



Merri-bek
City Council

Calder Reserve

Park & play upgrade

Consultation summary report

Prepared by

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Open Space Design & Development Unit

May 2026

Revision A

Revision A: initial consultation summary - May 2026



Calder Reserve Upgrade – Phase 1 Consultation summary report

Consultation summary report

May 2026

Calder Reserve in Patterson Street in Coburg, is a small local park located in a cul-de-sac. It comprises a small play space, trees and open lawn area. It has been determined ready for a park and play upgrade according to Merri-bek City Council's Open Space and Playspace strategies.

This report provides a summary of the Calder Reserve consultation – Phase 1, Gathering Ideas.

1. Background

This report covers a summary of the consultation phases for Calder Reserve park and play upgrade. This first phase is "Gathering Ideas" to inform design of the Draft Concept Plan.

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 play space area, not the surrounding areas such as roads, car parking, lighting and services
- This park will remain a 'Dog on-leash' Park
- Unless trees are dead or in decline, they will not be removed as part of the works
- A water connection will be made to the park, and the existing light pole will be removed
- 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 Calder St 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 is being used as inputs to developing the draft concept plan, now in progress. This initial phase of engagement closed in March 2026.

- **Draft Concept Plan Consultation**

Using results from the initial consultation, Council is now developing a draft concept plan using the local community's initial input. The draft concept plan will be shared for comment in advance of a Popup in the Park, to be scheduled for June 2026 (TBC).

- **Final Concept Plan Consultation**

The final concept plan will be issued at a future date. It will reflect changes from the draft concept plan, incorporating the community's feedback where possible. The final concept plan will be posted on the project web page for all to see. This will close the consultation process, prior to the Open Space team proceeding to detailed design for construction later in 2026.

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Consultation timing

- Initial consultation: Mid–February to March 2026
- Draft concept plan consultation: Late-May to Early-July 2026
- Revised/final concept plan issued: Aug-Sept 2026 (TBC)

2. Initial consultation

Initial community engagement for Calder Reserve, Phase 1, was conducted mid-February to mid-March 2026. For the initial community engagement, we dropped post cards in the letterbox to residents in the area around Calder Reserve. With those post cards, we were notifying the community of the proposed Park and Play Upgrade, and inviting people to submit feedback through the website, by email or telephone.

Posters were also put up at the park with a QR code link to the Merri-bek website, so that anyone visiting the park was made aware of the community engagement and could participate in the process.

3. Initial consultation feedback findings

Council received a total of 31 contributions from 30 contributors who provided feedback to the initial consultation from the Conversations website.

This feedback has been organised into a Phase 1 Feedback Summary, detailing all the individual contributions provided, and that is included as an attachment to this Report.

4. Phase 1 consultation findings

Phase 1 of consultation was about “Gathering Ideas”, and we heard from people that they really value Calder Reserve as a place to enjoy open space, connect with nature and enjoy some outdoor activity.

The feedback we received is helpful in identifying the range of things people would like to see in an upgraded version of the park. It also showed how much passion there is in the community for having this open space in their neighbourhood.

We also heard that people have been waiting a long time to some improvements in Calder Reserve and we couldn't help but notice a sense of “it's about time” in some of the feedback.

What We Heard

The overall message is that people in this community want Calder Reserve to offer much more in the range of activities that can be enjoyed there, providing for multi-generational activity. People are also looking for there to be greater variety for children through provision of more play options.

While there were a few suggestions for Calder Reserve to accommodate more for dogs, such as fencing it in, most of the feedback was focussed on improving the park experience for people. While the most contributions were focussed on provision for play, including nature-based play and accessible play, there were also suggestions for improving the natural environment through tree planting, native planting and planting for biodiversity.

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There were also suggestions for improvements to park infrastructure such as more seating and seating with backs and arm rests, picnic tables and additional bins. People also identified the need for drinking fountains.

All the individual suggestions for improvements are summarised in the “Wish List” column of the Summary that is attached to this report.

We will work to include as many of those requirements as possible in preparing the Draft Concept Plan for Calder Reserve. At the time of completing this report, we can advise that a water connection has been made and a water meter installed in the reserve. This enable us eventually to connect a drink fountain and, potentially, irrigation for new tree planting and garden beds.

