



4

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

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PURPOSE OF ENGAGEMENT

In order to develop a vision and direction for the future development of Kilsyth Recreation Reserve, Hansen and Council sought to engage with the local community and stakeholder groups to seek insight into the wants, needs, the general perception of the existing conditions at the Reserve, as well as identifying the features and characters which are considered valuable and significant.

The consultation process provided a platform for the community and stakeholders to voice their concerns, identify issues to be addressed and opportunities for the future development and activation of the Reserve.

Consultation and engagement with the local community, stakeholders and user groups is an important part of the design process as the knowledge, experience and information gathered can assist in guiding the design initiatives and inform future design decisions.

METHODOLOGY

The consultation and engagement process is completed in two phases:

- Phase 1 - Informing the Draft Master Plan:

The consultation process for the Kilsyth Reserve Master Plan took place from 10th of October to 24th of November 2019.

A number of different forms of community engagement processes were utilised as part of the consultation programme including:

- Bulletin and survey;
- Council internal workshop;
- Council Project Reference Group (PRG) workshop;
- Community pop-up session on site;
- Local user group and stakeholders engagement; and
- Direct mailing.

The results of the survey (refer to Appendix 1), combined with the feedback gathered during the Phase 1 consultation sessions informed the development of the concept plan for Kilsyth Recreation Reserve

- Phase 2 - Draft Master Plan Consultation:

The consultation process for Phase 2 took place from February to March 2023 including:

- YRC Shaping Pages - Survey;
- YRC Disability Advisory Group;
- Kilsyth Community Action Group;
- Walmsley Retirement Village;
- Kilsyth football members and spectators; and
- Churinga Shopping Centre, Kilsyth.

During this phase, the community were engaged utilising:

- An online survey,
- Letterbox drop to 400 local residents,
- QR code and Shaping Pages link
- Pop-up sessions (3) at the Kilsyth shops and oval, (conversations with approximately 250 people),
- Campaign to 1,620 recipients,
- Shaping Pages link distribution by AFL user groups,
- Presentations to:
 - Council's Disability Advisory Group
 - Kilsyth Community Action Group
 - Walmsley Village residents
- Internal officer feedback.

PHASE 1

INFORMING THE DRAFT MASTER PLAN

COUNCIL INTERNAL WORKSHOP

(JULY 2019)

An internal workshop was undertaken at Yarra Ranges Council on the 24th of July 2019, with Council staff providing the project team with feedback on existing opportunities and issues to assist with the background review. This session was organised and run by the Council, with the comments collated and emailed to Hansen Partnership for reference during the background review process.

Key feedback from this session was also provided at the initial project inception meeting with the project team from Hansen Partnership.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

(AUGUST 2019)

Individual stakeholders and user groups currently located at Kilsyth Recreation Reserve were directly contacted by email in August 2019, and asked to provide feedback to help assist with our understanding of the current and future needs, as well as issues as observed by regular users of the Reserve.

Information was sent out to the following stakeholder and user groups:

- Eastern Ranges Football Club;
- Montrose Football Club (Junior and Girls);
- AFL Outer East;
- Kilsyth Tennis Courts;
- Kilsyth Memorial Hall, and;
- Axicom Pty Ltd (Telecommunication Tower).

Stakeholder and user groups were provided with the following prompt questions to help with the project team to understand the specific requirements, including:

- How you use the Reserve and what are your existing and future needs;
- What are the main existing issues you would like us to review;
- On site meeting with Kilsyth Community Action Group;
- A presentation to Council's Disability Action Group;
- What do you value about Kilsyth Recreation Reserve, and;
- What (if any) changes or improvements would you like to see implemented within the Reserve.

BULLETIN AND SURVEY (OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2019)

A project bulletin and survey were circulated, in both print (on site) and online format, to provide a medium for the dissemination of project related information and seek feedback from the community on the proposed objectives and direction of future developments at the Reserve.

The survey was available in a digital format accessible from Council's website; and was also distributed on site during the consultation session. The questionnaire included a series of questions addressing desired activities and programs, frequency of use, mode of transportation, age groups of users, and opportunity to voice any other ideas or concerns. The results were collated and tabulated to identify the most prominent issues, concerns and opportunities to be accommodated in future design interventions. The surveys were available for completion online from the 25th of October to 24th of November 2019.

