

Attachment 3 - Community Engagement Outcomes



Community Engagement at Leichhardt Park. Photo taken by Welsh + Major.

OVERVIEW + ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

1.0 Summary

Council engaged the Inner West community for input in the preparation of a 10-year plan for Leichhardt 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) and two drop-in sessions at Leichhardt Park, which occurred on Saturday the 29th of June and Saturday the 6th of July.

The drop-in sessions provided visitors the opportunity to view the community engagement material in person and give feedback in an informal setting. The park was busy with a range of users stopping to discuss the material. Printed boards outlined key activities, both existing and proposed as well as a map indicating the site area, and details of the proposed skate plaza concept and synthetic turf concept. Members of the public were asked to identify the facilities and areas they liked the most, and which facilities and areas they felt had room for improvement. Comments on additional items were also welcomed.

Online engagement was carried out from the 9th of June to the 22nd of July 2019. The project page received close to 1300 visits. Of those visitors, close to 250 visitors left feedback. The engagement was structured to garner feedback on primarily three topics:

- A concept proposal for Lilyfield Skate Plaza, including the location of the skate plaza; what people liked about the concept designs of the plaza and what changes, if any, they would make to the design to improve it.
- A concept proposal for installation of a synthetic playing field at Leichhardt Oval #2;
- Leichhardt Park in general, including what visitors currently value and dislike about the Leichhardt Park; what improvements visitors would like to see in Leichhardt Park; and what should be prioritised within the plan.

The skate plaza concept received mixed feedback overall. Online, over three quarters of respondents supported the skate plaza in some form, with responses ranging from slightly supportive to completely supportive. Of the respondents who did not support the proposal, the location of the skate plaza was the primary concern. Some people who defined themselves as potential users also did not support the proposal on account of its design and limited scope.

During the drop-in sessions, park visitors were generally enthusiastic about the proposal, with a smaller number of visitors leaving negative comments about the proposal. Those who left negative feedback largely identified themselves as residents who live close to the proposed skate plaza location. A petition with 133 signatures was also received by council opposing the skate plaza.

1.1 Background

Plans of management must be prepared for all types of parks on community land. Inner West Council established a parks planning priority list, which nominates which open spaces in greatest need of new or updated Plans of Management. Leichhardt Park has been nominated as high priority within the Inner West council area, with the previous plan of management for Leichhardt Park being adopted in 2004.

1.2 Promotion

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

- Your Say Inner West project page
- On-site signage
- Media release
- Social media
- E-news
- 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.

2.0 Engagement Outcomes

Outcomes of community engagement have been separated into feedback received at the drop-sessions and feedback received through the online survey. For greater clarity, comments received have been categorised as to whether they pertain to the skate plaza concept, synthetic turf concept, or Leichhardt Park overall. Comments by the community relating to specific proposals by organisations has been filtered out and will be presented alongside feedback from organisations within that section of the document.

2.1 Drop-in Sessions

The drop-in sessions were undertaken over two days, the afternoon of Saturday 29th between 2pm and 4pm, and the morning of Saturday the 6th of July between 10am and 12pm. The drop-in sessions provided visitors the opportunity to view the community engagement material in person and give feedback in an informal setting. The material consisted of four A1 panels, which displayed an overall map of the park and the location of the proposed skate plaza and synthetic turf oval, concept images of the skate plaza, and two panels which displayed some images of current parts of the park or features of other parks in order to prompt discussion.

Park visitors who approached were asked to identify facilities and areas that they liked the most, and which facilities they felt had room for improvement, through coloured stickers on the panels. Comments on areas for improvement were also welcomed. The sessions were productive with a number of park visitors approaching the team and

DROP IN SESSIONS

engaging with the material to have their say. The comments have been themed and are presented without hierarchy.

