

McCleery Reserve

Park upgrade



Merri-bek
City Council

Consultation summary report

Prepared by

Andrew Blight Landscape Architect

Open Space Design & Development Unit

November 2025

Revision B

Revision A: initial consultation summary: August 2024

Revision B: draft concept consultation summary: July 2025



McCleery Reserve – park & play upgrade

Consultation summary report

November 2025

McCleery Reserve on corner Munro and Vincent St in Coburg is a small local park, comprising a fenced area with play space, trees and open lawn areas. An adjoining block of public open space, 2B Kelson Street, sits on the opposite side of a bluestone cobbled laneway running between Vincent and Kelson Streets, comprising a native bush garden and open lawn area. It has been determined as being ready for a park upgrade according to Merri-bek City Council's Open Space and Playspace strategies.

This report provides a summary of the McCleery Reserve consultation, Phase 2, Draft Concept Plan.

1. Background

This report covers a summary of each consultation stage for the McCleery Reserve, park upgrade. This phase is 'Draft Concept Plan' to inform the final concept design.

As mentioned on Conversations Merri-bek web page, the following elements of the reserve are not negotiable as part of this upgrade:

- The upgrade will only cover the reserve and play space area, not the surrounding areas (e.g. roads, car parking, lighting, services etc) – excepting the inclusion of “bus stop” seat and drinking fountain, which is relocated from its current position in Munro Street.
- The upgrade also includes the public open space in allotment 2B Kelson Street, which is owned and maintained by Council in conjunction with the reserve land on the corner of Munro and Vincent Streets.
- This park will remain a 'Dog on-leash' Park.
- Large-sized play elements cannot be included (e.g. a flying fox, basketball Halfcourt, Public Toilet, tower combination unit, etc) owing to the lack of space, amount of funding and proximity of neighbouring properties.
- Unless trees are dead or in decline, they will not be removed as part of the works
- All the works must fit into the available budget.

Council's Open Space Design and Development unit are conducting three phases of engagement with the local community for the McCleery Reserve upgrade, these being:

- **Initial consultation**

Council have asked the local community what they would like to see included in the upgrade of this park. This information can be used as inputs to develop the draft concept plan. This stage has now closed.

- **Draft concept plan consultation**

Using results from the initial consultation, Council has developed a draft concept plan using the local community's initial input.

- **Final concept plan consultation**

This final concept plan reflects changes from the draft concept plan, incorporating the community's feedback where possible. After receiving feedback on the draft concept, a final concept plan will be

produced including any final changes to the design where possible. This phase is termed “Inform”, which means it is for information, and it will close the consultation process, with the team now proceeding to detailed design.

Consultation timings

Initial consultation: 1st July – 24 July 2024 (completed)

Draft concept plan consultation: July 2 – 22 July 2025 (completed)

Final concept plan issued: November 2025.

For both the initial and draft concept plan consultations, postcards were distributed to households within 0.4km of McCleery Reserve, advising residents that they can provide feedback using Council’s website, <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/mccleery-reserve-coburg>. Posters are also to be displayed at the park and provided to the nearby schools.

A slightly different approach will be undertaken for the revised/final concept plan. The final concept plan will be displayed on the website along with posters at site. All who register to “follow” the project will be notified by email. Thereafter the Open Space Design and Development team can proceed to detailed design. We will advise when construction will be starting and finishing once known.

2. Initial Consultation Feedback Findings

Council received **13** feedback responses to the initial consultation through the Conversations website.

This feedback has been summarised and addressed in detail in the McCleery Feedback Phase 1 Summary, which was made available in November 2024.

The feedback from Phase 1 consultation was helpful in preparing the Draft Concept Plan.

3. Draft Concept Plan Consultation Feedback Findings

Council received **24** feedback responses to the Phase 2 consultation on the Draft Concept Plan from the Conversations website. This is outlined in detail under the following subject headings.

