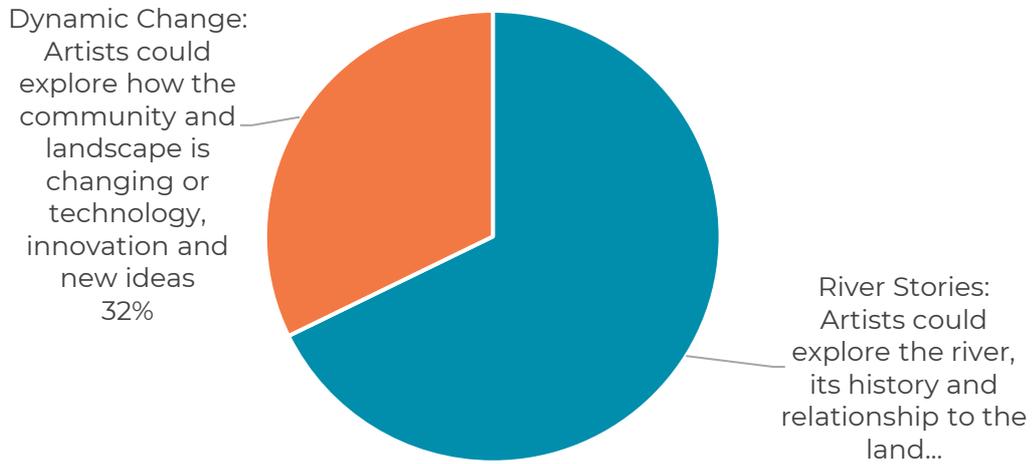


Two public art themes have been developed for Tench Reserve from community inputs, historic research and council policy. Which of these two themes are you most interested in us exploring? (Q5)

Participants demonstrated a clear preference for public art that explored the theme of river stories.

River stories: artists could explore the river, its history and relationship to the land received 21 votes, whereas Dynamic Change: artists could explore how the community and landscape is changing or technology, innovation and new ideas received 10 votes.

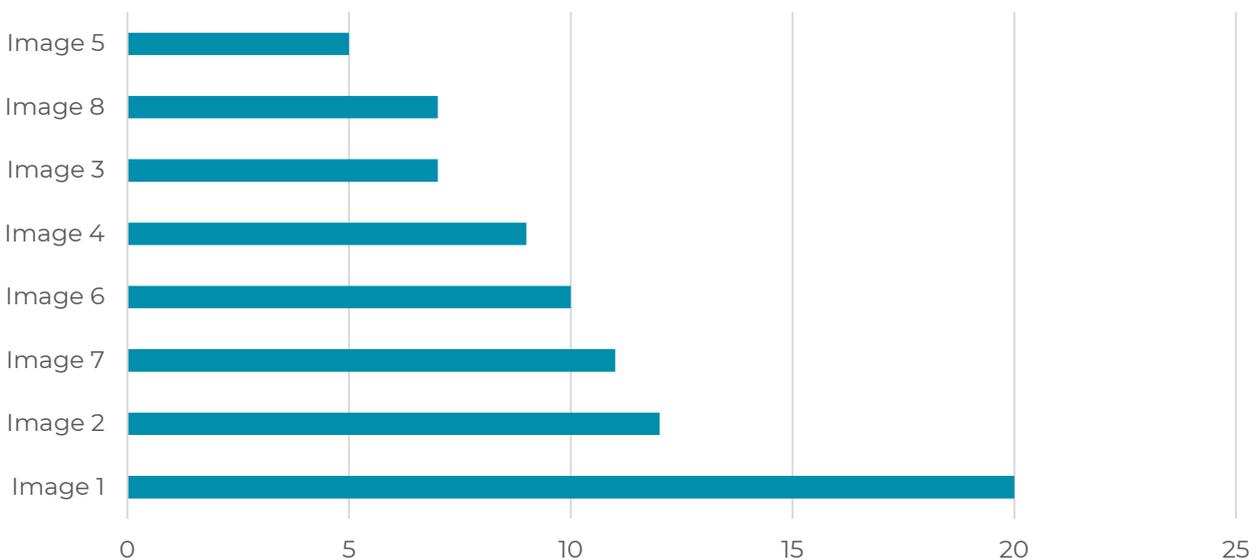
Two public art themes have been developed for Tench Reserve from community input, historic research and Council policy. Which of these two themes are you most interested in us exploring?