2.1.1 Leichhardt Park

- Many visitors commented on the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians along the Bay Run, with users not feeling comfortable with the speed at which cyclists use the conjoined and shared paths. There was a preference generally for separating cycle and foot traffic, with some commenting that this would need to be through a physical barrier or planting.
- Sections of the Bay Run which were seen as hazardous were highlighted by a number of visitors. Areas identified included; blind corners and path merges around the rowing club; the areas around the Blue Hippo playground; the area to the north of Leichhardt #3 where the path becomes shared; areas around the Lilyfield Road bridge.
- Visitors cited confusing wayfinding, people generally ignoring the path markings, and blind corners or merges as contributors to issues at these locations.
- Visitors who identified as cyclists highlighted a number of issues that affected their enjoyment of the space or deterred them from cycling, including that generally people walk on both the footpath and the cycleway; that it is too crowded; that dogs on leads are often running into the cycleway; when the path is busy cyclists are forced to ride on the road which can be dangerous; and a feeling that they were causing inconvenience to pedestrians or putting pedestrians at risk.
- Visitors were generally very supportive of the bush regeneration and what has been achieved so far. Visitors commented that they would like to see more native bush, wildlife and biodiversity. Some users suggested a focus on habitats for smaller birds which require dense under-storey planting for protection. Some visitors identified areas where bush regeneration had reduced the amount of open green grassed spaces that had been used for picnics and relaxation.
- Many visitors commented that the current areas of public, open and undefined green space should not be reduced by further building works or paved areas.
- Many visitors requested that lighting along the Bay Run be improved, with current lighting not sufficient to use the path safely in the mornings and evenings. Areas noted as needing more lighting were along the Bay Run generally and particularly around the rowing club and Le Montage.
- When prompted by an image of an in-park cafe, most users noted that there were two coffee shops in the park already and this would not be required.
- Some visitors commented that more furniture facing the water would be welcomed, particularly for older park visitors. Users who liked the public exercise equipment noted that it should be more robust and repaired (it was out of order at the time).
- The Blue Hippo playground was generally commented on as being sufficient and not too busy at most times. There were comments that it is a little tired and could be improved. Some visitors commented that some more areas for wild play for kids would be a good addition.
- Some visitors commented that it would be good to have facilities for less formal sports that could be integrated into the park, such as basketball hoops, table tennis, or a bouldering/climbing wall.
- Some local residents and visitors to the LPAC commented at the frustration of parking and traffic management around the LPAC and in residential streets, particularly when there is a game at Leichhardt Oval and access to the car park is limited. Local residents suggested reviewing the timed parking in local streets.
- A few visitors voiced that they would like community access to Leichhardt Oval outside of event times, and that the space should host more events - including sporting events but also arts and markets.
- A few visitors suggested it would be great to have public access to the water for kayaking and canoeing, with potentially a rent-a-canoe facility.
- Some local residents commented that there were some issues with signage and traffic flow around Le Montage and access to the park generally.
- Some users commented on confusion with signage around dogs off-leash areas.
- A number of people commented on the underutilised park along Maliyawul Street Reserve (Peace Park) which appears as a dead space. Visitors who lived around Peace Park commented that they would prefer quiet or relaxing uses for the space.



Image: drop-in session information boards and community feedback

DROP IN SESSIONS

2.1.2 Lilyfield Skate Plaza

The majority of visitors to the drop-in sessions were supportive of the proposal for a skate plaza within the Park. These visitors were generally park users and lived in the general area, but not in close proximity to the proposed site. Themes of answers that were supportive of the skate plaza included:

- Seeing it as an opportunity to provide an activity to engage teenagers and young adults, which they generally felt were overlooked by the current facilities.
- That the skate park would be beneficial addition for their children and others in the community.
- That a skate facility has been desired by members of the community for a long time.
- That the location would allow families who come to the park to have activities for children of different age ranges in a fairly central location.
- That the skate plaza should cater for all ages and abilities, and include beginner and more advanced elements, and seating and shading for parents.

A number of visitors to the drop-in sessions voiced their concern with the concept for the skate plaza in its current form. The visitors were generally park users who lived close to the proposed skate plaza. Themes of answers that were unsupportive included:

- The skate plaza's proximity to neighbours and the associated noise impacts. Some commented that it would be better located further into the park away from residences.
- The expected requirement that local residents will need to police the skate plaza and deter anti-social behaviour, particularly at night time. Comments were made about the lack of information about the opening hours, lighting, and generally whether it will function at night.
- That the skate plaza is too close to Le Montage, a drinking venue where there are events held with many patrons wandering about who occasionally leave glass bottles in the area which might be thrown; also that the plaza may deter people from hosting events at Le Montage.

- The concern that skaters would ride at speed down Frazer Street and the road leading up to the LPAC, which would be dangerous, result in injuries and cause inconvenience to residents.
- That the proposed location is poor for reasons including: the area is currently valued as open green space for relaxation and picnics; that the drainage of the location is poor and often floods; that the location is too close to Leichhardt #3; that the location is too close to vehicles parking which is dangerous; that the location will contribute to vehicle traffic and parking which is already at capacity; that the plaza's location could affect the pleasant views of residents through to the bay; that the site is too small.
- That the plaza will result in the removal of trees, including she-oak trees which are significant in the community.
- Whether a skate plaza is desired by the community and still relevant.

2.1.3 Synthetic Turf

Visitors to the drop-in sessions were generally not overly concerned with the proposal for synthetic turf on Leichhardt #2, with the vast majority of visitors stating that the proposal would not affect them personally. As a result most comments were fairly indifferent to the proposal. The few comments that were made about the synthetic turf concept included the following themes:

- That synthetic turf would be acceptable if it reduced maintenance and increased the amount of days the field could be used for sports.
- That apparently synthetic turf can get hot during summer and can cause injury to players compared to regular grass - however, the general consensus was that if the sporting teams were happy to use it, then this was not a barrier to its installation.
- That synthetic turf would probably not be as nice visually and is unable to be used for general recreation not related to sports.
- That the sustainability of synthetic grass is questionable.

