



Parks for People  
**Phase 1 Engagement Outcomes Report**  
George Kendall Riverside Park, Ermington

November 2020

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creative urban planners



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All care has been taken to prepare this report for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

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**Photography by Being Agency.**

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# Contents

**Acknowledgement** 4

**Executive Summary** 5

Who participated in the consultation?

What did we hear?

Project objectives

Landscape benefits

**About the project** 11

Background

Purpose of the engagement

Summary

**Engagement findings** 14

Priority 1: Active & Playful

Priority 2: Welcoming & Accessible

Priority 3: Cool & Natural

**Where to from here** 30

**Appendix A – Online survey analysis**

**Appendix B – Social Pinpoint analysis**

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# Acknowledgement

This document acknowledges that Parramatta is on Aboriginal land where the traditional custodians have been caring for Country for more than 70,000 years.

We pay our respects to the traditional owners of this land, their Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the continued rich culture and heritage of all Aboriginal people on this land.

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**“Indigenous stories [should be shared in the park] - not enough of this is celebrated in local area.”**

– Online Survey participant

# Executive Summary

In 2020, the New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) commissioned JOC Consulting to assist with the delivery of community engagement for upgrades to George Kendall Riverside Park (the Park or GKRP) as part of the Parks for People Program.

The first round of consultation consisted of an online survey and Social Pinpoint map available for community comment between 13 October and 3 November 2020. The engagement methods sought to identify community values, needs and aspirations for the park to help inform the drafting of the concept design for the park (at this stage there were no set design parameters for the park). A second phase of engagement will ask for community feedback on the draft concept design.

In total, 239 community members were passionate in their responses, showing support for the Parks for People Program and sharing ideas for the upgraded George Kendall Park in Ermington. These ideas along with community values and priorities in relation to open space have been captured in this Report.

## Who participated in the consultation?



**9,310**  
total visits



**3,692**  
unique users



**239** people participated  
(88 online survey participants  
and 151 via Social Pinpoint)

**84%**

local residents



Participants **ranged in age from under 18 to 76+ years old**. The main age brackets were 36-45 and 46-55 (jointly 51%)

**48%** female

**51%** male



**63%**

live within 10 minutes' walk of the park



**12%**

play sports nearby or are part of a sports organisation

## What did we hear?

### Community perspectives on the existing George Kendall Riverside Park

Across the engagement, participants described the park as it is now as an attractive site for active recreation such as running, cycling, walking and exercise. Its green expanse was described as a picturesque, peaceful and quiet refuge from city living, though some community members expressed that it was unimpressive and that more could be done to make better use of the open space – “just a simple park” and “very large park but I was somewhat unimpressed. Just an average park” (via Google reviews).

The park was mainly seen as a place for recreation; there were only very few comments that mentioned opportunities to get together, which could indicate that the park is not currently used much as a social gathering place and also highlights the fact that most participants (98%) are existing users of the park, most of whom visit the park for active recreation purposes.

### A vision for an improved park

**The improved George Kendall Riverside Park will continue to attract walkers, cyclists, sports people and dog lovers to a place that is cool and welcoming for the whole family. It will bring neighbours and visitors to Parramatta together in a pleasant riverside setting where the natural environment is protected and offers respite from a bustling urban setting.**

The above vision statement was prepared by JOC Consulting on the basis of community ideas and feedback received through the survey, social pinpoint map and social media comments. (See also Appendix A (Q5) for particular details regarding the vision for the park).

## PERCEPTIONS ON THE EXISTING PARK; SOCIAL MEDIA QUOTES

### Social and safety aspects

- “Too much crowd on weekends and it is not good for families...”
- “Going there wasn't that much fun. The playground area isn't really for younger babies.”
- “Nice big park, unfortunately not many facilities for kids, most of the space is occupied by cricket and baseball fields. The barbecues are often dirty.”
- “Not ideal for walking after dark as there are very few people around compared to other parks”

### Use of space and upkeep

- “I play in a baseball league that have us playing away at GK four or five times a season at least. It is a poor field with no facilities [...] leagues hate coming here.”
- “Needs some more proper fields. Not just open land”
- “Crashed my bike on the treacherous cycle path. Be careful, it is very slippery even when dry”

## Community priorities

Participants across the engagement wanted to see a park that responds to the diverse needs of a growing community. The following themes reflect the community's priorities as identified across all engagement methods and form the basis for this report.



### ACTIVE AND PLAYFUL

An active place for diverse recreational interests, ages and abilities



### WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE

A welcoming and accessible space for the whole family



### COOL AND NATURAL

A cool space that celebrates the natural landscape as a place for relaxation and respite

It should be noted that the majority of survey respondents, which the above priorities are informed by, mainly are local residents and existing users of the park (and hence may favour existing uses of the park rather than identify new uses).

## Participants shared these common ideas for improving the Park:

### ACTIVE AND PLAYFUL

- Improve existing play spaces to better the user experience for children and their minders
- Create play spaces (including waterplay and multi courts) that promote social interactions for all ages and abilities
- Encourage physical activity by maximising the existing sports field

### WELCOMING AND ACCESSIBLE

- Increase visibility of Indigenous local history through native vegetation and educational pieces
- Improve pedestrian safety by segregating walking trails and cycling paths
- Install amenities that will ensure George Kendall is comfortable and well-lit but will not negatively impact the environment
- Improve connections within George Kendall via foot and cycle paths that cut through the park
- Encourage exploration and share stories through creative wayfinding

### COOL AND NATURAL

- Improve shading options in the park, particularly along walking and cycling paths
- Maintain the topography of the site to enhance the view
- Use natural materials where possible to complement and reflect the unique natural environment

#### **Key concerns and considerations:**

- Impacts on adjacent residents: Some participants (local residents) expressed concern that any increase in use of the park could negatively impact local amenity, and particularly noise related impacts from increase use of tennis and multi courts as well as litter.
- Divided opinions on parking: Social pinpoint comments reflected differing views on local carparking options – with some residents wanting to see more parking opportunities (than the two car parks in the northern and eastern end of the park). Other residents wanted to see less cars (and hence carparking).
- Connections to the park: It was commonly acknowledged that the site is difficult to access, even by car, and that the connections within the park were poor (with only one path running along the perimeter of the park).

The following pages provide a summary of engagement responses sorted by project objectives and landscape benefits.



## Project objectives

The table below outlines the ways in which the community engagement findings align with the objectives identified during the George Kendall Riverside Park Visioning Workshop.

**Table 1: Project objectives**

Objectives	What did community say?
Undertake remedial and environmental restoration works which consider both organised and non-organised recreational uses of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase native plantings and incorporate a bush food garden as part of a bio-restoration approach</li> <li>▪ The topography of the site, and the views from the highpoints were recognised as key assets of the park</li> <li>▪ The innate tranquillity and ability for green spaces to offer a sense of calm and respite were key priorities</li> </ul>
To create a multi-functional open space that is adaptive to changing demographics and increased demand and densities of the surrounding area, and the evolving role of the park as a district-level facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider play areas, such as an additional basketball court, which are targeted to a younger demographic</li> <li>▪ The park should serve to bring the community together and create new connections</li> <li>▪ The park should offer facilities that enable family and friends to come together and socialise in open space</li> <li>▪ Feature elements of wild play, including a natural playground and water elements</li> </ul>
Promote the role of the park as a connecting and cooling element through landscape performance initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase shaded areas across the park, especially along the current cycle/walking trail near the riverside</li> <li>▪ The natural landscape should be utilised to provide a cooling space for the suburb</li> <li>▪ Including an element of water, particularly in the form of waterplay</li> </ul>
Reveal and celebrate the significance of the river as an experiential element of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Integrate a boardwalk or separate path along the foreshore of the Parramatta River to provide visual and physical access to the water</li> <li>▪ Incorporate water features and small waterplay elements that reflect the unique riverside setting</li> </ul>

## Landscape benefits

The following table outlines how the engagement findings and what the community has told us, relates to the Landscape Architecture Foundation and University of New South Wales' research into the Social, Economic, Environmental and Cultural (SEEC) benefits for the Parks for People project.

**Table 2: Overview of identified landscape benefits**

	Where are we today?	Where do we want to be?
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community members noted that the area is becoming increasingly developed, with many additional people moving into the area</li> <li>The participants wanted to see a better lit and well-maintained park</li> <li>The participants wanted better public transport connections to the park</li> <li>The participants wanted a space for exercise and fitness</li> <li>Community members identified a need for more engaging play areas ) for people of all ages and accessibility levels (and especially for unstructured play and games</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>George Kendall Riverside Park will be accessible and inclusive for everyone</li> <li>Play spaces that will integrate nature and waterplay for different age and accessibility levels</li> <li>Health and fitness areas with outdoor gym equipment</li> <li>The Park will be well-lit and will feel safe at all times of the day</li> </ul>
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some respondents expressed concern about overdevelopment and its impact on the feel of the park and the natural environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Park will deliver a balance of spaces and uses</li> <li>Trees are seen as a major economic benefit of the Park</li> </ul>
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The community expressed a deep appreciation of the Parramatta River and raised that both visual and physical access to the river could be improved</li> <li>Participants called for more naturally shaded areas throughout the park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The upgrade will provide more trees and greater tree canopy cover</li> <li>The Park will provide opportunities for the community to connect with the natural landscape</li> <li>The Reserve will provide opportunities to engage with the Parramatta River</li> <li>The Park will be better maintained</li> </ul>
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants identified a need for spaces that facilitate social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The art pieces in the Park will showcase Parramatta's rich heritage</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The area has a rich history spanning from the pre-colonial to the present. The community want this to be celebrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Park will celebrate Parramatta's long-standing Indigenous Culture</li> </ul>
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The following pages provide more detail on community feedback collected during the engagement period as they relate to the identified community priorities above.

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# About the project

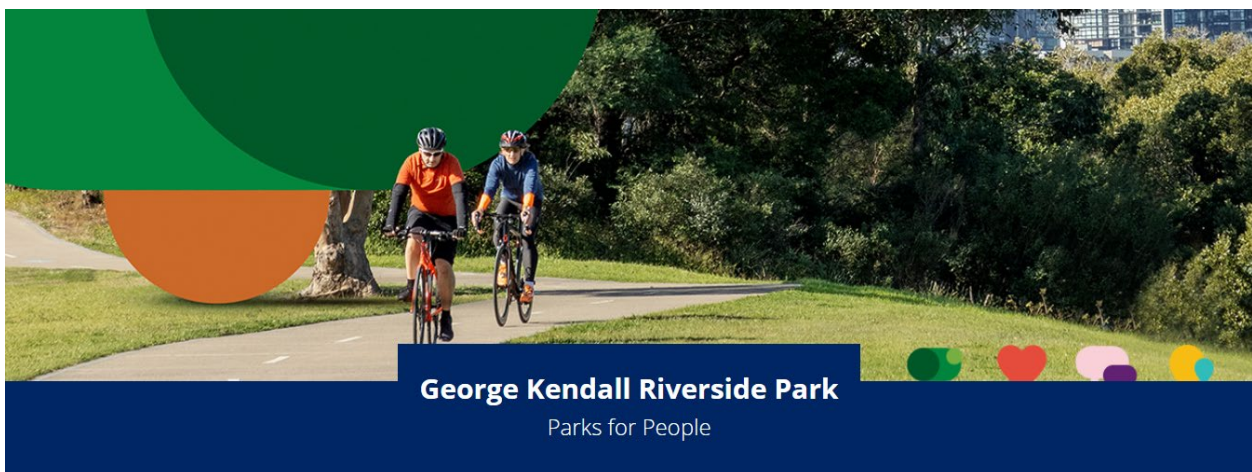
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## Background

George Kendall Riverside Park will be upgraded as part of The Parks for People Program, an ambitious NSW Government initiative that focuses on the creation of high-quality open space. This project sees the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (the Department) collaborating with City of Parramatta and the local community to create a vibrant space that balances passive and active recreation opportunities for the community.

