Riverside Playground, North Shore

Community Engagement Report

June 2022

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL

have your say

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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ENGAGEMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Background

Following a request from the North Side Progress Association, a draft concept design was developed for a new play space at Riverside Park on the North Shore.

The playground was designed to encourage active living and community interaction. The design focused on providing play for all ages and abilities, and included a variety of play equipment, nature play elements, picnic shelter, connecting paths, landscaping and informal parking.

This project builds on our commitment to provide a large range of outdoor recreational spaces for our residents.

Engagement approach

Our engagement approach was Involve, with North Shore residents asked to contribute their thoughts and ideas on the park design. North Shore residents and the North Side Association are the key stakeholders in this engagement.

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise To The Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

Consultation focus

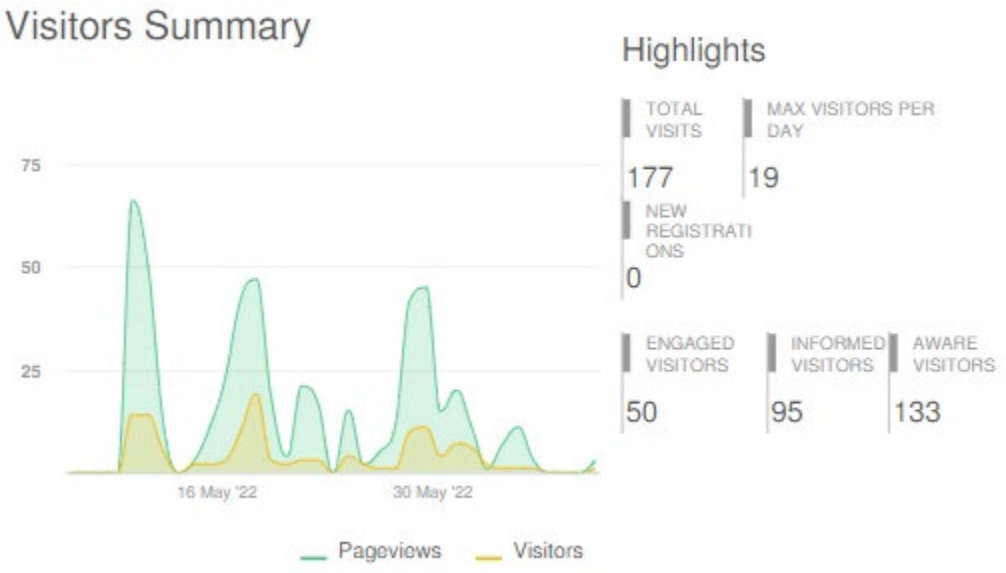
In the Have Your Say survey, we asked:

