



Sun Valley Park Regional Playspace

Round 2 Community Consultation Report



Fiona Robbé

Landscape architecture,
horticulture and playspace design

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STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects (FRLA)

Fiona Robbé

Matthew Parkinson

Quinn Ritchie

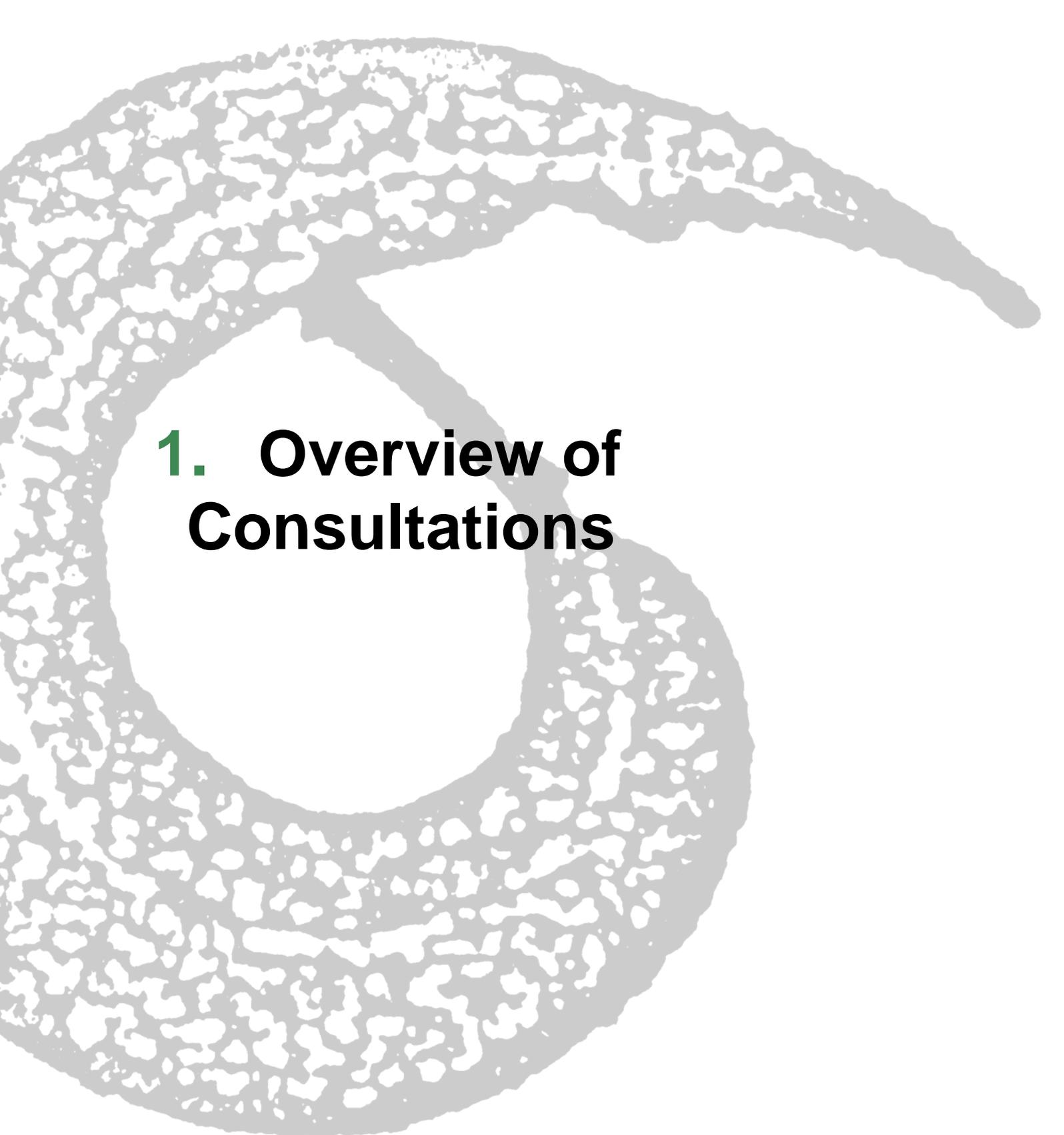
Central Coast Council (CCC)

Janice Dart

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1. Overview of Consultations

1.1. Background

In 2019 Council received funding through the State Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund to redevelop Sun Valley Park at Green Point.

The existing Sun Valley Park currently accommodates two full size basketball courts, public amenities, graffiti wall, car parking and ancillary park infrastructure. The park is located in close proximity to Avoca Drive - a main arterial road and Green Point shopping centre.

The vision of the redevelopment is to produce a high quality inclusive regional playspace that will create opportunities for play, social engagement and an active outdoor lifestyle for a wide range of ages, ability levels and cultural backgrounds across the Central Coast. It is anticipated that the redevelopment will include the following elements:

- > Regional level playspace including play equipment and softfall
- > Basketball court(s) or half court(s)
- > Passive recreation space incorporating pedestrian pathways, shelters and picnic facilities
- > Accessible amenities building
- > Shade structure(s)
- > Car park
- > Fencing

Once completed the facility will become part of Council's suite of playspaces and provide the 2nd largest playspace within the southern end of the Central Coast.

Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects (FRLA) were engaged to undertake consultations with the community, and from this develop a design for the Sun Valley Park Regional Playspace. The purpose of the Consultation Report is to provide strategic direction on how Sun Valley Park can be developed to provide equitable and inclusive play opportunities to meet the overall community's needs, by directly consulting with interested members of the local community.

1.2. Consultation Methodology

Community consultation is critical to the design of the proposed Regional inclusive playspace as interests and needs of the community are hence reflected in the design of the playspace.

Central Coast Council and FRLA collaborated to develop a community consultation and engagement plan to ensure the community and stakeholders were aware of the project and empowered to have their say in its development.

Phase 1 of consultation involved engagement with schools, childcare centres, seniors' groups, people with disabilities, the general community and other relevant community organisations. In total, eight consultations were held with over 1,200 people. The feedback from Round 1 of consultation was used to develop a concept design for the playspace, directly reflecting the needs and wishes of the community.

Phase 2 of consultation invited the community to provide feedback on the concept design.

1.2.1. Consultation Method

Phase 2 of consultation consisted of two main avenues of consultation, both of which were available through Council's Your Voice Our Coast (YVOC) webpage, dedicated to the Sun Valley Park project. The webpage provides a project overview, results from Phase 1 of

community consultation, the design documents (including concept design and ideas booklet) as downloadable PDFs, and the concept design in the form of an interactive map. During Phase 2 of consultation, 1400 visits were recorded on the YVOC page.

Phase 2 of consultation consisted of two main avenues of consultation:

- > Social Pinpoint (SPP)
- > Online Feedback Form

Social Pinpoint allowed community members to view an interactive version of the concept plan, divided into 26 playspace elements. The interactive concept plan showed a birds-eye view of the proposed playspace, which community members could then drill down into. Each playspace element in the design was linked to a corresponding page in the “ideas booklet”, which provided example photos of the playspace element.

Community members could ‘thumbs up’, ‘thumbs down’ and comment in a public forum on each playspace element. 1674 visits were recorded on the Social Pinpoint concept plan from 617 unique users. 99 comments were made, as well as 823 thumbs up and 59 thumbs down.

The online Feedback Form was a private response sheet, presenting the same 26 playspace elements, and allowing community members to select elements, state whether they liked or disliked the elements overall, and provide detailed comments. 424 community members downloaded the design documents (concept design and ideas booklet) and Feedback Form, with 53 webforms completed.

1.2.2. Data Quality

The consultation methods described above were chosen to allow the community to view and engage with the concept design. Community members could view the holistic design, or view individual play elements, thereby allowing precise commentary on specific areas.

Social Pinpoint is broadly accessible to any member of the public, and allowed respondents to comment publicly and discuss each play element individually.

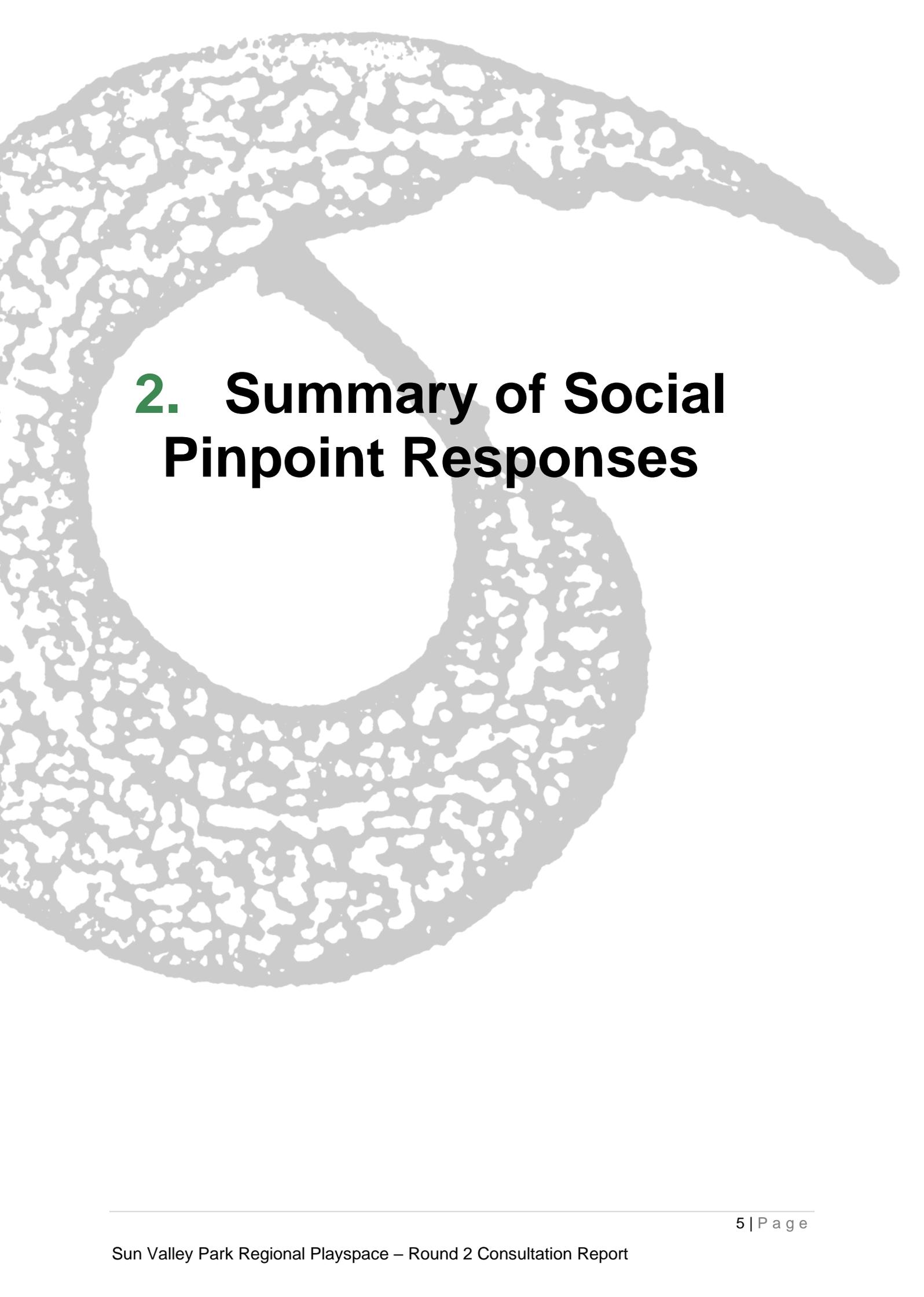
Feedback Forms provide a private response sheet, in the form of a simplified version of Social Pinpoint. This is a more accessible option, however still requires internet access and internet literacy.

