



Ashfield Park. Photography by Welsh + Major.

Appendix B - Community Engagement

OVERVIEW + ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.0 Summary

Council engaged the Inner West community for input in the preparation of a 10-year plan for Ashfield Park, which is to include a Plan of Management and Master Plan. Community engagement was carried out via the engagement platform Your Say Inner West (YSIW).

Online engagement was carried out from the 2nd of March 2020 to the 31st of March 2020. The project page received close to 340 visits. Of those visitors, close to 120 visitors left feedback. The questions prompted visitors to express their thoughts on Ashfield Park in general, including what visitors currently value and dislike about Ashfield Park; what improvements visitors would like to see in Ashfield Park; and what should be prioritised within the plan.

1.1 Background

Plans of management must be prepared for all types of parks on community land. Community engagement is a critical step in the preparation of a Plan of Management, forming one of the first stages of the process. Community feedback is then taken into consideration alongside stakeholders and expert advice to form a draft plan of management and master plan, which is presented for further community input prior to the final document being decided upon by Council.

Inner West Council established a parks planning priority list, which nominates which open spaces in greatest need of new or updated Plans of Management. Ashfield Park has been nominated as high priority within the Inner West council area.

The purpose of engagement was to establish any key issues that the community may have in relation to Ashfield Park, as well as highlighting aspects of the park which are highly valued. Contributors were encouraged to include ideas, comments and suggestions to assist in prioritising the focus of key strategies and outcomes for the future.

1.2 Engagement Method

The methods of engagement were:

- Online on yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au through survey
- Engagement with existing park organisations
- Written feedback form

Drop-in sessions were planned to be undertaken within Ashfield Park on Wednesday 18th of March 11am-12:30pm and Saturday 21st of March 4-5:30pm. As part of council's response plan to coronavirus COVID-19, these sessions were unfortunately not able to be held.

1.3 Promotion

Community consultation The public exhibition period was promoted by Inner West Council using a number of means, including:

- Social media
- 'Your Say Inner West' monthly update
- Council Column Inner West Courier
- Council website
- Email to identified groups.

All promotion collateral directed people to the online submission form on YSIW and to the two park drop-in sessions. When it was discovered that in-person sessions were unable to go ahead due to the public health response, signs were posted to direct would-be participants to online.

2.0 Engagement Outcomes

Outcomes of community engagement received through the online survey and written feedback forms have been collated within this report. Feedback to questions has been arranged so that comments which were more common are presented first.

2.1 Online Survey

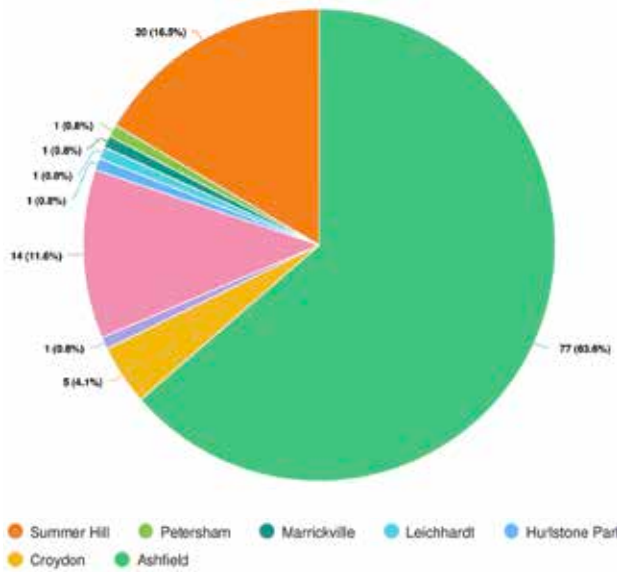
The online survey included multiple choice and essay style questions for more detailed feedback. Quantitative responses to the multiple-choice questions are displayed visually in the Engagement Outcomes section below. Written responses have been themed and are presented in descending order of common themes raised.

Feedback from organisations was also sought through the online engagement format, with the ability for organisations to upload documents and provide comments.

