

Reimagining Ruthven Master Plan

Community Engagement Summary Report

1. Introduction

The former William Ruthven Primary School site is located at 74-76 Glasgow Avenue, Reservoir. In 2010 the school merged with Merrilands and Lakeside colleges and then was deemed as surplus by the State Government for educational requirements.

As this site fills a 'gap' in the provision of open space for the Reservoir West community, Council resolved to purchase the site at its meeting 5 September 2016.

A master plan is required to help guide the future development of this site for open space and early learning uses, improve movement and accessibility to the site and provide a framework for the landscape and environmental function of the site.

This project is also nominated as a 'big action' item in the new Council Plan 'Darebin 2021' which defines the master plan objective to *'create a new park, playground, oval and children's hub on the site of the old Ruthven Primary School in Reservoir.'*

2. Community Engagement Program – Phase 1 - Understanding the Community Expectations

Since the State Government declared this site as surplus to their educational needs in 2010, the local community have strongly advocated for Darebin Council to acquire the site.

This preliminary phase of engagement sought to build on previous conversations with the community, and collect their ideas about how they would like to use their new community space. It also sought to collect stories from past pupils and teachers to paint a picture of what the school was like, and help inform its future development.

The Community Engagement program included:

- A three week community consultation period, from 21 October – 5 November 2017.
- Letter drop to properties within a 1km radius of the site, promoting the Family Fun Day event and advise of the master plan process.
- Promotional posters were also placed on site, Reservoir Library, Preston Library, Customer Service centres and Reservoir Leisure Centre.
- Advertisements were placed in the Local Leader.
- Engagement activities and consultation milestones were promoted on Council's social media streams.
- [Yoursaydarebin](#) page created as the main online platform tool. Three core question for phase 1 were placed on this online forum and included:
 - **Share your ideas** – which sought to collect ideas of what the local community would like to do in their park.
 - **Share you story** – collecting stories from past students to help inform the future development of the site.
 - **Ask a question** about the project.

3. Family Fun Day Event

The 'Reimagining Ruthven' Family Fun Day was held on site, on Saturday October 21st between 10.00am and 1:30 pm. The sky was overcast early but cleared up around midday so the weather was of little hindrance to attendance.

A steady stream of interested residents visited the information tent throughout the three and a half hours.

Activity 1 - Vote for your favourite activities

The tent accommodated several image boards illustrating examples of potential activities that might occur within the redeveloped site. Residents were asked to 'vote' for activities on the basis of:

- Positive - would like to see idea developed for the site - (place a green sticker)
- Don't care/ No opinion - (place a yellow sticker)
- Negative - would not like to see idea developed for the site - (place a red sticker)



An example of the voting engagement activity

A cross section of adults and children were well represented with perhaps adolescent and middle aged people underrepresented. Responses were primarily positive or negative; few responses were 'on the fence'.

Council observations would suggest approximately 350 people attended.

Ideas and Observations

Generally most of the over 30 ideas were well received with a number of additional suggestions made by residents, and can summarised as follows:

- There was overwhelming support for the local market in terms of the number and the positive responses received. This could be partly attributed to the fact that this was an easy concept to comprehend.
- Other positive responses related to the provision of pedestrian paths, playgrounds, park amenities including toilets, picnic and BBQ facilities with shelter and outdoor exercise equipment, a community garden, all within a predominantly native landscape.
- Specific areas for gathering and events, organised sport or activities such as multi-purpose or synthetic courts and a games area, whilst receiving generally positive feedback, attracted a limited number of responses.
- Ideas eliciting a generally , lower number of mixed responses and it could be concluded less interest, included reserve naming , local history and Interpretation, storytelling, art and sculpture and custom elements.
- Probably the three most highly contentious issues eliciting a large number of responses related to any Community Building uses (such as a Community Hub or Early Learning Centre), a dog off lead area and a skate / BMX precinct.

- Any 'large' community building was generally seen by the majority of respondents as a retrospective step in terms of a building and potentially some carparking taking up what otherwise would be part of the broader open space. Where some explanation was provided as to the potential building and carpark scale (e.g. Keon Park), the response was generally a little more positive.
- The response to the dog off lead area was relatively mixed until the suggestion of a fenced area was added to the ideas board. This fenced option subsequently received many more positive responses.
- A skate/BMX precinct had a strong mixed response that was generally well received by children but negatively received by older members of the community. Concerns raised were largely in relation to noise and potential anti-social behaviour.