Allowing community members to respond to the design in this way allows for detailed and honest feedback on the overall design and individual playspace elements. However, many assumptions were made by respondents as to how various aspects of the site would be managed, which were not communicated in the concept plan. The key assumptions noted during Phase 2 of consultation are addressed in Section 4.1: Design Clarifications.

1.3. Purpose of This Report

This report summarises the key findings and recommendations resulting from the second round of community consultation. It outlines community preferences and desires for providing play experiences for different user groups that will visit Sun Valley Park. It also outlines the elements and facilities that support a visit to the Park. The findings will be used to guide the development of the final playspace design.





2. Summary of Social Pinpoint Responses

FRLA and Central Coast Council released an interactive concept plan of Sun Valley Park Regional Playspace via Social Pinpoint. This enabled community members to see an overall plan of the site, with the ability to drill down into each component, see images of potential play elements, and read a brief explanation of the play value of each component. Members of the public were invited to ‘thumbs up’, ‘thumbs down’ and comment on each component of the playspace design. Comments were open for two weeks until 11 March 2020.

In total, 1674 visits were recorded on the Social Pinpoint page from 617 unique users. 99 comments were left by 28 unique respondents, as well as 823 thumbs up and 59 thumbs down.

The playspace elements available for comment were:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Climbing | 14. Cognitive Challenges |
| 2. Nature Play | 15. Spinning |
| 3. Water Play | 16. Ball Sports |
| 4. Monkey Bars | 17. Rocking |
| 5. Flying Fox | 18. Walking track |
| 6. Swinging | 19. Intergenerational |
| 7. Slides | 20. Accessible Parking |
| 8. Bike Track | 21. Accessible Picnic Areas/ Seating |
| 9. Sensory Walkway | 22. Accessible Toilets |
| 10. Sand Play | 23. Bins and Drinking Fountain |
| 11. Imaginative Play | 24. Perimeter Fencing |
| 12. Creative Play | 25. Playground Entrance |
| 13. Nature Obstacle Course | 26. Shelter and Shade |

2.1. Likes and Dislikes

All 26 items were voted on, with the least engagement on the nature obstacle course (26 votes) and walking track (26 votes). The perimeter fence received the highest level of engagement (47 votes) and was also the most universally liked (47 likes, 0 dislikes).

The items with the greatest number of likes were:

- > Perimeter fencing (47)
- > Bike track (46)
- > Swinging (44)
- > Nature play (40)
- > Flying fox (40)
- > Intergenerational (40)

