

Fisher Reserve

Park upgrade



Merri-bek
City Council

Consultation summary report

Prepared by

Deb Piattoni Landscape Architect

Open Space Design & Development Unit

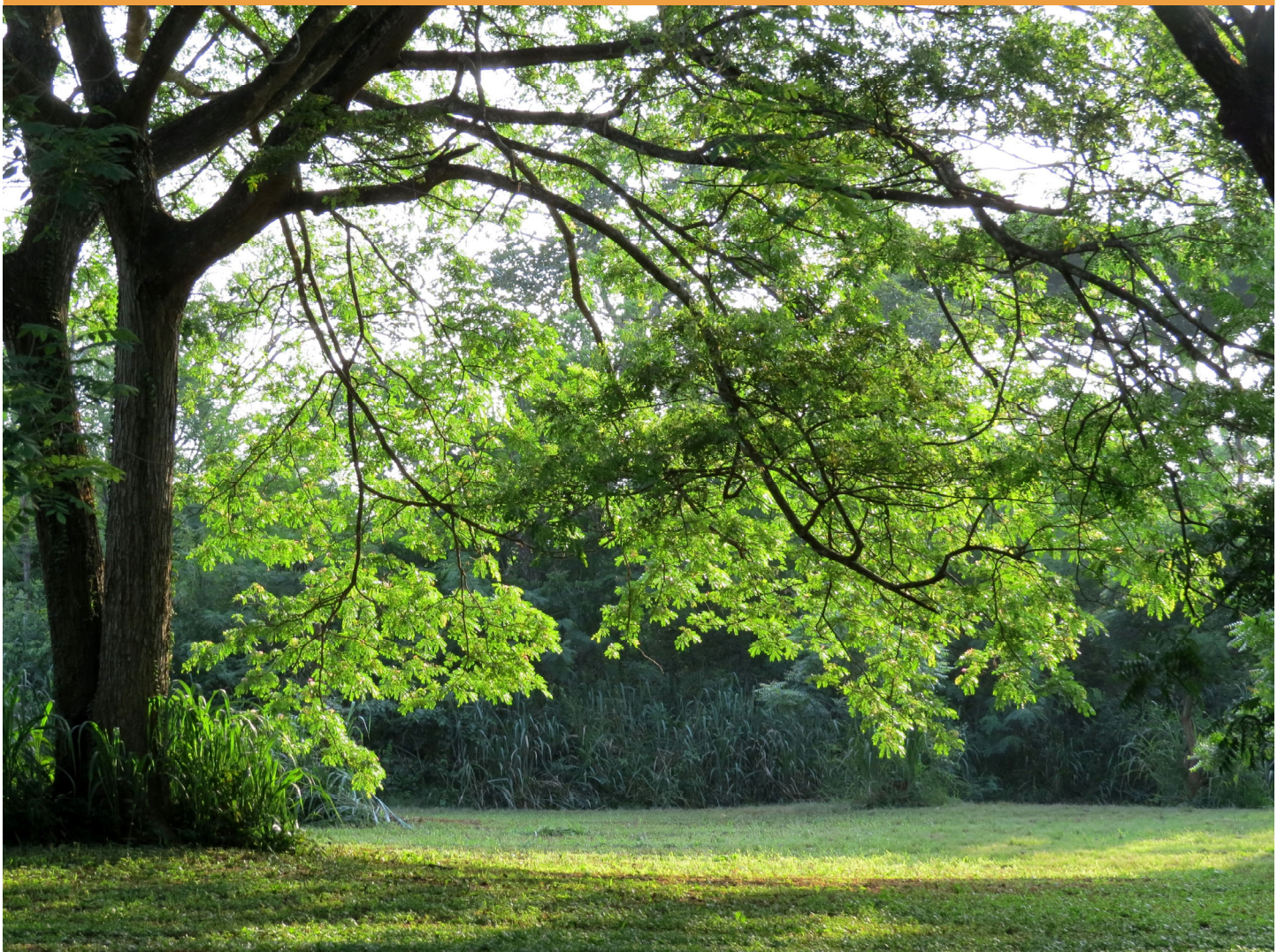
February 2024

Revision C

Revision A: initial consultation summary: October 2023

Revision B: draft concept consultation summary: February 2024

Revision C: final concept plan: March 2024



Fisher Reserve – park upgrade

Consultation summary report

March 2024

Fisher Reserve off Noel Street/Glenlyon Road in Brunswick East is a small-medium-sized reserve, comprising of a playspace, trees and open lawn areas. It has been determined ready for a park upgrade according to Merri-bek City Council's Open Space and Playspace strategies.

This report provides a summary of the Fisher Reserve consultation.

1. Background

This report covers a summary of each consultation stage for the Fisher Reserve park upgrade.

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

- The upgrade will only cover the reserve and playspace area, not the surrounding areas (e.g. roads, car parking, lighting, services etc)
- The existing playspace will be repositioned to a more central location in the reserve to reduce impacts on an adjacent large tree and the proximity of a neighbouring property
- Large-sized play elements cannot be included (e.g. a flying fox, tower combination unit, etc) owing to the lack sufficient space and proximity of neighbouring properties
- Sports grounds and their facilities will not be included
- Unless trees are dead or in decline, they will not be removed as part of the works
- Some park infrastructure elements need to be upgraded (e.g. park fencing)
- All the works must fit into the available budget.

Council's Open Space Design and Development unit are conducting three consultation phases with the local community for the Fisher Reserve park 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 developing 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.

- **Revised/Final Concept Plan Consultation**

This revised concept plan reflects changes from the draft concept plan, incorporating the community's feedback where possible. After receiving feedback, a final concept plan will be produced including any final changes to the design where possible. This will close the consultation process, prior to the team proceeding to detailed design.

Consultation timings

Initial consultation: 6 September – 6 October 2023 (completed)

Draft concept plan consultation: 25 January – 16 February 2024 (completed)

Revised/final concept plan issued: early March 2024.

For both the initial and draft concept plan consultations, postcards are distributed to households within 0.5km of Fisher Reserve, advising residents that they can provide feedback using Council's website, <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/fisher-reserve>. Posters are also to be displayed near the playspace and were provided to the adjacent kindergarten.

A similar poster 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. 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 43 feedback responses to the initial consultation, one of these being a collation from various local residents.

This feedback has been organised into the following categories (not in order):

- **Laws, rubbish collection and overall maintenance**

Several comments from respondents have asked for improved maintenance including greater frequency of mowing and weed/rubbish removal.

Although this does not form part of the park upgrade, we have passed this information to the maintenance teams to see if we can help improve this.