Fencing

Changes to fencing as shown in the draft concept plan was mostly positive. Some are concerned about “encroachment” into the bluestone laneway but the proposed new rock edging and gravel paving are to be aligned with the true property boundaries. The only exception is the corner “cut-off” to 2B Kelson Street that preserves vehicle turn-out for 118A Munro Street that has its frontage onto the laneway. Continuous fencing around the whole park perimeter is not desirable as it tends to encourage dogs being allowed off-leash, which is not permitted in McCleery Reserve, it being an on-leash park.

Dogs

Some have requested fencing to contain dogs within the reserve. This is not desirable given the proximity to residents. This park will remain a dog on-lead park. For a list of dog off-leash parks in the municipality you can view: <https://merri-bek.vic.gov.au/exploring-merri-bek/parks-and-gardens/park-amenities#autoAnchor2>

Gathering spaces, seating and shade

In the initial consultation people asked for additional seating throughout the park, especially in shaded areas and this has been catered for with a total of five park seats included in the final concept plan, all which are placed to obtain natural shade from trees. This is in addition to a new picnic setting to replace the existing one, plus an informal “log seat” being placed in 2B Kelson Street in conjunction with planting a new shade tree.

Gathering spaces, seating and shade (cont'd)

The reserve is endowed with an abundance of existing, established trees and these are all retained in the final concept plan. Apart from the additional tree to be planted in 2B Kelson Street, there is one proposed in the mulched strip in conjunction with new park seat, inside the fence along Vincent Street, along with another outside the same fence in the nature strip.

In response to requests for provision of a shelter, this is not allowed for in the project budget as we advised at commencement of initial consultation.

Additional trees and garden beds: shade, buffer and biodiversity/interest

We are planning to install garden beds to improve biodiversity and provide interest along with an ephemeral swale, which is described separately under the following paragraph.

Ephemeral swale, water play, drink fountain

Water play was requested. There is insufficient budget to include water play in this reserve. We are, however, including an ephemeral water element by forming a shallow swale that will be fed by overflow from stormwater in Munro Street. This will be landscaped with native planting into bush mulch, including flowering plants like those now flourishing in the native garden in 2B Kelson Street. The new drink fountain now installed near the bus stop in Munro Street, will also have its overflow draining into the ephemeral swale. This will provide much-needed watering to newly planted trees through seepage into the sub-soil from the landscaped swale.

Playspace upgrade

Many respondents asked for different forms of play equipment, incorporating natural or recycled materials.

Council will endeavour to source a range of equipment that suits a broad range of ages and abilities including a basket (bird nest) swing and rope climbing play.

All the manufactured equipment to be supplied will have support posts made of natural timber and incorporate timber panels where suitable.

People have asked for one or other of the “tractor” springer play items to be kept. At least one of the existing springer toys will be retained in the upgraded play space.

Nature-based play

The playspace design now includes natural materials to provide a retaining edge in sections between the concrete edging. As well as helping contain the play softfall, the rock and log edging is incorporated into nature-based play elements such as raised steppers of varying height and log placements for clambering and stepping. The same natural materials are placed around the ephemeral swale for visual interest as well as nature-based interaction.

Grassed areas for play

People pointed out that the proposed location for picnic setting that was shown in the Draft Concept Plan along the eastern (Vincent Street) side of the reserve, is not suitable. That open grassed area is the only space available for free play and is popular for ball games and other physical activity. We have heard this advice and left the space free and open in the Final Concept design, with a new picnic setting to replace the old one beside the play space.

The specific request for putting down a synthetic surface for a mini version of cricket games is not consistent with keeping as much grassed, open area as possible. It is also not appropriate to encourage cricket so close to Munro and Vincent Streets, with a high probability of balls being hit over the fence and into the roadway.

Toilets

A few respondents asked for a toilet. As notified at commencement of engagement, no toilet is planned for McCleery Reserve and none is included in this upgrade.

Inclusion of public toilets in public open space are subject to Council's public toilet policy and not generally part of a small park upgrade such as this. Where they are included in small parks, the decision is usually guided by whether there are insufficient public toilets in the broader vicinity.

