

# Cambridge Street Reserve play space engagement

Summary Report



City of Yarra

02.05.24

capire

# Giving every person a voice.

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Capire staff and associates take great care while transcribing participant feedback but unfortunately cannot guarantee the accuracy of all notes. We are however confident that we capture the full range of ideas, concerns and views expressed during our consultation activities.

Unless otherwise noted, the views expressed in our work represent those of the participants and not necessarily those of our consultants or our clients.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background

The City of Yarra's (Yarra) Open Space Strategy 2020 identified the lack of open space in Collingwood and recommended investigating the opportunity to increase the size of Cambridge Street Reserve to meet the needs of the increasing local resident population. The reserve is located on Cambridge Street, between Peel Street and Langridge Street, in Collingwood.

In early 2020, Yarra City Council (Council) was awarded a \$1.3M grant from the Department of Land, Water and Planning (DELWP, now DEECA) for a project to upgrade and expand the reserve. The reserve expansion, informed by community feedback, took place from 27 February 2023 to 17 October 2023.

Council engaged with the community at various stages throughout the reserve expansion project, including providing information on initial road closures, inviting ideas for concept design for park expansion, seeking feedback on the draft concept, and informing the community about the road discontinuance process on Cambridge Street.

Following the completion of the reserve expansion in October 2023, some members of the community provided additional feedback regarding the play opportunities for young children in the reserve, namely that they would like to see more traditional play equipment. This response received media attention, including several published articles that commented on the new play equipment within the expanded reserve.

At the Council Meeting on 13 February 2024, the Council resolved to consult with the community again, with a focus on play equipment and play element options. Council engaged Capire Consulting Group (Capire) to collate and analyse community feedback gathered during the play space engagement, the findings of which are detailed in this report. *It should be noted that the engagement tools used to capture the feedback were designed by Council and not by Capire.*

### 1.1.1. The play space engagement

The play space community consultation took place from 21 February to 25 March 2024.

Council delivered a community engagement program to understand community preferences regarding four concept plans for additional play equipment and play elements within the reserve which were informed by the following considerations:

- **Removing the existing pull-up and turnover bars off site and installing a four-way rocker and mini trampoline beside the existing swing, no grass area removed.** This option is present in all four concept plans.
- **Providing additional natural play elements, meandering linear detail and four-square play, no grass area removed.** This option is present in all four concept plans.
- **Removing up to 7% of the existing grass area and installing additional play equipment.** Councillors resolved to set aside up to 7% of the grassed area for consultation on the play equipment. The play equipment options provided as part of the consultation will take that into consideration.

## CONCEPT PLANS

The four concept plans for the reserve play space are pictured below. The concept plans detail the equipment and other features that are proposed for inclusion and removal within each design.

**Cambridge Street Reserve**  
Council Resolution 1.c.i

1. Basket Swing remains - new accessible surface installed.
2. New four way rocker
3. New mini trampoline
4. Logs/ steppers through the garden
5. Playful Linemarking/ Foursquare
6. Balance beam remains

Notes:  
The chin up / turnover bars are removed from the park.  
No loss of grassed area.

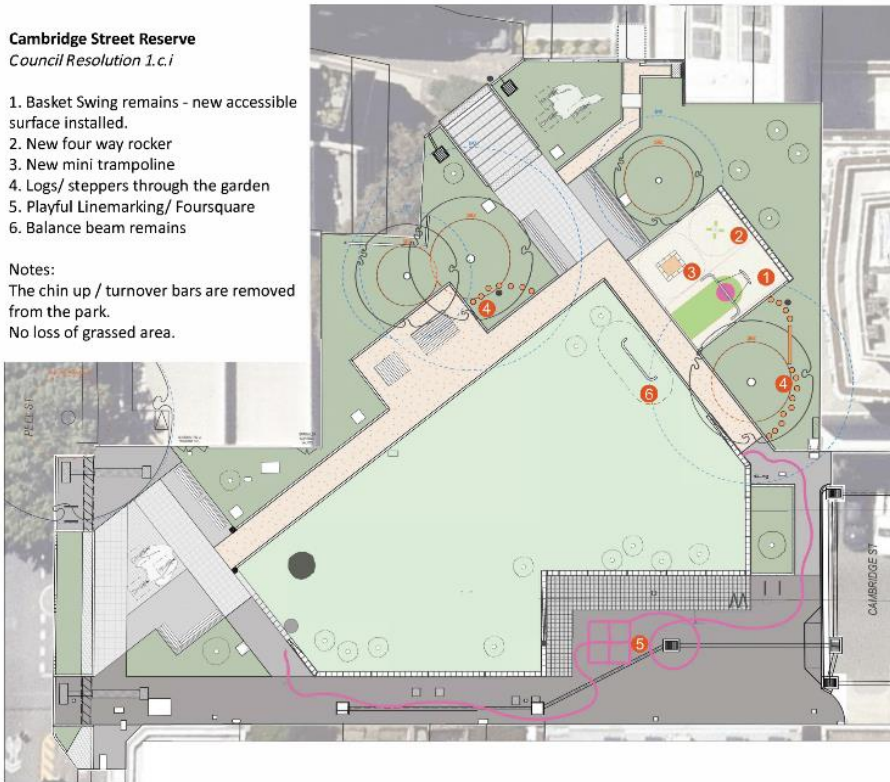


Figure 1: Council Resolution 1.c.i

**Cambridge Street Reserve**  
Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Slide variation

1. Basket Swing remains - new accessible surface installed.
2. New four way rocker
3. New mini tramp
4. Logs/ steppers through the garden
5. Playful Linemarking/ Foursquare
6. Balance beam kept & relocated
7. New slide with climbing rope

Notes:  
The chin up / turnover bars are removed from the park.  
Two trees are removed.  
The reduction in grassed area is approximately 7% (40m2).