A full list of Community comments captured, see **Appendix A** for details to this report.



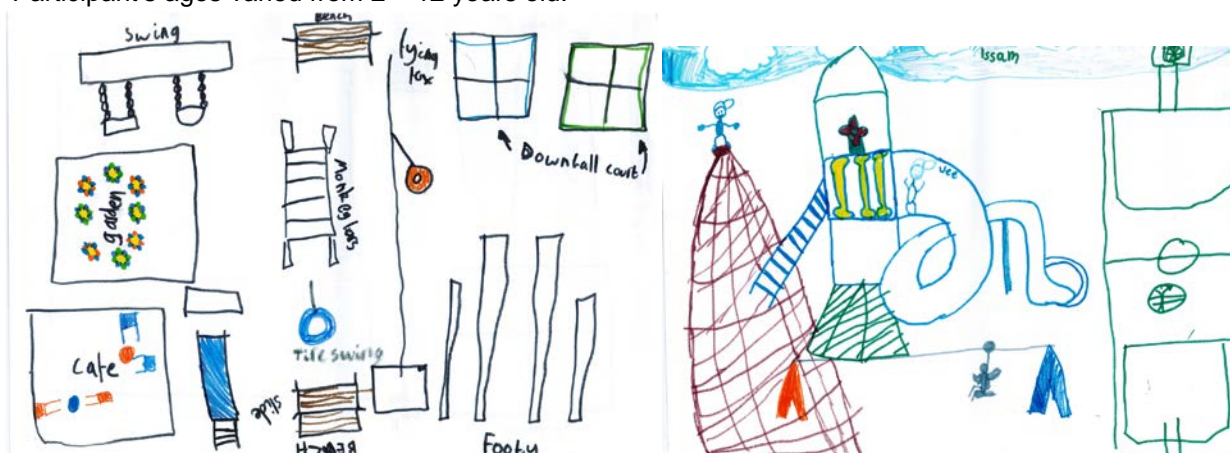
Images from the Community Engagement Tent at the Family Fun Day event.

Exercise 2 - Kids 'Design your Park'

As the Family Fun Day event would attract many families, an engagement activity was created to collect kid's ideas of what they would like to do in their new park.

To encourage participation, we ran a design competition, with prizes awarded to the top 3 designs as selected by the mayor and ward councillor.

Participant's ages varied from 2 – 12 years old.



Some examples of the kid's designs & drawings.

Ideas and Observations

- This exercise was very successful on the day and attracted many participants.
- The top ideas include a slide, swings and adventure playground.

Summary of activities suggested in kids drawings.

Activity / Equipment	Number of drawings illustrating this activity
Slide	16
Swings	10
Water Play	2
Football Oval	4
In ground trampoline	1
Cubby house	2
Lots of shady spaces	2
Balance beams + stepping stones	1
A Market	2
Flying fox	5
Basket Ball Court	5
Table area	1
Monkey bars	4
Adventure Park playground - play equipment with platforms and bridges	7
BBQ / picnic area	2
Vegie / Community Garden	2
Gardens with lots of flowers	3
Public Toilets	1
Meandering Paths	3
Lake with ducks	1
Creative park	1
Climbing equipment	3
Seating area / seats / benches	3
Feature water fountain	1
Bike/Scooter area	1
Grass areas	3
Trees	3
Bouncy castle	1
Café	1
Downball court	1
Tyre swing	1
Tennis courts	1
Running track	1