The Park is located within the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula identified in the Greater Sydney Commission's Central City District Plan. It is one of the fastest growing areas within Greater Sydney with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's (formerly the NSW Department of Planning and Environment) *Interim Land Use and Infrastructure Implementation Plan* estimating 72,000 new homes and 110,000 jobs to be created in the area by 2036.

With the move towards higher density living, access to quality open space is becoming increasingly important as the community grows and evolves. With local infrastructure being put under greater pressure in the process, getting the planning right is vital in ensuring the community's needs are met.



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## Purpose of engagement

The purpose of the first round of engagement was to better understand the community's aspirations for the upgrade of the Park. It focused on gaining insights around how the community wants to use the space, the facilities needed in the park to support their desired activities as well as the general community sentiment around the Reserve. The engagement was motivated by a desire to create a world-class reserve that is aligned with the needs and characteristics of the local community.




In total, 239 people were engaged through the online survey or Social Pinpoint map with another 73 engaged on social media platforms. The design of the survey questions and engagement approach was guided by a key question: "How can we create a world-class park that is loved and well-used by the community, and supports their vision for the future?"

Engagement participants provided detailed insights into their vision for the improved park, clearly outlining the needs to which the park should respond and offering an extensive list of ideas to help bring their priorities to life.



## Community Priorities

The community feedback from all the engagement methods can be grouped under three key priority themes. Key stats from the online survey are indicated below as they relate to the priority themes.

1	<b>Active &amp; Playful</b> 	<b>An active place for diverse recreational interests, ages and abilities.</b>  The online survey identified 'a place for cycling, running and walking' as a key priority, with 73% of all respondents nominating this as a vision for the area.
2	<b>Welcoming &amp; Accessible</b> 	<b>A welcoming and accessible space for the whole family</b>  The online survey identified 'a peaceful place to relax and wind down' as a clear aspiration for the park with nearly half (47%) nominating this as a key priority.
3	<b>Cool &amp; Natural</b> 	<b>A cool space that celebrates the natural landscape as a place for relaxation and respite</b>  More than one third (40%) of online survey participants identified 'place to play games and sports' as a key priorities for the park.

These priorities have been used to structure the findings from the engagement into outcome areas that can directly inform the development of the concept design.

The following pages provide more detail on community feedback collected during the engagement period as they relate to the identified community priorities above.

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# Engagement findings

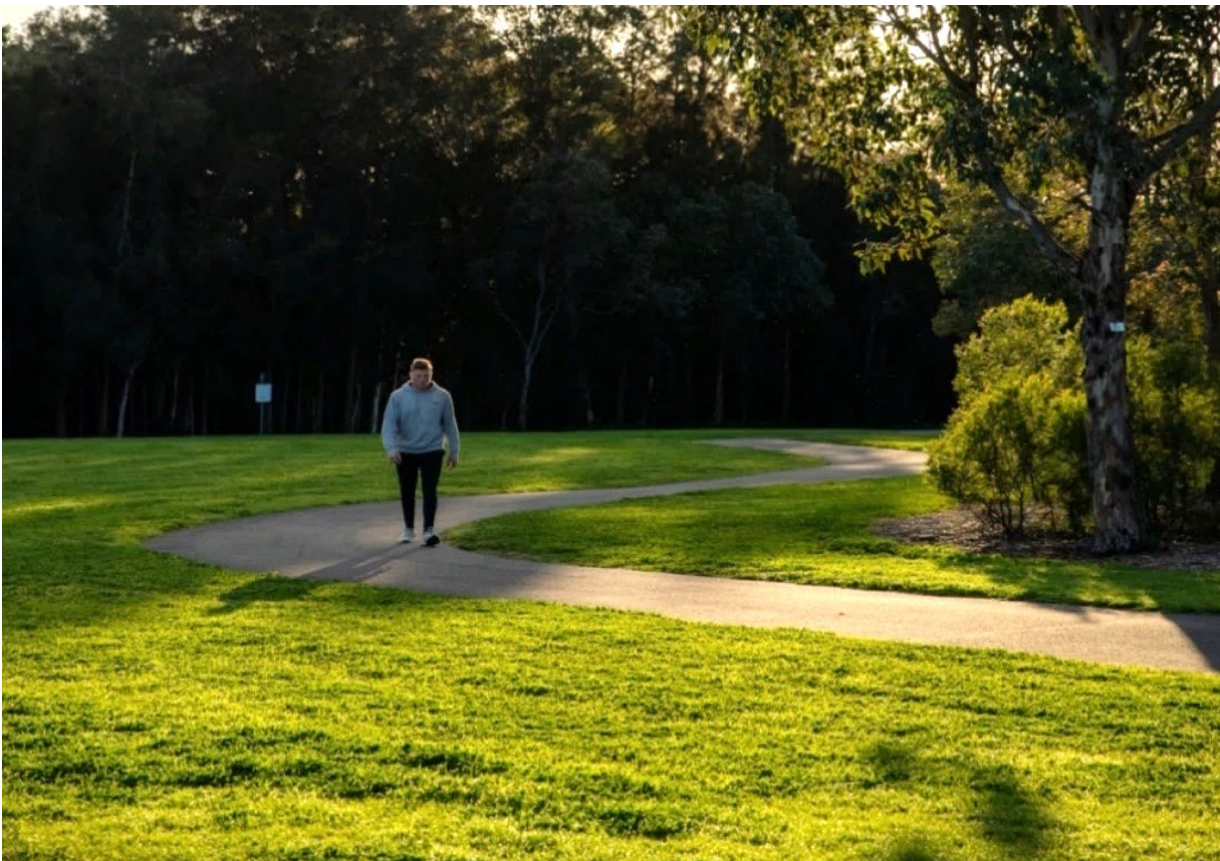
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## Priority 1 – Active & Playful

*“This park is great. Especially the path along the river. However, I feel more could be done with some of the open spaces.”*

– Social media comment

George Kendall Riverside Park is popular with both the local community and visitors



from outside the area. The community engagement highlighted the diverse mix of people who use the park with 98% of survey participants having previously visited the park. 80% (68 people) of the survey respondents reported visiting the park on a daily or weekly basis.

The participants recognised that George Kendall Riverside Park is uniquely located in an urban area that is rapidly growing and where more and more people live in apartments. Community members noted the need for opportunities to stay healthy and active and expressed a desire for the new park to continue to cater for cycling,



walking, sports – as well as more unstructured playful opportunities for people to get together and kick a ball around.

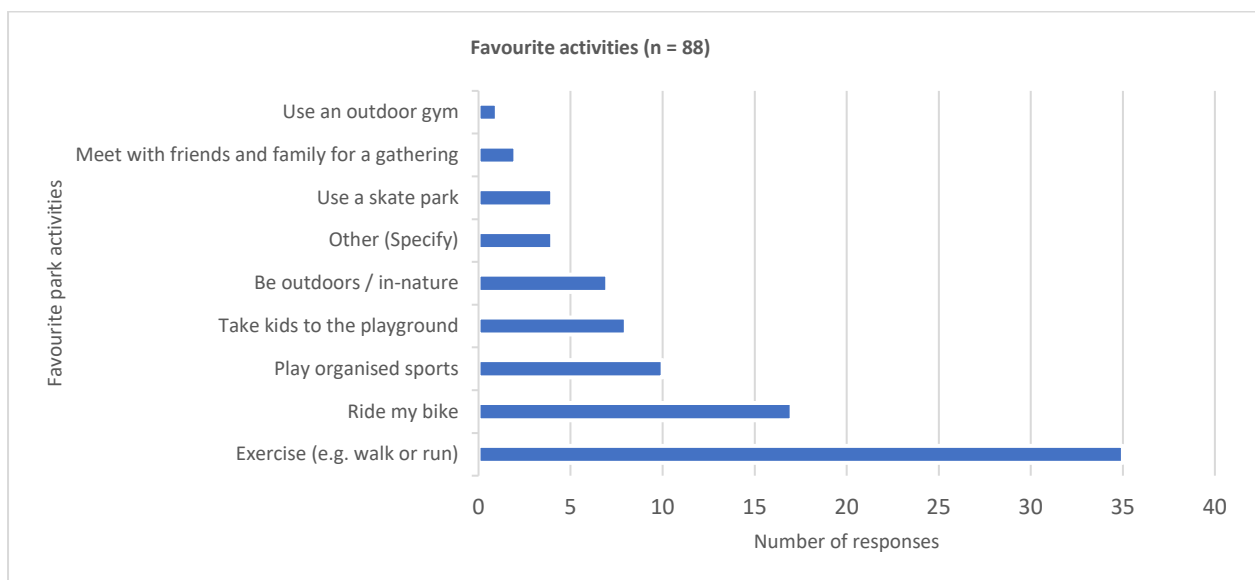
### What people said

We heard from the participants across the engagement that they value the local opportunities for active and unstructured recreation. Some participants, and particularly those who identified as being part of a local sports club, also wanted to see improvements to the variety and upkeep of sporting facilities. There was general agreement across the engagement that more and broader family friendly and playful experiences are needed; not just in terms of the formal playground area (which is not deemed suitable for young children) but also in terms of nature based play and opportunities to ‘kick a ball around’ in pleasant areas.

Specific community aspirations relating to an overall desire for active and playful spaces (in its broadest sense) are described in more detail below.

#### 1. Park features that encourage active lifestyle

A total of 70% of the 88 survey responses were from people who currently use the park for active recreation or sporting uses. When asked to name their favourite thing to do in a park, 35 people (40%), nominated ‘exercise (walk or run)’, a further 17 people (19%) ‘ride my bike’, and 10 people (11%) ‘play organised sports’. These three activities were common across all age groups and genders in the online survey – see Figure 1 below:



