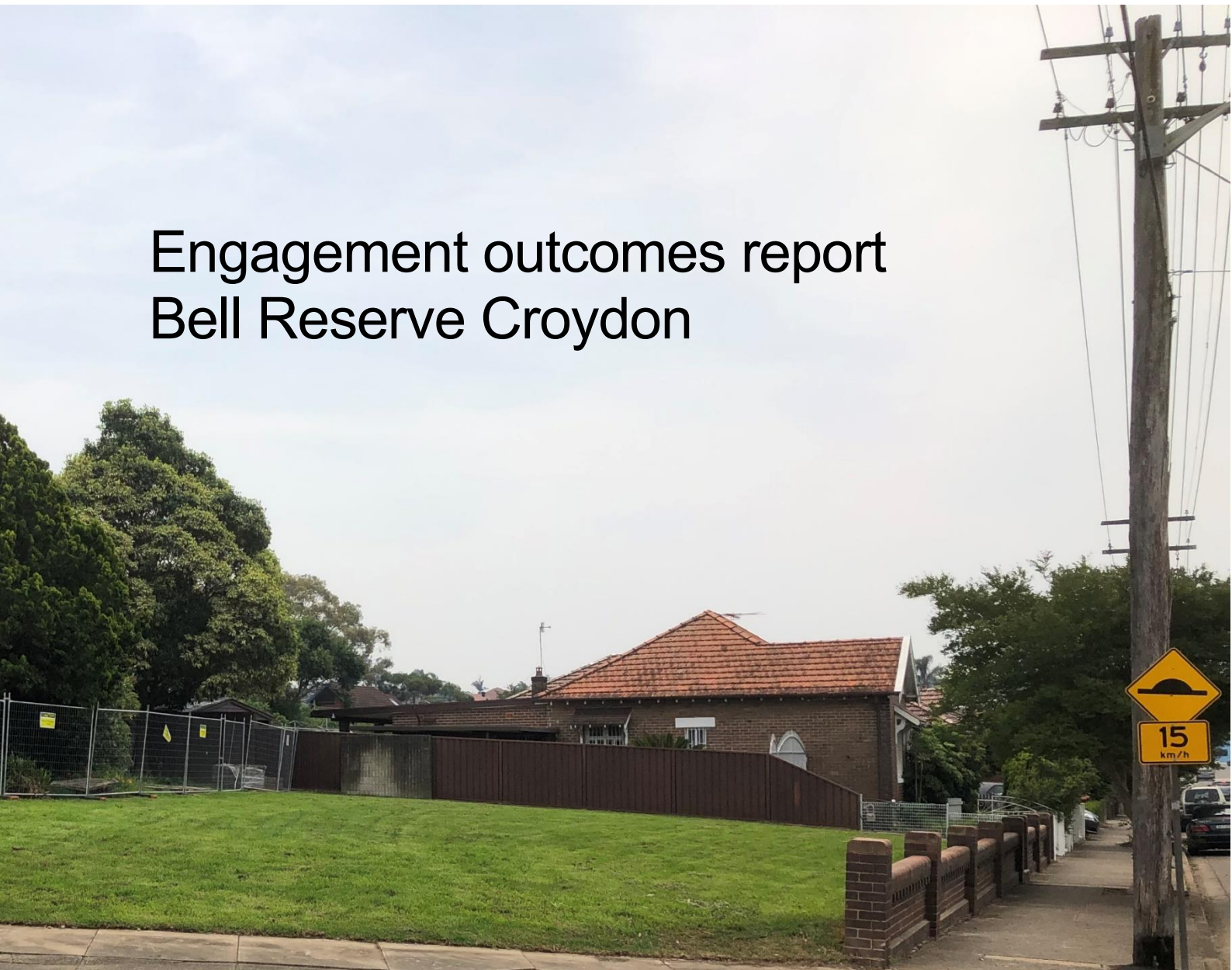


Engagement outcomes report Bell Reserve Croydon





Summary

The former home 'Balmoral' belonging to Betty Bell, was bequeathed to Ashfield Council by Betty Bell with the intention that council 'maintain the land as an open space reserve'. Council resolved to accept the bequeathed property and require community engagement to be carried out by Council as part of its commitment to delivering effective, efficient services that meet the expectations and needs of the community.

Council recognises that local knowledge, ideas and feedback from the community are essential to ensure Council's decision-making improves community wellbeing and long-term sustainability. Community engagement is the process by which the community participates in and influences Council's decision-making.

Engagement involved the following activities:

An onsite engagement session

An Onsite engagement session held at which approximately 50 people attended.

Your Say Inner West project page

The project page included project information and a feedback form which was completed by 86 participants.