Public art comes in many different types, scales, and forms. Which of these examples reflect the type of art that excites you? (Select 3) (Q6)

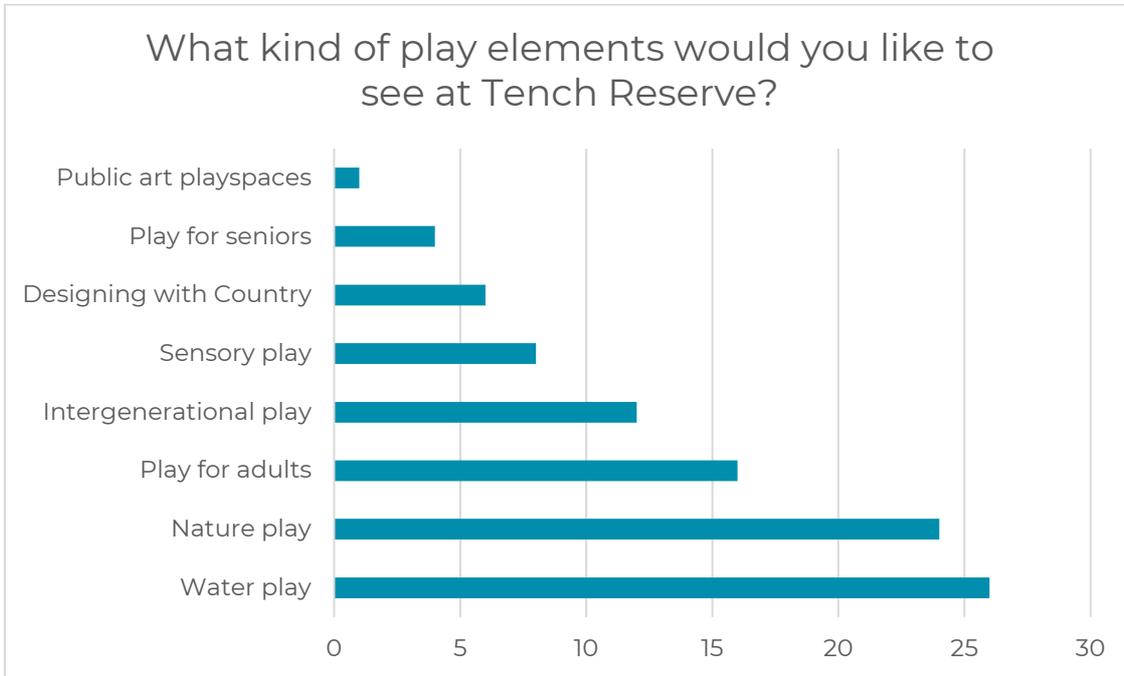
Image 1 was the most popular selection among participants, followed by Image 2, receiving 20 and 12 votes respectively. Image 5 was the least popular image, receiving only 5 votes.

Public art comes in many different types, scales and forms. Which of these examples reflect the type of art that excites you?



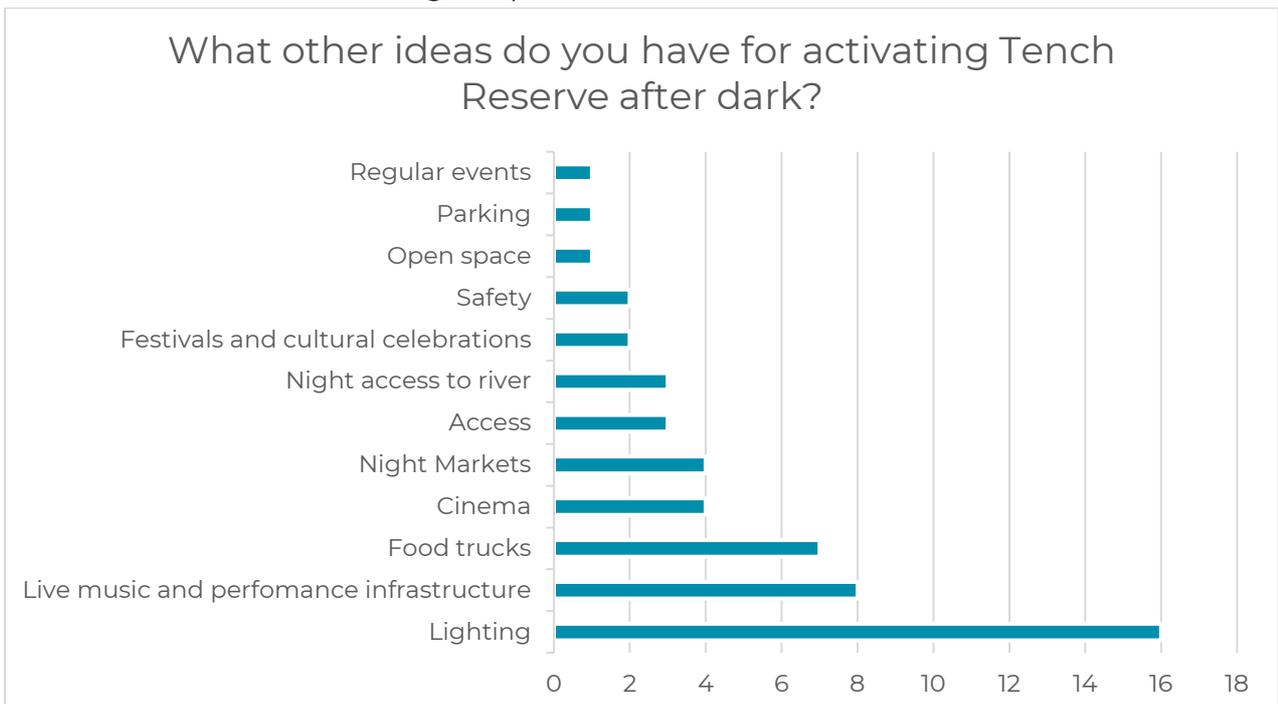
What kind of play elements would you like to see at the new Park? (Q8)

The majority of participants nominated *Water play* and *Nature play* as their preferred type of play element for the new Park, receiving a combined total of 50 votes.