- **Gathering spaces and waste bins**

A few people asked for additional seating, especially in shaded areas and suggested a gathering space near the playspace for carers to sit and watch their children play. We agree an improved gathering space area which greatly benefit users of this reserve.

There were several requests for a drinking fountain and for waste bins positioned nearer the gathering space.

- **Reserve fencing**

Several respondents asked for replacement taller fencing along both reserve entries to prevent children from wandering. We are planning to upgrade the fencing and maintenance access in the reserve as the current fencing requires upgrading. This replacement fencing can be taller and will include self-locking pedestrian gates as part of this upgrade. We will also be upgrading the maintenance entry to be just at the Glenlyon entry with a gate to match the fencing style.

Another person suggested buffer planting especially near Glenlyon Road. This can also be included as part of new garden beds to soften the fence lines.

- **Pathways through the reserve**

Some comments covered the need for an accessible pathway connecting Glenlyon Road and Noel Street from the entries. Another mentioned having a curved path would provide greater interest for people. We agree that having a connecting path would make the reserve more accessible it can be curved to provide interest.

The secondary entry from Noel Street was mentioned as being uninviting. We are looking at ways to improve both entries/pathways to the reserve and make them more engaging, including garden beds.

- **Lighting through the reserve**

One individual asked for improved lighting around park boundary and play equipment.

It is doubtful we can include lighting along new paths in the reserve as there would not be sufficient budget. In addition Council's open space lighting policy only allows for illumination of paths, not playspaces or gathering spaces at night. It would also be difficult to illuminate just the paths without light spilling towards neighbouring properties.

- **Additional trees and garden beds (shade, buffer and biodiversity/interest)**

Several respondents asked for more native trees rather than exotic trees to be planted in the reserve. Others asked for attractive flowering native shrubs to attract birds, bees and bats. Further shade trees were requested as well as garden beds to provide natural barriers adjacent roads and neighbouring properties as well as including feature mounds to provide natural barrier treatments. We are planning to install a number of garden beds with native shrubs to improve biodiversity and provide interest along with some flowering native trees.

Another individual mentioned how the northern section of the reserve is an unusable wasteland and they would like to see this area activated. We are looking at various improvements for that area of the reserve as well.

- **Playspace upgrade (suggested items, nature play, materials)**

Many respondents asked for different forms of playspace equipment. The majority flagged the need for the play equipment to target the 3 – 10 year olds, owing to the numbers of children from the adjacent kinder and primary school, with some elements for the 2 – 6 year olds in particular.

Several have mentioned a preference for timber-based equipment rather than plastic. We will endeavour to source equipment that uses a mixture of materials with less focus on plastics where possible and to provide a range of equipment that suits this range of ages.

One asked for small trampolines and several others mentioned climbing units and monkey bars and a slide tube. This included mention of a fun-filled and challenging playspace. One asked for a train element in the playspace. Another mentioned including a sand pit. We are less likely to include a sand pit at Fisher Reserve as there is already a sand pit at the nearby Balfe Park and we try to provide different experiences in each of our upgraded playspaces. Other play elements we are assessing and seeing what will work well in the space.

Several have asked for nature-based play (including logs/rocks and to encourage exploring) to be included in addition to more traditional play equipment. One suggested this could use the north corner of the reserve for this which we agree.

One expressed concern about branches falling from the large tree near the playspace. As mentioned on the Conversations webpage, we are intending to relocate the playspace away from this large tree – also to better support the tree's health – and to ensure that the playspace is not so close to a neighbouring property.

- **Water play**

One individual asked for water play. There is insufficient budget to include water play in this small reserve. We can however include nature-based play using different materials to make the area engaging.

- **Sports related (ball games, table tennis, basketball)**

A few people asked for some ball sports or similar. Currently ball sports are not permitted in this reserve owing to the proximity of neighbouring properties. Inclusion of any sports related elements will need to be carefully considered so that sufficient open space areas can be retained for passive enjoyment (picnics etc). We are intending to retain open lawn areas that can allow for small-scale informal sports/frisbee play can continue though would need to be away from the playspace and gathering space areas.

We are also considering table tennis as this could work better than larger ball sports as it does not require as much space/hard surfacing, has less impact on adjacent mature trees root zones and does not need to be located as far away from the playspace/gathering space area and neighbouring properties.

It is looking unlikely that there will be sufficient budget to allow for fitness equipment stations.

- **Gathering space (seating, drinking fountain, BBQ, shade)**

Several asked for improved seating and a drinking fountain and for this area to be co-located to encourage socialisation. We have already been thinking along similar lines to include such an area near the playspace, in addition to other seats in the reserve.

A few people asked for a BBQ area. We are unsure that this can be accommodated as there may not be sufficient space for this away from the playspace and that strong smells can travel to adjacent properties.

- **Toilets**

A few respondents asked for a toilet.

We cannot include a toilet in this upgrade, partially owing to insufficient budget or physical space but mainly as the nearest public toilet is in Balfe Park (which is only 400m away). 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. Where they are included, it is where there are insufficient public toilets in the vicinity.

- **Possum control**

One individual mentioned that possums are damaging some of the mature trees. We will assess the tree health in the reserve to see if there is possum damage occurring though our arborist team no longer install possum tree guards.

- **Dogs in the park (off-leash / in-leash discussion)**

Several individuals commented on the need to keep the playspace areas protected from dogs. We will look at ways to discourage dogs from being within the playspace areas. To adhere to council policy, dogs must not be within 15m of a playspace and in Fisher Reserve, must be on a leash at all times.

Another commented that they would like the park to be an off-leash park. Fisher Reserve will remain a dog on-leash park. Balfe Park (approximately 400m away) has dog off-leash areas away from the playspace. 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>

- **Space for adults (not just children) and for those of all ages**

One respondent asked that we consider the needs for adults of all ages, including those without children. We will agree with this and will be including areas for all adult ages in the design including gathering spaces and passive recreation, especially in shaded areas where possible.

- **Community gardens**

A few individuals asked for a community garden area. We can consider including a mulched area for locals to grow plants though these would need to be just herbs, vegetables and shrubs, not trees nor can any weed species be planted. Locals would also need to maintain this area themselves including watering.

- **Property sale of adjacent property on Glenlyon Road**

Several respondents asked whether the adjacent property for sale on Glenlyon Road could be acquired by council to extend the reserve further. Under the Park Close to Home initiative, Council acquires properties for sale to build new reserves where there is an identified shortage in open space accessible on foot. In this instance it is unlikely that Council can prioritise purchasing this land as there are already reserves nearby including Fisher Reserve. We understand that the adjacent property is planned to be redeveloped in the near future.

