

**Manly Dam All Abilities Playground
Community Engagement Report – Stage 1 and 2
September 2018**

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Executive Summary

Council undertook a two stage community engagement process to involve the community in planning for an upgrade to the Manly Dam Reserve children’s playground.

Development of the concept plan took place following a Stage 1 engagement period that involved onsite drop in sessions, a project webpage taking online submissions, and a series of workshops with children who attend local schools.

Participants in Stage 1 engagement were largely supportive of the proposal. Feedback from Stage 1 was used to prepare the concept plan that was exhibited at Stage 2 engagement.

Stage two engagement involved placing the completed concept plan on public exhibition in January and February 2018.

Community feedback on the draft concept plan has been mixed. There are people who strongly support the project and are enthusiastic about its construction. There are people who have reservations about the extent of the project, its impact on the environment and its context within a War Memorial Park.

Council staff has liaised with key stake holder groups to address the concerns and to revise the designs.

Background

Creation of an inclusive playground at Manly Warringah War Memorial Park is part of the Northern Beaches ‘Connecting All Through Play’ program. Manly Warringah War Memorial Park was selected for this playground because it is already a regional centre for natural play, it is located away from the coast and the site was scheduled for an upgrade.

The proposed new playplace aims to enhance the recreational experience at Manly Warringah War Memorial Park by developing a universally accessible place to play that reflects the remarkable natural surrounds and offers comfort, engagement and challenge for everyone.

The aims of the playground upgrade project are to:

- Create an inclusive playplace which caters for residents within the local community
- Create a play journey that celebrates the natural surrounds and endeavours to afford play opportunities sympathetic and complimentary to the environment in which it will exist. The

design will be innovative, sensitive and robust, and focus on opportunities for engagement for all.

- Be a playplace that is vibrant, emphasising inclusiveness, providing elements for users of all abilities.
- Create a playplace that is engaging and challenging as well as complying with Australian Standards regarding Playgrounds and Public Spaces.
- Encourage environmental education opportunities, increasing the understanding of responsibility for environmental caring and sustainability.
- Ensure universal access is provided
- Refurbish and improve the existing toilet block to be more accessible.
- Provide an overall design that respects and respond to local cultural and heritage values.

Engagement Objective

The objective of the community engagement on this project is to:

- involve the community in the planning process for the playground and to allow them to evaluate elements of the proposed plans

Community engagement activities

The following activities took place as part of Council's two stage community engagement plan:

Date	Activity
	Stage 1 engagement – initial community ideas
20 July 2017	Project webpage published
22 July 2017	Manly Daily advertisement
27 July 2017	Email from Council engagement database to 16,197 addresses
5 August 2017	Drop in session
10 August 2017	Email from Council engagement database to 16,270 addresses
9 August 2017	Drop in session
13 August 2017	Stage 1 engagement comments close
29 August 2017	Workshop with Allambie Heights Public School
30 August 2017	Workshop with St Kieran's Catholic Primary School
	Workshop with Balgowlah North Primary School
	Stage 2 engagement – community feedback on concept
19 January 2018	Project webpage updated with concept plan exhibition commencing (Stage 2 engagement)
20 January 2018	Manly Daily advertisement
25 January 2018	Email from Council engagement database to 17,225 addresses
8 February 2018	Email from Council engagement database to 17,461 addresses
17 February 2018	Stage 2 engagement comments close

Key findings

In response to Stage 1 engagement, Council received 118 online submissions from 115 participants. 104 submissions expressed support for the proposal.

Based on the positive responses from the stage 1 online submissions, Council engaged with 3 local schools. Utilising the feedback from stage 1 and the feedback collated from the schools workshops Council was able to develop a concept design to exhibit at Stage 2.

In response to Stage 2 community engagement, Council received 116 online submissions and 6 submissions in writing. 43 were in support of the concept plan and 79 had concerns about the concept presented.

