

D R Atkinson Reserve Playground Renewal - Community Engagement Results Report

Date: January 9th, 2026

Background

D.R. Atkinson Reserve is a substantial community space located near the northern boundary of Darebin in Reservoir. Covering approximately 24,000 square meters (6 acres), the reserve features a sporting pavilion with public amenities, a playground, a car park, a sports oval and expansive grassed areas. Nestled within a suburban pocket of Reservoir, it is surrounded by residential housing and can be accessed from three entry points. The pavilion serves as a hub for various sporting clubs throughout the year, accommodating seasonal tenants.

Unfortunately, the playground was largely destroyed by fire around 12 months ago and has since been cordoned off for safety. To restore this vital community asset, the 2025–2026 D.R. Atkinson Reserve Playground Renewal Project has been allocated a budget of \$200,000 to deliver a new playspace for local families.



Location: D R Atkinson Reserve, Reservoir

Each year, the Parks and Open Space team review park assets throughout the municipality and allocate funds to complete important renewals and upgrades. D.R. Atkinson Reserve has been identified as a priority site for an upgrade in 2025-2026.

This upgrade will provide modern, new equipment and a more inviting space that can meet the needs of the local residents and encourage more park participation. Key considerations throughout this project have been:

- Community feedback
- Budget
- Availability and suitability of equipment
- Alignment with Council policies.

Participation Analysis & Consultation Process

Council has actively engaged the community, targeting subject areas in which the community was able to contribute to this project.

A single stage community consultation was planned to achieve this outcome, through the *Your Say Darebin* [project page](#). This consultation occurred from 1– 29 October 2025.

The following table is a description of the engagement methods used by Council for the D.R. Atkinson Reserve Playground Renewal Project.

Engagement Activity	Number of participants/ people engaged	Targeted group	Demographic information
Letter drop	572	Local residents	Letters with a summary of the project and a QR code to the <i>Your Say</i> page were sent to 572 local residents within the selected catchment area of the playground.
Posters	undisclosed	General community	Posters (4 no.) with a QR code to the <i>Your Say</i> page were displayed on-site and at each access point of the reserve.
Stakeholder Email	Over 10	General community	Emails with poster attachments and links to the <i>Your Say</i> page were sent to: - 7 schools and kindergartens nearby - 2 scout groups - Sporting Clubs who use the pavilion - Keon Park Children's Hub
Pop Ups	2 sessions – 25 participants	General community	2 pop up sessions were undertaken on site at D.R. Atkinson Reserve: Pop up session 1 - Wednesday 8th October at 3:30pm - 4:30pm Pop up session 2 - Saturday 18th October at 1:00pm - 3:00pm

The following table is a description of the engagement activities used by Council for the D.R. Atkinson Reserve Playground Renewal Project, with accompanying participation targets and results.

Engagement Activity	Target Number	Result
Visitors to YourSay Page	30	358
Survey Completions through YourSay page	30	192
Pop Up participation	10	25
Additional forms of communication	-	2 email responses 1 letter response

Participants were largely from Reservoir. Only 16% of participants were from other suburbs. The table below demonstrates where each participant is from.

Suburb	Percent	Count
Reservoir	83.33	160
Preston	7.29	14
Northcote	4.17	8
Bundoora/Kingsbury	2.08	4
Other (outside of Darebin)	1.56	3
Thornbury	1.04	2
Alphington/Fairfield	0.52	1
Total	100%	192

Engagement Results

The engagement sought to understand the community's preference for two options of equipment.

Option 1 was a thoughtfully designed bespoke playground, featuring a unique large steel-frame climbing structure not found in other Darebin playgrounds.

Option 2 prioritised variety, offering a wide selection of play equipment to cater to diverse interests and age groups.

Each option was accompanied with images and details of the equipment included.

