

## ITEM 5 PUBLIC EXHIBITION - DRAFT STUART AND GALVIN PARK LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

In accordance with the Delivery Program 2022-2026, Operational Plan 2022-23, a draft landscape Master Plan has been developed to provide Council with a vision to inform the future enhancement of Stuart and JP Galvin Parks, North Wollongong.

The draft Stuart and Galvin Park Landscape Master Plan (draft Master Plan) focuses on enhancing and improving community access to the park and proposes a range of improvements. Key features of the draft Master Plan include incorporation of the planned all abilities/all ages playground, new boardwalk and footpaths, new yarning circle and upgraded public amenities. Public exhibition of the draft Master Plan will allow the community to provide further input into the refinement of the plan. This report seeks Council's endorsement of the draft Master Plan for exhibition and for a subsequent report with findings from engagement be presented to Council on completion.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Council endorse the draft Stuart & Galvin Park Landscape Master Plan for public exhibition from 28 September to 2 November 2022.
- 2 Following exhibition, Council receives a further report with an updated Master Plan incorporating the community engagement findings.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Lucielle Power, Manager Property + Recreation  
Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

### ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Stuart Park Precinct Master Plan - Study Area - Map
- 2 Phase 1 - Preliminary Community Engagement Report
- 3 Draft Stuart Park Landscape Master Plan

### BACKGROUND

Stuart Park (including JP Galvin Park) is Wollongong's premier park and is a much-loved community asset. Located on Dharawal Country on a site with significant Aboriginal cultural value, it is a Crown Reserve and was gazetted as Stuart Park in 1885 for public recreation purposes.

Stuart Park is a vital recreational asset for the City. In terms of scale, Stuart Park is the most significant open space area in the city foreshore area. Located adjacent to the highly popular attraction of North Beach, and the natural areas of Puckeys Estate and Fairy Creek, Stuart Park provides a significant open area for leisure and recreation, and space for community events.

The park is well used by local residents and during peak period and weekends is a popular destination for visitors. Stuart Park is also increasingly used for special events such as festivals and community celebrations.

The JP Galvin area, lagoon and playground area are well utilised for passive recreation and leisure including social gatherings, picnics, sun baking and fitness. In contrast, the southern and western sections of Stuart Park support activities including walking and cycling by persons using the existing asphalt shared path. Having little embellishment and supporting infrastructure, the area has a much lower level of utilisation and general activity. The central area of the park is almost devoid of activity having no infrastructure but is used frequently for major events.

The park is currently home to several facilities including:

- The Lagoon restaurant and café servicing park patrons
- The Caretakers Cottage (currently utilised by Skydive the Beach for skydive operations)

- Access road with right angle car parking and three designated carparks
- An old cricket amenities building: a 1970's brick building currently used by Council open space staff but having no public access
- Contemporary public amenities close to the lagoon, and older style amenities south of the old cricket amenities building
- Dedicated cycle path along the southern and western boundary, shared path and footpaths
- Bike racks, benches, picnic shelters, bollards, seating, parking and BBQs
- Dedicated beach access point and timber fencing along crest of foreshore dune area
- A children's playground with tall slide tower, flying fox and liberty swing incorporating shaded picnic settings and children's art. An all abilities/all ages playground is in the process of being built.

The park is also home to significant natural vegetation, including extensive swamp oak plantings undertaken by Council along George Hanley Drive and Squires Way, coastal estuarine vegetation on Fairy Creek Lagoon, large Norfolk Pine trees along JP Galvin Park and on the northern side of The Lagoon restaurant.

In 2007 Council adopted the Blue Mile Master Plan (incorporating Stuart Park precinct) which proposed a range of city foreshore improvements to realise the potential of the iconic urban beach and foreshore as a major people-oriented place and the focus for public activities. Council has progressively implemented significant public infrastructure and recreation and tourism experiences in the foreshore area stretching from the Wollongong Golf Course in the south to Fairy Creek in the north.

Since the adoption of the Blue Mile Master Plan, several improvements within Stuart Park have occurred including the upgrading of the playground, installation of contemporary toilets, and new and upgraded shelter and picnic facilities.

Since the adoption of the Blue Mile Master Plan, several significant changes have occurred that requires a review of the Stuart Park precinct. This includes:

- Strong population growth
- Construction of the tramway and increased walking and cycling movement throughout the precinct
- Increased visitation from western and south western Sydney
- Recognition of Stuart Park as Wollongong's premiere event site
- Adoption of new policies including Urban Greening Strategy
- Extreme weather events and climate change
- Deterioration of ground conditions in some areas receiving higher usage
- Improved understanding of Aboriginal Cultural values attached to the site
- Development of the Innovation Campus and planned future works.

## PROPOSAL

A draft Master Plan has been developed to guide future activities and enhancements that support current and future usage. The draft Master Plan:

- Provides a long-term design vision to guide changes to Stuart and JP Galvin parks
- Responds to the changing and diverse recreational requirements of local residents
- Ensures the park is placed to support an increasing visitor population
- Guide future iterations of Council's plan of management, capital programs and works plans



- Understands the park's natural and cultural values and how they can be best preserved and enhanced
- Responds to the changing and diverse recreational requirements of visitors to the park
- Make recommendations about the future pedestrian and cycle access and traffic management within the park.

Key aspects of the draft Master Plan include:

- **Retaining current park structure**

The Master Plan seeks to enhance the intrinsic qualities of the park by retaining the current park structure. The Master Plan features enhanced vegetation management on the front dune and estuarine area, whilst maintaining the current level of natural area plantings that bound Squires Way and George Hanley Drive ensuring that the natural feel and biodiversity of the area is maintained. Opportunities for native grass and tree plantings will be pursued where integration with infrastructure and key activity nodes is desirable eg: playground, sensory trail, picnic areas. Planting of trees in the defined events area should be cognisant of the operation of events and other commercial activities.

The Master Plan does not envisage an increase in the footprint of The Lagoon restaurant although landscape interventions to immediately surrounding areas are required to improve condition, functionality and connection to parking, footpaths, foreshore and playground.

The lagoon area incorporating the sanded/grassed area and stand of Norfolk Pines will remain relatively untouched but requires improved maintenance and sensitive treatment to minimise erosion resulting from high usage and inclement weather events.

- **Enhanced pedestrian experience**

Defining key pedestrian circulation routes will enable Stuart Park to accommodate increasing numbers of visitors without compromising the condition of its green spaces and landscaped areas and will also ensure the aging population and less mobile residents can continue to access to the park activity nodes.

The Master Plan provides guidance for new pedestrian entry points to the park from surrounding residential areas.

The Master Plan envisages a new perimeter path that responds to existing desire lines and walking tracks connecting the Blue Mile with Fairy Lagoon through to Puckeys Nature Reserve and around the western fringe of the park to the shared path. The new path alignment shall take advantage of key views and logical connections with activity nodes, the form, dimensions, materiality, colours and detailing requiring careful consideration and response to the park's heritage significance and sense of place.

Consideration of future pedestrian level lighting (including solar) along the primary paths is required to support general park activity during the hours of 6am-9pm.

- **New yarning circle**

In recognition of the significance of Stuart Park to the Aboriginal community, the new yarning circle will provide a space where stories and knowledge can be shared. The yarning circle will be located within proximity and visual connection to the man-made lagoon and take advantage of natural shade from mature trees. Function and scale should support gatherings and design will be connected to by footpaths to the perimeter walking circuit. Additional tree planting will provide natural shade over time.

- **Upgraded play experience**

An expanded and improved play precinct targeting a broader age range and abilities will be provided. The draft Master Plan incorporates Council's planned all abilities/all ages playground and strengthens access with new pedestrian access to existing amenities.

- **Nature/Sensory trail**

The Master Plan envisages a new secondary path that will circumnavigate the man-made lagoon encouraging exploration and provide a series of experiences along a route that is designed to engage the different senses and to collectively immerse people in a multi-sensory journey.

The trail will be planned for people with disabilities, especially people with sensory impairments, but will connect and support all users of the new all abilities/all ages playground and the proposed yarning circle encouraging people to move between these spaces.

- **New and upgraded amenities**

Amenity and usability of the park will be improved through the integration of additional toilet facilities. The Master Plan envisages that the main amenities southeast of The Lagoon restaurant will more than double in size to meet current demand.

The older southern amenities will be demolished and replaced with contemporaneous and automated style facilities, located closer to the realigned southern path and activities.

- **Enhanced interpretation**

Stuart Park plays an important role in both the environmental, indigenous, historical and social history of Wollongong. A significant opportunity exists to create a new and enhanced interpretation experience to convey the multi-layered history of Stuart Park to every visitor. The Master Plan proposes a new interpretation overlay to be permanently embedded within the park landscape including new methods of wayfinding and interpretation so that all visitors can engage with its many stories. It is proposed that the perimeter walking circuit becomes the uniting element for this enhanced interpretive experience, whilst the man-made lagoon provides for a new trail with a focus for ecological exploration and fun.

- **Defined Events Area**

The Master Plan will continue to support events by creating defined event spaces suitable for large and smaller events and temporary activations. These spaces will be supported by providing new power to the spaces, widening/strengthening of footpaths to allow for heavy vehicle movements, and improvements to flooding/stormwater infrastructure. Regrading of the area west of the access road may also be required to improve stormwater.

Removal of the old cricket amenities building will create a larger contiguous open area free of obstructions suitable for hosting larger music style events. The realigned southern shared path provides improved delineation that will allow the operation of events whilst providing continued access to activity nodes within the park.

- **Unstructured Recreation**

Supporting healthy lifestyles through the creation of attractive and well-maintained spaces is a core priority for local government. Meeting community need is fundamental to good planning.

The Master Plan notes the desirability of Stuart Park for the high number of local residents who enjoy using the park to walk, run, and exercise in group fitness. The proposed upgrading of paths and improvements to stormwater and flooding will meet the needs of these groups.

This Master Plan notes that Stuart Park historically hosted tennis courts and a senior cricket field. The Master Plan does not support formalising any area for organised sport but acknowledges that the large expanse of grassed areas is conducive to light training by local sports groups and can be accommodated with minimal intervention subject to ground condition.

Other emerging recreation activities such as slacklining (walking and/or balancing on a suspended flat line) is to be supported with minimal interventions and harnessing the natural setting. Low-cost interventions such as kilometre markers along key jogging routes could be installed to encourage challenge.

- **Caretakers Cottage**

The Master Plan envisages the restoration and refurbishment of the Caretakers Cottage to make accessible for public commercial use. Future works must also consider the adequacy of current storage facilities, amenities and outdoor gathering areas and plan for accordingly. Any new work should reveal and reinforce the role of the Caretakers Cottage whilst meeting the needs of current and future users.

- **Traffic and Parking**

The Master Plan seeks to maintain current access arrangements and the current level of carparking within the park. However, several interventions are envisaged that will improve safety and support park users including:

- Renewal of the north western carpark (immediately west of The Lagoon restaurant) incorporating new accessible carparking bays with extended lengths allowing for disability support vehicles adjacent to the playground area.
- Reduce vehicular speed limit within the entire park area from 40 kilometres per hour to a maximum of 10 kilometres per hour.
- Construct a new raised crossing at the intersection of Cliff Road and George Hanley Drive.
- Provide new formalised parking on western side of Squires Way.
- Provide space for minibus parking in the central carpark adjacent to the Caretakers Cottage.
- Provide new layover minibus parking adjacent to the main toilet facilities.
- Provide permanent emergency vehicle access to North Beach and Fairy Lagoon.
- Review parking configuration along George Hanley Drive with aim of increasing carparking.
- Consider bus parking bay along George Hanley Drive.
- Review the amount of accessible parking bays within the park to ensure adequate parking exists for future needs of the community.
- Explore opportunities to reduce or manage carparking demand to encourage a modal shift to transit, pedestrian and bicycling trips and opportunities for smart parking (real-time information).
- Provide new electric vehicle charging points.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

To help assist in clarifying aspirations for the site, significant engagement has already occurred and has directly informed the development of the draft Master Plan. The preliminary engagement phase ran from 25 October to 22 November 2021 where we asked the community and key stakeholders for ideas on how we can improve this area for everyone over the next 10 years.

### Methods and stakeholders

During the engagement period of 25 October to 22 November 2021, more than 4,100 letters, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and surveys were sent to residents, businesses and property owners near Stuart Park. Emails with this information were sent to:

- Destination Wollongong
- Emergency services
- Lifeguards
- Local businesses, licensees and event holders
- Local early education and care services, primary schools and high schools
- Mr Paul Scully MP

- Neighbourhood forums
- NSW Crown Lands
- Participants in previous engagements linked to Stuart Park
- Register of Interest – Access, Cultural/Arts
- Sport, fitness, recreation, health, multicultural and disability groups and organisations
- University of Wollongong

A project webpage was published on [our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au](https://our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au), which included an ideas tool, online survey, mapping tool, stories tool and Q&A forum. People were encouraged to submit ideas to the webpage via SMS.

A short video was produced to promote the engagement which was used on the website and social media. Promotional signs were installed around Stuart Park, written in English, Arabic and simplified Chinese. The signs had a QR code linked to the project webpage.

Social media was utilised including Facebook posts, with some in multiple languages targeting local audiences and those in Southern and Western Sydney. A media release was developed and a notice in the Community Update of the Illawarra Mercury newspaper was published. People could access the information from Council's Customer Service and Wollongong Library. Four online information sessions were conducted, and a video recording of the presentation was published on the project webpage for those who were unable to attend. Several online meetings were held with key stakeholders and online workshops with school students were also conducted. A poster was also sent to local early education and care services so children could draw pictures of what they want to see and do in Stuart Park.

Several meetings with local Aboriginal Elders, community members and representatives from the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Lands Council were held onsite. These meetings were an opportunity to work together to ensure the draft Master Plan appropriately acknowledges and responds to the Aboriginal cultural values of Stuart Park. Our conversations with people from the local Aboriginal community are ongoing as we plan for Stuart Park's future.

## Feedback

Responses were received from 860 people ranging in age from early education and care services through to older residents and several organisations. Most respondents enjoy the park's amenity but offered multiple ideas and suggestions for enhancing the park experience including:

<b>Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The community most values the park amenity - large, open space and green natural areas.</b></li> <li>• <b>Family friendly.</b></li> <li>• <b>Plenty of room for everyone - enough space for different groups of people to do different activities.</b></li> <li>• <b>Opportunities for play.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Greening and shade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plant more local natives.</li> <li>• Need more shaded areas.</li> </ul>

<b>Parking, traffic, public transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People recognise there are issues which will be challenging to resolve, but opinion is divided on how to do this.</li> <li>• Some want timed or paid parking, with free parking/permits for ratepayers.</li> <li>• Others think there is enough parking and want to discourage having more vehicles in the area.</li> <li>• Encourage active transport - improve and create new pathways, add bike facilities.</li> <li>• Encourage use of public transport - consider having a bus stop or Gong Shuttle bus stop at the park.</li> <li>• Improve pedestrian safety.</li> <li>• Consider installing smart parking.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise facilities</b>	Install outdoor gym/calisthenics equipment.
<b>Picnic facilities, seating, water</b>	Respondents like what is there, but said there could be more huts, seating, barbeques, access to water and coal bins.
<b>Events</b>	Support for temporary activations including markets, food trucks and music. People also like the idea of having an outdoor cinema.
<b>Spaces to play and recreate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The playground is good, but suggestions were made for it to be expanded to include more play equipment for people of all ages; babies, toddlers, children, teenagers and adults.</li> <li>• Some children would like to see modest additions to the existing playground such as monkey bars, a trampoline, sandpit or more swings.</li> <li>• Basketball/multipurpose court areas for informal sport and games.</li> <li>• Many people want some sort of accessible water play feature.</li> <li>• A skate park or pump track.</li> </ul>
<b>Recognising culture, history and heritage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bush tucker garden.</li> <li>• Interpretive signs - Aboriginal cultural values, migrant history, accessible information (height of signs, braille), use of mobile technology.</li> <li>• Preserve and promote the site's Aboriginal cultural values with artwork, a circle gathering place or 'yarning circle' and a garden containing places of significance to the Aboriginal community.</li> <li>• Exploring the possibility of dual naming of Stuart Park.</li> </ul>
<b>Waste management / maintenance / cleaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy with the overall appearance of the park.</li> <li>• Mostly happy with the cleanliness and maintenance of facilities and parklands.</li> <li>• The Lagoon restaurant waste area needs improvement and better management.</li> </ul>
<b>Dogs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A divisive issue amongst respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Supporters want an enclosed off-leash area.</li> <li>○ Those unsupportive did not want dogs, their droppings or disruptions in a space they feel is just for people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Pathways and connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some pathways need fixing up.</li> <li>• People want bike paths to be separate from pedestrian paths.</li> <li>• Put pathways on both sides of the parking area.</li> <li>• Create a perimeter/loop pathway around the park.</li> <li>• Build a path connecting the playground to the existing toilet block.</li> </ul>

<b>Cycling facilities</b>	Need bike racks and lockers.
<b>Lighting</b>	Need more lighting, especially along pathways, for people using the space early in the morning or in the evening.
<b>Commercial use and development</b>	Some do not want any development to occur, preferring to keep its current character, while others want all sorts of facilities and infrastructure built or renovations made to the Skydiving building. There is mixed opinion on commercial operators at the site; some are supportive of it, but others want the space returned for public use.
<b>Stormwater drainage flooding</b>	/ After rain, there is an area in the park that stays waterlogged for a long time. Improve drainage to help resolve this.
<b>Cultural facility, art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More public art.</li> <li>• Amphitheatre.</li> </ul>
<b>Food / cafes / restaurants</b>	<p>People are generally pleased with current food and drink offerings but would like more options such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food vans / trucks / carts.</li> <li>• Takeaway food from a canteen or kiosk.</li> </ul>
<b>Toilets showers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more toilets.</li> <li>• A shower would be good.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure pathways, parking, water, signs and facilities are accessible.</li> <li>• Provide accessible play spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Skydiving</b>	Of those who support this happening in Stuart Park, they like watching skydivers land, and think it has local economic and tourism benefits. Those who are unsupportive do not like a commercial business taking up so much of the space or restricting public access to it. They think it should be moved elsewhere.
<b>Leave as is</b>	Some people think it is just right as it is and do not want any new infrastructure to change or impact its natural beauty.
<b>Amusement Park</b>	Some like the idea of an amusement park that would appeal to all ages and be a tourism drawcard.

The full Engagement Report is attached to this report – refer Attachment 2.

Moving forward, should Council resolve to support the public exhibition of the draft Master Plan, additional community engagement is planned to run from 28 September to 2 November 2022 seeking feedback on draft plans.

The following means of promoting the draft Master Plan will involve:

- Community update in the Illawarra Mercury
- Mail out to all households/businesses within 400 metres of site (approximately 4,000 residents)
- Our Wollongong: Join the Conversation - online survey, FAQ, key documents
- Media release
- Flyers/posters/feedback forms dropped off at local libraries
- Onsite signage
- Social media posts
- Onsite information stalls



- Presentation to Neighbourhood Forum 5 (NF5)
- Stakeholder workshop
- Workshops with children and young people who participated in the first round of consultation

The findings of this second phase of community consultation will be used to refine the draft Master Plan and reported for Council's future consideration.

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 5 "We have a healthy community in a liveable city". It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032		Delivery Program 2022-2026	Operational Plan 2022-23
Strategy		Service	Operational Plan Actions
5	We have a healthy community in a liveable city	Parks and Sports fields	Develop and implement the Landscape Masterplan for Stuart and Galvin Parks, North Wollongong

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The draft Master Plan has carefully considered the natural values of the site. All proposed initiatives utilise site topography, avoiding extensive cut and fill exercises and wherever possible maintaining current landscape form. Existing native vegetation will be maintained with some further urban greening options and increased natural shade across the site will be pursued over time.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The draft Master Plan envisages significant works that will provide new and upgraded recreational opportunities along with additional supporting amenities. These works are designed to be delivered in a staged manner over time. Additional information including preliminary high-level cost estimates will be provided to Council following community feedback and development of a revised draft Master Plan and an accompanying Implementation Plan. It is anticipated that once adopted, the Stuart and JP Galvin Park Master Plan will help inform the forward capital delivery program requirements and external grant opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

The draft Master Plan has been developed to stimulate community input to guide the future direction of Stuart Park precinct. The draft Master Plan focuses on retaining the current structure of the park whilst enhancing community access, engagement and enhancing usage of the park for locals and visitors.

Key features of the draft Master Plan include an expanded play precinct, enhanced pedestrian access and new recreational opportunities for local residents. Proposed interventions retain the open space feel of the park, improve functionality for events, acknowledge and celebrate the multi-layered history of the park.

Endorsement of the draft Master Plan for exhibition will allow community feedback and input, to assist in refining the Master Plan and ensuring its success.







