



LAURIES FIELD MASTER PLAN

Engagement Summary Report

**Phase 2 Community Consultation
24 July to 7 September 2025**

Introduction

The City of Whittlesea has developed a draft master plan for Lauries Field, one of Council's open spaces in Doreen, an established area of the municipality. The reserve has an area of approximately 4.90 hectares made up of an open grassed area, lake, and conservation area.

The master plan is a high-level document providing a broad vision for the reserve. The master plan endeavours to:

- **improve park infrastructure** to ensure the safety and accessibility of all users, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities
- **enhance environmental sustainability** by addressing the water quality of lake and restoring the natural habitat for aquatic life, as well as protecting and preserving natural features of the park by implementing measures to mitigate the damage to conservation area
- **foster community interaction and recreation** by creating opportunities such as walking paths and leisure areas to promote healthy lifestyle and community interaction
- **promote connectivity and accessibility** by improving pedestrian pathways and connectivity within the park to enhance accessibility for all users and to establish linkages with surrounding areas and transportation networks to facilitate easy access for residents and visitors
- **enhancement of play experience** by Improving the quality and variety of play experiences offered at the recreation reserve by introducing new and innovative play equipment, features, and layouts. Create a dynamic and engaging environment that caters to the diverse needs and preferences of children and families.

Feedback from the community and stakeholders informed the Lauries Field Master Plan. The community engagement comprised of three phases:

- phase one -information gathering - completed
- phase two-draft Lauries Field Master Plan shared with community for feedback – completed
- phase three-revised draft Lauries Field Master Plan shared for community feedback – yet to come

This report summarises the community engagement undertaken as part of phase two, sharing the draft with community for feedback which was open for community comment from Thursday 24 July to Monday 7 September 2025.

How we engaged you

Phase 1: Gathering ideas – Tuesday 18 June to Tuesday 16 July 2024 COMPLETED

We consulted with our community to inform the development of the draft Lauries Field Master Plan by identifying key issues, challenges and opportunities of the site and capturing the key ideas for improvement. To do this we asked the community how they felt about the park, what they valued and if they had any ideas to improve the area.

Community feedback was sought online through Council's *Engage Whittlesea* platform and through direct conversations and activities at two community-based pop-ups.

The *Engage Whittlesea* platform utilises an accessibility add-on ensuring that it is as accessible as possible for all users. The platform also has an in-built translation tool to mitigate any language barriers

to participation, allowing the page to be translated into the top fifteen languages spoken within the municipality.

Phase 2: Draft Master Plan shared with community for feedback: 24 July to 7 September COMPLETED

We shared the draft Lauries Field Master Plan with stakeholders previously consulted in phase one, as well as the wider community to understand if the draft plan met community expectations and the current and future needs of user groups.

The community was able to view the draft master plan and have their say online via the [Lauries Field Engage Whittlesea page](#) or at the two in-person community-based pop-ups.

Online Engagement

The project page on the *Engage Whittlesea* platform featured two engagement activities, a survey and an interactive view of the draft master plan. The project page presented a summary of opportunities captured from the community through the first phase of consultation and offered visitors a chance to learn more about the key recommendations of the plan. Visitors to the page were encouraged to complete a short survey to let us know if they support the draft plan or not and which three elements (out of a possible nine) of the proposed design are the most important to them. Participants had an opportunity at the end of the survey to provide any additional comments for suggestions regarding the proposed design for Lauries Field.



Figure 1: Interactive map showing Council's recommendations from draft Lauries Field Master Plan on the Engage Whittlesea page

In-person engagement

During phase two, Council held two community-based pop-ups as below:

- Thursday 24 July, 10am–12pm onsite at Lauries Field in Doreen
- Friday 1 August 2.30pm–4.30pm at Hazel Glen shops in Doreen.

In-person participants had an opportunity to view the draft master plan and complete a dot board activity where they were asked if they support the draft plan and were encouraged to share their top three priorities (out of nine recommendations) for the upgrade. There was also an opportunity to provide additional comments about the proposed draft master plan. The in-person engagement mirrored the online engagement activity.