5. Next steps

The response to the initial phase of engagement for Calder Reserve has been great. All the feedback we’ve received is welcome and is already proving helpful in guiding our early thinking on what needs to be kept, changed, improved or added as part of the upcoming concept design for upgrading Calder Reserve.

The next phase to follow will start with us circulating the Draft Concept Plan to the community. Phase 2 engagement will be kicked off by post card distribution, inviting feedback on the draft plan through the Conversations Merri-bek website.

We’re excited to have Phase 2 of engagement also include a Popup in the Park and look forward to the chance to meet with everyone who’s able to come and share thoughts on the Draft plan. The post cards to be distributed will confirm details of the Popup to be held in June 2026.

At that time, there will be explanation of what is proposed and the decision-making that went into items that may or may not be included in the Draft Concept Plan.

All feedback received in the next phase will be considered in a review of Draft proposals, before releasing the Final Concept Plan as we prepare for upgrading works to be carried out at Calder Reserve, planned for completion in the second half of 2026.

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.

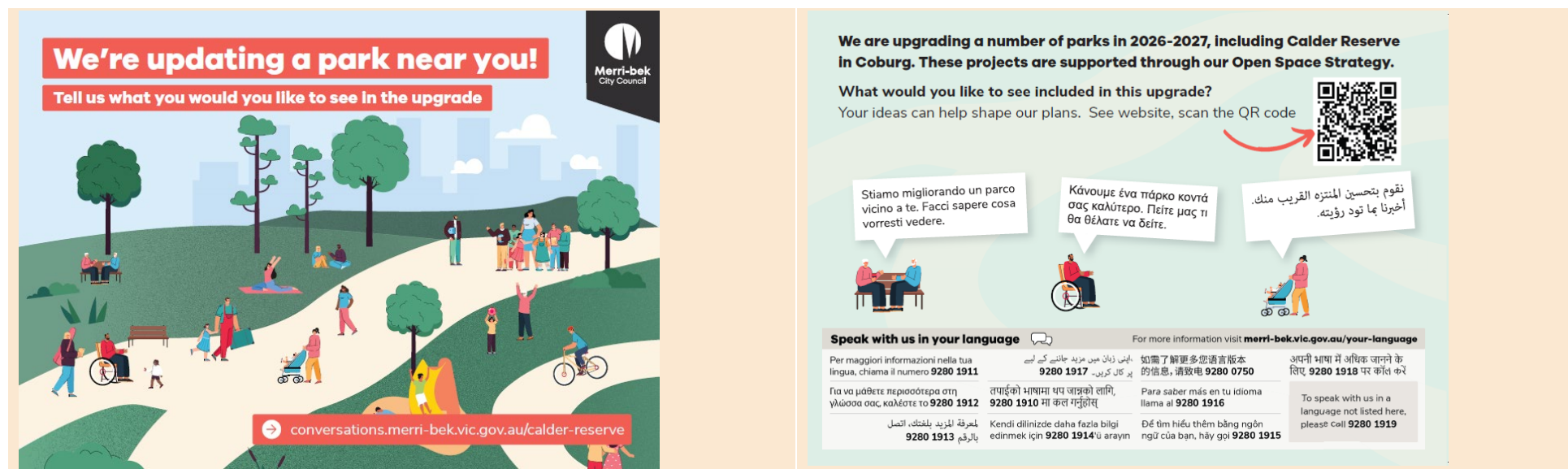
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7. Appendix

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

8a Initial consultation

Figure 1: Postcards were issued to households within 0.4km of the reserve



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Following is attachment with all feedback received in Phase 1 Engagement for the Calder Reserve Park & Play Upgrade.