OUR WOLLONGONG JOIN THE CONVERSATION



# Planning for the Future of Stuart Park

## Phase 1 – Preliminary Engagement Report

### August 2022

Planning for the Future of Stuart Park – Phase 1 Preliminary Engagement Report August 2022

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The information in this report is based on data collected from community members who chose to be involved in engagement activities and therefore should not be considered representative.

This report is intended to provide a high-level analysis of the most prominent themes and issues. While it's not possible to include all the details of feedback we received, feedback that was relevant to the project has been provided to technical experts for review and consideration.

Planning for the Future of Stuart Park - Engagement Report August 2022

## Executive Summary

Council is working on a master plan for Stuart Park, including JP Galvin Park (the grassy beachfront area). As Wollongong's premier park, it is a well-used and valued place for our community and visitors. Many people enjoy going there to play, picnic, attend special events, get fit or enjoy the natural areas and coastal views. This area is on Dharawal country and has important Aboriginal cultural value. The Stuart Park Master Plan, once written, will be a 10-year plan that will guide:

- Improvements that make it a better place for the community and visitors.
- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment, heritage and Aboriginal cultural values.
- Additional recreational opportunities for local residents.
- Improved traffic and parking arrangements, and access to Stuart Park.
- Development of key event areas.
- Future work programs.

We asked the community and key stakeholders for ideas on how we can improve this area for everyone over the next 10 years.

### Methods and stakeholders

During the engagement period, 25 October to 22 November 2021, we sent more than 4,100 letters, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and surveys to residents, businesses and property owners near Stuart Park. They were invited to learn more and join the conversation. We sent emails with this information to:

- Destination Wollongong
- Emergency services
- Lifeguards
- Local businesses, licensees and event holders
- Local early education and care services, primary schools and high schools
- A Local MP
- Neighbourhood Forums
- NSW Crown Lands
- Participants in previous engagements linked to Stuart Park
- Register of Interest – Access, Cultural/Arts
- Sport, fitness, recreation, health, multicultural and disability groups and organisations
- University of Wollongong

We published a project webpage on [our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au](https://our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au), which included an ideas tool, online survey, mapping tool, stories tool and Q&A forum. People could also submit ideas to the webpage via SMS. We produced a video to promote the engagement which was used on the website and social media. We installed promotional signs around Stuart Park, written in English, Arabic and Simplified Chinese. The signs had a QR code linked to the project webpage. We published Facebook posts, including some in multiple languages targeting local audiences and those in Southern and Western Sydney. We issued a media release and published a notice in the Community Update that appears in the Illawarra Mercury newspaper. People could access the information from Council's Customer Service and Wollongong Library. We held four online information sessions and published a video recording of the presentation on the project webpage for those who were unable to attend. We held online meetings with some key stakeholders. We facilitated online workshops with school students and set up an online survey for school groups and young people. We sent a poster to local early education and care services so children could draw pictures of what they want to see and do in Stuart Park. We contacted people from the local

Planning for the Future of Stuart Park - Engagement Report August 2022

Aboriginal community via phone and email. We also met with the chairperson of a local Aboriginal organisation at Stuart Park. Our conversations with people from the local Aboriginal community are ongoing as we plan for Stuart Park's future.

Between February and August 2022, Council arranged several meetings with local Aboriginal Elders, community members and a local Aboriginal organisation. These meetings were an opportunity to work together to ensure the draft Master Plan appropriately acknowledges and responds to the Aboriginal cultural values of Stuart Park.

### Feedback

We heard from 873 people ranging in age from early education and care services through to those in their 90s, and several organisations. Their ideas and comments are summarised as follows:

<b>Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community most values the park amenity – large, open space and green natural areas.</li> <li>Family friendly.</li> <li>Plenty of room for everyone – enough space for different groups of people to do different activities.</li> <li>Opportunities for play.</li> </ul>
<b>Greening and shade</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant more local natives.</li> <li>Need more shaded areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Parking, traffic, public transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People recognise there's issues and they'll be challenging to resolve, but opinion is divided on how to do this.</li> <li>Some want timed or paid parking, with free parking/permits for ratepayers.</li> <li>Others think there is enough parking and want to discourage having more vehicles in the area.</li> <li>Encourage active transport – improve and create new pathways, add bike facilities.</li> <li>Encourage use of public transport – consider having a bus stop or Gong Shuttle bus stop at the park.</li> <li>Improve pedestrian safety.</li> <li>Consider installing smart parking.</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise facilities</b>	Install outdoor gym/calisthenics equipment.
<b>Picnic facilities, seating, water</b>	Respondents like what's there, but said there could be more huts, seating, barbeques, access to water and coal bins.
<b>Events</b>	Support for temporary activations including markets, food trucks and music. People also like the idea of having an outdoor cinema.
<b>Spaces to play and recreate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The playground is good, but suggestions were made for it to be expanded to include more play equipment for people of all ages; babies, toddlers, children, teenagers and adults.</li> <li>Some children would like to see modest additions to the existing playground such as monkey bars, a trampoline, sandpit or more swings.</li> <li>Many people want some sort of accessible water play feature.</li> <li>A skate park or pump track</li> <li>Basketball/multipurpose court areas for informal sport and games</li> </ul>



Planning for the Future of Stuart Park - Engagement Report August 2022

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<b>Waste management / maintenance / cleaning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Happy with the overall appearance of the park.</li> <li>• Mostly happy with the cleanliness and maintenance of facilities and parklands.</li> <li>• The Lagoon Restaurant waste area needs improvement and better management.</li> </ul>
<b>Dogs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A divisive issue amongst respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Supporters want an enclosed off-leash area.</li> <li>◦ Those unsupportive don't want dogs, their poo or disruptions in a space they feel is just for people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>Cycling facilities</b>	Need bike racks and lockers.
<b>Lighting</b>	Need more lighting, especially along pathways, for people using the space early in the morning or in the evening.
<b>Commercial use and development</b>	Some don't want any development to occur, preferring to keep its current character, while others want all sorts of facilities and infrastructure built or renovations to the Skydiving building. There is mixed opinion on commercial operators at the site; some are supportive of it, but others want the space returned for public use.
<b>Stormwater / drainage / flooding</b>	After rain, there is an area in the park that stays waterlogged for a long time. Improve drainage to help resolve this.
<b>Cultural facility, art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphitheatre.</li> <li>• More public art.</li> </ul>
<b>Food / cafes / restaurants</b>	<p>People are generally ok with current food and drink offerings but would like more options, e.g:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food vans / trucks / carts.</li> <li>• Takeaway food from a canteen or kiosk.</li> </ul>
<b>Toilets / showers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need more toilets.</li> <li>• A shower would be good.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure pathways, parking, water, signs and facilities are accessible.</li> <li>• Provide accessible play spaces.</li> </ul>
<b>Skydiving</b>	Of those who support it happening in Stuart Park – they like watching skydivers land, think it has local economic and tourism benefits. Those who are unsupportive don't like a commercial business taking up so much of the space or restricting public access to it. They think it should be moved elsewhere.
<b>Leave as is</b>	Some people think it's just right as it is and don't want any new infrastructure to change or impact its natural beauty.
<b>Amusement Park</b>	Some like the idea of an amusement park that would appeal to all ages and be a tourism drawcard.

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**Next steps**

The feedback received from the first phase of the engagement will be used to help develop the draft Master Plan for Stuart Park.

The draft Master Plan will be shared with the community in 2022. This will be an opportunity for people to let us know if they support the draft Plan. Feedback received during this second stage of engagement will be used to finalise the Master Plan, before it goes to Council seeking adoption.

## Background

Through its Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Council has committed to provide a variety of quality public spaces and opportunities for sport, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.

Stuart Park Precinct (including JP Galvin Park) is Wollongong's premier park and is a much-loved community asset. It is located on Dharawal country and is a site with significant Aboriginal cultural value. This park is an important recreational asset for the City, well used by the public daily and for special events such as festivals, celebrations and race endings. It is a Crown reserve and was gazetted as Stuart Park in 1885 for public recreation purposes.

The area is currently home to:

- A restaurant and café servicing park patrons.
- A sky diving business and, when the area is not in use as a drop zone, a wide-open space of green lawn for general recreation and multiple commercial fitness trainers.
- Caretakers cottage (used by Skydive the Beach).
- A 1970's brick building used by Council Parks staff to store equipment near the oval.
- Facilities; bike racks, public toilets, benches, picnic shelters, bollards, seating, parking and BBQs.
- A children's playground with tall slide tower, flying fox and liberty swing incorporating shaded picnic settings and children's art. An all ages and abilities playground is in the process of being built.
- Significant natural vegetation, including along JP Galvin Park (dune area), swamp oak plantings along George Hanley Drive, coastal estuarine vegetation on Fairy Creek Lagoon, large Norfolk Pine trees along JP Galvin Park and on the northern side of the Lagoon Restaurant.



1 Stuart Park Plan from 1885 showing artificial lake, island, cricket and running ground, feature tree planting, foot and baseball ground, perimeter pathway and pathway network and enclosure for horses and carriages.

For the purposes of Crown land management, the Stuart Park Reserve also includes the North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club building (currently being refurbished) which is a local heritage item. The northern lawn area immediately outside this building will be included in the Master Plan.

The Norfolk Pines and Canary Island Palms are of local significance.

Stuart Park is located on Dharawal Country and is understood to be an important place with strong Aboriginal cultural values. The site's location next to a coastal lagoon, on the coastline and nearby to

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rock platforms and other valuable food resources, as well as known Aboriginal sites within the area confirm that the site has a special place in the community.

Stuart Park and Galvin Park feature as a key precinct in the northern extent of the City's Blue Mile Precinct. The original Blue Mile Master Plan was formerly adopted in 2007. Since this time, there have been significant improvements to the playground, shelters, pathways, public amenities and carparks. More recently, the evolution of the park as an events precinct has created additional activities and opportunities.

There are several drivers which require exploration in an updated master plan to guide future activities and enhancements. These include:

- Growing use of the park by local residents for green space and local recreational activities.
- Increasing visitor numbers on weekends and school holiday periods.
- Stormwater/flooding issues.
- Some infrastructure is ageing and requires renewal and accessibility upgrades.
- Strong demand for parking and improved accessibility.
- Need to improve connectivity with the Blue Mile foreshore area and recent investment in North Gong Beach area.
- Commitment to preserving and enhancing Aboriginal culture and values of the site.
- Multiple commercial business operations.
- A need to consider the optimal footprint for major events; enabling the activity while:
  - Lessening disruption to parks users and visitors.
  - Minimising impacts to park infrastructure and turf.

The overarching goal of the project is:

**“To provide a strategic approach to the sustainable long-term development and enhancement of the Stuart Park as Wollongong’s premier park to accommodate the future recreational and cultural needs of our community”.**

We are involving the community in a staged approach for developing the Stuart Park Master Plan.



We will implement the Stuart Park Master Plan from late 2022 onwards, subject to:

- Council endorsement.
- Further community engagement on specific projects in the Plan.
- Available budgets.
- Annual capital programming.
- Environmental approvals.

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## Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the start of the engagement period included:



## Methods



### Our Methods

Table 1: Details of Communication and Engagement Methods

Methods	Details of Methods
Communication Methods	
Email to key stakeholders	An email and FAQ was sent to key stakeholders identified through an analysis process.




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Letter	A letter about the engagement and how to submit feedback (via phone, email or online) was delivered to more than 4,100 local residents, businesses and property owners.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)	Responses to questions about planning for the future of Stuart Park and the engagement were distributed with the letter and emails, and published on the project webpage.
Maps	<p>Two maps were produced; The study area:</p>  <p>Location plan with images:</p> 




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Our Wollongong website	<p>The project webpage hosted background information, videos and supporting documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently Asked Questions</li> <li>• Ideas tool</li> <li>• Stories tool</li> <li>• Mapping tool</li> <li>• Q&amp;A forum</li> <li>• Online survey</li> </ul> <p>There was also a webpage for online engagement with schools and young people. It hosted the overview video, an online survey and community information session presentation video.</p>
Community Update	<p>A notice appeared in Council's Community Update page, printed in the Illawarra Mercury, on the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 October</li> <li>• 3 November</li> <li>• 10 November</li> <li>• 17 November</li> </ul>
On-site signs	<p>Corflute signs in English, Arabic and Simplified Chinese that included a QR code linking to the Our Wollongong project webpage were installed in multiple locations around Stuart Park.</p> 
Media release	A <a href="#">media release</a> about the engagement was distributed on 2 November 2021.
Presentation	Wollongong Youth Services gave a presentation at an Education Support Network Meeting to promote the engagement and opportunity for young people to be involved.
School newsletters	Information was distributed to schools for publication in school newsletters.



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Social media	<p>City of Wollongong Facebook page published a post promoting the engagement on 28 October and 16 November 2021.</p> <div data-bbox="646 488 1181 990"> </div> <div data-bbox="646 1041 1181 1787"> </div>
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	<p>Wollongong Youth Services Facebook page published a post promoting the engagement and competition (5 x \$25 gift card draw for completed surveys) on 18 November 2021.</p> 
Engagement Methods	
Our Wollongong website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Ideas tool was used for people to share their ideas for improving Stuart Park via the website and SMS.</li> <li>• A survey was used to capture participants' comments.</li> <li>• A mapping tool was used so people could provide feedback and share ideas about specific locations in Stuart Park.</li> <li>• A Stories tool was used so people could share their memories and experiences of Stuart Park.</li> </ul>
Stakeholder meetings	A summary of open feedback and actions was noted in meeting minutes.
Online workshops	<p>Online workshops were held with students at the following primary schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coniston Public School</li> <li>• Towradgi Public School</li> <li>• Wollongong Public School</li> </ul>
Email	People emailed in open written submissions.
Poster	A poster was distributed to early education and care services so that children could draw three things they would like to see or do in Stuart Park.

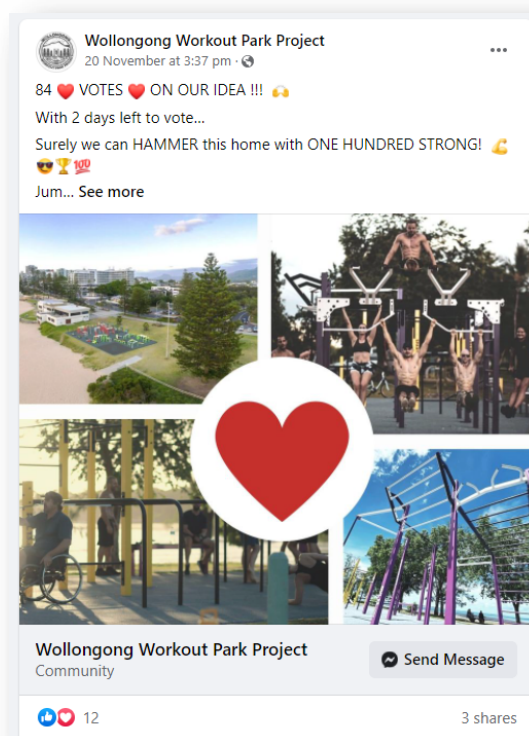
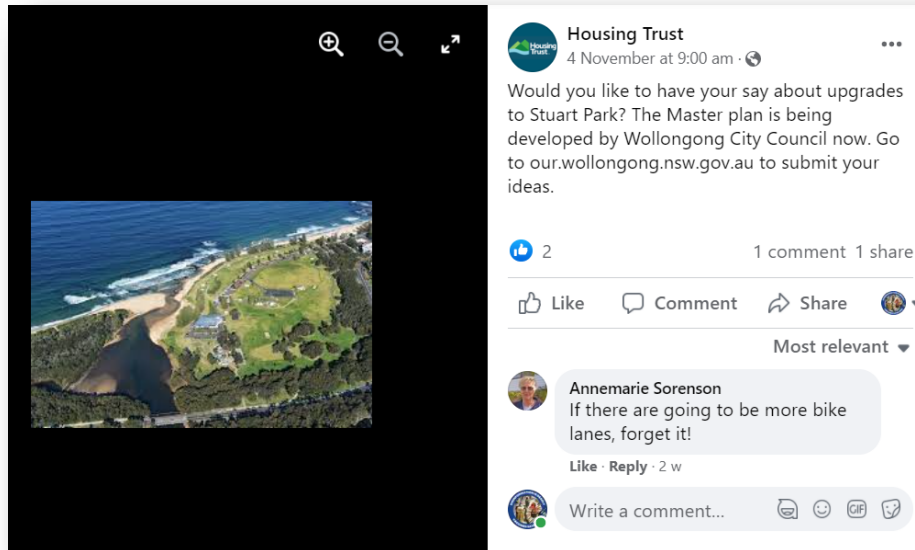
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	<div><p>We want to make <b>Stuart Park</b> in North Wollongong a great place for everyone to visit.</p></div> <div><p>→ <b>What 3 things do you think would make it better?</b> You can write your answers or draw us some pictures</p></div> <div></div>
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## Results

All stakeholders and the wider community were invited to share their ideas for improving Stuart Park. Social media pages posted about the engagement opportunity.



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The Illawarra Mercury published a story on 3 November 2021. ABC Illawarra interviewed Council's Recreation Services Manager on 18 November 2021.

### Engagement Participation

This section provides details on the participation in engagement activities and feedback received during the engagement period. Details of the number of participants for each engagement activity are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Participation in Engagement Activities**

Engagement Activities	Participation
Stakeholder meetings	15
Online information sessions	8
School workshops	144
Poster - drawings from children under the age of	44
Online Participation – general public	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aware – Total number of people who viewed the project webpage.</li> </ul>	1,150
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed – Total number of people who clicked a hyperlink, e.g. to download a map.</li> </ul>	772
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged – Total number of people who actively contributed to the project, e.g. by submitting comments via the survey, posting ideas, commenting on ideas or voting <input type="checkbox"/> for their favourite idea.</li> </ul>	504
Online Participation – schools and young people	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged – Total number of people who actively contributed to the project, e.g. by submitting comments via the survey</li> </ul>	49

### Submission results

We received ideas and feedback from 873 people of all ages (from early education and care services through to people in their 90s), including from the general community, several groups and organisations.

**Table 3: Submission types**

Submission type	Number of participants
Open – Email	27
Open – Letter	1
Open - Online information sessions	8
Open - Meetings	15
Drawings from children under 5 years old	44



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Survey	130
Schools' workshops with years 3, 4, 5 and 6	144
Online – Survey for schools and young people	49
Online – Ideas tool	436
Online – Mapping tool	15
Online – Stories tool	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>873</b>

People contributed many ideas and comments in different ways. This is a summary of all the feedback we received:

#### Open feedback received via email

##### Individual submissions

We received 13 submissions from individuals. A community member who had attended an online information session also emailed through letters of support from nine organisations for their “Wollongong Workout Park” proposal. The letters were for a funding application they put together in mid-2021. Letters of support were provided as part of this submission by nine sport, health and community organisations.

##### Parking, traffic and public transport

Most commonly in open submissions from individuals, people spoke about parking, traffic or public transport. Some suggested more parking is needed, while others said they do not support having more parking. One respondent thought parking should be removed entirely and vehicular access limited, e.g. only to emergency and service vehicles or booked patrons of commercial facilities. One called to consolidate the parking area on the corner of Cliff Road and George Hanley Drive and at the Surf Club, then build a multistorey carpark on it. Another was unsupportive of having a multistorey car park. Some suggested moving Skydive the Beach, e.g. to Fairy Meadow, to use that area for parking. Some suggested using other areas for parking, such as:

- On the western side of Squires Way, both north and south of the bridge over Fairy Creek.
- Angle parking both sides of George Hanley Drive, between Corrimal Street and Squires Way
- In the area adjacent to the Innovation Campus and Live Steamers.

It was suggested to continue the road past the Lagoon Restaurant out onto Squires Way, possibly one way, to stop cars turning around at the restaurant and going back. Another suggested extending George Hanley Drive through the existing carpark (to follow the original railway location) from the roundabout and close off the existing road into Stuart Park to compensate for loss of parking spaces.

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Other ideas included:

- Have digital smart parking sign at the intersection of Cliff Road and George Hanley Drive.
- Provide a free mini shuttle to park locations and the car park during peak season.
- Limit traffic along Cliff Road in front of the Novotel to emergency and service vehicles only.
- Charge parking fees to out-of-town visitors.
- Collaborate with the community to develop then implement the Stuart Park access and parking strategy.
- Create 10km/h shared zone/s to improve safety for pedestrians.
- Provide and enforce 3-hour or 4-hour time limits for foreshore parking to avoid all-day use e.g by people using the free bus to access the CBD.

There was a call to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and public transport at intersections.

### Skydiving

This was the next most discussed topic in open submissions from individuals. Some think the oval should be for public use only. There were calls to return the heritage Caretakers Cottage to the public and use it as a museum, information centre or kiosk. Some would like Skydive to be relocated, e.g. to Fairy Meadow “where they have used it before”, North Dalton Park or the perimeter of the park “as previously provided in Plan of Management”. It was suggested that if Skydive moved, there could be community or charity events, occasional concerts or more parking in that space.