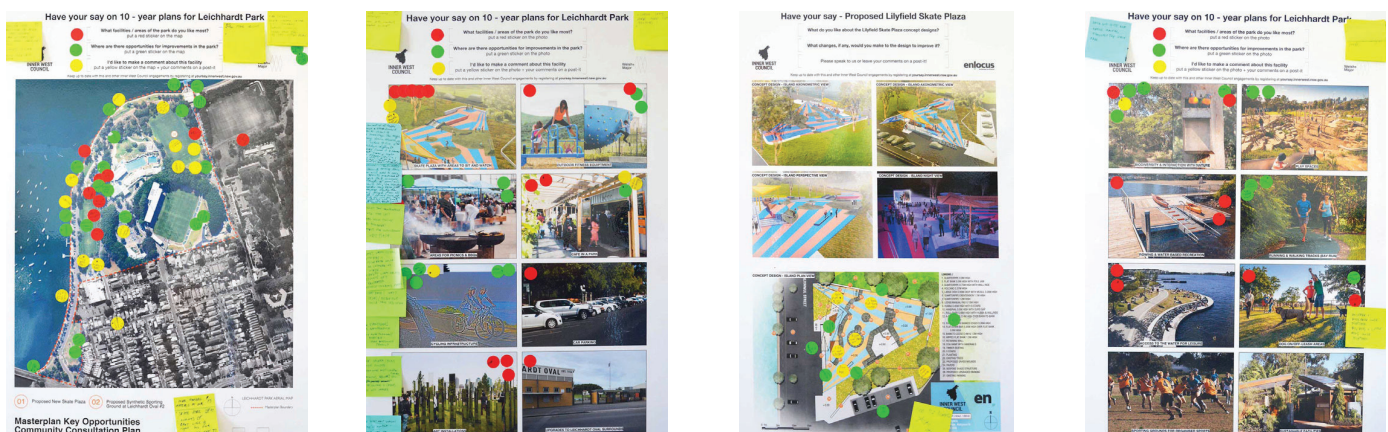
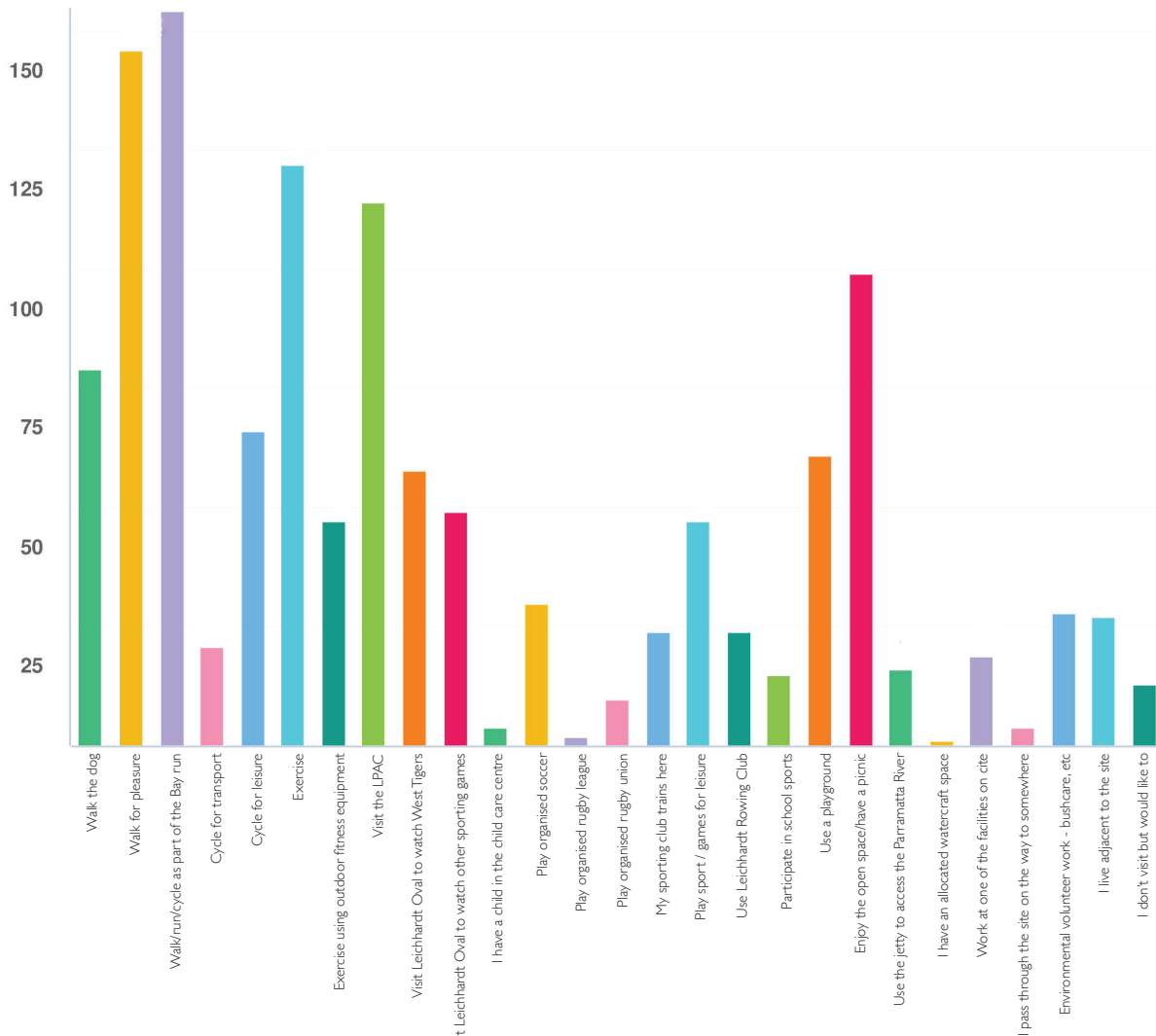


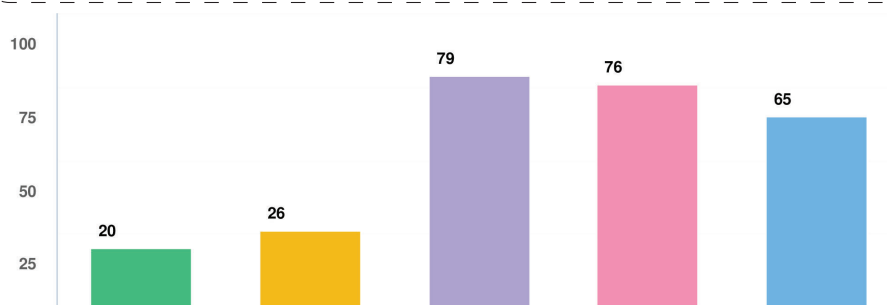
Image: drop-in session information boards and community feedback

3.0 Online Survey

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



Q4 - How often do you visit Leichhardt Park?