It is evident that a very passive style park is supported with minimal elements and facilities and planted as a very green space. The important themes that have come through the engagement, in order of support are as follows:

- Green open space.
- Bubblers
- Seating
- Landscaping
- Public Art
- Informal children's play in the gardens
- Retain existing shade trees
- Pathways to provide access through the gardens
- Timber shelter
- Interpretation Signage with the history of Betty Bell
- "Betty Bell Reserve" be considered as the official name of the park
- A replacement Magnolia tree be incorporated into the design
- Design should consider Betty Bell's wishes and is respectful in terms of setting the design parameters for the new park
- Use salvaged items, including plant pots and paving

The response from the community provides a starting point for the further development of the Master Plan. Their comments and contribution will be taken into consideration in the development of the draft Master Plan for Bell Reserve.



Background

The Community engagement was the result of a Council resolution on Tuesday 15th December 2015 to accept the gift of land at 188 Croydon Road Croydon and reclassify the land as community land and use of the land as a park. The resolution included the demolition of existing improvements to create an open space reserve and name it “Bell Reserve” conditional on approval by the Geographical names Board.

This new reserve to be known as Bell Reserve will be located on the site of the former home belonging to Betty Bell which was demolished in September 2019 to create an inclusive community space.

The existing structure has been demolished to;

- create an inclusive community space that celebrates the site’s history
- design for informal passive recreation and rest areas
- include accessible and interactive nature areas for children to play and explore at an informal level
- design for safe and robust/ sustainable long-term maintenance
- respond to requirements of the broader community users of the park
- Retain selected onsite materials and plantings to acknowledge Betty Bell’s commitment to gardening and enjoyment of the outdoors.

This project aims to provide an inclusive community space that celebrates the site’s history.

Community Engagement was carried out to assist Council and their Landscape Architectural Consultants to prepare a landscape design of this new park at the site of the former home belonging to Betty Bell and bequeathed to Ashfield Council;

The consultation was carried out for the following reasons:

- The local community has a strong interest in the future of the park
- Council believes community participation is essential to ensure the success of managing the park.

This report outlines the process of gaining community and other stakeholder input into preparing the Master Plan, and the results of that process.



Engagement Methods

We engaged the community with the following methods:

- Online on yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au – this ran from 21 October – 17 November 2019
- On site engagement session at Bell Reserve held on 2 November 2019 10am - 12pm

Your Say Inner West

Council's online engagement hub is the place for the community to get involved in important projects that shape the future of the Inner West.

Bell Reserve-a New Pocket Park for Croydon was posted on “Your Say Inner West” with the feedback period between 21 October 2019-17 November 2019.

The community was asked how often they visited parks in the Inner West and for what reasons. Other demographic questions were asked to give Council some background to the community being engaged.

Other questions that were asked were more specific to determine which facilities the community would like to see prioritised for the new park.

Council wanted to know if the community had any preferences with regards to seating, landscaping and informal play for the new park.

On site engagement session

An Onsite engagement session held on site from 10am -12pm on Saturday 2 November 2019. Approximately 50 people attended.

The residents were asked to put any comments, or requests for what they would like to see in the proposed Park on post-it notes and by marking up posters set up on site.

Residents were also asked to mark up posters with stickers denoting their interest in particular activities and elements in the proposed Park.



Promotion

Promotion for the project and engagement included:

- Social media – Facebook post advertising the online and on-site engagement
- Letter delivered to surrounding residents
- Inner West Council Facebook post on Friday 31 October
- November E-newsletter to Your Say Inner West registered participants
- Onsite posters – posted to site fence providing information about the project and engagement
- Post online in Inner West Council's News and announcements.



Engagement outcomes

On site engagement session

An Onsite engagement session held on site from 10am -12pm on Saturday 2 November 2019.

Approximately 50 people attended. A range of comments were received on post-it notes and by marking up posters.

The Collected responses marked up on Post-It notes are summarized as:

- Pedestrian crossing across Croydon Road (near the park)
- Bench seating along Croydon Road
- Shade cloth on playground
- Community herb/veggie garden
- Incorporate photos of the house in any memorial plaque
- Keep the lawn expanse flowing to the corner of property
- Scooter and bike path
- Pots of flowers
- Lots of benches
- A field
- Rather than 'picnic' seating, have park benches that are simple and take advantage of winter sun and summer shade
- Bubblers
- Playground
- Timber shelter
- Bin for rubbish from picnics
- Drinking fountain
- Shelter for picnic table
- Fencing along Croydon Road (planting boundary)
- Native beehive
- Water feature
- Reflective space
- Artwork
- Please add a children's playground with slide, swing, cubby house and shade
- Bike rack
- Tree planting – Magnolia, Azalea
- Strong evening flood lights to prevent youth or negative behaviour 'hanging out' in the park at night
- Tranquil setting for seating/picnic with pathway to walk around gardens.
- Reuse any plants possible
- Drinking fountain

