

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT\_ SUMMARY

Cooks River Parklands\_ Plan of Management + Master Plan



## 03\_ Engagement Common Themes

### Overview

Each of the different engagement sessions provided input on the future on the parks along the Cooks River. The engagement has produced some clear feedback. The feedback from both the community and stakeholders is outlined under each park with key headings that summarise the common themes received.

The key common themes include:

#### **Cooks River:**

A clean Cooks River, that is healthy for both recreation and habitat was repeatedly requested by park users for all the Cooks River Parklands. Visual rubbish as well as pollution were outlined as issues that need addressing. The community supports the vision to be able to swim in the river in the future.

### Mahony Reserve

#### **Character:**

The informal character of Mahony Reserve is much loved by park users. The open, green, undeveloped nature, with many canopy trees is what park user's love and want retained.

#### **Pathways:**

There are no pedestrian pathways through Mahony Reserve. Although walking (including walking dogs) was the most popular past-time in the park, only a very small proportion of people want new pathways in Mahony Reserve, however many requested better pedestrian and cycle connections to the park.

#### **Art Wall:**

The existing art wall is a well-used area of the park. Users like the art wall and some users want the extent of the wall expanded.

#### **Fencing:**

AFL stakeholders request white picket fencing to demarcate the playing field, otherwise fencing was not raised as a priority except by dog owners for a dog off leash area.

#### **Trees:**

Many users of Mahony Reserve appreciate the large existing trees. There were mixed comments in regards to the tree species. Some people do not like the Poplar trees along the river edge and would like to see them replaced. A large number of responses noted the need for additional tree planting and shade. Feedback also highlighted users wanted additional mulch to tree surrounds.

#### **Planting:**

Some park users wish to establish revegetation areas in Mahony Reserve. Users disliked the use of coir matting as mulch. The introduction of native meadow plantings was also liked by the community.

#### **Foreshore edge interface:**

Park users request a natural edge treatment with additional tree plantings, groundcovers and grasses with salt marsh species along the river's edge. Some users also wanted to see the ability to launch canoes in Mahony Reserve.

#### **Public toilets + amenities:**

The community and sporting groups appreciate having the public toilets. The quality of the public toilets was noted as needing improvement. AFL stakeholders specifically request additional club facilities including showers, change rooms, umpire facilities and all items listed under 'local' amenities within the facilities guidelines for AFL.

#### **Car parking & water sensitive urban design (WSUD):**

Users wish to see increased water treatment in Mahony Reserve including the introduction of car park rain gardens.

#### **Play facilities:**

The provision of play facilities was requested by users. The request has been for younger children's play equipment rather than an older children's age group. Stakeholders would like the field be available for multiple sports.

#### **Playing field:**

Feedback from users specifically requested the removal of bindies from the turf. Stakeholders would like the field used for multiple sports and uses.

#### **Furniture and picnic facilities:**

More shade and weather protection is to be provided in Mahony Reserve. Additional picnic tables and seating was requested. Shaded seating was selected as an important element required in the park.

#### **Dogs:**

The second most common activity undertaken by park users is dog walking. There were many requests for a dog off leash area and the provision of dog poo bags. Some requests included fencing to the dog off leash area.

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### Steel Park

#### Character

The green, well connected, family friendly nature of Steel Park is what its users appreciate. Users enjoy the ability to walk or drive to the park, use the picnic and seating facilities, under large shade trees next to the Cooks River. Many people used the words 'sanctuary', 'relaxed' or 'calming' in their description of the park, which highlights the value this green space has within the community.

#### Pathways:

The Cooks River foreshore path is highly valued and used heavily by both pedestrians and cyclists. Many pedestrians noted a conflict with bike users. It was noted by some that bike users appear to travel fast and startle pedestrians. Parents were also worried about children using the pathway and the potential danger of bicycle riders. Users requested a solution that will make the pathway safer for pedestrians and cyclists. No additional pathways were requested.

#### Trees:

The trees in Steel Park are highly valued. Many enjoy the deciduous nature of the trees allowing shade in summer and sun in winter. Some though would prefer the trees to be native (non-deciduous). More tree plantings were also requested.

#### Planting:

Feedback has outlined the communities desire to increase river edge planting along the Cooks River in Steel Park. The vegetation should also help with animal habitat opportunities, as this is another key element seen as important to the community. The community has requested the condition of the existing park vegetation be improved. This needs to be balanced with other user desires to maintain views out to the river as well.

#### Fencing:

Parents are concerned about children entering the Cooks River from the grassed bank near the children's playground. There were a number of requests for the installation of a fence or barrier either around the playground or between the playground and the water edge.

