

YERRABI POND RECREATION AREAS ENGAGEMENT REPORT

TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES

JULY 2021

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PROJECT NEED

The Yerrabi Pond foreshore received \$300,000 in the ACT 2020-21 Budget for improved amenities.

The ACT Government, in consultation with community advocacy groups, has identified the opportunity for additional amenities to be included in the areas surrounding the pond. Stakeholder and community engagement was conducted to gather ideas and feedback from the Canberra community on improvements people would like to see made in the area surrounding Yerrabi Pond.

1.2 CONSULTATION APPROACH

Community feedback was sought between 23 April and 4 June 2021 to better understand the way the community currently uses the pond, understand community aspirations for the pond and its surrounds, and to inform future improvements and changes that will enhance the function and character of the space. There were **five consultation activities** undertaken with three community pop-up sessions, a dedicated YourSay page with feedback opportunities, and an online survey.

1.3 **PROMOTION OF CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Multiple channels were used to promote consultation opportunities to stakeholders and the broader Canberra community. These channels are listed below:

- > ACT Government issued media release and Whole of Government issued message
- > YourSay and City Services websites
- > Social media posts
- > Emails sent to approximately 20 key stakeholders
- > Over 2,000 A5 flyers were handed out, and corflute signage was erected at Yerrabi Pond District Park
- > 'Our Canberra electronic delivered mail (EDM)' announcement to the Canberra community, and an article in the Gungahlin hard copy edition of Our Canberra (May edition)

1.4 PARTICIPATION

In total, the YourSay website received **4,225 page views**, with **976 people participating** in the online survey. Social media posts received **12.8% engagement** rate with **21,288 impressions**.

1.5 FEEDBACK THEMES

All feedback received has been analysed and the key feedback themes are detailed in Section 7. The most common areas of feedback are:

- > rubbish
- > toilets
- > improvement of general maintenance in the area
- > lighting
- > improved facilities
- > gardens, trees and open spaces
- > parking
- > shared paths.

2. ABOUT THE PROJECT

Yerrabi Pond is located in North Canberra and is a popular location for recreation, exercise, and social events. The ACT Government, in consultation with community advocacy groups, has identified the opportunity for additional amenities to be located in the areas surrounding the pond.

Yerrabi Pond opened in 1999 and has changed a lot since then with additions including:

- > playground facilities
- > additional walking and cycling paths
- > skateboard area
- > nature play space featuring a sandpit, balancing equipment and natural log and boulder steppers.

The ACT Government sought feedback from the community on improvements community members would like to see made in the area surrounding Yerrabi Pond. Improvements that will be considered by the ACT Government include:

- > improved paths
- > more facilities such as seating and bins
- > enhanced landscaping
- > better parking arrangements
- > amenities to bring the community together such as access to power for social events.

Community feedback was sought between 23 April and 4 June 2021.

3. ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

The ACT Government recognises Yerrabi Pond as a popular recreation area. This engagement project sought community feedback to meet the following objectives:

- > better understand the way the community use the space currently
- > understand community aspirations for Yerrabi Pond and its surrounds
- > inform future improvements and changes that will enhance the function and character of the space.

4. HOW WE PROMOTED THE ENGAGEMENT

To encourage participation from Yerrabi Pond users and the broader Gungahlin community, a range of communication was undertaken to promote the engagement activities before and during the engagement period.

Commencing on 23 April 2021 - the first day of consultation - the ACT Government issued a media release, directly followed by the launch of YourSay and City Services websites, and ACT Government social media posts. There were subsequent social media posts distributed across Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate's Facebook page, the Taylor Mingle Facebook page, and the Transport Canberra and City Services Twitter account.

Emails were sent to approximately 20 key stakeholders on 27 April 2021 including Gungahlin Community Council, Forde Community Association, Crace Community Association and Crace Landcare. With assistance from Friends of Yerrabi Pond, over 2,000 A5 flyers were handed out.

On 30 April 2021, a Whole of Government message was issued. Further announcements were issued via the Our Canberra EDM and an article was published in the May edition of the Gungahlin hard copy edition of Our Canberra. Corflute signage was erected at Yerrabi Pond District Park in the first week of May.

In total, the YourSay website received 4,225 page views during the engagement period and the social media posts received 12.8% engagement rate with 21,288 impressions.

5. HOW WE GATHERED FEEDBACK

Feedback was collected via pop-up sessions, surveys, written submissions and social media posts.