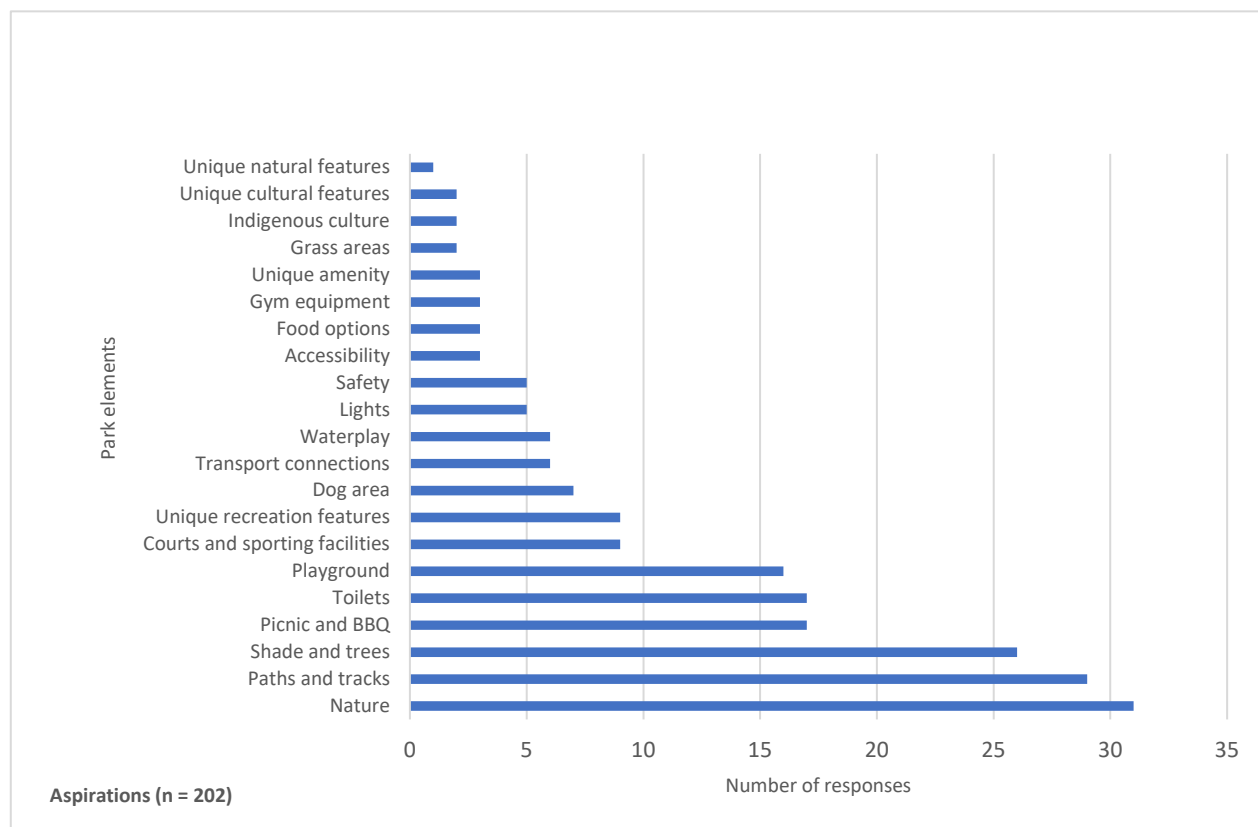
**Figure 1: Favourite park activities**

Participants from across the engagement expressed a need for upgrades of the existing sporting facilities, with some survey participants noting that the baseball facilities in particular needs new turf and diamonds. Some participants also wished to see the existing gym equipment located to a more convenient and accessible place, such as near the play equipment or the main paths. A survey

participant stated, “The current exercise equipment is in a strange location. Too far away from main footpath.” This was echoed by a Social Pinpoint user who noted “Love to see a body weight gym put in this park, to help with the health and fitness in the area as many people going for rides/walks/runs will use the facility”.

## 2. More paths and tracks

The engagement overall identified paths and tracks as integral to the visitor experience, with the majority (59%) of all online participants specifically nominating that they use the paths and tracks on a regular basis. When asked about what they liked most about parks generally, paths and tracks rated second receiving 29 mentions (33%) by survey participants (refer to Figure 2 below). Similarly, it was the most popular suggestion on Social Pinpoint with 16% of all pins mentioning the need for more paths and tracks. Comments generally reflected an aspiration for more paths and tracks as a way to gain health benefits; this was a prevalent reasoning, though participants also highlighted a need for better connectivity across the park improved (not only on the perimeter) – see also the section on the “Welcoming and Accessible” priority below.



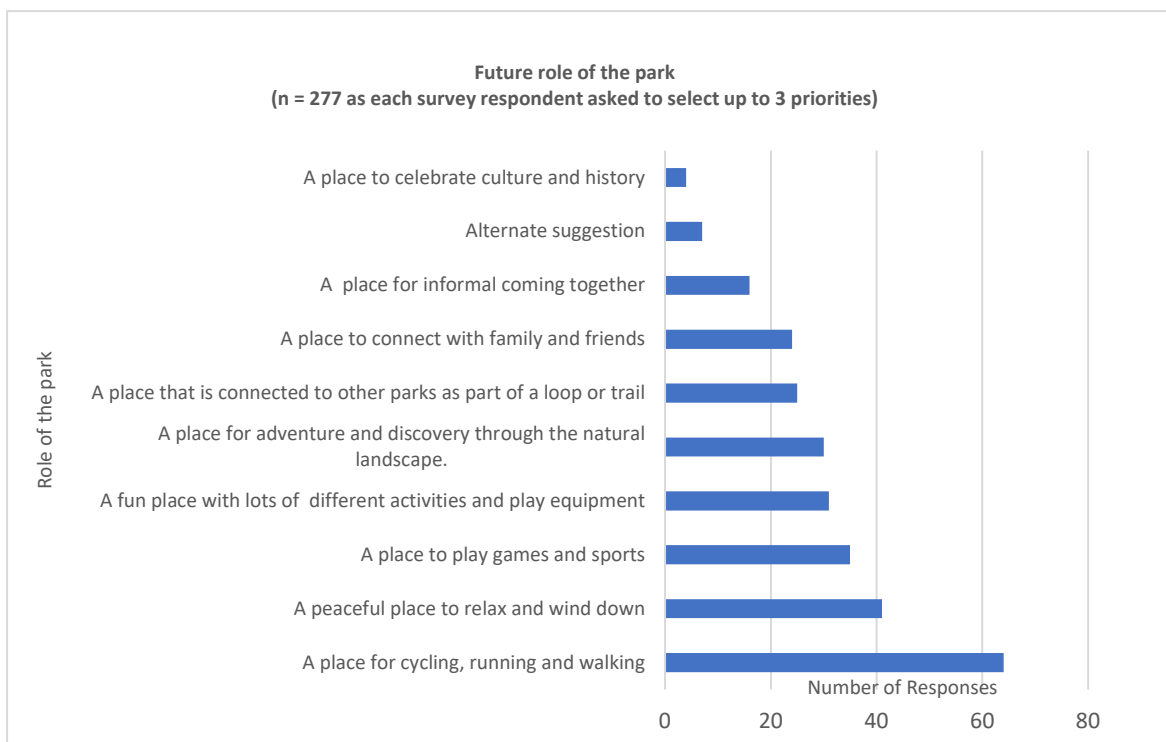
**Figure 2: What participants like most about parks they’d visited**

## 3. Inclusive play spaces and playgrounds

Participants across the engagement expressed a desire for play spaces as well as playgrounds that are family friendly and encourage informal play, exploration, and creativity. They expressed a need for dynamic and well-

utilised playful spaces that support a range of recreation opportunities for people of all ages and access levels – from ‘unstructured’ areas for games and ball play to more formalised play areas such as playgrounds for a range of ages.

For example, 35 (40%) of the 88 survey respondents selected ‘a place to play games and sports’ (see Figure 3 below). Nearly a fifth of survey participants nominated playgrounds when asked to identify what elements they most liked about the parks they currently visited (see Figure 2 above).



**Figure 3: Future role of the park**

The existing playground did not rate many mentions throughout the engagement, though some people noted that it is not sufficient to cater for demand and the diverse needs of the whole community: *“The current playground can get quite busy in particular during weekends. With the current development on the former Pfizer area shaping up, a second play ground with shaded areas, scooter track, flying fox would be a great addition to the park”*. Some community members also commented that the existing playground is not suitable for younger children.

The need for more play spaces was also reflected in the Social Pinpoint with play spaces being the fourth most common recommendation. The comments emphasised need for a safe play space that can be easily monitored by parents and are located in close proximity to amenities and facilities. One Social Pinpoint user comment that they wanted *“a more sprawling playground with something for children of all ages and abilities (as) the*

*current play space is not enough. Also more BBQ and covered picnic spots near the equipment.”*

#### **4. More multi courts and sports facilities**

Participants across the engagement, and particularly in the online survey, reported a need to extend existing court and sports facilities to create family friendly, multipurpose areas.

Survey respondents noted that the existing facilities are insufficient to meet current demand as they can only be used by one group at a time. Several participants wanted to see an expansion of the provision of the tennis and basketball/futsal courts to enable more simultaneous usage. One Social Pinpoint user commented, *“the basketball/futsal court is great but it gets hogged by the “big” kids (adults). Can you perhaps have a full-sized and smaller sized tarmac court for different ages? Also a scooter or skateboard park would be great. Kids love it.”*

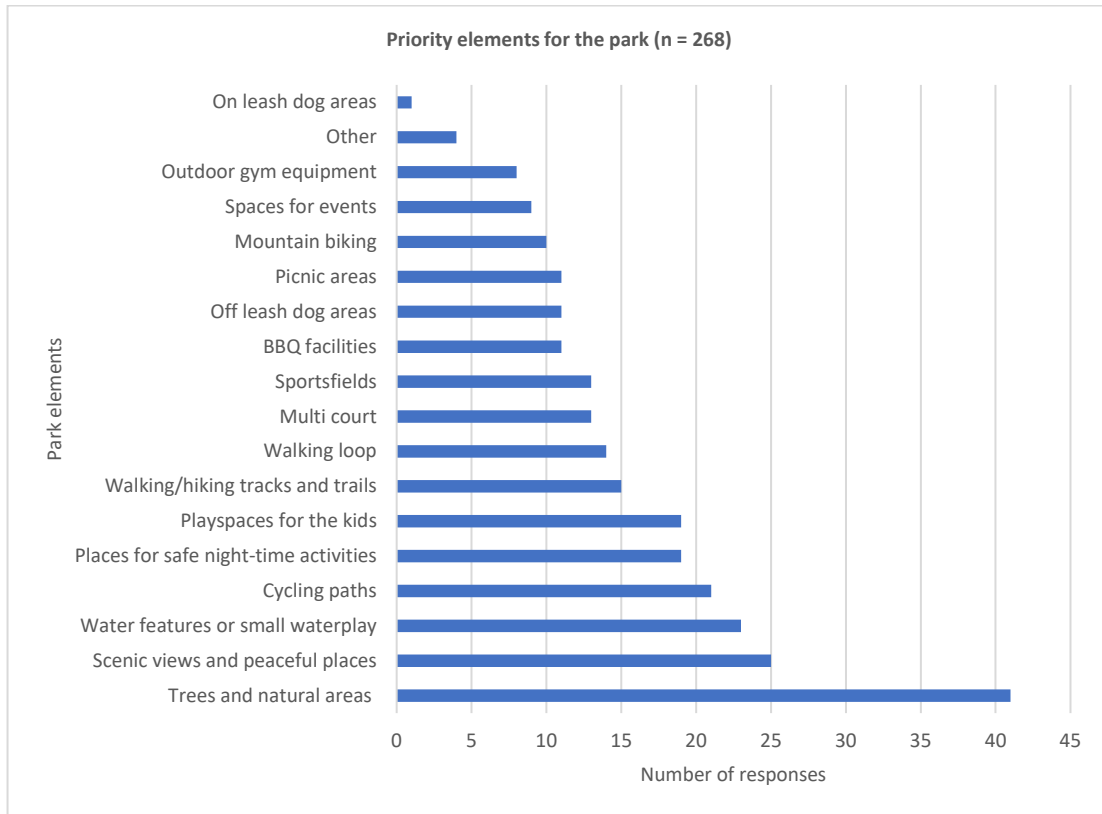
Some local residents expressed concern with any impacts from increased use of the courts on local amenity (noise) and one survey participant wanted to see more consultation with local residents:

*“Everyone uses the park just now - please think and consult us as long-term residents when you plan anything. The park run is an example of no consultation with locals, us poor locals in our quiet little spot have no peace early on a Saturday morning.”*



## 5. Water play to cool off in summer

Community members from across the engagement expressed a strong desire for the park to provide for water play in the park. It was third most popular park feature receiving 23 votes (26%) by survey participants, where women were more likely than men to prioritise this feature (see Figure 4 below) and was the sixth most common recommendation in the Social Pinpoint.