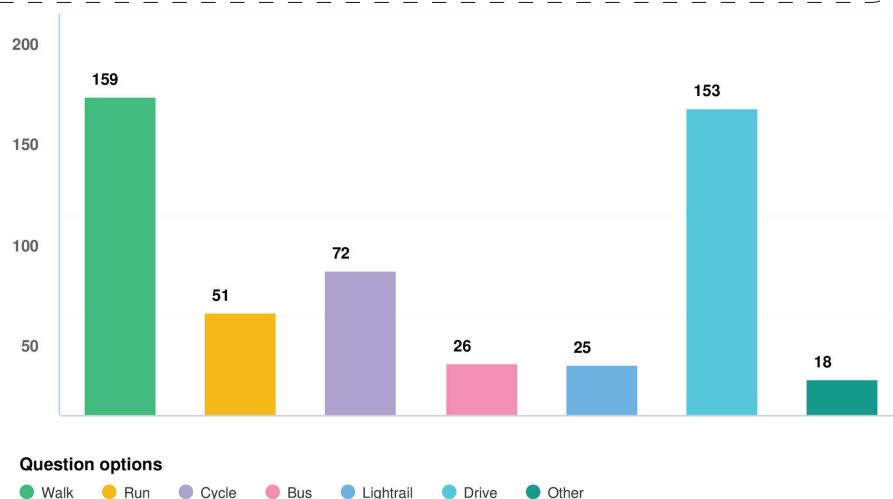


Question options

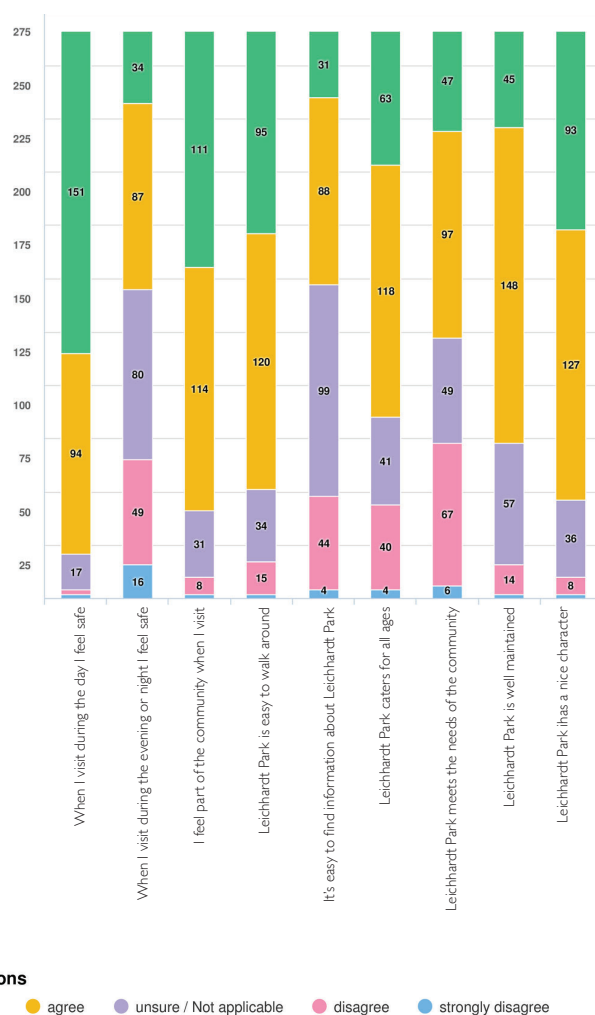
- Never
- Rarely (a few times a year)
- Sometimes (a couple of times a month)
- Often (Weekly)
- Frequently (Daily or several days a week)

ONLINE SURVEY

Q5 - How do you get to Leichhardt Park?



Q11 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



ONLINE SURVEY

Q7 - Please describe what you value about Leichhardt Park. You may like to describe what it looks like, how you use it or how it makes you feel.