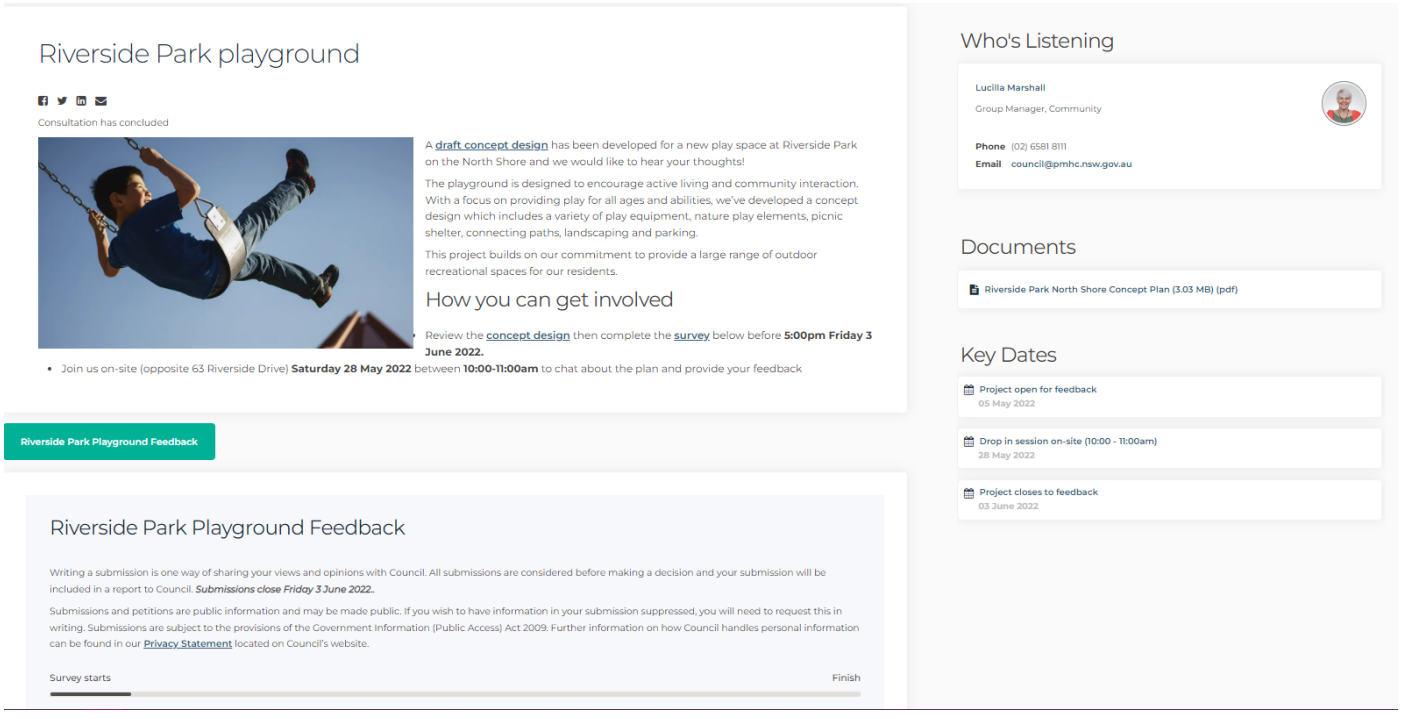
- Name
- Email address
- Postcode
- Do you identify as a person with a disability?
- What do you (or your children) like to do in a play space? (Multiple choice)
    - Play games with others
    - Meet new friends
    - Spend time engaging in nature
    - Physical play
    - Other, provide comment
- Do you have any feedback on the concept design for Riverside Park?

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES, TIMELINES AND RESULTS

Have Your Say

The concept design for Riverside Playground was on Have Your Say from Thursday 5 May 2022 to Friday 3 June 2022 for community feedback. A total of 56 responses were received on the survey, with 74 downloads of the concept design.





On Site Meeting

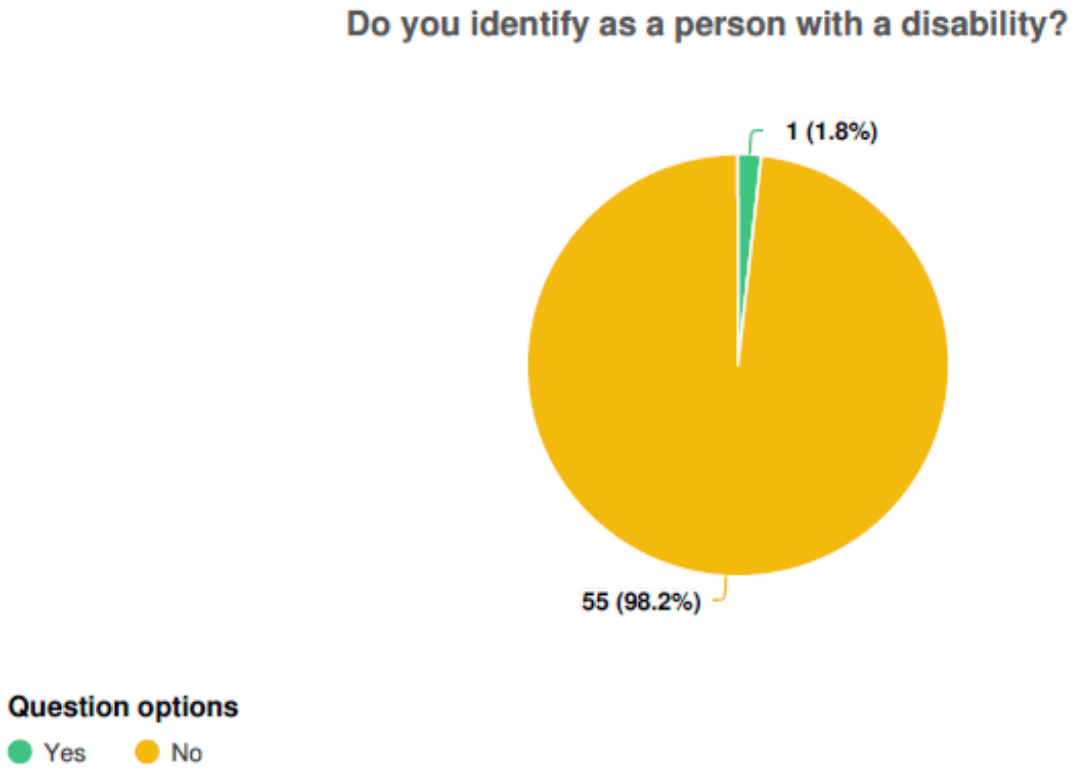
An onsite meeting with North Shore community members was held on Saturday 18 May 2022, 10am-11am at Riverside Park. A dotocracy board was used to display a range of play elements where they could mark which elements they preferred to see in the play space. Thirty community members attended the onsite meeting to discuss the design and provide feedback. The dotocracy board can be viewed in appendix 1.