Figure 2: Images from in-person engagement

Project promotion

The opportunity to participate in the community engagement was promoted through a range of channels to have a widespread reach across the local Doreen area including:

- Council's digital engagement platform [Engage Whittlesea](#)
- Social media – we shared two posts across Council's social media channels (Facebook and Instagram)
- Letterbox drop to residents within 500m of the site advising them of the project and inviting them to share their feedback through the project [Engage Whittlesea](#) page or by visiting one of the community-based pop-ups
- Posters displayed at nearby Council facilities and libraries as well as 650 flyers available to take at these locations
- PVFM – 24 July 2025
- Media Release – 29 July 2025
 - [Have your say on Lauries Field draft master plan | City of Whittlesea](#)
- Local newspaper/media coverage
 - 30 July - Star Weekly – online: [Views sought on master plan | Northern](#)
 - 5 August - Star Weekly – print:  [Views sought on master plan - SW.png](#)
 - 5 August - NCR/Whittlesea Review – online: [Lauries Field Draft Master Plan Confirmed - The North Central Review](#)
 - 5 August - NCR/Whittlesea Review – print:  [Lauries Field draft master plan confirmed - WR.png](#)

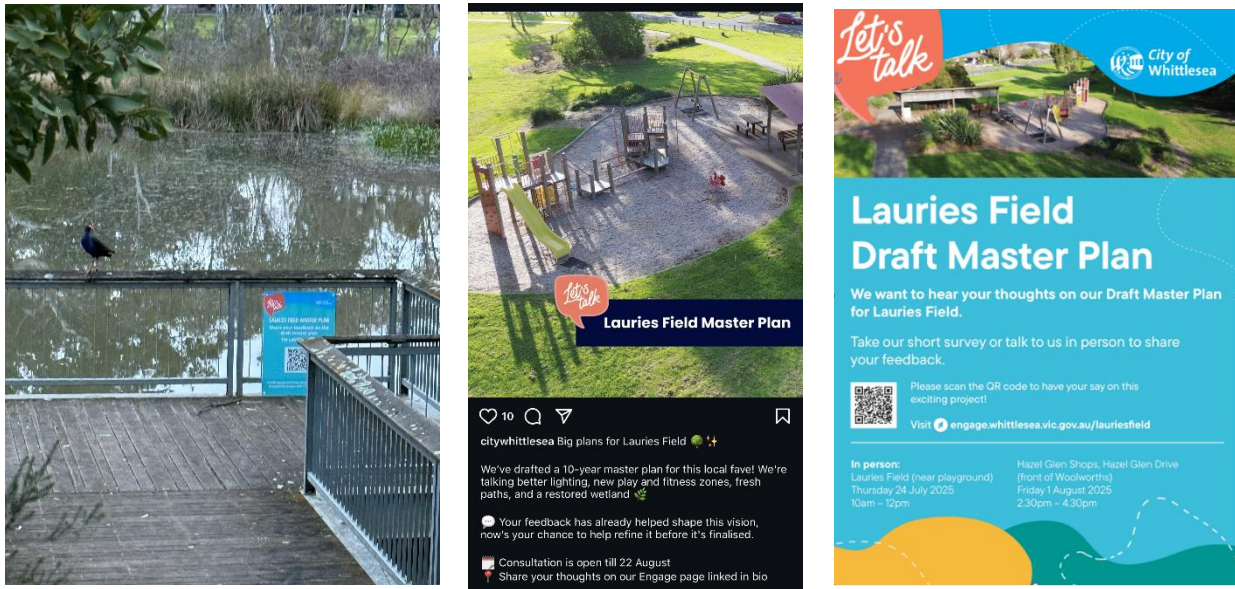


Figure 3: Large corflute signage onsite, social media post and flyer promoting the consultation

Participation

A total of 515 community members participated in phase 2 consultation, 47 in-person at community-based pop-ups and a further 449 online via the *Engage Whittlesea* platform. Council hosted an information session on 21 August at 7pm, which was attended by 55 local residents. Council also received a further 19 submissions from residents via emails to Councillors.

A snapshot of demographics of participants

Gender Identity



A total of 57% identified as female, 28% as male and 1% of participants identified as non-binary.

Age



All age brackets participated with the most represented being 35-44 years (25%), followed by 45-54 years of age (23%) and 55-64 years (17%).