- **Inclusion of the kindergarten in consultation**

A few individuals asked that the adjacent kindergarten are included in the consultation. We have been including them in the consultation process including holding a meeting with them at the kinder to understand their needs.

We will endeavour to address as many of these requirements as possible in the Fisher Reserve design.

3. Draft Concept Plan Consultation Feedback Findings

Council received 22 feedback responses to the draft concept plan consultation. Overall many were supportive of the design with some requests for additional elements.

This feedback has been organised into the following categories (not in order):

- **Sports related (ball games)**

A few people asked for basketball courts or similar ball sports. Currently ball sports are not permitted in this reserve, owing to the proximity of neighbouring properties. This ruling will be retained for this reason. We are able to provide smaller-scale sports such as table tennis to provide locals with an alternative option which is unlikely to be an issue for adjacent properties.

Some respondents support including table tennis.

- **Play equipment for younger children**

Several respondents have asked for play elements (especially the combination unit) to consider very young children (in addition to older children). We will work out how their needs can be accommodated as well.

- **Water play**

One individual asked for water play. There is insufficient budget to include water play in this small reserve. We have included nature-based play using different materials as an alternative form of engagement for children.

- **Dogs in the park**

One respondent flagged up the issue that dog owners are using the park for their dogs which can scare off children from wanting to use the playspace. We are adding new signage to both entries to remind park users that dogs must be on leash at all times in the park and cannot be within 15m of the playspace.

We are unable to provide additional fencing in this small reserve to isolate dogs from children but ask that dog owners manage their dogs in line with this park's dog policy.

- **Shade sails**

We are unable to provide shade sails in this reserve owing to budget constraints. We will assess play equipment (in particular the combination unit) to see if additional shade components can be incorporated with it. Fisher Reserve already has many established trees offering shade and we are planning to include additional shade trees as well. In addition we will look at any repositioning of play equipment as possible to maximise shade benefit.

Unfortunately we need to move the playspace away from the mature eucalypt and property boundary to better protect this tree root zone, reduce the risk of branches dropping and also to reduce any noise impacts to the neighbouring property.

- **Positioning of the picnic setting**

A few respondents commented that the picnic setting is too close to the kindergarten fence. We will look at alternative locations that are also in shaded areas.

- **Toilets**

One respondent queried whether a toilet can be included.

We apologise but still cannot include a toilet in this upgrade, owing to insufficient budget, insufficient physical space (would require removal of open space areas). The nearest public toilet is in Balfe Park (which is only 400m away). Inclusion of public toilets in public open space are subject to Council's public toilet policy and do not generally form part of a small park upgrade. Where they are included, it is where there are insufficient public toilets in the vicinity by much more than this distance.

- **Trees in the reserve and native vegetation**

All trees will be retained in this reserve. Generally we do not remove healthy trees, especially when established. We will assess the condition of the trees as part of the design so that any dying or declining trees are removed and replaced.

A few individuals also asked for native vegetation to be included in new planting. We are planning to include a mostly native planting palette including providing flowering shrubs.

- **Lighting**

Council lighting policy is to only illuminate paths and not playspaces or gathering spaces at night. We don't feel that lighting along the proposed access path is needed in Fisher Reserve since it is a small reserve and there should be sufficient light spillage from street lighting.

- **Adjacent construction site**

A few respondents mentioned that the adjacent construction site should be addressed. From what we understand, the upgrade of this public housing on the adjacent block is a state government-run project and outside council's control.

- **Further seating**

Several respondents asked for additional park benches to watch children in the playspace. We will assess where additional seating can be included for this purpose. We are also considering using log edging for the playspace which can double up as informal seating for carers (and fun for children to climb over).

- **Keeping open green spaces**

One respondent asked that some green space be kept clear for passive recreation activities. We have retained some open lawn areas for this purpose.

4. Revised/final Concept Plan

A summary of the final concept plan will be provided here once this stage of consultation has been reached.

5. Next Steps

The Open Space Design and Development team are currently preparing the revised/final concept plan, using feedback received from the draft and initial consultation stages. Once ready this plan will be displayed to the community on posters at site and on council's Conversations Merri-bek webpage. This completes consultation and the team will then be proceeding to detailed design.

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 111.

7. Appendix

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

8a Initial Consultation



We are upgrading a number of parks in 2023-2024, including Fisher Reserve in Brunswick East. These projects are supported through our Open Space Strategy.

What would you like to see included in this upgrade?
Your ideas can help shape our plans.



conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/fisher-reserve-brunswick-east
openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
9240 1111

Figure 1: Postcards were issued to households within 0.5km of the reserve.

Below is feedback received for the Fisher Reserve:

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
Oct 05 2023	Local Residents feedback	The following list is a compilation of suggestions from local residents. Better lawns and higher level of maintenance across all grounds - this park has had a very poor level of maintenance which has limited its use despite the high demand for public open space in the area. A basketball half court on the Glen Lyon rd. edge - lots of kids from local primary and high schools use the park after school - we'd love to see some equipment for older kids. New playground equipment that can accommodate 3-10yr olds. There is high usage of the park by kinder and primary school kids, but the equipment is dangerously old and poorly maintained. We'd love to see nature play mixed with play equipment. Keep the open areas for running/ball games/kicking a footy - don't lose the long space at the back - it's great to for picnics and dogs - there's very limited spaces like this in the area and with the large number of apartments in the area there is increasing demand for space. Exercise equipment for group training Paved pathways for accessibility connecting Glen Lyon Rd and Noel St Better lighting at night around park edges/play equipment Fencing/planting buffer along Glenlyon Road to prevent small kids from wandering out Rubbish bins located near new play equipment - currently the playground often is blemished by trash Landscaping and new planted areas to alter the paddock feel, which often has very long grass in spring and summer More regular maintenance- the grass and weeds are often left to grow to waist height rendering the park unusable Possum control - ringtail and brushtail possums are destroying several of the mature trees
Oct 05 2023	Great idea to optimise the green space	Very happy that you're working on making the park better. A basketball hoop and barbecue station would be well utilised. Upgrading the children's play area and a buffer between the street and the park would also be most appreciated.
Oct 05 2023	Upcoming sale of the flats at 261 Glenlyon rd.	Haven Home Safe are looking to sell the property at 261 Glenlyon (the derelict flats project). There will be demolition rights. @MERRIBEK, it would make a great extension to Fisher reserve!!
Oct 05 2023	A place for local kids to gather	The local school had (still has?) Friday night gatherings at this park - Slurpie night. Unfortunately the kids often left their rubbish behind (though the bin was not placed conveniently) and the equipment was so dire. Also the grass also gets very long there. However its central location was really great for kids to get together. So maybe a solution that factors in larger groups of kids for after school? water taps, rubbish bins etc
Oct 03 2023	Wood, water and plants	So happy to hear this park is getting some attention. We use it frequently after kinder- we would love to see a playground that's appropriate for kinder age kids as so many kids from EBK use it. Some undercover tables, BBQ and toilet would be wonderful. A playground that considers child development- for example- steps that are easy to negotiate to the smaller slides, without drop offs either side. A wooden style adventure playground and thoughtful native planting would make it an interesting place for kids to explore. In ground small trampolines are loved by kinder age kids . It would be amazing to have a splash park in this area for summer- not a sandy/ muddy one but a proper splash park as taking young kids the pool on your own is difficult- a shady splash park would be great and well used by kinder kids and their siblings! A park that isn't open or connected in any way to an off leash dog park in this area would be welcomed by our family. We are

