

WHOLE OF SUBURB PLAY REVIEWS

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD



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As part of the ACT Government's Better Suburbs Program, a community-led Play Spaces Forum allocated \$1.9 million to improve play spaces across Canberra in 2018-19.

This Forum trialled a new way of making decisions in the ACT, through participatory budgeting. The Forum's decisions are now being implemented by the ACT Government.

One key decision was the allocation of \$375,000 for five whole of suburb play space reviews. The Forum selected the suburbs of Richardson, Waramanga, Torrens, Narrabundah and Higgins for these reviews.



The Forum specified that the whole of suburb play reviews were to be undertaken in partnership with the community. This was a new way of planning for play, working with whole communities and whole suburbs rather than looking at one play space at a time.

The ACT Government asked the communities of the five selected suburbs what types of play spaces they would like to see in their suburb. The communities' views informed designs for:

- one new or rebuilt feature play space in the suburb.

THE CONVERSATION

The communities of Richardson, Waramanga, Torrens, Narrabundah and Higgins told us what they would like to see in their suburb's play spaces over two phases of engagement:

Phase 1: initial co-design sessions - the community provided input on preferred play elements, the location of the feature play space within each suburb, and other feedback and ideas.

Phase 2: final co-design sessions - the community was presented with design concept options and asked whether they endorse the design concepts, and which play elements in the designs they preferred.

We held conversations online, over the phone, face-to-face and directly with communities in each of the five suburbs between 1 March and 31 July 2019.

The communities had their say on the play space designs through various approaches to co-design across all five suburbs, including:

- community design groups;
- community pop-ups at local shops, public events, outside schools, playgroups, polling day, etc;

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- workshops with primary school and early learning school students (aged 6-12 years);
- workshops with high school and college students and youth groups (aged 13-18 years);
- liaison with stakeholders and organisations through phone interviews, email and face-to-face interactions;
- Indigenous liaison with the Representative Aboriginal Organisations and United Ngunnawal Elders Council;
- online YourSay surveys for each suburb open for seven weeks between April and June 2019; and
- community final design endorsement meetings.

In addition to these activities, additional co-design methods were trialled in some suburbs, including:

- a letterbox drop of the YourSay survey to residents in Torrens;
- a walking tour with community members in Narrabundah and Waramanga; and
- four intensive co-design sessions with a group of local residents in Higgins.

WHO ENGAGED

The ACT Government conducted targeted engagement and co-design sessions with over 1,500 community members across the five suburbs. The number of people engaged in various activities in the suburbs of Richardson, Waramanga, Torrens, Narrabundah and Higgins are provided in the table below.

	Richardson	Waramanga	Torrens	Narrabundah	Higgins
Community pop-ups (at shops, events, schools, playgroups, polling day, etc)	46	120	163	235	52
Workshops with primary schools & early learning schools (6-12 years)	38	43	40	38	30
Workshops with high schools, colleges & youth groups (13-18 years)	37	18	12	45	
YourSay survey	13	43	51	46	49 (+196*)
Community design groups	8	8	9	10	34
Other (walking tours, stakeholder liaison, local clubs, paper surveys, etc)		20	39	64	1
Final design endorsement meetings	13	6	10	26	
TOTAL	155	258	324	464	362

(*number of contributions for the YourSay Higgins revote survey)

In addition to receiving feedback from local residents in each suburb, including people of all ages (from 4 to 80+), key stakeholders and stakeholder groups who we liaised with included:

- primary school and early learning school students;
- high school and college students;
- school P&C committees;
- childcare centre educators and carers;
- local shop owners;
- local community councils and resident associations;

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- community services organisations, including Community Services #1, YWCA, Communities@Work, Marymead, Tuggeranong Link, Belconnen Community Services, Kippax Kids and Winnunga Nimmitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services;
- local clubs such as playgroups, scout groups, youth groups and sports clubs;
- aged care facilities;
- advocacy groups, including ACT Inclusion Council, Childrensafe ACT, Pedal Power, Bluearth, NaturePlay CBR and Council of the Ageing ACT; and
- the four Representative Aboriginal Organisations.

We also:

- consulted with other ACT Government Directorates, including the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development and Education Directorates, to ensure a whole of government approach;
- presented updates on the whole of suburb play space reviews to three district community councils – Woden Valley Community Council, Weston Creek Community Council and Tuggeranong Community Council;
- presented an update on the whole of suburb play space reviews to the United Ngunnawal Elders Council. The Council were supportive of the project and our approaches to working with the Ngunnawal community to create play elements, artwork and educational signage that promote the Ngunnawal language and culture to people visiting play spaces across Canberra; and
- undertook a followup YourSay survey to revote on the location of the feature play space in Higgins. This was in response to divergent results on the initial voting of the location of the feature play space, whereby two locations (Higgins Oval and Tester Park) received equal votes.