- Spaces that are publicly accessible and the ability to utilise the park as a communal backyard, particularly for people who live in smaller residences.
- The recreational benefits of a dedicated walking, running and cycling track around the bay (The Bay Run).
- The areas of the Bay Run path that are wider with a separated bike lane and footpath.
- That the park is easy to access.
- Paths for relaxed walking, including along sections of the foreshore sea-wall.
- Areas of the park that are free from cars.
- That the park is used by a diversity of people which gives a sense of vibrancy and that it attracts and offers a place for people of all age groups and stages of life.
- The park is a fantastic place with activities for parents, families and children.
- The park is a good place for dog walking and the off-leash dog areas are valuable.
- The importance of open green spaces within dense urban areas for both physical and mental health and general well-being.
- A strong sense of escaping from the busy nature of surrounding areas into an urban oasis where there are no cars and buildings.
- The value of unstructured open outdoor green spaces for undefined community uses such as picnics, gatherings, kids parties and quiet relaxation. Examples given of such spaces included the grassed areas along the foreshore.
- The value of community access to the waterfront.
- Opportunity to see and meet people in a casual and unstructured setting.
- The good level of amenities and generally excellent facilities.
- The community value of the Bay Run for the wider Inner West and it's strong identity as a destination.
- The strong connection with natural vegetation and the water.
- The views throughout the bay afforded along the water front.
- The habitats which are provided for native birds and animals.
- The cleanliness of the Park.
- Being alone amongst others in a safe environment and the respectful nature of other park users.
- Enjoy using the free exercise equipment and how they complement the Bay Run.
- The importance of sporting fields, such as Leichhardt #3, operating as an open grassed area for other visitors when not in use for organised sports.

Q8 - What don't you like about Leichhardt Park?

- Many responses indicated that there was nothing in particular that they disliked about the park.
- Sections of the Bay Run are too narrow considering amount of pedestrian and bicycle traffic during peak times, especially along shared sections of the Bay Run where pedestrians and cyclists are forced to merge onto a small pathway, resulting in accidents.
- Pedestrians can feel threatened by cyclists moving at speed; particularly cyclists ignoring the advisory speed limits next to Blue Hippo playground
- Cyclists and pedestrians not keeping within their allocated paths, and the amount of dog walkers on the Bay Run as dogs don't stay to one side of the path.
- Cyclists being forced to cycle along the car park and behind reversing cars due to busy shared paths, which can be dangerous and difficult with small children and inexperienced cyclists.
- Confusing wayfinding along the Bay Run in general, and particularly where the cycleway and footpath swap sides.
- The lack of connections throughout the park. The LPAC, Leichhardt Oval #1, 2 feels disconnected from the foreshore.
- Vehicle traffic within the park is heavy and vehicle speeds are too high. The park should focus on the experience of people instead of cars.
- The increased traffic flow associated with events at Le Montage, Leichhardt Oval and the playing fields and the effect this has on parking in the area. The lack of a clear traffic management plan to manage the needs of different park user groups and the need for consultation with the surrounding residents.
- The prioritisation of parking particularly along the Le Montage foreshore area, which limits the space available for other park users and depreciates the natural beauty of the foreshore.
- Dog owners not picking up dog waste, and limited dog waste bins and bags which could be contributing to excessive dog waste.
- Off leash dogs impacting the enjoyment of the park for other users, including safety concerns about some off-leash dogs particularly with some breeds and the lack of concern some dog owners have for other community members who do not want to interact with dogs.
- The lack of accessible exercise opportunities.
- Lack of areas for parents and young children to engage with nature and wild play.
- Too many areas designated for specific users may neglect the needs of others in the community, such as seniors.
- The park areas around the LPAC and Leichhardt Oval are of poor quality and underused.

ONLINE SURVEY

Q8 Responses - Continued

- A lack of furniture and BBQ sites around the foreshore area.
- New re-vegetation and bush regeneration that has removed spaces that used to be open grass spaces for picnics, sitting and taking in the views.
- The storage of dinghys along the foreshore is an eyesore.
- There is a lack of celebration of Indigenous history.
- Concerns about the removal of trees and green spaces to be replaced with hard surfaced areas.
- There is a lack of natural vegetation within the park, particularly around the foreshore where mangroves would have grown.
- Feeling unsafe after dark or when the park is empty.
- The lack of provision for alternative forms of recreation, such as tennis courts, basketball and water polo.

Q9 - What improvements would you like at Leichhardt Park?

- A number of responses indicated that there were no improvements needed.
- Fix disconnected pathways which force pedestrians to walk on the road and restrict wheelchair access, particularly around the Aquatic Centre and create better connections between the Aquatic Centre and the foreshore.
- Too much focus is placed on vehicles, car access and car parking and this needs to be balanced with other users.
- Upgrades to the bicycle and pedestrian paths and widen the bay run to allow for a separate cycle and pedestrian path.
- Better signage and wayfinding along the bay run for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Encourage alternative forms of transport for reaching the park to reduce car traffic. Consider strategies to reduce congestion, potentially by providing public transport with links to the aquatic centre. The park is difficult to access for those without a car and this is especially true for those with limited mobility.
- More council rangers are needed to monitor parking restrictions and enforce compliance.
- Increase parking around the aquatic centre with a double-storey car park.
- Management of the car park during times when a sports game is on at Leichhardt Oval and the need for a clear traffic management plan.
- Additional facilities to appeal to children, youth and families, for example, upgrades to the playground facilities, improved waterside play areas to cater for a wider age range, and spaces for youth and teenagers, not just younger children.
- Would prefer that spaces which are currently open and flexible are not over-developed.
- Would like to see a 'learning to ride' facility for young children learning to cycle.
- Exercise equipment could be offered in a greater range of sizes and styles for different users.
- Provide more seating along the foreshore to take in the view and around playground areas, and provide benches so spaces can be used after rain for picnics.
- Provide more filtered drinking water stations.
- Provide more areas for picnicking. Maintain passive open and green spaces.
- Make toilet facilities more available and re-consider their opening hours.
- A community vegetable garden.
- Need to unify the identity of the park, with the foreshore currently acting as a separate element to the rest of the park.
- Leichhardt Oval's 'outdated' qualities are part of its charm and unique character; and this needs to be balanced with any future upgrades.
- Dinghy racks for the storage of boats to improve the presentation of the foreshore.
- More public art including sculpture and landscapes unique to the park.
- Better management of water, run-off and drainage on-site.
- Continue to improve the native vegetation of the area.
- Implement better environmental management of litter, waste and dog waste, and provide additional bins.
- Restore the natural heritage of the park to protect biodiversity and local flora and fauna.
- Restrain dogs to protect ecologically significant areas.
- Improve the lighting along the bay run, especially for peak morning periods which begin before sunrise and at night.