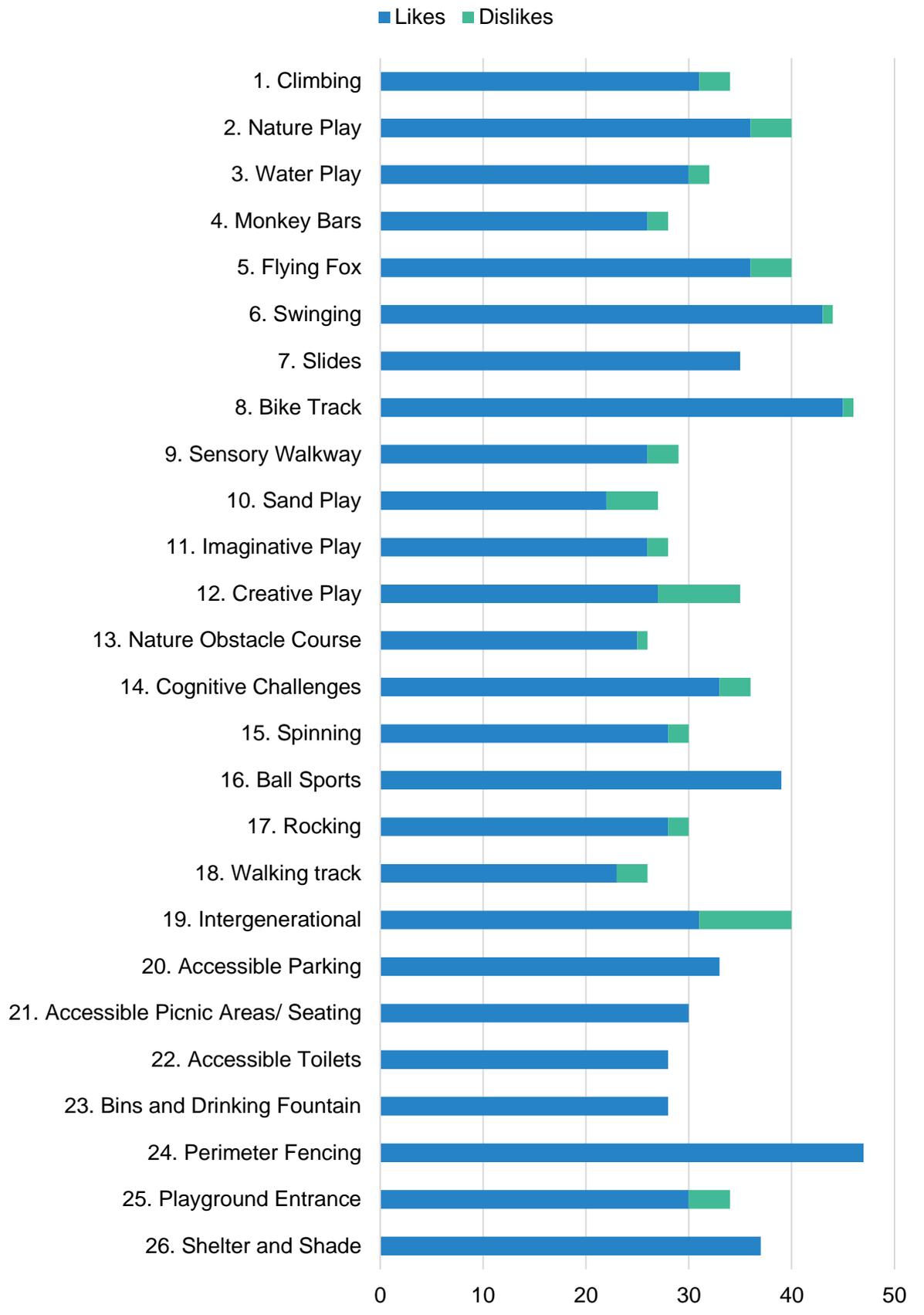
While the items with the greatest ratio of likes to dislikes were:

- > Perimeter fencing (+47)
- > Bike track (+44)
- > Swinging (+42)
- > Ball sports (+39)
- > Shelter and shade (+37)

No items had more dislikes than likes – the items with high percentage dislikes were:

- > Creative play (23%)
- > Intergenerational play (23%)
- > Sand play (19%)
- > Playground entrance (12%)
- > Walking track (12%)

Play Item Summary - Likes and Dislikes



2.2. Comments

99 comments were left on the Social Pinpoint interactive map, on 23 out of the 26 playspace elements – items not commented on were climbing, rocking and the walking track.

2.2.1. Favourite Play Items

Perimeter Fencing

Perimeter fencing was universally liked, with comments explaining that it is a fantastic addition for toddlers and community members who do not have a strong sense of road safety.

Bike Track

The bike track received the second greatest number of likes, and had the second highest ratio of likes to dislikes. Most commenters reiterated their praise for the idea of a bike track in the playspace.

Some commenters had concerns about the proximity to the creek – this would cause issues with mosquitoes, as well as possibly leading to water on the track (making it unsafe to ride on).

Swinging

Comments on the swings largely indicated, “the more swings the better!”, with one commenter specifically appreciating the inclusion of a “You and Me” intergenerational swing.

Ball Sports

While the basketball courts were one of the most popular play items, most comments on this play item were focused on the graffiti wall. This was a contentious issue in the first phase of consultation, and comments remain divided in phase 2. Some respondents noted that:

- > The graffiti wall has been used for decades;
- > The graffiti wall has reduced the incidence of illegal graffiti in surrounding suburbs;
- > The wall is frequently used; and
- > Artists travel to use this graffiti wall.

While others contended that the graffiti wall is incompatible with a children’s play area due to safety reasons, e.g. spray cans littering the area, courts being graffitied.