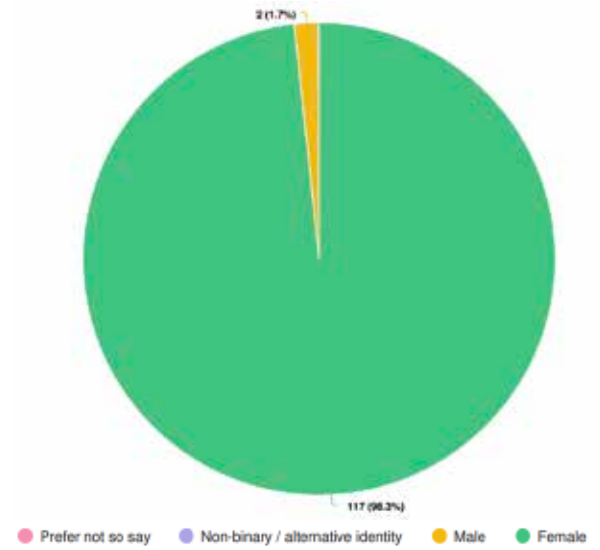
Input was also received by council in the form of written surveys and feedback posted to council to ensure that there were opportunities to provide feedback beyond the online portal. This feedback has been themed and collated with the online feedback.

The demographics of respondents were collected through the online survey and is represented in graph form within this report. The most significant age group of respondents was between 35-49 (38% of respondents) followed by 25-34 (32% of respondents). The majority of respondents identified as living in Ashfield (64% of respondents) followed by Summer Hill (16% of respondents).

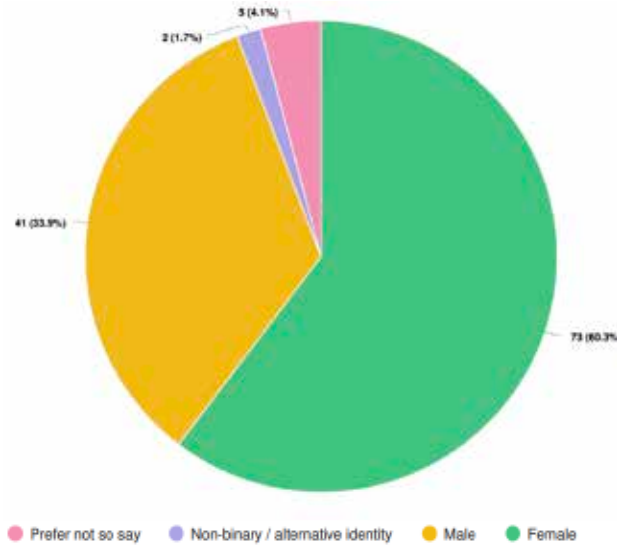
Question - Which suburb do you live in?



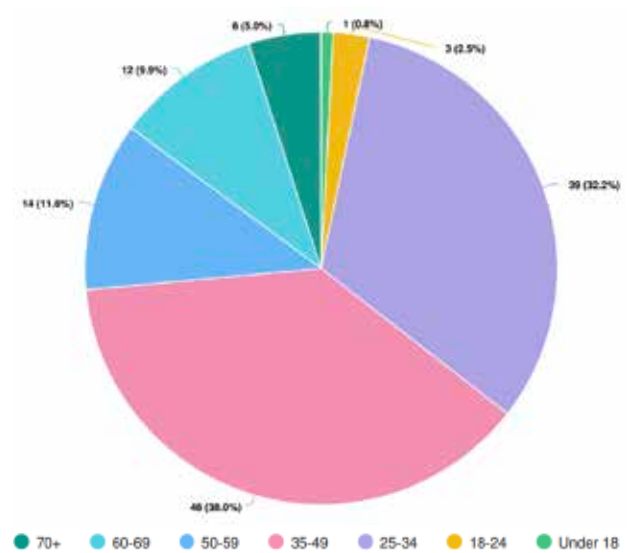
Question - Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?



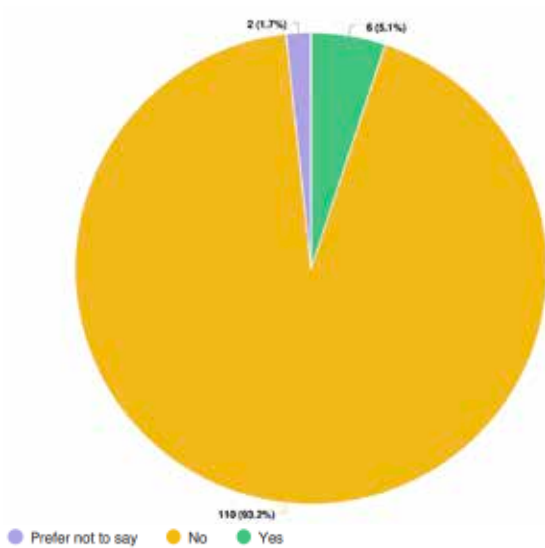
Question - What is your gender?



