

Item No: C1218(1) Item 12**Subject:** CAMPERDOWN MEMORIAL REST PARKSAFE UPDATE ON THE
OUTCOMES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**Prepared By:** Aaron Callaghan - Parks Planning and Engagement Manager**Authorised By:** Cathy Edwards-Davis - Group Manager Trees, Parks and Sports Fields**SUMMARY**

This report highlights the outcomes of community engagement in relation to a public survey on community views on park safety within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park and Fleming Street Playground in Newtown. The survey results highlight that the community feel safe accessing the park after dark. However, there are significant ongoing concerns about park safety and anti-social behaviour. This report recommends that Council continue to work in partnership with the NSW Police in addressing anti-social behaviour problems at Camperdown Memorial Rest Park.

RECOMMENDATION**THAT Council:**

1. **Endorse the proposed location for the public toilets within the park as outlined in the report and proceed to deliver these facilities in 2019;**
2. **In response to the engagement survey outcomes, establishes an alcohol prohibited area in the park along Australia Street (as highlighted in Fig 1.0) and seek the NSW Police assistance in administering this area;**
3. **Maintain the current alcohol restrictions (9am-9pm) in other areas within the park;**
4. **Undertake a public education campaign within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park and Fleming Street Playground similar to the program which has been run by the City of Sydney;**
5. **Note the public request for increased ranger patrols in Camperdown Memorial Rest Park after dark;**
6. **Subject to future partner funding support or grant funding, the option of a Park Ambassador program be considered should anti-social problems continue to be a concern to park users; and**
7. **Proceed with the removal of the picnic shelter at Fleming Street Park.**

BACKGROUND

At the meeting on the 9 October 2019, Council considered a report on issues concerning park safety within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park in Newtown and resolved the following:

1. Council undertake a community safety survey to assess community views on park safety at Camperdown Memorial Rest Park and Fleming Street Playground. The public survey will assess the following:
 - Community perceptions on safety within the two park areas;
 - Community ideas on reclaim the park initiatives with regards to the types of community events and means in which Council and external agencies can assist in activating the park;
 - Community perceptions on the establishment of an alcohol free zone in the

- southern part of Camperdown Memorial Rest Park;
 - Community perceptions of the impact of lighting improvements on safety in Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, including the 2018/2019 summer trial of lighting pathways only;
 - Community support for increased Council presence in the park out of normal working hours as a way of activating the park, such as evening ranger patrols; and:
 - Community support for the establishment of a community garden (subject to future community ownership and management) at Fleming Street Playground and the removal of the picnic shelter.
2. Council's engagement actively includes young people who currently use Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, including working with local youth outreach organisations where required;
 3. The results of the public consultation are reported back to Council no later than December 2018, with the report to include an interim assessment of the impact of the lighting trial;
 4. Council implement the short term lighting improvements outlined in the report, for a trial period over the 2018/2019 summer in which only path lights within the park will be activated; and
 5. Council identify options for funding future long term lighting improvements along key pathways within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park.
 6.
 - a. That the community survey recognise that there is well-established community support for a public toilet, and propose a location or locations for community comment;
 - b. That council receive a report on funding and location options for the construction of the public toilet in 2018/19 or sooner; and
 - c. That council receive a report on the existing after dark operations of the City of Sydney to improve safety and deter anti-social behaviour, with consideration of whether these operations could be extended to the park.

Community Engagement

Council launched a community engagement strategy to assess community concerns relating to park safety on Thursday 1 November 2018. The public survey ran through to Sunday 18 November. A total of 3,000 residents (both Inner West Council and the City of Sydney) were letter boxed informing them of the survey and directing them to Council's Your Say Site (**Refer to Attachment 1**). Posters were also placed in the park itself advertising the engagement process. In addition to the residential letter drop, two intercept sessions were held in the park on:

- Friday 9 November 4pm – 6pm
- Saturday 17 November 12pm – 2pm

Youth off the Street also undertook tailored evening surveys later in the evening with young park users. The surveys were also promoted at the Inner West Council stand at the Newtown festival on 11 November 2018. A total of 1024 people visited the Council Your Say site in relation to the public survey and a total of 678 respondents completed the survey.