Results of the dotocracy were:

Play Element	**Result**
Quiet and calm spaces	13
Active experiences	30
Challenging play	39
Everyone can play	10
Imagination play	12
Nature based play	8
Storytelling and culture	9
Sensory (look, feel, touch, hear, smell)	7
Flying fox *(added by community)*	3
Inground trampoline *(added by community)*	7
Basketball half-court *(added by community)*	5

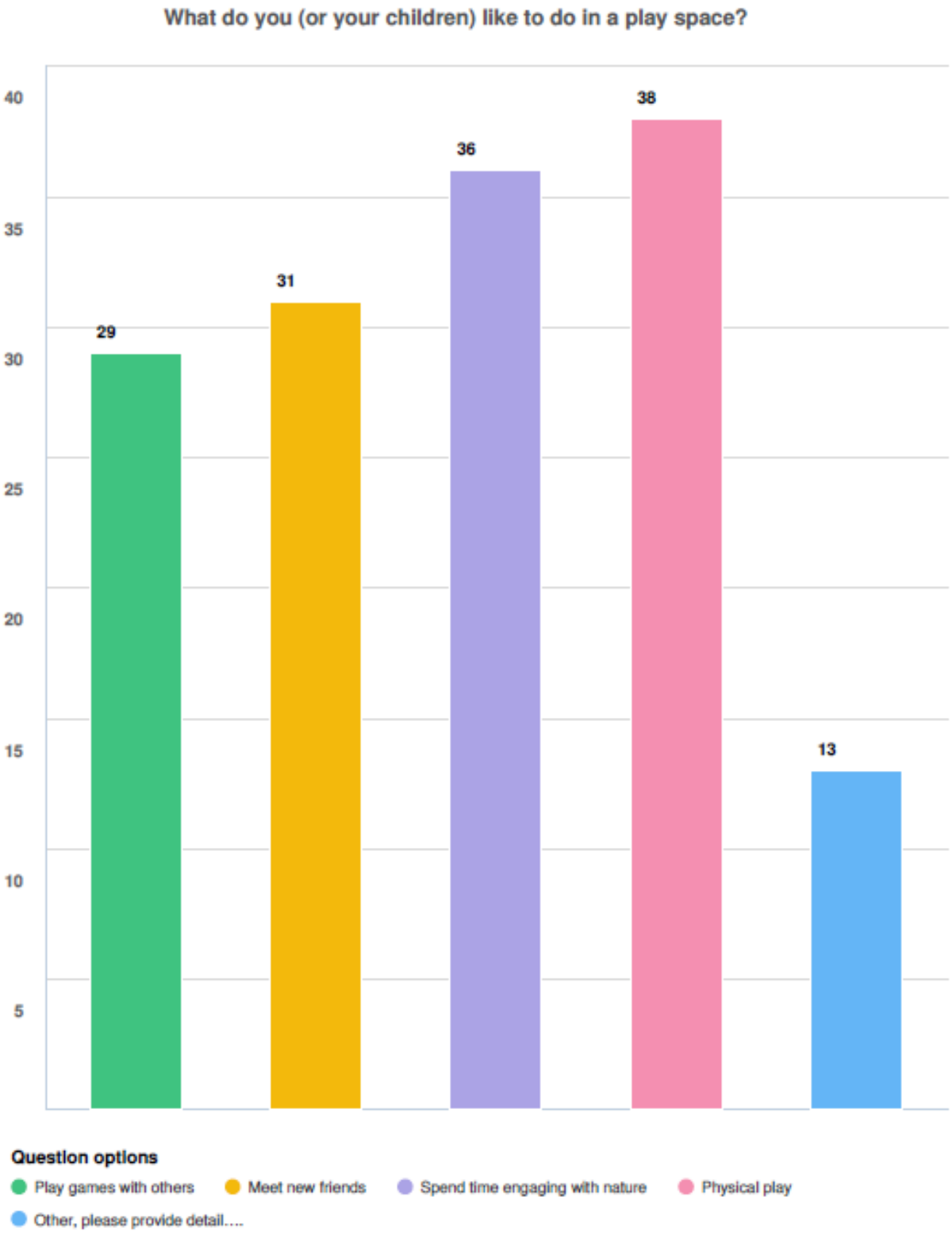
Have Your Say

Of the 56 survey responses, the majority of respondents were located within the 2444 postcode. One respondent identified as a person living with a disability.