People who have support for the playground like the natural elements of the design, the cultural heritage and pathways. They look forward to the development and quite a few people are in support of the upgrade of the amenity block at the playground.

Opposition to the playground development was primarily based on concern about the scale of the concept. The expanded footprint and particular features of the concept design were the main concerns. Some people were concerned about environmental impact of the expanded playplace footprint. There were also those concerned that a playground may be inconsistent with the current use of the park as a War Memorial.

Many respondents to the online survey also made suggestions for additional facilities to include in the concept plan.

The key considerations raised in the submissions are grouped and responded to in the next section of the report.

Key considerations and Council response

Council's online survey for Stage two engagement contained three questions:

- Q1 What do you like about the draft Concept Plans for Manly Dam Playplace?
- Q2 What concerns do you have about the draft Concept Plans for Manly Dam Playplace?
- Q3 Do you have any general comments?

For each of the three questions, the key considerations raised by each submission have been summarised and addressed in the tables below.

Q1 What do you like about the draft Concept Plans for Manly Dam Playplace?

Key considerations	Council response
<u>Support</u> (including natural elements, cultural heritage and pathways, sculptures, caters for range of ages, some support upgrade to toilets only)	Play elements have been selected using natural material where possible. The Aboriginal Heritage Office staff shared stories with the project team to inspire some of the play features. The toilet block will be upgraded to meet Australian Standards for accessibility.
<u>Opposition</u> (including general opposition and people that think it should be in another location, some support upgrade of toilets in location, no expansion of footprint)	Manly Dam Picnic Area 1 has an existing playground that is within the most highly utilised and visited area within the War Memorial Park. The existing playground and its environs are degraded and in need of an upgrade.

	<p>The existing playground was identified for an upgrade in the Warringah Open Space Strategy and in the Northern Beaches Disability Inclusion Action Plan.</p> <p>The Manly War Memorial Park plan of management identifies the existing playground and its environs as developed spaces as an important recreation destination and asset for the local community as well as a regional attraction for visitors. The revised design for the playspace and its environs is consistent with the plan of management for this location in the context of its ongoing purpose as both a War Memorial and as a nature conservation area.</p>
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Q2 What concerns do you have about the draft Concept Plans for Manly Dam Playplace?

Key considerations	Council response
General support	
<u>Support</u> – bike track for kids	Path network within the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park allows for sufficient bike riding. A dedicated cycling track for children does not form part of the revised design.
Suggestions – need more shade	The revised design will incorporate creation of a new shelter area, adjacent to the relocated BBQ. There will also be planting of 82 advanced tree specimens.
Suggestions – transport for more people	Local schools, carers of groups of children and adults with disabilities are generally transported in small buses to the location and Council will continue to support these user groups and their needs.
Suggestions – waste management for more people	Waste collection is catered for by supply of onsite bins.
Suggestions – make it more adventurous for older kids	The revised playground design caters for a diversity of play experiences.
Suggestions – relocate the war memorial	The location within the current design is that preferred by the Manly Warringah War Memorial Trust
Suggestions – shade (including retention of trees and provision in furniture for people to bring own umbrellas, and for permanent shade on benches and tables)	<p>The revised design retains as many trees as possible and allows for planting of more trees.</p> <p>The revised design requires removal of 15 trees and some shrubs and planting of 82 new ones to replace them.</p>
Suggestions – reduce bright colours to blend with environment	This will be a nature based play space dominated by natural materials.