ONLINE SURVEY

Q10 - What do you think should be the main priority of the park plans?

- Improve safety by separating cyclists and pedestrians along the bay run and do this in a consistent manner. Remove shared pathways as these are not working; Removal of advisory speed limits which defeat the purpose of a dedicated cycle and running track; addressing safety concerns by providing better infrastructure for the Bay Run.
- Better lighting on the fields at night for public use.
- Upgrade the Aquatic facility.
- Improvements to the park should focus on pedestrians and encouraging active transport.
- Increase public space by the water by relocating parking elsewhere.
- Addressing bottle necks and congestion along the Bay Run.
- Improve public transport to the Park to access the LPAC and events at Leichhardt Oval.
- The amount of parking should be increased and the parking of local residents needs to be protected.
- Provide accessible facilities and pathways to create an inclusive environment.
- Create and maintain spaces for all ages.
- Better management of dogs within the park.
- Maintenance and keeping the current amenities clean and in good condition.
- Landscaped seating near the foreshore for picnics.
- Preserve undeveloped open green spaces.
- Consult with local community members before changes to the park.
- Maintain free outdoor recreation and amenities for all.
- Improve the free outdoor gym equipment.
- Improve community access to the water.
- Maintain views through to Iron Cove which is an asset of the park.
- Consider more natural path materials instead of concrete.
- Improve drainage of some areas that currently flood.
- Keep all the existing trees and plant more native trees and plants and maintain existing habitats for local fauna. Preserve the natural environment along the foreshore.
- Consider solar lighting for new lighting along the Bay Run.
- Make the bay run safer so people can use it without risk of danger of collision with other users and dogs.
- Maintaining grass playing fields that can be shared with and

enjoyed by the community.

- Better facilities for organised sports that could include showers, change rooms, club spaces.

2.2.2 Lilyfield Skate Plaza

Themes of answers that were supportive of the skate plaza included:

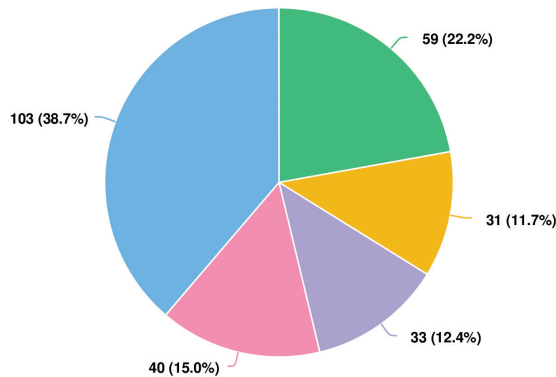
- Providing an active recreational space for a wide range of age groups, particularly older children and teenagers to who are often overlooked in the design of public spaces.
- Skating gets people off the couch, physically active and teaches important skills.
- Skate plazas create a sense of community for youth, teenagers and adults, offering a place to meet people and make friends in a supportive environment. The skate plaza will become a focal point for community events. The skating community is supportive and inclusive for girls and women.
- The Inner West does not have enough skating facilities as there are a considerable amount of people in the community who skateboard, ride scooters and BMX who have been wanting a skating facility for many years. Skateboarding is a sport and deserves to be supported. Other skate parks within the inner west are well patronised and used by a wide variety of people.
- It is a misconception that skate parks contribute to anti-social behaviour, violence or drug use.
- The location is not too close nearby residents, so lighting and noise will be less of an issue.
- The skate plaza will provide a destination for older children and keep them from roaming the streets.

Themes of answers that were supportive of a skate plaza generally, but had comments about its proposed location or operation:

- Poorly located due to the lack of public transport links to the site.
- The noise associated with the plaza could affect the peace and tranquillity of the surrounding areas and the enjoyment of those spaces.
- The footprint of skate plaza is too small to be worthwhile.
- The proposal looks like it will remove more trees, when the focus should be on bush regeneration, keeping open green spaces, planting trees and replacing those trees already removed.
- While a skate plaza is a good initiative, open green spaces are rare and it is a shame when they are paved or developed.
- The proposal will add to parking in the area around Le Montage which is already at capacity at peak times.
- The plaza could be better at an alternative location such as: along the Hawthorne canal, within the LPAC, close to the Blue Hippo playground
- Supportive of the skate plaza, but concerned about supervision and safety at night.

