



**ACT**  
Government

**Suburban Land**  
Agency



**Coombs Play Space at Holden's Creek Pond**

# **Frequently Asked Questions**



## **1. What is the history and next steps for the proposed Play Space at Holden's Creek Pond in Coombs?**

The Coombs Play Space at Holden's Creek Pond is the final piece of active living infrastructure that the Suburban Land Agency are required to deliver in the suburbs of Wright and Coombs (excluding works to be undertaken at the Coombs Peninsula).

At the time of the development of the Coombs Estate Development Plan (EDP) in 2012, an indicative location for a future Play Space was shown near the Holdens Creek Pond underpass, close to John Gorton Drive. The indicative location was included by the Coombs Estate Design Consultants engaged by the Land Development Agency and did not consider the concurrent Holdens Creek Pond construction works being undertaken at that location by the ACT Government Directorate responsible for Civil Works.

This same indicative Play Space location was erroneously included in concurrent versions of the Coombs EDP despite the completion of Holdens Creek Pond Stormwater Infrastructure in that location.

A new location on Edgeworth parade was identified as part of the North Coombs Estate Development Plan in 2016 and again as part of the Coombs Landscape works. Preliminary sketch plans of these landscape works were released in 2017. These referenced the site for the future Play Space and showed possible landscape elements and pedestrian, cycling, equestrian paths through Holdens Creek Pond and within the Molonglo River Corridor.

The Suburban Land Agency commenced consultation on the Play Space design in May 2018 and published the consultation report and engagement responses in August 2018. Based on this feedback a draft design was prepared in February 2019 with a view to including its construction as part of the Coombs Landscape works.

The design responded to the natural setting of Holden's Creek Pond through the use of a sympathetic palette of materials and colours, in addition to appropriate fencing and barriers to Edgeworth Parade and the Pond. The design was overseen by Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) who provided in-principle support to the concept.

Following the release of the draft design, further feedback was received from the community. In response, the SLA updated its Active Living Map and commissioned two reports between March and June 2019 which re-investigated the planning principles behind the proposed Play Space and reviewed the provision of toilet facilities in the Molonglo Valley.

With these reports now complete, and in light of ongoing community feedback the SLA has appointed consultant company Communication Link to develop and undertake the Stage 2 Engagement which will engage key organisations, community representative groups and individual community members through face-to-face meetings, events, localised door-knocking and online platforms over a six-week period between August and October 2019.

The engagement program will gather and record additional feedback from interested stakeholders on the proposed size, scale and inclusions in the new Coombs Play Space at Holden's Creek Pond.

## **2. What were the outcomes of the first stage of engagement and why is the government engaging with the community for a second time?**

The first stage of engagement consisted of both online and face to face engagement activities. Analysis of the outcomes indicated that respondents were well represented across age groups, and gender, with 80 per cent living in the Molonglo Valley.

Toilets, a basketball court and water play were identified as the most popular inclusions along with shade structures, double swings, slides, mini trampolines and a climbing wall.

A separate residents' submission was also received which highlighted a number of concerns with scale, noise, amenity, safety, and the design in the context of Government infrastructure standards.

Following the release of the Play Space Draft Design, ongoing concerns were again expressed by some residents on the size, scale and inclusions and its compliance with Government Standards on recreation facilities. Concerns were also expressed about the consultation methodology and the need to get the views of individual stakeholder groups, including those who frequent Holdens Creek Pond regularly.

The Suburban Land Agency responded to these ongoing resident concerns by halting the project's progression and undertaking a targeted stage 2 engagement program on the design. The aim of this second stage is to ensure all voices are heard and for the community's feedback on the design to be independently collected, analysed and provided back to the Suburban Land Agency.

## **3. What is the Stage 2 Engagement schedule and how can I have my say?**

Full details of the Stage 2 engagement are available at:

<https://www.yoursay.act.gov.au/coombs-play-space>

## **4. Will the scope of the Stage 2 engagement include a review of all recreation facilities in Coombs and Wright and alternative locations for the Coombs Play Space?**

No. All other recreation facilities in Coombs and Wright are now under the custodianship of Transport Canberra and City Services except for the soon to be opened play space in North Wright. Once this is officially named and opened over the coming months, it too will be transferred to TCCS. The Suburban Land Agency is tasked only with completing the Coombs landscape works and designing and constructing the Play Space on the site at Holden's Creek Pond.