**Figure 4: Priority elements for the park**

Water play were seen to be complementary to the provision of a playground. A Social Pinpoint participant stated *“Water park sounds amazing.... Keep a lot of the green space but if you add a water play include it up near the playground so its shared by all and doesn’t get rid of the green space used by all.”*

Participants also recognise the potential for water to help cool the wider area, with a Social Pinpoint participant noting, *“a water park/playground for kids to enjoy in summer since is usually very hot around here and we are far from the beaches”.*

## Challenges

- Providing shaded areas and cooling the large vast open spaces in times of extreme weather events and water shortages
- Providing and maintaining sporting facilities and infrastructure that cater for diverse and increased needs and uses people expect from the park such as athletes, sports teams, families, and people with accessibility needs
- Providing play areas that are easily and effectively maintained, reducing costs of ongoing upkeep
- Identifying long-term needs of the growing and evolving community and catering for future residents (not just existing users of the park)

## Opportunities and design ideas

- Creative design of park furniture that incorporates elements of play and creativity in cost-effective ways (e.g. picnic seating that include board games; seating that can double as 'balancing beams' or stepping stones for young children to play on)
- Incorporation of public art that stimulate creative play and a sense of exploration
- Co-locating facilities and ensuring multipurpose design that can cater for diverse user groups at the same time
- Favour design options that provide for multi-use rather than exclusive use of an area or equipment for particular uses or functions.
- Include water play/features (potentially as public art sculptures) as a key design feature that simultaneously provides cooling, creates playful spaces and can be a centre point for social gatherings (e.g. in a similar way to 'the village well' concept)

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## Priority 2 – Welcoming & Accessible

***“For me it would be amazing to utilise the fantastic location and proximity to the river to cater for a “centre of social wellbeing” without trying to sound too hippie! Creating a space where people can escape and distract their minds from daily life has to improve the whole community.”***

– Survey Participant



The community engagement highlighted that need for family friendly spaces that are accessible, connected and pleasant.

### **What people said**

We heard from the participants across the engagement that the community wants a more welcoming and accessible park. The park is generally experienced as being hot and unpleasant during the middle of the day in summer, and the general amenity poor (particularly regarding toilet facilities, lighting, seating and picnic areas). There were strong concerns about access for people in general, and particularly for people with disabilities, many of whom effectively would be unable to

access large areas of the existing park. Many community members noted that there are not many provisions for people to get together for a picnic or a BBQ (and the few areas available get 'book out' or become overcrowded).

Specific community aspirations relating to an overall desire for a more welcoming and accessible park are described in more detail below.

## 1. Better movement and access within the park

The survey participants reported George Kendall Riverside Park can better cater for 'all people' (16 people, 18%) and 'people living with disabilities' (14 people, 16%). The responses to the free text questions echo this sentiment with participants detailing the desire for spaces that could cater to people of all age and accessibility levels. *"There is a lot of empty space currently which needs to be better utilised. I would suggest adding spaces for sports and amenities, while also adding walking paths to criss-cross this area. Given how large the park is, it's worth considering adding vehicle access and an additional carpark to make the lower part of the park accessible and well utilised"*.

Online survey participants also expressed concern about pedestrian safety and user conflicts on the paths, with many pedestrians noting expressing a desire for segregated bike and cycling paths to protect the safety of pedestrians. This was also reflected in the Social Pinpoint and social media. One survey participant commented, *"Something needs to be done about managing cyclists on these shared pathways. For my age it is becoming scary when I am walking that I am going to get hit by cyclists who seem to be racing the clock. What is more dangerous is little children who are not cyclist aware. I have seen so many near misses where children step in the path of speeding cyclists. It is time to start building separate pathways for walkers and cyclists"*.

The community expressed the need for greater connections to help the flow of people into the park. 11 Social Pinpoint pins as well as a number of free text survey responses related to transport connections coming into the park. Participants reported that the paths should be a safe space that enable greater connection throughout the park. One survey participant noted that *"More trees are needed across the middle of the park with better access across from north to south somewhere in the middle"*.

## 2. Improved connections to the park

Participants raised the need for more visitor parking and public transport provision should foot traffic increase. The community believe that supporting community infrastructure should develop in tandem with the park, with one Social Pinpoint participant stating, *"Ermington is poorly serviced by public transport and much change is required as the area continues to develop"*.



Some participants in the Social Pinpoint survey also expressed some concern around the impact of greater park visitation such as traffic and congestion on nearby local roads. A few online survey participants wanted to see improved access points to the park, as well as better parking options.



### 3. Highlighting Parramatta River

Participants across all engagement platforms want to leverage the park's location along the Parramatta river to feature water design elements in the park as well as to create greater connections to the river. Though the park fronts the river, it is largely not visible.

It was mainly the ambience of water views that were highlighted in the comments; there was hardly any mention of potential active uses of the river (i.e. kayaking). Most comments in the online survey expressed a desire to see the river as a backdrop for other park activities, a way to highlight the park's 'scenic views and peaceful places' – a park element receiving 25 nominations (28%) when participants identified their top three park features (refer to Figure 4)

This sentiment was echoed in the Social Pinpoint survey with participants identifying *“a walkway along the foreshore to enjoy the views of the river”*; to *“create/ fix up the separate path along the foreshore (possibly as a boardwalk) to provide a lovely, safe walk along the river... and we're all missing out on enjoying being able to see out over the river”*; and *“quiet areas with views to sit and relax”*. The participants generally recognised the potential of the river to provide general health and wellbeing benefits, offering participants a relaxing backdrop for a busy lifestyle.

Approximately 15 survey participants wanted the park to reflect stories about the river as a part of the natural environment, local history and aboriginal heritage. Participants wanted for water design elements to be incorporated into the park to reflect the river and its significance to the area. The Parramatta river was a recurring theme in responses to Question 6 of the online survey (see Appendix A).

#### 4. Improved amenity and feel of the park

Survey and Social Pinpoint participants want to see George Kendall Riverside Park transformed into a vibrant, welcoming and well-maintained space where the community comfortably can get together. In particular, participants across the engagement called for:

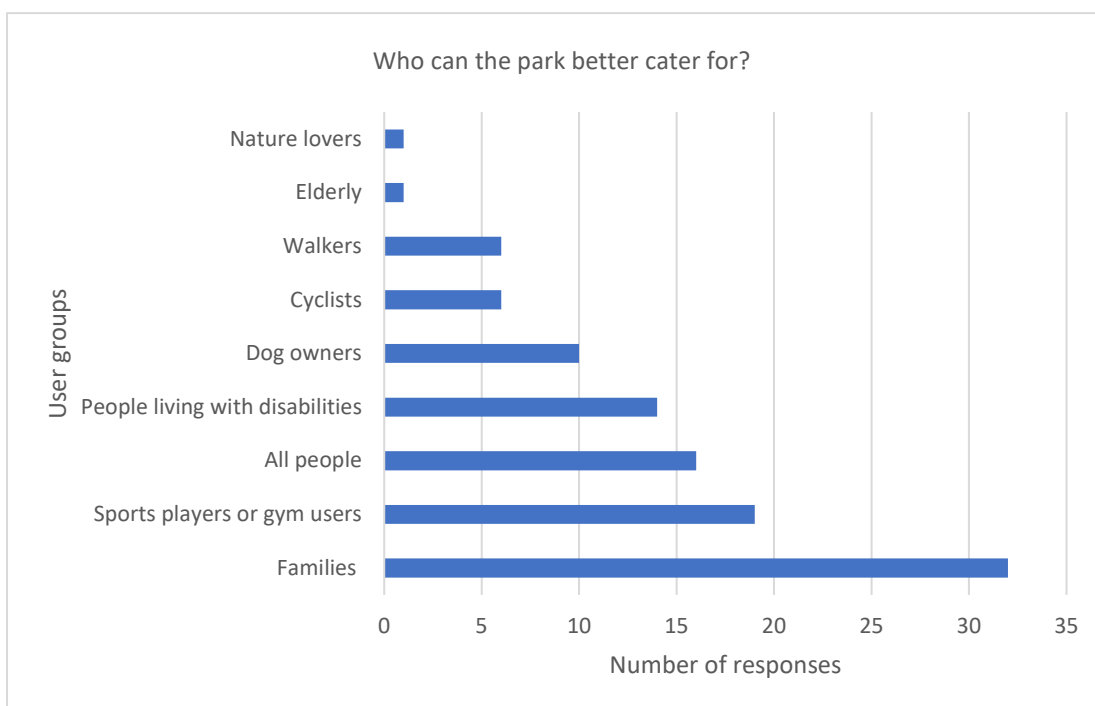
- **Improved lighting:** Participants were concerned about the general lack of lighting in the park. Participants reported the park felt unsafe to be in at night. For example, one survey participant noted: “Most parks have lights for people that want to visit the park at night time or when its dark outside but this park doesn't have any lights system because of which my wife and me avoid going to the park or jogging there at night time.” This comment aligns with the feedback from the Social Pinpoint where one participant suggested this improvement: “Solar powered lights along the path for added safety early morning and evening for better visibility.”
- **Better access to toilets in different areas of the park:** Participants expressed the desire for better toilet facilities that are easily accessible and



equipped with change facilities. Though there are toilet facilities on site, they are not always open for use and are not conveniently located. The engagement highlighted the need for toilets located near the river edge of the park, with a Social Pinpoint participant commenting, *“at the moment there are only toilets near the soccer fields on the other side of the park and they are frequently locked when there are users in the park”*. This sentiment was echoed by survey participants with one stating *“There needs to be OPEN toilets at the other end of the park that can be open at NIGHT or when Soccer is not at the park”*.

- Ensure a pleasant and comfortable park experience:** Many survey participants commented that the park currently feels unpleasant, with heat being the dominant issue (see below) and other issues having a negative impact on user experience (especially the social aspects of potential park use) including the prevalence of bindis and mosquitos. For example: a Social Pinpoint user reported the need to *“Improve mosquitoes situation. There are way too many in spring and summer to enjoy this parkland”*. This was repeated in the online survey which raised the need for more consistent pest control, with one participant reporting *“mosquitos can be really fierce at the park (I’ve never seen so many mosquitos anywhere else in Sydney)”*. Similarly, participants across the engagement commented on bindi infestation, for example: *“would be good is to spray the grass for bindies; empty the rubbish bins more often”*.

The need for greater public amenity is consistent with the the need to better cater for families and the general public as shown in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: Priority user groups for the park**

## Challenges

- Creating greater transport connections into and out of the park
- Maintaining the current topography and high points of the park which the community value whilst creating an accessible space and delivering additional amenities and features that the community prioritised
- Ensuring the long-term maintenance of the park by considering long term (environmental, social and financial) sustainability in the design of the park

## Opportunities and design ideas

- Leverage visual qualities of the river and create access to or inclusion of the bodies of water on the borders of the site
- Enhance connectivity through Appin and to surrounding national parks
- Creating a welcoming space that is well-loved and well-used by all members of the community
- Creating connections in, throughout and out of the Reserve via foot and cycle paths with creative wayfinding to promote good flow
- Investigate the use of universal design as a way to make the park more accessible for all users

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## Priority 3 – Cool & Natural

**“More large shade tree plantings alongside cycle/walking trail near riverside, due to increasingly hot summers”**

– Social Pinpoint Comment



Urban heat and the need for pleasant natural areas that recognise Parramatta’s unique natural landscapes, was a strong theme throughout the engagement. Participants wanted to be able to use the park throughout the day as a place to exercise, get together with friends and family or seek quiet refuge from a busy life. Centrally located in a growing urban centre, George Kendall Riverside Park can play a pivotal role in contributing to the wellbeing of the local community and visitors to the area.