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
		so tired of trying to protect our kids from dogs running through the playground and kids not being able to run in any open space for fear of being knocked over by dogs 'just being friendly' . There is plenty of room in this park it has so much potential! We hope something really nice comes of it.
Oct 02 2023	Underused park	We have lived locally for years and almost never use the park. It is always dirty with rubbish and long grass. It doesn't feel safe. The unfinished development to the east is an eyesore. It was once a beautiful mid-century cream brick aged care housing complex. Please don't render bricks! Play equipment is old. Play equipment for older kids would be good. Nice seats and garden beds. Keep mature trees.
Oct 02 2023	4 the♥ofcommunityparkland	Greatly appreciate offers of suggestions about upgrade of my local park, as follows: - non-blockout fencing. Everyone deserves to experience a stress reduced and fun time in the park. Protecting our little people is a priority including supporting our older carers of little people who aren't as mobile and quick to keeping up with their little loved ones from fast moving vehicles. - water fountain - large shade and bird attracting trees and shrubs - fun-filled and challenging play scape - community veggie patches - fitness fixtures - defibrillator access Thankyou!
Oct 01 2023	More native vegetation	I agree with some of the other suggestions, more maintenance of the park is needed, as it is often left neglected for long periods. More native trees and vegetation would make the park seem more inviting and add habitat value to the park. I would love to see some of the newer plantings of ash trees and oaks replaced with native trees as well. A community garden would be ideal, as much of the park is left unused. I think the large tree above the playground should also be managed as it has a number of large branches that threaten to break in windy weather. A real concern when young children are playing underneath .
Oct 01 2023	Make it inviting	Agree with quite a few of the comments. Suggestions please for the council: - do something about the development bordering the park. It's unacceptable that it's been left like this for so long. It diminishes the area and park considerably. - please put in planting, E.g. flower / plan beds and lighting and paths and a nicer fence so the park seems inviting. Cutting the grass regularly would also help - can you set aside some space for a small community garden? This could be used by the kindergarten too. - upgrade the playground, E.g. sandpit/water play. The equipment isn't too bad if money didn't allow to replace it. Thank you!
Sep 30 2023	259 Glenlyon Rd - offer to purchase?	Would it be crazy for Council to consider offering to buy the (park locked) sole house at the corner to extend the park?
Sep 30 2023	Community gathering area	Great to have this on the radar finally. However, even if the park is upgraded, the (8+ years?) unfinished next door flats project will continue to create a sense of neglect unless urgently finished or -better still - subsumed into the park area. Please tell us what Council is doing in this regard. There have been so many different ideas raised but it's a rare gem of a green space that just needs better maintenance. We need: the grass (and more frequent mowing) with exotic trees that provide a lush shade canopy to offset the urban heat island effect in immediately neighbouring streets; lighting; more bins for the high schoolers on

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
		their way back from 7-Eleven; dog friendly grassed areas; poo dispensers; upgraded play equipment; better fencing; herb planter boxes/market garden pantry structure for sharing produce; seating; better integration with the kinder space. Finally, I concur with the idea to extend into Glenlyon to calm the crazy traffic.
Sep 25 2023	A hidden gem	I use this park most days with my dog. I really like that it is shady, particularly for summer as most other parks are very exposed. Maintaining or increasing tree coverage would be great. It would be great to have water facilities and more benches. The fencing is very low and ineffectual so it would be great to get something a bit higher, maybe a pathway and better lighting at night. It could benefit from other shared facilities like a BBQ and an updated playground. Part of its charm and difference from the other nearby parks is that it's not a sports field so it's available all the time.
Sep 25 2023	A Colourful Display of Native (Non-Indigenous) Shrubs and Small trees	I would love to see some lovely flowering native shrubs such as grevillea, banksia, white and purple prostanthera, a variety of wattles and small flowering trees such as silver caesia. Fisher is a small park and under-utilised at the moment. There are plenty of indig trees and shrubs in surrounding parks ... Fisher could be made to be attractive in a different way, so why not lash out against the prevailing orthodoxy? A looped cement path around the park beginning and ending at Glenlyon road would also attract people. Three or four park benches would be attractive to elderly people and mothers watching children at play.
Sep 22 2023	Great opportunity for a rejuvenated park	Currently the park is very underutilised despite being the main open space area in the immediate area and with the East Brunswick Kindergarten next door. With the completion of another stage of the nearby East Brunswick Village on Nicholson St the area can expect an increased demand for open spaces. The playground feels very dated with poor quality equipment that is frequently dirty and not consistent with the standard of similar areas within the Merri-Bek area (e.g. Kirkdale Reserve Playground). The grass is often long in spring and summer and rubbish accumulates. Ideally the park would have a change in landscaping to cut down on the paddock feel and bins near new and updated equipment to encourage people to dispose of trash. With relatively low-cost enhancements, such as a new playground equipment and thoughtful landscaping, the park could be a fantastic resource in a growing area.
Sep 22 2023	A place for all	We live very close, but prefer to go to Fleming or Balfe Park. Toilets and communal seating areas would make it more inviting. Water play is a bonus and something for big kids to play ball games etc. Well maintained grass and plants would be lovely. It often feels a bit dark and unappealing. I'm looking forward to the upgrade!
Sep 21 2023	A community hub for all ages	Bulleke Bek playground should be of guidance in creating an inviting, landscaped focal point for the local community where the youngest can play on wooden equipment and the older can sit around, walk their dogs, bounce a ball or knit if they want to. A green piazza for days and evenings, for market or gatherings. Glenlyon is unnecessary large for the area so I would take over a chunk and make it more friendly for walkers and bikes. Finally, that abandoned building site just next to it has to go — its looming decay is a turn off and encourages vandalism.
Sep 21 2023	Facilities for all	Thanks for upgrading this park! This is right near our home but we don't use it as playground is rundown and the space is not inviting. As a large space there is a lot of opportunity to make this a neighbourhood hub. For younger kids, an upgraded playground is needed and facilities for older kids to use in the neighbourhood would be fantastic like a basketball court and place to gather safely. Current signs about not playing ball sports means neighbourhood kids can't

