



INNER NORTH PLAY SPACE

REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

Canberrans were invited to provide feedback on a proposed new play space for the inner north, adjacent to Canberra Technology Park in Watson.

An upgrade of the green space is proposed to provide modern outdoor recreation opportunities and deliver a destination style play space in the inner north.

The ACT Government will retain responsibility for the green space adjacent to Canberra Technology Park, which is anticipated to be sold to the Academy of Interactive Entertainment in two stages. The community green space comprises approximately 22,150 square metres of land at the site's north-eastern side, bounded by Windeyer Street, Burton Street and A'Beckett Street.

THE CONVERSATION

Online survey

An online YourSay survey was open during the consultation period from Tuesday 2 November until Tuesday 14 December 2021 for the community to provide input to the future inner north play space. A total of 482 surveys were completed.

Members of the community were also invited to provide feedback via email, Facebook and by sharing photos and videos of play equipment and recreation facilities they would like considered. We had 43 responses.

Online kids' corner

Children were invited to provide input by sharing a drawing or short story or by completing a short survey via the YourSay online kids' corner. We heard from 45 children.

WHO WE ENGAGED

The consultation targeted inner north residents, families, children and visitors to the region.

85% of those who filled out the online survey were inner north residents, predominantly from the suburbs of Watson, Downer and Hackett. Belconnen and Gungahlin residents accounted for a further 10% of responses.

40% of survey respondents currently use the green space adjacent to Canberra Technology Park. Of those who use the space, two thirds do so at least once a week for general recreation and exercise including playing in the open space, cycling and walking their dogs.

Submissions were also received from the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, All Play Inner North and the Canberra Croquet Club.



Key insights from the community

Support for an inclusive and integrated play space

1. There is strong support overall for the new inner north play space in Watson. Survey respondents rated the proposal 4.86 stars out of a possible 5 stars.
2. Many respondents expressed a strong desire for the inner north play space to cater to all ages and abilities, especially older age groups such as teenagers and young adults who may not traditionally be well catered for.
3. Considerable support also exists for the new play space to be well integrated with and connected to existing and future facilities and services that surround it, including the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, Watson shops and Majura Primary School.

Recreation facilities

4. The top three ranked recreation facilities were children's play equipment, trees and shade structures.
5. Toilets, seating and open green space were also strongly supported by the community.
6. Barbecues, picnic shelters, shared paths and fitness equipment were a lower priority but still desired.
7. There is also support for ensuring the recreation area can support community events, markets, performances and festivals, for example a flexible staging area with power.
8. A wide variety of other recreation facilities were also suggested including multi-purpose courts, a climbing wall and Canberra's first Gate ball course.

Play opportunities

9. The top three ranked play opportunities for children were nature play (70%), structures with climbing (59%) and water play (52%). Children also suggested a wide variety of imaginative and active play options via the online kids' corner including tree houses, a flying fox and multi-purpose courts.
10. Adults ranked structures with climbing (78%), nature play (74%) and ropes with climbing (50%) as their top three priorities with water play (47%) and universal play (43%) the other top ranked options in the survey.
11. There was also a significant amount of support for bike and skate facilities to be included in the new inner north play space via the online kids' corner, main survey as well as email responses.
12. A variety of suggestions were also provided of specific play equipment with photos and videos supplied.

Transport links and parking

13. There is support for linking the inner north play space with existing and future transport networks, including the Phillip Avenue light rail station and future Garden City cycle route to support active travel to the site.
14. We also heard that local residents would like careful consideration given to future parking arrangements and how increased visitor numbers are managed.

Community identity and involvement

15. A number of respondents commented on the unique characteristics of the inner north and a desire for a play space that reflects these characteristics, including the use of natural and sustainable materials, spaces that foster community connection and the inclusion of creative elements, specifically Aboriginal art.
16. There was also a desire expressed by some for further and deeper engagement with the community on the inner north play space in Watson as well as a future play space/s in Dickson.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Feedback from this first stage of engagement will help shape the future stages of this project including the draft design for the new inner north place space.

Updates will continue to be provided via the YourSay page. If you have any questions about this project or would like to be kept updated on its progress, 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: What We Heard report released [**we are here**]

Next steps: Inner north play space design phase (subject to future funding).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

570

we received 570 items of
feedback in total

482

a total of 482 people
completed the survey

45

we received 45 pieces of
feedback via the kids' corner

13

we received 13
submissions via email

4,900+

we received 4,918
page views on YourSay

2,151

we reached 2,151
people via YourSay

44,000+

we reached a social media
audience of 44,013

91.5%

the majority of respondents
(91.5%) were satisfied with
the engagement experience