Question - What is your age?

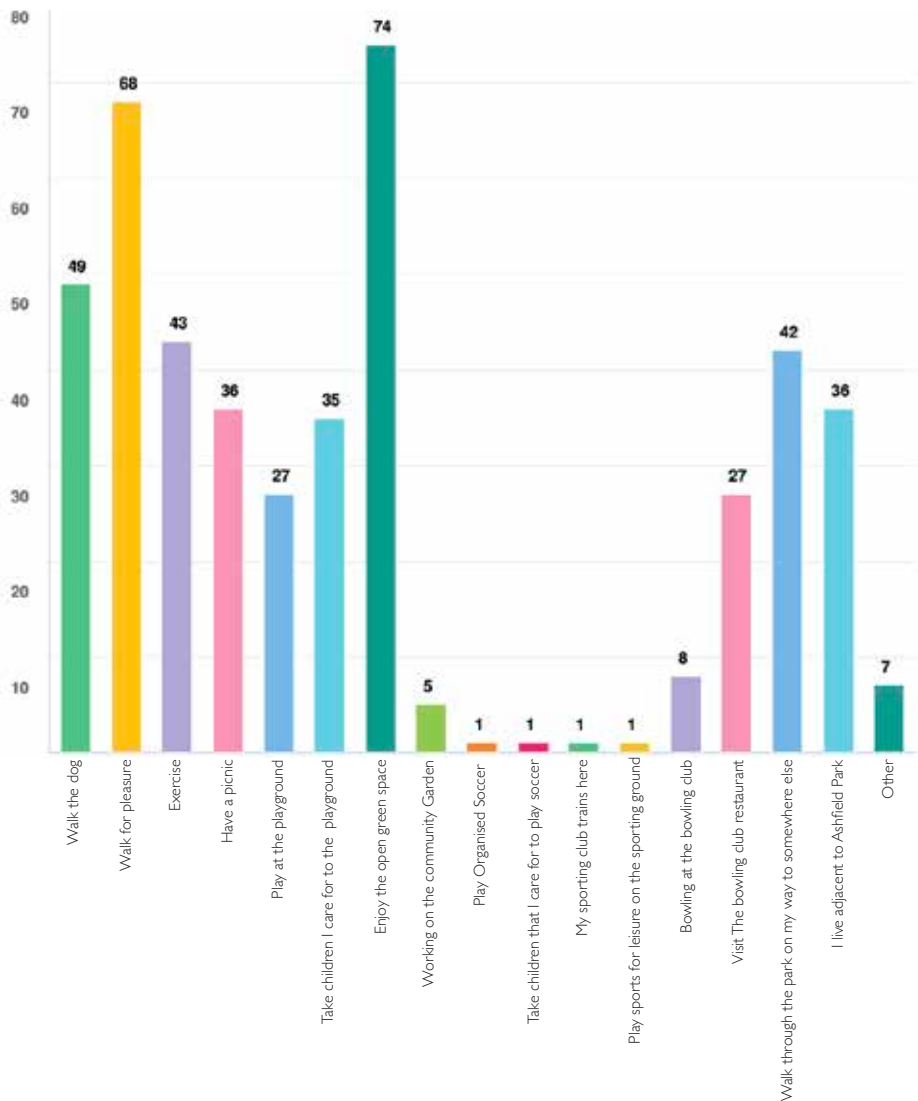


Question - Do you identify as someone with a disability?