Suburb



A total of 87% of participants reside in Doreen with a further 8% living in nearby Mernda.

LGBTQIA+ Community



2% of participants identified as a member of LGBTQIA+ community.

People with Disabilities



19% of participants identified as a person with a disability, unpaid carer of an older person or unpaid carer of a person with a disability.

Aboriginal /Torres Strait Islanders



A total of 6% identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

A snapshot of community participation and social interaction

Digital Engagement



The project *Engage Whittlesea* page was viewed 3,158 times during the consultation period, with 449 people participating in the online survey and 73 people opting to follow the page to receive project updates.

In-Person Engagement



47 people participated at one of two community-based pop-ups in Doreen. A further 55 local residents attended the Information Session.

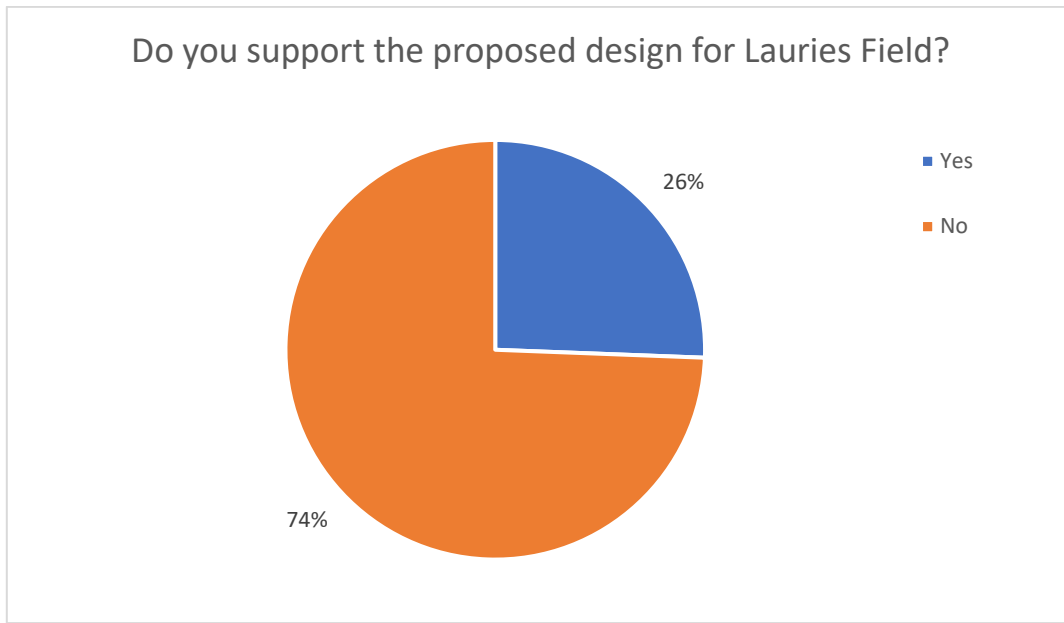
Socials



Two social media posts reached 12,562 people, with 34,989 views and were engaged with 565 times, generating 25% of traffic to the online Engage page. The campaign received 1,050 direct views from our community generating 43% of contributions.

What we heard

A total of 496 people responded to the question **“Do you support the proposed design for Lauries Field?”** Of these, 127 people (26%) said they supported the plan, while the remaining 369 (74%) indicated they did not support the draft plan.



Support the plan

Online participants had the opportunity to provide additional comments to explain why they supported or didn't support the draft master plan. Of the 83 online participants that supported the project, 45 chose to provide additional comments. The main theme of these comments were:

- support for the wetlands (9)
- don't support the wetlands (9)
- adding toilets (6)

“I LOVE the proposed Ephemeral Wetlands. Globally, more wetland is lost annually, than rainforest. I encourage Council to decide according to environmental best-practice, and not be dissuaded by nearby residents wishing to optimise personal interest, as understandable as this is.”

“There is a lot of misinformation being spread about this including concerns that wetlands will be smelly and promote mosquitos. Clear, easy to understand, information about this may help increase community support.”

“I really like all the proposed upgrades to the playground and amenities. I'm concerned about the proposed changes to the lake. It is currently a beautiful space with a lovely walk around it. I do not want that part to be changed.”