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
		use the park. It would also be great to have some space for adults to feel welcome to spend time. Thank you!
Sep 20 2023	Soccer goal for older kids	My kids would love to have a soccer goal, and an area to shoot goals with a wall behind.
Sep 20 2023	More active	My son asked for monkey bars or other more active play like climbing.
Sep 20 2023	Water/Toilets	Would be good have some toilets. A drinking fountain. A water play area. There's a fairly new playground on Cardinal St in Glenroy that has a great water play area. That would be awesome in the summer. A BBQ area.
Sep 20 2023	Basketball Court	As a teenager I would love to see a basketball ring hoop/ court. This would allow my friends and I and other members of the community to gather and have fun. It wouldn't take up too much space at all allowing for other things like a playground, BBQ area/ picnic tables and even a small work out space
Sep 19 2023	Drawing in community	Would love to see something that removes the lengthy grass and makes the area inviting. a push to include garden (perhaps an edible one in collaboration with the kindergarten community), an area to host a weekend farmer's market and an upgraded playground. the main issue with the space currently is that falls into disarray quickly.
Sep 18 2023	Table tennis table and badminton	Hello, it would be good for older kids to have a table tennis and badminton play areas. These can also be utilised by adults. These do not take much space but provide a lot of ways to entertain and provide activity/exercise.
Sep 18 2023	Exciting opportunity	This is a really exciting opportunity. It is a big space and there is a growing demand for well thought-out public space, especially for children, in this increasingly dense inner urban area. This park needs to have sufficient infrastructure and amenity for the literally THOUSANDS of people, including families, moving into and using EBV in the future. Hopefully some of the EBV community fund which was part of their planning permit can be utilised for this project. You need pathways, seating, permanent shade, and a higher standard of play equipment for all ages and abilities, including for very young children. Consider fencing an area off for the little ones like Park Street Reserve in Yarra. The Royal Park Nature Playground is another excellent example with a fantastic array of water play and nature elements which are so popular with children, particularly during warmer weather. Something like that would be great. You need lighting (isn't this council's responsibility?) to deter anti-social behaviour particularly given the abandoned building site next door, and to ensure all users of the park feel safe at all times. Bins with dog poo dispensers should also be installed. Planter boxes for herbs, again, like Yarra have on their footpaths, would be great. Native trees, garden beds and landscaping, well maintained grassed areas would all be beneficial.
Sep 18 2023	Lots of potential	A shaded and updated play space is very much needed and would help improve the community. We use the playground after kinder and on the weekends but find the equipment is broken and unsafe. Our five year old would love a train as part of the playground.

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
Sep 17 2023	Nature playground	Finally, there's some action being taken to improve this space! It's been a sad and neglected area for too long, but it has so much potential. We live just around the corner and have been avoiding it due to various issues. Over the past few years, I've witnessed litter and bird droppings everywhere, teenagers loitering around the large slide, public urination at the Noel Street entrance, and even a dog jumping on me while walking through. Safety should be a top priority. My kids are fond of nature playgrounds constructed from wood, featuring climbing structures, monkey bars, slides, treehouses, stepping logs, and swings. They also love basketball courts and open grass areas to kick a ball. I completely agree with the other commenter who suggested making the entrances more welcoming and accessible. Indeed, those abandoned units at the back should be concealed or removed somehow. It would greatly improve the overall appearance and atmosphere of the area.
Sep 17 2023	Better Playground	The Fisher Reserve park looks very old and dated and unsafe with the play equipment falling apart. I would recommend creating a new wooden playground and a basketball court for older kids to play and a dedicated area for dogs as my kids have almost been bitten twice by dogs in the park.
Sep 14 2023	So much potential... currently very underutilised	As others have mentioned, the tired play equipment needs replacing. Something with natural / wood elements would be preferred over plastic. Royal Park Nature Playground, Methven Park and Bulleke-Bek park are good examples. Large climbing structures (like at Douglas Reserve) would suit older kids and/or a small basketball court? Sand and water play is always great for little ones! The Reserve is desperately calling out for landscaping and seating, as well as more accessible entrances, especially to play equipment. Council should also consider handing over the small strip of land between East Brunswick Kindergarten and the abandoned flats to EBK - it would be much better utilised by the kindergarten, and will create clean boundary lines. It would be odd to leave this strip as parkland, but if it was to remain as part of the Reserve, perhaps it could be a small community garden with raised planter beds? Lastly, I note from other submissions that people like to give their dogs a run at this park. Totally valid, Brunswick is doggo central! But if this is the case, it would be great to have the playground fenced off as it isn't a large park like Fleming, so the chances of dogs and little children mixing are much higher. It's safer for all to have the playground fenced if dogs will be off leash.
Sep 14 2023	Lots of potential	Our family loves this space but the facilities are lacking. Paths for accessibility, bins and a toilet would be amazing. More plants and shade. Nature play - rocks, logs. Keeping little kid play areas a bit separate from dog play areas would be important. Looking forward to seeing what comes out of planning.
Sep 13 2023	Tube slide and monkey bars and a skate ramp	The park needs a tube slide and monkey bars. And a skateboard ramp in the far corner. Thanks Elliott (8 y.o.)
Sep 12 2023	Monkey bars !!!	Monkey bars and some off-lead areas for dogs would be great.
Sep 11 2023	Consider East Brunswick Kindergarten	I use this park for kicking the football and climbing with my children 4 and 7. The northern 1/4 is an unusable wasteland, the climbing frame is sad, and the small entry to Noel St uninviting. Dealing with these drawbacks is important. However 2. Any renovations should involve consultation with staff and committee of EBK and should permit and strongly consider future or present expansion to the north or west of the park (i.e. east or south of the current kindergarten boundary). Most kindergartens are land locked and unable to be expanded despite increasing need for childcare and kindergarten and state and federal policies to match. Merri-bek has a once in a generation chance to get this right. But even if not properly future proofing , the emergency exits, etc and shared fencing need consideration. 3. The park should include a covered barbecue area.