Key insights from the community

Richardson

1. The existing play space at the local shops (Clift Crescent) was the preferred site for the new or rebuilt feature play space, with 70% of votes, due to:
 - a. its location near the shops, childcare centre and school; and
 - b. the existing skate bowl, which is used regularly by more than half of Richardson residents under 15 years.
2. The most commonly requested play elements were climbing (monkey bars, frames and spider webs), skate and bike (half pipes, boxes and rails), combination units (with swings and slides), nature play and water play.
3. Amenities requested included shade, seating, water bubblers and bins.

Waramanga

1. The site between the local shops and oval (Waramanga Place) was the preferred site for the new or rebuilt feature play space, with 59% of votes, due to:
 - a. its location near the shops, to support shop owners and boost the local economy; and
 - b. the need to create a community hub where residents can meet, connect and interact.

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2. The most commonly requested play elements were traditional equipment (swings and slide), climbing and flying fox. Intergenerational play and nature play were also popular. A hang out space was designed by high school students for teens and young adults.
3. Amenities requested included seating, shade/shelter, better path access and fencing.

Torrens

1. The existing play space at the local shops (Beasley Street) was the preferred site for the new or rebuilt feature play space, with 60% of votes, due to:
 - a. its proximity to the shops, childcare centre and school; and
 - b. the need to upgrade the existing equipment.
2. The most commonly requested play elements were climbing, monkey bars, flying fox, traditional equipment (slide and swings) and basketball court. Hybrid play spaces with a mix of traditional play and nature play were also popular.
3. Amenities requested included shade, accessibility, fencing and BBQ facilities.

Narrabundah

1. The sites opposite the local shops on Iluka Street and Boolimba Crescent were the preferred sites for the new or rebuilt feature play space, with 52% of votes.
 - a. The existing play space at Kootara Crescent was the second-most preferred site, with 24% of votes.
 - b. Due to site constraints at each site, the feature play space will be split across all three sites to create a network of play opportunities and equitable provision of infrastructure for all ages, abilities and play styles.
2. The most commonly requested play elements were zip-line (flying fox), maze, water play, climbing and bike track. Traditional equipment (slides and monkey bars) and nature play were also popular.
3. Amenities requested included shade, seating, better path connections and fencing.

Higgins

1. Tester Park (Westhoven Street) was the preferred site for the new or rebuilt feature play space, with 62% of votes.
 - a. The site is considered as a community hub where residents regularly meet, connect and interact.
 - b. Higgins Oval was the second-most preferred site, with 38% of votes, due to its proximity to the upgraded oval, local shops, retirement village and childcare centre.
2. The most commonly requested play elements were traditional equipment (swings and slide), bike track, fitness equipment and basketball court. Intergenerational play and nature play were also popular.
3. Amenities requested included shade, seating, better path access and BBQ facilities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The final design concepts for the feature play spaces in each suburb will be available on the YourSay website once construction costs are finalised and final inclusions are confirmed. The inclusion of elements in these designs for the feature play spaces will be determined based on available budget and approvals processes.

You can register to receive project updates at communityengagement@act.gov.au.

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To find out more about the whole of suburb play reviews and other initiatives, policies and projects in Canberra visit www.yoursay.act.gov.au.

Key Timings

August 2018 – First Play Spaces Forum held

September-October 2018 – Second Play Spaces Forum and panel meetings held
Priorities Framework agreed and allocation of \$1.9 million into categories finalised

March-July 2019 – Engagement for whole of suburb play reviews
Design group meetings, community pop-ups, workshops, YourSay surveys and other co-design activities held in Richardson, Waramanga, Torrens, Narrabundah and Higgins

September 2019 – Feature play space and masterplan design concepts submitted for each suburb
Internal review of draft design concepts

October-November 2019 – Procurement for construction of feature play spaces in each suburb
We are here

June 2020 – Construction of feature play spaces in each suburb complete

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

398

We reached nearly 400 people via
YourSay

1,563

We engaged with over 1,500
individuals

61

We delivered 43 presentations,
community pop-ups, workshops and co-
design sessions, ran 16 design group
meetings and held 2 walking tours

2,375

We distributed over 2,000 posters,
flyers, surveys, postcards and invitations
to local shops, community groups,
schools, local clubs and households

71

We liaised with over 70 stakeholders
and organisations

79%

Almost 80% of people engaged were
supportive of the engagement process