The space monopolised by Skydive is one of the best for ball games for families and groups, however they are frequently excluded from this by a private enterprise.

### Greening, shade and open space

Some want Stuart Park to maintain its natural, green character with no additional infrastructure. Some said they want to see more trees planted, especially along the roads. There was a call to return the former cricket oval area to the concept of the village green, “as promised in the 1990s as the reason for relocating cricket and baseball out of Stuart Park”.

The level of development in the local area has meant Stuart Park and surrounds is the only available large green space left for people to use. Green space is essential as Council acknowledges in many of its policies. This was never more evident than during COVID, when the park was a refuge and haven for so many people.

### Development

We received mixed comments about the possibility of future development in Stuart Park. Some would not like more structures or commercial facilities built in the park, with a respondent saying they may ruin the existing view. Others said they would like to see a new toilet block built near the Caretakers Cottage. A suggestion was made for a new beach canteen including seats, tables and a bridge area for fishing. We heard that the interior and exterior design of the beach canteen should reflect Wollongong’s beaches with classic sea motifs or themes and a long deck on a steep slope to connect it to the water.

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### Pathways and connectivity

A request was made to improve and widen the original cycleway through the park. One respondent wants cyclists confined to the roadside perimeter of the park and to in-fill a pedestrians-only path around the park. One respondent believes the path from the beach into Stuart Park near North Wollongong SLSC is dangerous for pedestrians (refer to extract from submission). They suggested:

- Having marked pedestrian crossings to provide safe movement.
- Replacing the pathway around the western part of the park.
- Completing the pathway around Stuart Park to make a circuit.

### Planning decisions and impacts

It was requested Council recognise the areas surrounding Stuart Park, particularly the Smiths Hill area, is a high-density residential area with no access to a local park within the immediate area.

There was a call for the 2000 Plan of Management for North Beach and Stuart Park to be the overarching planning document for the area and not the Blue Mile Master Plan. With all future use of the park being consistent with the 2000 Plan of Management.

### Events

We heard that well managed events and festivals bring many benefits to the park. It was mentioned that the management of major events has improved over the years. We also heard that people were happy that major events are taking place at other parks across Wollongong, like, North Dalton park, Lang Park and MacCabe Park. This has helped balance the needs of residents and visitors with the economic benefit. Another contributor suggested Lang Park and the Steelers Stadium could be used more for major events. A comment was made that events should not have commercial sponsorship from the liquor industry.

### Community engagement

A request was made for more consultation with local residents. It was suggested that a community-based committee/working party could be established to inform the project. Membership of the committee/working party could include:

- Ward 2 Councillors
- Representative from North Wollongong Surf Club
- Representative of the food places at North Wollongong Beach
- Representative of Lagoon Restaurant
- Convenor of Neighbourhood Forum 5 or his/her delegate



There is a clear opportunity to complete the pathway (yellow line below) as a circuit around Stuart Park which would allow the many pedestrians and runners who already follow the logical and well-worn route to safely complete this without the many trip-hazards that exist near the Lagoon and without walking through mud after rain in much of the rest of the circuit.

#### 10. Stuart Park

Such a wonderful asset: to have a large, open and grassy park adjacent to a beach. Once again, across the whole of the access road into this area, there is not a single designated and marked pedestrian crossing.

The pathway around the western part of the park is in need or replacement. It is cracked and rutted and beyond its best-before date.

The pathway on the beach-side of the car park ends abruptly before the Lagoon Restaurant. Although the path kind of continues through the Lagoon car park, it involves pedestrians competing with cars and is not well designated.



Image ©2021 TerraMetrics. Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Extract from submission:

"Pedestrian Movements along the Blue Mile Pathway, Wollongong"

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- Four residents of North Beach/Smiths Hill area

#### **Picnic facilities, seating and water**

There was a call for more seating to be provided near the playground. An idea was shared to install more shelters and BBQs to the north west of the playground, while being mindful of allowing enough open space for people to play and run around.

#### **Waste management / maintenance**

We received feedback about the restaurant's waste disposal – that it is an 'eyesore' and unhygienic. It was suggested the waste from the rubbish could be removed more often and the area could be cleaned with a high-pressure hose. The wooden structure housing the bins could also be better used.

#### **Other areas**

People shared comments about how busy the park can be and that we should encourage people to go to some of our other local parks and beaches. Others told us they are happy with Stuart Park and think that resources would be better directed towards some of our other parks. It was suggested MacCabe Park could be improved.

#### **People using the park**

Respondents shared that the number of visitors to the park can stop residents and their families from using the park. It was requested that Council recognise that many users of Stuart Park, especially on weekends, are not residents of Wollongong.

#### **Other comments**

Other comments and feedback received via email include:

- Shared proposal for Wollongong Workout Project.
- Rejecting any proposals for a BMX track.
- Strict enforcement on noise controls.
- Encourage family-oriented activities of a fair commercial nature.

#### **Group submissions**

We received detailed submissions from 12 groups. The full submissions have been provided to the project team for consideration. Following is a high-level summary of each:

##### **One community cycling group** made the following requests:

- Relocate the existing shared path crossing 20 metres north to improve sightline.
- Continue the shared path on George Hanley Drive east to Cliff Road.
- Build the shared path around the northeast side of Stuart Park as shown in the Blue Mile Master Plan.
- Provide a separated cycleway to improve safety for all.
- Have a fully separated bicycle route to accommodate the number of cyclists using the Coastline Cycleway.
- Provide a link from North Wollongong Railway Station along Ajax Avenue.

##### **A government health promotion unit** provided the following recommendations to inform the development of the Stuart Park Master Plan to maximise health and wellbeing:

- Acknowledge the cultural significance of the area through interpretive signs explaining the cultural significance of the area, identifying bush tucker and local native plants.
- Improve active living infrastructure, e.g.
  - Slow traffic measures.
  - Clear crossing points.
  - Shared pathways on both sides of the parking area.



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- Level pathway access to more places such as forest maze, dry creek bed.
- Complement concrete pathways with paths/tracks that include mulch and dirt surfaces.
- Accessible pathways.
- Separate off-road style path for BMX, mountain and gravel bikes.
- Bike racks.
- Outdoor exercise equipment stations.
- Regular activation events and seasonal programs of free or low-cost communal sport/fitness activities, e.g: communal soccer, cricket, free outdoor exercise classes, Park Run type activities.
- Increase lighting along shared pathways and at equipment/facilities.
- Increase appropriate supportive seating, including bench seating with supportive high back and arm rest to assist with rising out of seat.
- Water-saving showers.
- More affordable, healthy food/drink options closer to the main playground and picnic areas e.g. food vans during weekends and holidays.
- No smoking signs in locations where smoking is prohibited.
- Improve accessibility:
  - Add wheelchair accessible water refill and drinking fountains.
  - Uninterrupted level pathways.
  - Add wheelchair accessible picnic tables and hard surface around current picnic tables with sufficient manoeuvring area.
  - Additional disabled toilets.
  - Ensure signage is readable from a seated height and include clear legible text, explanatory symbols and images.
  - Include Braille in signage/tactile maps of site.
- Add shade trees to open spaces, shade structures over the main play space and quiet/calming areas.

**A local heritage community group** would like images of the history of the park and its strong value to the migrant community in any signage, interpretative works or art installations. They feel any migrant history that is showcased needs to follow the Indigenous history of the area. The group believes there are opportunities to:

- Link the park to other key places to contextualise the area, such as the Harbour and migrant hostel accommodation on Squires Way.
- Model safety and responsible care for our beaches and natural environment as well as the management of refuse.

They shared an extract from their research to provide context and emphasise the significance of Stuart



Stuart Park tents and caravans can be seen around the oval and among the trees. Aerial photo January 1955 Wollongong City Council.

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Park in the history of migration to Wollongong. This includes information about tents and caravans in Stuart Park that were used as temporary first accommodation for migrants coming to Wollongong in the late 1940s and '50s. In 1949, it was estimated the population at Stuart Park was about 3,000. NSW Heritage Listed buildings from the former Migrant Workers Hostels are a five-minute walk further north along Squires Way. They shared photos used in the research, two of which are included in this report.



Jeanny, Elle, Jeannet and Herbert van Gils outside the tent at Stuart Park 1951.  
 Photo: Petrus van Gils.

**A road safety lobby group** provided a detailed submission to support their view that share paths are dangerous. They want separated pathways for pedestrians and bike riders.

**Local emergency services** representative would like to provide input into the draft Master Plan. Their focus is on operational considerations for major events and music festivals, e.g. crowd management, infrastructure and hostile vehicle mitigation.

**A local resident community action group** provided a detailed submission and suggested improvements for:

- Facilities for community and visitors, e.g. shelters, barbeques and seating.
- Natural environment improvements, e.g. additional plantings.
- Highlighting heritage, e.g. park entry structure and interpretive signage.
- Providing for passive recreation, e.g. open space, exercise equipment and Bocce area.
- Restricting commercial use, e.g. relocating Skydive the Beach, minimal-impact events and leasing the cottage out for a kiosk or information centre.
- Improving access and safety, e.g. co-develop access and parking strategy with community, 10km/h shared zone, timed parking and perimeter share path.
- Installing services, adding lighting and improving drainage.
- Ongoing management, e.g. employ a Stuart Park Place Manager, establish a Master Plan working party with community and use feedback from internal and external stakeholders to inform improvements.

**A local recreation business** told us they value the open green space and views between the park and ocean. They made suggestions for improvements, including:

- Upgrading the Caretakers Cottage in line with the park's heritage and environmental strategy.



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- Adding a shaded area and associated facilities next to the cottage.
- Allocating a bus parking bay on George Hanley Drive, with Skydive providing bus shuttles.
- Joint precinct initiatives through partnerships with surrounding local businesses.
- Linking with Indigenous communities through programs, art and joint initiatives. Inclusive/accessible facilities e.g. increasing accessibility to the cottage.

**A local organisation that help preserve Illawarra history** advocates to maintain the park as an open recreation area for individuals and small groups. They do not support use of the park for commercial activities or large events like concerts but are ok with Illawarra Live Steamers continuing where they are. They think exercise/fitness activities should be restricted to non-peak times and/or to areas in the western portion of the park east of George Hanley Drive. They'd like to see historical and environment interpretation boards in the park, supplemented by technology access to more information. They want the dune area protected by a wider range of endemic flora, access barriers and accessible pathways. They want to see the Swamp Oak plantings maintained along both sides of George Hanley Drive. They suggested adding a 'formal gateway' near the junction of Cliff Rd and George Hanley Drive. They do not want parking areas to increase. They would like additional toilet facilities near the playground and in the western sector of the Park east of George Hanley Drive.

**A community service club** proposed two projects:

- A basketball court that could also be converted to a performance space.
- '100 Tree Project' – planting 100 Illawarra Flame (or best option) trees to celebrate Rotary Club of Wollongong's 100 years of service to the City.

They acknowledged the Aboriginal heritage significance of local landmarks and would like to gain the support of Indigenous communities and organisations to assist with the proposed projects.

**A national conservation body** would like the following items considered whilst developing the Master Plan:

- The public park amenity be maintained.
- Reconsider use of the skydiving drop zone so it can be used by the public.
- Consider alternate locations for skydiving activities or meet participants at the airport to take pressure off the park.
- Avoid corporate use of the former caretaker's cottage by current or future businesses
- Carefully manage festivals to minimise the alienation of public space.
- Coastal dunes, riparian corridor and cultural landscape plantings maintained/enhanced.
- Appropriately maintain heritage listed Norfolk Island Pines and Canary Island Palms and prepare succession plantings for pines and other feature trees, including figs.
- Add interpretative signage – historical and ecological.
- No additional parking facilities or multistorey parking.
- Heritage listing of the stone shelters.

They congratulated Council on the information session video presentation on the engagement website.

**A government heritage organisation** advised there are recorded Aboriginal cultural heritage sites and values at Stuart Park. They recommend a comprehensive heritage assessment be conducted to inform the Master Plan, incorporating:

- A detailed Aboriginal cultural heritage assessment.
- An Environment Heritage Assessment.

**A local tourism organisation** emphasised the importance of major events at the park and North Wollongong Beach precinct to the region's economy. They are not against limiting the number of events

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held each year, but would like capacity for events at the park to increase to attract world-class musical acts. They said having one premier event annually at North Wollongong Beach would help take the load off Stuart Park. They expressed support for skydiving adding colour and atmosphere to the park, saying “They have shown over many years that they can work with and among event operators, with little disturbance to the general public”. Their suggestions for maintenance and improvements for major events included:

- Allocation of a dedicated annual maintenance budget for pre-approved major event sites.
- A membrane installed in high traffic areas of the park, so heavy vehicles can access the non-hardstand areas without causing damage.
- Improving drainage, especially in the heavily used south-east section of the park.

#### Open feedback received during online information sessions

Eight people attended a one-hour online information session. Their feedback is summarised under the following themes:

##### Parking

A representative of a local resident action group spoke about needing a foreshore parking strategy. Another community member made suggestions for:

- Smart parking.
- Creating more spaces on Cliff Road and Squires Road.

##### Exercise facilities

One community member shared their detailed [proposal](#) for a large outdoor gym/calisthenics equipment, “Wollongong Workout Park”.

##### Use of the site

Some community members said Skydive the Beach should be relocated so that the space they’re using can be used by the general public. There is concern about the site’s use for commercial business activities and perception that Skydive do not pay Council adequately for use of their facilities. Other suggestions for how the site should be used include:

- Only using the oval for occasional community events or festivals.
- Banning bikes within Puckeys as they are perceived to be dangerous.
- Limiting group sizes, particularly around barbeque areas.

##### Blue Mile Master Plan

A representative of a local resident action group said a significant number of existing 2007 Blue Mile Master Plan projects have not been completed.

##### History and heritage

One community member said they would like to see Puckeys House rebuilt. They shared personal stories of the park as a zoo, which had peacocks and wallabies.

##### Community engagement

Some community members attended to learn about the process for developing the master plan and appreciated the opportunity to receive information at the online information session.

#### Open feedback received in meetings

##### A local Aboriginal organisation provided their feedback.

- Stuart Park is a significant site. This needs to be acknowledged and carefully considered in all future planning and works.
- Want to ensure the significance of the park is recognised and acknowledged in the future and keen to discuss how this might be explored through the Master Planning process, both in terms of ensuring appropriate outcomes but also through education and site interpretation.

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- More detailed and broader discussions in relation to the master plan process need to be held to consider the future use and management of the space.
- Keen to use the site to educate the community about Aboriginal Cultural Values, stories and attachments and to encourage the whole community to engage with this important part of our heritage. Local Aboriginal people must lead this process and the development of interpretation material and how these stories are communicated and told. The development of the interpretation material for Sandon Point by the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council was noted as an example of where this type of approach is happening.
- The ongoing use of the area for picnic grounds and passive recreation may be a good fit for the site. They are concerned about any ideas to commercialise and develop the space further, or to build large-scale infrastructure.

**A cultural knowledge holder and traditional owner provided the following feedback.**

- They would like to be involved as a cultural advisor.
- Stuart Park is a very special and sacred site for local Aboriginal people.
- It was traditionally used for a gathering place, a place to make tools.
- There are known archaeological sites that should be kept protected from development and dogs.
- Was also a place for teaching, hunting and dance.
- Had plenty of bush tucker which and fresh water that meets the sea.
- Would like to see an Aboriginal-designed circle gathering place built in the ground with sandstone. It would be the perfect place to meet outdoors on country if a big meeting needed to happen.
  - Big enough to sit 30 to 40 people.
  - Locate near the existing new park.
  - A spot that all can use, easy to access.
  - Toilet close by so elders using the space don't have to walk too far.
  - Tables and chairs around the outside with shelters.

**Another local Aboriginal organisation provided their feedback.**

- Would like to see:
  - A storyline of Aboriginal history depicted on signs along the boardwalk of Stuart Park.
  - Artwork that represents the historical use for such a special place for the local Aboriginal people.
  - More toilet amenities in park area.
  - Aboriginal artwork on footpaths, like what was done at Hill 60.
- Interested in creating a bush tucker walk at Stuart Park for all community to be a part of.
- Interested in creating employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, especially young people.
- Would like specific sacred sites to be untouched if possible and preserved.

**A charity health organisation shared their feedback.**

The organisation has a focus on creating a health-affirming environment, through urban design, footpath connections and spaces to recreate. They shared Heart Foundation's Healthy Active By Design case studies.

They said it is important to:

- Get people walking more.
- Provide connectivity to active transport.
- Make sure those who are disadvantaged, at risk of heart disease and least active see it as beneficial – making it accessible and appealing for those people.

**A local resident action group provided their feedback.**

They spoke of Stuart Park's local and state importance, as the most important park on the coast between the Royal National Park and Victoria, used primarily for passive recreation and nature-based activities. They feel a new Master Plan needs to be holistic, recognising the needs of the natural environment, users and key stakeholders, engaging with them and balancing key priorities and

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outcomes. The group want Council to consider existing constraints in developing a new Master Plan, such as:

- Environmental conservation areas.
- Flooding.
- Conditions of DA approvals, leases & licences including:
  - Skydive the Beach (they feel it alienates the large, central grassed area).
  - Lagoon Restaurant.
  - Commercial fitness trainers.
  - Illawarra Live Steamers.
  - Major events.

They said ideally, the plan of management should be developed first, which will outline principles for further enhancement of site.

They believe optimising green space is the highest priority and improving functionality is paramount. General observations included the need to:

- Improve facilities for the growing community and increasing visitors, including picnic shelters and seating, drinking fountains and toilets.
- Maintain perimeter plantings, whilst additional tree planting will help Council meet its Urban Greening Strategy targets. Extend Norfolk Pine plantings along the foreshore.
- Highlight heritage (Aboriginal, European) including installation of interpretative signage, art.
- Explore potential opportunities for local skate facilities and hardcourt basketball court, exercise equipment, maintain area for bocce.
- Improve path network and reduce conflict with cyclists.
- Improve entry point, including raised pedestrian area – noted success of recent garden/flower plantings at key entry node.
- Retain JP Galvin Park area for passive recreation and picnics. Noted wind protection in existing picnic shelters on the ridge lacking. Provide additional bubbler/water points.
- Western area of park provides more nature-based opportunities e.g. nature trails and links to Puckeys Estate.
- Maintain Live Steamers area west of Squires Way – no further development but access could be enhanced by additional pedestrian crossing.
- Enhance the lagoon area enhanced for passive recreation, children swimming etc. Minimise concrete paths / hard surfaces.
- Opportunity for place management approach.

The group also requested opportunities to exchange and discuss views with representatives of the key stakeholders, including the recreation planning section and open space staff in developing the plan.

#### Drawings from early education and care services

Poster templates were sent to early education and care services across the Wollongong Local Government Area. The posters allowed space for children to draw three things they would most like to see or do in Stuart Park. We received drawings from 44 children.

An amazing swing that goes as high as the sky

Most of the drawings included requests for more play equipment, with a slide, monkey bars, flying fox and swings being the most popular. Other suggestions included:

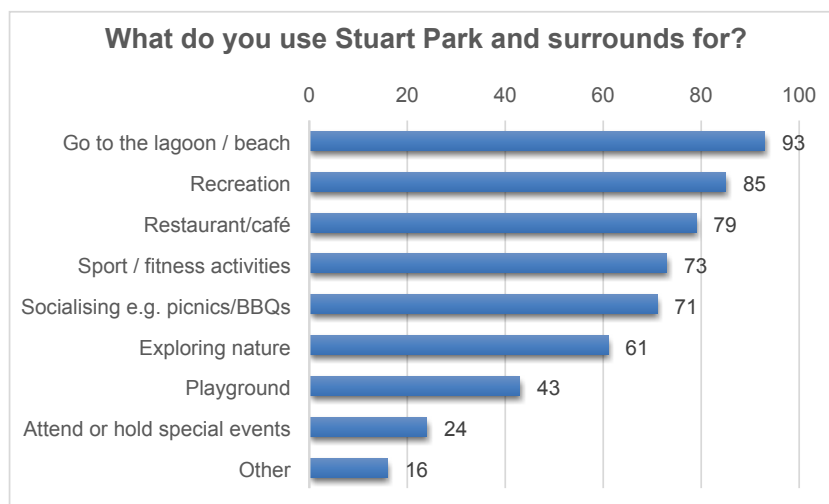
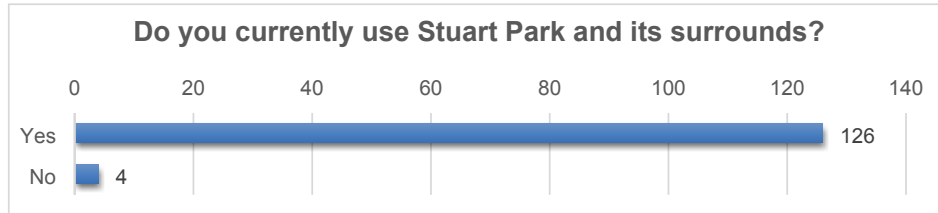
- Swimming pool or water park.
- Ninja park.
- Bike track or skatepark.
- Climbing area or frame.
- Sand pit.