Shelter and Shade

All commenters on shelter and shade were positive, stating that generous shade throughout the park would be a welcome addition to the space.

2.2.2. Least Favourite Play Items

While no play items received more dislikes than likes, the following play items had the highest percentage dislikes and are worth investigation.

Creative Play

The key issues raised concerning the creative play area were:

- > There is already adequate provision of natural items (twigs, mud, branches, etc.) in the playspace – a dedicated area is not needed to encourage this sort of play; and
- > These play items could be hazardous (splinters, trips, using sticks to poke/hit others).

Intergenerational Play

Most commenters were concerned that this space would be underused, as it is not typically a popular type of equipment. However, one commenter acknowledged that it was vital to take into account the needs of older people in the community, who wish to attend playspaces with their grandchildren.

Sand Play

The key issue raised with respect to the sand play area was its proximity to water play – commenters noted that poor design of these two elements results in a “huge muddy mess”.

Playground Entrance and Overall Design

Most comments on the playground entrance were in reference to the playspace as a whole. The key themes discussed were:

- > Drainage;
- > Over-crowding of activities; and
- > Parking/pedestrian safety.

Commenters were concerned with how the nearby creek would be accommodated, citing existing issues of flooding and mosquitoes.

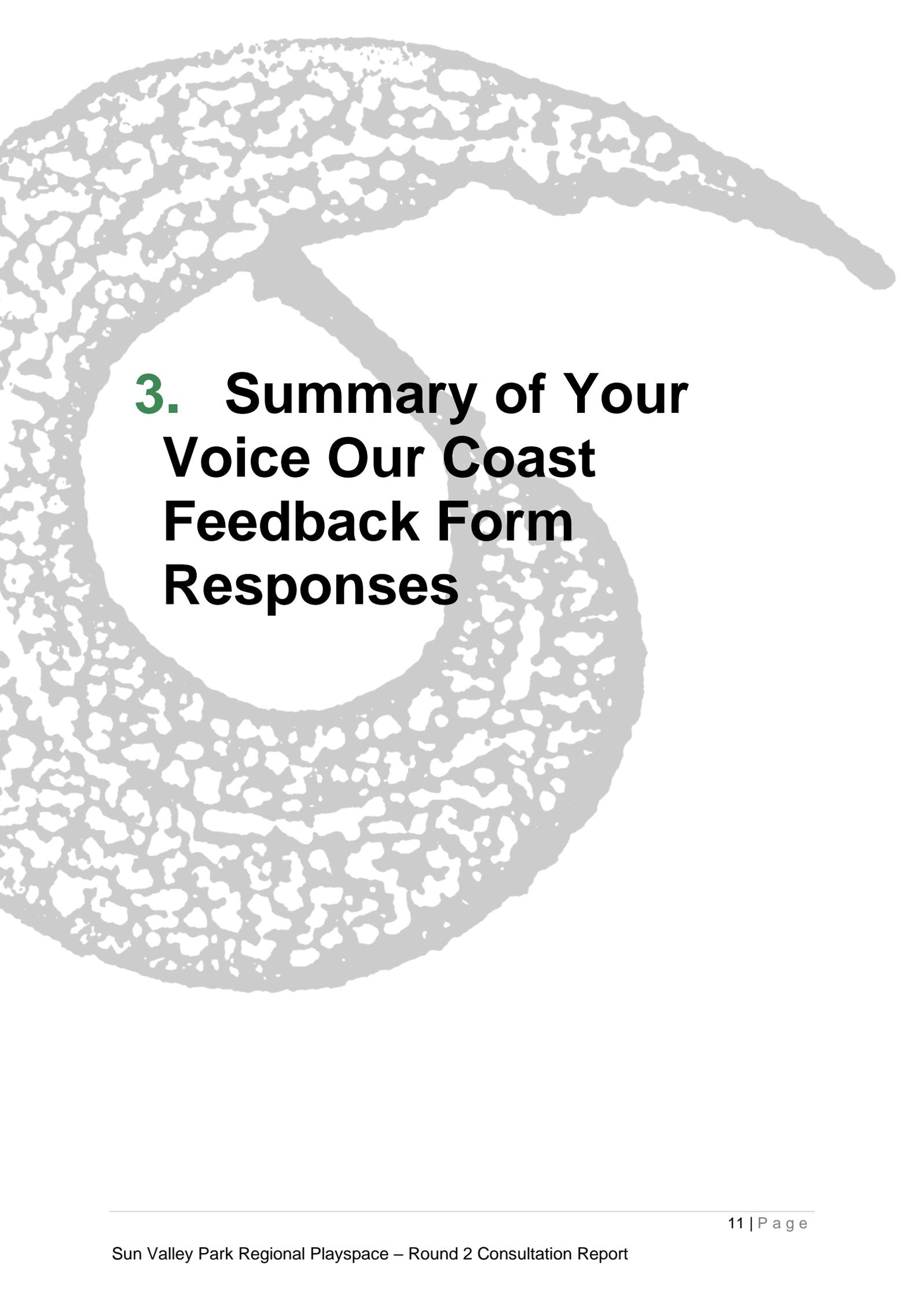
Several comments also stated that while the design was good, the playspace was too over-crowded. These comments indicated a preference for more open space and less equipment, as the playspace is not large enough to include all items on the concept plan.