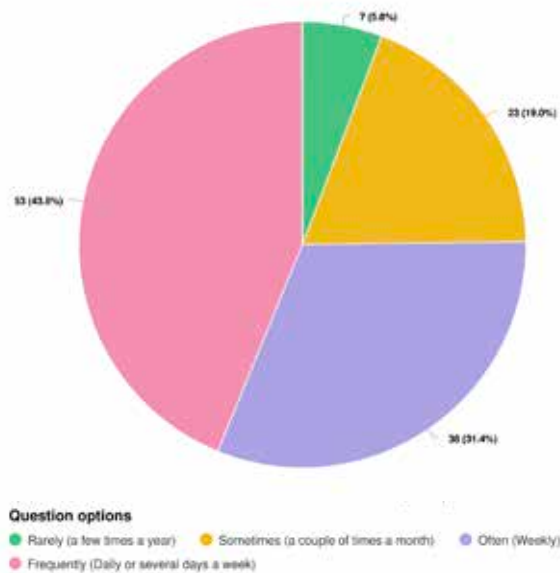


ONLINE SURVEY

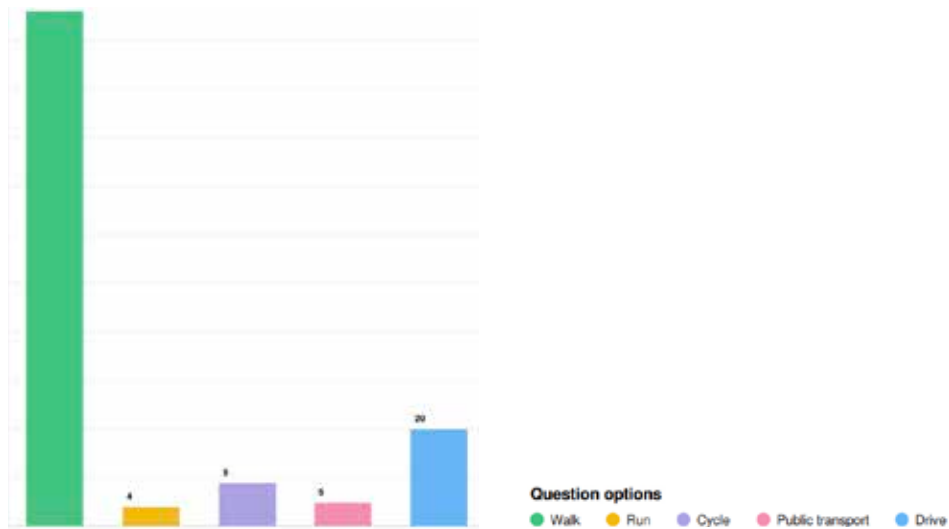
Q1 - What are the main reasons that you visit Ashfield Park? Please tick all that apply



Q4 - How often do you visit Ashfield Park?



Q5 - How do you get to Ashfield Park?



Q10 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



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Q6 - Please describe what you value about Ashfield Park. You may like to describe what it looks like, how you use it or how it makes you feel.

- Open green spaces and leafy greenery.
- The grand, established and historic trees within the park which also provide welcome shade.
- The park is a peaceful space, with a unique calming character.
- A great place for dog walking and meeting other dog owners.
- Safe areas for children to play and socialise, such as the fenced playground and amongst the trees.
- The size of the park and the many spaces available so that there is enough room for all visitors.
- Jogging, strolling and pram walking around the paths.
- Using the community garden, and watching how visitors interact with it.
- The rich history of the park.
- Seeing the local wildlife, such as possums and birds.
- That the park is well kept, clean and maintained.
- The way the park brings a diverse community together.
- The park is great for getting some exercise.
- The bowling club and the community feel.
- The open spaces are valuable for people who live in apartments and offers a respite from dense urban areas.
- Barbecue shelters.
- Exercise equipment.
- The lovely flower gardens within the park.
- That the park is not overdeveloped and isn't overly defined.
- The memorials, particularly the war memorial.
- Attending soccer / cricket training and games at the park.
- Cycling through the park.
- That the park is family friendly.
- Children riding their bikes around the paths.
- Seeing dogs within the park.
- Slack-lining between trees within the park.
- Available water fountains.
- Great place for watching the sunset.
- Running in the park.
- The park is great for impromptu soccer games.
- The inter-crossing paths.
- Spending time with family in the park.
- The picnic seating.
- That the park is on-leash for dogs.

Q7 - What don't you like about Ashfield Park?