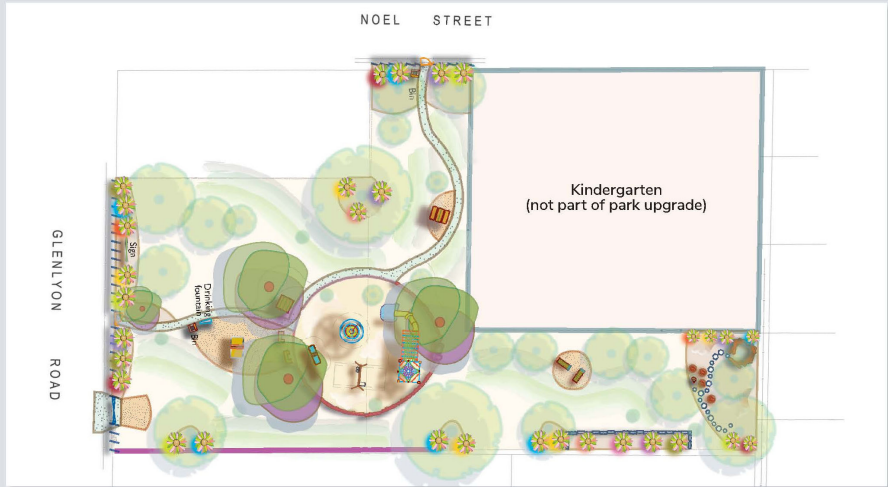
Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
		4. Parks like this should include something for older children and teens: basketball, soccer, etc. 5. However please do not lose all space for kicking a football, games of soccer.
Sep 11 2023	Nature play	It would be great to swap some of the grass for mulch around the trees, add some feature mounds with low maintenance plantings, park benches, landscaping to provide a barrier to the road. Landscaping to provide a barrier to graffiti boarding along flats. A timber log play area like they have at the German School or Royal Childrens Hospital would be preferred over standard plastic play equipment. So much potential- thanks for making a difference! Agree make it all ages friendly, I'm sure there are some elderly people who would like to sit in a safe park space. Would love not to have to walk past the overflowing bin on Glenlyon Rd each day!
Sep 11 2023	Underutilised with great trees	So much potential and agree with others that upgraded play equipment (including for older kids) and facilities would be great. It is a great space for dogs and many people use it for a romp with their furry friends, so it would be nice to keep this aspect of it.
Sep 11 2023	Access for all	This park over the 20 years that I have lived here has catered for all age groups, parks are not for just little kids, many teenagers also use this place and lots of dogs that have all played hear. Add native trees and understory to also attract birds, bees and bats!! Definitely need pollinators in these urban areas. The neighbours across the road with the double story house, fills this one single bin regularly which ends up overflowing.
Sep 11 2023	Has great potential	This park has some amazing potential. Great and quiet location for kids to enjoy the space. It is commonly frequented by the children of EBK (kindergarten next door) and play equipment suitable for 2–6-year-olds will greatly benefit the kinder kids. We can get inspiration from Bulleke-Bek Playground for an interactive space.
Sep 11 2023	Under-utilised space	This is a play space that I seek to avoid with my kids as it seems poorly maintained. It would need bins, grass cut and a simple toilet to make the space more usable. Having a range of play equipment, including "risky play" for older children. Not just tiny kid's equipment.
Sep 11 2023	So much potential	We would use this park so much more if there was shade over the play area and not as much grass (rumoured snake bite last year during summer?!?). Upgrade of play equipment, more facilities e.g. park benches and taps, tables, shade, BINS!!! and better access from Glenlyon Rd and Noel St. So much potential to become a well-used and much loved community space, especially given the proximity to kinder. Thanks for making this happen, looking forward to the end product.
Sep 11 2023	Such an opportunity for improvement	We've lived locally for years, and had two kids through the East Brunswick kindergarten. The established trees are lovely and such as asset. It would be great to see the kids play spaces to allow for more free range nature play, landscaping with rocks and logs that allow for climbing and exploring - not just play equipment that is often age specific. Free play in the tucked away northern corner would be great as its not near the road. It would be great to see a central space for parents/others to sit and observe - but also connect with each other. A scoping of the site to allow for zones for free play/dogs/roaming, a place for play equipment, and a place for informal gathering. Please make best use of the trees to provide effective shade - as so many Merri-bek parks/play spaces are not well shaded. Finally, please seek effective engagement with the kinder community as it's a great way for the kinder families to connect alongside the facility.

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
Sep 07 2023	A buffer from the road would be a good start.	We live quite close but don't regularly use this park. We go to Kirkdale reserve for the water pump, BBQs and peaceful surrounds. Even though Glenlyon Rd should a local road here the speed limit is still 50km/h (!!) so the road noise and danger is unpleasant. A native-planted buffer would help somewhat. The area at the back is an odd space and could be hard to use practically. If a "wild" water feature with native plants was possible that would be amazing (but probably expensive!), but perhaps as density increases around Merri-bek there might be more need for community garden plots where people can grow their own food.
Sep 07 2023	Looking forward to seeing this opportunity realised!	Fisher Reserve currently isn't attractive at all for our family, which is quite disappointing. We're fortunate to live in Brunswick East and have access to Merri Creek and Fleming Park, but it would be wonderful if our nearest park offered an enjoyable and safe environment for kids and adults alike, with consideration of dogs as well. Currently, the play equipment is pretty bleak, worn out, and not fun for kids to enjoy safely. We moved from central Brunswick and our 4 year old still talks about wanting to go back to Bulleke Bek and Warr Parks as more enjoyable locations, so perhaps some inspiration could be taken from what's on offer there. It would be nice to contrast with Kirkdale Park to provide options for people living on the eastern side of Nicholson St. With the large amount of people moving into East Brunswick Village, it will also be important for their most local park to be useable for everyone - people will cross Nicholson and go down Sumner and Noel Sts, in preference to Fleming Park, I believe. The park could complement rather than replicate some of the utilities available to them (e.g. lots of BBQs may not be necessary as there are a few rooftop options there; open, safe, shaded space for play and picnic gatherings may be more important, and would make use of the big old trees). I would suggest that EBV residents and the local childcare centre EBKCC that backs onto the park should be priorities for inclusion in consultation.
Oct 16 2023	Group submission by email	Group submission from the Sumner Street Neighbourhood Group. We are an organised group of over 40 local residents who have worked successfully with council on several occasions for improvements to our neighbourhood. We are excited about a commitment to upgrade and maintain Fisher Reserve. We thank you for your commitment to our shared places. [attachment].
Sept 22 2023	Email submission	It is great to see that Fisher Reserve is being upgraded. As a resident from Glenlyon Rd we have two pieces of feedback which we hope that you will be able to incorporate in the planned activity. It is often very disappointing to see the bin on the Glenlyon rd. face of the park overflowing with rubbish. It would be great to see extra bins here, including recycling and green waste. I reckon the current bin overflows at least once a month. If there are more users after the upgrade it would be a shame to see amenity detracted by waste. Also, can you include as much native vegetation as possible. The adjacent green space in that section of east Brunswick are areas like the Northcote high and Brunswick zebras sports grounds which have short grass and high levels of human activity. Fisher reserve has some lovely mature canopy which sustains a surprising amount of bird life, we have seen tawny frogmouths, kookaburras, wattlebirds and two types of honeyeater here. It would be good to see the park have a range of understory vegetation of different sizes, this would help native birds to stay in the area and provide a refuge against dogs when they are off leash.

