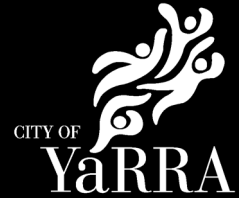


Charles Evans Reserve Upgrade Stage 2 Community Engagement Report



This report details the specifics of the Charles Evans Reserve Stage 2 community engagement and evaluates the participation. The consultation opened on 19 Feb 2024 and was live until 18 Mar 2024.

Background

Charles Evans Reserve is a small park located near the Yarra River in Cremorne. It includes a playground, drinking fountain, garden beds and small grassy area. This park must meet the needs of a diverse and increasing population and accommodate different groups of park users, including residents, visitors and people who work in the local area.

Cremorne has less than 0.5% open space and land for additional open space is not likely to become available in the short term. Additionally, commercial development is drawing new people to the area for work and Cremorne's residential population is also growing.

As such, we're upgrading Charles Evans Reserve to make sure the park can serve a broad range of park users for years to come.

Why we ran this consultation?

Stage 1 Community Engagement – August/September 2023

Last year we asked the community for feedback to better understand how they want to use this space and what improvements they think we should make (refer to Stage 1 Community Engagement Report for details). A key element was understanding how the community feels about the existing playground. It was clear from the responses we received during the consultation that the community want the existing playground to be replaced and upgraded.

The feedback received during the first stage of consultation informed the development of the Draft Concept Design for the reserve.

Stage 2 Community Engagement - Draft Concept Design – February/March 2024

Earlier this year we presented the Draft Concept Design to the community for feedback before proceeding with the detailed design stage.

We proposed to upgrade the existing playground with a new playground of similar size. The design for the upgraded playground will consider the following elements:

- A larger, or better use of the existing playground space
- Providing play facilities for a wider age range of children
- Improving accessibility and provide better separation of the play area from dogs and traffic.
- Exploring nature play options – this is in addition to upgrading and replacing the existing play equipment.

The design also considers the possibility of providing a basketball hoop or multi-court for informal ball sports to further broaden the age range of play facilities.

Objectives of this engagement

1. Providing an update about the results of Stage 1 Community Engagement
2. Checking in with the community and gaining support for the proposed Draft Concept Design
3. Understanding the level of community support for the park to expand into Cubitt Street.

Level of Community influence

Negotiable

The community can influence:

1. Whether the park expands into Cubitt Street.
2. Minor changes to the Draft Concept Design that meet the overall project objectives.

Non-negotiable

The community cannot influence:

1. Whether the project goes ahead. The park needs an upgrade.
2. The types of upgrades that are delivered (not taking new ideas and suggestions).
3. Retention of trees – site located within Significant Landscape Overlay. Certain trees may not be removed to make space for other facilities.
4. The budget. We have an allocated amount that we will be spending on this project that has already been decided on.

What did we ask?

Participants were asked:

1. What do you like about the draft Concept Design? (open text response)
2. Is there anything else we need to consider in the Concept Design? (open text response)
3. Do you support expanding the park into Cubitt Street?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
4. If the park is expanded into Cubitt Street, given the limited space, what types of sports activities would you like to see prioritised? (open text response)

Methods included:

- Online survey
- Two (2) in-person information sessions at the park
- Postcard and letter drop to surrounding residents
- Individual consultations with surrounding residents & property owners

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the 99 online survey submissions.

- 90% of people surveyed live in Yarra (76% from either Cremorne or Richmond).
- 58% of people surveyed were women.
- The most common age range was 35-49 (51%), the next most common age was 25-34 (23%).

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers	Percentage
I live in Yarra	89	89.9%
I work in Yarra	35	35.35%
I visit Yarra	6	6.06%
I study in Yarra	1	1.01%

I own a property or mortgage in Yarra	45	45.45%
I rent in Yarra	6	6.06%
I own a business in Yarra	8	8.08%
What gender do you identify as?	Numbers	Percentage
Man	38	38.38%
Woman	57	57.58%
Self-described	0	0%
I prefer not to say	4	4.04%
What is your age range?	Numbers	Percentage
Under 11	3	3.06%
12 to 17	0	0%
18 to 24	1	1.02%
25 to 34	23	23.47%
35 to 49	50	51.02%
50 to 59	16	16.33%
60 to 69	2	2.04%
70 to 84	3	3.06%
85 and older	0	0%
I prefer not to say	0	0%
What suburb do you live in	Numbers	Percentage
Abbotsford	3	3.03%
Alphington	0	0%