5.1 POP-UP SESSIONS

Three pop-up sessions were held at Yerrabi Pond to allow the local community to ask questions and share their thoughts about improvements to Yerrabi Pond.

The pop-up sessions were held near the playground at Yerrabi Pond District Park and took place on:

- > Saturday 1 May 2021, 10 am to 12 pm
- > Thursday 6 May 2021, 3.30 pm to 5 pm
- > Tuesday 11 May 2021, 7.30 am to 9 am.

Community members were invited to discuss the project and were able to complete hard copy surveys.

5.2 YOURSAY SURVEYS

An online YourSay survey was conducted between 23 April and 4 June 2021.

The survey collected information relating to:

- > community use of Yerrabi Pond
- > improvements the community would like to see at Yerrabi Pond
- > demographic information
- > participant satisfaction
- > project update email request.

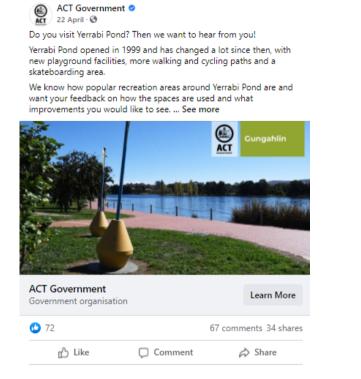
Survey questions can be found at Appendix A of this report.

5.3 WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Written submissions were received via email to communityengagement@act.gov.au.

5.4 SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Comments made on the ACT Government Facebook posts during the engagement period were monitored and incorporated into the engagement feedback evaluated in this report.



On 22 April 2021 a post was made on the ACT Government Facebook page requesting community feedback. Community members could provide their feedback via YourSay, or make a comment on the Facebook post.

6. WHO WE ENGAGED WITH

The majority of community feedback came through the YourSay survey which attracted over 1000 responses. The methods with which feedback was provided are summarised below.

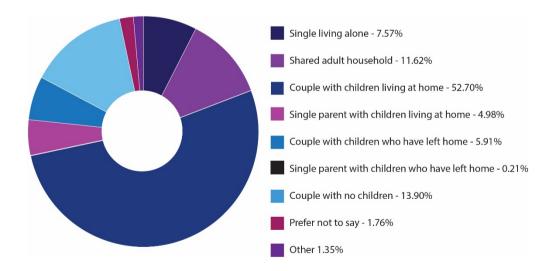
YourSay Survey	Completed online Completed in hardcopy	969 7
Email, written and phone submissions		17
Social media posts		33

Demographics were not provided in written submissions, or social media posts. Based on the survey responses, the majority of respondents were Amaroo residents between the ages of 35-39 (19.3%) that identified as being part of a couple with children living at home (52.7%).

The breakdown of household types and ages of survey respondents are detailed below.

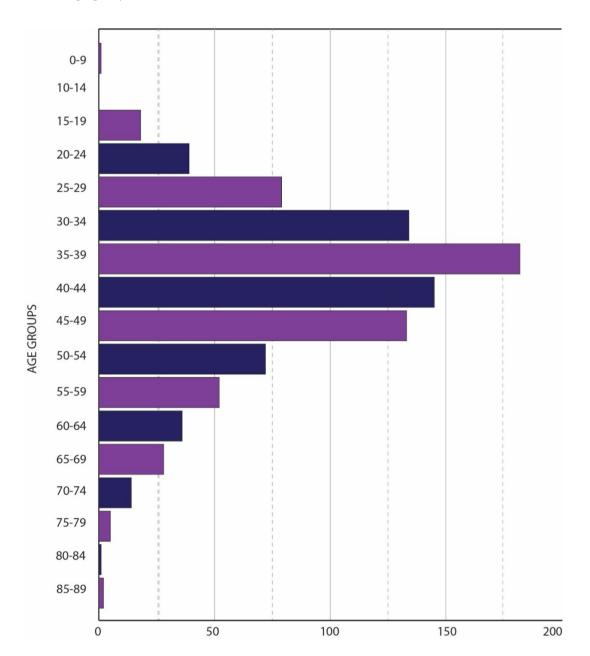
6.1 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Over half of participants reported as being part of a couple with children living at home (52.7%), followed by couples with no children (13.9%) and those living in a shared adult household (11.6%).



6.2 AGE

Most of the participants ranged between 30-50 years of age, accounting for 60% of the survey respondents. 19.3% of participants are between the ages of 35-39, 15.4% between the ages of 40-44, and 14% for both age groups 30-34 and 45-49.