4. Revised/final concept plan

We have attempted to meet as many of the requests from people as possible in the McCleery Reserve Final Concept design. In some instances there is insufficient space or budget to include what is requested, such as for shade sails, a shelter or toilet. Otherwise, we have been able to meet most requests, as described in the Draft Concept Feedback and Findings, above.

5. Next Steps

Officers have prepared the Final Concept Plan, using the feedback received from the draft and initial consultation stages and further site and stakeholder investigations. Once ready this plan will be displayed to the community on posters at site and on council's Conversations Merri-bek web page. This completes the community consultation component of the project and Officers are proceeding to detailed design and procurement before commencing construction. Updates regarding the project will be placed on the Conversations Merri-bek webpage and the community are encouraged to register to "follow" and receive email updates via the website.

6. Further information

Any questions can be directed to Council's Open Space Design & Development Unit via email openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au or by phoning 9240 1111.

7. Appendix

Below are all feedback received from the community for each stage of consultation for the McCleery Reserve and images of the posters and postcards issued.

7a Initial Consultation



Figure 1: Postcards were issued in Jul-Aug 2024 to households within 0.4km of the reserve.

7b Draft Concept Plan Consultation



Figure 2: Postcards were issued in June-July 2025 to households within 0.4km of the park.

7b Draft Concept Plan Consultation (cont'd)

Below is feedback received for the Draft Concept Plan at McCleery Reserve:

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 10, 2025, 12:25 PM	This park as council points out is a very small park located near homes. Why there is a need to improve it at all. As to council statements: No toilets, no shades, No dogs of lead, too close to residential homes. Why then we are spending money on this little area instead of larger parks where everyone can enjoy them. Total waste of money.
Jun 11, 2025, 06:45 AM	I live at 2 Kelson St and use the right of way for access constantly to park my vehicles off the road and out of public space. I do not want to see the access that has been there for over 25 years restricted in any way. Can you please ensure that the fence that runs along the back of 2B Kelson is aligned as it is now with the rear of my fence and does not encroach further into the right of way. Since 1 Vincent has been allowed to build right to the site boundaries and the gardens are already encroaching on the right of way. A small group of neighbours have planted vegetation in 2B and do not want to see any seats there. The space is too small for this and would create noise, nuisance and rubbish which has been a constant problem over the years. Can someone please contact me for a meeting onsite to discuss this further with local residents. Philip Alviano 0422842923, phil@brunoplace.com

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 11, 2025, 06:42 AM	I live at 2 Kelson St and use the right of way for access constantly to park my vehicles off the road and out of public space. I do not want to see the access that has been there for over 25 years restricted in any way. Can you please ensure that the fence that runs along the back of 2B Kelson is aligned as it is now with the rear of my fence and does not encroach further into the right of way. Larger vehicles also use this access to gain access to the rear of properties along Kelson and Vincent St. Since 1 Vincent has been allowed to build right to the site boundaries and the gardens are already encroaching on the right of way. A small group of neighbours have planted vegetation in 2B 0422842923, phil@brunoplace.com
Jun 21, 2025, 10:45 AM	Teens would enjoy somewhere to meet after dinner so some cover from the rain over the picnic table would be nice. Being on Munro Street it is a more public and therefore safer option than Bush Reserve for this cohort.
Jun 03, 2025, 12:11 PM	It's a bit hard to determine how much open space there is for activities like ball games. I noticed other submitters would love space to kick a ball or play a little cricket. It would be great if a section of firm material such as a plastic could be inlaid in the northern end of the grassed area, at right angles to the fence line to act as a short cricket pitch where we could bring our own free-standing stumps. The area would only need to replicate the final say, 3 metres of a cricket pitch, so about 3m x 1m. This would have the benefits of 1) providing a consistent bounce for a bowled ball and 2) protecting the turf from the effects of batting and bowling. Apart from this addition, as a small local play area it is very good and can also be a space for community gathering. The Bush Reserve nearby provides for more organised gatherings with the BBQ's and toilets. Well done, good to see activity areas developing
Jun 12, 2025, 11:24 AM	You should be fencing directly around the play equipment to stop kids running out and dogs running in