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- Trampoline/jumping pillow.
- Adventure/imagination play; an obstacle course, pirate ship, rocket ship, cubby house, dry creek bed, doctors set, hairdressers set and train set.
- A play area for babies.
- Bowling alley or flip out.
- Bush walking and camping area.
- Shelters, bins and picnic tables and seats.
- Toilets and showers.
- Potato garden.
- A waterfall with a fairy garden.
- Art centre.
- Yoga area.
- Fenced area for dogs.
- Butterfly or dragonfly enclosure.
- Pony rides.
- Small farmyard.
- Pond for frogs.
- A jetty with flowers, water and a boat.
- Lolly or ice cream shop.

### Survey

People could complete either an online or paper survey. We received a total of 130 completed surveys; 70 online surveys and 60 paper surveys. Some responses to the survey questions are graphed and others are presented under themed headings.

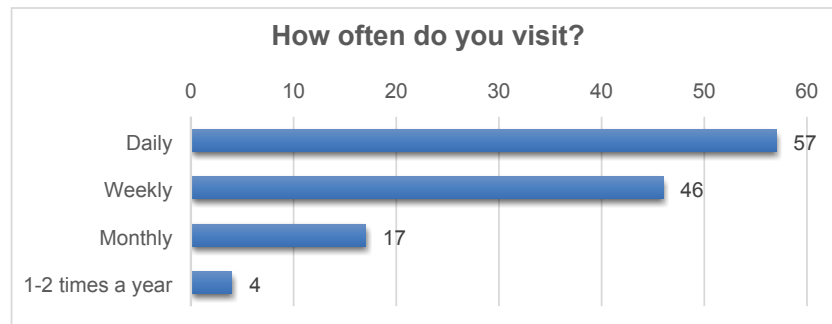


Other reasons people gave for visiting the park included:

- Walking.

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- Dog walking/activities and picnics.
- Bike riding/cycling.
- Access parking to go to the beach.
- Kick a football.
- Meditate and read.
- Passive recreation.



People who said they didn't currently use Stuart Park said their reasons for this are:

- Too busy, especially in summer.
- Parking is too difficult.
- No shade.
- Don't like the rock music concerts, festivals and daytrippers from Sydney camping out and taking over the facilities.
- A 93-year-old who uses a walking frame prefers to walk along the Blue Mile, closer to where they live.

We asked what people value the most about Stuart Park and what are the good things people like about it. Their responses are summarised as follows:

**Nature / green space / open space / size**

Most respondents said they value the park's natural areas, green space and open space. They expressed appreciation for the beautiful scenery, coastal and escarpment views and grassed areas. Some said they value the trees, shade and wildlife, including the birdlife and duck pond. Several commented about the park having great spaces to picnic, including under the Norfolk Island pines. Some spoke of the lagoon and the natural water play opportunity it creates. Respondents like that there is lots of space for a variety of activities. Feedback showed an appreciation for the large area of relatively undeveloped land right in the city and next to the ocean, with the backdrop of Mount Keira and Puckey's bushland. It was commented that large, green spaces like these are highly valued by those living in surrounding apartments. Its value during the pandemic was also noted.

You are immersed in nature, but in the city with facilities, showers, toilets, bins, playground and coastal path connection right there.



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### Exercise

Some respondents spoke of the park being a great space to play sport and exercise, including with their outdoor fitness groups, friends and family. They enjoy walking, running and riding there. Some mentioned participating in Parkrun. The pathway connection to Puckeyes and North Wollongong is valued.

I love that I can come down and enjoy my outdoor fitness in such a great environment. As we know from this past year, fitness plays an important part to mental health and training outdoors is so much better for you. We can even enjoy a dip in the ocean afterwards.

### Location/connections

Some respondents appreciate the park's location close to the CBD, Blue Mile, Puckeyes and the beach. Several spoke of it being close to home, so it's convenient and easy to access or walk to and from. Some said it's handy to cafes and other Blue Mile amenities. One respondent said they value its isolation away from traffic and roads, while another spoke of their appreciation for having "a beautiful pocket of nature so close to the CBD".

### Facilities and amenities

Some respondents said they value facilities and amenities such as:

- Barbecues and huts.
- Picnic shelters.
- Public toilets and showers – "clean, modern".
- Seating.
- The stone shelters.

We often use the shelter areas for lunch or when the weather changes.

### Pathways / bike paths

Some respondents said they like the walking paths and bike track. They like the connectivity to the Harbour, WIN Stadium, Puckeyes and the North Gong Pavilion – "great for exercising". Some like the flat pathways ("easy, accessible") and being able to take their children for a ride on their bikes or scooters.

### Ocean / beach

Some respondents value the access or proximity to the beach and lagoon. Some said they enjoy surfing, kayaking or the views.

### Atmosphere

Respondents said it was a peaceful, calm and relaxing place when not crowded. Some like seeing people enjoy the area, saying it feels lively and friendly. Another said they like the lack of commercialism.

### Restaurants/cafés

Several respondents like the cafés and restaurants at the park and along the Blue Mile. People enjoy having a coffee in beautiful natural surroundings as well as supporting local businesses and going there for special occasions.

### Play

Several respondents said they like the playground or playing at the park because it has:

- Accessible facilities.
- Natural water play opportunity created by the lagoon.
- Open space for children to play.
- Paddleboarding on the lagoon and beach for young children.
- Playground has good variety.

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- Childrens cycle area.
- Is great for all ages and families.

### Maintenance

Several people said they appreciate that the facilities, e.g. toilets, and the park's grounds are well maintained.

### Skydiving

A few respondents said they enjoy seeing "spectacular, colourful parachutes" and skydivers landing. Some think it is a drawcard for the city, with nearby cafés benefiting from visitors.

### Variety of activities/experiences, a place for everyone

Respondents spoke of their appreciation of the large space, its coastal/beachside location so close to the city and how it's used in a variety of ways by different groups, e.g:

- Picnickers/barbequers.
- Families.
- Music goers.
- Different cultural groups.
- Walkers and dog walkers.
- Bike riders.
- Beach goers.
- Skydivers.
- People enjoying natural areas.

Multipurpose  
but spread out

### A place to spend time with friends and family

Respondents said they appreciate being able to socialise at the park with friends and/or family. People appreciate that it is a family-friendly place. These respondents go there to eat (picnics or café), meet people, or play.

We live in an apartment  
so it is our backyard, a  
place to meet people.

### Events

A few respondents said they enjoy live music events, such as concerts and festivals. One said they like how the park is cleaned up quickly and well after big events. Another said music events "may be a bit inconvenient, but provide a vibrant music scene for our area".

### Parking

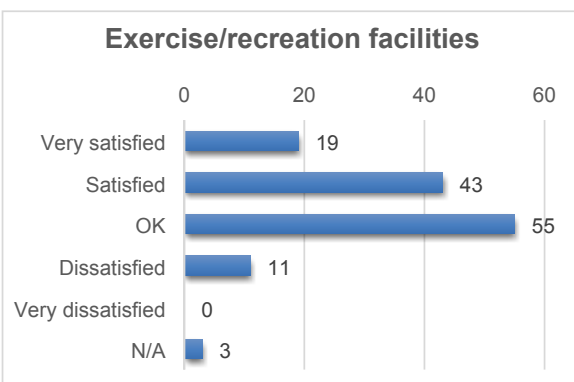
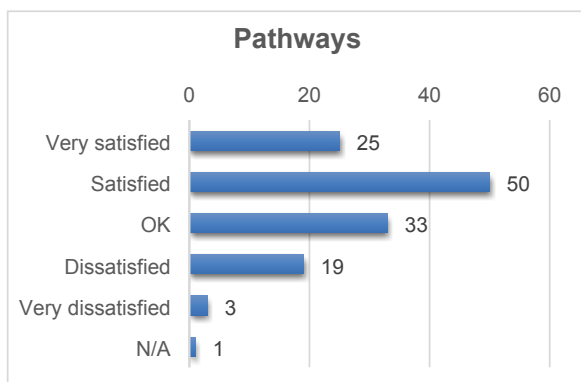
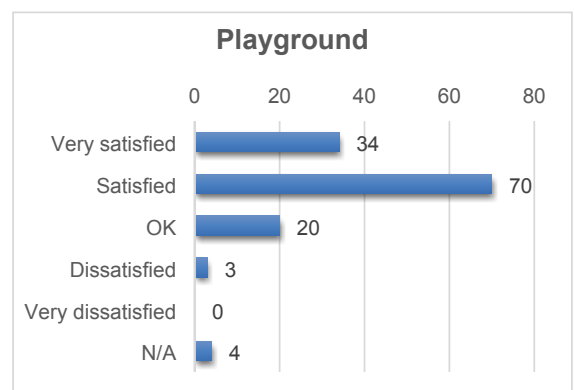
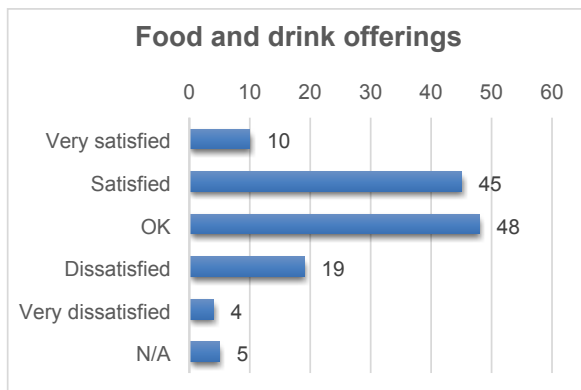
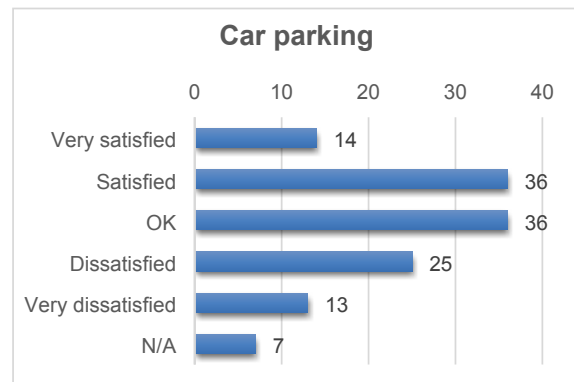
Some respondents said they appreciate the amount of parking, location and limited traffic at the park.

Less commonly, respondents said they value:

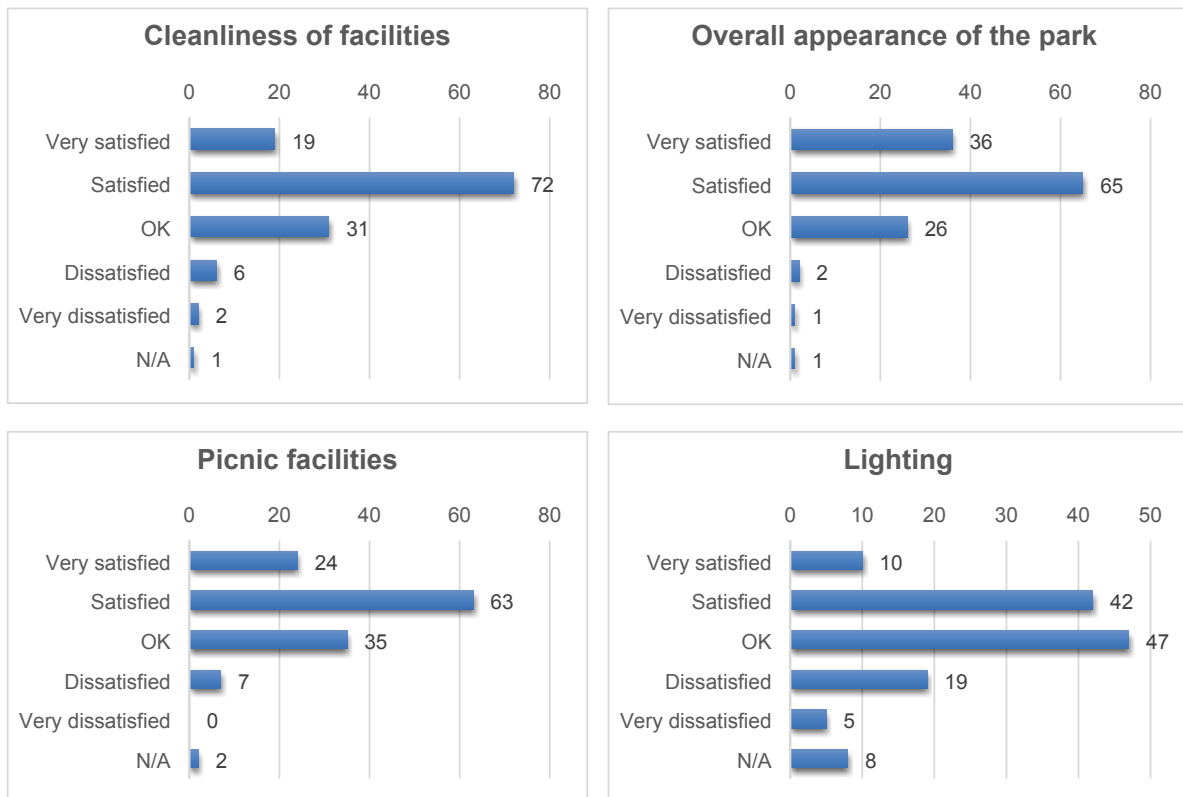
- The park's historical buildings, e.g. surf club, Diggies and brick huts.
- Feeling safe at the park.
- No squatting or camping allowed.
- Its potential!

We asked people to rate their satisfaction of the facilities and services at the park. These are their responses:

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We asked people to tell us their ideas for how Stuart Park can be improved for the whole community over the next 10 years. We wanted to find out what would encourage people to spend time there and what's most important to them. Responses are presented under the following themes with the number of submissions referencing that theme in brackets:

### Parking, traffic and public transport

More than a third of respondents shared ideas or comments relating to parking, traffic and public transport. There are mixed opinions about what will resolve issues relating to this. While some are supportive of increasing the amount of parking, others do not like this idea at all and are concerned more parking will make congestion worse by encouraging more vehicles into the area. Some want timed or paid parking, with preferential weekend / public holiday access or parking permits issued to ratepayers. Some think visitors from out-of-area should be contributing to the maintenance cost of the park through parking fees. Others say it is important to keep free, untimed parking. Some called for more accessible parking spaces.

I often avoid going, even though I would like to, because I know it will be hard to park.

To manage parking and congestion issues, people suggested:

- Evening lockout of parking.
- Having an electronic sign showing the number of car spaces available, or a "parking full" sign at the roundabout entry to the car park.
- Parking attendants, e.g. a roster of interested community groups to supervise weekend parking and collect parking entry fees.
- Extending the road to join up to the main road beyond the Lagoon Restaurant (perhaps with traffic lights).
- Free 'park and ride' bus service.

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- A multistorey car park.
- Marked parking spaces in nearby streets and better line marking of spaces at the park, with fines for those taking up two parking spots.
- One way traffic.
- Angle or rear-to-kerb parking along the western side of Squires Way.
- Encourage people to use the Gong Shuttle by adding a stop closer to the park, or a better connection / crossing to the existing stop outside the Novotel.

One respondent said priority for parking and feedback on the area needs to be given to the skydiving business, with a view they are pulling in huge revenue from tourists for the city and Stuart Park area.

Gridlock has a massive impact on the skydive business, as they cannot transport their passengers in and out of the area.

Suggestions for improving the safety of pedestrians and bike riders included:

- A raised crossing that gives bikes and pedestrians right of way on Cliff Road at the beginning of the car park.
- New crossing from Virginia Street to Stuart Park - "It is very dangerous crossing Squires Way and George Hanley Drive".
- Install a stop sign on George Hanley Drive at the intersection with Cliff Road to give priority to pedestrians on the crossing - "Vehicles often do not fully stop before turning either right or left. This has been a dangerous intersection for a long time".

One respondent said "swamp pines are scary" and they don't want to walk through areas with these to get to Virginia Street or George Hanley Drive. They suggested ripping some out to create spaces for more parking islands.

**Pathways, connectivity, cycling facilities and accessibility**

Many respondents spoke about needing to improve, repair or widen existing pathways. There is a strong desire to have a continuous path around the park and to separate pedestrians from cyclists. Some want cyclists to use the pathways outside the park and keep the inner pathways just for pedestrians. There were requests for easy, safe access to the lagoon, restaurant area and beach for people with disability.

Suggested locations or ideas for new pathways and connections to other areas included:

- Continuous connection from the coastal path to the lagoon and playground.
- Connection to North Wollongong Station.
- A path to walk through the park - not just around it.
- A pathway on the northern side of the Lagoon Restaurant.
- Cinder, not concrete, walkway around eastern fence line.
- Connecting routes to other local riding/walking trails.
- Footpath from the playground to the toilet block - "grass uneven, stumbling block".
- Dedicated running track.
- Accessible links from the park to Puckeys Estate and the Innovation Campus.
- Footpaths on the opposite side to the beach, across the carpark.
- A bridge across the lagoon closer to the beach or over the roots of the casuarina grove.
- A good dirt walkway at the north western end.

Stop using asphalt for walkways.. generates too much heat.. dirt walkway is sufficient.

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Suggestions relating to bike paths and cycling included:

- An inner, circular bike loop for young children.
- Build a cycle track from near the lagoon to Squires Way.
- Realign the bike track away from the T-intersection.
- Replace the bitumen bike track that is becoming dangerous with longitudinal cracking.
- Connect the current bike track between North Gong Beach and Puckeys Estate, possibly in front of the Lagoon Restaurant – “Need to make the bike track not go directly through the playground. It is very dangerous to try navigate through the carpark with kids around”.
- Provide illustrated maps and directions via apps etc.
- More cycling facilities and secure bike racks.
- Onsite e-bicycle hire.

The intersection of the bike track and pathway on Squires Way causes a lot of problems, especially with bikes going too fast.

### Greening and shade

More than a quarter of respondents spoke about having more shade, more local native plantings or keeping the park as green and natural as possible. Some said native vegetation is important to support native wildlife. Another said open green spaces were important to local residents living in apartments. One respondent said they love the flower boxes. Another said they'd like more shade, but to be mindful of the impact on large concerts. There is a view the green space should be left open to all. Some suggested locations where more trees could be planted, including:

- On the western side.
- Around the playground.
- Around the edge of the large green area.
- In the middle of the park.
- Along pathways.

Other suggestions included:

- Extend what is growing in Puckeys Reserve into Stuart Park.
- Turn the grassed areas into gardens.
- Keep the grassy beachfront natural.
- High-quality landscaping and native gardens with things of interest for people to look at, use and impress visitors – “An extension and expansion of the Wollongong Botanic Gardens”.
- Urban agriculture.
- Put tree guards around new trees.
- Demolish the Lagoon Restaurant and car park and return it to parkland with picnic shelters.

Suggestions for vegetation maintenance included:

- Clear the undergrowth on the south and west sides of park to beautify it.
- Weed and get rid of non-native plants and trees in the green area on the western side of the car park and along George Hanley Drive.
- Weed Puckeys.
- Replace non-native weeds growing along the banks of the lagoon area with native vegetation.

### Toilets / showers

Some respondents would like additional toilets or showers, or upgrades to the existing toilets. Some think the toilet block in the middle of the park should be demolished or replaced. There were requests for showers near the lagoon end of the beach, including water-saving showers. There was a request for additional shower facilities at the northern end of beach on “peak use days”.

Locations where additional toilets are desired include:

- Near the playground.



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- Nearer to the main road.
- South-west near the duck pond.

Requested features for toilet amenities included:

- Sloped floors so water drains away properly.
- Sanitary bins for transgender men.
- Toddler-sized toilets in the family amenities, like some of the shopping centres.
- Toilets with lids.
- "Sinks you can actually wash your hands in".
- Clean changing facilities.
- Having to run a toilet training 2-3 year old all the way from the playground to the toilets is not easy, especially if you have other kids that you can't leave unattended.
- Install dispenser soap as "current hand soaps are unhygienic".

### Picnic facilities, seating and water

Nearly a quarter of respondents said there is a need for additional picnic facilities, seating or access to water. This includes more huts/shelters, barbeques and shaded picnic areas. An idea was shared to have some weatherproof picnic shelters that could be booked for use via the Council website. There was a suggestion to add some benches and raised observation platforms overlooking the beach along the eastern side of the park. There were requests for seating up near the main road, more sheltered seating at the playground and picnic shelters in the north western area. Some think the oval should be turned into a picnic area, with shade and/or shelters. There were requests for the provision of water; taps, bubblers and water bottle refill stations. Some would like seating not just for picnickers, e.g. grouped bench seating within a garden.

