

Quinn Ritchie

Hello all and welcome to the upgrading our playgrounds presentation. My name is Quinn Ritchie, I'm an Engagement Officer at Inner West Council. With me today is Sandra Chin who is the Parks Project Manager for this project.

In this presentation we're going to be giving you a bit of a background on this project, and then we'll go through some of the important considerations that we take into account when we do playground upgrades. That includes things like adding new play experiences, improving play experiences, ensuring we've got a great variety of play on offer, getting feedback from the community, how we use that feedback, and a bit about our approach to inclusive play and shade. We will then go through what you can actually influence in these playgrounds. We'll tell you a bit about each of those proposed playgrounds, what's included in the upgrades, and then some next steps.

To start off with here's a little bit of a background on the project. Sandra is going to walk you through that.

Sandra Chin

Hi I'm Sandra. Thanks Quinn.

Improving our playgrounds. Each year Council undertakes a review of the playgrounds across the whole of the Inner West. We look to renew ageing equipment and improve play experiences for everyone, not just children. In deciding which playgrounds to upgrade, we look at factors such as the age of the equipment, the condition of the equipment and improving play experiences.

Quinn Ritchie

Let's look at some of the important considerations that we take into account when we do playground upgrades. First up, will these playgrounds be inclusive?

Sandra Chin

Yes, it is important to us that people of all ages, abilities, and cultural playgrounds can access and enjoy our playgrounds. We are committed to following the principles set out in the New South Wales "Everyone Can Play" guidelines wherever possible.

Some playgrounds offer more opportunities than others for inclusive play, for example those with flat gradients are more accessible to people with limited mobility or in a wheelchair.

Where space and budget allow inclusive play such as intergenerational play and all abilities play equipment will be incorporated.

Quinn Ritchie

Could you give us a bit more information on what it actually looks like when we apply inclusive principles?

Sandra Chin

Yes, so a couple of the inclusive principles include providing equipment with support such as wide

seats to allow for older children to use the equipment, and appropriate support such as back support and handholds for easy access onto and out of the seat. We also look at using intergenerational equipment suitable for a range of ages and abilities such as a hammock, which allows carers or parents to play together with their children.

Some more examples of applying inclusive principles include offering a mixture of solo and group play opportunities such as a wide slide, which allows for a single child to play or a group of children to play together.

We also look at graduated challenges, accessible surfacing in and around the equipment, and a coordinator colour scheme to highlight use in a predictable way. As shown in the image, the grey colour shows the path leading into the play area, the lighter orange is the actual play area, and the darker orange is the safety zone of the play unit.

Quinn Ritchie

Great, and what do we do about shade when we upgrade our playgrounds?

Sandra Chin

Shade is very important to provide a comfortable environment for the users.

Shade sails are an easy solution but are quite expensive to install, so we also look at alternatives such as thoughtful equipment orientation (facing the equipment towards the south rather than to the north or west), not using metal surfaces which are in contact with skin and planting trees for natural shade cover.

Quinn Ritchie

And finally, what do we do with the old equipment?

Sandra Chin

A lot of our playgrounds are actually quite dated. They range from over 15 to 20 years of age. We need to replace the old equipment when it's reached the end of its safe life, which also means we can't reuse or repurpose it somewhere else. Wherever possible we recycle or reuse the materials.

Quinn Ritchie

Great, so now we're going to go a little bit into what you can actually influence in this project.

Sandra Chin

As users of the playgrounds, we would love to hear from you on the selection of play equipment, the incorporation of nature play, imaginative play, sensory play, landscaping and the selection of softfall.

We would also love to hear from you about what play experiences you would like to see. That could include swinging, sliding, climbing, spinning, monkey bars for upper body strength, springers or

seesaws for group play. This also includes incorporating nature play, imaginative play, intergenerational play, sensory play, multiplay and adaptive play.

In the survey you will get a question about what you like most about the playground? This is an opportunity for you to tell us what your favourite thing is about the playground. For instance, as a community gathering space, the unique character or charm of the playground, the types of equipment available, the open space and quietness, or anything else.

Quinn Ritchie

Great. Now onto the proposed playgrounds for this year.