Do not support the plan

Of the 336 online participants that indicated they did not support the draft master plan, 262 took the opportunity to provide additional comments. The main themes of these were:

- desire for Council not to drain the lake (237)
- concerns around perceived loss of wildlife habitat (57)
- just want updated park amenities, including seats, lighting, and shelters (23)
- concern there will be increased mosquitos (22).

“This master plan is a risk to our wildlife losing their habitats, and I do not want to see the lake turn into a muddy smelly swamp while it depends on only rain fall.”

“The wetlands are perfect the way they are, with beautiful bird life such as swans, ducks, water hens etc, which children love, thus creating peaceful beautiful walks and picnics for all. It’s a beautiful outlook from the BBQ area to. Families moved to Doreen for the picturesque, wonderful lakes and lifestyle. Who wants a smelly, mosquito drought ridden bog? What will go next? However, the other plans are fantastic.”

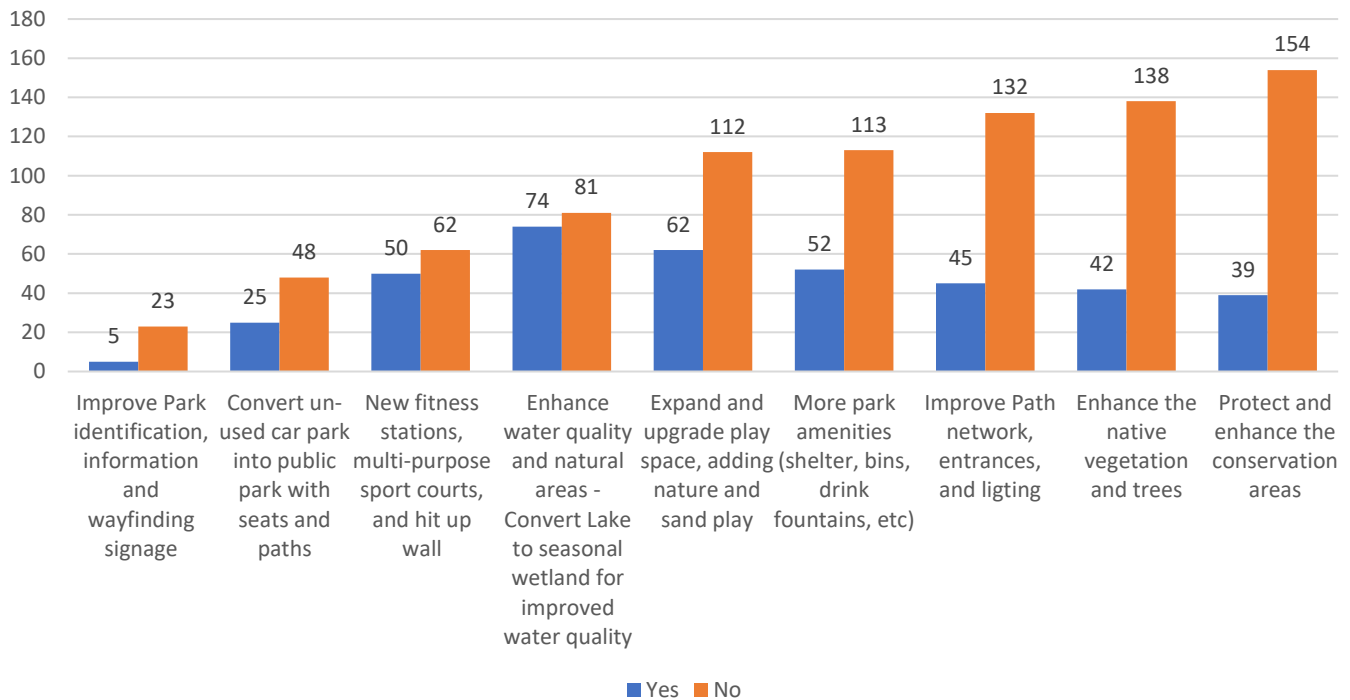
“Please leave the water in the lake. In my opinion this is very important to the environment and the happiness of residents in the area”

Participants were asked **“Which three elements of the proposed design are most important to you?”**. The top three elements identified by community were:

- protect and enhance the conservation areas
- enhance the native vegetation and trees
- improve path network, entrances and lighting.