	The yellow bee rocker has been replaced with a green grasshopper rocker.
Suggestions – trampolines or see saw	A trampoline has been incorporated into the design, along with inclusive rockers.
Suggestions – swings	Selections of inclusive swinging options are included in the revised design.
Suggestions – more BBQ's	<p>Whilst there are no additional BBQs in the revised design, the BBQs are relocated closer to the existing picnic shelter and the other is being relocated adjacent to a newly proposed shelter.</p> <p>The existing numbers of bookable picnic tables have been retained in the revised design, although some relocated to be more accessible for people of all abilities.</p>
Suggestions – benches and tables	An additional three flat deck / pallet seats have been included in the revised design, along with suitably placed landscape features which will allow for more places for people to sit.
Suggestions – improved access to the water (including safety concerns with injuries from diving and management of fishing waste)	<p>The revised design has a reduced amount of shore line rock work.</p> <p>Safety signage to highlight swimming depths to prevent injuries from inappropriate entrance to the swimming area.</p>
Suggestion – would like more equipment than landscaping	The revised design caters for a diversity of play experiences offering a range of challenges for a variety of age groups. The design creates a balance between landscape and nature play elements as well as play equipment which appropriate for this location.
Suggestions – improved linkages for cycling	Cycling is catered for in the Manly Dam War Memorial Park. A specific cycle track has not been incorporated into the revised design.
Suggestions – fence around playground	There will be a fenced section of the playspace. Council's goal is to upgrade the playground and enhance the associated play space outside of the fenced area also. Embellishment of the ancillary features and facilities in picnic Area 1 will improve accessibility in this area. An appropriate section of the playspace will be fenced, but not the entire area.
Suggestions – retain dam wall crossing	The playspace does not impact on the ability for people to use the dam wall.
Suggestions – neck and back injuries from sliding poles	There are no sliding poles in the revised playspace design.
Suggestions – reduce the amount of play equipment proposed	The revised design has a reduced footprint area of 3,455m ² . This is 2,195 m ² smaller than that exhibited in stage 2.

	<p>In undertaking path realignment as part of the new design, the play experiences have been reduced and the learning circle has been removed.</p>
<p>Suggestions – use of more natural materials</p>	<p>This will be a nature based play space and natural materials are used in the revised design where suitable.</p> <p>The yellow bee rocker will be replaced with a green grasshopper rocker.</p>
<p><u>Opposition</u> – Manly Dam War Memorial Space, removal of trees, impact on nature, ongoing maintenance, too many people will come here, too bulky for the space, potential for vandalism, access to the water not suitable, access to the area by dogs</p>	<p>Manly Dam War Memorial Park Plan of Management allows for the management of Picnic Area 1 as an intensively managed day use setting. Planned pathways between the playspace and the designated Remembrance Point have been removed in the revised design.</p> <p>Approximately 12 trees are planned to be removed with the majority not being locally indigenous to the area. The addition of 82 trees will be planted.</p> <p>The revised design has a reduced footprint.</p> <p>The area is already a regional destination. Replacing the old play equipment and enhancing the degraded environs is part of implementing the Plan of Management for the area.</p> <p>Access to the water has been reduced in the final design.</p> <p>Dogs on leads are welcome in the Manly Dam War Memorial Park, as per the Plan of Management.</p> <p>Potential for vandalism of the area is considered to be a small problem as the area is for day use only and the park gate is locked after dark. New equipment in an upgraded area will be maintained by Council park staff and Councils designated playground inspectors.</p>

Q3 Do you have any general comments?