Finally, several comments noted that many users of the park will arrive on foot, and increasing pedestrian safety has not been addressed in the plan. The parking area was considered inadequate by several commenters.

Walking Track

While the walking track had one of the highest percentages of dislikes, no comments were left to explain what should be altered.





3. Summary of Your Voice Our Coast Feedback Form Responses

3.1. Introduction

An online Feedback Form was specifically designed for this study in order to give a voice to the local community about the development of a Regional inclusive playspace at Sun Valley Park. The Feedback Form provided an opportunity for community members to make open-ended comments on individual play elements, or on the overall design, in a private forum.

The Feedback Form asked respondents to choose from the 26 playspace elements, state whether they liked or disliked the elements, and to leave an open-ended comment explaining why.

In total, 424 members of the community downloaded the design documents and Feedback Form, and 53 responses were recorded.

"I'm so pleased that that all the ideas and opinions I put forward were actually listened to... These plans look outstanding."

3.2. Play Options

Respondents were asked to state whether, overall, they like or dislike the playspace elements they selected. In total there were 36 positive responses ("I like them"), 14 negative ("I don't like them") and 3 neutral (left this question blank).

Positive responses tended to be broadly supportive of the design, whereas negative responses tended to have specific criticisms of playspace elements.

3.2.1. Favourite Playspace Elements

Out of the positive reviews, the following playspace elements were commonly selected:

- > Shelter/shade (21 likes)
- > Bike track (20 likes)
- > Intergenerational play (18 likes)
- > Climbing (17 likes)

"Very excited about the plan. We live in Sun Valley Rd and will be great for us to take our grandkids... Totally support it."

Most commenters were happy with the design and excited to see that Sun Valley Park is being upgraded.

Many comments were from residents in the adjoining streets, who were looking forward to frequenting this new playspace. Comments suggested that Green Point is in need of a safe environment to encourage outdoor play for all ages.

Commenters were pleased that the ideas they had put forward during consultation were listened to and reflected in the design.

Positive responses showed support for retaining the graffiti wall in some capacity, to maintain a space for local artists to express themselves and to avoid the flow-on effect of illegal graffiti in other parts of the suburb.

Shelter and Shade

Respondents stated that shelter over play equipment should be mandatory to allow children to continue playing throughout the summer months. Commenters stated that the park can become "stiflingly hot" in summer, and so shade should be provided over equipment and

seating. Nonetheless, comments did not indicate that the suggested shade provision was inadequate.

Commenters were however concerned that trees would be removed, thus reducing existing natural shade provision.

“The park plan is amazing! This will draw people from all over the coast.”

Bike Track

Two comments were left pertaining to the bike track, both of which suggested that the bike track should be enlarged as there are few safe spaces for children to ride in the area surrounding Green Point.

Several comments suggested a skate/scooter park would be a welcome addition alongside the bike track.

Intergenerational Play

Many comments were left by parents and grandparents who were looking forward to having a safe place to play with their children and grandchildren. One comment was left by a 73-year old pensioner who said they would love a place for exercise in the park.

Comments were also left regarding the safety of pedestrian access to the park, particularly for elderly residents in the area.

Climbing

No additional positive comments were left about the climbing provision, despite it receiving the 4th highest number of likes.

3.2.2. Least Favourite Playspace Elements

Out of the negative reviews, the following playspace elements were commonly selected:

- > Water play (4 dislikes)
- > Sand play (4 dislikes)
- > Climbing (3 dislikes)
- > Flying fox (3 dislikes)
- > Ball sports (3 dislikes)

“Please please please don’t forget our teenagers!!!!”

Two comments from residents were concerned about the impact of the playspace on the liveability of their properties, due to increased noise and disturbance. Two comments referred specifically to the impact on the northern area of Sun Valley Park – this area has been maintained by residents for decades, and residents have the expectation that it will remain as open space.

Commenters were concerned with the parking provision, noting that other nearby parking options (Green Point shops, Highland Road) would not cope with the overflow from the playspace.

Negative responses were in favour of removing the graffiti wall, stating that it is incompatible with a children’s playspace and tends to result in mess and hazards (with spray cans left in the park).

The graffiti wall remains a contentious issue, with one commenter summarising the problem perfectly:

“I feel this is a great outlet for our young, talented artists. Where will they go if they lose their wall? ...I feel for them if they lose it. However, they have left a huge mess and that’s what has wrecked the park. I guess it’s a tough decision hey?”

Water Play

Two negative comments were left concerning water play. Water play and sand play were discussed in tandem in the comments, with respondents concerned that the proximity of the two play types would lead to a muddy mess.

One commenter was concerned that water play could lead to accidents.