### **What people said**

Participants throughout the engagement wanted to see George Kendall Riverside Park upgraded to be a cool space where people can enjoy Parramatta’s natural landscape. Specific community aspirations relating to an overall desire for a cooler and more natural place are described below as they emerged across the engagement.

## 1. Enhancing the natural features

Engagement participants want a park that celebrates Parramatta's unique natural features. The community raised the importance of leveraging the aesthetic qualities of the Parramatta River and abundant green space.

When discussing the value of green space, participants often associated it with words like 'wind down' and 'relaxation', acknowledging the calming effect of greenery. A total of 41 people (47%) see the park as a 'a peaceful place to relax and wind down' (refer to Figure 3 above), a popular vision particularly for women and people aged over 56. Participants emphasised the opportunity to use native vegetation to achieve this.

Nearly half (47%) the survey participants identified 'trees and natural areas' as features they would include in the park design. This was followed by 'scenic views and peaceful places' (28%) and 'water features or small waterplay' (26%) of respondents (see Figure 4 above). Participants did not consider these features to be mutually exclusive, rather they are complimentary in the making of a green space where the community can relax.

Additionally, the participants do not see the need relaxing green spaces as conflicting with the need for spaces for active recreation. A survey participant stated, *"The park is quite a big one so the scope to provide facilities that cater for a few different groups while maintaining some separation is quite good. Areas for play, exercise and relaxation is very achievable. Creating a space where people can escape and distract their minds from daily life has to improve the whole community."*

## 2. Celebrating the natural landscapes through arts and culture

Survey participants expressed a fundamental value of the natural environment and saw an opportunity for the design of George Kendall Riverside Park to use public art to showcase and educate the public about the native vegetation of the area.

Participants nominated 'natural environment' (32%) as the top answer when asked what themes, topics or local stories participants would like to see expressed in the design of the new park (see Figure 5 below). This was followed closely by 'local history' (32%). When discussing how they want the park to look, a participant noted: *"A park that reflects the area of the river but is beautifully landscaped like Auburn botanical gardens with a river cafe or like a mini Sydney botanical gardens."*

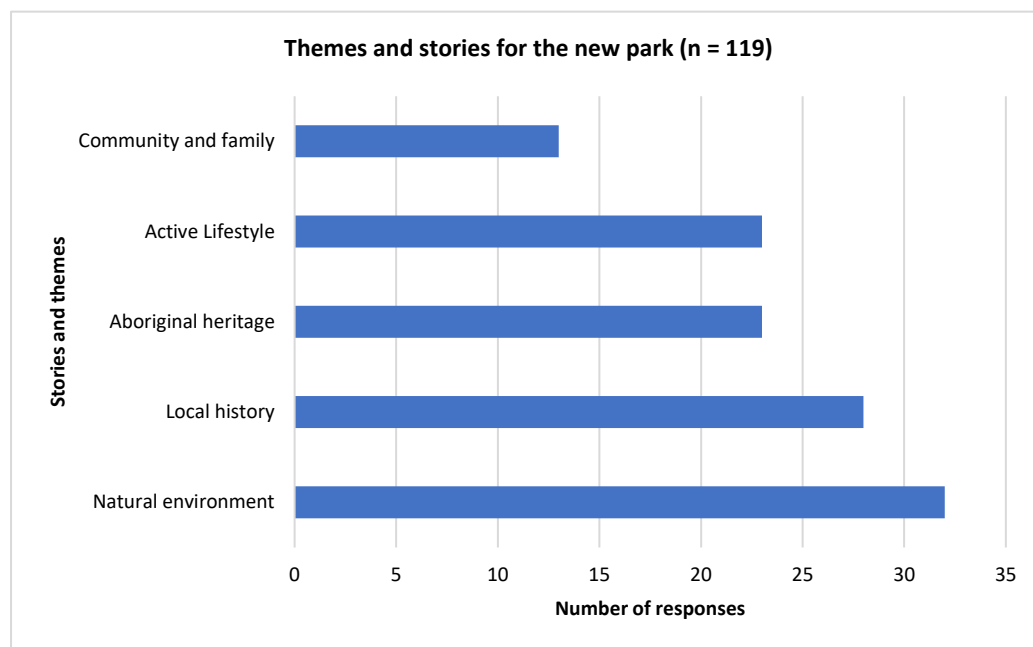


Figure 5: Themes and stories

## 3. Cooling Parramatta and offering refuge from urban heat

The need for shaded and cool areas was a strong theme throughout the engagement and it was clear that climate change is of concern to the participants. Community members called for paths to be lined with trees in order to provide shade to cyclists and walkers. They also wanted to see social areas better protected from exposure to sun and weather.

The community wants suitable green infrastructure that can help cool the wider area. In all areas of engagement, participants prioritised the provision of shade to provide protection from harsh weather. 'Shade and trees' was the third most popular response (29%) (refer to Figure 2 above) when participants were asked what they liked most about parks they had visited. Similarly, 'trees and

natural areas' was the top answer (47%) when participants were asked to name their top 3 park elements (see Figure 4 above). Women, more than men, reported wanting an increase in shade and trees.

Participants expressed a preference for this shade to be natural, provided by native trees and flowers. This was important along cycling and walking paths as well as in seated and picnic areas to respond to the challenge of urban heat. One a Social Pinpoint participant stated: *"More large shade tree plantings alongside current or duplicated cycle/walking trail near riverside, due to increasingly hot summers and such a long open stretch across this park."*

Among all age groups and genders, *'trees help to clean the air and cool the ground, reducing the heat particularly in the warmer months' was seen as the top economic benefit of the park".*

## Challenges

- Maintaining and enhancing tree canopy in the short to medium term in and around upgraded areas of the park, without negatively impacting on water usage
- Balancing a clear line of sight and passive surveillance opportunities with shade provision
- Public access to the river via paths has implications for the river, the mangrove habitat and the people using it, particularly around the safety of users and potential environmental degradation

## Opportunities and design ideas

- Creating a cool refuge for people to gather that will help cool the wider area
- Expanding Parramatta's network of high-quality open spaces
- Leverage the natural assets in and around the park to create a green respite for the community
- Plant as many trees as possible and identify suitable locations for trees and other vegetation to increase tree canopy and shading in the park, particularly along the paths and the playground



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# Where to from here

The project has been well received by engagement participants. Through the course of community engagement, a shared vision for the park was identified along with ideas and elements for consideration by the design team.

These engagement findings, along with the on-going site analysis, environmental reports and finds of the other project consultants will provide a firm foundation for the development of a 50% Concept Design

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## Next steps

- This findings from this report will be used to inform the 50% Concept Design to be prepared by lead design consultant; AECOM
- The 50% Concept Design will form the basis of the next phase of engagement which involves the testing of the park design with the local community via an interactive Design Board (Social Pinpoint ideas wall feature) and online survey

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# Appendix A

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## Survey data analysis

A total of 88 people participated in the survey.

To assist with overall readability, cross tabulation, and input to the main engagement report, the data analysis in the following is presented in logical order for the purposes of the reporting; it does not follow the chronology of the survey design (numbering of questions as they appeared in the survey).

### Demographics

This section provides a profile of survey participants. It looks at their relationship to the area, age, gender as well as cultural background.

#### **What is your connection to the area? (Q1)**

Most respondents were local residents (84% - 74 out of 88). Of these, six were also part of a sports group or played sports nearby, three were members of community organisations, and one respondent was a student.

Of the 14 participants who did not identify as a local resident, five were part of a sports organisation or played sports nearby, five were visitors from outside the area, two were members of a community group, and one person was planning to move into the area.

The proportion of all survey respondents who were part of a sports organisation or played sports nearby was 13%.

## Where do you live? (Q17)

As shown in the table below, the majority of respondents (89%) lived within the Parramatta LGA. Two people identified as living outside of NSW. These findings are consistent with Q11 below, which shows that the majority of people live within a 10 minutes' walk of the park.

**Table 1: Participants' place of residence**

Postcode	Suburbs	Number	Percentage of total survey responses (88)*
Parramatta LGA			
2115	Ermington	52	59%
2116	Rydalmere	9	10%
2114	Melrose Park; Denistone; Meadowbank; West Ryde; Denistone West	3	4%
2117	Oatlands; Telopea; Dundas; Dundas Valley	3	4%
2118	Carlingford; Carlingford Court; Carlingford North; Kingsdene	3	4%
2127	Wentworth Point; Sydney Olympic Park; Newington	2	2%
2151	North Parramatta; North Rocks	1	1%
2152	Northmead	1	1%
Outside the Parramatta LGA			
2112	Putney; Ryde; Denistone East	2	2%
2170	Casula; Lurnea; Mount Pritchard; Moorebank; Liverpool; Hammondville; Warwick Farm; Chipping North; Prestons	2	2%
2021	Centennial Park; Moore Park; Paddington.	1	1%
2073	Pymble; Pymble West	1	1%
2077	Asquith, Hornsby, Hornsby Heights, Waitara	1	1%
2142	Holroyd; Clyde; Granville; South Granville; Rosehill; Camellia	1	1%
2161	Yennora; Old Guilford; Guilford West; Guilford	1	1%
2607	Acton	1	1%
3078	Alphington; Fairfield	1	1%

\* Responses have been rounded to the nearest percentage

### Do you live within 10 minutes' walk of the park? (Q11)

The majority of respondents (63%) live within a 10 minutes' walk away from George Kendall Riverside Park. All 88 participants answered this question.

### What is your age? (Q16)

As shown in Figure 1 below, there was fairly good representation of survey responses across the adult age categories, except seniors over the age of 76 which only included one person. The age brackets with the highest representation were 26 – 35 years old (46%), followed by 36 – 45 years olds (23%).

Four of the participants were under the age of 18.

All 88 participants answered this question.

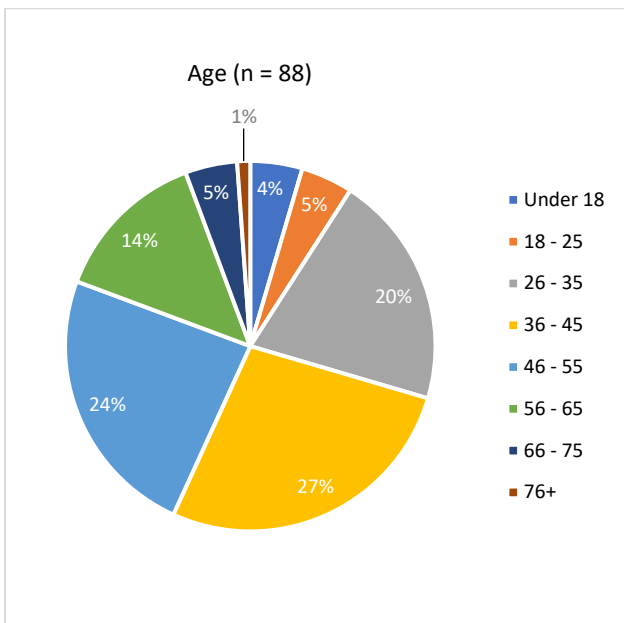


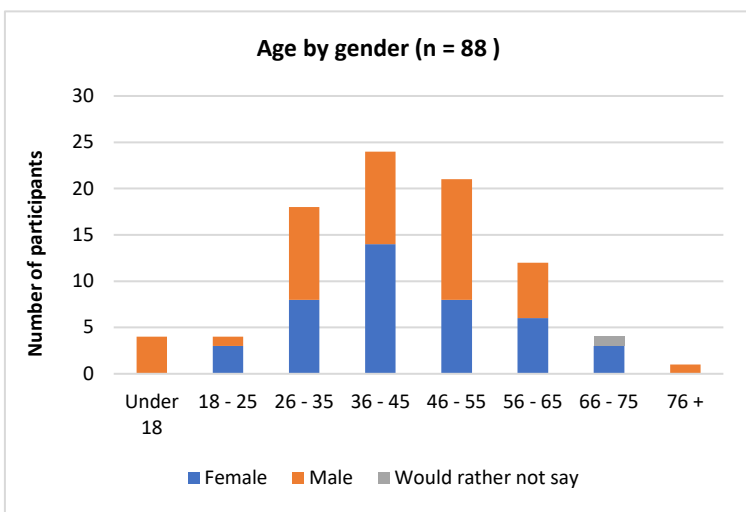
Figure 1: Participants' age

### What gender do you identify with? (Q13)

There was an almost equal number of men (45 people, equalling 51% of respondents) and women (42 people, equalling 48% of respondents) who participated in the survey. One person preferred not to answer this question.