I like the area to the south of the large playground around the pond for more intimate/quieter picnics.

### Events

Respondents most commonly said the type of event they would like to see is markets, including night markets. There was discussion about when these could be held, with suggestions including on the last Friday each month, weekly, in summer during daylight savings or on weekends.

Some would like to see more running and cycling events or a seasonal program of sport/fitness events the community can take part in, e.g:

- Communal soccer.
- Cricket.
- Free outdoor exercise classes.
- Parkrun type activities.

A Parkrunner would like to see signs promoting when the event happens (weekly) and kilometre markers along the track.

While several respondents would like to see more large music and concert events happen, others did not support this idea.

Relocation of music concerts to JJ Kelly Park? Impact of noise and antisocial behaviour on nearby residents is huge and constant - often on public holidays stopping us from doing any entertaining ourselves. Parking is also ridiculous at these times, resulting in strangers parking in our driveways.

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Other events-related ideas included:

- Community or special events, such as on New Year's Eve or other occasions.
- Food festivals.
- Once a year kart race.
- Regular activation events.

No circuses

One commented "The park should not be monetised in a 'user pays' concept but be freely amenable, and its availability for informal gatherings maintained".

### Food / cafes / restaurants

There is a desire for more food and drink options, including casual dining or takeaway/kiosk. Some suggested a mobile food van area with some permanent outdoor seating and tables, e.g. near North Beach Pavilion on the southern side. Suggestions for food and drink options included:

- Casual, healthy food/drink option/s, including food vans.
- An ice cream cart.
- Another café.

The Lagoon Restaurant is too formal and the distance from the main playground to any alternate food outlets is too far.

Locations where people would like to see these include:

- Closer to the main playground and picnic areas.
- Near the Skydive office.
- At the lagoon end of the park.

I wouldn't mind a kiosk, but I don't want to see significantly more buildings on the site than there are now.

### Business and development

Some respondents want the park to remain as is. They don't want to see any development occur and want the natural characteristic retained. Some feel private/commercial businesses should not be allowed to operate in the park. Others made suggestions for developments they'd like to see, including:

- A deck over the lagoon to fish or feed ducks.
- A variety of shops, similar to Burleigh Heads with the beach and shopping close by.
- Improved facilities for SkyDive the Beach – "We believe this could be done sensitively with minimal impact on the green space".
- A cable car station that takes people to the top of the escarpment and back – "This would REALLY put Wollongong on the world map. Tourists could park at the top off the F6, land in Stuart Park, day trip around all the key locations in Wollongong (getting around by e-bike or free shuttle) before heading home or staying overnight – an amazing tourist experience and a winner for Wollongong businesses!"
- A supermarket – "North Wollongong needs a Metro Woolies, Coles Express or IGA. There are currently no supermarkets within walking distance to cater to all the apartments in the area. A supermarket would also be an awesome convenience for people wanting to picnic, picking up fresh food etc".

If you start developing it you risk spoiling its atmosphere. Also you don't want too many people there of that will create more parking/toilet/facility problems.

It was meant to be a park for the people, not for business.

Need to create other areas in the Illawarra where residents and visitors can enjoy similar facilities and recreation as Stuart Park.

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It should be modelled on Centennial Park in Sydney - large, open space to relax with low-impact recreational amenities. The park should maintain the relaxed atmosphere of the holiday camping ground it once was.

### Lighting

Several people called for improved or more lighting, especially along pathways. There was a request not to have major floodlighting and another to turn lights down at night to allow a more natural environment.

I really enjoy training there with my fitness group but in winter, it gets very dark and you can't see where you are running.

### Waste management / maintenance

There were requests for more bins, including recycling bins. Several complained about the rubbish area at the Lagoon Restaurant, saying it is a "smelly eyesore" that needs to be cleaned up. It was said the garbage bins in the Skydive car park are a dumping ground. Some respondents spoke about needing to fix pollution and water quality issues at the pond and lagoon. Some called to continue or improve the level of cleanliness and maintenance of the toilets and facilities, including the playground tables.

The duck pond has had a tractor tyre in it for some time. Not pretty.

The Lagoon restaurant rubbish compound is a disgrace. The encroachment on the road is untidy and at times dangerous - kegs, broken furniture and bins that stink.

### Skydiving

While there was not much commentary on skydiving activities, most of those who did mention it said they think it should be relocated to another area, e.g. North Dalton Park or Fairy Meadow Beach. This is to free up more space for picnickers and allow the area to be used by the general public for other activities. Others called to maintain the parachuting facilities, saying it is iconic to Wollongong.

Its presence does little for Wollongong from an economic point of view. As soon as they land they are taken away in a bus with no time to go to the local cafes. The money they pay Council is not commensurate with monies paid for the privilege of using Council-owned properties elsewhere in Australia.

### Exercise facilities

Some said they would like gym equipment stations or ninja warrior course, to encourage a healthy lifestyle and participation by people of all ages, e.g. elderly people who don't like indoor gyms. Others said they want recreation space retained for sport and fitness activities. Some asked that outdoor fitness groups be allowed to continue using the area. Another suggested having yoga on the beach on Sunday mornings.

### Spaces to play

Some people would like a skate park for mid/older children. Others would like a water park/play area, near the children's' playground. Reasons given for this are that the beach is unpatrolled at that end, lagoon and beach are unsafe for swimming, and the lagoon is sometimes stagnant or polluted. Examples of water play areas people like are Darling Quarter/Darling Harbour, Pyrmont and Brisbane Southbank. A request was made for a children's ninja warrior park or play area like one in Oatley (Sydney). There were requests for a basketball court or multi-sport courts and proper Bocce court. Some

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would like more play equipment and a jump track for children. There was a suggestion to remove the children's' bike paths, with a view they are not used much, and to have more shade sails in the children's' play area.

### Stormwater/drainage/flooding

Several respondents called for the drainage to be improved. Some areas have been observed to be waterlogged for weeks.

### Dogs

A few respondents would like the park to be a dog-friendly area, while others do not want dogs in this space because they don't want it "spoilt with dog poo". There were requests for an enclosed off-leash area, or parks similar to Reed Park in Dapto or Brisbane waterfront. More bins and waste bags were requested.

The area over near the duck pond would be good [for a dog park]. The ducks would not be affected and other activities such as Skydive the Beach, concerts or cross-country races would be unaffected.

### Safety

A few respondents gave suggestions for improving safety at the park. These included:

- Pedestrian crossings:
  - Where the bike path crosses the road, north of the surf club.
  - Just east of the Kembla Street roundabout, to cross George Hanley Drive.
  - Between Virginia Street and Fairy Creek, to cross Squires Way.
- Banning bikes in the park or having speed limits for motorised skateboards, bicycles and similar – "they speed and are a danger to walkers, children ,dogs, water rats, ducks etc."
- Measures to prevent to prevent loitering, vandalism, hooning and antisocial behaviours:
  - Clear signage and surveillance.
  - More ranger presence.
- First aid station - defibrillator.
- Having a perimeter fence or fencing the playground to keep children safe.

### Aboriginal culture

There were requests to have places to learn about and explore Aboriginal culture. These included:

- An Indigenous garden.
- Aboriginal cultural space.
- Yarn circle.
- Signs and information with names of Aboriginal places and things, and history of the area, e.g. the battle on the banks of the creek in the 1830s.
- Artworks.

In New Zealand they have English + Maori on signs everywhere. Why not here?

I am not Aboriginal, but love learning about the Aboriginal history and culture of sites in Wollongong. My family and I actively plan to visit spaces with these features, e.g. signs along the Blue Mile and Aboriginal artworks at Port Kembla.

### Cultural facility and art

Suggestions for a cultural facility or art included:

- Relocate the Bert Flugelman winged figure sculpture to a location in Stuart Park looking towards Stanwell Tops. Permanent sculpture pieces on display.

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- Exhibit artworks in a well-designed building that is inviting and easily accessible to passing foot traffic.
- An amphitheatre to enjoy concerts, plays, etc. by the sea – “Would look awesome and connect so many people”.

**Other ideas and comments**

- Open the lagoon to the ocean for fresh water.
- Install gates at the entrance to control excess visitors.
- Be mindful of and consult with residents living along George Hanley Drive and other directly neighbouring streets of any changes.
- Alternative use – “Could part of it be set aside for burials? I do not wish to be cremated and turned into a toxic greenhouse emission”.
- “It is beyond recovery. There are too few alternative spaces for local and Western Sydney users”.

The final survey question asked people if they had any additional comments. Of those who responded, most took it as an opportunity to reinforce the ideas and feedback in their other responses. New ideas and feedback that were shared included:

**Parking, transport and connectivity**

- “We need to flip the transport paradigm to make it easier and more convenient and well connected to ride, walk or get public transport to Stuart Park than it is to park a car”:
  - Have crossing points on the natural-lowest point e.g to Virginia St, to connect to North Gong train station.
  - Improve east-west connectivity: build a shared path and bridge from Montague St, in the utility easement on the northern side of the PYCY, over Fairy Creek and through the Little Steamers car park to connect to Virginia St – aligns with the Wollongong Cycling Strategy action 2.3 to “Develop and deliver high impact cycling routes that link dense residential areas to nearby employment, education, public transport and activity centres” and action 2.4 to “Develop and deliver east-west cycling routes across Wollongong” and potentially 3.1 to “3.1 Develop ready-to-construct, high-value cycling projects.”
  - Fairy Creek bridge and shared path would be a great facility to improve connectivity to Stuart Park, and from the coastal path to the main uni campus, TAFE campus and Gwynneville.
- Request for designated “restaurant only” parking spots.
- Car park near the playground is perceived to be dangerous – “the timber bollards don’t stop kids running out into the car park.”

**Criticisms of the survey**

- Not community friendly as you had to provide your own stamp to post it. “A friend could do it online - but could not find the right term. Not everyone is computer literate anyway”.
- Doesn’t allow for being neutral on a topic.

**Facilities, amenities, new additions and aesthetic**

- Current barbeques are slow with long cooking times – “It would be great to have more efficient/faster barbeques so cooking is quicker, allowing more people to use them”.
- Keep the public toilets open after sunset for people using it in the evening, e.g. for exercise/recreation.
- Put a bike café in, a meeting spot for bike riders – “We can’t all fit in Diggies now!”
- Have a floating pontoon walkway at Puckeys, like Brisbane, to link Puckeys.
- Maintain the contrast between the built area and the more natural area of Puckeys Estate separated by the lagoon.



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**Play features**

- Mollymook Beach park and playground a great example - fully fenced and suitable for all ages and abilities.
- Request to assess whether the wheelchair swing in the playground is used, as respondent had not seen it used.
- "The current playground has great equipment but is too close together - little ones running around can quite easily be struck by a swing".

**Thanks and appreciation for...**

- Being able to call a beautiful place like Wollongong home.
- Clean up after weekend activities and around the lagoon after a storm.
- Putting in additional bins and skips when there are major events or public holidays.
- Those who have made Stuart Park "so wonderful to date" – "I hope your new plan preserves what is good and enhances the parts that have not received a lot of attention over the past 40 years".

**Complaints**

- Report that people ignore the off-leash dog restrictions – "One day a child could be bitten".
- Perception that the pop-up cycleways in the City Centre have been a waste of money and nobody uses them.

**Other areas**


It was suggested to use the money to develop other places like north of Fairy Meadow Surf Club, Towradgi (needs more seating and trees), Bulli or around the Lake. This is to encourage people to visit other areas.

**Photos**


Possible location of water playground, site of tree removal (with request to plant Norfolk Pines), waste and maintenance issues:

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**Possible Water Playground Location**




This area of Stuart Park currently under-utilised as it is not close to lagoon or beaches but does have good access to parking area and toilet facilities



Possible alternative location for water experience playground – south of the Amenities Block – should the first suggestion not be suitable – still close to parking and amenities but also not a well utilised area.



This area of Stuart Park is in close proximity to the existing much-loved playground – a new experiential water playground would add to its attractiveness for families, providing safe access to water recreation – current lagoon water quality can be poor, beach can be unsafe.



A number of trees have been removed (presumably dead) and should be replaced with Norfolk Pines or an alternative species with wide shady crown to cool parking area.

General Maintenance and Visual Aesthetic Issues



Garbage area behind the Lagoon is an eyesore and needs better screening and management.



Interface between the Lagoon and the driveway to the parking area behind the Lagoon is an eyesore that needs better urban design treatment.

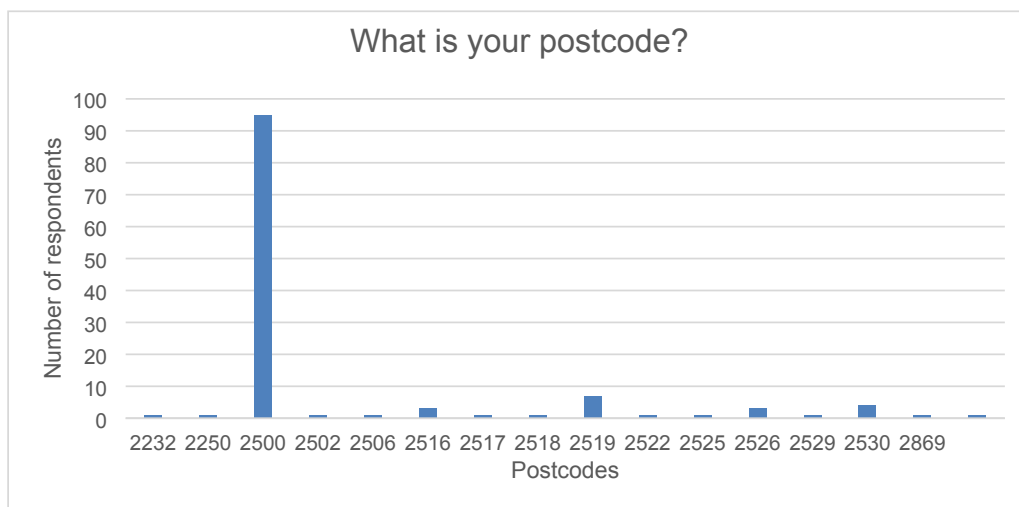
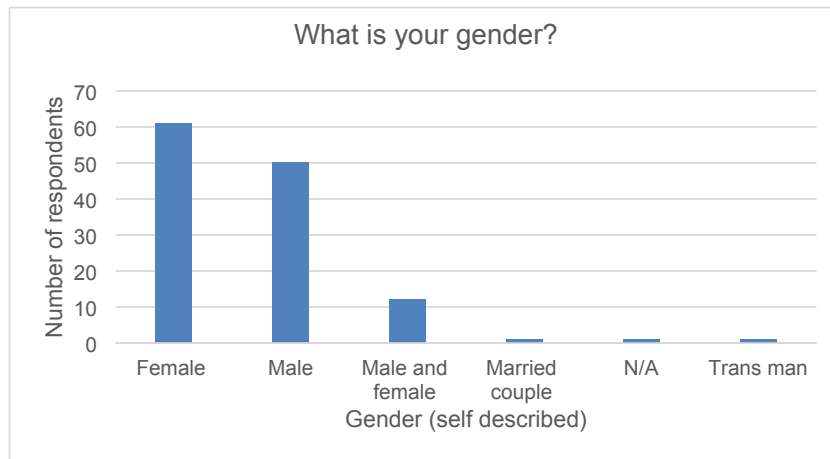
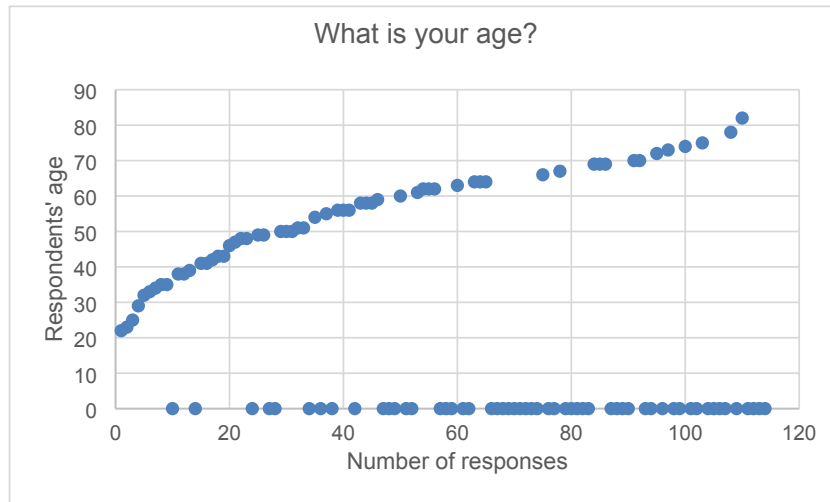


Storage approaches behind Skydive cottage needs tidy up and better urban design approach.

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**Demographic data for survey respondents**

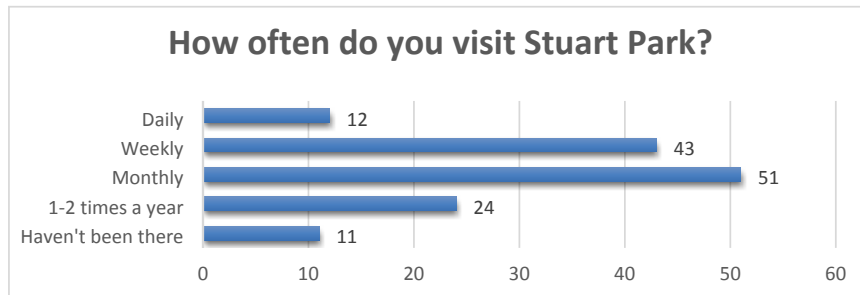
Responses to the demographic questions were optional, so not all respondents provided this information.



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### Schools' workshops

We facilitated online workshops with students from Wollongong Public School, Towradgi Public School and Coniston Public School. A total of 144 students from years 3-6 participated across three workshops. Some of the feedback received has been graphed, with the rest presented under themed headings.



People who don't visit Stuart Park said their reasons for this are:

- Not been there in a long time.
- Not much to do there.
- Because of the parking – it's hard to get a park.
- There are other playgrounds for this age group closer to where they live and other beaches they can walk to.

Students were invited to break up into small groups and were provided a map of the area and large sheets of butchers paper where they could write and draw. We asked the students to tell us about what they like to do at Stuart Park. The feedback received has been themed under the following headings:

#### Play

The majority of participants told us that they like to play when they go to Stuart Park. Many like to visit the playground, making mention of the flying fox/zipline, slide, net swing and chair swing. We also heard that several of the students like the artwork at the playground. Other ways children like to play include:

- Playing tip, chasing birds or running or dancing on the grass.
- Playing sports, like soccer, football or volleyball.
- Climbing trees, exploring amongst the trees or making forts out of sticks.
- Playing walkie talkies or hide-and-seek.
- Making obstacle courses and then completing them.

Do the spaghetti dance all around the grass lawn.

Explore every inch of the trees.

#### Beach and lagoon

Visiting the beach and lagoon was another popular activity for participants, with many telling us they like to go there to swim or play in the sand. Other activities the students like to do at the beach and/or lagoon include:

- Having lunch or a picnic with friends.
- Collecting rocks.
- Skipping rocks across the water.
- Going fishing.
- Making sandcastles.

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- Sprint or walk along the beach.
- Creating structures by the lagoon.
- Surfing.
- Beach volleyball.
- Making sandcastles.

### Walking and cycling

Many people told us that they like to go walking in the park and some mentioned they go there for a run or to jog. Participants shared that they go for walks with their parents or take their dog/s for a walk. Some people told us that they like to walk along the footpaths in the park and others told us they like to walk along the beach or at Puckeys. Others said they like to go on bike rides or ride their scooter along the bike track.

### Picnic / BBQ

Some students told us they like to have a picnic or a BBQ when they visit Stuart Park. A participant told us they go there for picnics with their church, while another said it's a great place for a birthday party. We also heard it's nice to have a picnic under the gazebo.

### Other things

Listed below are the other things students like to do when they visit Stuart Park:

- Stare at people.
- See the ducks.
- Watch the skydivers fall out of the sky or go skydiving.
- Learn about history and look around.
- Sightsee, look at the view or look at nature.
- Visit the park on school reward days.
- Go to events or music festivals.
- Attend the rock and mineral show.
- Spend time with family and friends.
- Exercise or practice sport.

We asked students to tell us what they think the good things are about Stuart Park. Following is a summary of what they told us:

### Play

Most participants said the many places to play is a good thing about Stuart Park. Most enjoy the playground, with respondents making special mention of the following equipment:

- Flying fox.
- Spider swing.
- Carousel ('spiny thing').
- Trampoline.
- Hammock.
- Lookout.
- Chain swing.
- Big slide.

The park that everyone  
can enjoy

We heard it's a great place to visit and play with friends. Others told us they like to play with the bell step at Puckeys and they like the bike track next to the playground.