7. WHAT WE HEARD

7.1 PRIMARY USES AND FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO YERRABI POND

The survey data shows that the majority of people providing feedback use Yerrabi Pond to walk or run around the pond for exercise or on their way to another destination (82%), with a significant number of visits made for the use of the green open spaces/for water views (60%), and to use the toilets, drinking fountains and other amenities (57.5%).

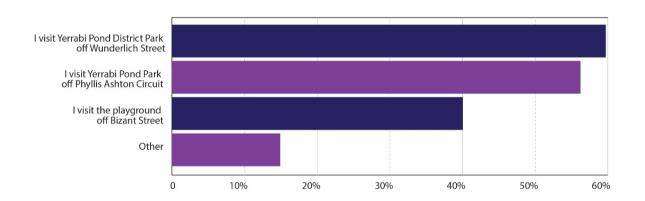
Nearly half of the survey participants reported that they utilise the seating facilities (47.2%), use the play spaces (45%), walk their dog (43.4%), or to cycle, skate or scoot around the pond for exercise or on their way to another destination (42.4%).

Combined, nearly half of the respondents claim to visit Yerrabi Pond either a few times a week (31%) or daily (17%).

7.2 PRIMARY CONNECTION TO YERRABI POND AND WHICH AREAS

Over 60% of survey respondents live within walking distance to Yerrabi Pond, with 56% identifying as a local Gungahlin resident. There is a smaller portion of community members that do not live nearby but enjoy visiting the Pond for recreation (13.3%).

Yerrabi Pond District Park off Wunderlich Street (59%), and Yerrabi Pond Park off Phyllis Ashton Circuit (56%), were identified as the more commonly used areas of the pond.



7.3 KEY INSIGHTS - AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Across the survey, emails, and Facebook posts there were consistent areas for improvement identified.

The key insights below represent the most common themes raised across all feedback channels.

Key insights

Rubbish

- 1. more rubbish bins would be welcomed right across the Yerrabi Pond area
- 2. particular focus could be on the provision of more facilities to encourage responsible disposal of waste by dog owners

Toilets

- 3. more toilets would be welcomed, with the most common place suggested being the Bizant Street playground area
- 4. upgrade of the existing toilets, with maintenance and more frequent cleaning

Improvement of general maintenance in the area

- 5. concerns were raised about the water quality in Yerrabi Pond and requests for improvements
- 6. more mowing, weeding, trimming of trees and general upkeep of the green areas would be welcomed
- 7. more frequent cleaning of facilities including toilets and BBQ areas would be welcomed too

Lighting

- 8. concerns about safety due to the dark nature of many areas of the walking tracks
- 9. lighting was suggested across all areas of Yerrabi Pond including carparks, existing basketball facilities and at the skatepark

Cafes and businesses near the waterfront

- 10. coffee vans were suggested near playgrounds and BBQ areas, markets, pop-up food stalls and other community type events
- 11. opportunities for recreation businesses such as scooter and kayak hire places

Improved facilities

- 12. suggestions for more seating alongside playgrounds and BBQ areas
- 13. additional BBQ facilities for use by the community

Gardens, trees and open spaces

- 14. planting more trees, maintaining trees and weeding garden areas
- 15. enhanced green open spaces for use by the community

Parking

- 16. more parking opportunities would be welcomed
- 17. improved lighting in carparks

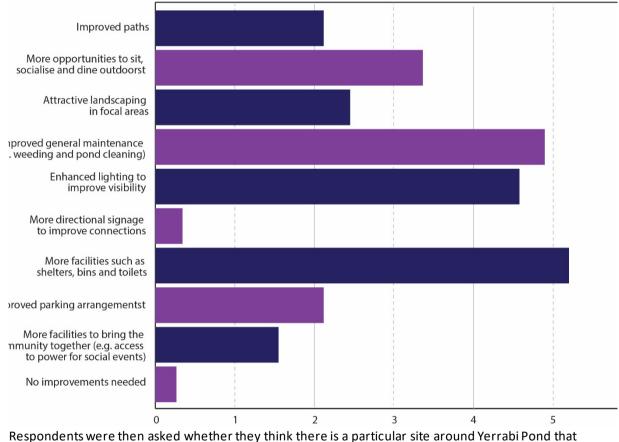
Shared paths

- 18. concerns about successful sharing of paths between pedestrian and cyclists
- 19. improved shared path signage
- 20. wider or separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists

7.4 SUMMARY OF PREFERRED IMPROVEMENTS FROM THE SURVEY

Within the survey, respondents were asked to rank their top three preferences on what improvements they would like to see at Yerrabi Pond. This was reported to be:

- > more facilities such as shelters, bins, and toilets
- > improved general maintenance (e.g., weeding and pond cleaning)
- > enhanced lighting to improve visibility.