As shown in Figure 2, there was a slightly uneven distribution of male/female representations across the age groups, with the four participants under 18 identifying as male, and the majority of people aged over 66 identifying as female.

All 88 participants answered this question.



### Do you identify with a cultural background? (Q14)

The majority of responses (80 people, equalling 91% of respondents) stated that they did not identify with a cultural background. Only eight participants identified as coming from a different cultural background, including Korean, Armenian, Chinese and Italian backgrounds.

74 participants answered this question.

### Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander? (Q15)

No respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. One respondent preferred not to answer this question.

A total number of 83 responses to this question were received.

### Visitation patterns

This section focuses on the visitation patterns for George Kendall Riverside Park. It looks at how often people visit the park and how they will get there (method of transport).

### How often do you visit the George Kendall Riverside Park? (Q3)

Of the 85 people who answered the question, almost all (83 people, equalling 98%) were regular users of the park, with 80% (68 people) of total survey responses indicating daily or weekly use of the park, and a further 18% (15 people) stating they visit the park monthly.

Only two people indicated they had never visited the park and three people did not answer the question.

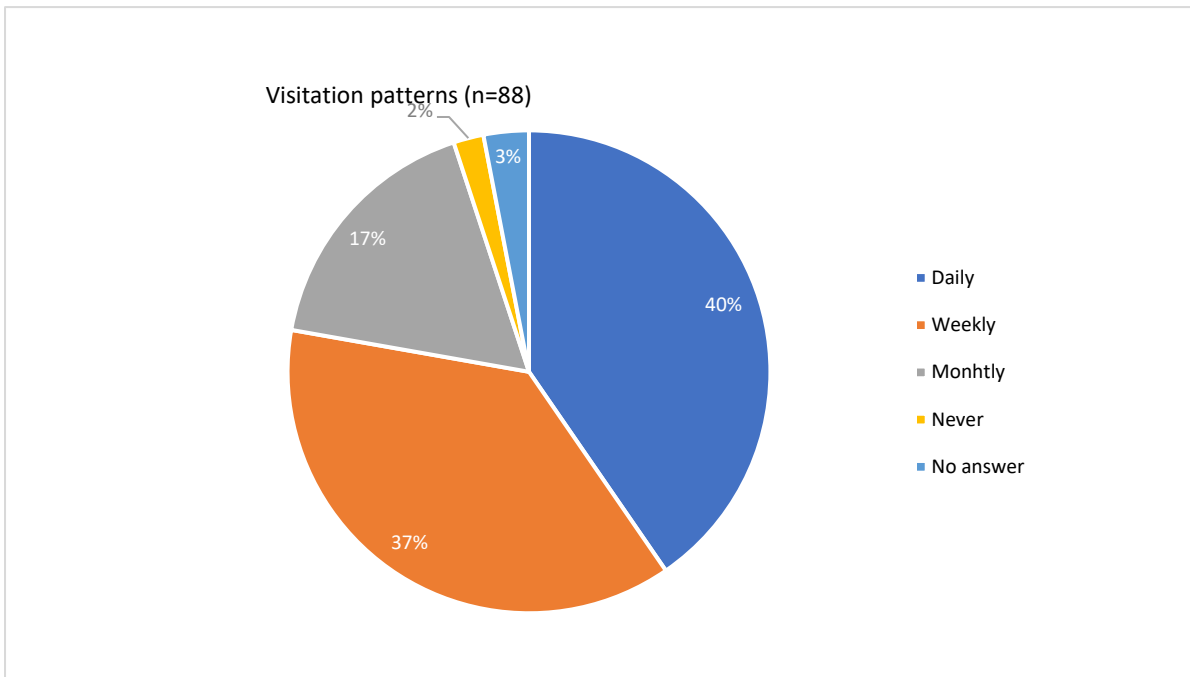


Figure 3: Visitation

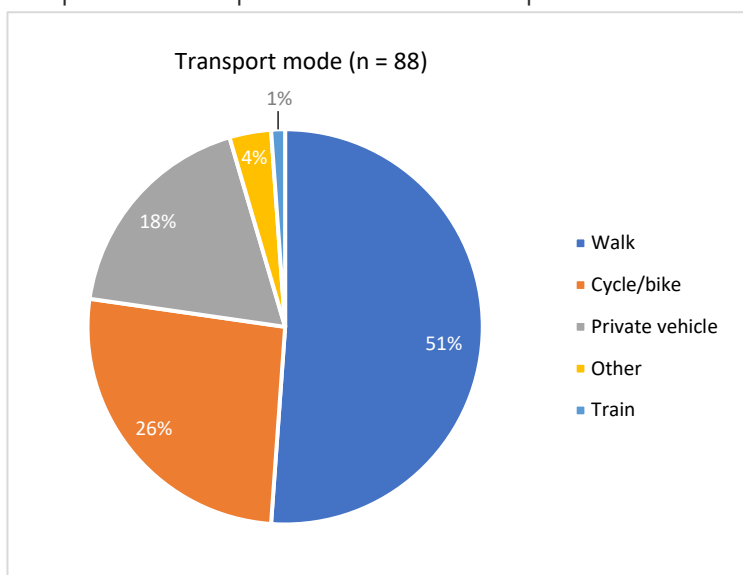
### How do you travel to the park? (Q12)

The majority of respondents (68 people, equalling 77% of total respondents) indicated that walk or cycle to the park, 18% (16 respondents) use a private vehicle, while the remaining 5% (four people) use public transport or skate to the park.

All 88 participants answered this question. **Figure 4: Methods of travel**

### Aspirations for George Kendall Riverside Park

This section focuses on questions that discuss the community's wants and needs in relation to the George Kendall Riverside Park.



## Thinking about all the parks you have visited, what do you like about them most? (Q2)

As shown in the figure below, the most commonly referenced feature of attractiveness of parks was nature (31 of the 88 participants indicating this theme in their response) closely followed by 29 participants selecting paths and tracks areas integral to a good user experience.

All 88 participants answered this question. The responses were then themed based on the most common threads running across comments with one comment possibly containing more than one theme.

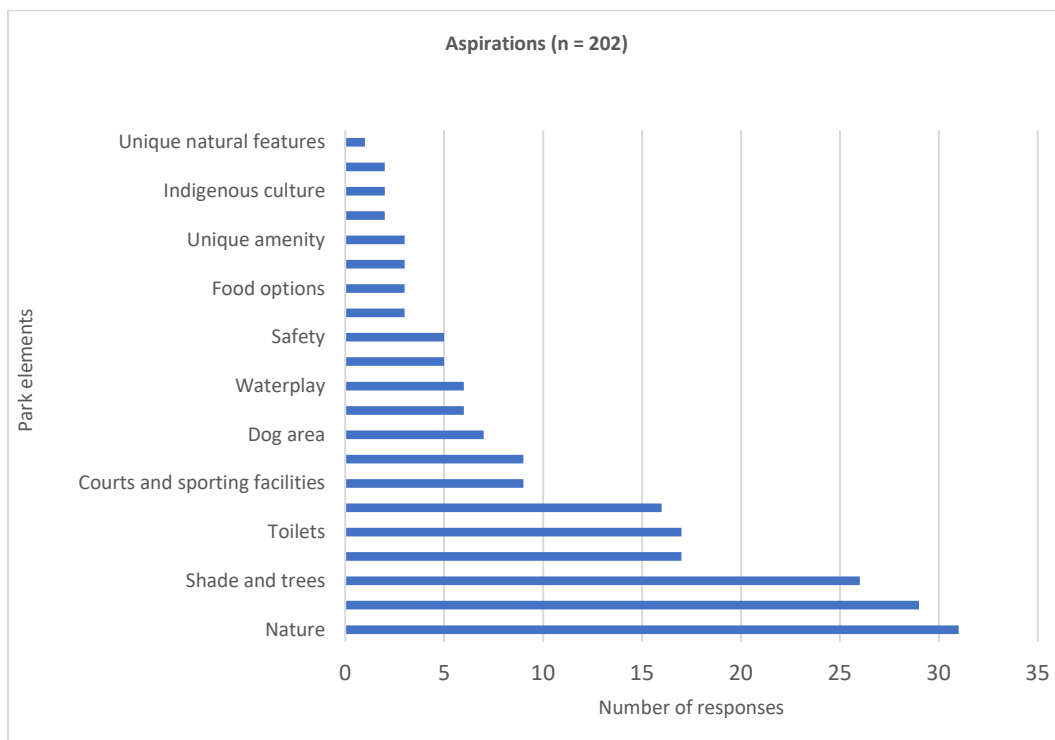


Figure 5: Aspirations for the new park

## What is your favourite thing to do in a park? (Q4)

The majority of responses identified 'exercise' (35 responses, equalling 40% of respondents) and 'ride my bike' (17 responses, equalling 19% of respondents) as the top two favourite things to do in a park. This was followed by 'play organised sports' (10 responses, equalling 11% of respondents).

All 88 participants answered this question.