Future reviews on recreation facilities in Coombs and Wright will be the responsibility of TCCS.

## **5. Have you considered putting the play space in another location?**

Stage 2 consultation is limited to the design of the play space at Holden's Creek Pond. This site has been identified as a play space since the 2016 North Coombs Estate Development Plan and the SLA is working to finalise this commitment.

There have been suggestions that the play space be relocated to a site on the corner of John Gorton Drive and Edgeworth Parade. This is not feasible due to the required buffers to the surrounding roads, and to a number of storm water assets on the site.

## 6. How is the Suburban Land Agency using the findings of the Toilet Block Study and Planning Review that were undertaken after the draft design?

The methodology and findings of both reports has been carefully reviewed and will be one of many inputs that will guide the final Play Space design. It's important to note that while these independent reports are an important part of the planning and design process, they are by no means influenced by government, nor are their findings considered to be a position of government. In the interests of transparency, these reports were made publicly available and the community feedback on them has been carefully reviewed.

## 7. Who will be responsible for managing the toilet facilities?

There has been no firm decision made about the inclusion of toilet facilities in the play space. This decision will be informed by the community feedback during Stage 2 consultation.

If toilet facilities are included in the final design, TCCS would be responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the facility. This would be undertaken in accordance with existing toilet management practices which include regular cleaning and maintenance and being locked overnight.

## 8. Will the Coombs Play Space be built to the new TCCS Standards?

New Municipal Infrastructure Standards were released by TCCS in April 2019. The draft Play Space design produced in February 2019 has been re-assessed against these standards.

The key findings from this review are as follows:

*Recreational Facilities – Municipal Infrastructure Standards 21 (Published April 2019)*

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| <b>1.3: Types of Recreational Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play Spaces</li></ul>                 | <p>The Suburban Land Agency in agreement with TCCS is defining the Coombs Play Space under these standards as a <b>Central Community Play Space</b> (refer 1.3.1.2, page 12).</p> <p>It is noted however that the standards state that the level of facility provided should respond to surrounding dwelling density and typology. A neighbourhood park located adjacent to multi-unit dwelling blocks or a large number of compact blocks should provide a higher level of public amenity than a neighbourhood park in a low-density residential setting (Page 12).</p> <p>The dwelling density on Edgeworth Parade and surrounds will be carefully considered as part of the design review process with TCCS.</p> |
| <b>1.5 Planning Concepts</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Siting layout and design</li><li>• Landform</li></ul> | <p>The siting and design of the play space makes use of the natural and landscape features and provides some shade and some shelter from</p>  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervision and Passive Surveillance</li> <li>• Play Equipment Setback Requirements</li> </ul> | <p>wind and create visual harmony with the surrounding area (<i>refer 1.5.1, page 15</i>).</p> <p>The draft design incorporates terracing within safe limits which will provide many advantages including access to elevated areas, maximise play opportunities such as sliding and rolling, and providing viewing opportunities (<i>refer 1.5.2, page 16</i>).</p> <p>The draft design provides a range of carer facilities that will encourage parents and carers to participate in the play experience. It incorporates passive surveillance through its connection and sight lines to the adjacent path network, and appropriate plantings (<i>refer 1.5.3, page 17</i>).</p> <p>The Holdens Creek Pond site dimensions could accommodate a play space area of approximately 3,200m<sup>2</sup> when considering the required buffers to the pond and to Edgeworth Parade. The current draft design however is for a play space area of approximately 2,000m<sup>2</sup> excluding the landscaped interface to the road and pond.</p> <p>The current design will require a special provision by TCCS to allow for a smaller buffer to the adjacent pad mounted electricity substation in accordance with MIS21 (<i>refer 1.5.4, page 18</i>). TCCS will make this decision during the DA approval process.</p> |
| <p><b>1.6 Design Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central Community Playspace</li> </ul>                       | <p>The design is consistent with the standards for a Central Community Play Space in that it caters for ages from 0-17.</p> <p>It incorporates the core design features, imaginative and creative play elements, and activities providing levels of agility and movement. It also includes social and amenity elements including a multi-use court and picnic and BBQ area (<i>refer pages 33 to 38</i>)</p>   |