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 11, 2025, 08:22 PM	I am not happy that this draft design without proper notification has expanded McCleery Reserve to include 2B Kelson St. McCleery Reserve, as shown in Google maps, does not include 2B Kelson Street. The signage in 2024 announcing that the park was earmarked for an upgrade was around the area bordered by the laneway, Vincent St and Munro St (which is the area that Google maps shows is McCleery Reserve). Therefore this was inaccurate because it did not declare that the plan was to add 2B Kelson St to McCleery Reserve. In June 2023 with council support (from Charlotte Napper) I spearheaded the establishment of an indigenous community garden at 2B Kelson St. Since then the Friends of 2B Kelson St have invested time, effort and water to the garden. We should have been alerted to the plan to expand McCleery Reserve. I am particularly unhappy about the inclusion of seating in 2B Kelson St. Please contact me ASAP (radhaclaridge@gmail.com) to arrange a meeting to discuss my concerns.
Jun 12, 2025, 11:58 AM	It would be great to have a sheltered area for when it rains and also you need to allow dogs at the park and have lots of bins for their poos
Jun 14, 2025, 03:08 PM	Love the upgrade well overdue please keep the quad bikes.
Jun 24, 2025, 09:52 AM	I would love to see more community BBQ area for adults and other spaces for adults to relax and enjoy their time at the park. Also love to see more native trees and grass and shrubs to encourage more native wildlife and that also makes less messy in the winter as they remain evergreen and don't lose their leaves.

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 15, 2025, 07:33 PM	Thank you for including play for the little ones (that is - those who are learning to stand and walk); so many of the new parks include equipment that don't even have stairs - they are made for bigger kids who can climb and have great balance... which takes a couple of years for kids to master. My little boy learned to stand and walk in this park, I was grateful that there was space for the little ones, too. Having said that, I do hope that the bigger equipment has a stairs section, not just rope ladders for the big ones. Also, one thing I wish you would keep: the plastic car rockers. These are much easier for kids to sit in (again - the little ones!), and hurt much less when the kid hits their head - the new ones are metal and hurt, and kids fall through them easily. AND, they're in all of the new parks - let's have some variety. I know that plastic is not the fashion, but maybe we can use recycled plastic, instead of all metal. Or just keep the ones that are there!
Jun 10, 2025, 04:37 PM	Please do NOT reduce the open area that enables the kicking of an aussie rules football. What appears to be a larger playground footprint to west side, and a new seat and the planting of a tree as drawn, east of nth/sth centre line of park will obstruct this past time. This council is famous for planting 20m trees under power lines (Not fit for purpose). Plant trees that are fit for purpose AND LOCATION. To provide more shade in summer for the playground, trees need to be planted along the west boundary, and the east boundary of the playground to provide shade for the eastern 1/2 of the playground. What about an electric BBQ in the south-west cnr?
Jun 09, 2025, 08:51 PM	Looks great. A safer street crossing to the park from Shaftsbury would be a huge improvement as well
May 29, 2025, 06:52 PM	It looks good, is there space for a dog area? Is it possible for a sun/ rain shelter? Or is it planned that the trees will shade the playground?