Burnley	1	1.01%
Carlton North	0	0%
Clifton Hill	1	1.01%
Collingwood	8	8.08%
Cremorne	63	63.64%
Fairfield	0	0%
Fitzroy	1	1.01%
Fitzroy North	3	3.03%
Princes Hill	0	0%
Richmond	12	12.12%
I live outside of Yarra	7	7.07%
Select all that apply. I am...	Numbers	Percentage
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	7	7.07%
A person living with a disability.	2	2.02%
A member of the LGBTIQ+ community.	8	8.08%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	0	0%
None of the above.	79	79.80%
I prefer not to say.	6	6.06%

Engagement Reach

Engagement and Communications Activity
2 x place-based pop-ups
4 x individual meetings between project team and community members
Your Say Yarra (YSY) page
Mail outs to owners and occupiers of residences and businesses in the streets immediately surrounding the park
Social media posts and ads
Council's email newsletter
Targeted emails to stakeholders

What did we hear?

Council received 99 survey contributions during this consultation. The following section provides a summary of responses for each survey question. Responses referring to the same or related topic are listed once with the frequency shown in brackets. Community responses have been grouped into themes that will be addressed during the detailed design phase of the project.

What do you like about the Draft Concept Design? (open text response)

Summary of points that people liked:

- Expansion of the park / multi-sports area (35)
- Like it overall (24)
- Variety of uses proposed / spatial layout (20)
- Barbeque facilities (18)
- Proposed playground (11)
- Tables / seating / picnic area (10)
- The lawn / green space (10)
- Space for dogs (7)
- Trees / planting (6)
- Upgrading of facilities (4)
- Mural / beautification of soundwall (3)

"This looks excellent - very impressive how you've managed to make the most out of limited space and provide a reason to explore this park for kids, adults, workers, residents and dog owners."

"Amazing amount of diversity catering to many local needs in a small space!"

"Overall concept is great, including expansion into Cubitt St, addition of BBQ, more seating, tables, updated playground in shaded area, retaining on-lead dog lawn, and increased and updated planting."

Is there anything else we need to consider in the Concept Design? (open text response)

Summary of points that people thought could be improved:

- Playground design / additional play equipment (39)
- Fenced / dedicated off-leash dog area (8)
- No concerns (8)
- Impact to Cubitt St – cars turning / parking loss / flood mitigation (8)
- Need for shade (7)
- Public toilet (6)
- Concern around additional litter & ongoing maintenance (6)
- Groundcover alternatives to lawn (3)
- Indigenous / native trees & planting (2)
- Upgrade to soundwall (2)
- Additional lighting / safety (2)
- Park noise affecting residents (2)
- Reduce / remove children’s play area (2)
- No murals (2)
- Too many picnic tables (1)
- No smoking signs (1)
- Not a fan of dog area (1)
- Smaller lawn area (1)
- Proximity of food area to dog area (1)
- Shelter for picnic area (1)
- Gated entrances (1)
- Deciduous trees to allow summer shade & winter light (1)
- Additional trees (1)
- Expand it further (1)

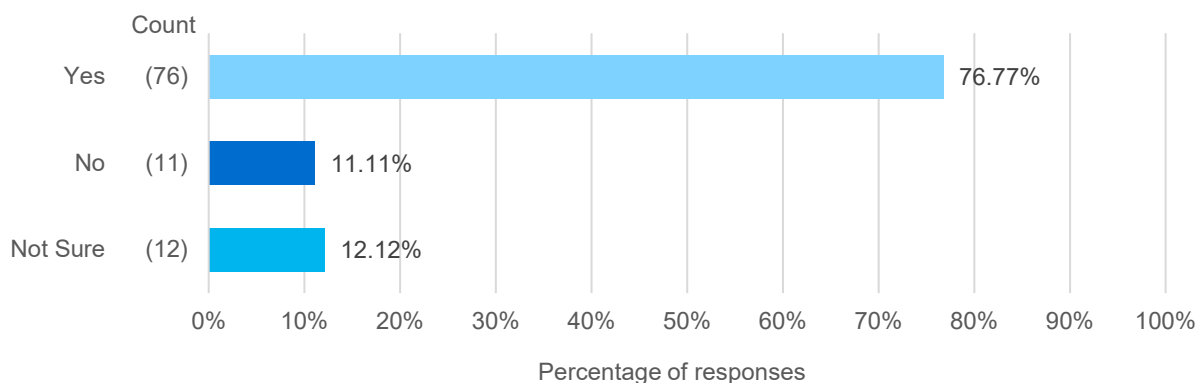
“Please make sure there is adequate lighting and also, please make sure the playground actually includes fun playground equipment similar to what is there now which allows multiple children to play at one time.”