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| <p><b>1.3: Urban Open Space Typologies and Facilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighbourhood Parks</li> <li>• Open Space Typology References</li> </ul> | <p>The Suburban Land Agency in agreement with TCCS is defining the Coombs Play Space under these standards as a <b>Central Neighbourhood Park</b></p> <p>The site reflects the character of the land and the neighbourhood and is linked to surrounding areas by active travel routes and pedestrian parkland (<i>refer 1.3.3, page 16</i>).</p> <p>Under this definition, elements within the Play Space’s draft and final design have been and will continue to be reviewed against the following additional standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MIS05 – Active Travel Facilities Design</li> <li>• MIS14 – Public Lighting</li> <li>• MIS20 - Street and Park Furniture</li> <li>• MIS22 – Signage for Urban Parks and Open Space</li> <li>• MIS24 – Soft Landscape Design</li> <li>• MIS25 – Plant Species for Urban Landscape Projects</li> </ul> |
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*Public Toilets – Municipal Infrastructure Standards 23 (Published April 2019)*

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| <p><b>1.2: General Design Considerations</b></p> | <p>The Standards for the Provision of public toilet facilities states that they will only be provided in District Parks and Nature parks.</p> <p>As the Play Space is not classified as either a District or nature park, the potential inclusion of toilet facilities would be at the discretion of TCCS under MIS21, section 1.3.1 (<i>refer page 12</i>). TCCS would make this decision during the Development Application process.</p> |
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**9. Have you considered the impact of the Play Space on the adjacent residents?**

Yes. The adjacent residents are an extremely important consideration in the delivery of this play space and are key stakeholders in the Stage 2 consultation.

In a combined submission to SLA from a number of adjacent residents in June 2018, they welcomed the development of a play space for children up to 14 years of age on Edgeworth Parade. They have strongly advocated for the design to respond to the natural environment through the use of colours, textures and materials that complement the water and bushland rather than contrast sharply with them. They have also highlighted the importance of preserving existing recreation uses around the pond such as walking and cycling and the annual model sailing regatta.

We have also taken very seriously their concerns as they relate to road, water and electrical safety, habitat preservation, noise and vandalism concerns, pond views, parking, and the potential inclusion of a toilet block.

Additional work has also been undertaken on elevations and lines of sight from the adjacent residences and these are available as part of the current Stage 2 consultation material on the YourSay website.

In response to this feedback, the draft design currently provides for noise attenuation, fencing and screening, a palette of colours and materials that are in harmony with the pond surrounds, and the benching of many play elements low into the landscape to minimise visual impacts. We will continue to engage meaningfully with adjacent residents over the Stage 2 consultation.

**10. Have you considered the Play Space's impacts on the pond and associated flora and fauna?**

Yes. The Suburban Land Agency has received advice from the ACT Conservator for Flora and Fauna in April 2019.

The Conservator has advised that the noise associated with the playground and the loss of some open exotic grassland may have a localised impact on some common bird species. The Conservator is however confident that the design and management measures that have been put in place for the whole Molonglo region will continue to see a protection of key habitat, movement between these habitat areas and overall enhancement of Molonglo's wildlife.

**11. Will there be an opportunity to provide more community feedback on the final design?**

SLA will provide the community with a copy of the design once it is finalised but will not be seeking further community feedback.

Depending upon the features included in the final design, the design may require a Development Application which will provide a further opportunity for the community to provide final feedback to the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate.

The draft design does not require any changes to the Territory Plan zoning for the site.

**12. What are the next steps once the Stage 2 Community Engagement finishes?**

Upon the completion of Stage 2, Communication Link will provide independent advice back to the SLA on community feedback on the draft design. This advice will be considered by SLA and discussed with other ACT Government agencies and will inform the final design. Construction is anticipated to commence in the first half of 2020.