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 14, 2025, 07:07 PM	I like the two climbing things and the butterfly toy. I wish there was still a gate at Munro Street. Thank you for building our new playground (7yr old and 4yr old feedback). Looks great. I think the bench at the Munro/Vincent corner should be moved back to allow for footy and frisbee games. Is the bus stop being moved to be under the shade? That is ideal
Jun 12, 2025, 12:32 PM	This small but well used park is all this part of Coburg has for local residents, I value the chance to add some ideas. Retain sitting and picnic table, more interest climbing shapes, better boundary fencing to lane adjacent to park as cars do drive through this lane at times.
Jun 24, 2025, 08:03 PM	I like the plan, I just hope that the playground remains accessible to toddlers. Whilst Bush Reserve is close by, it's suited for much older kids, whereas 'little park' as we call it is perfect for toddlers who aren't as confident in bigger more challenging playgrounds. <i>I also think losing the red and blue spring vehicles that are currently in the park would be a shame both my kids love pretending to drive them, as the cars and buses drive past on Munro Street.</i>
Jun 10, 2025, 10:55 AM	We like the addition of more swings, and the octopus. <i>We will miss the ride on tractors and wonder could we leave one there please (or add a new tractor)?</i>
Jun 22, 2025, 04:35 PM	It would be great to see a natural division between the open play space and playground, I've seen children running across people playing as well as ball play running into the play area quite easily. I love that this is a multi-use park and think this would help promote that aspect. Robinsons reserve has log chunks along play areas that achieved this well. The fence needs to extend to the ground for these reasons also. The play equipment looks like just new versions of the equipment already provided except for the wide circular swing. It would be nice to see some entirely different equipment, it seems like a waste to have just a facelift rather than an upgrade.

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 22, 2025, 01:10 PM	This look good. I like the idea of the Dry 'creek' bed. Perhaps consider the same on the north side, as there is a fair bit of storm water that drains toward the park from the laneway heading north behind house. I think you should reconsider the position of the bins as it is very close to living area of 118A. I like the rock boarders.
Jun 13, 2025, 03:11 PM	I think the draft concept plan looks great. I love the idea of more seating, particularly having bench seats with backs, for older residents. I really hope that the fencing is for the whole park, not just replacing part of the fencing. I think for children and pets, it's important to have it closed off. I know the bus stop is not included in this plan, but a large number of elderly people catch the 512 bus from the stop next to the reserve. It would be wonderful if the bus stop was replaced by a sheltered stop with a bench, like some of the other stops have. Thanks x
Jun 14, 2025, 12:28 PM	I am a local resident is Brendon Agpasa was based and located in both Fawkner and Wollert, we have new improvements of Pedestrian link with Sawn Bluestone path connection across cobblestone laneway, Bench/Park Seats, pedestrian-friendly park border, new play space for play equipment, Picnic Setting, native garden planting extended to laneway edge and park entry to Fence setback with drink bubbler combined with Bus Stop, We're glad you to see the improved local park from Coburg as well.

Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
Jun 03, 2025, 08:37 AM	I am a local resident who lives in Wollert, we need to Build an local park based in Coburg near far away from Fawknor that includes open space for ball games and other activities, better access for people with babies, children's play area, picnic seats and tables, new barbecue area and there's furniture and kids play equipment were all being featured as well.
Jun 11, 2025, 09:44 AM	This draft concept doesn't really seem to take the homes that border the park into consideration at all.
Jun 05, 2025, 11:26 AM	The image above isn't clear but it looks like the parking is going on the part of the park closest to Kelson street. If so where are visiting families going to park?
Jun 09, 2025, 01:25 PM	It's a great improvement, but are there more unique play equipment that can foster more imaginative play? The swings and slides are great but some other parks have musical elements, spinning round abouts, or different climbing apparatus
Jun 12, 2025, 10:12 AM	Not sure what is going on with the road there, but it gets very tight on the streets off of Munro St at that intersection. Making that road even skinnier to car traffic will make it a nightmare to drive around there. Don't make Munro St worse than what it is
Jun 10, 2025, 02:18 PM	Great to see vegetation, stormwater, playground and laneway entry upgrades. Further suggestions: - fencing needs to go all the way around the park, so that the park is fully fenced with secure child locks. - playground design could incorporate more equipment for older children, 6-12 plus. Eg. Monkey bars, climbing wall, in addition to the planned equipment for toddlers. See Gilmour Park for a good example of how the play equipment caters for both toddlers and older kids and wide range of abilities. - extra vegetation could be added along the fence lines along Munro and Vincent st, with extra logs and boulders providing extra nature play space (again, see Gilmour park example)