

Community Engagement Report

Empress, Patricia Carlon and Noel Sieffert Reserves

Council publicly exhibited the concept designs for playspace renewals at Empress, Patricia Carlon and Noel Sieffert Reserves from 25 November to 19 December 2022.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us feedback. Below is a summary of the feedback received and Council's responses to the key suggestions and issues raised.

General feedback across all Reserves

Play equipment

Provide supported swing seats and seats for all users

Swings will include a supported / high back seat and basket swing both of which allow a child to be loaded by a carer or be used independently. These inclusive swing seats cater to a range of ages and abilities. A wide flat seat will be included for older children and carers.

Provide equipment for toddlers, accessible slides and challenging play for older children

The play equipment at Empress and Patricia Carlon Reserves is designed for younger ages with options for upper primary. Dominey Reserve and Bexley Park cater to children of all ages, including upper primary.

The equipment at Noel Sieffert Reserve is designed for upper primary ages but will provide options for younger children. Depena Reserve is close by and provides high play value for younger ages.

In smaller playgrounds with limited budgets, such as these, providing play equipment for a specific age range is preferred because greater play value can be provided.

Accessibility and inclusiveness are part of the State Government's "Everyone Can Play" guidelines, which Council follows when designing playgrounds. The guidelines encourage playground designs that cater to children of all abilities to the greatest extent possible.

Park Furniture

Picnic tables, more seating, seats for different users, seats in shade, drinking fountain

A picnic table has been included at Patricia Carlon Reserve and a table bench at Noel Sieffert Reserve, but a picnic setting will be considered.

Seats will be shaded by new trees or located close to existing trees. We will look at locating some seats under the shade sails and there will be seating options for the general community.

Drinking fountains are not included in small local parks under Council's asset hierarchy but if one exists at any of the reserves, (Empress and Noel Sieffert Reserves) they will be retained.

Fence the playground

The existing playspaces at Patricia Carlon and Noel Sieffert Reserves are not fenced and are located away from boundary roads. There is an existing low barrier on the park boundary.

Flexible use of spaces and inclusiveness is part of the State Government's "Everyone Can Play" guidelines, which Council incorporates when designing playspaces. The guidelines enable children of all abilities and their carers to freely explore beyond the immediate playground, providing a more holistic play experience that has connectivity with the rest of the park. Gated playgrounds are much less accessible and inclusive for those with a disability. For this reason, Council generally does not fence playgrounds.

Park lighting

Generally, Council does not light small parks as it can encourage after-hours gatherings.

Playground layout

Shade

The existing shade sails are relatively new at Patricia Carlon Reserve and will be retained. Additional shade sails will limit the amount of play equipment and play value that can be provided with the available budget. New trees will provide natural shade in the nature play area and other parts of the playspace. A shade sail is included at Noel Sieffert Reserve as well as new canopy trees and a small sail at Empress Reserve between the existing large canopy trees that provide natural shade.

Amenities and use

Toilets

Toilet facilities are only provided in larger scale parks with multiple recreational activities and higher numbers of users.

Recreational facilities

The current funding has been allocated to the renewal of the playgrounds. Requests for fitness and basketball facilities has been noted for consideration when funds become available in the future.

The new town park project at Wolli Creek responds to growth in this area and includes fitness, table tennis, multicourts, 2 basketball keyholes, charging stations, picnic facilities and general landscaped open space.

Nearby Cahill Park is a large regional park and provides several recreational opportunities for the community, such as cycling, walking/running, off leash dog park, tennis, picnics, fitness groups and a café. Cricket practice nets will be constructed at this park later this year.

Council understands how important parks and recreational facilities are for our local communities and plan to ensure that parks are developed to suit the needs of the community.

Anti-social behaviour

Smoking and dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of playgrounds and dogs are required to be on lead at all times unless in a designated dog off-leash areas. This is indicated on park signage and enforceable by Council compliance inspectors.

Increased patronage of renewed parks activates the park and should minimise these types of behaviours.

Park-specific responses - Empress Reserve

Sandpit

Sandpits are not included in small local parks as they require a high level of maintenance to ensure cleanliness. There is a large sandpit at Cahill Park playground nearby.

Equipment that provides learning skills

The sensory play panels and nature play develops logical thinking as well as physical and sensory skills.

Safety for toddlers

The playground has an existing fence, however, a new gate will be added. As with all playgrounds, adequate supervision is required.

The playground itself is compliant with Australian Standards for access. Level, connecting pathways, including access to seating will be provided.

There are several playgrounds in the area

Bayside Council aims to achieve a 400m walking distance to playspaces to ensure easy access for all the community. Play infrastructure is renewed when it approaches the end of its useful life and in response to community requests for upgrading and improved play.

Artwork/mural

The suitability and provision of artwork in public locations will be considered under Council's Public Art Policy. Public art is not included in the budget for the renewal of this playspace.

Park-specific responses – Noel Sieffert Reserve

Scooter track

The design now includes a loop track extension for scooters.

Netball hoop

Council will look at including a netball hoop near the playground.

Passive visual surveillance

The existing hedge will be removed and replaced with low growing native shrubs, ground covers and canopy trees for shade. This will improve sightlines from the street to the playground whilst achieving shade and amenity.

Bushland protection

The playground upgrade will not impact any areas of bushland.

Next steps

Empress Reserve

- Detailed design progressing.
- Construction is anticipated to commence in spring 2023.

Patricia Carlon and Noel Sieffert Reserves:

- Detailed design progressing.
- Tender for construction anticipated for winter 2023.