Key considerations	Council comments
General support	
<u>Support</u> – thank you for the opportunity to comment (2)	Noted.
<u>Support</u> – retain existing footprint	<p>To provide accessibility for all people, including those in wheelchairs, an expanded area of pathways is required, as well as safety circulation space around play equipment.</p> <p>In response to people's concerns about the footprint of the concept, the revised design is significantly smaller. The revised design has a reduced footprint area of 3,455m². This is 2,195 m² smaller than that exhibited in stage 2.</p>
Suggestions – kiosk (2)	Development of a permanent kiosk in this area is considered inconsistent with the project.
Suggestions – kayak store	<p>The universal kayak launching ramp has been removed in the revised design to address environmental concerns about access to the water.</p> <p>A storage area for kayaks is not part of the revised design.</p>
Suggestions – remove noisy ski boats	The revised design has no impact on the ability of the dam to be used by ski boats. Ski boats are allowed in accordance with the adopted plan of management for the Manly Warringah War Memorial Park.
Suggestions – kids bike track	A children's cycle path is not part of the revised design as the revised design is on a smaller footprint with fewer elements than the previous design exhibited in stage 2. There are enough paths and rigid surfaces for younger children to practise,
Suggestions – put a pretend shop in the playground	<p>The upgrade is taking a natural environment theme therefore a pretend shop theme is not consistent with the look and feel of the overall design and has not been incorporated.</p> <p>The aim design is to give children a safe and enhanced play experience in the nature by incorporating specific equipment to address development of gross motor skills and to enable access by children of all abilities.</p>
Suggestions – upgrade toilets in area 3	Upgrading the toilets at area 3 is not part of this current project. This will be considered as a future project.

Suggestions – play over water	The water area has been reduced in response to environmental issues raised during the exhibition of the concept in stage 2.
Suggestions – play for older children	The revised design caters for a range of ages and has elements for all abilities.
Suggestions – filtered water stations	There will be a water source at the amenities block.
Suggestions – more Australian elements, native planting, Aboriginal elements	The revised design incorporates an Aboriginal-inspired coolamin area, which has been reduced in size to cater for environmental concerns about the footprint of the area.
Suggestions – more shade	More shade will be supplied by a new shelter area and by the planting of new trees throughout the revised design.
Suggestions – keep ducks and geese away	Ducks and geese that live in the area will be able to still traverse the open spaces, with the exception of a small area of playground which will be fenced, as is the current situation for those birds. The revised plan makes no allowance for keeping birds out of the area.
Suggestions – drop off area for BBQs	During the design process a 15 minute drop off zone adjacent to accessible parking has been considered.
Suggestions – footpath link between sections of the reserve	The revised design has created even better access for those with mobility difficulties to access much more of site that is currently possible. This is being achieved by relocating the main accessible path to the top of slope, which has a dual benefit of retaining open space.
Suggestions – make the eastern side of reserve accessible too	The focus of this project is the western end of Area 1, being the playground and its environs, which is the area flagged for an upgrade by the Warringah Open Space Strategy.
Suggestions – signage to stop people feeding the ducks	Management signs are not part of this project, but the suggestion has been noted and options to address will be considered when implementing the signage strategy.
Suggestions - repair and maintain mountain bike trail	The mountain bike trail is not part of the current project. Mountain bike riding is addressed in the 2014 Manly Warringah War Memorial Plan of Management in actions TT6-TT25 to upgrade and reroute sections of track to improve safety and the environment in Plan. Some upgrades may include technical investigation and features.

Suggestions – play for children of all ages	The revised design caters for children of all ages and abilities.
Suggestions – more equipment	In development of the revised design, officers have not catered for more equipment on the site. The reason for not adding more equipment is that environmental concerns have needed to be addressed.
Suggestions – signage for swimming areas	Management signs are not part of this project, but the suggestion has been noted.
Suggestions – restrict visitors only to those who come by bike or electric bike	As an all abilities area, limiting access only to those who are capable of riding bikes not a truly inclusive approach.
General Opposition	
<u>Opposition</u> – too elaborate, over development, environmental reasons	<p>The revised design addresses , footprint reduction and environmental concerns as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised design has a reduced footprint area of 3,455m². This is 2,195 m² smaller than that exhibited in stage 2. • Reduced number of trees to be removed – only 12 in the revised design whereas the original design had 27 trees needing to be removed • The main accessible path has been relocated to the top of slope to retain open space in the revised design. • The planned footpath from the Anzac Memorial along the foreshore to the playspace has been removed • The pathway around a couple of trees has been altered to retain some of the trees which would otherwise have been removed. • Following ground-proofing the slide has been relocated to retain some endemic trees that had not appeared on features survey • The large gathering circle in centre of space at the path junctions (and the paths) have been removed • The Aboriginal-inspired coolamin interactive art element has been relocated and reduced in size to reduce the footprint • To reduce the footprint, the learning circle and associated rock construction has been removed in the revised design

