

Engagement outcomes report



Simpson Park Upgrade Summary

Simpson Park is one of the neighbourhood parks that makes up the network of green space in the Inner West. The park is in St Peters bordered by Campbell, Lackey and Hutchinson Streets.

Council is upgrading the picnic facilities and playground paths in the park and working with West Connex commissioned artist, Mike Hewson to upgrade the playground.

We engaged the local community on the upgrade of the picnic facilities and playground paths, asking for feedback on how the spaces, as well as the park as a whole, could be improved.

Engagement was open from 23 September to 3 November 2019 on Your Say Inner West. The project page received 286 visits with 65 responses to the feedback form. The project manager received 4 emails from community members who provided feedback on Simpson Park.

80% of online respondents use the park at least weekly and gave a range of ideas for improvements to the elements being upgraded as well as the entire space.

Background

Engagement was conducted in 2014 on the upgrade of Simpson Park with community priorities for the park at that time being more seating, and more picnic tables near the BBQ.

There were also requests for specific types of playground equipment, playground fencing, landscaping, soft fall, improved toilets facilities and bins and dog bins.

The project was put on hold due to the construction of West Connex.

This time, alongside Councils planned upgrade, West Connex is funding the artist designed playground, St Peters Fences Playground as part of its New M5 public art program 'Canal to Creek: A Cultural Landscape'. Council and artist, Mike Hewson, have coordinated their separate engagements to run concurrently and are also coordinating construction.

In the initial scope, there was a plan to include an upgrade to cricket nets though no feedback was sought on them specifically. During the engagement period, it was decided that the cricket nets would be packaged with an upgrade to the basketball court scheduled to take place in the next two years.

A question at the end of the feedback form collected any other feedback about the park. This will be used to inform the Pocket and Neighbourhood Parks Plan of Management, the plan that Simpson Park will operate within.

Engagement Methods

Engagement was hosted on Your Say Inner West with information about the project, and an online feedback form. Artist, Mike Hewson, hosted an online feedback form on a separate microsite and ran engagement with a local school.

Promotion

The project and Your Say Inner West online feedback form were promoted through the following channels:

- Your Say Inner West home page
- Your Say Inner West E-news
- Council Facebook post on 8 October 2019
- Notification letter to residents within 350m radius of the park
- Onsite posters