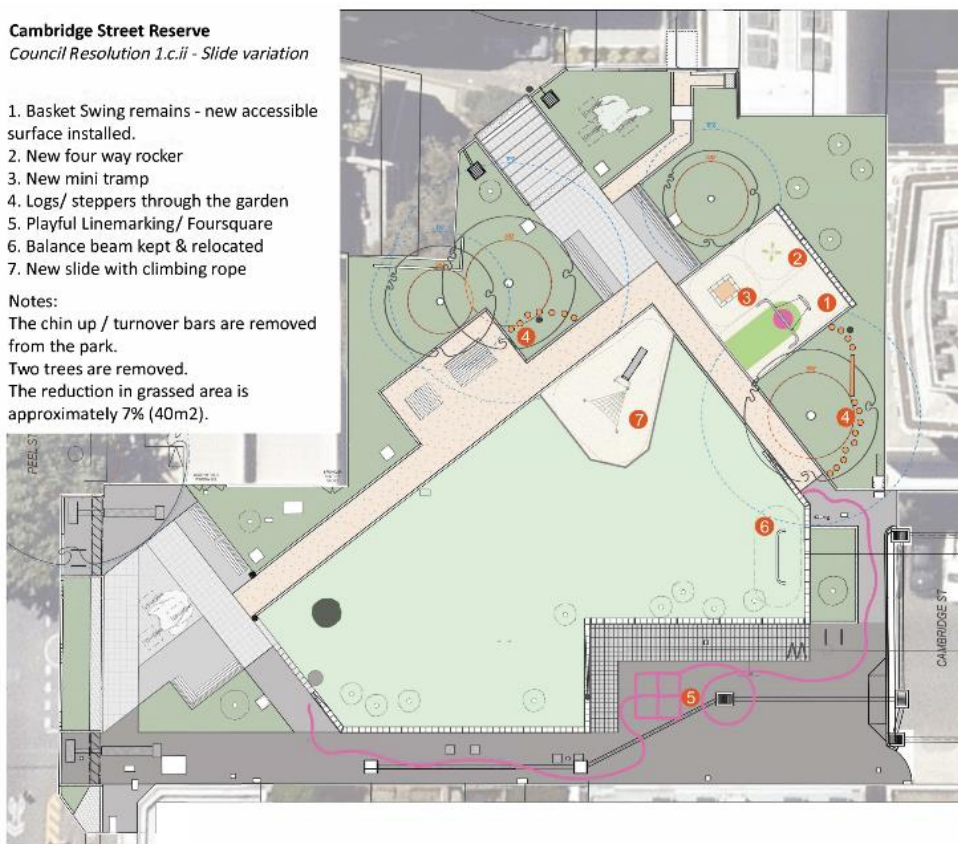


Figure 2: Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Slide variation

**Cambridge Street Reserve**  
 Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Spinner variation

1. Basket Swing remains - new accessible surface installed.
2. New four way rocker
3. New mini trampoline
4. Logs/ steppers through the garden
5. Playful Linemarking/ Foursquare
6. Balance beam kept & relocated
7. New climbing spinner

**Notes:**  
 The chin up / turnover bars are removed from the park.  
 Two trees are removed.  
 The reduction in grassed area is approximately 6.3% (36m<sup>2</sup>).

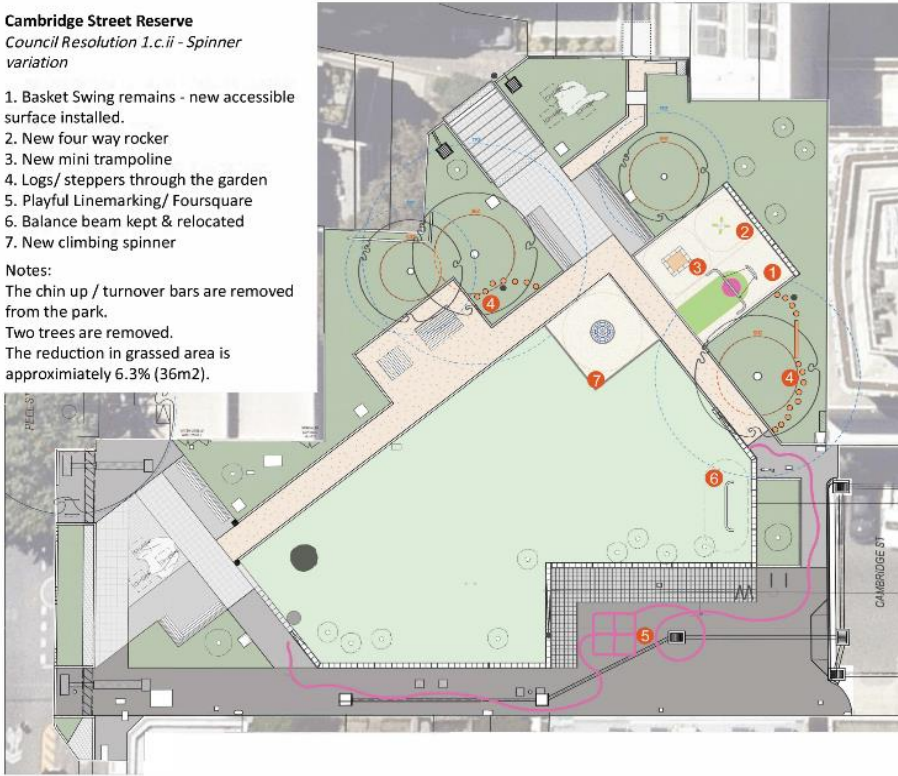


Figure 3: Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Spinner variation

**Cambridge Street Reserve**  
 Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Climber variation

1. Basket Swing remains - new accessible surface installed.
2. New four way rocker
3. New mini trampoline
4. Logs/ steppers through the garden
5. Playful Linemarking/ Foursquare
6. Balance beam kept & relocated
7. New climber with monkey bars

**Notes:**  
 The chin up / turnover bars are removed from the park.  
 Two trees are removed.  
 The reduction in grassed area is approximately 7% (40m<sup>2</sup>).

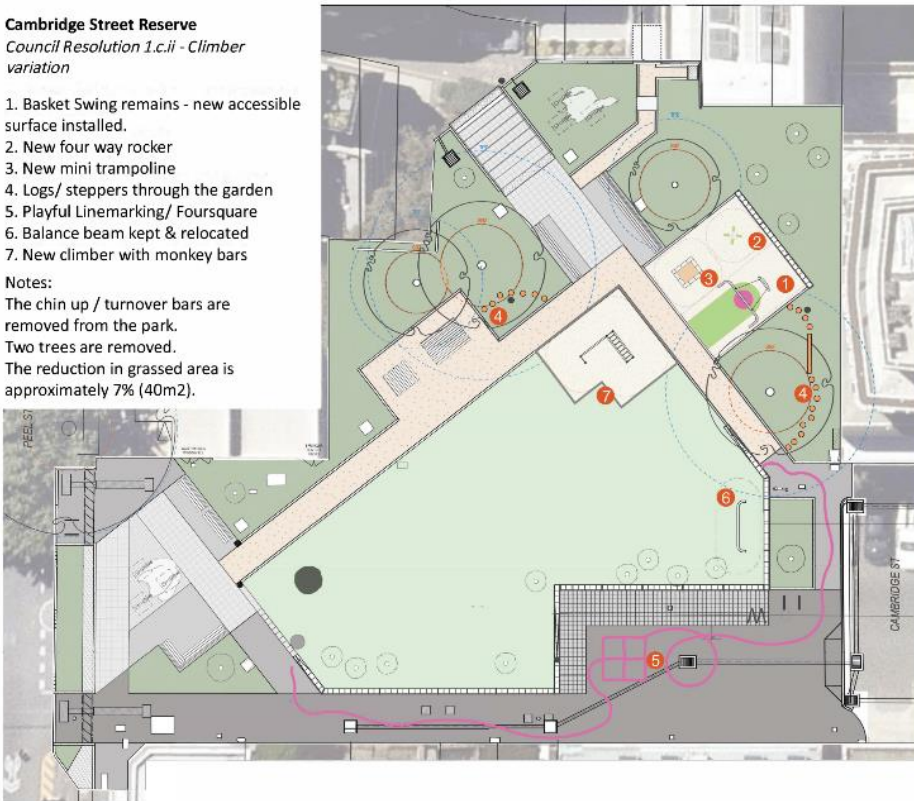


Figure 4: Council Resolution 1.c.ii - Climber variation

## 1.2. About this report

The purpose of this report is to summarise the key findings from the Cambridge Street Reserve play space engagement from early 2024. Capire has delivered an independent analysis of the engagement data, and the findings will be presented to Council to inform the future of the reserve play space.