Refer to Appendix 1.

COMMUNITY POP-UP SESSION

(NOVEMBER 2019)

A community drop-in session was open to the public and took place at the two shopping centres north of Kilsyth Reserve on the Saturday, 16th of November between 10am and 1pm. The drop-in session was hosted by Council and included Hansen representatives to provide assistance and compiling feedback from the Community. The drop-in session ran two simultaneous sessions at the Kilsyth Shopping Centre in front of Dan Murphy's and Woolworths. Print out of the plans were prepared to provide a basis for discussion, which were recorded and tabulated for reference during the design phase.

The comments and feedbacks collected during the drop-in session were added to the total responses received.

COUNCIL (PRG) WORKSHOP

(NOVEMBER 2019)

A PRG consultation workshop was held at Yarra Ranges Council on the 21st of November. The primary focus of the consultation session was to present the findings from the initial site analysis to the various Council officers to identify and address any opportunities and constraints. This session provided further clarity on Council's concerns and potential directions for the future development of the park.

The internal stakeholder was attended by representatives from the following departments:

- Local ward Councillor;
- Recreation and Active Living;
- Water Sensitive Urban Design;
- Traffic;
- Bush Management;
- Major Project;
- Parks Management, and;
- Aged Care.

DIRECT MAILING LIST

During the consultation process, opportunities were made available for community members to be added to the project mailing list to receive progressive updates about the project throughout the master planning process.

PHASE 2

DRAFT MASTER PLAN CONSULTATION

YRC SHAPING PAGES SURVEY

(FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023)

The Draft Master Plan received a total of 856 views, 563 visitors, 40 contributors.

Council handed out 82 of the slips with the QR code and hyperlink to the YR Shaping Page (web page) and survey, mostly on the 10th and 18th which correspond with the peaks on the website hits. A summary of the comments include:

- Inclusion of movement classes for elderly citizens;
- Additional seating, tables and BBQ area;
- Upgrade oval to an elite standard for junior footballers;
- Increase visibility and improve access to the Reserve from the shopping centre;
- Provide adequate shade shelter and seating on path from Walmsley Village;
- Need for public toilets; and
- All-abilities accessible play space.

A summary of the results from 41 respondents include:

- 69% of respondents identified as female.
- Spread across 25 to 84 age range.
- 75% of survey respondents currently use the reserve.
- For adults, 84% supported the proposed changes, only one person did not and five unsure.
- For children, 78% (18) respondents caring for children supported the changes, five people unsure.
- Of the proposed improvements the ones that gained most survey support and identified future use:

The above community priorities for future use were echoed in the survey comments and conversations with general community members at the shops, advisory groups and the retirement village.

Members and spectators at the football oval recognised the benefits of alternate activities at the site for their families but strongly supported the recommendations to improve lighting, ground condition and reduce car parking issues. The issue of the short oval length was raised, restricting the level of competition to under 18's. Due to the pavilion location and constrained site, a lengthening of the oval is not possible without stopping vehicle access and parking on the east side of the oval.

For Adults	For Children
Walking paths and seating (32)	Playspace (14)
Picnic shelters & BBQ facilities (23)	Access to the public toilet (12)
Sensory garden (22)	Pump track (11), Walking paths & seating (11)
Access to the public toilet (20)	Picnic shelters & BBQ facilities (10)

KILSYTH COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP

(9 MARCH 2023)

The Kilsyth Community Action Group session had 9 attendees and there was general support for the Draft Master Plan.

The key feedback includes:

- General support for the draft master plan.
- High need for access to public toilet (pavilion or new).
- Wider access path between Walmsley Village and shops.
- Lot of time spent discussing need and how to improve access through loading bay area (not Council Land). High concern for most vocal of attendees. (Path condition, width and layout).
- Need for Council to lobby shop owners to improve access.
- Suggest swap multi-purpose courts and playspace to reduce distance from playspace to car park.
- Interested in what is proposed for synthetic tennis courts at end of life – to be determined then taking into account use over next 5 years or thereabouts.
- Concern over level of maintenance in the reserve currently on the eastern side. Grass/weeds allowed to get high before slashing.

- Concern there may be insufficient community parking when AFL matches happening. Predominantly an after school training venue. Some practice matches on Friday nights and weekend.