The below graph shows all elements with a breakdown of those who supported (yes) the draft master plan and those who did not support (no).

Which three elements of the proposed design are most important to you?



Key messages from community feedback

Participants were invited to share what they like, any issues and any potential future opportunities for Lauries Field, some of which may be out of scope of this project. Below are the themed comments received through both online and in-person engagement activities



Play space - play space upgrades are supported, especially nature-based and toddler-friendly designs. Safety features like fencing are important to families.

"Upgrade the playground area. Put more lighting in. Hands off the rest."

"Make sure there is a little kids (1 to 4yr old) play space."

"Playground is near a road and waterway therefore for the safety of children it needs a fenced off area."

Council response: Council will provide a range of play experiences for different age groups as part of the proposed play space.

- The play space will be upgraded with nature play elements, sand areas, and toddler-friendly equipment.
- Full fencing may not be feasible across the entire playground due to open space design principles, but safety barriers will be considered where needed.



The lake – preservation and enhancement - the lake is the most valued feature of Lauries Field, with strong opposition to its conversion into a seasonal wetland. Community feedback emphasized its ecological, aesthetic, and emotional significance, and raised concerns about wildlife loss, and reduced amenity.

“Protect the lake, don't drain it.”

“Preserve the native wildlife and ecology. Do not convert into wetlands.”

“Do not drain the lake. It is the heart and soul of the park. The residents said to clean up the rubbish.... not drain it.”

Council response: Lauries Field has experienced recent fish deaths due to low dissolved oxygen levels. These events are linked to:

- **High nutrient loads** in stormwater runoff.
- **Rapid growth of Azolla**, a floating aquatic plant.
- **Oxygen depletion** during Azolla decay, leading to poor aquatic conditions.

The original proposal included retaining the existing sediment pond and wetland along Brookwood Avenue, with plans to clean and replant these areas to support fish, frogs, and birdlife. Initially, the large irrigation dam was proposed to be converted into an ephemeral wetland to improve water quality and biodiversity. However, in response to strong community feedback, this approach has been revised. The large irrigation dam is proposed to be retained as a permanent water body, but technical upgrades are essential to restore and maintain its ecological function. These actions aim to balance community values with environmental sustainability, ensuring Lauries Field remains a healthy and cherished open space.

- **Water quality improvements:** Council will explore alternative methods such as filtration, and ecological planting to enhance water health.
- **Install water circulation infrastructure:** It's proposed that an underground pipe and clarifier system will be installed to improve water turnover and oxygenation
- **Stormwater Harvesting Integration:** Opportunities to integrate stormwater harvesting—such as using water from the northern irrigation dam—will be investigated to support lake and wetland ecosystems.
- **Vegetation management:** It's proposed that overgrown vegetation will be thinned to improve visibility and access. Invasive or unsuitable species will be



replaced with native riparian plants to enhance habitat quality and visual appeal.

Protect and enhance the conservation areas - there is strong support for preserving and enhancing Lauries Field's natural areas.

"Plant more locally sourced river red gum trees and other plant species."

Council response: Council proposes to maintain and enhance conservation areas through native planting and habitat improvements. Protection measures are proposed to be introduced to safeguard offset conservation area from damage, such as the recent unsanctioned bike jumps.

- Install interpretive signage to promote awareness of environmental values and purpose of the conservation area
- Investigate fencing and additional planting in accordance with the Offset Plan for Laurimar Park and The Maples, Doreen (2008).
- Strengthen ecological resilience through locally sourced native species and habitat features



Enhance the native vegetation and trees - residents value the park's trees and support enhancing native vegetation. However, there is concern about the proposed removal of pine trees, which contribute to the park's character and walking experience.

"Plant more locally sourced river red gum trees and other plant species."

"The pine trees that you want to remove are beautiful to walk through. Keep the pines."

Council response: An arboricultural assessment identified 24 Monterey Cypress pine trees as exotic and non-native. Of these, 11 are in medium to low condition. While the long-term plan proposes replacing these trees with native species to improve ecological function and safety, Council acknowledges community attachment to the pines.