## 2. Engagement overview

This section of the report provides an overview of the reserve play space engagement objectives, the engagement activities and promotion, and the methodological limitations.

### 2.1. Engagement objectives

The objectives of the engagement program were to:

- understand which of the concept plans are preferred by the community and why
- understand the types of play equipment and play elements that are preferred by the community and why
- hear perspectives and preferences from a diverse range of voices and cohorts who utilise the reserve including residents close to the reserve, children and people who identify as having a disability.

### 2.2. Engagement tools

#### 2.2.1. Promotion

Various tools and channels were used to provide the community with information about the project and to promote engagement opportunities.

Table 1: Promotional activities for Cambridge Street Reserve play space engagement

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Your Say Yarra Page	<p>A webpage for the Cambridge Street Reserve play space engagement was established on Your Say Yarra (<a href="https://yoursayyarra.com.au/cambridge-street-reserve-play-space">https://yoursayyarra.com.au/cambridge-street-reserve-play-space</a>). This webpage served as a detailed resource, providing project information, frequently asked questions, a project timeline, and updates.</p> <p>The webpage also hosted the online survey for the project.</p>
Social media	Social media advertisements were published between 14 March -21 March 2024.
Social media	Council ran a series of posts through the corporate @cityofyarra social media account. These posts were also shared, when necessary, with sub brands including Yarra Libraries, Yarra Leisure and Yarra Arts.
Email newsletters	Council sent four newsletter notices regarding the engagement from 21 February to 15 March 2024.

#### 2.2.2. Activities

Council undertook a consultation process for the reserve play space designed to gather feedback from nearby residents and community members of all ages who use the reserve. Two methods of engagement were used, and they are described below.

## Online survey

The online survey, accessible via Your Say Yarra, was the principal method of gathering community feedback. The objective of the survey was to understand which concept plan respondents preferred and why, and to elicit any additional feedback regarding preferences for the reserve.

Participants were invited to select from the four concept plan options and to describe why they chose that option. Participants were also invited to provide any other comments relating to the play space and the reserve. The survey also gathered demographic information.

The survey received 475 contributions, six of which were incomplete and therefore discarded from the analysis and not included in this report's findings.

To complement and promote online engagement, the engagement approach included three in-person community pop-up events located at the reserve.

A copy of the survey questions can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## Pop-up sessions

Council delivered three pop-up community engagement sessions outlined in Table 2. The following community participation metrics were captured:

- Engagement – the approximate number of people that stopped at the pop-up sessions.
- Responses – the number of survey responses collected at the session.

Table 2: Pop-up sessions and participation results

INFORMATION SESSION DETAILS	ENGAGEMENT	RESPONSES
Cambridge Street Reserve session on Thursday 7 March from 6 to 7.30pm	40	11
Cambridge Street Reserve session on Tuesday 12 March from 11am to 1pm	25	3
Cambridge Street Reserve session on Saturday 16 March from 10am to 12 midday	40	14
Total	105	28

At the sessions, children were invited to choose from three example pieces of equipment and place the one they liked best on an image of the reserve play space. They were then asked to write their name and age on the options (occasionally with the support of their parents).

A total of 20 pieces of feedback were received from children through this activity, including:



6 contributions received by children aged 2 years or under



5 contributions received by children aged 2 to 5 years



4 contributions received by children aged 5 to 12 years



5 contributions received by children who did not write their age on the card.

## Other methods

Written feedback was accepted for the reserve play space engagement. Two written feedback were received via email represented by a local resident and a local community group.

## 2.3. Limitations

All engagements have some limitations inherent to the design and, or the process. The engagement methodology had several limitations that should be acknowledged when reading this report. These are outlined below.

- Capire did not deliver the engagement. Capire has reported and interpreted the information documented by participants within the survey and other data sources to represent the views of participants as closely as possible.
- The media's significant interest in the project may have influenced the community's sentiment and the overall results of the survey.
- The survey was edited one day into the engagement to remove a fifth 'no change' option (due to the Council resolution of providing four clear options for community consultation on the reserve play space). The initial data collected was disregarded and respondents were asked to re-issue their response, this may have resulted in some respondents' initial preferences or attitudes not being captured.
- The survey did not include a 'no change' option, and it was not clear that selecting a concept plan option was not a mandatory question on the survey. This led to some participants stating they selected an option only because 'no change' was not available, which may have resulted in some data inconsistencies. Where it is clearly stated, this data has not been recorded in the quantitative concept plan selection data, but the sentiment has been documented.
- The engagement approach included multiple opportunities for participants to contribute. Some people may have taken part in multiple engagement activities, for example completed the survey and participated in pop-up sessions multiple times. Their views may have been captured more than once. A total of 43 survey responses were identified as potentially duplicated feedback, based on the indicated Internet Protocol (IP) addresses<sup>1</sup>. Regardless, all feedback has been included for analysis in this report.
- People who participated in the engagement self-selected to take part. As such, whilst every effort has been made to gather the views of key stakeholders and the community the information in this report does not reflect the views of a representative sample.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: IP addresses are recorded automatically when surveys are being submitted. IP addresses are the identifier that allows information to be sent between devices on the internet. It can be used to identify which digital device was used to submit individual survey responses. In this case, multiple respondents may have submitted their responses via the same device, contributing to the number of potential duplicated feedback, as Council digital tablets were made available for community members during the pop-up sessions.

# 3. Summary of participants

The online survey asked respondents to answer a series of demographic questions, to help understand the characteristics of those responding and the reach of the engagement. Over the engagement period, 469 complete online survey responses were received.

This section of the report provides an overview of who was reached through the online survey.

## 3.1. Connection to Yarra

Figure 5 shows how the survey respondents are connected to Yarra. Respondents were able to select all options that applied to them. Most respondents live in Yarra (89%, 419 respondents) with 39% (185) indicating that they own a property or mortgage in Yarra. A total of 27% (127) respondents work in Yarra, and 7% (35) own a business within the municipality.

Ten percent of the respondents (46) shared they visit Yarra, 18 of which chose visitor as their only connection, which contributes to 4% of total survey respondents.

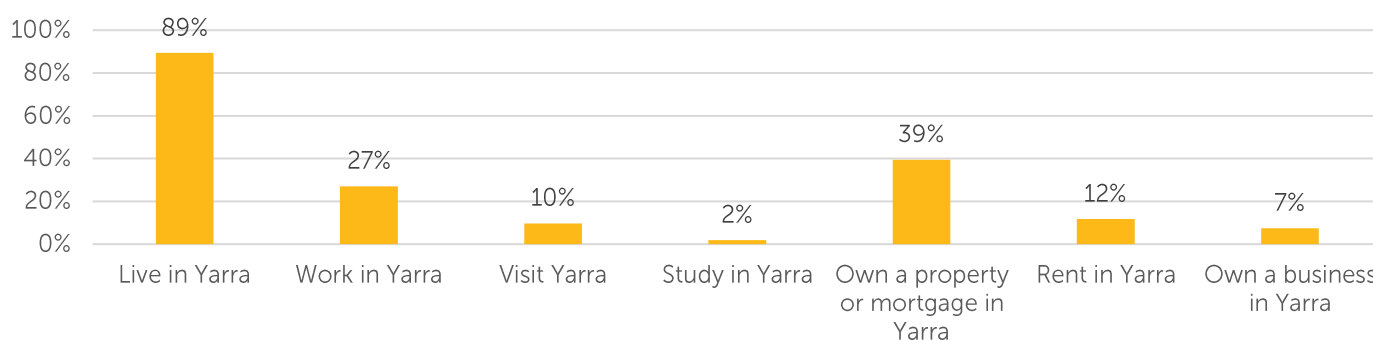


Figure 5: Survey respondents' connections to the City of Yarra (n=469)

## 3.2. Gender

As shown in Figure 6, slightly more than half of the respondents, 55% (258), identified as women, 38% (178) as men and 2% chose self-described. A total of 5% of participants preferred not to state their gender.