Kids design your park engagement activity

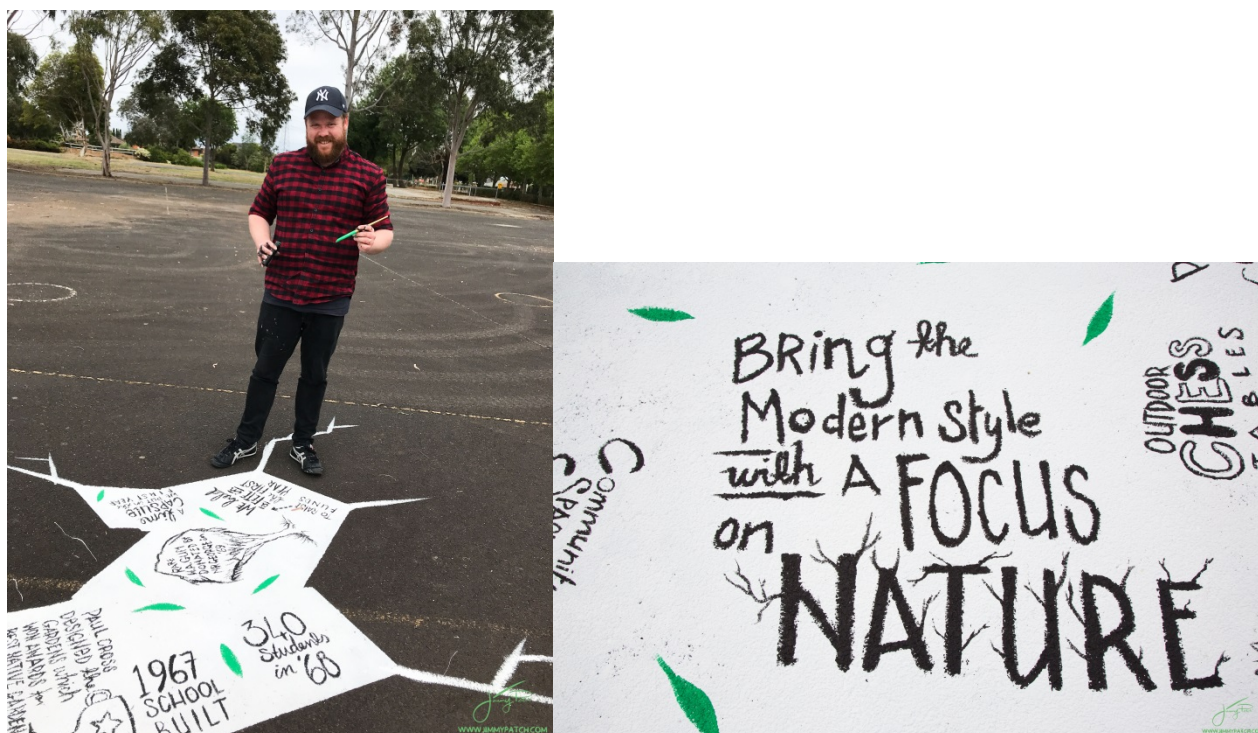


Exercise 3 - Graphic recording of Oral Histories with street artist

As means of starting to activate the site, street artist Jimmy Patch was engaged to graphically record the oral histories from the local community on the former ball/court asphalt area.

Former students and deputy principal shared memories with the street artist about their memories of the school, whilst local residents described their aspiration for the future development of the site.

'Thanks so much for the event, we thought it was really well run, the ground artists were a nice touch and it gave us a chance to connect with others in the neighbourhood.' **Quote from local resident.**



Images of Jimmy Patch and the Street Art Mural.

4. Written and online submissions

The number of written submissions and online engagement was relatively low when comparing it to other master plan projects in Darebin.

This is most likely due to the successful engagement opportunity the Family Fun Day offered the community.

Two written submissions and twelve ideas were posted on the [yoursaydarebin](https://yoursaydarebin.vic.gov.au/) website.

The can be summarized as follows:

- Popular ideas included an enclosed dog-off lead park, BBQ and picnic shelters and facilities, Public toilets, seating in shaded areas and water playspace.
- The written submissions emphasised the need for the new park to be an important community meeting space for all generations.

A table outlining the ideas can be found in **Appendix B**.

Appendix A

Summary of Comments from Consultation Posters.