Survey Questions and Results

Attachment 2 provides a full graphical analysis of the survey results. In summary the key survey findings highlighted the following:

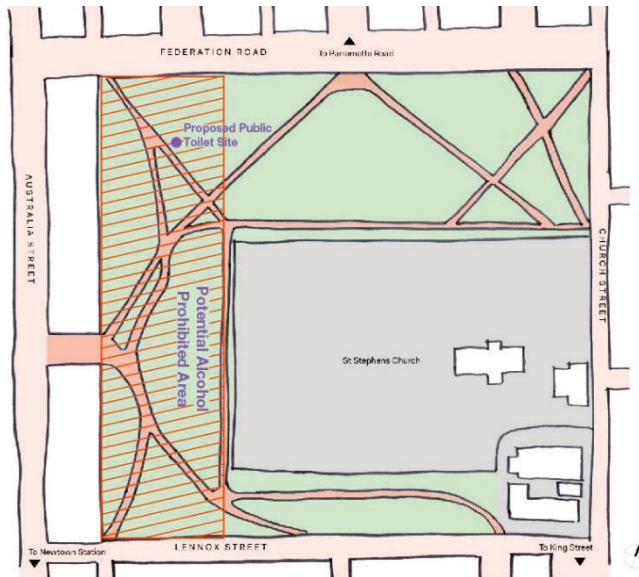
- A total of 678 respondents completed a park safe survey.
- The majority of respondents were from Camperdown
- The majority of respondents were aged 35-49 years of age.
- The majority of respondents were female.
- 99% of respondents visited the park.
- A significant number of people accessed Camperdown Park at night.
- The majority of survey respondents highlighted that they visited the park to relax and enjoy the park surroundings.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they accessed the park in the evening hours
- The majority of respondents agreed that they feel safe in the park after dark
- A total of 76% of respondents supported the proposed location for the public toilets.
- 55% of all respondents supported the removal of the picnic shelter at Fleming Street Playground and the introduction of community gardens.

In addition to the responses collated from the survey results a number of submissions were made by residents and park users on improving safety and amenity within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park and Fleming Street Playground. These responses are highlighted in the summary of submissions – **Attachment 3**.

Alcohol Restrictions

Currently alcohol restrictions are in place across the park from 9am-9pm. The public survey has highlighted community support for an alcohol prohibited zone (Refer to fig 1.0) along the Australia Street boundary of the park. Placing an outdoor alcohol restriction zone in this area will enable the NSW Police the option of confiscating bottles off park patrons who drink in this area. It is recommended that Council adopt such a strategy and enacted it with the support of the NSW Police. An educational strategy to educate park users about alcohol prohibited zone is also recommended moving forward.

Fig 1.0 Proposed Alcohol Prohibited Zone



Lighting

One stand out item from the public survey results was the community perception that the park needs more lighting, not less. While the vast majority of survey respondents highlighted that they feel safe in the park after dark, the vast majority of survey respondents also requested more lighting be considered especially in the playground area. Currently, Council has in place a six month trial over the summer period of having no lights on within the central greenspace area. Path areas remain floodlit and there are longer term plans to improve lighting along the main path which transverses the boundary of the playground. The works that are planned will provide a greater amount of light along this section of the park. It is not recommended to floodlight the playground at this stage but rather reassess lighting issues with the NSW Police at the end of the six month trial period.

CCTV

Video surveillance in public places is not a new theme. In many cities across the world, parks and town centers have CCTV installed to record images of people using and interacting within such spaces.

Importantly CCTV images can be used as evidence in court.

The use of CCTV can assist in the reduction of crime. However this reduction is often partnered with other initiatives, including improved lighting, Police patrols and the introduction of restrictions within parks. Council could consider the introduction of CCTV surveillance within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park. It is noted that there is no funding available for this initiative.

Park Ambassador Program

The community survey has highlighted public support for increased ranger patrols both during the day time and after dark within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park. Council's ranger service is not trained in the area of park patrols after dark and such a proposal raises inherent safety risks to staff. Further, there is no funding available for these additional resources.

Council could consider, in the future, complementing NSW Police activities within the park through the appointment of a Park Ambassador Program. This would require appropriately trained staff frequenting parks during the day and after dark and acting as the "ears and eyes" of the park. This role could include

- regular site visits and inspections,
- offering water to intoxicated persons,
- advising park users on park rules and regulations

- reporting damage and undesirable behaviour directly to the NSW Police
- developing a relationship with local residents
- educating park users on rules and regulations