- Native replanting will aim to replicate the character and experience of the existing pine grove
- Due to age and declining health, the pine trees pose a future safety risk and cannot be retained long term.
- Staggered removal is not feasible, as pine needle drop suppresses soil nutrients and compromises new plantings
- Replacement with native species will improve biodiversity, visual appeal, and pedestrian sightlines over time.



Park amenities (shelter, bins, drink fountains etc) - there's a strong desire for practical amenities that support everyday use, including bins, drink fountains, and seating. Maintenance of existing infrastructure is also emphasized.

"More bins for dog poo."

“The existing drinking fountains need replacing.”

Council response: Council will investigate the addition of park furniture, including:

- Upgraded picnic area with durable tables and a drinking fountain with a dog bowl
- Grouped seating near the playground to support outdoor gatherings
- Strategically placed bins at key park entry points
- Improved wayfinding signage to nearby public toilets at Brookwood Community Centre (3-minute walk)
- While there are no new toilets proposed in the Master Plan, public toilets are available nearby at Brookwood Community Centre, a three-minute walk from the park. The Master Plan includes improved wayfinding signage to help visitors easily locate the community centre and its facilities.



Retaining car park at 7W Lake Front Mews - there were mixed views about the future of the car park at 7W Lake Front Mews. Some residents expressed a strong desire to retain it for accessibility and convenience, especially given limited street parking in the area. Others raised concerns about its impact on the park’s character and potential for antisocial behaviour if converted to passive open space.

“Car park helps people with disabilities access the area. Leave it there.”

“The car park will ruin the feel of the park.”

“Turning the small car park into park with seats will encourage antisocial behaviour.”

“Would be good to get boat removed. The parking area is also closed off with bollards. If area is to stay as a car parking it would be good to have lighting.”

Council response: Council acknowledges the varied feedback regarding the car park located south of Lauries Field at 7W Lake Front Mews. Originally intended to serve medium-density townhouses that were never built, the car park currently contains 18 bays, though only 6 are accessible due to bollards installed in 2016.

- Council proposes to retain six parking bays to support accessibility, particularly for residents and visitors with mobility needs. This provides the same level of service of the car parking since 2016.
- Remaining car park area proposed to be transformed into open grassed parkland with a connecting path, lighting, and tree planting; lighting also supports six retained parking bays.
- In accordance with local law 5.5(1), “A person must not, without a permit given by the Council, occupy or allow to be occupied any Council land or any road for any use including ... storage of vehicles or goods of any kind” Continued storage of vehicles in the car park —including a boat—without a permit is a breach of this local law.



- There is ample parking available in the surrounding streets of the reserve, including unrestricted on-street parking available on surrounding streets—Lakeland Drive, Brookwood Avenue, Dalrymple Way, and Gosford Court.

Dog off-leash requests – A small number (<1%) of submissions expressed interest in having a designated off-leash area for dogs within Lauries Field. However, there were more submissions that supported the blanket ban (1%) or maintaining the existing on-leash dog exercise (2%) in accordance with the Community Local Laws.

“Plenty of space for a dog park... most people walk them off there anyway as no dog park in walking distance”

“Secure enclosed, small dogs play area. The size of a cricket pitch would be great. Water fountain with dog nozzle nearby and a bin. For doggy play dates with other residents”

“Stop taking areas away from locals to walk their pets. Dogs should be allowed in all areas while under control”

“Ban dogs as it is an environmental zone.”

Council response: The current reserve supports on-leash dog exercise in accordance with the Community Local Law, and the proposed master plan maintains this arrangement. There are additional bins also proposed in the plan, to support this ongoing informal recreation.

Due to Lauries Field’s provision of a children’s play spaces, waterbody, conservation area, and limited open space, it does not meet the criteria for an off-leash designation. As such, Council is unable to accommodate this request within the park but encourages dog owners to use nearby designated off-leash areas.



Improve path network, entrances and lighting— Safety and accessibility are key concerns. Improved lighting and path upgrades are welcomed, especially to support evening use and enhance security.

“Improve paths with some lighting.”

“Lighting is important in existing car park area: last week I had to call the police...”

“Make the park safer with more amenities.”