Calder Reserve | Gathering Ideas

Question: Share your experience of Calder Reserve

Tool: Gather

Date Range: 19 Feb 2026 - 11 Mar 2026

Date Retrieved: 17 Mar 2026

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
	Love this project! Upgraded swings, sandpit, nature based play area, features for older kids/teens, more shaded seating and a table.	
	More native bushes and foliage to make it feel less barren (And provide better spots for our games of hide and seek!)	
	Would support a bike/pump track around the perimeter (if space and budget permits).	Swings, Nature Play, Sand Play, Shaded Seating, Native Planting, Pump Track, Empty Bins
Mar 05, 2026	A regular bin pickup (or more regular) would be an easy win...	
Mar 04, 2026	I'd like to see strength exercise equipment installed like at Coburg lake so we can improve our fitness.	Outdoor Exercise Equipment
Mar 04, 2026	Finally! This upgrade is long overdue. Please use Service St playground as inspiration, it's great for kids of all different ages and lots of different play equipment that it doesn't get boring for them. Key features include: 2 slides for different abilities, various levels to the play equipment for exploring, a climbing wall, swings for babies & big kids (and pointing away from the afternoon sun), cargo net, water play fountain, widespread rubber matting instead of tan bark everywhere, a community garden, rocks for exploring/climbing (like at Gaffney St). A pump track would be great, but even just a path around the perimeter for kids to ride bikes/scooters would be a great addition. Picnic tables in the shade of the beautiful trees. Pool gate entry is a must - Service St is not safe because little kids can escape!	Multiple Play options, Rubber Matting, Climbing Wall, Water Play, Pump Track, Child Safe Gate, Shaded Picnic Table
Mar 04, 2026	A half basketball court for bigger kids and adults to use, and some additional play equipment like a rock climbing wall for smaller kids. Some bench seating and picnic tables in shade (e.g. tall trees) and more native garden beds around the perimeter of the property.	Basketball Half-court, Climbing Wall, Shaded Seating, Native Planting

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
Mar 03, 2026	It would be good to see this park fenced with gates for entry so it can serve as place for dogs to play. Besides North Coburg, there's no other dog park in Coburg. With some trees, gravelled section with large boulders and logs, seating for humans, etc, it could be a solution many of us would love to see. If not this park, then how about creating an enclosed dog park within de Chene Reserve near Merri Creek off Bell St? It would be ideal.	Enclosed Dog Park, Fencing, Tree Planting, Seating,
Mar 01, 2026	More trees and native plants to create shade and attract birds. Native garden and playspace inspired by Service St playground would be awesome. Fencing and gate to create a safe enclosed space for little ones to run about. Play equipment for young and older children e.g 2 different slides and climbing frames. More seating with shade. Have the swings face away from the afternoon sun. More natural play elements and equipment like logs and rocks for kids to climb on.	Tree Planting for Birds, Fenced Play Area, Multiple Play Options, Shaded Seating, Nature Play, Service St template
Mar 01, 2026	Dear council I strongly believe, that Calder reserve should have more play equipment for big and little kids. Like ,a rock climbing wall, little trampolines plus some extra stuff like a tennis wall and a table for a picnic and a little more trees.	Tree Planting, Multiple Play Options, Climbing Wall, Trampolines, Tennis Wall, Picnic Setting,
Mar 01, 2026	There are no off-lead dog parks (fenced or otherwise) within walking distance. We need somewhere to exercise our dogs, not more playgrounds.	Fenced Dog Park
Feb 28, 2026	We are frequent park users and would love to see some monkey bars, climbing wall and potentially a splash pad. It would be great if the equipment was properly shaded and not with black platforms. More seating and a shaded picnic table would be great and it would be great to see a native garden that attracts the birds. If you had the space a pump track would be amazing.	Monkey Bars, Climbing Wall, Splash Pad, Shade Hoods, Shaded Seating, Picnic Table, Planting for Birds, Pump Track
Feb 26, 2026	Hi I believe there should be - Taps - BBQ - Shelter - New playground - A fence line	- Taps - BBQ - Shelter - New playground - Fencing
Feb 26, 2026	I've always said this park would be perfect for an outdoor exercise station. Something like the image attached would be the dream but hey, I'd be happy with a chin-up and dip bar at the very least.	Outdoor Exercise Equipment