INNER WEST COUNCIL

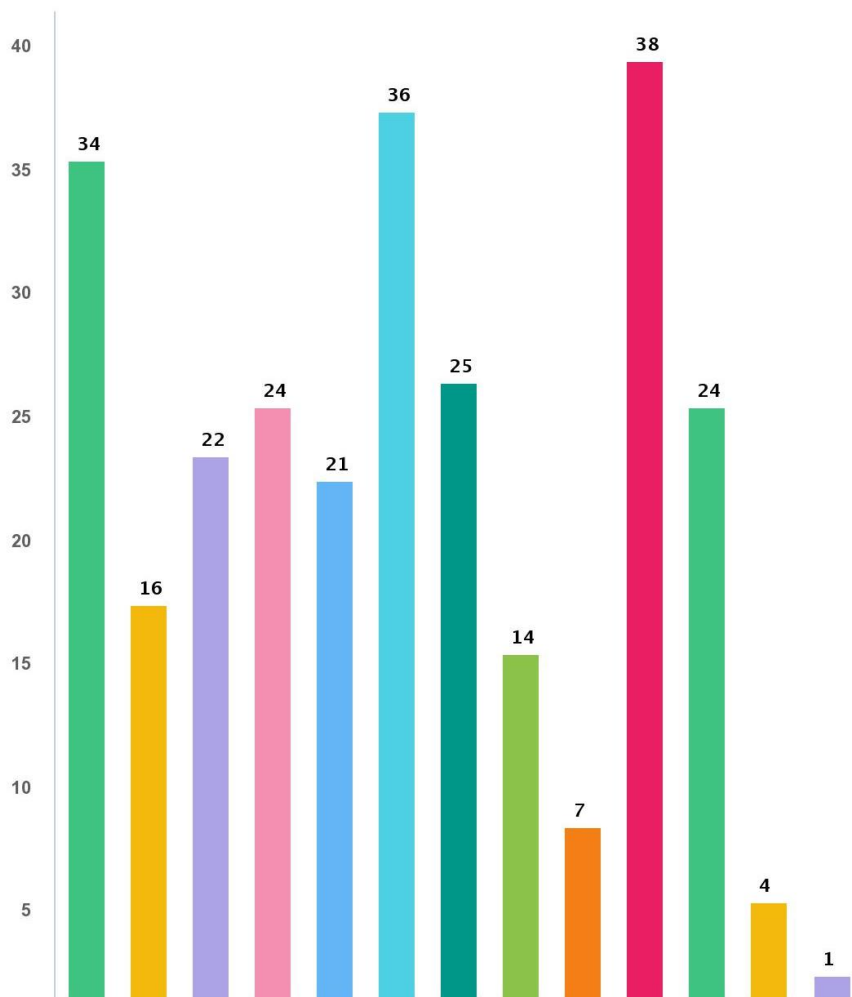
Engagement outcomes

Who did we hear from?

65 participants provided feedback online. We asked questions about how and how often community members use the park to get a better understanding of the main functions of the space, what's important to users, and to contextualise feedback for improvements.

The four community members who sent an email to the project manager provided feedback consistent with the themes which emerged in the online feedback.

How do you use simpson park?



Question options

(Click items to hide)

- Walk my dog
- Exercise
- Play at the playground
- Use the BBQ facilities
- Use the picnic facilities
- Relax in the green space
- Play on the open grass
- Use the basketball ring
- Hit the ball in the cricket nets
- Walk through on my way to somewhere else
- Take children that I care for to play at the playground
- Other (please specify)
- I don't use Simpson Park

Figure 1 How do you use Simpson Park?

The most common reasons for visiting Simpson Park include walk through on my way to somewhere else, walking a dog, relaxing in the green space, play in the open grass, use the BBQ facilities and take children to the playground.

How often do you visit Simpson Park?