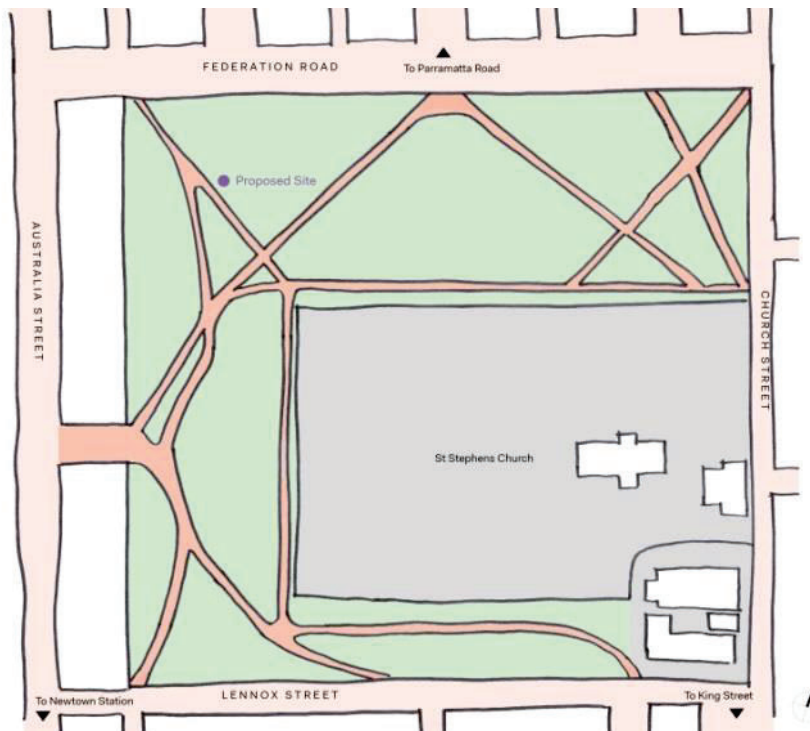
The costs of a Park Ambassador Service are likely to be significant in terms of staff recruitment and ongoing staff management costs. Given the likely cost implications it is recommended such a proposal only be considered should partner funding become available from either the NSW Government or another funding provider. Such a scheme would need to be costed and future additional reporting would be required in this regard to determine whether such a service would have benefits for the community and what the value of these benefits would be in terms of improving community safety within parks. Park Ambassadors, as distinct from Council compliance rangers, are a common service provided by Councils in the United Kingdom with annual hours of work adjusted to seasonal periods to reflect the nature of park use.

Such a scheme would not however substitute the legal responsibilities for crime prevention which remain with the NSW Police.

Public Toilets.

A total of 76% of respondents supported the proposed location for public toilets within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park. The location proposed is highlighted below in Fig 1.1. This location is located centrally and visibly within the park and has good site lines and accessibility. The location of this facility is supported by the NSW Police. It is noted that some submissions have requested that the public toilet be located adjacent to Lennox Street where they would be located closer to the NSW Police Station. This location is immediately in the site lines of residents who live on Lennox Street. The visual issue of a public toilet directly located across the road from residential properties was also a design issue which Council officers have considered and are not supportive of. Maintaining residential amenity and views into the park is also a key park planning consideration. Given the status of the park as a former cemetery Council will still need to resolve and manage archaeological issues which may be associated with the location recommended.

Fig 1.1 Proposed Public Toilet Location Camperdown Memorial Rest Park.



City of Sydney-After Dark Operations.

Council officers have met with the City of Sydney to discuss strategies which the City undertakes to address anti-social behaviour in parks and streets. Importantly the City of Sydney does not provide front line services for dealing with anti-social behaviour within parks. The City of Sydney has taken a proactive approach in working with the NSW Police to address such problems. The City has run a number of educational campaigns including the Good Neighbourhood BBQ's which are held in local parks to foster and encourage neighbours to get to know each other. One such event was partnered with the Inner West Council and held in Camperdown Memorial Rest Park on the 15 September 2018. In addition the City has also run campaigns aimed at educating park users on outdoor alcohol restrictions where these are in place within a street or public park. An example of a recent educational poster campaign is attached in **Attachment 4**. It is recommended that Council also adopt a similar education approach in Inner West Parks where such restrictions exist.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is an existing budget for the proposed toilet facilities. The signage and education work recommended within the report can be funded from existing budgets and delivered with existing resources.

OTHER STAFF COMMENTS

Council's Engagement team and Community Services Project Officer have been involved in the community engagement phases of this project.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Community engagement:

- Youth off the Street Engagement (within the park)

- Your Say online survey – 3,000 residents notified
- Park Planning and Engagement Office engagement (within the park)
- Newtown Festival Engagement
- VIBE Committee Engagement

CONCLUSION

Extensive community engagement has been undertaken by Council in assessing community views on park safety within Camperdown Memorial Rest Park and Fleming Street Playground. The engagement outcomes have highlighted that while the community feel safe accessing parks after dark there are significant ongoing concerns about park safety and anti-social behaviour. An ongoing partnership with the NSW Police in addressing anti-social behaviour problems in the subject park areas is recommended.

Subject to future partner funding support or grant funding, the option of a Park Ambassador program and/ or CCTV could also be considered should anti-social problems continue to be a concern to park users.

The survey outcomes have highlighted significant public support for a public toilet within the park, in the location recommended by Council officers and the NSW Police.

ATTACHMENTS

1. [↓](#) Park Safety Survey
2. [↓](#) Graphical Analysis of the Survey Results
3. [↓](#) Submissions by Residents and Park Users
4. [↓](#) Educational Poster Campaign