8b Draft Concept Plan Consultation

Fisher Reserve is getting a makeover!

We want to hear what you think



We are upgrading the playspace and park infrastructure at Fisher Reserve, Brunswick East.

We have used your initial feedback to develop a draft concept plan and would like your feedback on the design.



Join the conversation

We want to hear what you think!

Scan the code or visit the URL below to have your say.



conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/fisher-reserve
openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au
9240 1111

Feedback closes Friday 15 February 2024

Merri-bek Language Link

Italiano	Italian	9280 1911
Ελληνικά	Greek	9280 1912
عربي	Arabic	9280 1913
Türkçe	Turkish	9280 1914
Tiếng Việt	Vietnamese	9280 1915
नेपाली	Nepali	9280 0751
普通话	Chinese (Simplified)	9280 0750

National Relay Service:
13 36 77 or relayservice.com.au

Figure 2: Postcards were issued to households within 0.5km of the reserve.

8c Draft Concept Plan Consultation Responses

Below is feedback received for Fisher Reserve during the Draft Concept Plan consultation:

Date Submitted	Description
18 February 2024	Better landscaping is great. Adventure play and older kids play is good. Will there still be space to kick a ball? Not sure anyone will use the table tennis tables after the first month. Could it be something different? BBAII?
16 February 2024	The new playground looks excellent. Water play stations wherever possible would be amazing too. Wondering if putting a fence through the park might be a good idea for all the dogs. It's always been used a bit of dog park but with the new fence (which is great by the way), it has become more of a doggy hang out and the kids are too scared to go in. Obviously the dogs need somewhere to go but the kids also need to be safe. A fence sectioning the park will make it safe, keep the dogs and dog poo out of the playground area and make us all feel a bit safer. More signage for the dog on lead areas would be great too please as the dog owners are totally disregarding it. Some aggressive dogs are using this space too off lead. There are a family of magpies that reside in this space, have done for years and the dogs are starting to chase them as well.

Date Submitted	Description
10 February 2024	I support the new design, looks great! However please consider adding a shade sail to the playground. Have a look at Edinburgh Gardens North, or Holden Street Reserve for examples. It would make the space much more popular and climate resilient.
9 February 2024	The plan is very basic and disappointing. Given the large influx of residents into the local area (particularly apartment residents who will want to access open spaces), and the significant council rates the influx of residents will generate, Council should be investing more in this large space to ensure it is maximised and is accessible by all members of the community. The South Ward is often forgotten by Merri-bek in terms of community infrastructure and facilities. Demand is very high now given the EBC development and thousands of new residents in this corner of Merri-Bek. Council should commit more funding for a more sophisticated design. This design doesn't adequately cater for younger children in the sub 4 year old age bracket. Young children can't climb on ropes and cross bars. There should be shade provided over play equipment. Money should not be wasted decorating temporary hoarding which will eventually be removed by permanent fencing. Nature play elements should include water elements, which should be possible within the budget given the site is going to be plumbed for a drink fountain. Insect hotels are cheap and not a design feature. I can say that based on the proposed design I would not be going out of my way to visit this park.
7 February 2024	The plans are looking really great! A huge improvement. Would be good for the play equipment to have a shade sail if it's moving away from the trees. Playground equipment should suit little ones too (under 3's). Having the picnic table right near the fence with the kindergarten seems an odd choice.
6 February 2024	The draft concept plan is a really positive improvement on the current park offering at Fisher Reserve. Our family is excited for the upgrade. The addition of the nature-based play area, community garden, mural, diverse garden beds and a path through the park are all very welcome additions. It would be beneficial for the following to be considered in subsequent iterations: - Ensuring adequate shade (shade structure) for the play equipment if it is to be moved away from established trees. There are not enough play spaces in the local area that offer shade, which makes many unusable during the warmer months. - Ensuring the play equipment is also usable for infants and toddlers (0-2) who benefit from climbing and exploration, but are often overlooked in playground design (i.e. - the play structures at Fleming and Methven Parks cannot be used by children under at least 18months, even older!) Others like Balfe and Jones Parks at least have stairs that children in this age group can access for independent, but supervised exploration. Will local parents get a further opportunity to feedback on the playground design? While I appreciate catering to children aged 3-10 from the local kinder and schools as mentioned in the consultation summary report, many of these children have younger siblings. Children aged under 3 use parks too... arguably more so! As a stay-at-home parent to two children under 3, playing at the park is a daily activity for us. - Moving the picnic area (seating) to a different location which is away from the boundary fence of the kindergarten - As a parent to young children, a toilet would greatly improve our experience at this upgraded reserve. I understand Council's position on this in the consultation report, however, to suggest that park users go to Balfe Park when in need of a toilet (which is more than the 400m walk noted in the report, and across a busy road) does not factor in the user experience for most families, and is frankly impractical. Thank you for what is shaping up to be a really great new space for the local community to enjoy :)
31 January 2024	The playground equipment and nature play space looks good I can't tell if the current trees are being kept but if they are not then I would really like for them to be kept
31 January 2024	The park needs lighting as walking past at night feels really unsafe. I don't know how table tennis would work but agree with the other suggestions. Retain the existing trees. Also the abandoned construction site next to the park needs attention & should be demolished or upgraded. It is a blight on the area.
31 January 2024	I encourage consideration of whether a shade structure could be incorporated over some/all of the playground. The UV during the warmer months in the central area of the park can be very high and a shade structure would provide some protection to children and adults, and encourage all day use. Otherwise I am supportive of the overall plan.
31 January 2024	I think the plan is looking terrific. I would like to see a few more park benches - at least two for parents who need to sit down and watch children in the play area. Another one at the northern end and perhaps one or two in the southern end at the back of the Noel St building and facing into the park. Also, as I requested last