When asked what they, or their children, like to do in a play space, we heard that physical play and spending time engaging with nature were the most important to the community. This was followed by meeting new friends and playing games with others. The 'Other' section included:

- Suggestion of adding flying foxes, swings, and half basketball court
- Watching children enjoy themselves and exert their energy
- Events including birthday parties or picnics
- Outdoor physical fitness
- Imaginary play, creating adventure.



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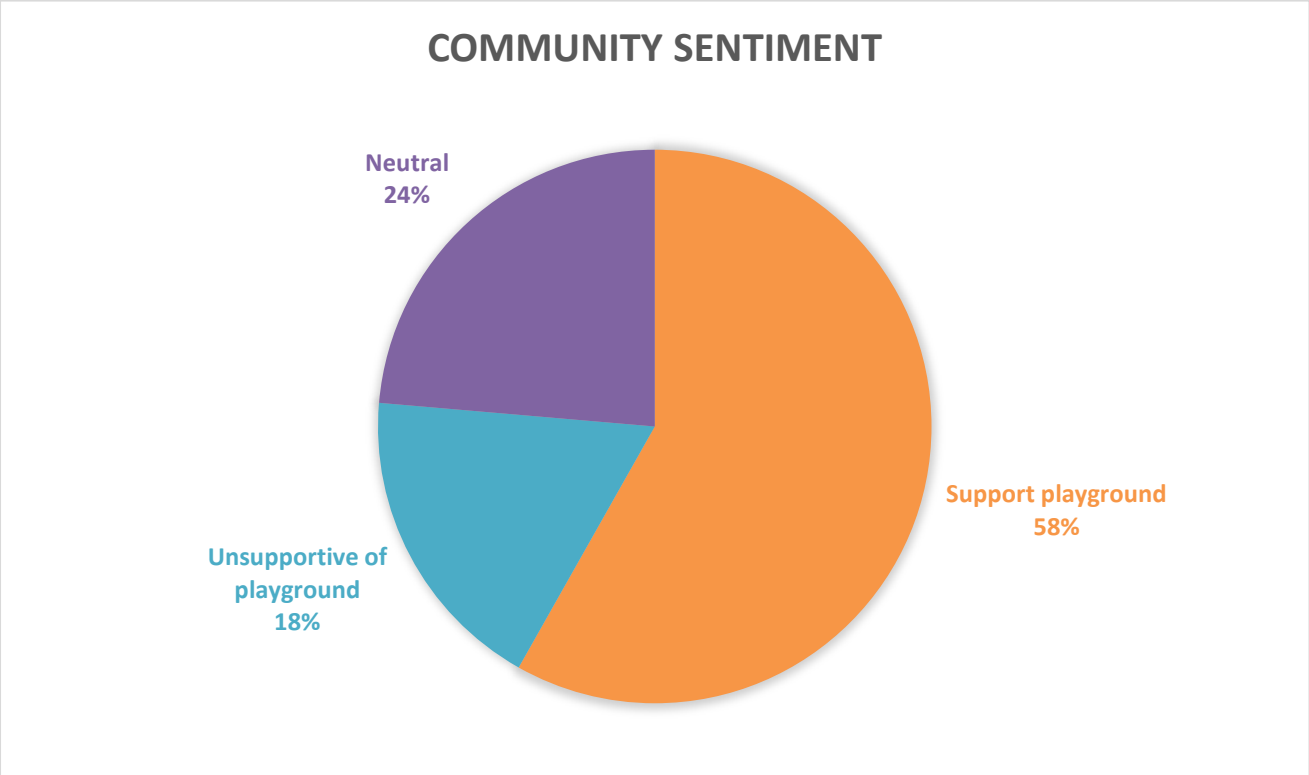
have your say