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shore line rock work has been significantly reduced in the revised design. • Channels created for water play in the revised design will utilise self-supplied dam water. No installation of water supply/plumbing will be required. • The universal access kayak launching ramp has been removed from the revised design. • There are no high rock walls in the revised design.
<p><u>Opposition</u> – inconsistent with War Memorial</p>	<p>Area 1 of the Manly Dam War Memorial Park has a playground that was identified in the plan of management as one of the top 20 most visited parks/playgrounds in Warringah.</p> <p>The playground is well utilised and is showing signs of wear and tear. It needs to be replaced with new, safe equipment that offers inclusive play experiences and inclusive visitation throughout Area 1.</p> <p>The location-specific management actions and directions from the 2014 Manly Warringah War Memorial Park Plan of Management state “Manage Picnic Area 1 as more developed, landscaped, modified and intensively used day use setting”.</p> <p>As a consequence of its long term use as an intensively used picnic and play area, Council intends to retain the playspace in an area that has been significantly reduced as a consequence of feedback from stage 2 engagement.</p> <p>The all abilities pathway along the water connecting the playspace to the Remembrance Point has been removed in the revised design.</p>
<p>Process comments – better diagrams available in Dee Why or online, management plan required</p>	<p>An upgrade of the playground at Manly War Memorial Park is needed and the project was first identified in the Warringah Council Open Space Strategy.</p> <p>Community engagement on this project has been undertaken in two stages.</p> <p>Stage 1 engagement examined the types of experiences that people are looking for in a revised playspace at the park.</p> <p>Stage 2 gave people the chance to comment on a draft concept plan for the playground.</p> <p>Council has decided to revise the design on the basis of community feedback received during</p>

	<p>stage 2 and to publicly exhibit the revised design in order to illustrate the changes made to incorporate the range of comments received.</p> <p>Manly Warringah War Memorial Park has a plan of management which was adopted in 2014. The guiding principles of the plan allow for the use of the area as a playground. Specifically, “sustainable management of the Park to protect its natural areas, while providing for a variety of passive and active recreational activities” and “provide safe and equitable access to the Park and its facilities for all user groups”.</p> <p>The existing and proposed playground areas are within well-established play areas as permitted in the plan of management.</p>
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Conclusion

The revised concept has been modified to reflect the feedback and suggestions received by Council.

The revised design meets the overarching objectives of 3 key planning documents in relation to and upgrading in Area 1: the play space and associated facilities and landscaped area.

1. Manly Warringah War Memorial Plan of Management
 - Guiding principles:
 - sustainable management of the Park to protect its natural areas,
 - while providing for a variety of passive and active recreational activities;
 - provide safe, fair and equitable access to the Park and its facilities for all user groups; and
 - protect and enhance the Park’s heritage
2. Northern Beaches Council -DIAP (Disability Inclusion Action Plan) June 2017
 - Council is a leader, role model and advocate for access and inclusion
 - Everyone can participate
 - Access and inclusion is everyone’s business
 - Social Justice Principles inform decision making - Access, Equity, Rights and Participation
 - Northern Beaches Council - Project Brief and Design Principles – NSW Government Everyone can Play Framework
3. A Spirit of Play – Warringah’s Open Space Strategy November 2015
 - To provide a safe, inclusive and accessible playground for the enjoyment of the community
 - Innovative playground offering more opportunity for social interaction.
 - A recreational space to aid the physical, social and emotional development of children

- A place which is connected to context and the natural surrounds, a place for children to learn and appreciate the value of the setting and the broader landscape
- A play space complying with relevant Australian Standards yet offering challenges for a range of ages and abilities