Respondents were then asked whether they think there is a particular site around Yerrabi Pond that should be considered a key focus. The response provided was relatively balanced across three main zones of the Pond, with order of preference listed below.

- > Yerrabi Pond District Park off Wunderlich Street (40%)
- > Yerrabi Pond Park off Phyllis Ashton Circuit (38%)
- > The playground off Bizant Street (34%)

7.5 ANALYSIS OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS, EMAILS AND FACEBOOK COMMENTS

In addition to the responses to fixed choice questions outlined above, feedback was received through open ended questions in the survey, social media comments and direct submissions. There were 642 respondents who provided feedback through open-ended questions on the survey, direct emails and Facebook posts. In total there were over 1,400 pieces of feedback (data points) provided through these avenues. Percentages noted in this analysis are a percent of these data points.

This additional feedback has generated the following key themes.

RUBBISH

Approximately 8% of feedback noted the impact of rubbish on the Yerrabi Pond areas - across the open recreation spaces, BBQ and playgrounds, along footpaths as well as in the water.

- > Respondents suggested there was a need for more rubbish bins around the entire pond area.
- > Almost 70% of those suggesting rubbish was a serious issue referenced the impact of dog users on the area, with many calling for dog waste bag dispensers and bins to be placed around walking areas.
- > It was also suggested that more signage and regular maintenance/cleaning would improve the amount of rubbish currently in the area.

MAINTENANCE

Around 8% of feedback raised maintenance of the Yerrabi Pond areas as a way of enhancing the area. The most common areas of maintenance were:

- > improving the water quality in the pond, with large numbers of people noting that the water is often smelly and that the pond has many weeds
- > calls for increased mowing and weeding in the area, trimming of trees and general maintenance of the gardens and open spaces
- > suggestions that more regular cleaning of toilets and BBQ areas, as well as maintenance of the playground equipment would improve useability of the areas.

LIGHTING

Around 8% of feedback called for improved lighting around Yerrabi Pond. The most common areas of feedback about lighting were:

- > general call for lighting 'right around the pond' to support people who walk, jog and cycle around Yerrabi Pond, particularly during winter when the days are short
- > lighting was recognised as a safety concern, in terms of personal safety when moving around in dark areas as well as to avoid trip hazards
- > need for improved lighting on the northside of the lake in the Bizant Street Playgound area and the Horse Park Drive end
- > suggestions for lighting at the skate park and at the basketball courts
- > several people noted that some existing lighting needed repair
- > one person commented that increased lighting may have a detrimental impact on native wildlife.

TOILETS

7% of feedback related to toilet facilities at Yerrabi Pond.

- > The most common theme was that more toilets are required, with the most common place suggested being the Bizant Street playground area.
- > Almost half of the feedback about toilets referenced the need for upgrade, maintenance and better cleaning of the existing toilets, with comments that people were so concerned about their cleanliness that they would not allow their children to use them.
- > Other suggestions about toilets included extending opening hours and incorporating a change table.

CAFES AND BUSINESSES NEAR THE WATERFRONT

7% of feedback suggested that cafes, restaurants and other businesses should be encouraged to establish in the Yerrabi Pond area. Ideas included:

- > coffee vans near playgrounds and BBQ areas
- > markets, pop-up food stalls and other community type events
- > recreation businesses such as scooter and kayak hire places
- > suggestions that commercial leases in the area around Phyllis Ashton Cct should prioritise dining, retail and recreational businesses, that complement the recreational nature of the area.

PARKS AND PLAYGROUNDS

6% of feedback suggested investment in parks and playgrounds in the area:

- > the most common area of feedback called for improvements, expansion and/or remodelling of the skatepark to make it a contemporary, accessible facility for a wider range of user. There was also a large number of people who suggested lights should be installed at the skatepark
- > there was also considerable support for upgrade and enhancement of the dirt park, with suggestions for improved jumps. A written submission was also received that outlined a proposal to rebuild the dirt jump trails as a community-led project.