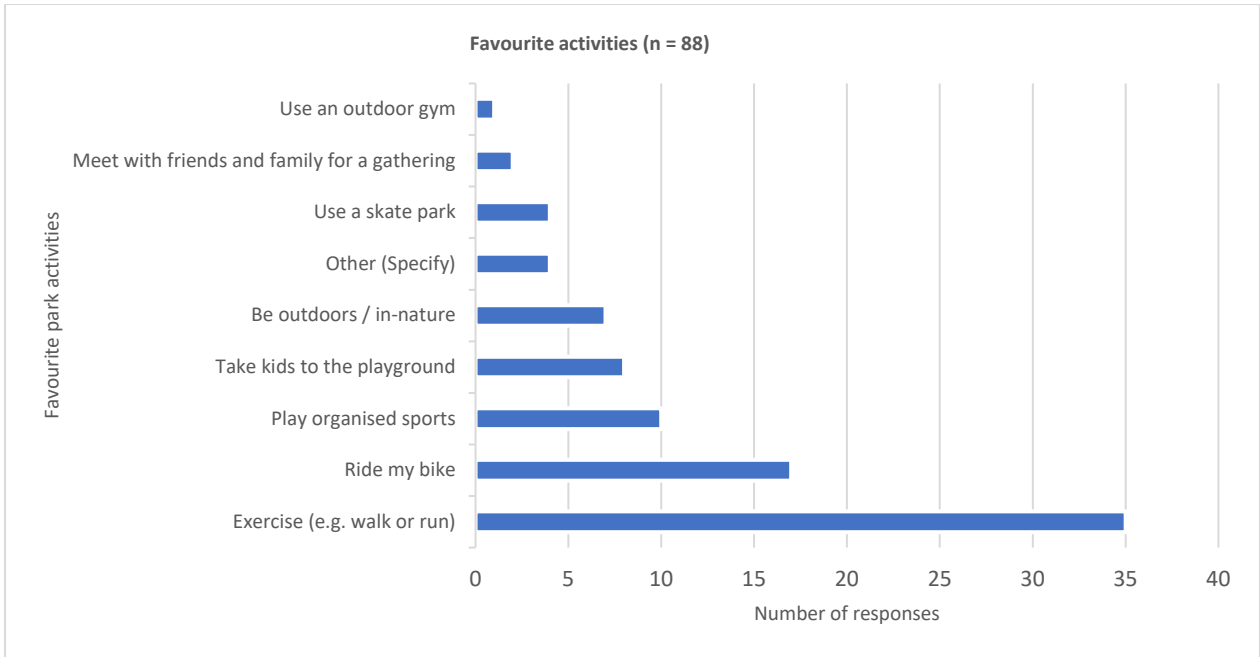


Figure 6: Favourite park activities

**What role would you like the park to have in the community? (Q5 – choose all that apply)**

As shown in Figure 7 below, 64 people indicated that the park should be a place for cycling, running and walking. This was followed by a peaceful place to relax and wind down (41 respondents) and a place to play games and sports (35 participants). A total of 277 responses were received for this question (as participants could select more than one option).

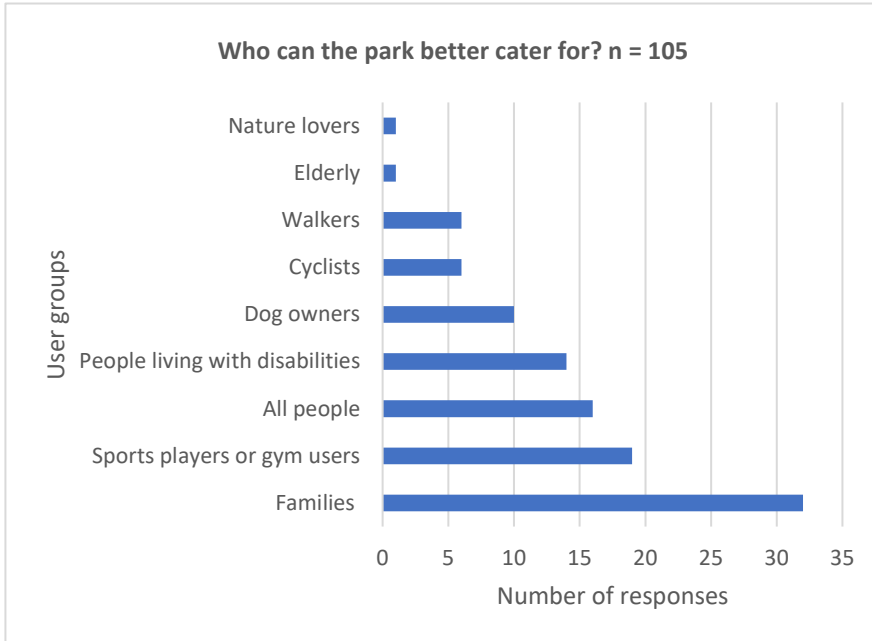


Figure 7: Future role of the park in the community



### Who in the community could George Kendall Riverside Park better cater for? (Q8)

As shown below, the largest number of people (32) indicated that the park should better cater to families. This was followed by sports players (29), all people (16) and people living with disabilities (14).



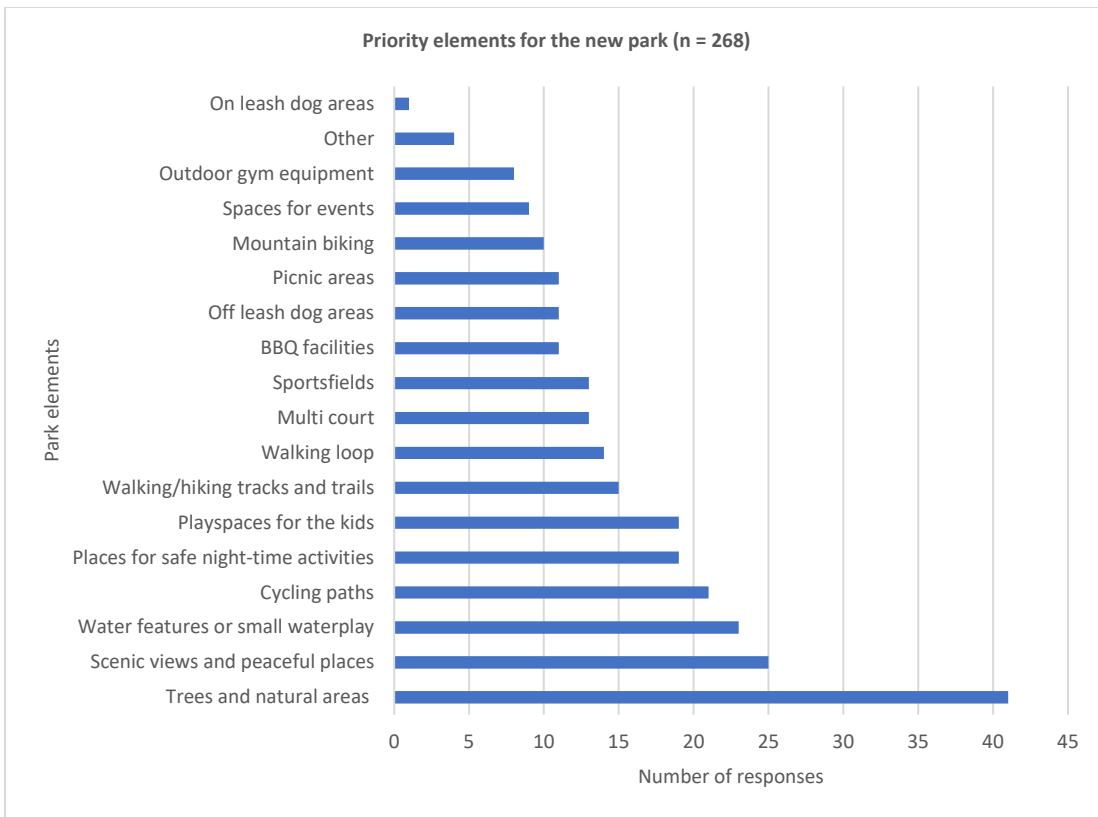
All 88 participants answered this question. The responses were then themed based on the most common threads running across comments with one comment possibly containing more than one theme.

Figure 8: User groups the park can better cater for

### If you were designing the new park, what are the top things you would want to include? (Q7 – choose all that apply)

The clear priority for the new park was identified as 'trees and natural areas' (41 participants selecting this as a priority). 'Scenic views and peaceful places', waterplay, and cycle paths were also considered important elements of the park, with each of these elements being selected by more than 20 people as amongst their top three features.

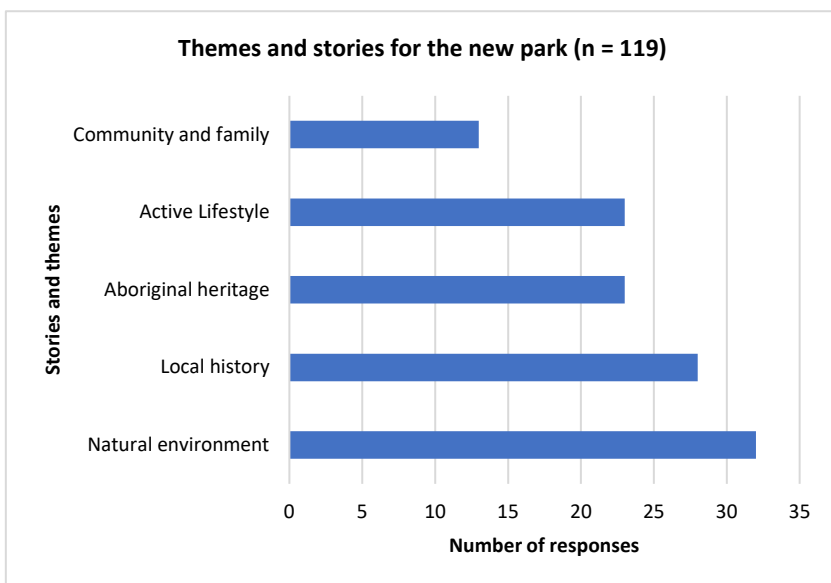
A total number of 268 responses to this question were received (as participants could select more than one option).



**Figure 9: Top three priorities participants wanted to see in the new park (select up to three priorities)**

**What themes, topics or local stories would you like to see expressed in the design of the park? (Q6)**

The largest proportion of participants wanted to see stories centred around the natural environment (32 respondents) reflected in the park design, followed by the local history of the area (28 respondents). There was also a strong interest in the local Aboriginal culture and history with 23 people selecting this as an important theme.



All 88 participants answered this question. The suggestions were themed based on the most common threads running across comments with one comment possibly containing more than one theme.

**Figure 10: Themes, topics and local stories**

## **Have you got any other ideas, suggestions or comments to help the design team? (Q10)**

The responses to this question largely focused on creating a comfortable space that can support a variety of activities including sports, skateparks, and food options.

Many of the comments highlighted a need for better lighting, toilets, and better park maintenance. A few comments (three respondents) also suggested the large open space currently is underutilised and not very comfortable (eight participants commented on bindi patches and mosquitos affecting their experience).

A total of 64 responses were received for this question.

Quotes:

*“Do a treatment for bind's in the grass. I can't walk my dog in the majority of the grass areas. Even the actual dog park is covered in them. Lighting for nights, particularly non-daylight saving time so it's safe to walk the dog in the evening.”*

*“More trees are needed across the middle of the park with better access across from north to south somewhere in the middle.”*

*“The tennis court is always jam packed with people waiting, we have only ever gotten on it once. Another two tennis courts would be great. The basketball courts are also very busy, more of these would be welcome.”*