“The current space is quite dark and damp, so thought would be needed to create an inviting space.”

“If changes are being considered to this design they should ensure that there is still a fair distribution of space for the different groups who use it. I use the park primarily to meet friends with our dogs and would like that grassy space to remain.”

“I am not supportive of the removal of 4 car parks. Need to ensure additional resources are provided to maintain the park with its increased usage.”

Do you support expanding the park into Cubitt Street?



If the park is expanded into Cubitt Street, given the limited space, what types of sports activities would you like to see prioritised? (open text response)

Summary of sports that respondents would like to see included:

- Basketball (43)
- Tennis / pickleball / rebound wall (16)
- Soccer (11)
- Multi-court / multi-use (9)
- I don't mind / not sure (4)
- Outdoor gym / fitness equipment (4)
- Four-square / handball / downball (4)
- Netball (3)
- Space for scooters / skateboards / bikes (2)
- Badminton (2)
- Trampolines (1)
- Volleyball net (1)
- Giant chess (1)
- Anything that isn't noisy (1)
- Lawn bowls (1)
- Climbing / bouldering (1)
- Gymnastics (1)
- Cricket (1)

Other responses not relating to sports facilities:

- No facilities (10)
- Children's playground (7)
- Picnic / reading areas (2)
- Public toilet (1)
- Off-lead dog space (1)

Individual consultation

Further to the online survey and in-person consultation sessions, we sent additional letters to surrounding residents and property owners inviting them to make a one-on-one appointment with Council project officers to discuss any concerns or questions they had about the project. Project officers conducted four (4) one-on-one meetings and also received one (2) detailed email submissions regarding the project. The feedback received from these individual consultations largely reiterated the feedback and concerns raised by survey respondents, including:

- Upgrades to the soundwall
- Trees and planting
- Concern around noise from park facilities affecting residents
- Safety and lighting
- Concerns around the loss of carparking / traffic implications if the park is expanded into Cubitt St.

Common feedback themes that will be addressed during the detailed design phase:

Feedback Theme 1: Children’s Playground	
What did we hear	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The young children’s area is lacking equipment. It seems a downgrade and a downsize. We need a large variety of children’s equipment. Swings, cubby style play centre, slides, safe climbing, tunnels, ground trampoline, sandpit, basketball hoop for toddlers.”</i> • <i>“Provide more play equipment for young children.”</i> • <i>“Reduction of play equipment for local young children. I would like to see the number of equipment options maintained rather than reduced (eg. keep 2 slides, keep climbing frames and tunnel, keep 2 swings). Young children miss out on proposed plan.”</i> • <i>“Diversity in the play equipment has reduced. Consider less logs and cubbies in exchange for more variety of equipment. A playground needs 2 swings, somewhere to climb, slide, imagine, rock, balance, swing, jump.”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new playground will occupy approximately the same size footprint as the existing playground. • Due to existing tree protection zones, and the need to accommodate other existing uses within the park, we are unable to increase the size of the playground. • We are working closely with a playground designer and play expert to create a customised play solution that will deliver the same or increased range of play opportunities as the existing playground. • Quality of play is not determined by the quantity of equipment provided, but rather the quality and range of play experiences offered. For example, a basket swing can accommodate up to four children, and is usable by a broader age range, compared to a combination toddler and junior swing. • Council is currently writing a Play Space Strategy. The final playground design will be peer reviewed to ensure it meets the objectives of this strategy.
Feedback Theme 2: Off-leash Dog Area	
What did we hear	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Rather than an informal fence around the playground, I would prefer a fence that runs the whole way around so dogs can’t get into that space. That way the lawn area could be an off leash area.”</i> • <i>“Could the dog area be fenced? There are no fenced dog parks within a 30 minute walk of Cremorne.”</i> • <i>“Off leash space for dogs is a must. There are far more dogs in the neighbourhood than children.”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog off-leash areas are designated in the Council Order that was adopted by Council at its meeting on 10 October 2023. • Council recognises the need for dog off-leash areas in Cremorne, however, Charles Evans Reserve is too small to safely accommodate an off-leash dog area as well as its other uses. • Additionally, allowing dogs off-leash would be too costly for Council to manage as it would require restoration and replacement of lawn on a continual basis.