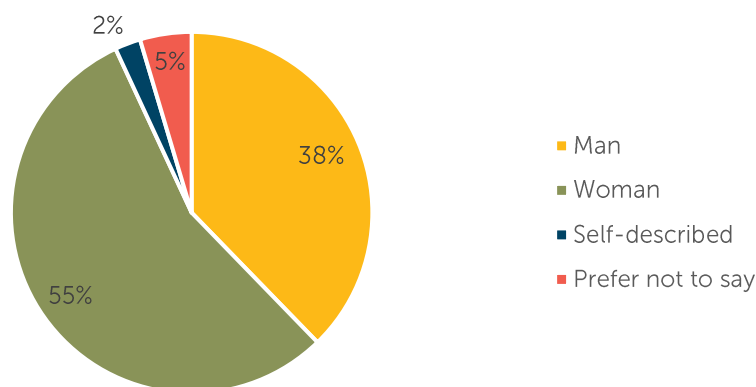


Figure 6: Survey respondents' gender (n=469)

### 3.3. Age range

Approximately half (52%, 242) of the survey respondents were between 35 and 49 years of age, as shown in Figure 7. The next most common age group was 25 to 34 years (22%, 103) followed by 60 to 69 years (10%, 49). One respondent was aged 12 to 17 years of age (0.2%), and no respondents were 85 years or older.

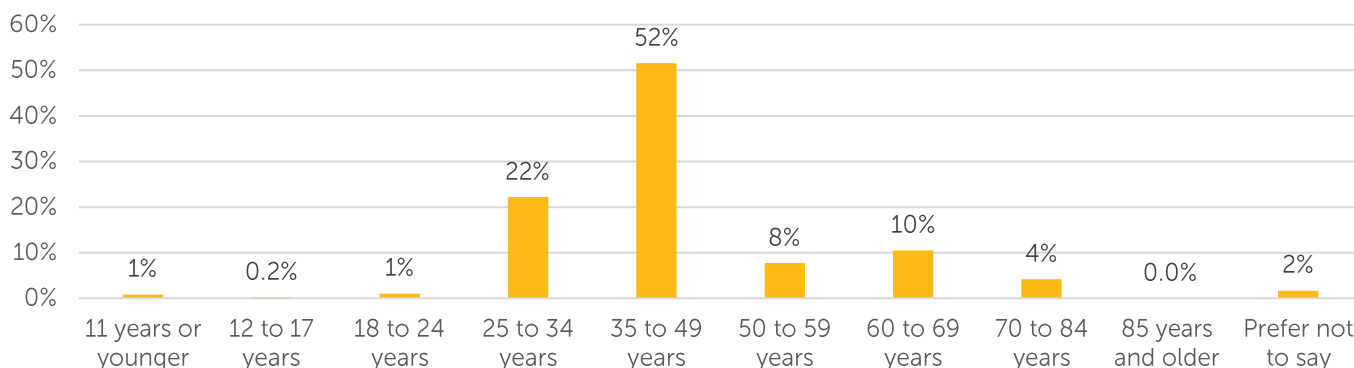


Figure 7: Survey respondents' age (n=469)

### 3.4. Suburb

Figure 8 shows the suburbs in which survey respondents reside. The majority of respondents 66% (309) live in Collingwood, where the reserve is located. Richmond, Fitzroy, Abbotsford and Fitzroy North were other common suburbs of residency. Six percent (29) of respondents said they live outside of Yarra.

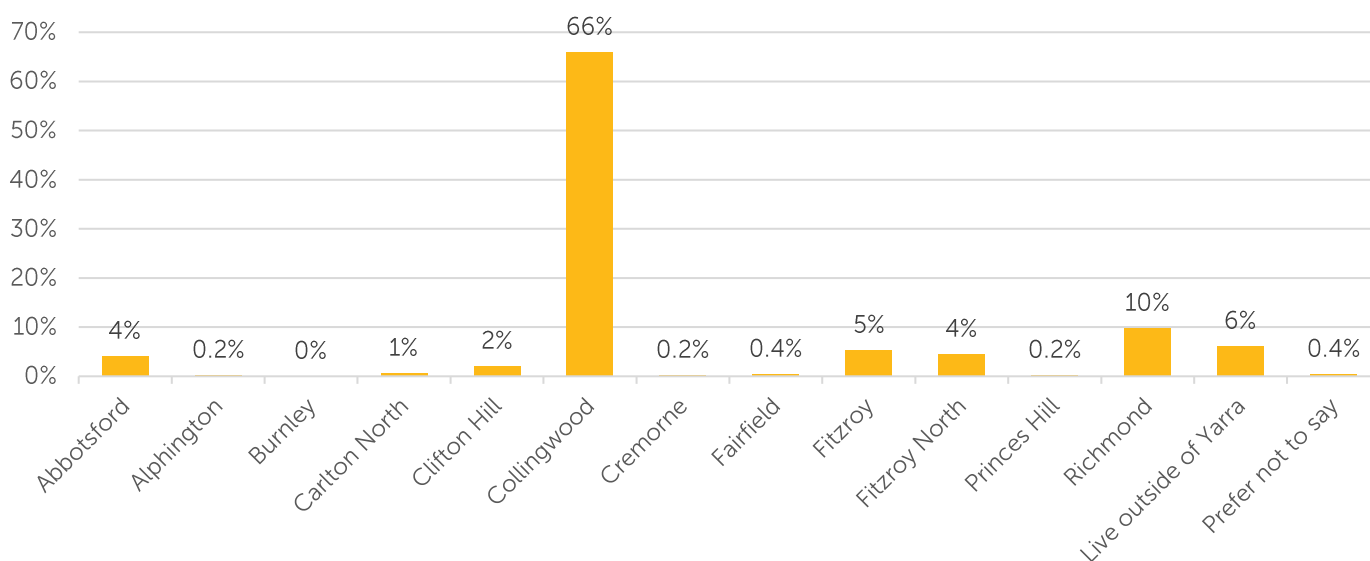


Figure 8: Survey respondents' suburb (n=469)

### 3.5. Representation

The City of Yarra recognises the diversity of their community and seeks to understand whether groups that may be underrepresented at times are included within the engagement. Respondents were able to select all groups which apply to them. As shown in Figure 9, 18% (86) of survey respondents identified as being part of the LGBTIQ+ community, 9% (41) speak a language other than English at home, 5% (25) are living with a disability and 1% (4) identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