Sandra Chin

So this project covers 7 playgrounds for this year – Mort Bay Park up in the north of the LGA, all the way down to Kendrick Park at the southern end of the LGA.

We also have King George Park, Lion St Park, Rose St Playground, John Paton Reserve and Rowe Playground.

The total budget for this project is \$996,000.

The Council has secured \$2.875 million in compensation from Transport for New South Wales for the WestConnex project. Out of this, \$480,000 is allocated to the playground upgrade at King George Park.

The remaining balance of \$516,000 is distributed between the remaining 6 playgrounds.

Quinn Ritchie

So now we'll go into a little bit more detail for each of these playgrounds and what's included in the upgrades. Starting with Mort Bay Park, what's included in this one? What are opportunities available and what are some considerations you might need to take into account?

Sandra Chin

Mort Bay Park has quite a lot of equipment which is in very good condition, but there's one piece of equipment which is quite old and dated and that is the timber deck. We are proposing to replace the timber deck with new play activities and new play spaces, depending on the feedback we get from you.

The opportunities are to utilise the natural shade. We can possibly have a water or boat theme as it sits next to the Bay, and we can open the views up to the Bay.

Considerations will be that this play space is within the tree protection zone and so we have to consider the impact on the trees.

King George Park already has a strong identity – it is currently known as Constellation Playground – but it has degraded quite a bit over time, so now there's an opportunity to create a new identity.

The area that we can make changes to is the sandpit area, and we will add new shade sails. We will also be upgrading the softfall in other parts of the playground. There's also an opportunity to reference the new play experiences with the nearby Fish Trap sculptures, which were recently installed.

Considerations are that some of the equipment is still in good condition, so we will not be replacing all of the equipment.

Lion St Playground is a small pocket park and the equipment is quite old and dated, so we are proposing to replace all equipment and softfall.

The consideration would be that it is a small space and it is close to houses, so privacy and noise would be an issue. The play space may be within the tree protection zone, so we will get an arborist to make the assessment.

Rose St Playground is another pocket park.

The equipment is quite old, so we are proposing to remove that and replace with a new multiplay unit pending on community feedback. Again, this is a small play space and the space may be within the tree protection zone, so we will get an arborist to assess the impact.

John Paton Reserve is another small pocket park with an old piece of equipment. Again we are proposing to replace the dated equipment with a new multiplay unit pending on your feedback. This play space is within the tree protection zone and it is also close to houses, so privacy and noise can be an issue.

Rowe Playground is another small pocket park, and we propose to again remove all the equipment and softfall and replace with new. The opportunities would be to make the exit gate to the road safer, as currently the gate opens straight onto the road.

We can also look at retaining and refurbishing the slide unit if that's possible, or totally replacing that with a multiplay unit. Again, the considerations are that the play space is within the tree protection zone and it is close to apartments, so privacy and noise can be an issue.

Quinn Ritchie

And the final one here, Kendrick Park.

Sandra Chin

Kendrick Park is a bigger park and the play spaces are in two areas. We propose to remove all the equipment from the two play spaces, as well as the synthetic grass softfall, and replace with new.

The opportunities will be to improve the accessibility to the playground from the car park, also to improve the connection between these two play spaces and to utilise the natural shade.

The consideration for this play space will be that it is within the tree protection zone, so we will need to work with tree sensitive design.

Quinn Ritchie

Great, so finally we'll just talk through some of the next steps. Once this consultation period ends and we've got all your feedback, what do we actually do with it?

Sandra Chin

At the end of the consultation, the feedback will be collected and we will prepare an engagement outcomes report for each of the playgrounds. The factors that we consider in the report will be the desired play experiences based on the feedback, the budget for each playground and the space constraints (whether it's possible to fit in the proposed equipment).

Everyone who provides feedback will be updated by email and on the project page.

To provide feedback go to the Have Your Say website. Engagement closes on Sunday 12th of December. We do value your feedback and we will make sure that we use it to form the design brief.

Quinn Ritchie

Even if you have completed the feedback form already, if this presentation has inspired some more ideas, you're welcome to get in touch with us. We would encourage everyone to complete the survey or send us an email. Thanks for watching and hope this has been useful.

Sandra Chin

Thank you, bye.