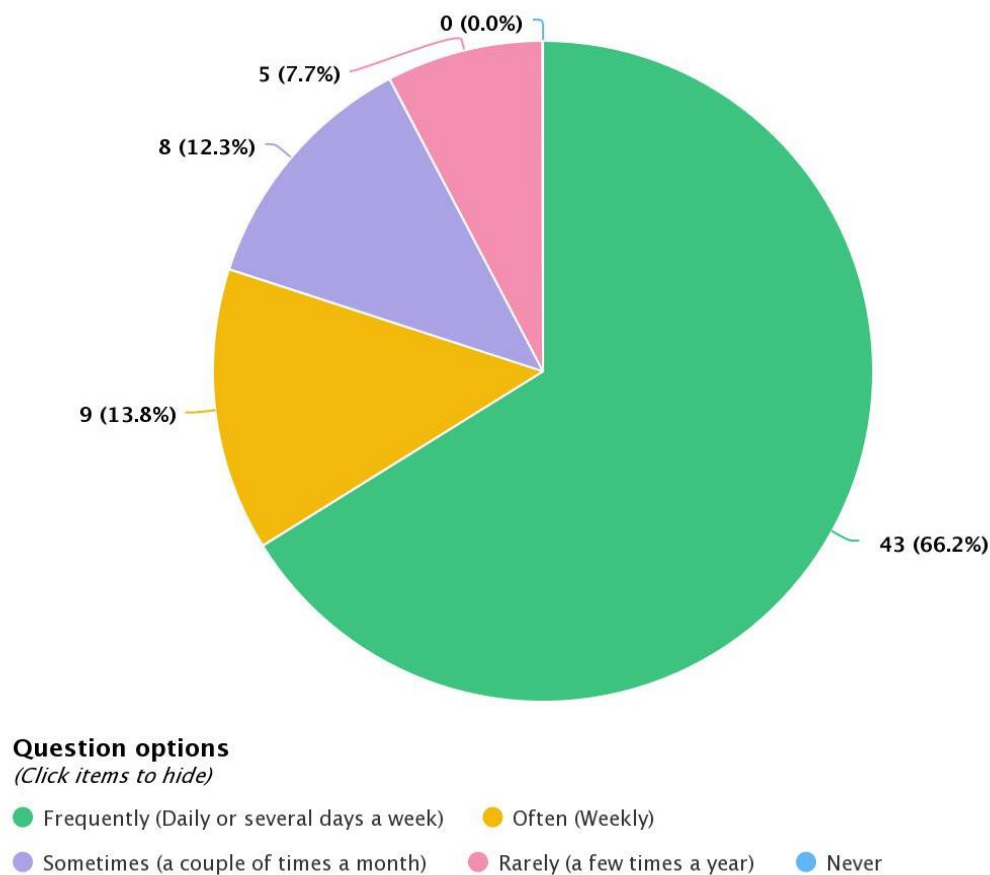


Figure 2 How often do you visit Simpson Park

80% of participants in the Your Say Inner West engagement visit the park either daily, several days a week or weekly.

What did they say?

Improvements to the paths to and around the playground

Feedback has been summarised as there were consistent themes. We heard the following:

- Improve the safety and accessibility of the paths, especially path smoothness and width
- Paint games such as hop scotch onto the path
- Improve path connections in the park, a path around the perimeter of the park, a path around the playground and paths that follow walking routes
- Decorate the paths with coloured paint for children
- Explore alternative path materials and textures including ideas to integrate old bricks into the paths.

Improvements to seating, tables and BBQ area

There were consistent themes raised in ideas for improvements to the picnic facilities. We heard the following:

- Better general maintenance to the facilities including cleaning and upkeep of furniture, regular emptying of bins
- More BBQs and picnic tables spread across the park for multiple groups to use, including a wheel chair accessible picnic table
- Shelter to BBQs and picnic tables to protect from elements and bird poo
- Add a water station to the picnic area
- More and better designed bins
- More seating in the park with a mix of in sun and shade
- Landscaping elements such as an herb garden and garden beds to define picnic area
- Move bins away from the BBQ area as they get filled with dog poo and are unpleasant
- Update picnic facilities with either wood as a material or coloured paint
- Lighting around the facilities for evening use.

Other comments

Participants were asked for any other comments on Simpson Park. This information will be used to inform the Pocket and Neighbourhood Parks Plan of Management which Simpson Park operates under. Comments have been themed.

The most common feedback was to introduce a dog off-leash area. Some comments supported a fenced area while others discouraged fencing the area. Other suggestions included having different periods of the day open to off leash. We also heard the following:

- Fence the playground area and remove bark chips using soft fall instead
- Improve safety and access including suggestions such as use auto-close gates and have ramps up to park entrances. There were suggestions to both retain the park fence for safety and remove it to encourage access
- Have designated dog poo bins, provide dog poo bags and have a dog drinking bowl
- Toilets are in poor condition and need an upgrade with added baby change areas
- Improve the sports facilities with basketball court extension and upgrade, upgrade and add cricket nets, remove volley ball net, install a soccer goal
- Add outdoor fitness equipment
- More plantings including plantings for nature play and exploration, and nesting boxes in trees
- It is a lovely, well used local park and this upgrade is fantastic
- A local artist would have been able to bring local character to the playground.

Participant demographics

87.5% of participants live in St Peters with most other participants living locally.

53% of participants are aged between 35 and 49 with a fairly even spread of participants on either side of that age bracket.

55.4% of participants are women and 38.5% are men.

3.2% of participants identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

6.3% of participants identify as someone with a disability.