

Community Engagement Results Report

Judith Scott Memorial Park Revitalisation - Background

Darebin City Council is experiencing increased density, urbanisation, and population growth, which places added pressure on our open spaces. As private open spaces become smaller, access to public parks becomes more essential. These public spaces provide children with places to play, offer the community opportunities to connect with nature and stay active, and create environments where diverse cultures and generations can come together.

As part of our ongoing commitment to community health and well-being, Council is revitalising the play space and surrounds at Judith Scott Memorial Park on Browning Street, Kingsbury. This project is included in Darebin's 24/25 Playspace Renewal Program. Our goal is to enhance the park to better meet the needs of our growing and diverse community, ensuring that individuals of all ages, genders, abilities, and backgrounds have access to a play space that promotes a healthy, social, and active lifestyle.

The existing equipment in the park is nearing the end of its useful life and requires replacement. This project aims to enhance the site's amenities, activate the area, and provide local residents with a safe and inviting environment for connection and play. Additionally, Council will address repairs to surrounding infrastructure, including the concrete path, picnic benches, and edging around the play area.

Judith Scott – Locale Demographics

In alignment with the Council's Breathing Space Strategy, we will continue to develop and upgrade play spaces, taking into account a projected 42% increase in children under 4 and a 42% increase in children aged 5–17 in the Kingsbury area in the next 4 years.

Kingsbury's current population is 5,831. With a growth rate of 18.5%, it is projected to grow to 6,913 in 2028. It is expected that Kingsbury will see the most demographic change in the 0 – 4 age group (42 per cent to 2028) and 5 – 17 age group (40 per cent) with more families moving into the area.

Overall, 13.0% of the population is aged between 0 and 15, and 15.8% is aged 65 years and over. 43.4% of the population in Kingsbury are in the bracket of young workforce/ parents between the age of 25 – 49 years of age. 11% of all Kingsbury residents are aged in the pre-school and school age profile.

Aside from English, the languages most spoken in the Judith Scott Memorial Park locale are Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese, Hindi and Greek.

Engagement Overview

Council initiated a community consultation program in mid-August inviting residents to share their views and aspirations for the park. We sought feedback on equipment preferences and the community's vision for improvements. This section presents information about this engagement.

Communication for engagement

Council supported this engagement activity by a letterbox drop to approximately 2,000 homes within a 100m radius of the site. Council also promoted the engagement through posters displayed in the park and at local shops and businesses. In addition, community outreach to three local schools and kindergartens supported information about the project and encouraged participation in a drawing competition.

To facilitate easy access to the consultation page, all engagement materials included a QR code that directed residents to [the project's page](#) on the Your Say platform.

Engagement approach

Residents were encouraged to provide feedback via an online survey available on this page. Consultation details were translated into multiple languages, ensuring accessibility for diverse community members. Additionally, individuals with hearing difficulties could learn more and participate through the National Relay Service.

Children were invited to take part in the consultation by sharing their ideas through drawing pages specifically designed for them. The Council project team also reached out directly to local schools and kindergartens via email to encourage their participation.

A pop-up session with Council staff was held on-site on Saturday, September 7, from 1 to 3 PM.

The community engagement process ran for four weeks, from Monday, August 19, to Sunday, September 15, 2024.

Engagement in numbers

During the engagement period:

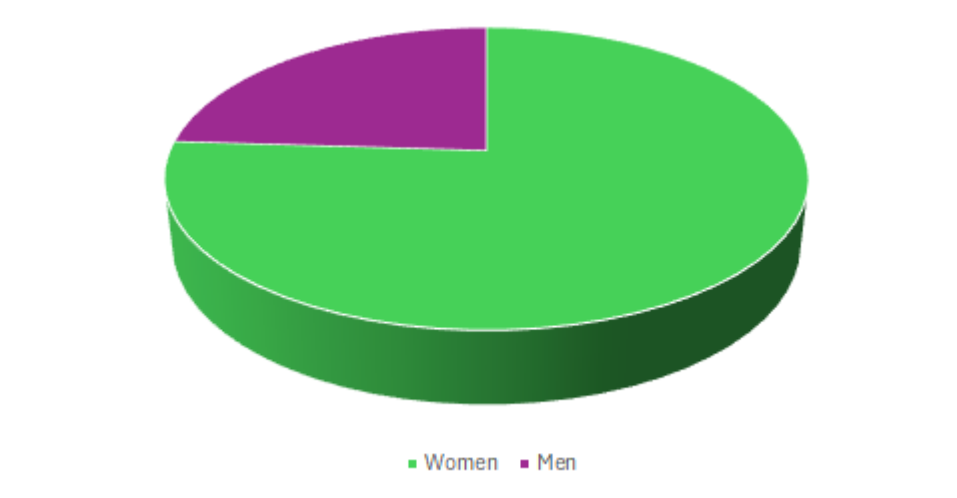
- 111 people visited the Your Say project page.
- 27 contributions were received via the Your Say page.
- 1 person attended the pop-up session held at the reserve.

Of the contributions received:

- 37% of all respondents visit the park once per week.
- 82% of respondents who contributed feedback were local parents of children.
- 86% of respondents were local residents of Bundoora and Kingsbury.
- 100% of respondents live in Darebin.

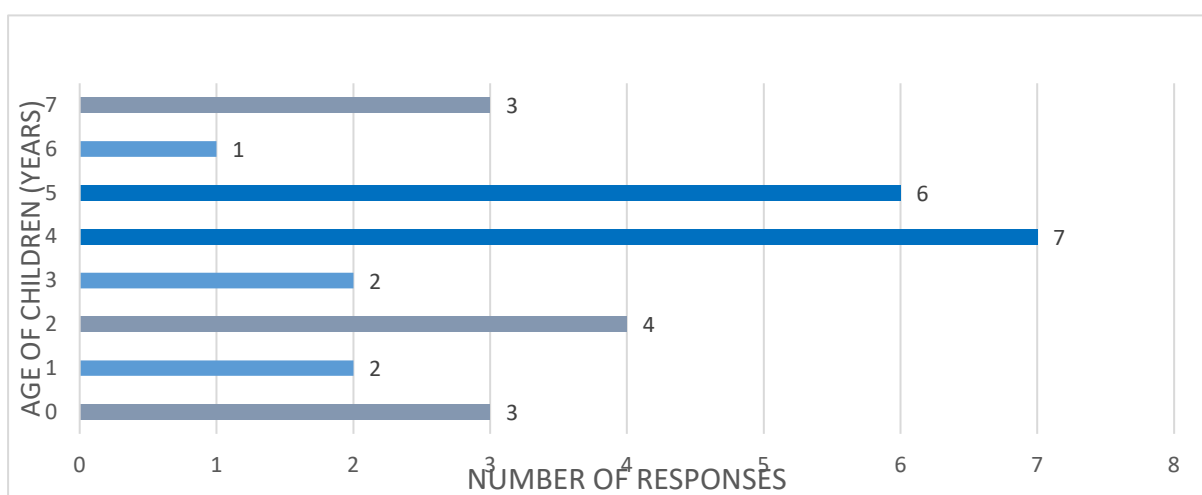
Of the people who participated in the online survey, the only demographic data provided to Council was gender of the respondents.

Gender of respondents who participated online.



5% of respondents spoke a language other than English in the home.

The following graph illustrates the number and ages of children of the adults who participated in the engagement through the online survey:



The table below shows the types of various engagement activities and number of responses provided to this project.

Engagement Activity	Number of participants/ people engaged	Targeted group
<i>Your Say page engagement</i>	<i>27 submissions were received during the engagement period</i>	<i>Darebin Community at large, local residents, Local young children.</i>
<i>Pop- Up Session held at Judith Scott Reserve on Saturday 15 September, 2024</i>	<i>1 participant</i>	<i>Visitors to the park and local residents, Local young children.</i>
<i>Drawing submissions distributed to children</i>	<i>No submissions were received in this format</i>	<i>Local young children.</i>

Challenges

Council recognises that meaningful community involvement is crucial for shaping a park that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of local residents. Despite efforts to reach a broad audience and providing a range of engagement opportunities for this project, the level of participation by the community was lower than expected. The turnout at the in-park engagement and broader engagement statistics fell short of expectations. The project team was disappointed with this outcome.