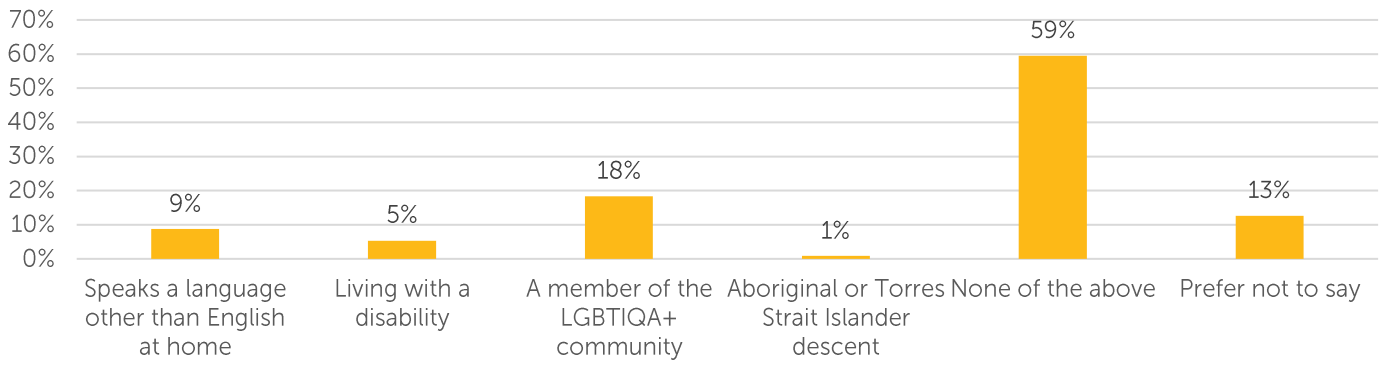


Figure 9: Survey respondents' representation (n=494)

## 4. Engagement findings

The following findings summarise the feedback and ideas collected through the engagement process, which includes the survey, pop-ups and submissions.

### 4.1. Key community preferences for the reserve play space

A range of feedback was gathered during the reserve play space engagement regarding what people value and how they would like to use the reserve. Prevalent and recurring themes have been identified which reflect the overarching preferences and values responses shared regarding the proposed reserve play space concept plans. These are summarised below.

#### 4.1.1. Desire for open space in Collingwood

Responses commonly expressed the desire for more open space in Collingwood and for many, this was a key consideration when evaluating the concept plan options. Such responses indicated that with increasing development, more community members are now living in apartments or housing that do not have direct access to outdoor areas. It was felt that well-maintained public open spaces are critical for residents to access nature, enjoy recreational activities, gather, play, and rest. Many responses further emphasised that there is limited space of this kind available in and around Collingwood, and community members would travel longer distances to access other open spaces such as Fitzroy Gardens, Powlett Reserve, and Emerald Street Playground.

Overall, many responses expressed that the reserve is a valuable opportunity to provide quality open space in Collingwood given its proximity to nearby residential areas, businesses, and schools.

*'Collingwood is an excellent neighbourhood, but it lacks any significant green spaces.'* – Survey respondent

*'This and the pocket parks are essential to an area undergoing expensive redevelopment.'* – Survey respondent

*'Living in apartments means we don't have our own backyards and consequently rely on our local parks and playgrounds to provide our little ones with time outdoors.'* – Survey respondent

*'I think it would be great for the community and families living in apartments to have more play area and spend more time outside in a safe environment.'* – Survey respondent.

This sentiment was predominant in responses that selected Council resolution 1.c.i (retaining the most green space) and those that stated a preference no change at all.

#### 4.1.2. Need to cater for the diverse needs of the community

When evaluating the concept plan options, many responses reflected on individuals' experience and observations of the changing site and their participation in previous engagements to help shape the expansion of the reserve. Still, there were divergent opinions regarding whether the expansion project has provided the right space for the changing community.

Many responses emphasised that the reserve must cater to the evolving community's diverse needs in Collingwood. At times, some responses were at odds over whose needs were of most importance.

Some responses shared that the local neighbourhood is experiencing a change in its demographics since the pandemic, with an increase in families with young children, indicating the need for more play opportunities in Collingwood. At the same time, there is also a high demand for open space to support the health and wellbeing of

community members who live, work, and visit in the area. Responses commonly stated that concept plan options should be able to fulfil and balance the diversifying needs of the evolving community.

Table 3 provides a list of users of the reserve, as indicated by responses received, and their considerations for the concept plan options.

*'It's essential it provides a place for children to climb and play, as well as for all other park users to enjoy.'*  
– Survey respondent

*'I think it is important to bear in mind the multiple needs of the community and the demographic.'* – Survey respondent

*'We are often visiting with adults and children. It's important to provide open spaces for everyone to use, not just a specific demographic.'* – Survey respondent

*'It (the Reserve) definitely has potential to serve everyone and foster a connected community.'* – Survey respondent

Table 3. Different user groups and their key considerations for the reserve

Users of the Reserve indicated in responses received	Key considerations
Families with children	<p>Responses that indicated they are a family with children (or have children who visit regularly) emphasised the importance of play equipment and elements in open space to support the growth and development for children, and for families with children to spend quality time together.</p> <p>Some responses pointed out that children at different ages and stages may enjoy different kinds of spatial layouts and play equipment; therefore, the space must consider safety, enjoyment, and developmental benefits for a range of age groups.</p> <p>Therefore, key considerations are that the reserve must be engaging for children and families, versatile for children at different age ranges, and inclusive for children of all abilities.</p> <p><i>'Hopefully it can be more family friendly, especially some families are living in small apartments, they need a good park/playground to take kids to.'</i> – Survey respondent</p> <p><i>'There are lots of lovely young families with young children in the area and need to be catered for'</i> – Survey respondent</p>
Families without children, working professionals in Collingwood, young people	<p>Some responses shared that the reserve is an important site for families without children, working professionals in Collingwood, and young people to enjoy passive recreational activities such as reading, relaxing, gathering with friends, and having lunch during breaks; as well as active recreational activities such as exercising.</p> <p>Respondents who shared this view expressed that they would not like to see such activities being compromised when considering the concept plan options.</p> <p><i>'I live close by and every time I walk past (frequently) there are adults sitting out there eating, reading, playing with their dogs. The park is full on nice days, it's great to see.'</i> – Survey respondent</p> <p><i>'I've noticed that people enjoy the passive recreation space which provides a peaceful area.'</i> – Survey respondent</p>



Users of the Reserve indicated in responses received	Key considerations
Pet owners	<p>Some responses shared that given the limited open space available in the area, Cambridge Street Reserve is used by many pet owners for dog walking and socialising with others. These responses pointed out the needs and wellbeing of pet owners and their pets in the community as a critical factor when evaluating the concept plan options.</p> <p><i>'Peel Street park is used by so many dog owners to relieve their pets.'</i> – Survey respondent</p> <p><i>'I love the space as is and have been really enjoying reading a book with a rug and my dog on a sunny day there.'</i> – Survey respondent</p>
People with a disability	<p>Several responses stated that accessibility is a consideration when selecting concept plan options as the reserve should be an inclusive space with equipment for people with all abilities to access and enjoy.</p> <p><i>'Ideally which ever options are picked the disability community is considered in the delivery to ensure the maximum amount of play equipment is accessible.'</i> – Survey respondent</p>

In summary, responses received through this engagement indicated a wide range of considerations when evaluating the concept plan options. This includes participants' understanding of the provision of open spaces in Collingwood, the changing needs of the evolving community for open spaces, and their personal connections with the reserve. The selection of the preferred concept plans and the indicated reasons for each option are further discussed in the sections below.