- Many participants noted that the park was generally very good.
- Lacks off-leash dog areas, timed or otherwise.
- Lack of parking during sports events and training, difficult for residents and other visitors.
- A lack of shady picnic benches with tables.
- Lack of toilets within the park - needs more toilets and upgraded facilities - current toilets are too small.
- The toilets are unpleasant and should be better maintained to keep up with use.
- The park being overrun with sporting groups and training.
- A lack of shelter, particularly from the sun but also for wet weather gatherings. Needs additional picnic shelters.
- The lack of lighting, particularly along pathways and around picnic areas.
- Dogs being off-leash throughout the park regardless of this not being permitted.
- A good coffee shop, pop-up or coffee van would be welcomed as the bowling club 'Homer's Cafe' has closed.
- The park needs more native plants and fauna habitat.
- A lack of trees in the park.
- Lack of signage / confusion about where toilets are located. Hard to find the toilets.
- A lack of strategic bin placement - more bins and better located.
- The footpaths within the playground are uneven, and kids running / riding around often trip over.
- Recent additions that do not sit well with the timeless character of the park such as new lighting and display board at sporting ground.
- The impact of the busy Parramatta Rd on the park.
- Water fountains are out of order / there is a lack of them.
- Need more areas with playground equipment, such as more smaller play areas, more play structures, such as waterplay, and play equipment for older children.
- Not enough seating within the park.
- Vegetables being stolen from the community garden
- Rubbish being left in the park from visitors getting takeaway from the nearby McDonalds.
- Lighting could be improved around exercise stations.
- Memorials and statues are hard to interpret, lacking context to justify why they are in the park.
- The footpath around the Anzac memorial could be improved and wider.
- The amount of loud parties and events at the park which continue into the night.
- The bowling club could use an upgrade, and include a pet and child friendly element, such as a cafe.

- The parks vegetation is overly manicured.
- The feeding of birds and possums by some visitors.
- Some of the spaces can be taken over by large groups.
- The park could have more food and drink options.
- More fresh water for dogs.
- Bindies in the grass.
- Parramatta Road is an eyesore and could be obscured with new planting.
- Maintain Begonia House and upgrade the lighting inside.
- The post at the ramp along Parramatta Rd.
- Noise from sporting training.
- More barbeques as the existing ones can get crowded.
- The manicured gardens are neglected.

Q9 - What do you think should be the main priority of the park plans?

- Off-leash dog areas, for example using the sporting ground when not in use, or time-share arrangements for another area within the park.
- A fenced off-leash area, as fencing would be required to protect dogs from running onto Parramatta Rd.
- Limiting new additions or developments to the park as it is currently a versatile, open and welcoming space for all.
- Upgrading the toilets.
- Better play areas for children - playground upgrades.
- Upgrading the exercise equipment as it is outdated. Suggested equipment could include: chin-up bars; parallel bars; dip bars; callisthenics equipment.
- Hosting more community events within the park, for example small, free festivals, with music, activities, food stalls, etc.
- Reducing the speed limit on roads around the park to make access safer for people crossing the road to the park.
- More planting and more trees.
- Preserving the trees.
- Maintaining the planter beds / more garden areas.
- More sheltered picnic spaces for all-weather use.
- A sensory garden, for example in the locations of the existing ornamental garden beds.
- Addressing shopping trolleys being left within the park.
- Improve the planning around events held at the park.
- Any new additions should blend in.
- Function and hiring requirements to limit noise after dark.
- Dogs should be on-leash only and no parts of the park should become off-lead.

- The sporting ground should be available for the community to use.
- Ensuring the park is welcoming for people to picnic and children to play.
- There are many memorials and information that celebrates first nations people, history and local indigenous culture.
- Shady areas for tai-chi.
- Remove signage that is belligerent and ensure new signage respects visitors.
- A water feature for local birds to drink, particularly during the drought when a water source is important.
- Shared paths / signage for cyclists.
- The bowling club is a great place to share with friends and family and could be expanded.
- Sympathetic fencing around the parramatta road side to improve safety for children.
- Theme the park into quadrants to strengthen the character of the various areas, such as; leisure; formal/ceremonial; play; activity.
- Pavement upgrades to make jogging and cycling easier.
- Another playground at the other end of the park would be good.
- Cricket nets.
- A specialised running and cycling track.
- Fixing bowling club signage.
- Focus on recreation for smaller groups and individuals rather than sporting groups.
- Create a space for kids to ride bikes.
- More barbecue facilities.
- Add more bicycle parking.