ONLINE SURVEY

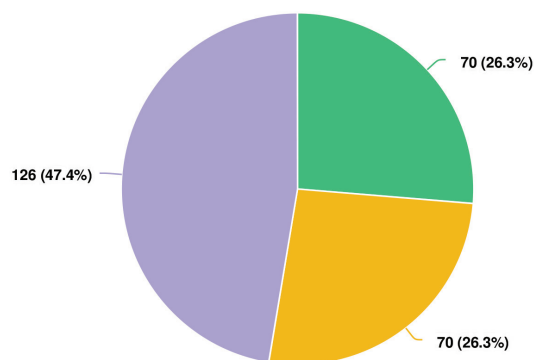
Q12 - To what extent do you support the location of the Lilyfield Skate Plaza?



Question options

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Moderately supportive
- Very supportive
- Completely supportive

Q14 - Would you or your family use the skate plaza?



Question options

- Yes I would use the skate plaza
- Yes someone in my family would use the skate plaza
- No I would not use the skate plaza

Themes of answers that were not supportive included:

- Whether there is a current need for a skate plaza and whether it will be utilised enough to justify the cost, considering that there are other facilities in Sydney. There are other priorities which should be the focus for spending.
- The skate plaza is in a poor location and the reason for it being located there is unclear. The location is highly contested and it is too close to local residencies, the foreshore, busy roads, the car park, the Bay Run, and the steep road to the LPAC.
- Access to the skate park location is poor. There is limited public transport and the surrounding streets are not suitable for skateboarding. This will also contribute to pressure on parking in the area.
- The proximity of the skate plaza to Le montage - including issues of negative interactions between skaters and Le Montage patrons and the safety of patrons.
- That local residents will be required and expected to watch over the skate park and police anti-social behaviour.
- Issues relating to noise, not limited to skating but also portable music devices, shouting, etc. Noise issues have not been adequately addressed.
- It is not clear whether the skate plaza will be used in the evenings and at night and there are concerns about people using the space at night time, contributing to noise after dark, light pollution and safety concerns.
- The skate plaza will attract anti-social behaviour and criminal activity.
- The proposal does not suit the surrounding environment and the park as a place of quiet relaxation in a green open space. The existing space is currently used by the community and there already is enough built area in Leichhardt Park.

Q15 - What do you like about the Lilyfield Skate Plaza Concept Designs?

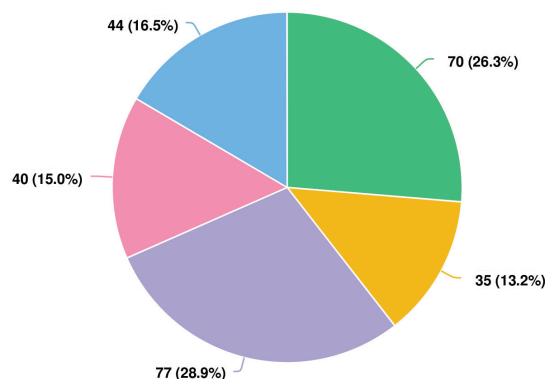
- That existing trees are being kept within the skate plaza
- That the design of the skate plaza invites all users by offering something for a range of skill levels, being that it is a street-style plaza. The multiple sections allow multiple groups to use it simultaneously.
- The visual openness of the plaza will deter misuse of the space and vandalising.
- Seating areas with shaded covers for onlookers.
- The bright colour scheme.

ONLINE SURVEY

Q16 - What changes, if any, would you make to the design to improve it?

- The skate plaza needs to be bigger so that it is well utilised and can offer elements for different users and skill levels.
- The skate plaza needs to be relocated to a better location that is better suited, so that it can be larger; not remove existing green open areas, and have less impact on the surrounding areas and neighbours.
- The intense colours of the proposed concept design does not go with the park environment, and the striped design could make it difficult for skaters.
- The designers of the skate plaza should work with skaters specifically so that the design caters to their needs.
- The design is not challenging for more experienced skaters or riders and lacks flow. It also needs to cater for intermediate skaters and riders. Would prefer something better like the design proposed earlier for Callan park, or other parks such as what you see in Everleigh, Meadowbank, Edge Park in Perth and Evergreen Skateparks in Colorado. In its current form it will only be used by beginners and kids on scooters.
- Must ensure that the skate plaza does not overheat in summer by providing adequate shading.

Q17 - To what extent do you support the installation of synthetic turf on Leichhardt Oval #2?



Question options

- Not at all supportive
- Slightly supportive
- Moderately supportive
- Very supportive
- Completely supportive

2.2.3 Synthetic Turf

Themes of answers that were supportive of synthetic turf on Leichhardt #2 included:

- Reduce the need for watering and general maintenance of

the current grass field.

- Synthetic turf can be used in all weather, which increases the amount of time the fields can be used for sports throughout the year. This is important as space for sporting grounds is highly contested.
- Current pitches are in a poor condition beyond mid season limiting the ability to play sports.
- Supportive as long as the synthetic turf is of a high quality, does not cause injury to players and meets the specification for rugby use.
- Supportive as long as environmentally friendly turf is installed.