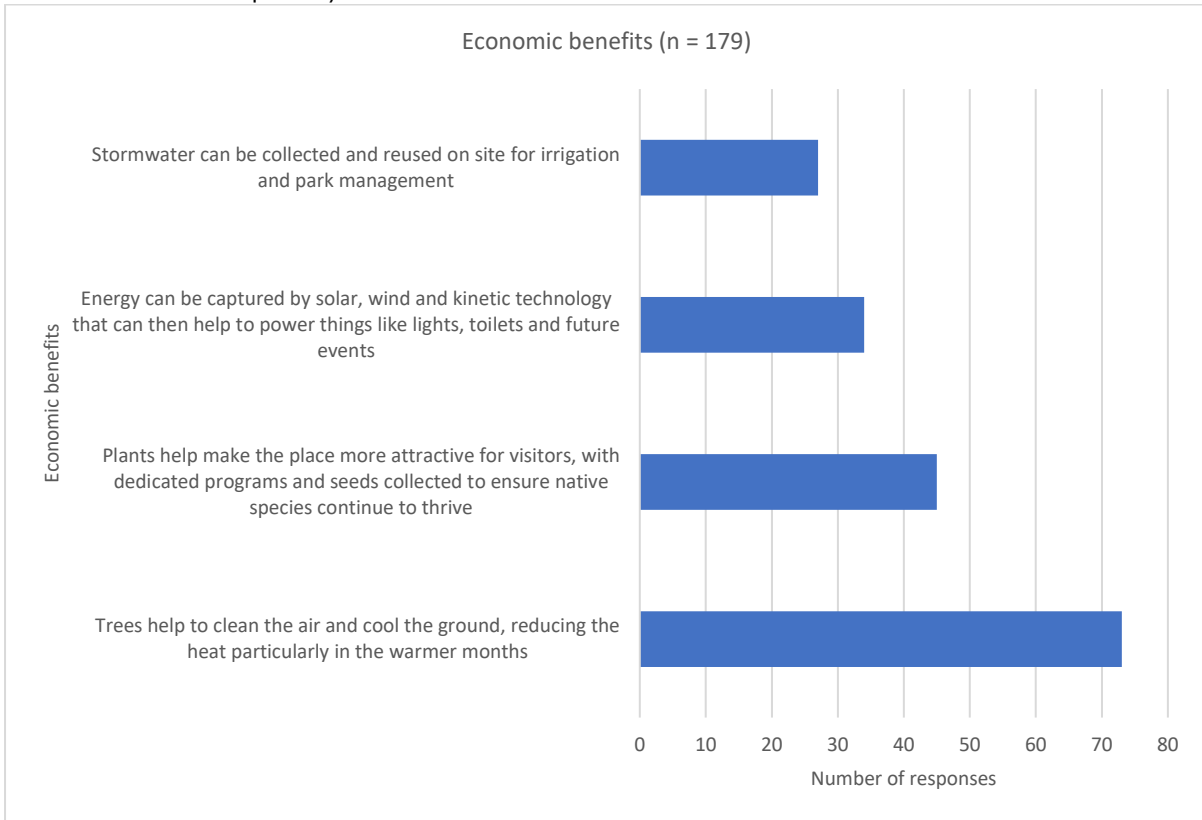
*“There is a lot of empty space currently which needs to be better utilised. I would suggest adding spaces for sports and amenities, while also adding walking paths to criss-cross this area.”*

*“Mosquitoes are a big problem that make the parkland unusable in spring/summer evenings. This must be addressed before spending any money.”*

**Parks can also have economic benefits, contributing to the local community in different ways. (Q9- choose two that apply)**

The majority of respondents (83%) indicated ‘trees that help to clean the air and cool the ground, reducing the heat particularly in the warmer and ‘Plants that help make the place more attractive for visitors, with dedicated programs and seeds collected to ensure native species continue to thrive’ (45 responses, equalling 51% of total respondents) are the biggest economic benefits in a park.

A total of 179 responses were received for this question (as participants could select more than one option).



**Figure 11: Economic benefits of parks**

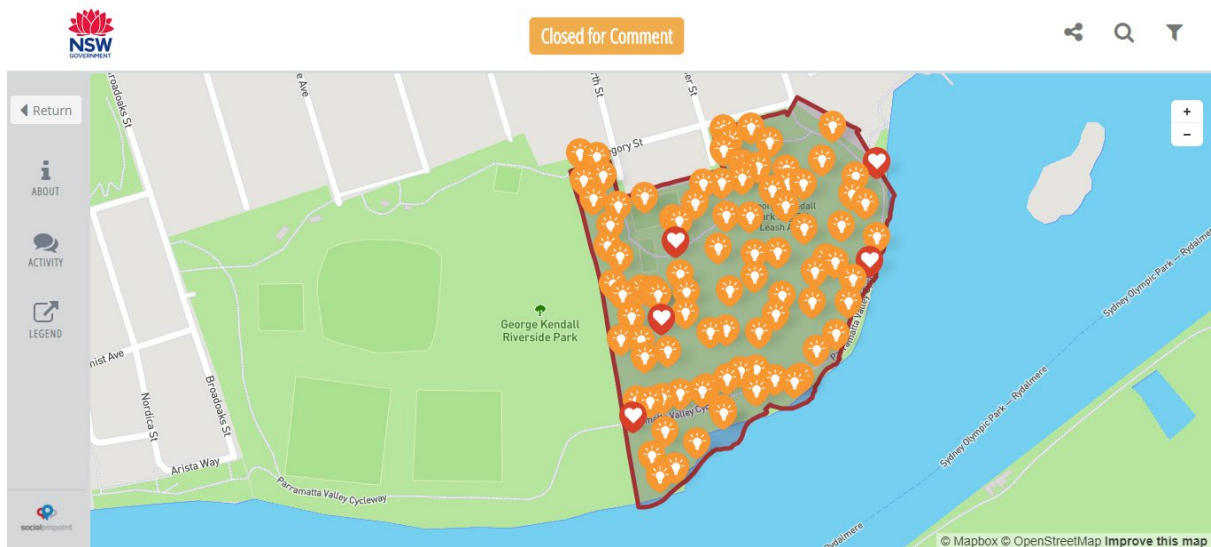
# Appendix B

## Social Pinpoint analysis – George Kendall

### Overview

A total of 151 responses were recorded:

- 146 (97%) ‘What do you want to see?’ pins (the yellow pins in the map below)
- 5 (3%) ‘What do you love?’ pins (the red pins in the map below)



### Heat map

The heat map below displays concentration of pins that were dropped onto the Social Pinpoint.



Most comments on the map were directed to these areas

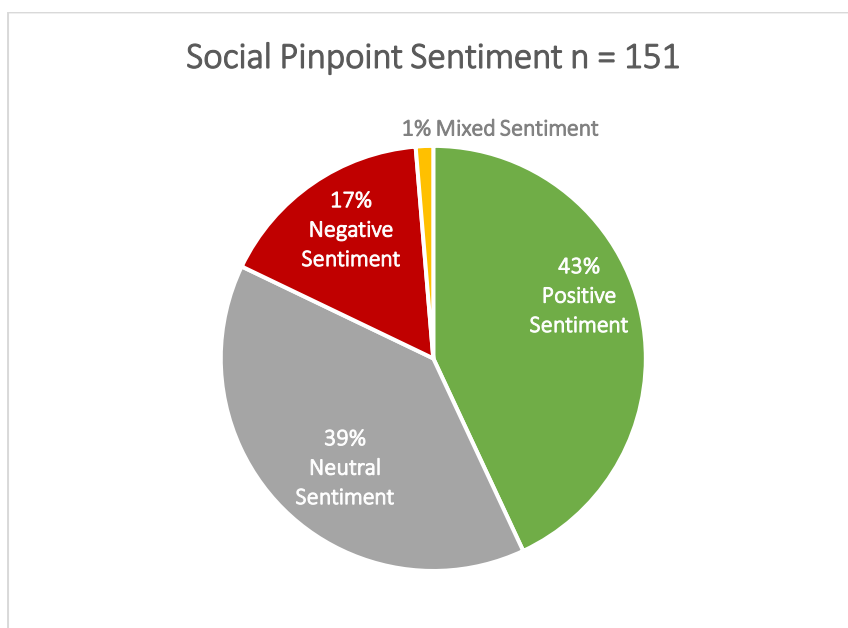
### Overall sentiment

The pie chart below indicates the overall sentiment of the comments received. This was generated by

the Social Pinpoint program based on the language used by participants, not their actual content (for example a comment such as 'I would like to see...' would register as a positive sentiment. As such, they are indicative only.

Of the 151 pins dropped, 17% (equalling 25 comments) expressed negative sentiments but no negative comments were directed at the program itself. The negative comments centred on the park in its current state, highlighting needs for better access to amenities and facilities, better maintenance of the space, and the need for better transport connections.

65 comments of positive sentiment were received, most relating to the provision of facilities and amenities that encourage play and physical activity for people of all ages and abilities, the separation of walking and cycling paths, and food options in the park. 59 comments were categorised as neutral and the remaining 2 comments were of a mixed nature. The breadth of these comments focused on the need for broader transport connections to the Park, the planting of trees to create shade, the installation of lights and seating, as well as separate walking and cycling tracks to create a safer experience.



## Community values

The following provides a brief summary of community values as they relate to key opportunities for the park:

### Opportunities to stay active

The community expressed that they value active recreation, and in particular walking, cycling, outdoor exercise (gym), and sports (multipurpose courts). The participants reported that these active recreation opportunities should

be able to be used by all members of the community, highlighting the value they place on inclusiveness and universal design.

- “Upgrade the current outdoor exercise facility. The current one in Kendall Park is outdated and inadequate for the current community. A combination of static and dynamic equipment should be added. The equipment should include chin up bar, push up, sit up, stretching, balance and the like.”

### Opportunities for informal play and family activities

Social Pinpoint participants valued opportunities to get together with their families in a playful and unstructured way.

- *“No more hard surface spaces, keep the soft green to kick a ball, fly a kite, littlies to run and enjoy, families to picnic.”*

### Opportunities to take in nature

Community members appreciate the local area’s natural environment and landscapes, wanting to have access to views of the Parramatta River. They expressed a desire for a park that integrates the natural ‘feel’ and features of the area, such as using trees with large canopy cover for natural shading and cooling.

- *“A themed landscaped area reflecting the riverside - concept like Auburn Botanical gardens with water feature and lots of interesting paths to walk with fauna and flora but with a riverside theme.”*

### **Most popular comments**

Community members were able to vote on each other’s comments. Quoted below are the most popular comments as voted on by members of the community.

- *“Fix the drainage along the shared path. Floods in several spots when it rains. It is also dangerous near the large tree where the roots have lifted the path”. (28 up votes)*
- *“A separate path for bike riders as it's a very popular commuter and exercise track. It is very busy all day. Use the existing path for runners ramp; walkers. This will alleviate the congestion and make a safer exercising area for everyone”. (24 up votes, 1 down vote)*
- *“A walkway along the foreshore so we can enjoy the views of the river. Keep the existing path for bike riders.” (23 up votes)*
- *“Solar powered lights along the path for added safety early morning and evening for better visibility.” (21 up votes)*





## Community ideas

Across the 151 responses, community members suggested ideas for the new park which are described below as they relate to the following themes:

- Community and culture
- Play and activation
- Look and feel
- Amenity and access

### Community and culture - key ideas

- Picnic/BBQ facilities, restrooms, and increased seating opportunities.
- A space where the community feels safe.
- Honours and acknowledges the traditional owners of the land through creative wayfinding and signage.

*“Native garden /other landscaped elements that celebrate local indigenous heritage/culture and can allow for nature play for kids - somewhere kids can go and play in nature, not just a playground. What would be fantastic would be a nature playground like the one at centennial park”*

### Play and activation - key ideas

- Walking and cycling tracks with shaded provided by vegetation.
- Aspects of water play to provide relief from the heat in summer.
- Playground, possibly a natural playground, for all age and access levels.
- Outdoor gym equipment to encourage fitness.

*“Waterpark for All ages of kids And teenagers and play area with Multiple swings, flying fox, BBQ and lots of shaded seating and picnic tables.*

*With lots of development In the area there is a need to add more outdoor play areas for families to enjoy, parking needs to be extended too.”*

### Look and feel - key ideas

- Overhead shade provided by vegetation.
- Makes the most of the natural environment.
- Native vegetation with creative signage that encourages learning.

*“More large shade tree plantings alongside current or duplicated cycle/walking trail near riverside, due to increasingly hot summers and such a long open stretch across this park.”*

### Amenity and access - key ideas

- Universal design principles to encourage people of all ages and access levels to use the park.
- Good provision of amenity including lighting and toilet facilities.

*“Upgraded toilet and change facilities with better disabled access”*

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