At the on-site engagement session residents were also asked to mark up posters with stickers denoting their interest in particular activities and elements in the proposed park. The following numeric results were recorded:

Use plants that reflect character of original garden:	1 participant
Retain selected existing elements	3 participants
Reuse and replant items retained from the garden	1 participant
Repurpose and relocate retained trough as a planter	0 participants
Planting to reflect traditional garden character	2 participants
Relocate existing planting	0 participants



Retain existing shade trees	6 participants
Pathways to provide access through the gardens	5 participants
Informal children's play in the gardens	8 participants
Reuse site materials in detailing	2 participants
Traditional sensory planting	3 participants
Circuit path through gardens	2 participants
Picnic settings	2 participants
Timber shelter	5 participants
Provide accessible drinking fountain	6 participants
Include public art	5 participants

Your Say Inner West

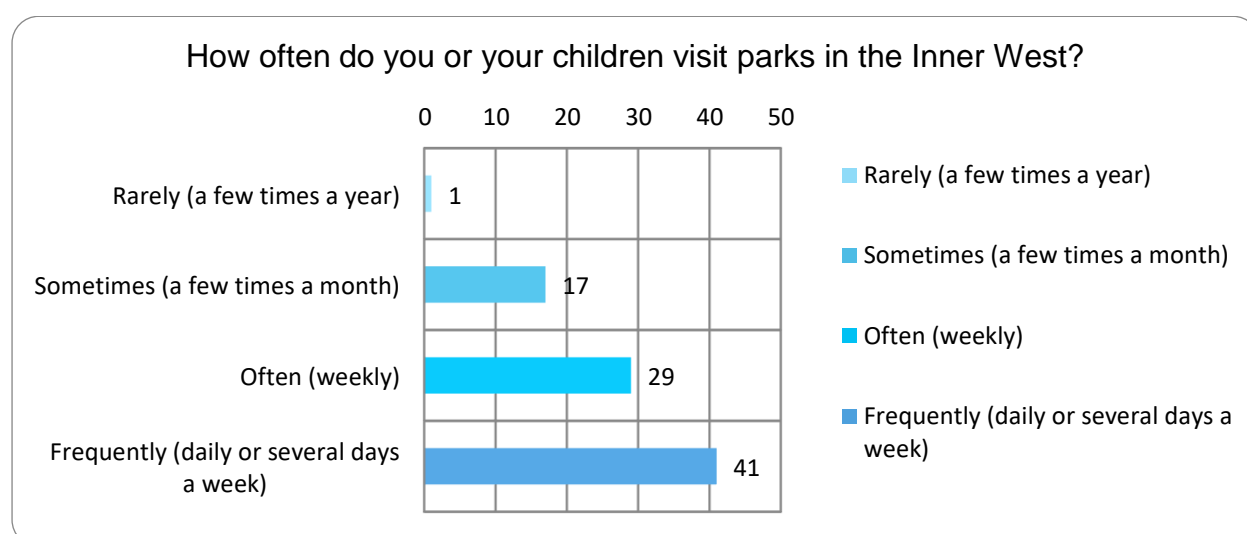
The engagement for Bell Reserve was open on "Your Say Inner West" between 21 October 2019-17 November 2019.

535 visits were made to the site, and 86 people completed the feedback form.

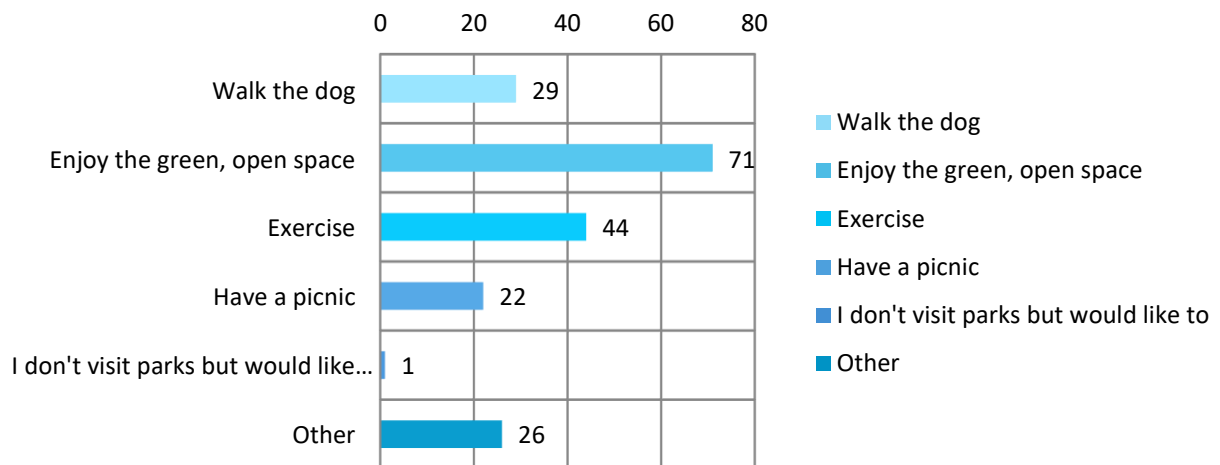
The dominant age group amongst respondents was young to middle aged (23% 25-34/ 53% 35-49 years old).