We also recognise that not all projects attract levels of attention from the community that are anticipated by Council staff. In addition, the timing of this project coincided with the approaching Council election and communication and engagement freeze from Council. This could have also impacted on interest in engagement in Council project.

The feedback we received is valuable, and we appreciate the contributions from those who took part. However, we are committed to improving outreach in future consultations to ensure that all voices in the community are heard and considered in shaping public spaces.

Engagement Results

The engagement survey posed a series of key questions to participating community members. The questions sought to encourage community feedback on both the style and item of new play space equipment, and general feedback relating to how the user felt the park may be further improved.

A detailed response and analysis of community suggestions made is provided below.

In Question 1, respondents were asked to engage with in interactive tool and consider *which new play equipment they would prefer to be installed at Judith Scott Reserve.*

WHAT NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT JUDITH SCOTT MEMORIAL PARK?



the place to live

BASKET SWING 	CLIMBING BARS 	CLIMBING NET / WALL 	SANDPIT 
SEE SAW 	SLIDE 	OTHER	

In addition to pre-defined choices respondents could also include their own play equipment ideas.

The survey found that community preferences of those who participated in the survey was as follows:

Please note that respondents had the ability to select multiple answers to this question.

Basket Swing: 52% of respondents selected this option.

Climbing Bars: 38% of respondents selected this option.

Climbing Net/Wall: 66% of respondents selected this option.

Sandpit: 23% of respondents selected this option.

See Saw: 23% of respondents selected this option.

Slide: 76% of respondents selected this option.

Other: 61% of respondents selected this option.

In Question 2, respondents were asked *how they thought the park may be improved and for further details why they selected this item.*

A variety of suggestions were made in this section of the survey. Request for change and improvements are summarised into the following themes:

Requests for nature and sensory based play:

Respondents recommended that the Council prioritise nature-based play options, such as logs, balance beams, climbing apparatus, and the planting of additional local indigenous species. Based on this feedback, site improvements will include timber stepping stumps or logs along the play area boundary and leading towards the natural vegetation zone. The Council will enhance this area by planting new indigenous plants and removing a section of existing concrete to make space for an existing tree to grow to its full potential. These changes will promote nature play and enhance the site's aesthetics.

Request for improved seating:

Respondents regularly cited that they would spend more time at this local site if the location was better equipped with seating options for families and parents. Design of the improved facility will feature the installation of improved seating to fit the style and theme of the park.

Requests for bike and scooter tracks:

Unfortunately, due to site size and budgetary restraints of this project, Council will be unable to accommodate a bike or scooter track at this site. This feedback from the community is very valuable and has been noted. It will be considered in the future, at a site of close proximity.

More play equipment:

Respondents noted their preference for the site to offer a variety of play space equipment for children. Council Officers will work to facilitate the best outcome for the site and prioritise nature-based play options, a slide and climbing options. Officers will also prioritise the inclusion of equipment that can be accessed and used by all members of our community.

Climbing and swinging play equipment:

Respondents added further emphasis for their preference for climbing apparatus to be featured in the final design. As the second most selected option for preferred equipment, Council intends to have this feature in the final design.

Clean up and Maintenance:

Included within the scope of the final design, Council will replace garden edging, improve the quality of the footpath and undertake general landscape maintenance. If the budget allows, fencing surrounding the park will also be addressed to improve its aesthetic appearance. Surface remediation works will also take place.

Of community responses to Question 2, the highest-ranking features were:

1. Nature and sensory based play (to be incorporated into the final design)
2. Improved seating (to be incorporated into the final design)
3. Bike and scooter tracks (Unable to be incorporated into the final design)
4. More play equipment (to be incorporated into the final design)
5. Climbing and swinging play equipment (to be incorporated into the final design)
6. Clean up and maintenance (to be incorporated into the final design)

Recommendations

Community feedback will be considered and, where practical and possible, it will be incorporated into the development of the final design of the upgraded reserve. In incorporating the community feedback into the final designs Council will strive to strike a balance between site constraints, stakeholder needs and the project budget.