#### Café:

Many users request the ability to buy coffee from within the park; either from a coffee shop or coffee cart.

#### Foreshore edge interface:

The existing vegetation along the river edge is important to the community that use Steel Park. Both further naturalisation and the development of an interactive river edge at Steel Park have been requested by users.

#### Public toilets + amenities building:

The toilets were highlighted for an overhaul and upgrade by the community as many of the respondents believed the condition of the toilets needs improvement. Stakeholders noted flooding issues with the change rooms and canteen during major rain events. Stakeholders wish for an upgraded amenities building.

#### Car Parking:

Car parking is limited within Steel Park. Users want the number of car parking spaces increased.

#### Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD):

Increasing WSUD elements within Steel Park (including the DABCRC car park) were requested by users. This included wanting storm water treatment, native meadows and car park rain gardens.

#### Play facilities incl. water play:

The existing play facilities and water park are loved by the community. Users request additional play equipment. Additional shade was also requested over particular items including the flying fox and some water play elements. A swimming beach and swimming pool was also requested by some along with expansion of the existing water play facilities.

#### Park pedestrian lighting:

Respondents noted the pedestrian lighting in Steel Park is poor. There was a request to upgrade the existing lighting.

#### Exercise equipment:

Users enjoy using the exercise equipment. People noted that shade over the equipment would be useful for exercising at times other than late afternoon / morning and mid-winter. Users also suggested the installation of additional pieces of equipment along the foreshore, to be developed as a series of stations and not just one area.

#### Playing field:

Recent upgrade works noted as contributing to an improved playing surface, though the outer field still has an uneven surface. The addition of extra cricket wicket was requested by stakeholder groups.

#### Furniture and picnic facilities:

The existing facilities at Steel Park are very well used and highly valued. Additional bins were requested as well as improvements to the existing bin amenities (cleanliness, visual appearance etc.) were requested. BBQ, picnic tables, seating and weather protection were requested as well as the provision of seating for spectator viewing over the playing fields (Specifically near Illawarra Road).

#### Dogs:

People enjoy walking their dogs through and around Steel Park.

#### Signage:

Some park users requested additional signage for wayfinding and interpretation.



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### Warren Park, Richardson Lookout's, Cooks River Foreshore

#### Character:

The generally flat open space surrounded by planted escarpments with trees, shrubs and groundcovers is the character that users love the most in Warren Park, Richardsons Lookout and the Cooks River Foreshore. The plantings provide a natural setting and quiet retreat for visitors which is very much appreciated by the community.

#### Art:

Park users wish to see the addition of art elements within the parks. It is requested that art elements should provide insight into the history of the area. There is the opportunity to integrate art and signage. Some users also wish to have a practice street art walls erected for community use.

#### Signage:

Park users wish to have way finding and interpretive signage provided within the parks. Interpretive signage should be considered as part of a greater interpretive trail. Park identification signage will also help with park wayfinding.

#### Pathways:

The pedestrian and cycle pathway along the Cooks River is a highly valued park connection by many park visitors. Better connectivity between each of the parks (Warren Park, Richardsons Lookout and the Foreshore) was requested by the community.

#### Trees:

The community highly value the tree plantings and additional tree plantings were requested.

#### Planting:

Plantings of shrubs and groundcovers to aid in habitat protection of animals have been requested.

#### Turf:

Users dislike the bindies in the grass. Users enjoy the open turf kick-about spaces.

#### Foreshore edge interface:

The vegetated edge to the river environment is valued and so are water views. A balance of each of these priorities was highlighted by the community.

#### Peace and reconciliation park co-naming:

The community has strong support for the designation of Richardsons Lookout as a peace and reconciliation park.

#### Lighting:

Users requested park lighting along pedestrian routes for night use of the parklands.

#### Car parking:

As most visitors to Warren Park, Richardsons Lookout and the Cooks River Foreshore travel by foot, provision of car parking facilities is not a high priority for the community.

#### Water sensitive urban design (WSUD):

Provision of storm water treatment and other WSUD measures are a high priority for park users in each of the parks.

#### Play facilities:

The provision of both younger and older age play facilities were noted by the community as good outcomes, though were generally noted as low priorities for the parks.

#### Furniture and picnic Facilities:

More seating opportunities along the river were requested by the community.

#### Dogs:

Provision for a dog off leash area in Warren Park was highly requested by users.

#### Fencing:

Fencing along the road edge at Thornley Street (Warren Park) is not liked by many surveyed. A permeable edge with easy access into the park is preferred.