## 4.2. Concept plans

Participants were asked to select their preferred concept plan option for the reserve play space and explain the reasons for their selection. For details of the four concept plan options, refer to [Section 1.1.1](#). To note:

- selection of a concept plan was not mandatory to make comments about the project
- some participants selected a concept plan but were explicit in their open text response that they preferred no change
- some participants did not select an option and were explicit in their open text response that they preferred no change
- some participants did not select an option for other reasons shared in the report
- children's selection of their preferred play equipment during pop-up sessions has been reported on separately in [Section 4.3](#).

Capire counted the responses that indicated a preference for no change in addition to the participants' concept plan selection where necessary. This has resulted in some responses being counted as both a concept plan selection and a 'no change' selection, totalling 501 counts compared to 469 surveys received.

As shown in Figure 10, Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Slide variation was selected the most with 167 counts, closely followed by 151 counts for Council Resolution 1.c.i. There were 89 responses that expressed preference for no change. Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Climber variation, and Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Spinner variations received the

least support, with 45 and 36 counts respectively. The remaining 13 of responses did not make a selection for shared reasons other than seeking no change.

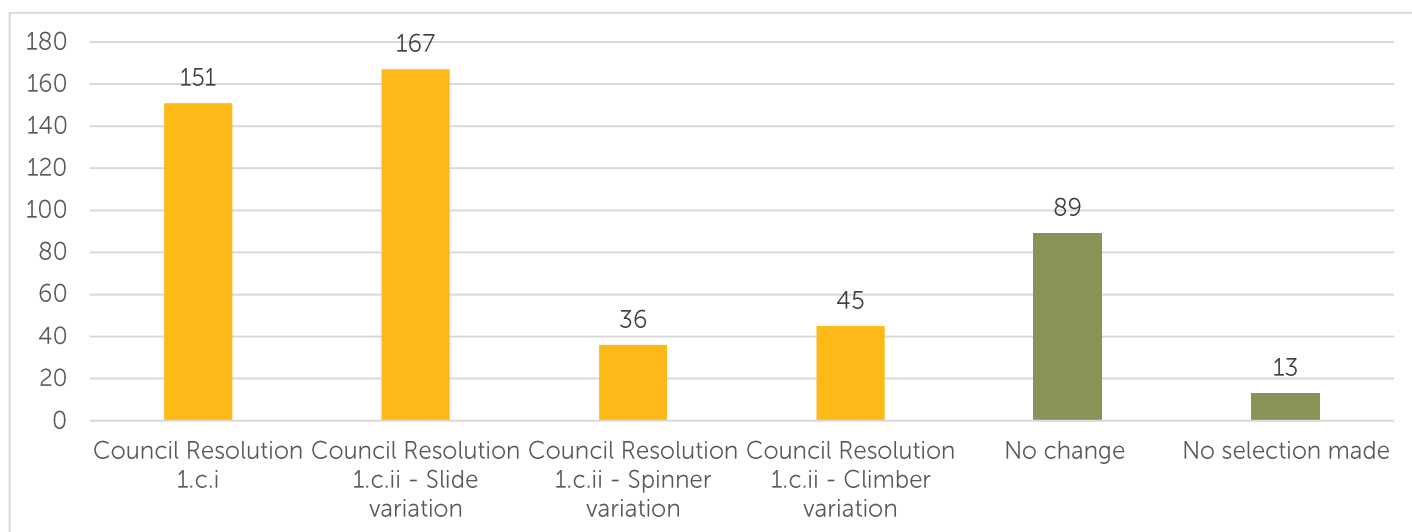


Figure 10: Respondents' concept plan preference (n = 501)

(Note: The number of counts for 'No change' and 'No selection made' are displayed in green, compared to yellow for concept plan options in Figure 10, as they were counted by Capire in addition to the selected concept plan options for reasons stated above.)

#### 4.2.1. Council Resolution 1.c.i

Council Resolution 1.c.i includes the new proposed designs without any loss of grassed area. There was a total of 151 counts for this option. The primary reason shared for selecting Council Resolution 1.c.i was to preserve and maintain green space in the reserve.

Some respondents felt that this option was a fair compromise between additional equipment with minimal disruption on the green space. Respondents selecting this option stated that this would balance the different uses and needs, while some said the main users of the reserve were local workers and dog owners. Respondents emphasised the importance of retaining grassed areas and trees, especially considering the small proportion of green space in Collingwood. Respondents also highlighted the grassed area provides a flexible space for both children and adults, including activities such as:

- dog walking
- relaxing, having picnics, reading
- playing games in open space such as frisbee and playing with balls.

*'I would not support any reduction in the grassed area because there is such a limited amount of green space left in this part of Collingwood. I strongly believe that Council's expansion of the park has been very successful in addressing some urban heat island effects. Further to this I would not support any removal of the existing trees.'* – Survey respondent

*'Collingwood needs more green space. In such an urban, built up area, pockets of green is highly needed'* – Survey respondent

*'This appears to me to be the design with the least additions. I have small children and live in Collingwood but I see no problem in having a park with minimal play equipment, and I don't want council to spend too much more money on this park.'* – Survey respondent

*'The whole idea of this park was to create more green space. Having lived in this area for over 20 years I do not believe we need to remove grass space for children's play equipment. It's not exactly an area that*

*is heavily dominated with kids. However plenty of people with dogs who want more grassed areas' – Survey respondent*

#### **4.2.2. Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Slide variation**

Council Resolution 1.c.ii slide variation includes a new slide with a climbing rope, a 7% (40m<sup>2</sup>) reduction in grassed areas and two trees removed. There was a total of 167 counts for this option. Respondents said they predominately chose this resolution based on the inclusion of the play equipment, and particularly the slide. The main reasons were:

- this option provides the most variety of play equipment
- the equipment caters to a range of ages and abilities, especially younger children
- the amount of loss of grass is a good compromise for additional play equipment
- slides are a safe, fun and teach children useful social skills such learning to take turns and negotiating space with others
- climbing ropes onto the slide provide positive health outcomes such as building strength and coordination
- the slide is their children's favourite piece of play equipment.

Several respondents shared that they prefer traditional play equipment such as slides. There were also several suggestions for a ladder or stairs to get up the top of the slide in addition to a platform to improve access and safety, especially for younger children. Other suggestions include a small and large slide for different children of different ages.