Option 1



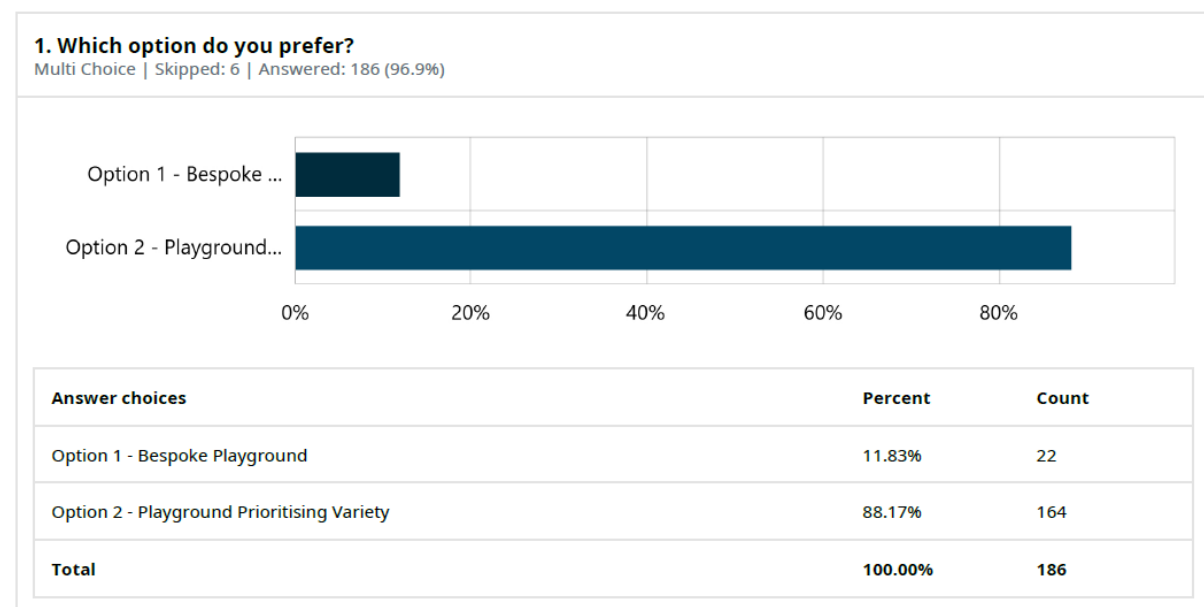
Option 2



The first question was multiple choice and asked the participants:

Which option do you prefer?

Respondents overwhelmingly voted for Option 2. The detailed results were as follows.



Participants were then asked to provide more detail on why they preferred their selected option:

Tell us why you have made this selection.

Participants who preferred Option 2 highlighted its variety, its ability to cater to a broad range of age groups, and the perception that it offered greater safety compared to Option 1.

Participants shared other suggestions and feedback. There were several suggestions mentioned numerous times. These included:

- Clarity around public toilets (signage, opening hours etc)
- Seating facing playground
- Shade
- Nature play
- Requests for retaining elements of old playground (spiral slide, wooden bridge)

- Drinking fountain with dog bowl
- Clearer signage regarding dogs on/off leash
- Exercise equipment
- Pump track
- BBQ facilities
- Basketball court
- Fence for separation between play space and dogs off leash space
- increase disability accessibility into design
- Bike racks

Participants who preferred Option 1 noted its uniqueness to other playgrounds in Darebin, and its focus on climbing. Also mentioned was its ability to cater for older age groups, which is not a common feature of playgrounds.

Additional questions were asked to understand more about those responding to questions. These included participant location, Darebin connection and a range of demographic questions including age, gender and cultural identity. The only mandatory question was the participants' postcode.

Recommendations and Next Steps

Community feedback from this survey will help shape the design of the new playground equipment. Following preference from the community, Option 2 will be installed when the equipment is available. While it is not be possible to incorporate every request or adaptation suggested by the community, the project team will strive to achieve a balanced outcome that considers site constraints, stakeholder needs, and the available budget. Community feedback gathered from this project will help us to shape future projects at D.R. Atkison Reserve.

This project will be completed by July 2026. Officers will continue updating the community on construction timelines (once known) through the Your Say page, acknowledging keen interest from the community to learn about the progress of this project.