Date Submitted	Description
	time, can we have colourful grevillea, some banksias, prostanthera and other native (not necessarily indig.) shrubs to add colour and interest. Also, a bed of kangaroo paws would be terrific and would attract honey-eaters.
30 January 2024	Looks like a lovely plan. Please consider lighting for safety. The site is quite long and narrow with potential dark corners.
28 January 2024	After reviewing the consultation report and reading that a suggested water play space cannot be included due to budget restraints is disappointing. As an example, the children's garden in the botanic garden has a simple concrete pad with water jets that run through a cycle which kids adore having a splash in. This possibly can't cost too much and if it is assumed it should, perhaps contractors should be questioned for price gouging. Not sure why the size of the reserve impacts this also. Why is it not possible to have a small reserve with a unique feature? For plant selection, please consider sourcing plants from VINC (Victorian Indigenous Nurseries Co-Operative) or La Trobe's plant nursery (Nangak Tamboree Wildlife Sanctuary Indigenous Nursery).
28 January 2024	Please consider waterplay facilities as there is not anything like this in a large radius from this area and please consider using local plants sourced from VINC (Victorian indigenous nurseries co-operative).
27 January 2024	I support the addition of the table tennis table. It offers a varied sports activity for all ages beyond the usual basketball. Consideration of a green space for adults should be kept sufficiently large enough to host impromptu activities such as boules or frisbee. Path infrastructure needs improvement, as it is currently non existent. Natural pathing material should be considered where possible.
27 January 2024	Must allow dogs to be off leash in certain area to run!
27 January 2024	I hope this plan also allows dogs to run off leash, I live around the corner and use this park for my border collie and honestly, this park gets utilised more my neighbours with dogs than anyone else throughout the day.
26 January 2024	Lots of good ideas. Swing for little ones with safety harness please. I like the big climbing equipment with wobbly steps and combination of open weave grid and solid flooring in Edinburgh Gardens and often walked there from Dudley St Fitzroy with grandchildren. The example pictures in the design are all open weave. Two slides of different heights for different ages coming off the climbing structures would be great. An area of running water similar to Bulleke Bek park playground would be nice too. Great idea to join paths from Noel St to Glenlyon Rd. Thank you for this opportunity.
26 January 2024	I think it's wonderful that Merri-bek is improving this under-utilized park. With so much apartment development in the area, we need lots of green space for the community. I'd like to see lots of seating and more green vegetation the better. I love the street art you're putting on the temporary hoarding around the empty half-finished apartment block next door. Lots more street art to deter the tagging that's blighting our streets. Thank you for this development
25 January 2024	I like the plan. Well done. There is a dying pine and a dead gum at the north end of the park. I would like to see both of them removed/replaced, and the pine in the very north east corner of the kinder is really messy, and underneath is a pine-needle wasteland. I know it's just out of the park boundary, but it's still council, and that tree should be replaced with something more appropriate before it gets 10m taller. Poor (and cheap) planting decision of the past!
25 January 2024	Thank for this great plan! It is such a good start with some excellent inclusions. A few pointers: Most essential - Shade structure over playground. Without this, the playground is not useable for most of the day during summer. This should be the absolute top priority in the budget, above anything else. If there is insufficient budget, PLEASE request the council provide a separate source of funding for this element of the park. Highly desirable: Inclusion of some equipment that is suitable for toddlers (e.g., not too high and can be accessed by little people independently - like getting to the slide via steps rather than a rope ladder, with no drops off the side). There is a shortage of this type of play equipment in the area. Desirable: -Seats right next to the play equipment for carers to sit and supervise their children/talk to other parents -Water play would be fantastic! E.g., like in Bulleke-bek park (if extra budget is allocated) Other:

Date Submitted	Description
	Regarding biodiversity, please be mindful of the kindergarten if the proposed insect nest box will attract a large amount of bees to the area. 3 and 4 year olds are still learning to not touch bees (like my child), and there is risk of adverse reactions to stings while at kinder. Maybe this is not an issue (I'm not a bee expert), however I would like to flag it just in case.
25 January 2024	All looks good, but can the design team please give special consideration on how to maximise shade over the kids play spaces? The trees are an asset, and unfortunately other local parks are very lacking on shaded play in the heat of the day. Thanks
25 January 2024	Missed opportunity to include facilities for older kids - the public basketball hoops nearby are heavily utilized, often by young adults. This would be a great place to include another so the older kids get a go. Love the tennis table.

8d Revised/final Concept Plan

Below shows the revised/final concept plan. This will also be displayed at the reserve and on Conversations Merri-bek webpage.

FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

Council is upgrading the playspace and park infrastructure at Fisher Reserve, Brunswick East. We have listened to your feedback on the draft concept plan and used this to develop this final concept plan. This concludes consultation, we are now working on the detailed design.

This final plan is also shown on:

<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/fisher-reserve>

Proposed upgrades:

- New gathering space area on gravel paving with platform seat, backed seats and table tennis, accessible drinking fountain. New picnic and lounge seat areas, with one of the picnic settings moved away from the kinder
- New concrete path connecting both entries and the playspace/gathering space area
- New playspace amended to focus on junior children (junior combination unit with slides and climbing elements, double swing with sling seat/toddler seat, spinning rope play, multi-user rockers and domed cubby). Surrounding log edging also offers informal seating
- New nature-based play area in the north corner (including a log 'nest', an animal sculpture, stepping paths and timber steppers)
- Additional colourful garden beds with native planting. We are also including a community garden area where you can grow your own small shrubs/herbs/veggies (to be maintained by the community)
- Additional native trees for shade and colourful garden beds. We may also include insect nest boxes to further support biodiversity.

We will be repositioning the playspace area away from the large tree and neighbouring property to a more central position.

Street art has since been installed on the neighbouring hoarding fencing to provide interest and reduce the graffiti (on the eastern side of the reserve). Taller park fencing with self-closing gates have been installed to improve child safety in the reserve.

Note that this park remains a dog on-leash space and dogs must not be within 15m of the playspace.



Example insect hotel



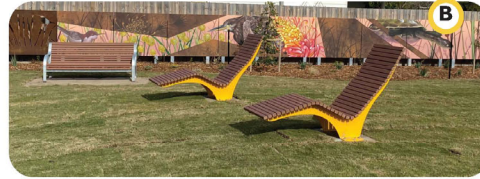
Colour palette inspired by native trees



(Example images)



A



B

Lounge seats area for relaxing



C

Possible community garden bed area
(for small shrubs/herbs/veggies only)



D

Nature-based play area with animal sculpture,
log seats, stepping trail, log 'nest' & shrub planting



E



F



G

New native
flowering garden beds
& trees



Gathering space area with mixture of seating, table tennis, drinking
fountain and waste bin. Custom flora and fauna design applied to table tennis



H

Accessible curved concrete path connecting both entries,
playspace and gathering space, with stencil motifs



New playspace to suit junior children

Figure 3: Final concept plan.