Q - Do you have any other comments about Ashfield Park?

- The well-being of dogs and dog owners in the community, including those with companion animals, should be considered with an off-leash dog area.
- A natural green barrier between Parramatta Rd and the park would make that area of the park more attractive and useful, and block noise / traffic pollution.
- The date being displayed on Parramatta Road is great / must be continued into the future.
- Park is in great condition, is well maintained and is highly valued by the community. This should be a continued focus.
- Food trucks / pop-up cafe for weekends or sporting events could be a good addition.
- Climate change should be considered in planning for the future, such as around water use. The park should be drought-proofed with additional capacity.

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ONLINE SURVEY

Q - Do you have any other comments about Ashfield Park? -

Continued

- More lighting is needed.
- Dogs-on-leash rules should be maintained.
- Parking can be an issue during events, but this may not have a solution.
- Dense understorey planting should be re-established at the corner of Ormond and Pembroke St.
- There are occasionally people sleeping rough in the picnic areas.
- Barbecue and picnic areas would benefit from more lighting.
- A walking track with separated cycleway is needed.
- The bowling club is a fantastic community asset.
- The park's multicultural character makes me feel proud to be part of this community.
- The park must be protected as an oasis and green retreat from a dense urban area.
- Council should keep the community updated on the park and any changes going into the future.
- The bus route that stops at the bowling club should be protected.
- Events should be supported at the park, such as the carnival of cultures and carols. Jazz concerts should be held at the park once again.
- There is little on offer for teenagers.
- A separate bike path.
- Do not install more unattractive fencing.
- Ensure that new grassed areas are growing adequately and not neglected, resulting in bald / exposed patches.
- The park itself should be protected from development, particularly any future roadway expansions along Parramatta Rd and Westconnex.
- The areas surrounding Ashfield Park should not be overdeveloped and the density should remain as it currently stands.

2.1.1 Input from Organisations

Online input was received from one organisation.

Ashfield Park Dog Community

Online input was received in the form of a document from the Ashfield Park Dog Community. The document suggested that an off-leash dog area be considered for the park. The organisation suggested a timeshare arrangement for the off-leash dog area, so that it can be used between 6am to 10am and 3pm to 7pm. A suggested location for the off-leash area was the grass area close to the Ormond St / Gower St Entrance. The same organisation also has an online petition for the support of this suggestion, which had 275 signatures as of the 3rd of April, 2020.

2.2 Other Input

Input was also received by council in the form of a written survey and letters posted to council. This feedback has been collated with the information collected online.

STAKEHOLDERS AND ORGANISATIONS

2.2 Stakeholders and Organisations

Input was sought from a number of key stakeholders who are currently involved with Ashfield Park. These stakeholders included:

- Ashfield Park Community Garden
- Ashfield Bowling Club
- APIA Leichhardt Football Club
- Canterbury & Western Suburbs Cricket Association

1) Ashfield Park Community Garden

- The community garden is well looked after, with people working and learning together, sharing skills and fresh produce provided by the garden. There are on average 20 members currently, but this number rises and falls. The group includes a wide range of ages. The group made use of largely existing garden beds that were in a disused state on site to create the community garden.
- Members normally meet on the first Saturday of the month, with one or two people watering the garden every day or two.
- The size and variety of the garden is good; It could be extended with a herb garden that could be free and open for the wider community to pick.
- A fence could assist in reducing people from being tempted to harvest the garden, however a fence would also isolate the garden from the wider community which is one of its assets and best features.
- The garden is generally in a good location; but the bed adjacent the large tree is sapped of nutrients by the trees roots, which is difficult. It could be relocated further from the tree to address this.
- The existing facilities include a watering tap on site. The group bring their own fixtures and hoses. The tap attached to the raised garden leaks, and some attachments require 2 people at once to use.
- There is an existing storage shed offered by the bowling club, however this is quite far from the garden and somewhat dependant on the owner of the bowling club permitting access in the future.
- A water tank would be a good water saving measure / could be used for the garden.
- A compost on site would benefit the garden, as well as key access to the green waste bin used by the bowling club (the bin is padlocked).
- There is existing signage, but this could be improved to discourage harvesting by non-members.
- Access to any small amounts of council excess garden material from council, such as fertiliser, could be beneficial.
- Council could assist by paying public insurance cost for the

garden so that the money raised by the group can be invested into equipment and plants.