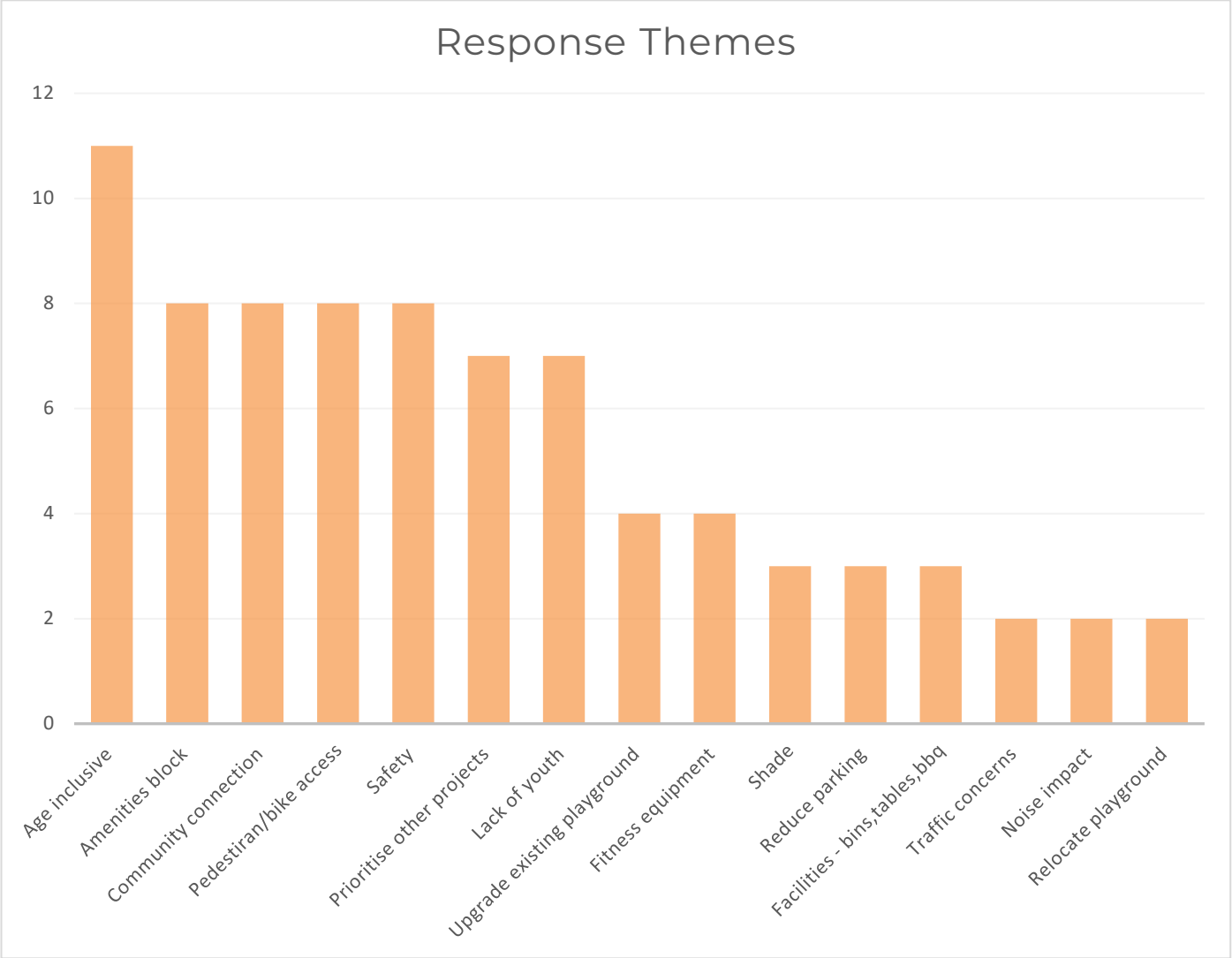
The question, 'Do you have any feedback on the concept design for Riverside Park?' was a free text response. Each response was given a sentiment label from 'support', 'neutral', 'unsupportive'. The majority of respondents are supportive of the proposed play space and concept design. Responses which did not display clear sentiment either for or against the proposed playground were labelled 'neutral'.