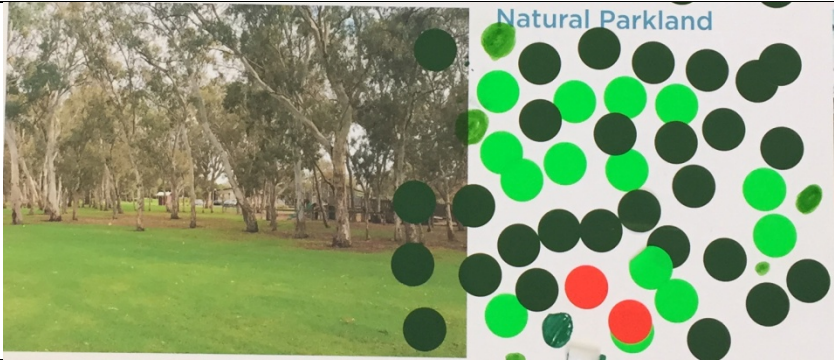
HOW CAN WE MAKE WALKING AND CYCLING HERE SAFER?
STICKY NOTE COMMENTS
ACCESS
Walking/scooting with toddler and pram – even out footpath – less sloping crossing.
Maintain footpaths as they are cracked and uneven, also prune street trees.
Connect Edgars Creek bike path to Darebin Creek path.
Definite link to bike path and to Edwards Creek.
Speed bumps and hoon reduction, traffic calming. Plant trees in the middle of the road.
Pedestrian crossing at Whitby Reserve on Broadhurst Avenue.
Edgars Creek: trees needed. Between Broadhurst Avenue and Glasgow Avenue large tree planting. Very hot, no shade along bike and footpath.
Crossing at Broadhurst Avenue! Whitby Reserve.
A full length path along Edgars Creek to join up with Merri Creek at Coburg Lake.
Parking around perimeter. Diagonal parking around park area.
Safer pedestrian crossing to access park. Existing one on Wilson works well!
Off street parking!!
Look at Public Bus Route: increase frequency of buses to service the site.
Pedestrian crossing at Hurley and Tracey Streets.
Tracey Street for drop-off Zone – safer for kids.
Roundabout at Hurley and Tracey Street4s to eliminate speeding drivers.
Reduce rat running on Glasgow Street.


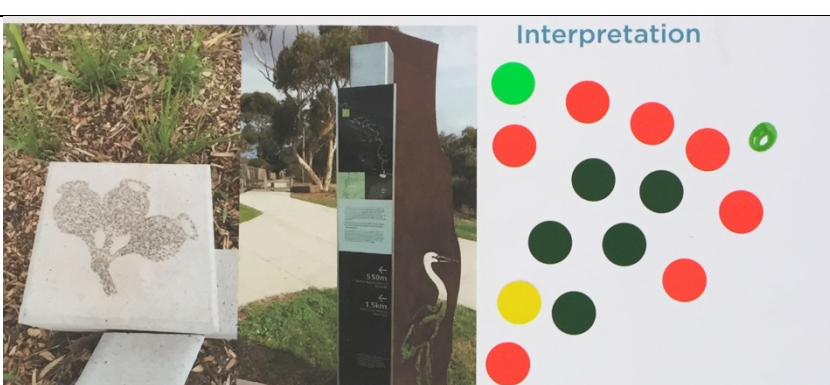

WHAT DID WE MISS? LET US KNOW YOUR IDEAS.....
STICKY NOTE COMMENTS
ACTIVITIES / AMENITIES
Soccer goals, a lot of playground equipment, bike track, public toilet, BBQ area.
Drinking taps, repaint Basketball Court, ensure fencing is fixed, some shelter perhaps.
Tennis Court.
For children play areas: 1) please have it fenced, gated and shaded. 2) Please also have outdoor/adventure style playing equipment like ropes and safe rock climbing etc.
Skate park on Gaffney Street in Coburg (Moreland CC).
Make it a playground/park or a soccer/footy club – you should be making use of the oval.
No BBQ's, prefer a picnic area instead.
Flying fox including for older people. "Rock climbing" bigger than at Edwardes Lake.
Bocce Courts for older people and all people.
Drinking tap facilities. Electronic toilets for safety.
Indigenous garden, dog free areas, kids and family friendly.
A tennis court so that in Summer we all can play there.
Playground: all ages and abilities. Progressively challenging and interesting.
NO TOILETS – keep OPEN space. One note on this one: Need toilets!!
BBQ was not used when it was a school – won't work in the future.
Community kitchen for workshops and events.
All abilities play space, e.g. swing for child in wheelchair, objects at toddler height, natural wind chimes (see drawing)
Separate dog designated area. No dogs in park area. Plenty of trees for natural shade. Plenty of park benches and picnic tables.
Dog park, please! With exercise/training equipment – and make sure it is maintained.
This area has limited off leash dog areas. Dog owners want to do the right thing. Please support a fenced space for dogs. Crispe Park is our only useable space and is closed until next year. Edwardes Lake also has no useable dog space. We have 10 dogs in our court. One "yes" added to these comments.
Fenced dog spaces to keep everyone safe.
Cricket oval, toilets, drinking tapes ("free ice creams")
Footy oval. Multi-sportsground.
Toilet facilities, BBQ, rubbish bins, keep oval – please shade.
Toilets, footy oval.
Toilets, BBQ/Picnic area, shelter, play space, fenced dog park, tables.
Skate park: small mini ramp (2-3 ft) something everybody can use rather than some of the other skate facilities in Darebin.
Space to fly kites, kick balls. This one received 3x yes ticks.
I second the Farmers Market/Craft Market idea.
BBQ, toilets/public toilets. This one received one yes.
Open space, somewhere to sit and relax. Maybe covered shade.
Water park play. Use of wood.