- New edging around the smaller round garden bed - mowers maintaining the grass in the park have damaged the current edging.
- Weatherproof signage to inform the community of working bees.

2) Ashfield Park Bowling Club

- The bowling club has around 900 members across a range of age groups, and has been operating for 130 years.
- The club offers a variety of services to the wider community including; senior citizen computer lessons; barefoot bowls where younger players are matched with senior players; a range of events for different community groups and organisations and more. Space to community groups is offered for meetings and functions at no extra cost. Nursing homes and disability groups frequent the club.
- Parking is an issue, with street parking fairly limited which impacts bookings at the club.
- The vision is for the club to become more family friendly and to change one of the existing natural grass bowling greens to a synthetic green, so that the club can host more community days on the green.
- The club is in contact with the First Nations community through the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence to explore opportunities for new and inclusive events at the club.
- Council should continue to renew the lease for the club and support the club so that it can continue to operate.
- The club has rainwater tanks located under ground.
- The community garden has access to storage in the bowls room via a key, so that they can access the room at all times.

3) APIA Leichhardt Football Club

- It was noted that the club's home ground is Lambert Park and that Ashfield Park is generally used for junior's games and training.
- The club uses the playing ground on Saturday mornings (shared with the Pirates sport team) and Sundays.
- Parking during sports games can be difficult, particularly the younger games, with parents often dropping off younger players and parking to watch the game. This is however the nature of the inner west.
- Amenities and change rooms could use an upgrade, ensuring better facilities, accessibility and gender neutral change facilities. Canteen facilities would be welcomed.
- APIA would not be supportive of a synthetic pitch at Ashfield Park, as it limits general community use.

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STAKEHOLDERS AND ORGANISATIONS

APIA Leichhardt Football Club - continued

- A fence around the entire sporting ground would be nice, but it was acknowledged that this is not really practical for a community sporting ground that is used by other sporting games, for example cricket.
- The park is very well maintained and generally is a great place already.
- Facilities for spectators are not really an issue - people generally bring their own chairs, or sit in the shade to watch games.
- Lighting for the sporting ground is generally very good.

4) Canterbury & Western Suburbs Cricket Association

- Generally 3 games of cricket are played on a Saturday.
- Lighting level is sufficient for grade of cricket played at Ashfield Park.
- Cricket nets at the park would be useful, but would need to be fairly close to the playing area for warm up and training exercises, and Cricket Australia can provide specification for nets.
- An additional smaller sporting ground would be nice to have, but could be hard to locate at Ashfield Park.
- Sporting ground seems to drain, and there are not issues raised with standing water.
- Cafe 'flag poles' to advertise the bowling club is open or can be reached from the sporting ground area, so that parents attending sports on Saturdays know that there is a cafe on site / ensure that bowling club cafe is catering towards this. Would be nice to have a 'hatch' or side opening so that there is a takeaway spot at the bowling club.
- Storage for cricket equipment would be ideal. Storage should be secure and ventilated, so that expensive equipment is protected and does not go mouldy or get damaged. Storage / renovating underneath existing dressing sheds may be able to provide this.
- Typically there is one team sitting under the trees and one team under the awning on the benches, as there is not enough space on the verandah.
- Seating along embankment is currently nice and casual, and well used.

5) Summer Hill Cricket Club

- Typically 250 players, with numbers growing, particularly with girls playing. the club has been established for 29 years, and has a junior boys and girls teams, and mens teams.
- The sporting ground is used for Saturday afternoons for girls cricket. Lighting is not used.
- The sporting ground is great size for junior girls cricket and is considered one of the better grounds for this division.
- Well maintained, good drainage great sporting ground.

- players and spectators set up at the southern end in the shady areas. There is good access to toilets and play equipment nearby.
- Parking is not ideal.
- The bank along the eastern edge could be levelled to increase the length of the shortest boundary.
- Tea room in the park would be a nice addition.

6) Ashfield Cricket Club

- Typically 200 players in last season and growing, with an age range of 5-65.
- Currently make use of storage under the dressing sheds.
- Sporting ground is in a great condition for cricket, and sloping boundaries are pleasant for sitting and watching.
- Parking is a challenge but this would be difficult to improve.
- Cricket net facilities would be good.

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