Free text responses were also coded against 15 recurring themes to analyse the data. Verbatim, de-identified survey responses are available in appendix 2.

These themes are:

- Pedestrian and bicycle access along road
- Age inclusive
- Reduce parking
- Safety
- Relocation
- Lack of youth
- Prioritise roads/drainage
- Community connection
- Traffic concerns
- Public toilets
- Fitness facilities
- Upgrade existing playground
- Noise impact
- Amenities/bins
- Shade



Age inclusive equipment

Of the total responses, 13.8% were related to ensuring the play space is inclusive to all ages, specifically for pre-teens and teenagers. Suggested equipment to encourage use by these age groups included:

- Skate half-pipe
- Half basketball court
- In-ground trampolines
- Flying fox.

The inclusion of fitness equipment was also considered beneficial in providing for the older kids but also catering for the broader community who use this space.

Facilities and parking

The inclusion of a public toilet block was frequently suggested by the community (10% of responses) as the current location does not have existing facilities, nor any nearby. Other facilities requested in some responses (3.8%) included bins, shaded picnic seating, and BBQs.

A few respondents considered nine parking spaces to be excessive when many users will be walking or riding to the playground.

Safety

Ten percent of responses had concerns regarding safety related to the proposed location of the play space and access to and from this area.

There is concern regarding the playground's proximity to both Riverside Drive, which is considered a busy, fast-paced road, and the river, particularly when fencing is not included in the design. Residents have suggested relocating the playground to a safer location, or alternatively including fencing in the design.

At the current proposed location, calls for reduced speed limits, traffic calming measures and signage have been made to increase the safety of all users. Respondents also identified safety concerns for those travelling by bike or walking along the road to and from the playground due to the poor road condition, narrow width, and lack of footpath.

Unsupportive of playground

Of the total responses, 18% were considered to be unsupportive of the construction of a playground at Riverside Park. Some respondents believed that Council should be prioritising other project, including repairing roads, drainage and ferry services, over building a new playground. Others preferred for the existing playgrounds to be upgraded instead and consider a new playground not warranted due to the lack of youth living on the North Shore. Residents close to the proposed playground location are concerned by potential noise impacts and antisocial behaviour.

Support playground

The majority of responses were supportive of the construction of a play space in Riverside Park and believe it will be beneficial for the community. Respondents identified the great benefits that the playground will have for the health and wellbeing of not only children on the North Shore, but will bring the whole community together after multiple periods of hardship.

Communications

The engagement on the playground design was shared on the Port Macquarie North Shore Facebook page and received a lot of engagement from the community. Verbatim, de-identified Facebook comments is available in appendix 3.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Overall, the community is supportive of the playground at Riverside Park and are eager to see this go ahead for the health and wellbeing of their children, families and community.

Key elements for consideration are:

- Inclusion of age-appropriate play equipment, particularly for pre-teens and teenagers
- Provision of picnic and BBQ facilities
- Reduction in car parking
- Consideration and improvement of safety both within the play space and travelling to and from.

Concerns from neighbouring residents to be considered include potential noise impacts, attraction of anti-social behaviour and increased traffic in their street. Concerns were also raised about the lack of toilet facilities.

NEXT STEPS

Review of concept design with consideration of community feedback.

Council and community to seek grant funding opportunities.

Construction to commence once funding has been secured.

APPENDIX

Please refer to attachments.