Fenced play area. Sandpit, rubber flooring on/around play equipment.
Playground, BBQ, public toilet, trees, tables.
BBQ, toilet/public, tables. (Vita)
BBQ, picnic, toilet. This one received 1x tick.
Could we have a monthly Farmers Market in the park. (Angela and Lina) this one received 2x yes please ticks.
Comprehensive plan incorporating both infrastructure and open space. Early Learning and beyond, Community rooms; Gardens, orchard, water play spaces, local Farmers Market. Aim: broad demand to draw use of space constantly.
Opposite Wilson Boulevard playground/park with a modernising shelter area.
Wheelchair friendly.
Public toilets.
Multiple ages play facilities, i.e. Malahang Reserve. Equipment for all.
CHARACTER
Native garden, more street trees in middle of the road.
Lots of native trees – no buildings.
Sheltered seating area with garden around seating.
Link green spaces for native flora and fauna.
Native trees and plants, open space, quiet area for elderly/reading/reflection. Children (small area)
Bird boxes, lots of trees.
Use lots of timber in buildings.
Plant large trees to clock the large power towers visible near Tracey Street. This will reduce EMF rays and look more appealing
Large canopy trees to picnic under.
Keep the trees along Wilson Boulevard. Beech trees.
Canopy trees at benches. Dog friendly.
Take some hints from Ray Braman Garden in Preston. Nice garden with water feature etc., with Hurley Street Entrance also.
Use recycled materials where possible, e.g. timber flooring. This one received 1x tick.
Water play area, native planting, natural shade (trees!), nesting boxes for birds.
BUILDINGS
Childcare on other park (existing playground) Tracey Street (old Rotary site).
Whilst an Early Learning Centre is needed, the Keon Park Children's Centre is underused and not successful. The Toy Library closed down and it is like a ghost town that has not worked well as a community space – so don't repeat that mistake here!
Community Hub facility with an indoor/outdoor design. Residents can book this out for events.
No exclusive use buildings. Space is for everyone – public. Open space for everyone.
No buildings. No buildings, No buildings.
No buildings, open space, landscaped areas, caged off area for off leash dogs



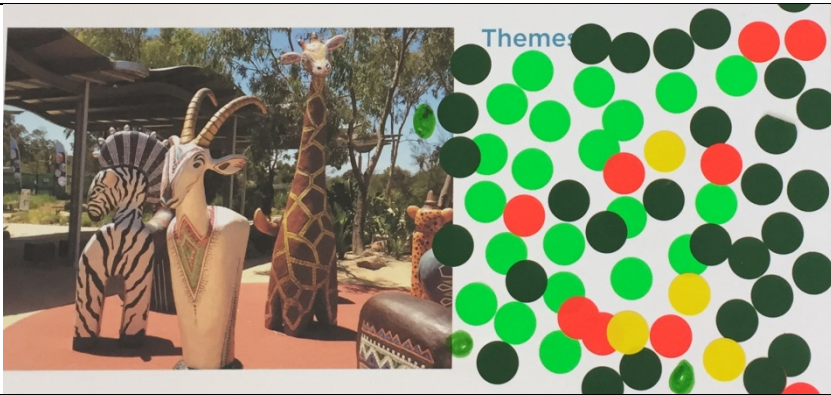
Have Childcare during day and community centre at night and weekend in the <u>same</u> space. Balance nature and buildings. <u>Multi-Purpose</u> .
No buildings on this site, which will need fencing and restriction; take up open space and restrict natural entry. (M. Brennan)
No buildings on this site. Keep planting and open areas so it can be rebuilt as a school if required. (Bev Down)
No ELC or Kinder – keep it open space.
Kinder/childcare building.
<u>If</u> a Kinder is built, make sure it is in one corner of the site.
GENERAL
Consider a 11am – 4pm later time slot - future events


Likes and Dislikes




OPEN SPACE		
	OPPORTUNITY	OBSERVATIONS
 <p>Perimeter paths for walking and exercise</p>	Perimeter paths for walking and exercise	Positive
 <p>Gardens that collect and utilise stormwater run off</p>	Gardens that collect and utilise stormwater run off	Positive
 <p>Natural Parkland</p>	Natural parkland	Positive