The key actions includes:

- Council to advocate to shop owners for improved shop/reserve access
- KCAG to leverage off MP improvements to encourage shop owners to 'up their game' and improve the shopping precinct

KILSYTH FOOTBALL PRACTICE MATCHES POP-UP SESSION

(10 & 18 MARCH 2023)

The consultation sessions at Kilsyth Football Practice Matches (U16, U18 girls and boys practice matches) engaged with approximately 160 spectator groups and overall all very supportive of the improvements proposed in the Draft Master Plan.

The key feedback includes:

- New recreation activities proposed will provide families with facilities to utilise while children/other siblings are training.
- Path around the oval received strong support.
- High need to improve parking and traffic flow (conflict between motorists experienced on 18/3 due to inconsiderate parking practices and blocking of thoroughfare).
- Constrained access for emergency vehicles in peak usage times.
- Training lights are currently too low a lux level for safe training – many globes not working and considered below the 50 lux training level requirement.
- Suggest flip multi-purpose court and playspace to strengthen linkage with sports ground and recreation area respectively.

- Increase level of perceived safety - decrease attraction of area as a hangout and for undesirable behaviour.
- Noted use of the proposed plaza area as warm-up space for AFL (visitors). Danny from Eastern Ranges suggested this was not normal as usually there is sufficient time scheduled between games to utilise the oval for warmups.
- Need to increase awareness of the adjacent shopping precinct. First time visitors to the reserve had no idea of the existence of the shops. There is an opportunity to provide wayfinding signage.
- Accessible toilet at end of pavilion has no signage. Spectators using the internal toilets.
- Spectators requested a kiosk facility. There is a coffee van present and well utilised.
- Scoreboard too small to read from opposite side of the ground.

WALMSLEY RETIREMENT VILLAGE POP-UP SESSION (16 MARCH 2023)

The consultation at Walmsley Retirement Village had 28 attendees and overall contributors were supportive of the Draft Master Plan however see limited benefit for themselves in the short term.

The key feedback includes:

- Improve lighting for paths:
 - Lighting near Churinga (early morning) not in service
 - Increase lux level
 - Include lighting down the side of Memorial Hall
- The pathway along the side of Memorial Hall was used as an access route to the shops however lighting was poor in this area. The pathway on the eastern side of the Memorial Hall provided an opportunity for Walmsley Retirement Village residents to vary their route to the shops.
- Essential to maintain access to the shops during any proposed works, residents would like to access the shops from Greeves Drive maintained for local residents during any staged works at Kilsyth Recreation Reserve.

- Current vegetation (Silky Oaks) blocking drains along access path.
- There is an opportunity and need for short term wins/improvements to benefit current residents of Walmsley.
- Support for increased seating throughout the reserve.
- There is a need for extra bins for rubbish left behind by youth frequenting the reserve in the evenings.
- Additional trees for screening on interface with Walmsley.
- Request for a croquet/bocce/pétanque type area as the croquet lawn in the Walmsley area is only half size and not well maintained.
- Improve maintenance of the reserve, especially the non-sport areas.
- Suggest removal of trees in the Churinga loading zone area to widen path and improve interface with reserve.
- Would like to see trees located to provide shade along the pathways and at key seating/rest spots.
- Support for removal of tennis courts and associated facilities to the west of the main path and see this as a high priority area to address (short term win).
- Supportive of any additional opportunities for exercise (e.g. fitness station catering for older age group).
- Indication that they generally feel safe using the reserve but have noticed some undesirable behaviour/hang out locations to the southern (lower sections) of the reserve.

CHURINGA SHOPPING CENTRE, KILSYTH

POP-UP SESSION

(18 MARCH 2023)

The consultation at Churinga Shopping Centre at a drop-in location outside Woolworths engaged with approximately 45 people and received a high level of support for the improvements proposed in the Draft Master Plan.

The key feedback includes:

- High level of support for improvements proposed.
- Suggest adding a gym/fitness station specifically designed for senior citizens (due to the closeness of the retirement village).
- Queried about toilet facilities – wanting to ensure that there would be access to these if a playground was installed
- A query raised about the potential for more cars to park within the retirement village or local side streets in order to access Kilsyth Recreation Reserve.
- Additional seating throughout the reserve to serve as rest spots.
- Local residents supportive of opportunities for younger aged groups within the reserve but expressed concern about children riding their bikes through Walmsley

Retirement Village on their way to Kilsyth Recreation Reserve (safety concern for elderly residents walking to the shops).