*'A slide option with a rope climb covers many developmental age groups.'* – Survey respondent

*'I feel this provides the most options for play of these concepts, however it's still not enough.'* – Survey respondent

*'My kids love slides. They can be used by all ages and abilities. Please ensure there is an actual ladder.'* – Survey respondent

*'This option seems to have the greatest appeal to the greatest number of children. This option appeals in that it would develop a variety of skills and provide opportunities to climb, explore and learn risk taking in a safe environment.'* – Survey respondent

*'I have an only child and find that slides are a great way for children to interact socially, teaching them to share by taking turns. Like the kitchen is to a home, the slide is the heart of a playground.'* – Survey respondent

#### **4.2.3. Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Spinner variation**

Council Resolution 1.c.ii spinner variation includes a new climbing spinner, a 6.3% (36m<sup>2</sup>) reduction in grassed areas and two trees removed. A total of 36 counts were received for this option. The main reasons respondents chose this option include:

- the equipment caters to a range of ages and abilities, especially being beneficial for self-regulation for people with neurodevelopmental needs
- the amount of loss of grass is a good compromise for additional play equipment
- spinners are fun, interesting and their children's favourite piece of equipment.

*'Seems more interesting, fun and challenging for children.'* – Survey respondent

*'I chose the Spinner option based on my 40 plus years in primary education and physical education and working with playgrounds in primary schools. This option increases children's activity in a safe setting whilst also providing enhanced physical movement.'* – Survey respondent

*'It incorporates a nice balance between maintaining the grassed space and having a mix of play equipment for varied ages to enjoy.'* – Survey respondent

#### 4.2.4. Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Climber variation

Council Resolution 1.c.ii climber variation includes a new climber with monkey bars. A total of 45 counts were received for this option. This resolution also sees a 7% (40m<sup>2</sup>) reduction in grassed areas with two trees removed. The main reasons respondents chose this option include,

- the equipment caters to a range of ages and abilities, especially older children and adults
- the amount of loss of grass is a good compromise for additional play equipment
- the equipment provides positive health outcomes, such as building physical strength for children
- the equipment is fun as there is no climbing tree nearby
- the equipment encourages curiosity and is their children's favourite piece of equipment.

*'I think the climbing option can also be utilized by adults for pull ups etc. this maximizes play for children.'* – Survey respondent

*'This option is a nice counterpoint to other equipment as it caters for slightly older children. With this option the park should be interesting to a wide variety of children and across different developmental stages.'* – Survey respondent

*'Suits a wider a range of activities. While there is a loss of some grass space, there still remains significant grass and seating/table areas which cater for everyone regardless of whether they are with children, have dogs or just want to picnic/relax on the grass.'* – Survey respondent

#### 4.2.5. No change

Apart from the concept plan options presented, a significant number of responses (89 responses) indicated that a preference for the reserve to remain as it is. The two written pieces of feedback received indicated a preference to not make any changes to the current play space in the reserve. The reasons shared by participants include:

- the reserve is currently well-designed and used by a range of users of different ages
- the reserve currently provides versatility for activities, including both passive and active recreational activities for both adults and children
- community members are satisfied with the current changes and would like Council resources to be allocated more efficiently
- further construction would cause disruptions to nearby residents and reserve users
- additional play equipment would have noise impacts for local residents
- additional play equipment would result in the loss of green area and plants
- other areas in Collingwood, such as the northern end of Cambridge Street and Peel Street Park, would be better opportunities to develop a new play space.

*'I like the park as it is. Recent changes are so great! I love to have more open space - it's far more versatile for games, picnics, ball games, etc and suits much wider age group' – Survey respondent*

*'I think that the park should stay the same as it is. I'm in high-school and this area works really well for me and my friends to hang out at.' – Survey respondent*

*'Council should not alter the Cambridge Street Reserve play space because neither side will be happy with the outcome: proponents of expanding the play space will not get back what was lost, and opponents of expanding the play space will not retain the green open space that they have now.' – Community submission*

*'All ages can use green space, only children can use children's playground equipment.' – Community submission*

### 4.3. Children activities

Children who attended the pop-up activities were shown three example pieces of play equipment and select the one they liked best, occasionally supported by their parents. Twenty pieces of feedback were received through this activity, as shown in Figure 11, the following votes were received by participating children:

- eleven participants voted for a slide
- five participants voted for a spinner
- four participants voted for a climber.



Figure 11: Children's contributions at the reserve play space pop-up

### 4.4. Additional comments

Participants were asked to comment on the Cambridge Street Reserve play space. The feedback received, in addition to those relevant to the options above, has been summarised below.

#### Design of the play space

- **Unsatisfied with concept plan options proposed:** some participants were unsatisfied with the concept plan options proposed, stating that three pieces of equipment included in all options is not enough for a fun, engaging play space for children of different age ranges. Several participants shared additional ideas such as installing nature play elements, play equipment with a brighter colour palette, play equipment beneficial for sensory development.
- **Placement of existing play equipment:** Several participants would prefer the current swing be replaced with traditional swings or move it to the grass area to make space for additional equipment. There were also suggestions to remove the balance beam, four-way rocker and chin-up bars.
- **Play equipment safety:** Several participants had safety concerns for the trampoline and spinner. There were also concerns regarding the proximity of the playful line markings to the road and the balance bar relocation near a high edge.
- **Proximity of play equipment to car parking area:** A few participants raised safety concerns about the proposed four-way rocker being closely placed to the car parking area, that it may be challenging to overlook the area and protect children from moving vehicles.

#### Other amenities, safety, and maintenance of the reserve

- **Additional amenities:** Multiple participants suggested a range of other amenities to be included in the reserve, such as a quiet space separated from the play area, outdoor gym equipment for adults, more natural shading, seating, and BBQ.
- **Maintenance:** There were recommendations for general maintenance of the area, including more regular cleaning and removal of rubbish bins.
- **Pet access:** Several participants shared comments about pet access to the reserve. Some participants would like to see a fenced area for dogs to run off-leash, and include more pet-friendly amenities such as dog waste dispensers. Some participants stated that some users allow their dogs to roam freely despite current regulations in the reserve. This was seen as a safety risk for individuals who may be allergic to or are uncomfortable around dogs.
- **Sense of safety:** Several participants shared safety concerns related to the reserve, including drug and alcohol-related activities and anti-social activities in the park. Some suggested installing additional lighting or arranging more regular monitoring by Council staff or park rangers to create a safer environment for reserve users.
- **Community activities:** A few participants expressed a desire for more community activities to be held at the reserve to foster community connection in the neighbourhood.

#### Project communication and community engagement process

- **Confusion about the survey and concept plan options presented:** Multiple participants shared comments about the design of the online survey, stating that the concept plan options were hard to understand with similar names and more detailed descriptions about each option would be more beneficial for participants to provide feedback. As indicated by the no change sentiment shared earlier, many participants also thought that an option for the reserve to stay as is should have been included in the survey.
- **Engagement opportunities:** A few participants shared that they would like Council to allow more face-to-face opportunities about this project to ensure Council could receive diverse feedback from more local residents, including children.

# 5. Conclusion

## 5.1. Summary of findings

### Community preferences and aspirations

- There is overwhelming support for more open space in Collingwood as there are more residential developments in the local area and an increasing demand for access to open space within walking distance.
- A diverse range of views were captured in the play space engagement regarding what participants value and how they would like to use the reserve, including those who are seeking as much uninterrupted green space as possible and those that who accessible play equipment deemed appropriate for a range of ages and stages. These values have influenced how participants evaluate the proposed concept plans for the reserve play space
- There were divergent opinions regarding whether the reserve expansion project has provided the right space for this local changing community.