### Beach, lagoon and pond



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Many participants said they like the beach, lagoon, duck pond and/or the creek. People like that they can get to the water to go swimming, fishing surfing, build sandcastles, or visit the ducks or seals. We heard people like that the water is clean.

### Nature and open space

Many students made comments about the natural park. We heard they like being surrounded by nature and wildlife, especially the ducks, and that it's a great place to look at the views of the mountains and the ocean.

Many people said they like the big, open, grassy space, saying it's a great place to play or run around on. Others made comments on the colour of the grass and that the space makes them feel 'free'. People told us they like the amount of trees, bushes, plants and the shade. Others said they really like how close it is to Puckeys Estate. It was commented that being surrounded by nature is calming, peaceful and relaxing. Some people told us they like the weather and the sunshine, while others like playing in the puddles when it rains.

That it's a nice, calm place.

environment of the  
All the adorable ducks.

The feeling of being free.

I love the colour of the grass.

### Food offerings

Many participants told us they think the food from the café/kiosk and restaurant is the best part of the park. We heard there are many yummy food choices, with participants making special mention of the hot chocolate and smoothies.

### Facilities and amenities

Students said the many places to have a picnic or barbeque is one of the good things about Stuart Park. Some people told us that they like the gazebos and covered areas because they have good seats and tables where people can eat their food. Students also told us they like the clean bathrooms, bins and large carpark.

### Walking, cycling and exercise

Many students told us the bike track is a good part of Stuart Park, with some telling us the park is a fun place to ride their bike. We also heard people like going for walks on the footpaths through the park, or along the nature trails in Puckeys Estate. Some participants told us they like to walk their dog through the park. Some people told us that they like the Park Run. We also heard that a participant likes to participate in Savvy Survivor with her mum.

The bike track is really fun to go on!

### Skydiving

Several participants told us they like to watch the skydivers and parachutes land in the park.

### Other comments

Other good things about Stuart Park include:

- Spending time with family and friends.
- It's accessible.
- Everyone is welcome and lots of people go there so it is very nice.
- Heritage significance.
- It's clean.
- It's appropriate entertainment for young kids.
- Lots of people having fun.
- Lots of things to do.
- Safety.
- The way it is connected to different areas and the location.
- Attracts different age groups and diversity.

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- Pet friendly.
- It's a good place to have a party or event e.g. wedding or birthday.
- Concerts and festivals.

Students were invited to share the things they would like to see and do at Stuart Park in the future. Their comments are summarised as follows:

### Play and recreation

Most students said they would like more opportunities for play and recreation. Many comments were made about the playground being expanded and including more play equipment for people of all ages – babies, toddlers, children, teenagers and adults. We heard people would like to see the following equipment/elements added to the playground:

- Flying fox / zipline
- Bouncy castle / in-ground trampoline.
- Twisting slide.
- Monkey bars.
- A maze / garden maze.
- Ball dunk.
- Climbing net.
- Musical equipment.
- Sandpit.
- Seesaw.
- Swings / chair swing.

Ninja warrior course  
with a warped wall.

Flying fox that shoots you into  
the water.

A suggestion was made that the equipment could be changed often to keep kids curious about what will be at the park. A call was made for more equipment for people with disability, such as swings. We also heard it would be important to have a toilet for people with disability close to the park.

Adventure play was a popular request with some people saying they would like to see a castle, mini caves, a treehouse or a drawbridge over the lagoon. A ninja warrior or parkour playground was another very popular idea. Other suggestions included a trampoline park, a human-sized chess board, an obstacle course or a rollercoaster that goes over the lagoon.

Water play was another popular theme. Suggestions included:

- Outdoor or indoor pool.
- Wave pool.
- Hot tub.
- Water fountain / water maze.
- Splash park with a tipping bucket or waterfalls.
- Water slide / slip'n'slide.
- Water park like at Jamberoo.

I'd love to see a  
water park

Many students would like to see sporting facilities included in the park in the future. They told us they would like to see:

- Soccer field or goals.
- Basketball court.

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- Tennis court.
- Cricket pitch.
- Football fields.
- Handball courts.
- Rockclimbing area.
- Gokart track.
- Stadium for ball sports.

I would really want a mountain bike track like Harry Graham park

Several students told us they'd like to see more bike facilities, like a bike track, mountain bike trails or a pump track. Others said they would like a skate park or some skating ramps.

Other ideas relating to play and recreation included:

- Laser tag.
- Paintball.
- Bat cave.
- An arcade.
- Jet rush.
- Nerf battles.
- Platform for scuba diving and snorkelling.
- Rollerskating.
- "A really cool machine that shoots out surfboards".
- A theme park.

The swamp can have a sitting area and more happy areas for sad people.

### Greening, shade and nature

Many students said they think the park should have more trees and shady areas. Some people suggested we should plant native trees, oak trees, lemon tree or a passionfruit vine. Other children told us they would like a big tree they can climb or a treehouse. Suggestions were made for more gardens, lots of flowers and a community garden. Ideas were shared for a native garden with information about all the different plants, a pumpkin patch and a corn maze. Several people told us it's important to have more gardens and plants, as they will attract and provide a home for wildlife such as, bees, insects, birds and other animals. A request was also made for another pond for ducks, fish and turtles. Other ideas about nature included:

- A greenhouse.
- To clean up the lagoon.
- A glass wall with fish in it.
- Spaces to sit and be in nature.

An Australian native garden that the community can access and learn about different species and important insects.

More plants that attract local birdlife and other animals.

### Amenities and facilities

Many people said they would like more toilets in the park, with some saying they should be located close to the playground. Students also said there should be more changing facilities and hot showers and that the toilets should be cleaned more regularly. Others told us they would like to see more water taps or bubblers throughout the park.

Some more picnic places or grass areas and more bins and more toilets.

Suggestions were made for more areas where people could sit and eat their food. They'd like to see more tables, chairs and picnic shelters and barbeques throughout the park. Students said it's important

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to have more bins, including recycling bins. A suggestion was made for a campfire area with log seating and another suggestion was made for a library to be built in the park.

A comment was made about needles and syringes being found in the park and that they needed to be cleaned up.

### Food offerings

Many participants said they would like to see more cafes or restaurants in the park. Suggestions were made for the following:

- KFC.
- McDonalds.
- Fish and chips.
- Exotic food.
- Doughnuts, candy and ice cream / gelato.
- Places for people with eating requirements like coeliac disease.

### Parking, traffic and connections

Many students told us they would like more parking at Stuart Park. A call was made for the free bus to stop at the park. Several ideas were shared about footpaths and connections. Participants told us they would like to have separate paths for cyclists and people walking or running. We also heard that the paths should be smoother and wider. We received a few ideas about improving connections through the park. These include:

- A bridge connecting Stuart Park to Puckeys.
- A path from the playground to the toilets.
- A bike track around the whole park.

A GIGANTIC  
carpark.

It was suggested there could be more walking tracks through the bush.

### Events and activities

Ideas were shared about the types of events and activities people would like to see in Stuart Park. Students said they would like to see a carnival with rides, a ferris wheel and face painting; or different types of markets, including fresh food markets. Other ideas were shared about the different types of facilities that could be built for events such as a stage, theatre or entertainment centre. Participants also shared their ideas for different activities to bring people together, like, free yoga in the park or community games of capture the flag.

Large, organised  
games, like  
community games of  
'capture the flag' and  
things so kids can get  
to know other people.

### Pets and animals

A few students said they would like to see more spaces for pets and animals in the park. We received requests for a dog park, a pet walking area, a bird house, a petting zoo, an aquarium and a farm.

### Other ideas

Other ideas included:

- An outdoor study area or classroom.
- Reading area that blocks out sound.
- Art including Aboriginal artwork or statues.
- Stargazing area.
- Bird baths.
- A dock for boats or canoes.
- Camping area or caravan park.

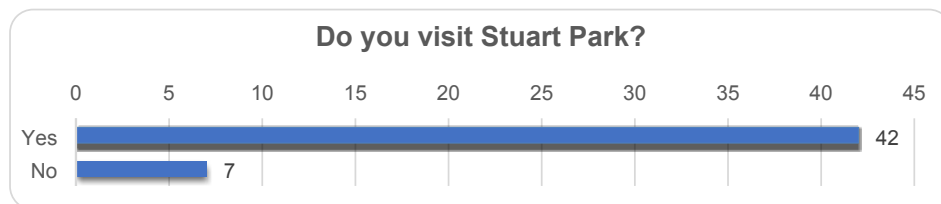
I would like to see a dog park.

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- Casino.
- Disneyland.
- Free wifi.
- A place to make art.
- Gym or exercise area.
- Library.
- Historical remembrance sites.
- More lifesavers at the beach.
- Things for people with disability – a playground or exercise equipment.
- Outdoor area to acknowledge our Aboriginal elders.
- Scuba diving and snorkelling, tourism.
- Information about the park and maps.
- Videogame centre.
- Wishing well.

### Online – Survey for schools and young people

A short survey was created for schools and young people. This version of the survey was adapted from the community survey. It was shared with all schools in the Wollongong Local Government area and promoted via the Wollongong Youth Services Facebook page. Forty-nine surveys were completed. Some responses to the survey questions are graphed and others are presented under themed headings.

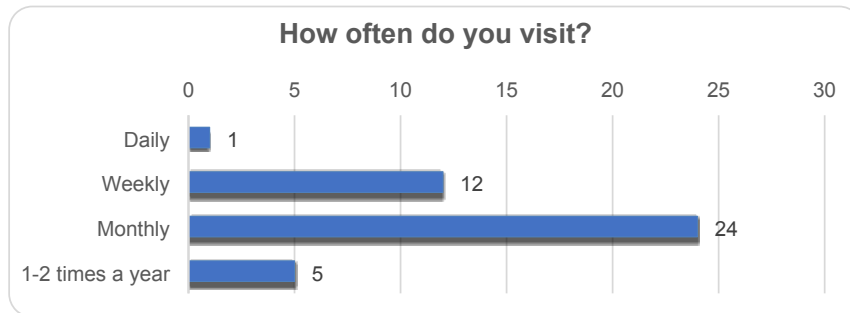


Other things respondents do at Stuart Park include:

- Run.
- Drive.
- Skate.
- Stand-up paddleboard.



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People who don't currently visit Stuart Park said their reasons for this are:

- Isn't really close to my house.
- Parents haven't taken me yet.
- I don't know / not sure.

We asked students and young people to tell us what the good things are about Stuart Park. Their responses are summarised as follows:

**Open space and natural areas**

We heard that people love that the park has lots of open, flat, grassy space. People told us that this a great place to run around, have a picnic and play. Other people told us they like the natural surrounds of the park and how close it is to the lagoon and the beach.

**Playground**

Many people told us they like the playground. We heard it's:

- Fun for people of all ages.
- Well put together with lots of places for people to sit and play
- Well maintained.

They told us the playground has nice equipment, with many people making mention of the flying fox, big slide, swings, tower, "spinney things you stand on" and bike/scooter track. Another respondent told us they thought the playground is starting to get outdated.

**Facilities and amenities**

Respondents told us they like that the park has a variety of facilities and amenities. We heard the parking and shaded picnic and BBQ areas are good.

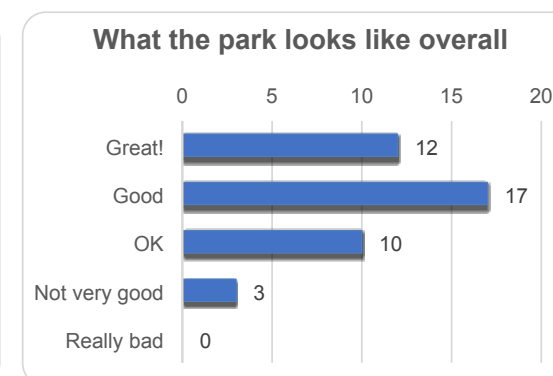
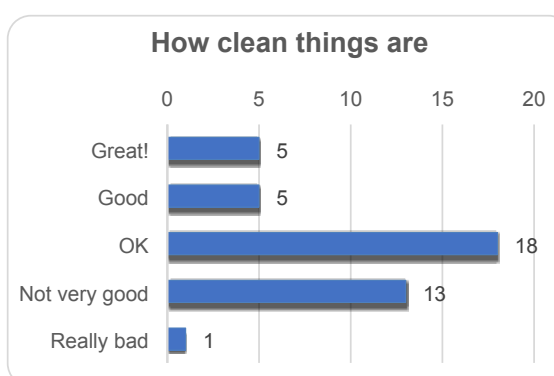
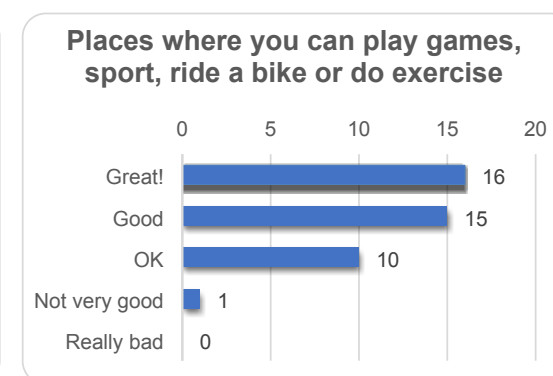
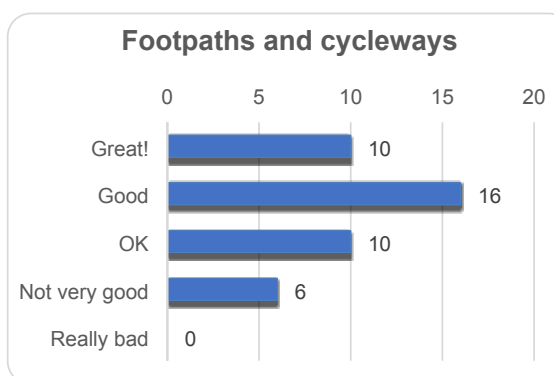
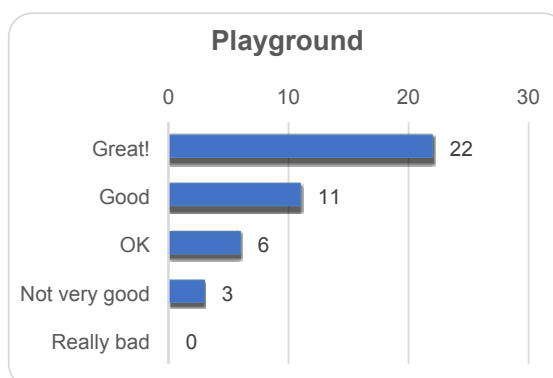
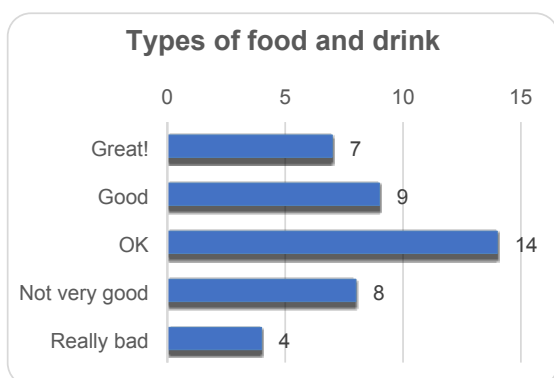
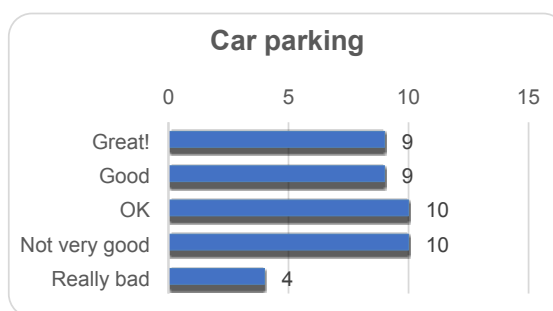
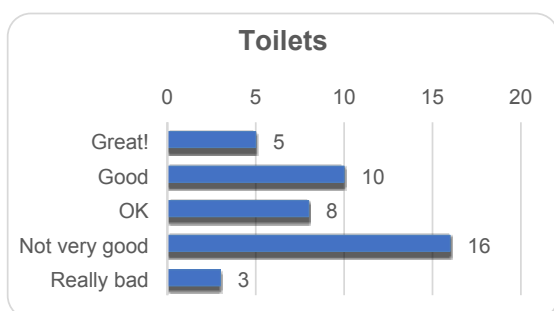
**Other comments**

Other good things about the park include:

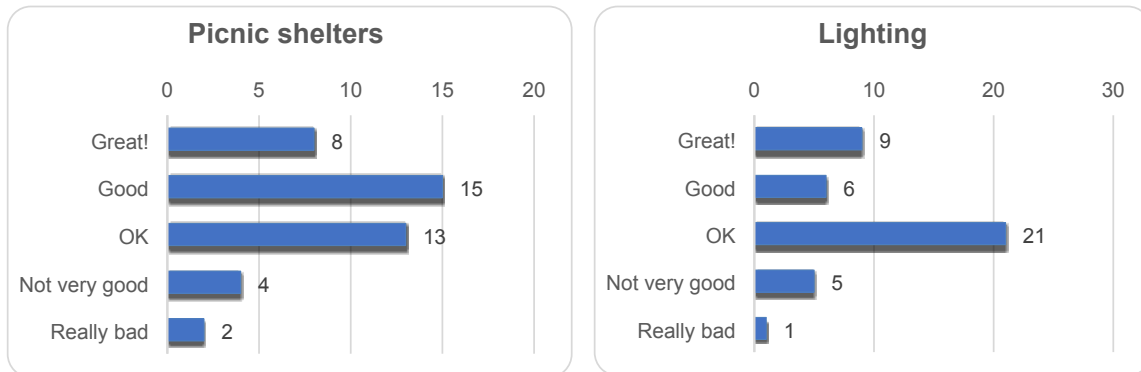
- Café and restaurant.
- Bike and walking tracks.
- Park is well maintained.
- Feels safe.
- Music festivals.

We asked people to tell us what they thought of the facilities and services at the park. These are their responses:

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We asked people to tell us what they would like to see or do at Stuart Park. Responses are presented under the following themes, with the number of submissions referencing that theme in brackets:

### Play and recreation

We received many ideas about places to play. Some people told us they think this would be a great place for a skate park/ plaza. A suggestion was made for a big bowl, similar to the one at Bar Beach Newcastle. Another respondent told us they would like one designed for skaters, as well as bike and scooter riders. We also heard this could be a good place for a bitumen pump track or bike jumps. A suggestion was made for a bike track with working traffic lights and signals.

Water play was another popular idea. People told us they would like to see a large-scale water park, similar to Jamberoo Action Park, while others said they would like to see elements of water play, similar to Darling Harbour, other areas of Sydney and Picton New Zealand. Other people told us they would like to see a pool in the park.

A water play area for summer.

Safe ninja course.

A proper skate park in for the skaters, bikers and scooterers.

Some people told us they would like to see another playground, a nature playground, a ninja warrior course, archery, skirmish or a maze with different difficulties. Other people told us they would like to see other elements included in the existing playground. These ideas included:

- Ground trampolines/trampoline pillow.
- Sandpit.
- Telescopes in the tower.
- Longer slides.
- More wheelchair-friendly activities.
- Monkey bars.
- A rocket powered round-a-bout.
- Another flying fox.
- More swings.
- Taller tower.

Have a clear tube that leads from that and connects to another tower that you can only access this way, then there's a slide that wraps around the second tower.

We also heard ideas for a basketball court, soccer field/goals or netball court at the park.

Add a soccer field at the park.

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### Infrastructure and amenities

Suggestions were made to build more toilets closer to the playground – we heard it's a fair walk to the toilet block with little ones and there's no path to get there. Others said they would like for the existing toilets to be cleaner or have better lighting. Comments were also received about increasing the number of water bubblers / bottle refill stations. We also received an idea for having stations that provide food and water for pets. There was a call for more seating areas and more picnic shelters. A request was made for more lighting at night. It was suggested the lights could be solar powered. We heard the park can get muddy after it rains – it was suggested that something could be done to help the grassy areas drain better.

Toilets closer to the playground

### Access, connections and traffic

Some respondents told us they would like to see a footpath linking the existing playground to the toilets so they don't have to walk on the road. It was suggested the existing cycleways and footpaths could be extended and/or widened, as this would make it easier for riders to steer clear of people walking.

A footpath from the playground to the bathrooms that doesn't require kids to walk on the road on the sharp bend corner past the restaurant. Cars don't look on that corner and it's really dangerous. The path that stops at the lagoon needs to be extended around to the playground.

Another comment was made about people feeling unsafe leaving the park from Virginia Street. We also heard people would like more parking spaces.

### Natural areas, greening and shade

We heard people would like to see more care given to the inlet. Some also said they would like more shady spots, trees and pergolas throughout the park.