	<p>Dog Off Lead</p>	<p>Primarily Positive if fenced</p>
	<p>Local History and Information</p>	<p>Mixed but with limited response/ interest</p>
	<p>Interpretation</p>	<p>Mixed but with limited response/ interest</p>
	<p>Native and Indigenous Vegetation</p>	<p>Positive</p>



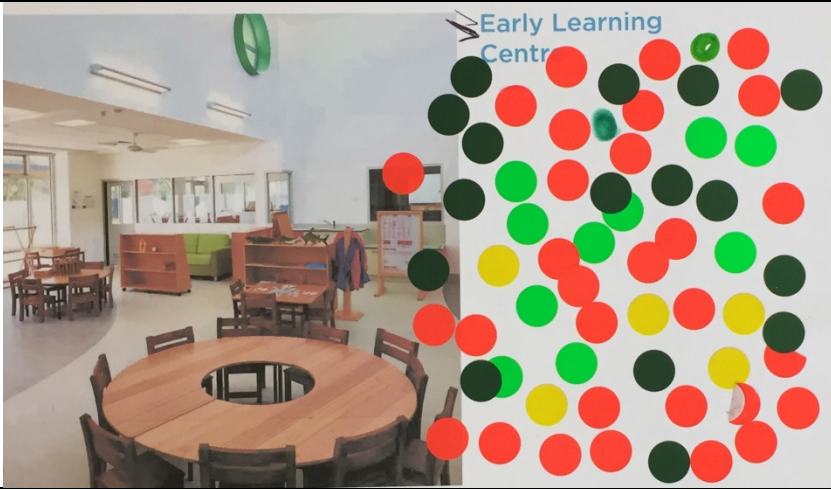
 <p>Community Garden</p>	Community Garden	Positive
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 <p>Story telling</p>	Story Telling	Mixed but with limited response/ interest
 <p>Art and Sculpture</p>	Art and Sculpture	Positive but with limited response/ interest
 <p>Themes</p>	Themes	Primarily Positive








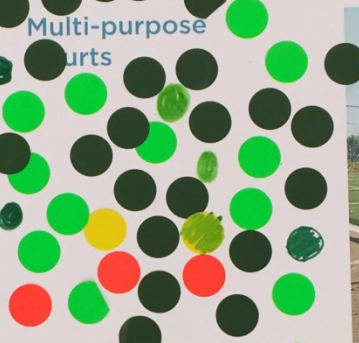
	Custom Elements	Mixed but with limited response/interest
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AMENITIES AND FACILITIES		
	OPPORTUNITY	OBSERVATIONS
	Covered Picnic Areas	Positive
	Permanent Shelters	Positive but with limited response/interest
	Accessible BBQ	Positive

	Natural Shade	Positive
<div> <div>OPPORTUNITY</div> <div>OBSERVATIONS</div> </div>		
	Gathering Spaces	Primarily Positive but with limited response/ interest
	Event Spaces	Primarily Positive but with limited response/ interest
	Outdoor Cinema / Performance Space	Primarily Positive

	Local Market	Positive Most enthusiastic response
	OPPORTUNITY	OBSERVATIONS
	Community Hub including Community Meeting Rooms	Primarily negative
	Early Learning Centre	Mixed Second most contentious activity

	<p>Reserve Naming</p>	<p>Mixed but with limited response/interest</p>
	<p>Water Play</p>	<p>Positive</p>
	<p>Accessible Play</p>	<p>Positive</p>

 	<p>Informal Play</p>	<p>Positive</p>
 	<p>Play Equipment</p>	<p>Positive</p>
 	<p>Outdoor Exercise Equipment for All Ages</p>	<p>Positive</p>
 	<p>Multi-purpose courts</p>	<p>Primarily Positive but with limited response/ interest</p>

	<p>Skate and BMX Precinct</p>	<p>Mixed Most contentious activity</p>
	<p>Games Area</p>	<p>Primarily Positive but with limited response/ interest</p>
	<p>Organised Sport</p>	<p>Mixed</p>
	<p>Synthetic Courts</p>	<p>Primarily Positive</p>

	<p>Paths for Walking / Kids Cycling</p>	<p>Positive</p>
	<p>Formal Bike Paths</p>	<p>Mixed</p>

