

Background

Council asked for feedback on the Jacobs Reserve Playspace Upgrade draft concept plan during November 2018, as follows:

- Information postcards were distributed to households near Jacobs Reserve notifying key elements of the Draft Concept Plan that had been prepared and URL address for viewing on the Moreland public website.
- People were invited to consider the proposals and submit feedback on the concept plan, which would be considered in the next step of developing a detailed design for construction.
- Feedback closed officially on Friday 30 November 2018, with over twenty (20) responses including comment on the Concept Design and providing suggestions for changes or improvements.
- Included in the feedback was a petition bearing 108 signatures with objections to certain aspects of the proposals, including the type of play equipment and the perceived level of engagement and play value the new playspace would have with children, in comparison with the existing.

Feedback Findings

Taken at face value, responses were roughly 50-50 in favour of the proposal to upgrade the existing playspace, except for the overwhelming level of objection contained in the petition submitted. Those in the affirmative gave endorsement of the brightly coloured play equipment and surface treatment and welcomed the renewal of the playspace as proposed, some with qualification about the lack of facilities such as toilets and BBQs.

In addition to those raised in the petition, concerns were expressed about shortcomings of the proposed upgrade. Issues raised most often include (in order of times raised):

- Request for installation of a public toilet
- Request for installation of BBQs
- Request for additional seating and picnic settings
- Provision of 'nature play' and 'imaginative play' elements in addition to traditional swings, etc.
- Greater use of natural and recycled materials
- Divided opinion over merits of physical separation of play activities between older and younger children
- Divided opinion over whether sufficient play value offered for either older or younger children by the proposed new playspace
- Request for inclusion of more walking paths in the reserve

Some responses called for specific play items to be included in the new play equipment, including (in order of times raised):

- Flying Fox
- Monkey Bars
- Sand Play (sandpit)
- See-saw
- Nature Play
- Water Play

Response to Feedback

New public toilets: installation of a toilet is outside the scope of the present playspace upgrade of Jacobs Reserve. Council's public toilet strategy has provision for installation of a toilet either at or nearby Jacobs Reserve. Planning and design for this new public toilet by Moreland Council including preferred location is scheduled for the 2020/21 financial year, with installation planned for 2021/22.

BBQ and picnic settings: provision of a BBQ is outside the scope of the current playground upgrade project so this would need to be proposed as a new item for the upcoming Council budget.

JACOBS RESERVE PLAYSPACE UPGRADE: COMMUNITY FEEDBACK – NOVEMBER 2018

The placement of any new installations such as BBQ, picnic settings or toilets will need careful consideration of site constraints:

- Locating sufficient space within the reserve between paths, trees, existing play equipment & furniture
- Providing path access to toilet or other new installation
- Allowing for tree protection zones, which limit intrusion into root zones of established trees
- Heritage overlay (HO 326 in Moreland Planning Scheme) which may require a review of any changes to the park character by inclusion of new structures such as BBQ and toilet.

Next Steps

The nature of community response to the proposed playspace upgrade clearly requires some re-thinking of the draft concept plan by Moreland.

Staff of the Open Space Design & Development Unit are already looking into alternative design and play equipment options to be workshopped with the parties who have presented the petition.

That process of further engagement will enable an alternative plan to be prepared for a wide-ranging round of community consultation, to kick off after the Australia Day long weekend. This will include meetings at Jacob Reserve to take place in early February 2019, where we will present options for discussion.

Notice of those consultation sessions will be distributed via text message to respondents who have provided contact details and on the public website, as well as signs erected at Jacobs Reserve.

This new round of community consultation will run from mid-December 2018, until sometime during February 2019. The playspace and park upgrade works at Jacobs Reserve are then expected to commence in April and be completed during June 2019.