### Events

We heard it would be good to have more events in Stuart Park specifically for children and young people. Suggestions were made for all-age music festivals with local and international acts. Others would like to see events centred around culture and food. A comment was made about the need to find another event area and having better crowd management at future events. We received several ideas about having markets in the park, including:

- Permanent market stalls set up in shipping containers.
- Weekend farmers markets.
- Markets with stalls run by kids.
- Night markets with food.

More events such as food stalls/night markets, music festivals.

### Food offerings

There were suggestions for a variety of small food shop selling ice cream, corn, chestnuts or popcorn. An idea was shared for a beachside boardwalk with bars and cafes. Another idea was for a hawker-esque food hall with permanent stalls for small businesses to make a wide range of foods and drinks, from snacks to full meals

Maybe ice cream shop, corn shop, small shops will be soooo good.

### Public art

It was suggested there could be more public art in the park, an idea included a local Aboriginal artwork/water fountain.

### Online – Ideas tool

On the Our Wollongong website, we asked people for ideas on how we could improve Stuart Park for the whole community over the next ten years. People could also submit their ideas via SMS. 436 people participated using this tool. There were:

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152 ideas



1,483 'up votes' for ideas people liked



99 comments

The ideas and comments are summarised under the following themes:

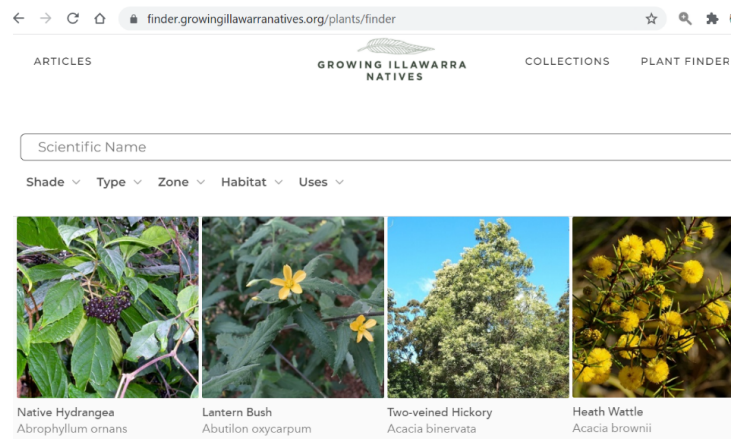
### Greening and shade

The majority of ideas, up votes and comments were from participants saying to increase shade and plant more local native trees and shrubs. There was a strong desire to retain green spaces, in consideration of increasing development in the area, climate change and population growth. Some supported ideas for "lush, wild gardens" and planting thousands of natives to help absorb carbon monoxide emissions from vehicles on Cliff Road.



With higher heat levels set to become a larger problem in the next few decades, more cooling and shade opportunities should be considered paramount. i.e. water fountains, tree-planting, shade shelters, and other public outdoor cooling infrastructure like water/mist cooling systems. They are already a feature in some places like the Pilbara (extreme example), but come with potential health risks. Might be a good feature near tree lines/pathways.

Green spaces are really precious. Slowly, decision by decision they are lost. They are so important to ocean health, mental health, biodiversity, climate. I look at Stuart Park and think how lucky we are to have that space. It would be a great loss to see the addition of more concreted/asphalted areas.



Some suggested or supported the idea of having an environmentally-friendly hedge maze. People liked the idea of using native bush/hedging. Some thought it would be a great attraction for the community, with the addition of having social and health benefits, although there was a concern about the level of maintenance it would require. A few did not support the idea of a hedge maze, with a concern drunk people from nearby bars may get lost in it. A picture showing an example of a hedge maze was submitted:

Great idea, but would need too much maintenance.



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It's amazing!



People suggested planting edible fruit trees, swamp lilies (*Crinum pedunculatum*), Illawarra flame trees and jacarandas. There was a suggestion to have community permaculture gardens and less play equipment. It was explained that the excess food could potentially be distributed to those in need and the gardens could host a range of community programs on permaculture, urban agriculture and sustainable communities.

### Exercise facilities

Many people either suggested or expressed support for the idea of having outdoor gym equipment. Respondents said the equipment could be fully inclusive, accessible for people of all skill levels and abilities and cater to a range of strength levels. Some proposed or supported the idea of a ninja warrior course or park, calisthenics equipment or seniors' exercise park.

Some submitted examples to help explain their ideas:



Comments on outdoor gym equipment related to:

- Having security cameras and emergency points.
- Encouraging a variety of health, social and economic outcomes.
- Ensuring it suits a range of ages, abilities, fitness levels, heights.
- Complementing exercise activities already taking place in Stuart Park.
- Being an attraction for Wollongong – “Muscle Beach” of the South Coast.
- Needing more outdoor exercise spaces during and post COVID-lockdown, for mental and physical health benefits.
- Providing examples: Corrimal SLSC, Canberra CBD - Henry Rolland Park, East Point Street Workout in Darwin NT (built to international standards), Observatory Hill in Sydney.



A great idea! For all ages, abilities and genders (current outdoor gyms do not fit women's heights need very well). Look at Henry Rolland Park outdoor gym in Canberra or the Observatory Hill one in Sydney: lots of different heights and equipment, little nooks to help climb up for people who are not the height of the average man, sitting AND bike racks.

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There was a call to retain the spaces where people set up slacklines and ensure commercial fitness activities can continue. Other suggestions included having a running track around Puckeys and a cricket oval.

### Parking, traffic and public transport

Most who commented about parking did not want to see it increased, as "it is the park's natural beauty that makes it attractive". People said active transport should be encouraged and the space should be retained for people, not cars. Some thought better public transport options and improved infrastructure would help ease parking issues. Suggestions were made to include this area on the free shuttle bus route, have light rail from Wollongong Station and a bus stop closer to the playground. A comment was made that having public transport to get skydivers and tourists into the CBD would be great. While some suggested having paid or timed parking to increase turnover, others want free parking retained. It was suggested that revenue from paid parking could fund park or beach upgrades and longer lifeguard hours in the summer. One commenter said free parking would be important for schools using the park for fun runs and those hosting charity events. In response to the idea of having less parking and more park, it was suggested to:

Anyone catching the bus to Stuart Park has quite a long walk to the playground, the kiosk and the popular picnic areas at Stuart Park, making it harder for older people and those with little kids to access these facilities by bus. We don't want to waste this beautiful site by putting in more parking, so let's have a bus stop close to the playground.

- Use current parking spaces at night for markets or events that require asphalt surfacing.
- Provide good, secure bike storage so people can ride to the beach instead of driving.

Others thought the amount of parking needs to be increased. Some suggested improving or increasing parking in the surrounding areas, e.g. on George Hanley Drive with overflow parking bays on weekends. Some thought building a multistorey car park is needed. Ideas relating to this included:

- Having it in the old 'Splashes' carpark.
- Building a multilevel underground car park, similar to the underground Botanic Gardens car park in Sydney.

To address traffic issues, people suggested:

- Changing to one-way along the beach or through Stuart Park, exiting onto Squires Way or with an exit and roundabout onto Pioneer Drive.
- Installing a roundabout at Virginia Street with a new parking entrance opposite.
- Installing speed bumps at the Skydive car park to prevent racing, noise and people doing donuts.
- Installing smart parking, so drivers know to park along George Hanley Drive if the park is already full.



Smart parking example (participant submission)

One person said the space needs to be accessible to everyone and that parking is vital for people with disabilities and mothers and babies. They said families arriving with small children, chairs, food, blankets etc. will appreciate good access.

A suggestion was made to permit rear-to-kerb parking, as:

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- It is safer to exit forwards than in reverse.
- Existing front-to-kerb damages vehicles with low bodywork.

### Picnic facilities

Some participants requested or supported the idea of having more:

- Picnic shelters.
- Barbeque areas.
- Covered areas.
- Tables and seats or benches, including in the West and South sections of the park and near the lagoon.
- Bubblers.
- Facilities for disposing of barbeque coals.

In response to a suggestion for electronic barbeques, it was asked if they could be powered by solar panels on the roof of the barbeque hut.

### Events

Many respondents suggested or supported the idea of having seaside markets, food trucks, local bands/buskers and breweries/BYO. The idea of sunset/night markets was popular, with others suggesting they could run on weekends or on the last of Friday of each month. It was thought this would be a good use of underused space at night, "create a Santa Monica Pier vibe" and be good for families, visitors and locals. Some liked the idea of having food carts along the cycleway a few nights a week to enliven the public space and bring people out to enjoy it more. People said more lighting would be needed for night events. There was a concern markets could add congestion to the busy walkway, with a suggestion to use other areas of the park instead, e.g:

- Skydive car park.
- South of the Surf Club.
- In the park near the Skydive office and amenities.
- Close to George Hanley Drive.

Close the road off during the markets and extend the road to Squires Way one way so the restaurant can still have road access while the markets are on.



Some people like the idea of a summer cinema, where films from around the world or cultural festivals are screened.

Some suggested or supported the idea of having a permanent stage for bands/concerts or an amphitheatre. One said the western side of the oval would be a good location. Another commented it could be used as an open air cinema too, great for sound and "no mozzies by the ocean". One participant said there could be future opportunities for surf, skate and music festivals to combine if there was a skatepark. An enclosed beach entertainment area, similar to the one in Brisbane was also suggested.

Have free movie screenings of local and foreign art films, and engage different communities to present their cultures through food, art, market, films - (Greek, Sudanese, Filipino, Thai, Macedonian, Latin American, etc) - Wollongong has a rich plethora of cultures - surface this for better understanding.





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Several people expressed support for Parkrun and asked that it continues in the future. A suggestion was made to improve the event with signage/bollards. One participant said their wife had been hit by runners in a fun run while crossing the bridge over the lagoon. They feel the Puckeys Estate area should be limited to passive recreation, saying "it is a nature reserve, not a running track".

Enclosed beach entertainment area in Brisbane  
(participant submission)

**Spaces to play / parks e.g. skate, amusement, water, pump track**

The idea of having a wild water play garden or splash play area was popular. People gave examples such as the Ian Potter Children's Wild Play Garden in Centennial Park, and water play areas at Darling Harbour and Calderwood. One said they loved this idea because they have a disabled child whose access to the current playground is limited. An accessible splash park would be ideal for them. Another thought it would be good for toddlers/infants, saying "80% of the playground is more suited to older kids from 3 years old". One said they currently do water play in the lagoon, as it their toddler's favourite spot and another was concerned it could be dangerous.



They are a great idea and when landscaped around them, they look really lovely.

The idea of having a pump track and skatepark was also popular. Some liked the idea of having it surrounded by permaculture systems, with shade from fruit trees and a community skill share area. People gave examples of facilities they like, including:

- Bondi bowl.
- Cairns foreshore.
- Dubbo.
- Riverside Skate Park in Melbourne.
- Camden area.

Capitalise on Olympics for skaters and scooters and older (over 5 years) bike riders. Provide something for teens.



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In my teens, the skatepark was a home. I can imagine with the surfy skater nature of many of the youth in the Illawarra, it would create a hub for them to share and create memories.



Riverside is council run, has a café and offers skate lessons on the weekend. It will create jobs, allow kids to get some training and keep it controlled, unlike Fairy Meadow Skate Park.

Some thought a skate park would benefit nearby businesses as well as young people.

Some also liked the idea of having a pump track similar to Shoalhaven Heads but larger, or Cringila. It was suggested to locate it through the casuarina grove on the George Hanley Drive side of the park and that it should be sealed/asphalt.

Several people suggested having an area that could be used for a number of different activities, e.g:

- A basketball court that can be used for netball/other sports.
- Water play park, hard courts, parkour and skate park.
- Volleyball.
- Children's cycle track.
- Outdoor games area - boules, volleyball, badminton, minigolf, skittles, Aboriginal games, designated soccer and cricket areas, equipment hire.



Several suggested or liked the idea of an amusement park, as a destination point. Ideas for this included:

- Environment friendly.
- Mini golf.
- Rides, e.g. rollercoaster and ferris wheel.
- Heritage family theme park, with ferry harbour activities, a new jetty, new fun boardwalks and visitors arriving from the harbour by miniature train.



Others were less keen on the amusement park idea.

I think this is the wrong site for an amusement park. The area is enjoyed by all age groups and is a free space. The attraction is the beach and parklands. An amusement park requires its own space away from a naturally beautiful environment. The area wouldn't handle the extra traffic either.

No motor scooters or mini golf or rollercoaster please.

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While some would like more playgrounds, play equipment for children or a sensory playground, another thought there should be more gardens and less play equipment.

Some would like to see an official disc golf course of 18 holes in the park. Examples included Lake Jindabyne and [one in Brisbane](#). A respondent suggested the proceeds could go to a charity and companies could sponsor individual holes.

### Recognition of Aboriginal culture and connection to country

Many liked the idea of having a bush tucker walk, local species planting and recognition/information shown about how Aboriginal people care for country. A suggestion was made to design and construct the bush tucker walk in collaboration with local Aboriginal people. It was thought it could work well along the current perimeter of bushland running from the lagoon, around the playground area and joining the walkway at the bridge, then again along the walkway on the southern side of the park amongst the existing bushland.

I think we are all really eager to learn as much as we can about our local Indigenous cultures and how they lived on the land so harmoniously. We have a lot to learn from them at a time when we are desperate for ideas to save our planet.

### Waste management

Many suggested or supported the idea of having recycling and FOGO bins. Some said rubbish bins are overflowing and rubbish ends up in the lagoon and ocean after weekends and public holidays. There was a suggestion to increase fines and patrols to stop people leaving rubbish behind. Others spoke of needing more bins to dispose of hot coals, as they are often dumped behind trees, next to bins or taps etc.

We've often seen hot coals dumped at the base of trees, often the pines and this has on some cases caused fires or killed vegetation. We need to have a policy and infrastructure to cope with this problem.

### Dogs

While many people liked the idea of having an enclosed off-leash area for dogs, others were less supportive. One of the ideas that received some support gave Sydney Park as an example, as it has walking tracks, proper landscaping and drainage, and space for people and dogs to walk and socialise.

Others suggested:

Not every dog is good with being unrestrained on the beach, so giving them an option for a fenced area is great.

- Having taps and chairs around the perimeter.
- Locating it between the duck pond and Skydive car park, as this area is not used much.
- Including seating and locating it near trees to provide shade.

People who are unsupportive of this idea were largely concerned about dogs disrupting or causing stress to picnickers and families, and people who don't collect their dog's waste. There is a view Stuart Park is for people, not their pets, and that we have enough off-leash areas.

Please no dogs. Stepping in dog poo is something that really takes away from your experience.

### Pathways and connectivity

Several people suggested or supported ideas for new pathways, including:

- Another footpath on the beach side in front of the car spaces to make it easier to walk from the Blue Mile to the playground at the lagoon and toilets.



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- New path linking the park to North Wollongong station.



Path linking to North Wollongong Station  
(participant submission)

I think a path is already there, just need to build a footbridge over the creek and a couple of street signs.

- New paved path linking the playground to the cycle track. The footpath on the ocean side of the car park is viewed as “too narrow for bike riders and pedestrians to mix comfortably at busy times, but then the road through the car park is also too dangerous for young kids on bikes”.

The pedestrian desire line (worn dirt track) that links the children's playground to the shared pathway / cycle track should be hard paved. Many people walk around the perimeter of the park. This section of park gets very boggy after rain.



Waikiki Park example  
(participant submission)

- Footpath along Fairy Meadow Beach that connects to the Blue Mile – extend the boardwalk to Fairy Meadow Beach. “See photo of Waikiki Park, that's what we need more of”.

Several people gave ideas relating to pathways for bike riders. Supported ideas included:

- Glow-in-the-dark bike lanes.
- Redoing the bike track.
- Widening the bridge over Fairy Creek on Squires Way for pedestrians and bike riders.
- Perimeter walking/riding track.
- Improving the bike paths in surrounding suburbs so it's more feasible to ride to the park.
- Safer cycleway/"shared path".

Poland's solar-powered glow-in-the-dark bike lanes have caused their cities to become even safer for cyclists at night. These cycling strips are made from blue luminophores, a material that emits light for 10 hours after being charged by the sun.

There was a call to separate bike paths from walking paths for safety reasons. Some spoke of almost being hit by bikes while walking, and cyclists speeding along the edge of Stuart Park and not ringing their bell on approach from behind.

Several people liked the suggestion to pave the walkway in front of the restaurant for wheelchair access and to stop grass wear and tear.

Suggestions were made to pedestrianise Cliff Road between the Novotel and George's Place and provide more pathways in the area for people with disabilities.

### Cycling facilities

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Several people liked the idea of having good, secure bike storage and lockers to encourage more people to ride to the beach. A request was made to improve end-of-trip facilities for cyclists and provide electric scooter hire.

### Water activities

Some liked the idea of an inflatable water park that floats on top of the water and a kayak entry point.

### Lighting improvements

Some respondents said there should be more/better lighting in the park so it can be used after dark, particularly on the northern perimeter and along the inner path. There was a suggestion to have solar-powered lighting.

### Development

Ideas relating to development in the park were met with mixed responses. Some people are against any kind of development in the area. People said they prefer to keep the natural areas, as that's what makes it attractive. Respondents suggested developing other parks around Wollongong to make them more attractive and spread people out. Some thought skate parks, basketball courts and outdoor gyms should be built in other areas. Some are concerned the park is already too congested or that development would impact the site's history.



Inflatable water park idea  
(participant submission)

Others suggested upgrading the building leased by Skydive the Beach and building different types of facilities/structures, including those that could provide Council with an income or make it a tourist destination.

Those suggestions included:

- A multistorey car park with gym and restaurant.
- An indoor saltwater swimming pool.
- A boardwalk down to the lagoon from the surf club, with 4 to 5 small restaurants along it.
- High-rise residential and entertainment restaurant strip / theme park / recreational areas in Puckeyes.
- Indoor skydiving and a sporting complex on the unused parkland / current skydive building.
- An airport for international flights.
- A scenic skyway.

Copy Cairns Boardwalk - they have everything from skate bowls, climbing walls, basketball courts, all linked through cafes and playgrounds.

It has been a successful active recreation area for at least 60 years.

Some expressed concern at the suggestion to develop Puckeyes, saying wetland, bushland and recreational areas should not be destroyed. Others said any development should be limited to passive recreation and add to the natural appeal of the park.

There were suggestions to:

- Improve Stuart Park as a destination by developing Wollongong Harbour and commercial shop activities.
- Have more public-owned assets to make money and provide community-used assets.

### Art and culture

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Some suggested building cultural facilities, such as an amphitheatre for the public to enjoy plays, choirs and concerts in the open air by the sea. There is a desire to encourage connection, culture and the arts.

Another suggested having a water sculpture such as at Redfern Park, Redfern, that celebrates the natural and cultural history of the area. There was a request for more public art and a performance space for local productions. One respondent wants a surfing monument to be built next to the surf club.



Amphitheatre idea (participant submission)

### Stormwater/drainage

Several participants said improvements to drainage are needed, as the old cricket pitch area where skydivers land floods with heavy rain, gets waterlogged and it can take a long time to subside. The flooding also makes it difficult to access the facilities.

### Public access

Some said the park's public use by all members of the community should be retained and they would like more public access to the park. Some don't like it when cars sit idly in one spot, taking up space, and feel the area should be kept for people. A few were critical of commercial business operators using public space.

### Food and drink offerings

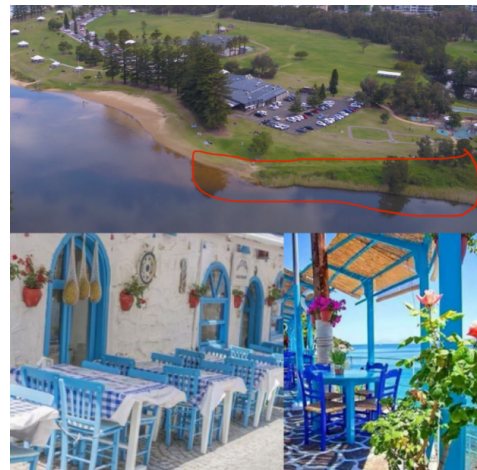
A few people liked the idea of having a takeaway shop and a beach canteen was suggested.

### Toilets

A few participants thought existing amenities need an upgrade or suggested areas for more toilets, including:

- Near Savvy on the corner/George Hanley Drive side.
- At the playground, as it's too far for children who are toilet training and solo adults who have to find and take all children every time one needs the toilet.

There was a request for toilets to be open 24/7 with light.



Beach canteen idea (participant submission)

### Accessibility

A few people suggested improving the accessibility of facilities, particularly for wheelchair users.

### Other ideas and comments

Some criticised spending any money on Stuart Park, with a view the priority should be neglected creeks, beaches and headlands in the east and providing more facilities in the west. Some said they love seeing the skydivers land and like that it brings tourists from Sydney to spend more money in Wollongong.