Council response: To enhance accessibility, safety, and overall user experience at Lauries Field, Council proposes to undertake the following improvements:

- **Path network expansion:** The existing path network will be upgraded to improve access and connectivity throughout the park, with changes in materiality in some areas to enhance durability and accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, and mobility users.
- **Entrance enhancements:** Key entry points will be redesigned to create more welcoming and legible entries with clear signage.

- **Lighting upgrades:** Lighting will be added to key connector paths to improve safety and access during evening hours. Lighting will be designed with timing controls and warmer colour rendering to minimise light pollution and protect nocturnal wildlife.

Community information session -Thursday 21 August

An additional Community Information Session was held on Thursday 21 August from 7 to 8.30pm at Brookwood Community Centre. A total of 55 residents attended the session.

Due to the large number of registrations (96 registered), the original format planned for the session was changed to accommodate more attendees. On the night, attendees were invited to view the draft master plan and speak to Council staff to share their feedback and/or discuss concerns about the draft plan.

What we heard

We quite clearly heard that the majority of community would like the lake to remain in its current form and not become an ephemeral wetland. We also heard there is strong support for playground renewal and maintaining the natural aesthetic of the site.

There was much discussion on the night with community taking up the opportunity to ask subject matter experts questions or seek further information about the project. The main themes of the discussions are as below:

- ***Car park and parking overall***
We captured 15 comments about the car park or parking with residents identifying that there are 18 parking bays overall although one is taken up by a boat which they'd like to be removed, however since 2016 there have only been six bays available. Residents indicated the parking area is closed off with bollards and there was a desire to keep the car park available for residents of Lake Front Mews as there is minimal street parking available. There was suggestion of introducing indented parking near the playground and residents indicated that if the area is to stay as a car parking it would be good to have lighting.
- ***Maintenance***
Eleven comments were captured about maintenance in general including requests for more bins, removal of blackberries, and the clean-up of branches and dead wood. One person commented that the people who do the grass maintenance now are doing a good job.
- ***Traffic calming***
Two comments about traffic calming including no chicanes on Lakeland Drive and supportive of traffic calming between roundabouts on Brookwood Ave.
- ***Support/feedback on other master plan elements***
There were 36 comments made about other elements of the draft master plan not related to the water body. These included supporting the playground upgrade, more lighting, upgrading pathways, more bins, exercise equipment and a BBQ area. Other suggestions included toilets and bike track or jumps for kids on their bikes.
- ***Don't support other elements***
Eight comments indicated they did not support other proposed elements including not wanting exercise equipment or a basketball court, no fencing of the conservation areas, and only having concrete paths.

- **Keep natural feel**
Five comments focussed on ensuring the plan was keeping the natural feel of the area.
- **Other options for waterway**
There were 15 comments suggesting other options for the waterway including having better maintenance, aeration of the water using pumps and irrigation to move water around. Residents also indicated a desire to view an Options Analysis report, and more evidence of water issues identified by Council.
- **General feedback about plan**
A total of 15 comments related to general usage of the area and personal observations. These included the waterbody assisting in maintaining people's mental health during covid, concern about mosquitos and associated smell if the lake was turned into an ephemeral wetland. Some residents noted that it was not originally a wetland, and that on the draft master plan the waterbody was made to look blue which is misleading.
- **Communication**
There were nine comments captured, however there was shared concern by majority of attendees around lack of communication. The concerns centred around not hearing about the consultation; the need for improved advertising of community engagement opportunities; the need for letters to be sent and not just flyers that can be mistaken as junk; desire for more transparency and residents expecting a group presentation and discussion at the information session.
- **Wetland objections**
We captured nine specific comments objecting to the wetlands, however, the overall sentiment of majority of attendees was against the wetland proposal. Comments captured included leave the lake alone, retain the lake and don't fix what isn't broken.
- **Planting and trees**
There were ten comments about planting and trees specifically. Concerns were raised about pine trees being removed with residents requesting to see the arborists reports. Others requested more native planting to attract birds and butterflies and for increased maintenance of the current trees including removal of dead wood.

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who participated in the second phase of community engagement by sharing feedback through the digital engagement, at community-based pop-up sessions or attending the Community Information Session. We will continue to update the community on further developments via the [Lauries Field project Engage page](#). Once we have a revised version of the draft master plan, community will have another chance to share their thoughts before the final plan is presented to Council for endorsement.