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
Feb 26, 2026,	Thank you for upgrading the park. We would love to see: •A modern playground •A water play area •A sandpit •A pump track for bikes and scooters •Secure fencing around the playground The large tree in the corner should also be assessed and removed to improve the layout and usability of the space. We hope this upgrade creates a standout, family-friendly destination for the community.	•A modern playground •A water play area •A sandpit •A pump track for bikes and scooters •Fenced Play Space Remove large tree (Cypress) for more space
Feb 26, 2026,	We would love to see something similar to the Service St Playground. Different surfaces and little hills to play on, maybe with a little bike track around the outside. Some shade, seating and lots of plants would be great too	Bike Track, Undulating Surfaces, Shaded Seating, Planting, Service St template
Feb 26, 2026,	Can't wait for the works to start. We moved to the area around 5&1/2 years ago, the first we did is send a message to the council about upgrading the park. We would like to see some water play areas, maybe a little skate park with shade, new swings and slides. It's a big space, it can fit many things in it.	Water Play, Skate Park, Swings & Slides
Feb 21, 2026,	We are here now having a picnic. The lawn is a little sad and dry, too much bark. Picnic table, bbq and more seats would be essential. A kids splash pad would be amazing. My daughter's first request was monkey bars please! A bicycle or scooter or roller skating track around the perimeter would make it really multi functional. The old tree on the corner would make an amazing tree house and elevated platforms to play.	More Lawn, Less Mulch, Picnic Table, BBQ, Seats, Splash Pad, Bike/Scooter/Skate Track, Tree House
Feb 21, 2026,	This is the closest park to where we live and we call it 'rubbish park', the lawn is rarely maintained, the equipment leaves a lot to be desired and a strange collection of dead birds always there! We would love a playground that is secure/ fully fenced, has a pump track/ wide path for the kids to zoom around on. Given the lovely shade this could be an incredible place to have water play as we often drive a long distance to get a park with shaded water play in the summer. We are often there with at least one other family and the swings are a constant negotiation- looking at Reynard Street Park vs Service Street and swing usage- better to have two baby swings and two normal swings than the bucket swing or the 'adult and kid joined together swing'	Fenced Playground, Pump Track, Water Play, More Swings, Better Maintenance

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
Feb 20, 2026,	A well overdue upgrade. New accessible play equipment, definately more seating with shade to allow familes to gather for a picnic and a water fountain, more shade trees and zero astro turf. Maybe someyhing for the older kids like a small basketball/netball ring area or a wall to plat tennis/downball or a table btennis table.	Accessible Play, Shaded Seating, Basketball/Netball Half-court, Tennis Wall, Table Tennis
Feb 19, 2026,	Agree the park is well overdue for an upgrade. This park actually gets lot of use from children of all ages, particularly children attending the school opposite. Would like to see more nature base play areas, balancing tracks etc and more challenging climbing equipment for school age children. Time to remove that gross cypress tree that's already dropped large branches in the past year. Fully support Council upgrading Calder Reserve! Calder Reserve is one of the closest parks to where we live, but we rarely go because it feels a bit sad and neglected. Decent sized space and potential for an upgrade though!	Nature Play, Balance Track, Climbing Wall, Climbing Ropes, Remove Large (Cypress) Tree
Feb 19, 2026,	My suggestion would be to incorporate soft landscaping around the park (with native / indigenous plants), to improve the amenity as well as create local habitat / biodiversity. At the moment it's just grass with a couple of trees.	Native Planting, Biodiversity/Habitat, Better Maintenance
Feb 19, 2026,	I mind my grand chold each week and Calder Reserve is close to us. I would love to see this little park updated. Some more play equipment, especially for toddler age. Maybe a low climbing tunnel, safe swings and definitely some seats and a table.	Toddler Play, Climbing Tunnel, Swings, Seats, Picnic Seating
Feb 19, 2026,	I'd love to see a playground design similar to Service St Playground in Coburg, with more modern, accessible play equipment for children of multiple ages. I'd also love to see a small grassy areas to sit for a picnic along with bench seats and picnic tables. Since it will have mains water, a water exploration area would also be fantastic for play	Accessible Play, Picnic Setting, Seats, Lawns, Water Play, Service St template
Feb 19, 2026,	Oh wow. This place def needs a revamp. Maybe incorporating more variable equipment for different ages. Maybe using Robinson Reserve as a reference. There's a looooot of unused land at this park. Could certainly be used better.	Multiple Play options, Creative use of Space, refer Robinson Reserve
Feb 19, 2026,	I have been waiting for this upgrade! The existing trees are great. But the play equipment is old and there is not much of it. Some new equipment would be great including slides and swings. Some creative garden landscaping including garden beds, rocks and logs for climbing would be great. I'd like to see proper bin facility and plenty of seats, maybe even a table. I'd like to see a good plan that makes the best use of this space .	Retain existing Trees, Slides and Swings, Creative use of Space, Garden Beds, Nature Play, Seating, Picnic Setting. Better Bins.