Sand Play

Aside from the issue of sand and water play creating a muddy mess, multiple comments also expressed concern that sand areas would be used as toilets by animals, and so the sand areas should be covered overnight.

Climbing

Negative comments concerning climbing stated that tall climbing structures could impact privacy of neighbouring properties, and may also lead to accidents.

Flying Fox

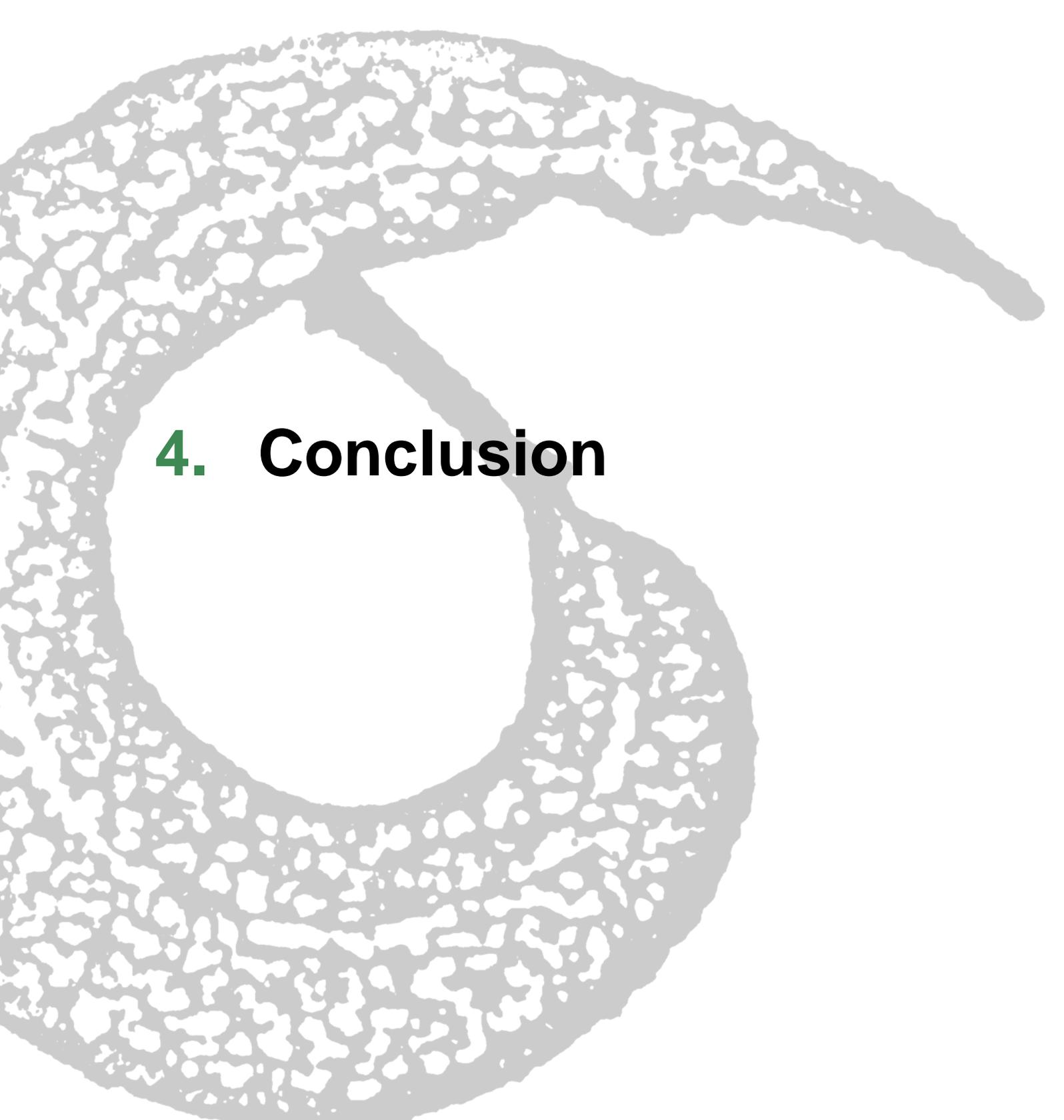
Comments similarly suggested that the flying fox could lead to accidents. One commenter expressed a desire for a double flying fox with an accessible option.

Ball Sports

Commenters were concerned that reducing the basketball courts from two full-sized courts, to one full and one half-size court would be inadequate. The basketball courts are already commonly used, and refurbishment of the playspace is likely to attract even larger crowds.

“I am concerned about the proposed siting of the development ... and the impact it will have on our liveability and the noise and disturbance resulting from use.”





4. Conclusion

Strong community engagement was recorded in Phase 2 of consultation. 1674 visits were recorded to the Social Pinpoint concept plan, from 617 unique users. 99 comments were left, as well as 823 thumbs up and 59 thumbs down. 424 community members downloaded the design documents and Feedback Form, with 53 webforms completed.