Themes of answers that were not supportive of a synthetic turf on Leichhardt #2 included:

- Natural grass is a more environmentally friendly and sustainable option. What consideration is given to the life cycle of the synthetic turf and its impact on the environment and the ecosystem?
- Synthetic turf is plastic, and will release micro plastic into the waterways as it degrades and is maintained with fill material. This is inconsistent with the plastic-free objectives of council.
- Plastic turf will wear out and need to be re-installed many times into the future at great cost and environmental impact, compared to natural grass which renews itself sustainably and for free.
- Natural grass provides a food source and a better habitat for local wildlife.
- The current field is already great for rugby and has good drainage.
- Natural grass fields are used by the community as a big communal backyard and this proposal results in a loss of public space. Real grass is much more inviting to use recreationally which is the majority of the time as organised sporting events only occur at particular times.
- Some synthetic surfaces are not able to be used by dogs due to contamination risks, so the field will likely be fenced off from community use.
- Concerned about the heat load during summer compared to natural grass. Synthetic turf gets hot and contributes to the heat island effect, particularly in a warming climate and as heat-waves become more frequent.
- Unsure of the safety of synthetic turf in terms of tackling and falls when playing contact sports and the risk of infection or allergies.
- Synthetic turf requires maintenance to prevent injury which is in some cases is ignored.
- Synthetic fields are often still watered to reduce their heat during summer.

WRITTEN RESPONSES

2.2.4 Input from Organisations

Online input was received from three organisations. Their input has been summarised and included below.

Balmain Para-Rowing Program Incorporated

Online input was received in the form of a document and associated comments which outline a proposal for a Community Rowing Club, which involves the construction of a new community boatshed facility in Leichhardt Park. The stated aim of the facility is to provide open access to the water, with a focus on accessibility and supporting rowers with disabilities. A number of comments were received through the online survey from the wider community which were in direct relation to this proposal. These have been gathered together and summarised. Comments have been themed.

- There is currently a lack of community access to the harbour and water sports, particularly for people with a disability.
- The need for an accessible rowing facility is not met by current facilities which are not accessible or are already at capacity.
- A facility located primarily on the water would not impact the valuable green space along the foreshore and the Bay Run.
- An accessible rowing club would contribute to the quality of life of people within the community living with a disability.
- Leichhardt Park is flat with good car access making it a good location for an accessible rowing club.
- The Iron Cove area of the harbour is unique in that it provides a dedicated 2km rowing course.
- A public facility would be suitable for a range of water craft, such as canoes, kayaks and paddle boards and thus benefit the wider community.

Belmore Boys High School

- Belmore Boys High School annually book Leichhardt #3 for a school cross country carnival. While it seems they are not directly affected by the proposal they comment that parks are being re-turfed with synthetic surfaces in other areas which assists in year round availability.

Link Sports

Link Sports recommend council look at replacing the concept skate plaza plan with a off road cycling plan. They suggest the following:

- off-road cycling on a multi-user shared dirt track would cater for a user group which does not currently have dedicated facilities within the inner west.
- The track could be designed to run around existing green spaces, and connect to the Greenway and Callan Park.
- The dirt track would result in easier maintenance for council and

greater custodianship by local riders and walkers.

- The track could be integrated with bush regeneration and enhanced with native planting.

2.3 Other Input

2.3.1 Lilyfield Skate Plaza

Council received a petition opposing the proposed location of the skate plaza. The petition was signed by 133 people, with the majority of signees indicating they are residents of the local area. The signed petition stated the following points:

- The development will result in the removal of a tranquil area of Bayside parkland used by hundreds of people each week for exercise relaxation and play.
- The proposed development will destroy the natural vista that currently exists between the park and iron cove.
- The development will result in the further erosion of parkland used for passive recreation vital to the health and wellbeing of the community
- The proposed development is far too close to residential homes. Residents will be adversely impacted through increased noise, floodlighting, vehicle and pedestrian traffic.

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Public Exhibition of Draft Master Plan and Plan of Management

Council engaged the Inner West community for feedback on the draft plan of management and master plan for Leichhardt Park. The plans were available for public viewing over a period of two months, from the 26th of November 2019 to the 2nd of February 2020. Over 130 contributors gave feedback on the plans. The public response to the plan overall was generally positive, with 70% of contributors supporting the plan subject to changes and 27% supporting the plan in its current form. 2% of contributors did not support the plan.

Major themes which emerged during feedback included the following:

New Rowing Facility:

The most significant amount of responses were in relation to the second rowing club advocated by NSW Para rowing. 73% of respondents who supported the master plan with changes were supportive of a new rowing facility adjacent Blue Hippo playground. The vast majority of these respondents did not leave feedback on other aspects of the master plan. 9% of respondents who supported the master plan with changes did not support a new rowing facility, citing concerns over the removal of well used recreational spaces, view impacts and the preference to extend the existing facility.

Proposed skate plaza:

Close to 10% of respondents who supported the master plan with changes expressed concerns with the skate plaza proposal, citing issues with the location including proximity to residences, Le Montage, vehicles, soccer fields and flooding (4%); impact on wildlife and natural amenity (4%); and anti-social behaviour (1%).

Synthetic Turf:

Around 5% of respondents who supported the master plan with changes expressed concerns about the synthetic playing field on Leichhardt #2, citing the environmental impact and lack of visual appeal. 2% of respondents overall expressed support specifically for the synthetic field upgrade.

LPAC link road:

Around 10% of respondents who supported the master plan with changes expressed concern with closing the LPAC link road for vehicle use, citing traffic congestion to surrounding streets during events at the oval and Le Montage. 2% of respondents commented that they supported its removal, citing improvements for cyclists and reduction of hard surfaces within the park.

Maliyawul St separated cycleway:

2% of respondents expressed concern with the proposed cycleway along Maliyawul St, citing proximity to the water causing conflict with pedestrians, and removal of access to part of the seawall to pedestrians.