

7. ROYAL PARK RESERVE: PLAYGROUND UPGRADE

General Manager responsible:	General Manager City Environment
Officer responsible:	Greenspace Manager
Author:	Robyn Croucher, Parks & Waterways Area Advocate Burwood/Pegasus, DDI 941-5314

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to confirm Board support for Royal Park Reserve playground renewal, following community consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Royal Park Reserve is a small neighbourhood park used widely by the local community. It currently consists of a single fort structure with swing set and metal slide. The Greenspace Unit has \$35,000 available this financial year, from the Capital Works - Playground Renewals budget to upgrade the Royal Park play facility.
3. A draft concept plan was distributed in February 2005 to approximately 450 residents, local interest groups and organisations for public comment. A noticeboard was also positioned onsite explaining the proposed development. The plan indicated total removal of the current structure, as it no longer meets current playground safety standards, and suggested installation of several different play items (not duplicated in nearby playgrounds) known to be popular and more in line with current trends. The proposal also included some general landscape features, and new park furniture, to further enhance the reserve.
4. By the end of the consultation period, 86 submissions had been received. 74 respondents supported the proposal, and 12 wanted to see significant changes made to the design. Overall, the responses indicated strong support for the upgrade and general design details, with a significant number of people happy about the variety of equipment proposed. The consultation also drew a noteworthy response from the neighbourhood children, and local Queenspark School - with two classes contributing to the consultation.
5. The consultation asked for feedback on what people liked about the plan, and suggested alterations and/or additions to the design. The information received was then abridged, and the more common themes listed to help further refine the development plan. The main themes are as follows:

What was liked:

- Overall design details; layout, pathways, picnic table and trees.
- Variety (and colour) of equipment proposed.
- Diversity across the age groups, in particular equipment for the younger children.
- Roktopus, spica, spinner bowl, swings and slide.
- Additional landscaping.

What changes/additions were suggested:

- (a) Three most common play item requests (in order):
 - Climbing structure (monkey bars).
 - Seesaw.
 - Flying fox.
 - (b) More play equipment for the older children eg adventure playground.
 - (c) Keeping the large grassy area free for ball games and general play.
 - (d) Include more seating for the parents/caregivers.
6. Whilst a large proportion of respondents supported the initial proposal with no significant changes made, there have been some common preferences regarding play items and also the layout, which project staff feel could be integrated into the design without compromising the main plan. In light of the responses received, project staff propose the following changes be made:
 - Install monkey bars.
 - Replace the children's mini bike with a miniature seesaw.
 - Paint a hopscotch area adjacent to the playground.
 - Ensure the large open grassy area is retained for ball games and general play.
 - Install an additional seat to allow for better supervision of the reserve area close to Royal Park Drive.

7. The redevelopment plan for Royal Park Reserve seeks to re-establish the playground as an attractive, stimulating and safe area for children to play and adults to rest/supervise. The revised plan has been amended from the original plan to include several additional play items popular with the local children.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

8. \$35,000 has been allocated in the 2004/05 financial year to upgrade the playground structure at Royal Park Reserve. The proposed playground has been designed accordingly.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board approve the proposed plan to upgrade the play equipment for Royal Park Reserve.

CHAIRPERSON'S RECOMMENDATION

That the abovementioned recommendation be adopted.