- Respondents generally felt safe within Kilsyth Recreation Reserve.
- One respondent expressed a desire for the murals to remain in place.
- Several respondents commented on the need for a fenced dog park within the area or municipality.
- A suggestion was made to include a water feature in the reserve's design.
- Another suggestion was to include some form of water play.
- Playground supported. Potentially flip with multi-use court so that this is located further away from the oval.
- One respondent wanted to keep the tennis courts.

CONCLUSION

Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is primarily used by local residents for active recreation including football.

The majority of Reserve users are adults with only a slight minority in care of a child(ren).

The Reserve is also a primary access route to the Kilsyth Shopping Centre for many local residents, especially the retirement village to its south.

The Kilsyth Recreation Master Plan takes on board feedback from the existing community and user groups.

The master plan recommendations seek to achieve a balance between maintaining the site's existing amenities, functionality, and facilities whilst also exploring opportunities for further improvements.

KEY FINDINGS

Consultation and engagement for the Kilsyth Recreation Reserve Master Plan resulted in a generally positive and supportive outcome for the development and upgrade of the reserve over the next 10 years.

Key initiatives seek to improve facilities within the reserve to better cater for the community's identified needs. They also aim to:

- Provide a balance of active and passive recreation for a broad range of user groups, including multi-generational facilities.
- Promote and further advocate for stronger links with the local shopping precinct.
- Strengthen the site's natural attributes which include extended views to the Dandenong Ranges to the south-east.
- Strengthen facilities to better cater for the needs of the existing sporting clubs utilising the site.

The following list outlines some of the community's key priorities identified as part of the consultation process. These helped to inform the development of the master plan.

General

- Improve linkages and accessibility between the Town Centre and Kilsyth Recreation Reserve.
- Maintain and improve the connectivity to the Reserve and Kilsyth Shopping Centre from the retirement village.
- Explore methods of enhancing the site's presence through strengthening community use and enhancing Kilsyth Recreation Reserve's qualities as a 'place' for people to visit and meet.
- Maintain views to the Dandenong Ranges.
- Increase the diversity of tree planting for habitat and natural shading.
- Improve vehicle circulation and parking.
- Improve site accessibility for less mobile users through additional accessible path networks, seating, lighting and shade throughout the Reserve.

Recreation

- Strengthen opportunities for more passive recreation opportunities for all age groups, particularly in the existing tennis court areas.
- Improve pedestrian access and circuit within the Reserve.
- Removal of the under utilised tennis courts to create opportunities for other activities.
- Inclusion of new formal and nature playspace within the Reserve.
- Improve oval and facilities for sporting use.

Gender & Equity

- Improved training and playing conditions of the oval to support increased capacity and opportunity to further extend the female AFL player progression program
- Provision of a no-cost court facility that has multi-use potential applicable to all ages, genders and cultures
- Provision of an intergenerational playspace area that encourages carers of all ages to be involved and active
- Provision of social spaces for families and community groups to interact
- Provide facilities such as a pump track to support young people
- Provide improved paths and seating throughout the reserve for older adults and those with mobility issues as they will benefit physically and socially from these improvements

Limitations of the project

The current football user groups requested that the existing oval length be increased as this restricts the level of competition to under 18's. This was explored in the early stages of the process. Due to the existing pavilion and constrained site, a lengthening of the oval is not possible without preventing vehicle access and parking on the east side of the oval.

The benefits of alternative activities at the site for football players, supporters and their families is strongly supported. This includes recommendations to improve lighting, toilet facilities, ground condition and to reduce car parking issues.

Whilst the community would like to see improvements made at the interface with the shopping precinct, it is acknowledged that the land to the north of Kilsyth Recreation Reserve is not owned by Council. The master plan advocates for improvements and stronger links to the shopping precinct. This includes:

- Better treatments and safer pedestrian access within the loading area between Dan Murphy's and Woolworths.
- Potential future connections to the reserve to the west of Dan Murphy's (to connect with proposed plaza area)
- Improved access and lighting at the Memorial Hall site