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
Feb 19, 2026,	We also live in the local area and would love to see this space upgraded for multi generational use. We have a mixed demographic in the area and would love to see this space to cater for older members of the community too. As suggested by others: fencing, bins, water fountain, tables and seating (some with backs for community members to lean against), even pathways for safer walking, trees / shade, sensory garden and play area eg smells, texture, colours, BBQ facilities, option to book the reserve for street Christmas parties etc. The area on many occasions looks tired and unkempt and a regular maintenance service from the council would requested.	Multi-generational, include for Older People, Fencings, Bins, Drink Fountain, Shade, Tree Planting, Picnic Table, Seats with back/arm-rest, Safe Walking, Sensory Garden, BBQ, , Better Maintenance.
Feb 19, 2026,	We live just a few blocks from this playground and have frequented it multiple times a week for the past few years as it is the easiest option. However it is definitely not my children's preferred playground due to the outdated equipment and lack of diverse offerings for older children. It is also frequented often by those that attend the adjacent school, however has limited offerings for school age children. Some suggestions: more diversity of play equipment spanning toddlers to primary school aged children e.g. climbing/monkey bars for older children (they use the big tree in the back for this at the moment), more shade, more seating for parents, better bin solution (the existing one is often over flowing and very off putting), the grass is not cut frequently enough in summer/spring can the upgrade consider management of this please. Please keep the swings!	Multiple Play Options, Climbing Play, Monkey Bars, Keep Swings, Shade, Seating, Better Bins, Better Maintenance
Feb 19, 2026,	We live very close by and frequent this park to help reset the kids after some of the 'wild' evenings that we experience from time to time. Certainly does the job in that respect, however I'm often discouraged by the single overflowing bin there and overgrown grassland. More seating as others have commented would be most welcomed and if toilets and a BBQ area are not in budget, some sort of paved area with a basketball ring would get utilised no doubt.	Seating, Bins, Basketball, Better Maintenance

Date Submitted	Description	'Wish List'
	We live walking distance to this park and love it as an available option closer to home than others in the area. Would love to see: - upgraded play equipment, and ideally more of it for children of differing ages, both small and large, more swings - large trees/hedges along the perimeter for privacy from neighbouring homes (there is a cctv camera pointed directly at the play equipment from one house) - covered seating and tables for adults - boundary fence along Patterson street for safety (though not too high as its openness to the street is a benefit) - water play of some kind - larger areas of contained mulch to allow play with trucks/digger toys. Agree with previous comment about using Service Street playground as a model for a great 'pocket' park in a suburban side street.	
Feb 19, 2026, Thank you :)		Multiple Play Options, Tree Planting, Hedge Planting, Shaded Seating, Picnic Setting, Park Fencing, Water Play, Digging Play, Service St template
Feb 19, 2026,	The Service Street Playground is jam packed with a variety of activity spaces suitable for children and adults. Often playgrounds are engaging for children under 10 but then unappealing to other, particularly the older members of the community.	Multiple Play Options, Older People, Service St template
Feb 19, 2026,	We live within walking distance and our children have been to this park multiple times a week for the past 8 years. I hope Merri-Bek would consider including the following; - A fence across the length of the street frontage to maintain a safe space for smaller children. - Some form of sustainable water play element - A more natural aesthetic to the playground equipment - Seating/tables for parents in play observable positions - Interactive play spaces/equipment	Fencing, Water Play, Natural Aesthetic, Seating, Picnic Table, Interactive Play
Feb 19, 2026,	We always walk or drive past and never stop. We have a two year old and live local. There's no shade, dated equipment, no fencing, poor use of space and no toilets. Recommend water play, shade trees, accessible equipment, fencing, a range of seats and tables, bins. Like Service St playground but add toilets please	Shade, Fencing, Water Play, Accessible Play, Seats, Picnic Setting, Better Bins, Service St template