There were requests to:

- Heritage list the site.
- Improve the grounds, grandstands and amenities at Thomas Dalton Park facilities.
- Publish all previous Master Plans so people can see what has been previously proposed, adopted and implemented. "Learnings from the past".
- Diversify areas of engagement in Stuart Park.
- Have Council visit Waverley Park at the top of Bondi Rd in Bondi to get ideas.

We asked what facilities or activities people would NOT like to see in Stuart Park in the future. The responses are summarised under the following themes:

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### Development

Most commonly, people said they do not want to see any type of development occur in the park. This includes:

- Commercial or residential development.
- Multistorey development, including a car park or high rise.
- Parks, e.g. fun park, skate park, amusement park, water park/slides or basketball courts. There is a view these activities should be located in other parks, e.g. MacCabe Park.
- Buildings.
- Development that will attract more visitors to the area.
- Concert arena.
- More picnic shelters, huts or barbeque areas – “there are plenty already!”
- Permanent, artificial shade sails.
- Extension of the playground.
- Pathways and bike tracks.
- Swimming pools.

A blank space holds a lot more potential than one that is already built upon.

The park can't accommodate more facilities and activities that attract more visitors. It is already overburdened and spoiled by too many visitors on weekends and public holidays.

### Parking

Many respondents said they did not want to see additional parking, especially if it encroaches onto green space or is a multistorey car park. There are concerns additional parking will lead to more overcrowding, congestion and traffic. Some said they do not want to see paid parking or parking meters. Others said they do not want to see a reduction in parking.

### Environmental and sustainability concerns

Many respondents said they did not want to see further loss of green space or anything that will detract from the park's natural beauty. Some said they do not want any trees removed or natural habitat destroyed. For park vegetation, some said they do not want more swamp pines, non-native plants, bindies or palm trees growing through rocks. Other comments about what people don't want to see included:

- Active powering of infrastructure (only solar or wind).
- Charcoal barbeques burning the grass.
- Lack of increase in trees.
- Park users not respecting the open green space.
- Too much of the open space taken up – “Stuart Park's free and open space makes it very appealing”.

We need all those trees to help cool our city, soak up carbon and restore our spirit.

### Commercial activities

Many respondents said they do not want to see commercial use of park, or expansion of this type of activity. There are concerns it is an “invasion of public space”, with a view the park is for residents and visitors. Examples of activities people are concerned about seeing in the park included sporting fields, fitness/bootcamp operators and Skydive the Beach.

I don't want to see one company (e.g. Skydive the Beach or an event organiser) become a monopoly or controlling.

### Events

Some people are against holding music or Yours and Owls events in the park. Reasons for this include the following impacts, particularly on nearby residents:



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- Noise.
- Waste/pollution/litter.
- Traffic.
- Stress to wildlife.
- Having a large part of the park unavailable for several days either side of the event for set-up and clean-up.

I don't mind occasional special events, e.g. markets and music festivals, but I wouldn't want to see large sections of the park consumed by commercial or private activity.

There was a call to relocate these events, e.g. to WIN Stadium. Others do not want to see carnival-style activities, e.g. merry-go-rounds, circuses or rides. Others said they do not want to see markets, events that are not waste-free and those that do not acknowledge Dharawal people as traditional custodians of the land.

### Food / cafes / restaurants

Some respondents said they don't want fast food vans, more cafes or franchised restaurants and chains. Others do not want further the Lagoon Restaurant to use more of the public space.

### Skydiving

Opinion was mixed on whether skydiving should continue in the park. Some do not want to see the skydiving business being provided with additional space to run their business or an increase in skydiving. It was suggested to relocate it to Dalton Park. Others are happy with the current level of skydiving activity/operations or do not want to see a loss of skydiving.

No further expansion, building and land asset with promotional benefits - but large enough.

It should never have been here. t, parking, a great

### Camping

Some said they do not want to see camping in the park, including Christmas/New Year's illegal camping. There is a concern campers do not respect the facilities, leaving rubbish and mess, including in the Pavilion bathrooms.

### Numbers of people/activities

Some respondents do not want to see overcrowding or an "inundation of non-illawarra visitors". There is a view we don't need additional activities as it is busy enough. There is a dislike of "large groups around the Lagoon deck obscuring the view or picnicking from dawn to late evening around large grass areas, with smoky BBQs and pop-up tents". One said they would not like to see it left empty and not being put to good use.

Some beaches like Austinmer are overwhelmed by Sydneysiders on weekends. Let's try to avoid this.

### Waste management / maintenance

Respondents said they don't want to see littering, overflowing rubbish bins or a reduction in the standard of maintenance. One said they don't want to see the Lagoon Restaurant's level of upkeep. Another suggested excluding charcoal barbecues because people dump the hot coals on the grass.

### Restrictions

A few respondents do not want to see any restrictions on park use or to any areas.

### Other things people do not want to see

A small number of respondents said they do not want to see:

- Fitness classes.
- Formal sporting fields.
- No spaces for group exercise with Savvy.
- Loss of open ground, green space or "space to exercise and kick a ball around with the kids".

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- Bike riders, including on the Blue Mile – “send them north to Fairy Meadow”, “I was run into last week!”
- Lack of showers close to the beach.
- “Terrible toilet paper that is rough on the butt”.
- Lack of lighting.
- Flooding.
- Drone use.

### Online – Mapping tool

Respondents could provide feedback via the Our Wollongong website using the interactive mapping tool. Using this tool, people could select a pin, drop it at a specific place on the map and then write a comment or share an idea. Fifteen people used the interactive mapping tool and 58 pins were placed on the map. The ideas and comments are summarised under the following themes:

#### Access and connections

It was mentioned the intersection of Cliff Road and Bourke Street is a very popular yet dangerous crossing spot. It was suggested this area could be improved, slowing traffic and improving pedestrian mobility.

An idea was shared for moving the Gong Shuttle Bus stop to the corner of Blackett Street and Cliff Road. It was suggested this would make accessing Stuart Park easier and more convenient.



We received several comments about the need to improve the safety of this popular crossing point for pedestrians. Ideas shared include:

- Installation of a pedestrian crossing.
- Installation of traffic slowing devices and signage.
- Installation of a stop sign at the corner of George Hanley Drive and Cliff Road.
- Moving the crossing further along Cliff Road, away from George Hanley Drive.
- Making the entire area a shared zone.

An idea was shared to widen the footpath along eastern side of JP Galvin Park, in front of the car park. we heard this is an area people like to walk along and it can become easily congested.

We received comments about the existing bitumen path along the western side of the park. It was suggested this stretch of path could be widened. Another suggestion was made to separate bikes and pedestrians along this path. We also received an idea about installing lights along this footpath to improve safety in this area.

Several ideas were shared for improving access and connections around the northern end of the park. A suggestion was made that pathways could be built around the playground and Lagoon Restaurant. These pathways could connect to the existing pathway on the eastern and western side of the park. It was mentioned this circuit of pathways would be popular for walkers, runners and cyclists who want to exercise away from traffic.

We also heard that many people would like paths connecting the playground to the toilets and Lagoon Restaurant. People expressed the importance of having these connections, as at the moment they need to travel along the road or through the car park with prams and small children.

One responded requested we explore the opportunity to provide more parking along the western side of Squires Way and include a designated crossing area for pedestrians.



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It was requested we consider installing a small roundabout before the restaurant, as this would allow cars the opportunity to turn around before making it to the car park at the end of Cliff Road.

Several ideas were shared for improving access and connection to the park from Fairy Creek and Virginia Street. We heard that people leave the path and travel along the grassy area on the northern side of the PCYC, between Montague Street and Virginia Street. It was suggested a share path could be built here, making it easier for people to access North Wollongong Train Station.



### Improving safety

A suggestion was made to rezone Cliff Road as a 30 km shared zone during summer daylight hours to alert drivers of the pedestrians and cycles in Cliff Road. This would make the road safer for cyclists and help overcome overcrowding on the Blue Mile.

### Amenities

We heard there is a need for more bins along the grassy beachfront, with a respondent suggesting each picnic zone could have their own bin. There was a suggestion that recycling and FOGO bins could also be installed in the Park.

Several comments were made about the need for more or upgraded toilets in the Park. It was suggested the existing toilet block in the centre of the park, near the Village Green could be removed and replaced by a new toilet block towards the edge of the park. We also heard people would like to see another toilet block built closer to the playground.

### Greening and shade

Respondents told us they would like to see more trees in the centre of the park where there is currently no shade.

### Food and drink offerings

It was suggested there could be more food and drink facilities in the park, including places to get ice cream, drinks, burgers and chips.

### Local stories, culture and history

A suggestion was made to install story boards about the local Aboriginal history of the area. It was mentioned these could be located along the foreshore area, with sightlines to Mt Geera and the Five Islands. We also received an idea for an Aboriginal cultural space in the north-western area of Stuart park, close to the duck pond.

We heard about the importance of preserving the existing cottage and palms in the centre of the park. A respondent had an idea that this could be converted into a cultural centre containing displays, local history and art and craft. It could also be used as an information centre and indoor/outdoor café.

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### Sport and recreation

It was suggested exercise equipment could be installed along the grassy beachfront (near the Surf Club). This would include features like pull-up bars and a spongy ground area, similar to the features included in the image.

We received several ideas about how sport and recreation could be incorporated into the Park. Ideas for the south western side of the Park included:

- Bocce-style courts.
- Basketball court.
- Roller-skating rink/basketball court that incorporates public art.



Participant submission

Ideas for the north western side of the park included:

- Rockclimbing boulders.
- Skate park.
- Outdoor table tennis table.

Participant submission



Participant submission



the stories too have been summarised under the following themes:

### Amenity

We heard that parking is getting worse, and access to the area is a “logistical pain”. It was suggested that public transport to the park could greatly reduce the traffic. A comment was made about the state of the surf club and skydive building. It was suggested they could be refurbished. A call was made for “sustainable and modern solutions” to the currently dilapidated facilities, i.e. the toilets. It was also mentioned there could be more footpaths within the park.

The once retro/historical buildings from my childhood are viewed as shabby, and in woeful need of repair and refurbishment. I would love to see the Surf Club and Skydive building revived in the same way the pavilion was, keeping the heritage aspect but bringing some much-needed love and attention into the area.

### Natural areas

Stuart Park is viewed as a sanctuary of green grass next to a pristine beach. We heard the lagoon is a great space to play and picnic with family and friends. Images were shared of Fairy Creek after a pollution incident and a call was made to protect and improve the water quality for the animals that live there and people that play in the creek.

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Fairy Creek – water pollution  
(participant submission)



Fairy Creek – normally  
(participant submission)

### Meeting up with family and friends

Stuart Park was said to be a great place for making memories over the years. It's a central place to meet for a coffee, with the park being a prime picnic location.

My friend and I cycle from Coniston down to the lagoon via Swan St and the coastal path for an outing with our toddlers. The kids chase the seagulls, we have a picnic and visit the playground and then head home. It blows the baby blues away.



Playing in the park with friends/family  
(participant submission)

### Skydiving

We heard from a respondent about their experience of viewing Wollongong and Stuart Park while skydiving. We also heard the skydiving provides free entertainment for people having

The best way to see Stuart Park and the rest of beautiful Wollongong is definitely after jumping out of a plane from way up above...coming into land at Stuart Park after freefalling over the city of Wollongong and taking in all the amazing views was one of the best experiences of my life!

When I was younger my parents were lifeguards, and I spent many sunny days running around the surf club, exploring the rock pools and watching the skydivers zoom in from the blue skies.

a picnic.

### Exercise

We heard Stuart Park is a great place for outdoor exercise classes.

### Meetings with Aboriginal Stakeholders

Between February and August 2022, we undertook additional engagement with Aboriginal stakeholders. This engagement process was guided by the principles outlined in Council's [Aboriginal Engagement Framework](#). Stakeholders included Aboriginal Elders, community members, Registered Aboriginal Parties identified through a stakeholder analysis process and a local Aboriginal organisation. Through a



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series of meetings, the group discussed how the draft Master Plan can appropriately acknowledge and respond to the Aboriginal cultural values of Stuart Park. A summary of these meetings is provided below.

### February 2022

Aboriginal stakeholders and representatives from a local Aboriginal organisation, an environmental consultancy firm, a government heritage organisation, a landscape architecture firm, and Council met to discuss current projects relevant to Stuart Park. One of the projects discussed at this meeting was the development of a Master Plan for Stuart Park.

Participants expressed that it was very important for the master planning process to consider the cultural values and culturally significant places within Stuart Park. The group shared the importance of allowing an appropriate amount of time for further discussions to be had with Local Aboriginal Elders and Knowledge Holders throughout the master planning process.

Some participants shared their ideas about how local aboriginal culture could be represented in the master plan; these ideas included:

- Recognition of a local soldier - a plaque or statue.
- Integration of a dreaming story.
- Dual naming of Stuart Park.
- A yarning circle and bush tucker garden.

Participants shared that they would like for Council work with a local Aboriginal organisation to collate and present the following information in the form of a map:

- Known areas of significance within Stuart Park based on historical documentation.
- Findings of previous archaeological investigations.
- Location of known artefacts uncovered due to weather events etc.
- Relevant geotechnical information.

It was decided the map would be presented at the next meeting, where further discussions would take place around what Aboriginal stakeholders would see as 'opportunities' and 'constraints' for the master plan. One participant suggested Council investigate the possibility of further non-invasive investigation methods, such as ground-penetrating radar or aerial radar to identify some of the culturally sensitive areas within the park.

### March 2022

Council staff worked with a local Aboriginal organisation to collate and visually present the information requested at the February meeting. A map indicating the areas known and predicted to have high archaeological value was created.

### April 2022

Council met with Aboriginal stakeholders and a local Aboriginal organisation to walk on Country and present the map containing the findings of recent archaeological investigations, documented recounts of local history and other relevant information. This is a summary of the feedback provided by the meeting participants:

- There is a need for a footpath connecting the existing playground, the proposed AAAA playground and the existing toilet block. It was mentioned this connecting pathway should be constructed in an area likely to cause minimal ground disturbance and impact to any artefacts in the area.

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- It was acknowledged there is a need for additional toilets to service the playground, both existing and proposed. As the proposed location for the new toilet facilities is in an area that contains many artefacts, it was suggested the new toilet block could be built opposite the accessible parking spaces, close to the playground. The construction of the toilets could make use of a concrete slab that already exists in this area, reducing the amount of ground disturbance.
- Nothing should be planned for the area identified as endangered ecological communities (EECs).
- Comments were made about the importance of maintaining the sightlines to Mt Keira. This is something Council should be mindful of if there are additional tree plantings proposed for the northern end of the park.
- The carpark at the northern end of Stuart Park is in an area where many artefacts have been found. The participants would not like to see the car park extended beyond its existing footprint. The group agreed the existing carpark would need to be upgraded into the future.
- It was suggested a raised boardwalk could be constructed to the east of the Lagoon Restaurant – between the restaurant and the Norfolk pines. This location appears to contain various shell deposits, which are being damaged by the many people who walk in this area. It was suggested a raised boardwalk would provide a formal walking path for pedestrians, while protecting the area from further erosion and damage.
- The participants would not like to see much proposed for the dune area, JP Galvin Park, as this area is predicted to have high archaeological value.
- It was suggested Council should undertake non-invasive testing throughout the site, particularly in the dune area to better understand what artefacts may exist.
- Some concerns were shared about the impacts of climate change to the park, particularly to the dune area.

### May 2022

A meeting was held with some Aboriginal Elders who were unable to attend the Walk on Country in April. The Elders were in agreement with the ideas and feedback shared as part of the Walk on Country, including:

- Maintaining sightlines to Mt Keira.
- A raised boardwalk located between the Lagoon Restaurant and the Norfolk pines.
- The need for and suggested locations for additional footpaths and toilet facilities.
- Minimal works should be proposed for the dune area, JP Galvin Park.

They mentioned they would like to see a yarning circle included in the Master Plan, saying this would be a great location for community gatherings, important meetings and to teach and share local knowledge and stories. They said it would be important for the Yarning Circle to be connected to other areas of the park by footpaths and located close to the toilet and AAAA playground. They would not like to see the yarning circle be positioned in the far north-western end of the park.

### June 2022

A meeting was held with Aboriginal stakeholders and a local Aboriginal organisation to discuss ideas for how Aboriginal culture, values and history could be represented in the master plan. The following ideas were discussed:

- **Yarning circle:**  
The idea that Stuart Park could be a good location for a yarning circle was shared. The group discussed how this could provide an appropriate space for the sharing of knowledge and stories.

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We heard that the yarning circle should be a standalone feature of the park and not integrated with, or an extension of with other elements of the park, like the playground or potential event sites. The ideal location would be in a quieter area of the park that provides lots of shade and is a short distance from the toilets and parking. The design of the space would need to be accessible for Elders and small children, with pathways connecting the space to all other uses in the Park. It was suggested that a garden containing local natives and local Aboriginal medicinal plants could be created next to the yarning circle, as this would enable future opportunities for the sharing of knowledge. While many felt that Stuart Park was a good location for a yarning circle, a participant asked Council to consider if this was the most suitable location in the City. Participants shared that the detailed design of the space would need to happen in collaboration with members of the Aboriginal community.

- **Dual naming:**  
The group discussed the potential for the dual naming of Stuart Park to include a traditional Aboriginal name for the area. It was mentioned that exploring the possibility of dual naming the park would be a great demonstration of reconciliation and decolonisation. The participants agreed that this would require further discussion and research, however they would like to see Council make a commitment to exploring the possibility for dual naming of Stuart Park.
- **Interoperative signage:**  
The participants discussed the possibility of including interoperative signage in the park. While some were supportive of this idea, others thought there are other places where it would be more appropriate to include this type of signage. It was mentioned that the idea of interoperative signage would need to be discussed in further detail with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.

## August 2022

A walk on Country was arranged as an opportunity for Council to share a preliminary plan and seek feedback from the Aboriginal stakeholders. The feedback provided by the meeting participants is summarised as follows:

- The AAAA playground should have a toilet located close by. Other possible locations for the toilets could be investigated, however the final location should not impact on any areas where artefacts have been found.
- While there were artefacts found in the location of the proposed footpath connecting the toilet block to the accessible parking, the footpath could be built in this location if it is constructed in a way that does not disturb the archaeology.
- Council will need to consider that any work to the carpark could interfere with the archaeology near the playground, this is something that will need to be investigated further if any works are proposed.
- The participants were supportive of the idea of creating a space for a yarning circle in the park, saying it would be a great location for community gatherings, meetings and events. It was also mentioned it could become a great space for schools to bring their students.
- A community member would like for Council to work with community to tell the community and local schools about the space as a way of ensuring it will be adequately and appropriately used by the community into the future.
- The participants suggested the yarning circle could be located to the south-west of the pond as this is a quiet area of the park. They mentioned that space is ideal as it provides lots of natural shade and is somewhat removed from the other uses of the park, while being positioned near toilets and car parking. It is also located close to the bike path, which was a positive.
- Many liked that the possible location for the yarning circle was close to an endangered ecological community as this could provide an opportunity for Aboriginal Elders to teach children about different aspects of nature.



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- The participants would like a garden containing culturally significant plants to be created in an area close to the yarning circle.
- It was suggested the Gong Shuttle bus could have an additional stop located along George Hanley Drive that would service visitors to and from Stuart Park.
- A suggestion was made for additional seating to be included in the site around the pond as this could provide a quiet space for people to sit and watch the ducks.
- The participants were supportive of the idea of including additional passive recreation opportunities in the western side of the park. They liked the idea of including a multicourt for casual recreation. It was stated that this space should not be used by any formal sporting groups, with its primary purpose being to cater to informal recreation and play.
- It was mentioned that Council could investigate the possibility of building a toilet block on the western side of the park to service the proposed yarning circle and passive recreational space. They asked if Council could investigate the location of the existing sewer lines to see if this is a feasible option.
- Some of the participants shared their frustration over the sense that the park “shuts down” for major events and for any repair work to the ground after major events. They feel the space should remain clean, tidy and available for the community.
- The group were supportive of the idea of the continuation of the Blue Mile – from the North Wollongong Surf Club, along the dune area, to the north of the playground, connecting to George Hanley Drive. They agreed that the footpath should be constructed in a way that will result in minimal ground disturbance and digging. The group were supportive of the proposed location of the raised boardwalk between the Lagoon Restaurant and the Norfolk pines. It was mentioned that in some locations along the dune, the preference is for the pathway to sit on the western side of the trees as this would channel the pedestrian activity away from some of the sensitive sites in this area of the park.
- A participant would like for Council to include more signage along the proposed extension of the Blue Mile to remind people about the importance of bike and pedestrian safety.
- A request was made for Council to undertake more non-invasive archaeological investigations.

## Next Steps

The feedback received from this first phase of engagement will be used to help develop the draft Master Plan for Stuart Park.

We will share the draft Master Plan with the community in 2022. This will be an opportunity for people to let us know if they support the draft Plan. Feedback received during the second stage of engagement will be used to finalise the Master Plan, before it goes to Council seeking adoption in 2023.