#### Public toilets:

No toilets are currently located in Warren Park, Richardsons Lookout or the Cooks River Foreshore. Users wish to have easy access to quality toilet facilities along the Cooks River. The park location is less than 400m from facilities in Steel and Mackey Park.

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### Mackey Park

**Character:**

The character of Mackey Park is quite open. Users wish to increase the tree plantings around Mackey Park to reduce this open appearance. The area of Mackey Park adjacent the river was noted as being quite picturesque though under utilised. The peacefulness of Mackey Park was highly valued.

**Pathways:**

The foreshore cycle link is highly valued and heavily used by commuters. Pathways within the park were noted as being in good condition.

**Trees + planting:**

The informal scattering of trees while appreciated, rating as being too few in number. An overwhelming proportion of responses requested additional tree, shrubs, grass and groundcovers to be planting in the park. Users wish to increase the extent of native vegetation and habitat values. Users also noted that seating under trees is desirable.

**Foreshore edge Interface:**

The community wishes to naturalise the river edge of Mackey Park. Saltwater reeds, trees, grasses and groundcovers are to be incorporated in park designs and upgrades.

**Public toilets:**

There was strong feedback to upgrade or provide new public toilet facilities.

**Playing field:**

The playing field was highlighted as being in excellent condition with good maintenance practices. Some trees are shading / damaging the playing surface at the far southern edge of the field.

**Drainage line / creek:**

The drainage line along the western edge of the park was noted as being 'ugly' and under-utilised.

**Car Parking:**

Park users often drive to the park and require additional car parking opportunities, particularly on weekends and during sporting events.

**Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD):**

The gross-pollution traps (GPTs) at the western park edge, at the interface with the Cooks River was highlighted by the community as an 'ugly' and 'smelly' part of the park that needs to be cleaned up.

**Play Facilities:**

Additional play facilities have been requested, along with further shade over the playground and additional illumination during the evening. Conflict between cricket balls and the play facility was highlighted.

**Furniture and Picnic Facilities:**

A large number of users wish to see additional seating and picnic tables in Mackey Park. It was noted the river edge was particularly picturesque place to picnic. Seating for spectator viewing was also requested.

**Dogs:**

Many community members wish to see a dog off leash area incorporated into Mackey Park.

**Concordia Club:**

A large number of park users wish to see the Concordia Club better integrated into the park, including fence removal and better connectivity for pedestrians.

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### Kendrick Park

**Character:**

The views and visual connection with the Cooks River and Fatima Island is very important to Kendrick Park users. The high levels of vegetation and natural appearance of much of the park is also a defining feature of the western half of the park.

**Pathways + connections:**

Users wish to have the pedestrian connection and flooding issues under Tempe rail bridge fixed with an all-weather solution. Users also raised concerns about pedestrian and cyclist safety travelling through the Tempe train station car park as a connection between Mackey Park and Kendrick Park. The bridge crossing (to Rockdale LGA) and the pedestrian crossing to the train station were also noted as dangerous elements needing safe design solutions

**Trees and planting:**

Park users request additional tree planting within the park. Users also wish to ensure the bushland areas are protected and expanded.

**Foreshore edge interface:**

Park users like the salt water wetland terraces. Further works to naturalise the river edge have been requested by users. Users wish to ensure the park river edge is stabilised to minimise erosion. The erosion of Fatima Island was raised by the some in the community as a concern.

**Public toilets:**

The existing public toilets are requested to be upgraded by park users.

**Car parking:**

No additional car parking has been requested. The existing car park can accommodate park use requirements.

**Water sensitive urban design (WSUD):**

Some park users have requested additional, more formal storm water treatment to occur in Kendrick Park.

**Pedestrian lighting:**

Park users request additional illumination during the evening via park pathway lighting.

**Play facilities:**

The play facilities are noted as being well used, though aging. Users request an upgrade to the facility and better integration with the natural appearance of much of the park. Some requested a swimming beach with river access to be integrated into Kendrick Park.

**Furniture and picnic facilities:**

Park disposal of BBQ coals is an ongoing issue that needs resolution. Provision of additional bins and the design of bin enclosures / fixing elements that prohibit bin vandalism was required. Additional water points for drinking and hand washing have been requested along with more picnic tables, seating and BBQ facilities.

**Dogs:**

There were no significant requests for the provision of dog off leash areas in Kendrick Park. Dog owners tend to walk through the park rather than use it as a destination. Tempe Reserve has dog facilities that currently accommodate the off leash function.

**Signage:**

Improved interpretative and wayfinding signage was requested by both the community and stakeholder groups. Interpretive signage should be considered as part of a great interpretive trail.