Feedback Theme 3: Cubitt St Carparking / Traffic Implications

What did we hear	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Parking is so limited in this area at the moment. taking away car parks will cause even more of a nightmare for us local residents.”</i>• <i>“It is already difficult for residents to get a car park in Cubitt St and reducing this by another 4 spaces is going to compound this problem. Is there a way to still provide a sporting area without giving up 4 car spaces?”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The design of the proposed expansion into Cubitt St will be reviewed in detail to minimise carparking losses.• In order to deliver the Cubitt St expansion part of the project, a separate Road Discontinuance process needs to be followed. As part of this process, a traffic impact assessment will need to be undertaken, and surrounding residents/property owners will have the opportunity to make a formal submission to Council about the proposal.

Feedback Theme 4: Sports Facilities

What did we hear	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“Love the sports facilities for the older kids. The BBQ will be a great addition too.”</i>• <i>“A multi-use court would be great, with ability to use for racquet sports and basketball/handball”</i>• <i>“The mixed-sport play area is great and a much better use of space currently taken up by the road.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposal for a multi-sport court area was well received by the community.• Basketball, tennis rebound wall, and handball were the top three sports requested by respondents.• Council will continue to investigate the feasibility of creating a sports area at the southern end of Cubitt St, considering concerns raised by community.• The final design of the sports area will need approval by Transurban (who manages the adjacent freeway) and will be required to be netted to prevent balls from entering the freeway.

Feedback Theme 5: Amenity & Maintenance Concerns

What did we hear	Our response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>“I don’t like the playground being put so close to residential buildings. All play areas and sports areas should be away from existing buildings. Residents and home owners have a right to quiet enjoyment of the space.”</i>• <i>“If you are putting in a BBQ then you will get more people eating and drinking (possibly with alcohol). People will need to use the toilet, so you need to cater for this and for all the rubbish that will be left as a result.”</i>• <i>“I am concerned about the ongoing maintenance, the Council has been unable to maintain the current park with the irrigation system not working, unable to repair the lawn area and unable to remove dead leaves etc.”</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The reason for relocating the playground is to address existing site issues, that is, that the existing lawn area (which needs sunlight to grow) is located in the shade, and the existing playground is located in the sunniest part of the park, requiring a shade sail. Whilst the new playground location will be closer to residences, the overall use of the park will remain unchanged and is not expected to generate additional noise.• We will include low-level ambient lighting to the park during dusk hours to improve user safety, without attracting additional use of the park at night.• We will review the park’s current maintenance inputs and adjust these as necessary to accommodate the new design.• We will address recurring maintenance issues through appropriate design and materials.

Requests for items that cannot be addressed in the scope of this project:

- We received 7 requests for public toilets at this site. Due to the small size of the park and the high cost of installation, public toilets cannot be accommodated at this location as part of this project.
- We received 2 requests to upgrade the freeway soundwall. This is not a Council asset and is out of the scope of this project.
- As stated under Feedback Theme 1 above, we cannot accommodate requests to further expand the playground.

Evaluating the engagement:

Objective	Evaluation
<p>Inform the community: Provide an update about the results of Stage 1 community engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We ensured that this consultation was shared through a variety of channels and methods and is relevant, timely and accurate. • 827 views on the Your Say Yarra page (target 500) • Reached 3,803 people on our social media channels. • Reached 12,924 people through email campaigns.
<p>Seeking feedback: Checking in with the community and gaining support for the proposed concept design/plan. Understanding the level of community support for the park to expand into Cubitt Street.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution rate of at least 13% on YSY page (target 5%) • At least 50 in-person conversations with community throughout the 2 pop up sessions (target 30) • We receive input from all target groups identified as highly impacted. • Responses received relate to the content discussed and are easily used by the project team to inform the development of the strategy.
<p>To make the engagement accessible and inclusive: We will actively seek to remove any known barriers to allow people of all abilities from our diverse community to participate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We used plain English descriptions and messaging. • Translation panels used on all printed materials and option to translate the YSY page into top 10 languages spoken in Yarra. • Translators available on request for in person pop up sessions. • We reached out to relevant advisory committees to inform them about the consultation.
<p>To share how feedback helped inform the final decision: We will be clear about how feedback will be used to inform the final decision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and stakeholders were updated on the final decision and how their feedback influenced that decision.