Appendix B – Comments from written and online submissions

Email

Comments	Submitter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage area for community events. • Water play features including jets water Splash Park to operate in the warmer months. • Traffic school or kids shared bike paths. • An exercise indoor undercover area. • Different play equipment (not like Edwards park), in-ground trampolines and soft padded area for under 5 years old. • A place to attend workshops / cooking dancing classes or a venue for private hire for birthday parties • Mini train line that surrounds the park area • A kiosk or cafe 	C kotsiris
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We would like to see it established as a community meeting hub, much like a piazza, where people can sit and chat and pass a few hours in the company of like-minded, especially older residents. • It is an ideal place as many residents can walk there. <p>Suggestions for the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A covered area with seats. • Toilets are a necessity. • Playground equipment for grandchildren, as many “nonnas” babysit regularly (fenced area for security and peace of mind) • Drinking fountain and rubbish bins. • An enclosed (covered) area for very cold or wet days with bench seats etc. • Perhaps a walking track around the perimeter. • A great place to create craft groups such as knitting, cards, games etc. 	G Sgro

Social Media

Comments	Submitter
Playspace with a sensory garden (dog free zone) and a community cafe like the fabulous one that used to be housed in Edward Street civic centre would be wonderful	L Patterson
A fully dedicated off lead areas for puppy play and training.	L Alice
Community housing and health care.	M Kery
Have Australia Day celebrations there !	J Hyde
Community garden with plots	L Alice
Homeless shelter	T Pavano
Community Garden for sure	R Baibakova
Shops please	R Polimeni
Community garden!	B Bailey
It would be so nice if you turned it into a community leisure centre with pools, gyms and meeting rooms! Young and old could enjoy it	R McInnes

Comments	Submitter
Splash park I would love to see water Jetts and spray mists for the warmer months to that kids can play using different water features 2 Votes	Kotsy C
More seating in shade 2 Votes	bev
Kids bike track & playground to suit 1-10yo A waterplay area, a proper fort/castle structure & a good bike/scooter track for kids to practice and play on, within sight of parents. Plenty of undercover areas and BBQ's too, Edwardes Lake Park gets too busy! A bench type change table for babies would also be amazing! https://www.thebump.com/news/breastfeeding-bench-croatia 1 Vote	Chowes
Off-lead, BBQs, seats and toilets This space is roughly the same size as Penders Park in Thornbury, which is a wonderfully successful space. It has a central undercover area, two bbqs, 4 seating clusters, a set of toilets, kids play equipment, plus it's off-lead. Arguably, the only thing it needs is a fence for the pups. I agree that Edwards Lake gets taken over in the BBQ areas, so Darebin needs to meet the demand. 1 Vote	zoe
Sporting facilities	8wma5
A stage (with roof) In reservoir in particular we have such a diverse group of musicians and performers - public stages are far and few between - but are excellent resources - can be used from yoga and tai chi to local school performances, Christmas events etc. 1 Vote	CarCar La Jenkins
Toilets They don't have to be fancy even the one at Wood Street is perfect. 2Votes	bev

<p>Composting/Worm Farm Hub</p> <p>What if we could collect the organic waste from local food businesses and process it in parks just a couple of blocks away? We could be diverting tonnes of waste from cafes, green grocers and even apartment blocks. It could be a learning hub that schools use and also a great space for sustainable workshops.</p>	Vanessa N
<p>Off leash dog park</p> <p>I would like to see an enclosed area as an off leash dog park - it's a big site - I currently use Crispe and it's fantastic, people come from all over and we have built our own community. It's a great way for all different types of people to connect with the community and dogs are good for peoples health - especially older people and people with mental health issues. But enclosed is important to keep people and children safe and to control doggie movements :)</p> <p>4 Votes</p>	CarCar La Jenkins
<p>Detailed kids' park with water features, mutli-level wooden adventure playground and shade with tables for local parents and young families!</p>	cmez
<p>More BBQ and more picnic tables</p> <p>Edwards Lake BBQ area allows big groups to take over the facility and take ownership. It's hard for single families to find a space to eat. Put in more BBQs and more picnic benches in other areas.</p> <p>3 Votes</p>	Bev
<p>Food forest</p> <p>There are a few community gardens in Darebin, but what if we created a food forest? Or an orchard where established trees could feed lots of people?</p> <p>http://www.mysmartgarden.org.au/en/Resources/Food/Creating-a-food-forest</p>	Vanessa n