Other less common feedback was:

- > improved maintenance of existing playground equipment including the flying fox, basketball rings etc
- > inclusion of basketball courts, tennis courts and cricket or soccer nets in the area
- > establishment of an open field are for kicking, frisbee, kites, football etc. The most common location suggested for this was an unused space near the Bizant Street Playground
- > addition of a water playground
- > more areas catering to toddlers and younger children.

IMPROVED FACILITIES

In addition to toilets and playgrounds, 6% of feedback generally suggested an improvement in facilities in the area including:

- > more seating alongside playgrounds and BBQ areas and along the shore of the Pond for water views
- > additional BBQ facilities
- > more shade, particularly associated with BBQ areas, playgrounds and alongside the skatepark and dirt park.

SAFETY

Safety concerns were raised in 4% of feedback. The key concern with respect to safety was concerns about the lack of lighting on paths around the Pond, which is covered in the lighting section above. Other concerns included:

- > the need for increased police supervision to address matters such as drug deals, graffiti, antisocial behaviour in the evenings and dog control
- > safety concerns associated with aging equipment or slippery footpaths caused by poor drainage.

GARDENS, TREES AND OPEN SPACES

Approximately 4% of feedback highlighted the importance of maintaining and enhancing existing plantings and gardens around Yerrabi Pond including:

- > improved management of the existing trees as well as planting more trees to provide shade and habitat
- > enhanced green open spaces throughout the area, including more frequent mowing and levelling some areas to facilitate playing large social gatherings and casual sport
- > maintenance and weeding of garden beds
- suggestions of types of gardens included native gardens, more flower beds and a community garden.
 A submission was also received with respect to a proposal to establish a memorial walk in the Yerrabi Pond area.

PARKING

Parking was identified as an issue by approximately 30 respondents, with Phyllis Ashton Circuit and Nellie Hamilton Avenue particularly highlighted as problem areas. More parking associated with playgrounds and improved lighting in carparks were also suggested, as well as additional disabled parking places.

SHARED PATHWAYS

Challenges associated with the shared pathways was identified by around 30 survey respondents – concerns included lighting of paths and tensions associated with the mixture of cyclists and pedestrians using the paths. Suggestions included better signage, wider paths and separation of cyclists and pedestrians.

Pedal Power ACT provided a submission noting that the main Yerrabi Pond path is not wide enough or laid out in a fashion to facilitate cycle commuting or cycling at speed. An additional cycle path or a widening of the existing path was suggested. The submission also identified areas of regular congestion and other safety issues.

SIGNAGE

Comments about signage were in 3% of total feedback received. A wide range of signage was suggested including:

- > Indigenous interpretation
- > interpretive signage associated with interesting locations and landmarks
- > signage associated with flora and fauna in the area such as nesting or swooping birds, native vegetation etc. This included suggestions to advise people not to feed bread to the birds.
- > to assist in the used of shared walking/cycling paths
- > to remind dogs owners of their responsibilities with respect to dogs on leads and disposing of waste

> Park-run signage.

DRINKING WATER

Around 2% of feedback suggested that increased access to drinking water for people and dogs is required right across the Yerrabi Pond area – reflecting the fact that many people walk or cycle around the whole pond and need various opportunities along the way to access drinking water.

WATER QUALITY, FISHING AND OTHER WATERSPORTS

Approximately 1% of feedback received raised matters relating to water quality, fishing and other water sports. Feedback included:

- > concerns expressed about the quality of the water in Yerrabi Pond and impact on native fish
- > calls for more native fish to be stocked in the Pond
- > concerns about the levels of carp in the Pond
- > construction of decks or wharf be built to counteract the number of weeds on the shoreline and allow easier access to the water for fishing, kayaking and other water sports
- > installation of a boat ramp for launching canoes and kayaks.

OTHER AREAS OF FEEDBACK

Other areas of feedback with respect to Yerrabi Pond were:

- > an off-leash dog park was suggested
- > more exercise equipment should be installed in the Yerrabi Pond area
- > it was noted that the bridges crossing Yerrabi Pond need maintenance to fix very rough surfaces
- > drainage associated with footpaths was raised as an issue, noting that often after rain footpaths are covered in water and unsafe
- > there were a few comments (less than 10) related to graffiti. These included comments about removing unwanted graffiti and support to the existing graffiti space. There were also a handful of comments that suggested increased public art in the area
- > it was noted by several respondents that the Gungahlin Park Run uses the areas, with suggestions that improved signage could support that event and facilitate the space being better shared during these times
- > community members were interested to preserve the local flora and fauna, particularly the birdlife and suggested appropriate native plantings to attract more native birds and signage to encourage people not to feed bread to the birds. It was suggested that safety features be installed to prevent birdlife becoming trapped in the pond overflow infrastructure
- > suggestions that live music should be encouraged or performed in areas around Yerrabi Pond
- > there were suggestions that more public art could be included in the area.