Other statistics of note is that of female respondents are the majority (77.9%) and live nearby in Croydon where the park is located (54%)

The majority of respondents visit parks frequently or have children who do so. The most popular reason to visit parks was to *Enjoy the green open space*.

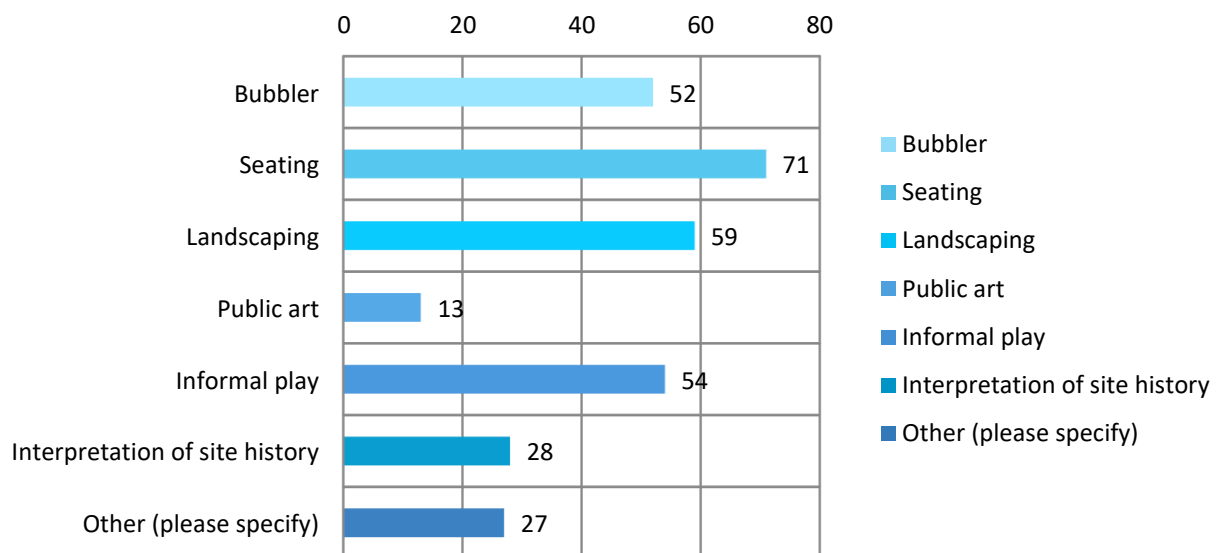


What are the main reasons that you visit parks? Please tick all that apply



The four items most requested to be prioritized were *Bubblers*, *Seating*, *Landscaping* and *Informal Play* which was closely aligned with results from the onsite engagement session.

What four items would you or your children like to see prioritised in Bell Reserve?



Other questions were asked regarding any preferences for seating, landscaping, informal play as well as comments on Betty Bell and her family. Some of the comments received included;

INNER WEST

"A few small tables and seats would be nice in a shaded area. If you could use parts of the old house, I think that would be a lovely recognition of Mrs Bell and the history of the site"

"Safe pathways with several stopping places & seating where small spaces with different size groups of 2/4 or 6 people may gather"

"Shady and artistic seating - recycled materials - you can share the story of the park through all the infrastructure"

"A beautiful big tree would be great to provide natural shade and having it planted at the start of the pocket park would be a nice symbol. Also, some native flowering plants would be fitting for Betty's love of gardening"

"Natural elements for play for kids (stumps to walk on), shaded areas, and native flowering plants for wildlife"

"A water fountain in the middle, with hedges bordering the sides of the park"

"Stumps of different heights for walking on, a good-sized tree for climbing, swinging"

"Natural elements would be fantastic! Again, we don't have enough wild, natural spaces in the inner west. If public art is included, please make it climbable for kids!"

"Logs for children to climb, walk on. In the far right back corner an area, wooden, where children can have a cubby to play in or construct"

Other responses

A small number of emails were also received. These had a range of ideas for the park and one email included a proposed design of the park.

One resident suggested the proposed park have a heritage feel including heritage lamp posts, park benches, a gazebo and "cottage style" flower gardens similar to Burwood Park. Another sent an image of curving path, sandstone blocks and a timber deck as inspiration.