Tench Reserve is a popular place for events and activity at night, what other ideas do you have for activating the park after dark? (Q10)

The comments for this question were themed and counted. Lighting was the most mentioned idea for activating the park.

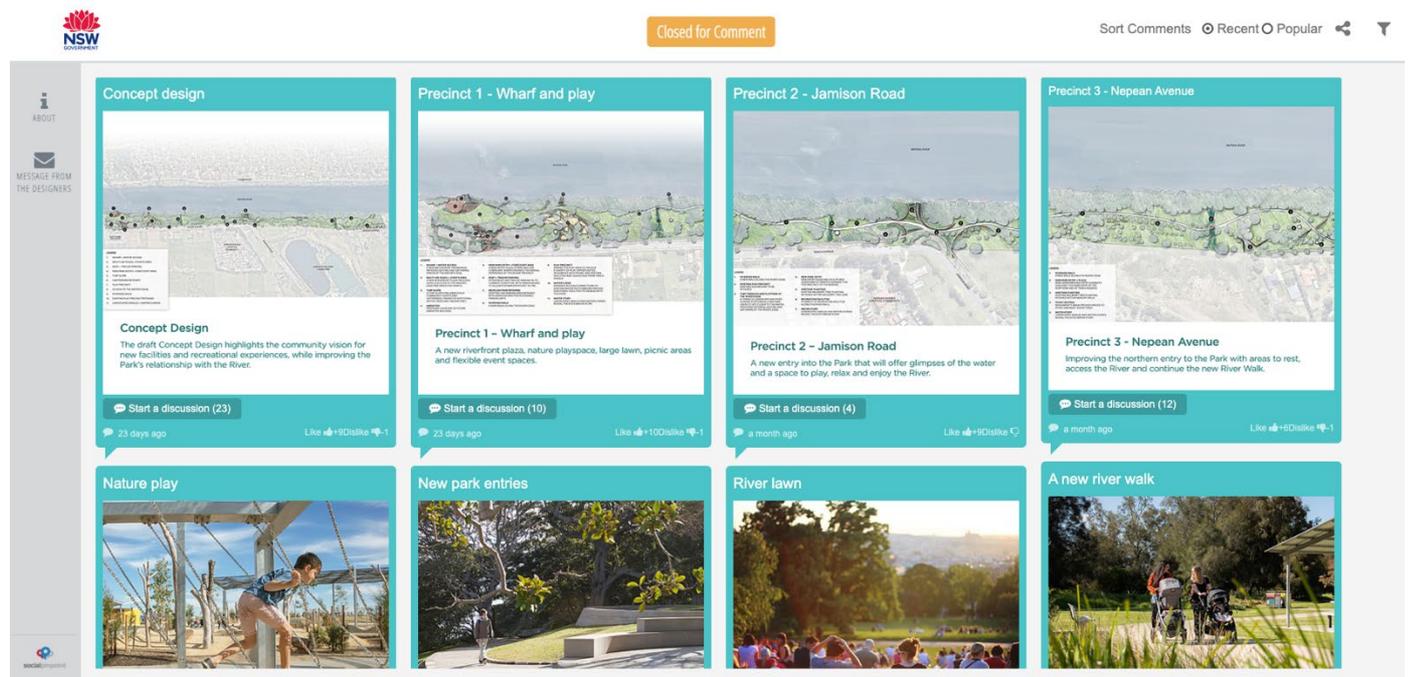


Appendix B – Social Pinpoint Design Board Analysis

Overview

A total of 87 responses from 56 people were recorded on the Design Board:

- 23 (26%) 'Draft Concept Design' comments
- 12 (14%) 'Precinct 3 – Nepean Avenue' comments
- 10 (12%) 'Precinct 1 – Wharf and Play' comments
- 8 (9%) 'Nature play' comments
- 8 (9%) 'The River edge' comments
- 7 (8%) 'A new river walk' comments
- 5 (6%) 'River lawn' comments
- 4 (5%) 'Precinct 2 – Jamison Road' comments
- 3 (3%) 'Feature landforms' comments
- 3 (3%) 'The Water story' comments
- 2 (2%) 'New park entries' comments
- 2 (2%) 'History and culture' comments



JOC Consulting

L4, Level 4/68-72 Wentworth Ave, Surry Hills NSW 2010

T +61 400 471 469 E john@jocconsulting.com.au

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