### Concept plan options

- Close to half of participants selected Council Resolution 1.c.ii – Slide variation as their preferred option (42%), closely followed by Council Resolution 1.c.i (38%), while 22% of participants and an additional two written feedback responses indicated that they would prefer the reserve to remain as it is.
- The 48% of participants who selected Council Resolution 1.c.ii—Slide variation (42%) chose it because it provides the play equipment option they (or their child) most prefers, as well as safety and accessibility considerations and health and developmental benefits. This rationale was similar to those of those who selected the Climber and Spinner variations.
- Participants who selected Council Resolution 1.c.i (38%) commonly felt that this option would balance demands for different uses and needs. There would be additional play space with minimal disruption on the grassed area that provides a flexible space for a range of activities by children and adults.
- Participants who preferred no change (22%) to the reserve expressed their satisfaction with the current design and use available in the reserve, concerns about disruption and noise impacts by further construction work and additional play equipment, and the loss of green area in Collingwood.

## 5.2. Consultant observations

While many of the limitations are covered in an earlier section of the report ([Section 2.3](#)), Capire Consulting Group has provided some reflections on the engagement results and considerations for future engagement with this community.

### Lack of 'no change' option in the survey

The project proposed four concept plan options for the play space in Cambridge Street Reserve. The survey, as the primary tool to gather community feedback, asked community members to select their preferred option from the four concept plans only. As the 'no change' option was removed from the original survey this sentiment may not have been adequately captured.

### Technical concepts and accessible engagement

Some participants expressed frustration that the concept plan options were hard to understand, given the similar names and technical drawings provided. To ensure accessible engagement, potential barriers that participants may face in understanding and providing feedback on projects should be identified and addressed. One approach could

involve preparing materials that are easier to comprehend, such as providing clear and concise descriptions written in plain language alongside any technical drawings or images. These descriptions can help bridge the gap between technical knowledge and community understanding, enabling individuals of varying literacy levels to participate more fully in discussions and provide meaningful feedback.

### **Ongoing engagement and communication with the community**

The engagement reflects a high-level of community interest in the broader provision of open space and play spaces in Collingwood. The politicisation of the Cambridge Street Reserve play space project and related engagement meant the engagement was treated more like a vote or a poll, rather than a discussion around current and future needs.

This suggests a need for clear and transparent communication regarding the next steps in the project and other parks and reserves. Given the divergent views captured in this consultation, additional engagement using observations over an extended period to understand the seasonal use may be worthwhile to ensure future reserve designs are informed by and responsive to the diversity of community preferences and needs.

## **5.3. Next steps**

The Council Resolution requires council officers to report back to Council at the conclusion of the consultation period. The community engagement findings included in this report will inform their report and the recommended next steps regarding the Cambridge Reserve play space.



# Appendix A: Survey questions

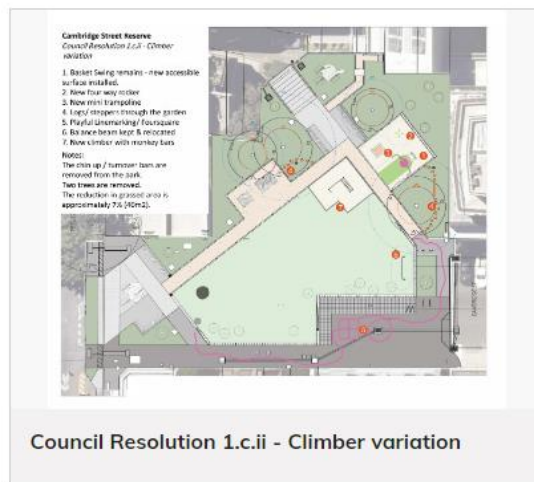
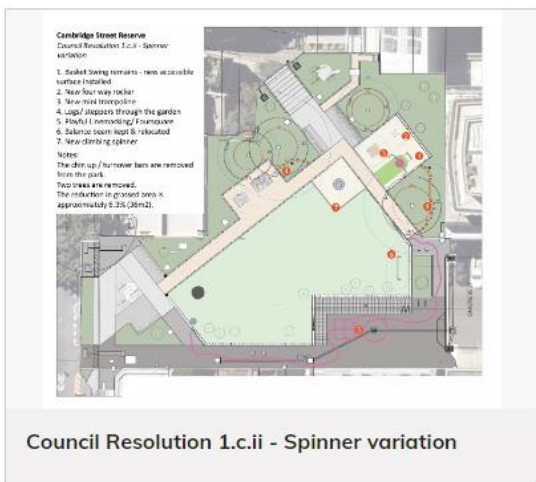
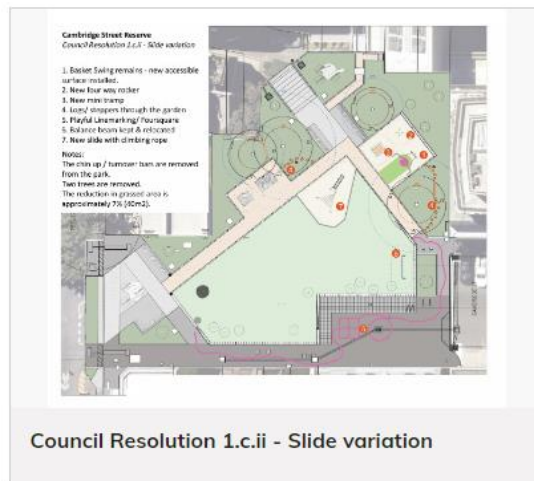
This survey has two sections:

- Section one asks for your opinion on how we should incorporate play equipment into Cambridge Street Reserve.
- Section two contains some demographic questions to learn more about you.

## Section one

1. Please select which of following concept plans you support the most.

The selected item will be surrounded with a pink outline and have a check mark next to it. To view the options in more detail, please click on the concept plans above.



2. Please explain why you picked the option above.
3. Do you have any comments regarding the Cambridge Street Reserve play space?

## Section two

4. What's your connection to Yarra?

- I live in Yarra
- I work in Yarra
- I visit Yarra
- I study in Yarra
- I own a property or mortgage in Yarra
- I rent in Yarra
- I own a business in Yarra

5. What gender do you identify as?

- Man
- Woman
- Self-described
- I prefer not to say

6. What is your age range?

- 11 years or younger
- 12 to 17 years
- 18 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 49 years
- 50 to 59 years
- 60 to 69 years
- 70 to 84 years
- 85 years and older
- Prefer not to say

7. What suburb do you live in?

- Abbotsford
- Alphington
- Burnley
- Carlton North
- Clifton Hill
- Collingwood

- Cremorne
- Fairfield
- Fitzroy
- Fitzroy North
- Princes Hill
- Richmond
- Live outside of Yarra
- Prefer not to say

8. Select all that apply. I am...

- Speaks a language other than English at home
- Living with a disability
- A member of the LGBTIQ+ community
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent
- None of the above
- Prefer not to say

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Capire acknowledges  
and deeply respects the  
Wurundjeri people and  
the Traditional Owners  
of the Victorian land.



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