Responses were overwhelmingly positive – no items had more dislikes than likes on either platform. Overall, the favourite playspace elements were:

- > Perimeter fencing (47 SPP, 36 YVOC)
- > Bike track (45 SPP, 20 YVOC)
- > Swinging (43 SPP, 15 YVOC)
- > Shelter and shade (37 SPP, 21 YVOC)
- > Ball sports (39 SPP, 14 YVOC)
- > Intergenerational play (31 SPP, 18 YVOC)
- > Climbing (31 SPP, 17 YVOC)

Note: (likes from Social Pinpoint, likes from Your Voice Our Coast)

The playspace elements which received the most dislikes or negative comments were:

- > Intergenerational play (9 SPP, 0 YVOC)
- > Sand play (5 SPP, 4 YVOC)
- > Creative play (8 SPP, 0 YVOC)
- > Flying fox (4 SPP, 3 YVOC)
- > Climbing (3 SPP, 3 YVOC)
- > Water play (2 SPP, 4 YVOC)
- > Playground entrance (4 SPP, 0 YVOC)
- > Walking track (3 SPP, 1 YVOC)
- > Ball sports (0 SPP, 3 YVOC)

Note: (dislikes from Social Pinpoint, dislikes from Your Voice Our Coast)

Several playspace elements appear as both favourites and least favourites. This reflects two phenomena:

1. The number of dislikes compared to likes is very low – playspace elements appear as “dislikes” with as few as 10% of votes against; and
2. Play space elements were often liked, but with some change/variation requested.

Positive responses tended to be broadly supportive of the design, with many commenters looking forward to what they see as a necessary park upgrade in an area of need.

Negative responses tended to put forward concerns for specific playspace elements. Aside from the playspace elements listed above, commenters also had concerns regarding:

- > Drainage;
- > Over-crowding of equipment/lack of open space;
- > Parking;
- > Pedestrian safety; and
- > Privacy of nearby residents.

Some of these concerns are addressed in the following design clarifications.

4.1. Design Clarifications

The following design clarifications aim to address key assumptions made by respondents in Phase 2 of consultation.

Drainage

The portion of creek running parallel to Dalgety Crescent will be excavated, allowing a drainage swale to be installed. The pipes will drain towards the existing creek running south of the park. Engineers have been engaged to design the pipework adequately for the catchment size. The current reeds will be removed, and low native screening will be planted over the pipes.

Additional Parking

The need for additional parking will be assessed once the site has been opened. A traffic study will be undertaken to investigate the need for extra parking provision.

Neighbour Privacy

The playspace has been designed to have minimal impact on neighbours – quiet play experiences have been situated close to neighbouring properties (e.g. intergenerational play area), while noisy play experiences have been placed furthest from neighbouring properties (e.g. flying fox).

Higher climbing structures will be placed carefully to respect backyard privacy.

Sand and Water Play

Water play will no longer be included in the design – extensive water play opportunities will be provided at the new Gosford Waterfront play space. The mixing of sand and water will therefore not be an issue.

Tree Removal

Detailed site analysis was undertaken to evaluate tree protection zones and structural root zones. In this way, paths and equipment were placed to minimise the impact on existing trees. Trees that have been selected for removal are relatively unhealthy, or do not provide quality shade provision, or are present in such large numbers on site that the removal of one tree would be unnoticeable (e.g. Casuarina groves).

Playspace Entrances

Two entrances to the playspace will be provided – a main entrance from the carpark at Dalgety Crescent, and a secondary entrance off Highland Road.

Intergenerational Equipment

Intergenerational equipment is designed in conjunction with physiotherapists and occupational therapists specifically for older people to assist with coordination, balance and

agility. Intergenerational equipment can be, and frequently is, used by all members of the community.

Central Coast LGA has a higher proportion of residents aged over 65 years than the state average (21% versus 16%), making this a statistically important demographic to represent in inclusive playspace design.

Skate park

The provision of skateparks is guided by the draft Central Coast Council Skatepark Strategy which will be on public exhibition in 2020. Whilst Sun Valley Park has not been determined as a location for a future skatepark, skateparks are located in the neighbouring suburbs of Kincumber, Kincumber South and East Gosford.

Due to the size of the site the bike path included in the concept design cannot be extended further. It is however anticipated that children will be able to ride on other hard surface areas within the playspace, including the continuous concrete path.

Imaginative vs. Creative Play

Like many play types, imaginative and creative play are closely linked and have some overlapping play outcomes. Both types of play are necessary for healthy childhood development, and opportunities for both types of play should be available in a Regional scale playspace.

Imaginative play: an object is used symbolically to represent something else, or children become different characters, pretending they are in specific locations or times.

Creative play: using materials to construct objects or settings, which may involve imaginative play outcomes, e.g. building a stick enclosure and pretending it is a cave.

Dedicated spaces for imaginative and creative play are specifically included in the plan, to reflect direct requests from consultation. These play areas mostly look like grassy open spaces with some natural items (e.g. sticks, bark) for children to arrange and play with if they choose.

4.2. Next Steps

The results of Phase 2 consultation will be used to amend the Concept Plan and generate the Final Design – some items will be changed and/or removed to reflect consultation results. The Final Design will be made available to the community as the project progresses to the construction phase.