



INNER NORTH PLAY SPACE: CO-DESIGN PHASE

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

Community representatives were invited to take part in a co-design workshop to progress the Inner North Play Space to the next phase of design development.

The ACT Government is committed to delivering a new destination play space for the Inner North through upgrading the green space adjacent to the Canberra Technology Park in Watson.

The ACT Government sought to progress the design process via a co-design workshop, to allow for ACT Government and community representatives to work with the design team to ensure the design direction meets a wide range of needs, while remaining true to the priorities identified by the community during the first stage community engagement in 2021.

Feedback received from the community during the first stage of engagement identified key priorities for the inner north play space and established the design framework for progressing the next stage of the project.

THE CONVERSATION

Government Stakeholder Workshop

To prepare for the discussion with the community, an online workshop was held with representatives from various ACT Government entities on Wednesday 10th May 2023.

This discussion acknowledged the communities' key priorities for the play space whilst identifying potential opportunities and/or constraints regarding the site and how these could be managed in the design phase of the project. The information collected during this session helped facilitate a focused discussion on what was realistic and achievable in the play space. That internal workshop was a pre-amble to the co-design workshop held later that day.

The Co-Design Workshop

A diverse group of community representatives were brought together to participate in a face-to-face co-design workshop which was held at the Academy of Interactive Entertainment (AIE) on Wednesday 10th May 2023.

The purpose of the workshop was to test and refine ideas that arose during the first stage of community engagement for the Inner North Play Space.

A total of 11 representatives attended the workshop from a range of backgrounds, including local schools, local community council, play based organisations and an indigenous representative.



The design team commenced the workshop with an overview of the project, including site context and project objectives. This included highlighting the community's key priorities for the site to focus the discussion and allow for meaningful feedback.

Another aim of the workshop was to identify priorities for the site as either short term or long term to allow for the delivery of a play space within the allocated spending envelope.

All feedback was documented and analysed to provide the summary below.

WHO WE ENGAGED

A total of 11 representatives from 7 community groups participated in the co-design workshop from a range of different backgrounds.

Invitations were sent to a diverse range of community organisations and groups, inviting them to contribute towards the co-design phase of the project.

Those in attendance were from:

- Buru Ngunnawal Aboriginal Corporation
- All Play Inner North
- Majura Primary School
- Blue Gum Community School
- Watson Community Association rep on NCCC.
- Playgrounds of Canberra
- Academy of Interactive Entertainment

The co-design workshop provided a great opportunity to assess the foundational design concepts and ideas received through the December 2021 Your Say online survey.

The community representatives were able to test and refine some of those concepts to ensure they were robust and meeting the objectives of the original play space consultation.

The themes that emerged aligned relatively closely with the original community input, noting of course that discussions were focused on emerging the design principles for the space, rather than blue sky ideas.

The first round of consultation showed strong support for:

- an inclusive and accessible play space with play opportunities for all ages
- a wide range of recreation facilities, with shade a priority
- well-connected active travel links and parking for the play space
- a play space that reflects the inner north community



The discussions held during the co-design workshop were centred around these themes but in more detail. The key insights are detailed below.

Key insights from the community

Key Aspirations

1. Education – learning through play
2. Storytelling – weaving indigenous and non-indigenous cultural story
3. Inclusivity – for all ages and abilities
4. Intergenerational participation – a broad range of ages catered for
5. Connection – links to local community infrastructure
6. Community – a space for all to meet, enjoy and connect

Site Amenities

1. There is strong support for toilet facilities, baby change and water fountains as there are no other facilities in the local area.
2. Support also exists for green space, barbecues, picnic seating and shade structures to provide space for a range of cultures to meet, allowing for the strengthening of relationships within the community (picnics, parties, community celebrations).

Play opportunities

3. There was strong support for multi-use courts that provide flexible play opportunities.
4. The top priorities for the play space were nature play, water play, climbing and opportunities for children to challenge themselves in a safe environment.
5. Intergeneration play was also strongly supported with the suggestion of gym equipment, bench seating and walking paths.
6. Importance was placed on the need for varied green open space that allow for a variety of activities such as yoga, informal games and quiet contemplation.
7. Consideration needs to be given to those with disabilities to allow for meaningful interaction with the play space such as easily navigable paths in the nature play area and plants grown at appropriate heights for access to sensory play.
8. Additional themes were discussed for the longer term priorities for the site, including bike/pump track, rock climbing with softfall, skatepark, and a safe place for teenagers to 'hang out'.

Safety

9. There is strong support for fencing or well designed planting that would provide a safety barrier between the roads and the play space.
10. Appropriate measures need to be implemented to create a division of space between younger and older kids to facilitate safe play.
11. There is also support for wayfinding lighting to aid connectivity throughout the site, however there wasn't support for lighting of the multi-use courts at night time to minimise disturbance to the neighbourhood.



Transport links and parking

12. Parking is an identified need for this play space, including disabled parking that is located at easy access points.
13. There was support to provide additional parking in the future. The priority is to minimise impact on the established perimeter trees and local residents.

Community identity and involvement

14. There is support to incorporate cultural aspects into the site such as designing in song lines and story lines that are educational and provide natural play elements.
15. There is support for acknowledging indigenous culture with use of more native planting.
16. A suggestion was to combine water play with the education of cultural waters.

Opportunities and / or constraints

17. The addition of power supply to the site to facilitate, in the long term, community events such as markets, outdoor performances, light shows by students of AIE etc.
18. There is support to cluster the play space, multi-use courts and facilities (with appropriate buffer zones) together to maintain openness and green space for other uses. This would also benefit site maintenance.
19. Additionally, the priority to reach 30% tree coverage is strongly supported as is minimising the removal of any existing trees.
20. The opportunity exists to have the existing nearby crossings upgraded through the proposed Garden City Active Travel Route which is planned to run down Windeyre Street. The proposal includes a wombat crossing on Burton Street and an upgrade to the signalised crossing on Phillip Avenue.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Feedback gathered from the co-design process will be used to inform a preliminary design for the inner north play space. The preliminary design will be prepared for further engagement in the second half of 2023.

Updates will continue to be provided via the Your Say page. If you have any questions about the project or would like to register to receive project updates, please email communityengagement@act.gov.au

Key Timings

March 2018: ACT Government community engagement on future site use for Canberra Technology Park

March 2021: Academy of Interactive Entertainment's community engagement for Canberra Technology Park

September 2021: Future Intentions Plan released for Academy of Interactive Entertainment site

2 November 2021: Start stage 1 consultation inner north play space



14 December 2021: Stage 1 consultation closes

March 2022: Stage 1 consultation What we Heard report released

2022 – 2023 ACT Budget: Construction funding provided

April – May 2023: Preparation of preliminary designs and targeted stakeholder engagement

Mid 2023: Stage 2 consultation commences

Late 2023: Designs finalised ahead of construction procurement

2024: Construction expected to commence