8. NEXT STEPS

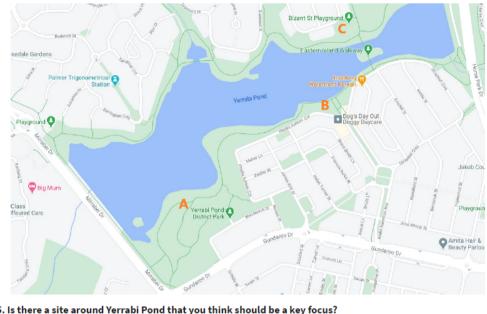
Community feedback has been gathered through this engagement to inform future planning and management of Yerrabi Pond and its surrounding recreation areas. In considering this feedback, the ACT Government will reflect upon initiatives and improvements that can be made in the short-term, whilst identifying initiatives that require longer term planning or a more significant investment of funds.

All feedback will now be considered and will inform further investment in the Yerrabi Pond area. The community will be kept informed through YourSay and the Friends of Yerrabi Pond.

9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - SURVEY QUESTIONS

YERRABI POND IMPROV COMMUNITY SURVEY	EMENTS Government
Do you visit Yerrabi Pond? Share with us how you like spe areas around the Pond could be enhanced. Complete our	•
YOUR USE OF YERRABI POND 1. What activities do you use Yerrabi Pond for? Please sel	ect all that apply.
I walk or run around the Pond for exercise or on my way to another destination	I cycle, skate or scoot around the Pond for exercise or on my way to another destination
I walk my dog around the Pond or to the recreation areas	I use the fitness equipment or open areas for exercise
I use the toilets, drinking fountains and other amenities	I use the shelters, outdoor dining and barbecue facilities
I use the seating facilities	I use the green open spaces and water views I use the skatepark
I host social gatherings and events (e.g. birthday parties)	I take part in water sports such as kayaking and fishing
Other, please specify.	
2. How often do you visit Yerrabi Pond? Never Rarely Daily A few times a	week Weekly Fortnightly Monthly
3. What recreation areas around Yerrabi Pond do you use I visit Yerrabi Pond District Park off Wunderlich Street I visit the playground off Bizant Street	? Please select all that apply. I visit Yerrabi Pond Park off Phyllis Ashton Circuit
Other, please specify.	
IMPROVEMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE AT YERRABI PO 4. What improvements would you most like to see at Yerr	
a 1 to 3 in the boxes available. Improved paths	lore opportunities to sit/socialise/dine outdoors
	nproved general maintenance (e.g. weeding/pond cleaning)
Enhanced lighting to improve visibility	lore directional signage to improve connections
	ore facilities such as shelters, bins and toilets
More facilities to bring the community together (e.g. access to power for social events)	o improvements needed



5. Is there a site around Yerrabi Pond that you think should be a key focus			
	Yerrabi Pond District Park off Wunderlich Street (A on map above)		
	Yerrabi Pond Park off Phyllis Ashton Circuit (B on map above)		
	The playground off Bizant Street (C on map above)		

Other, please specify.

6. Is there anything else we should consider in our goal to enhance Yerrabi Pond?

TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF

7. Please enter the name of the suburb in which you live.

8. What is your primary connection to Yerrabi Pond?

- I live walking distance to the Pond
 I own a business walking distance to the Pond
 I work walking distance to the Pond
 I am a local Gungahlin resident
 - I don't live nearby but enjoy visiting the Pond for recreation

Other, please specify.

Decision of the second seco	Shared adult household
Couple with children living at home	Single parent with children living at home
Couple with children who have left home	Single parent with children who have left home
Couple with no children	Prefer not to say
 Dther, please specify.	
0. Please select your age group.	_
Under 9	10-14
15-19	20-24
25-29	30-34
25-39	40-44
45-49	50-54
55-59	60-64
65-69	70-74
75-79	80-84
85 and over	
Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied	
2. Do you have any suggestions on how your eng	gagement experience could have been improved?
TAY IN TOUCH	
	gagement and future improvements around Yerrabi Pond?
hare your email address so we can keep you upo	lated as the project progresses.



TRANSPORT CANBERRA AND CITY SERVICES

July 2021