New inclusive playspace, Leslie Patrick Park

Community Engagement Summary

August 2024



CITY OF MORETON BAY

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Kabi Kabi, Jinibara and Turrbal Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways of the Moreton Bay region, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise that City of Moreton Bay has always been a place of cultural, spiritual, social and economic significance to First Nations people.

We are committed to working in partnership with Traditional Custodians and other First Nations communities to shape a shared future that celebrates First Nations history and culture as an irreplaceable foundation of our city's collective identity.

Alignment with our roadmap

The new inclusive playspace proposed for Leslie Patrick Park is helping to achieve the outcomes of our Corporate Plan 2022–2027 and realise our vision: **Our Moreton Bay. Amazing places. Natural spaces.**

The strategic pillar this project specifically relates to is:



By 2033, our Moreton Bay will have vibrant communities that proudly come together to participate in and celebrate different cultures and life experiences, with access to the services and facilities they need.

Read more about Council's Corporate Plan and the pillars that underpin it at https://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au/Services/Reports-Policies/Corporate-Plan

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A playspace for all abilities

We are considering options for a new inclusive playspace in Arana Hills' award-winning Leslie Patrick Park.

Leslie Patrick Park, Arana Hills features an All Abilities Playground that opened in late 2019. The playground was the first of its kind in South East Queensland and aims to meet the needs of children and adults of all abilities.

Playground users raised concerns with the Divisional Councillor about the playground not catering for those who are blind or have low vision. To address the feedback, we commenced planning for a Local Community Infrastructure (LCI) project to install a new inclusive playspace. This space would incorporate tactile and sensory play elements designed to be inclusive of children and adults who are blind or have low vision.

A draft concept plan was developed that included:

- tactile wayfinding tools including rope guides and contrasting concrete colourings and surfaces for visual distinction
- communication board
- sensory play elements
- optical overhead panels
- quiet spaces
- colour contrasting garden plantings
- potential for digital augmentation.

The proposed new inclusive playspace will be added to the southern side of the existing playground and the design will incorporate the existing bumble bee theme.

We know from Moreton Says (moretonbayt.link/moretonsays) that our community values inclusive facilities and prioritising diversity. 89% of community members told us they believe Council plays an important role in ensuring the city has the services and facilities it needs to support physical and mental wellbeing. We also know the Hills District community values inclusive facilities and diversity, and 77% agree Council plays a big part in helping facilitate inclusive and engaged communities that value diversity.

Engagement snapshot

Between 15 July and 11 August 2024 we received 8 completed survey responses and hosted two workshops with targeted stakeholders (lived experience users and professionals engaged via Vision Australia). Through the engagement we had:

568 webpage visitors

20 attendees across two workshops

During the consultation we received feedback from a range of users including professionals working in the space (speech pathologists, occupational therapists and access consultants), park users with lived-experience, including parents of children who are blind or have low vision, adults who are blind or have low vision, carers and other community members. Generally, we heard…

Positive feedback about the draft concept design and the considerations already made for the intended user group

Insights on how the elements can be improved to best meet needs, e.g. different ideas about garden edging for optimal wayfinding (navigation).

> *My son isn't very interested in play equipment but he loves to explore different textures so he touches plants and runs his fingers along walls. A sensory wall/ trail would be great.*
> Consultation participant

How we engaged

This project addresses actions in our Community Wellbeing Strategy 2042 including removing barriers experienced by people with disabilities within our community. Considering all views when making decisions tis crucial to meeting this objective so with a genuine willingness to listen, we engaged to:

- gain early advice from key technical stakeholders to inform refinement of the draft concept design
- provide an accessible and inclusive opportunity for stakeholders with lived experience to provide feedback on the draft concept design
- seek feedback from existing park users and interested community members.

Online survey

The online community survey asked questions about specific elements featured in the draft concept plan, e.g. the rope tool for wayfinding (navigation) and different technologies to support users.

The survey was open for 4 weeks from 15 July to 11 August 2024. Participation was encouraged through:

- physical signage in Leslie Patrick Park
- a letterbox drop to more than 50 residents surrounding the park
- a dedicated project webpage on Council's Your Say Moreton Bay (YSMB) website
- an email to YSMB community members with an interest in parks and recreation projects
- an article in the YSMB newsletter
- an article in the Divisional Councillor's newsletter
- correspondence via Council's existing relationships with community groups and professional networks.
- Social media advertising to potential park users in nearby suburbs and people who experience blindness or low vision.

The Divisional Councillor also raised awareness of the project during an interview with the Talk of the Town podcast by Echo News on 14 May 2024. A follow up article about the project was published in The Hills Echo on 19 July 2024.

Targeted workshops

We engaged Vision Australia to help us design accessible workshops and identify and bring together key stakeholder participants.

Expert advisory group workshop

During a two-hour virtual workshop, we met with 10 experts. These experts work with a range of age groups and support families within The Hills District.The professions represented in this workshop, included:

- Speech pathology
- Occupational therapy
- Access consultancy
- Physiotherapy
- Orientation and mobility services.

During this workshop, the project team presented the draft concept design and attendees provided feedback directly to the design team. The group also provided feedback on planned engagement tools before the online survey opened and the second workshop was held with park users with lived experience.

> *It would be great to use different colours in different ways to amplify contrast in spaces. People with a vision impairment may struggle with depth perception, which may mean repeated colours may make things confusing.*
>
> Expert advisory group consultation participant

Lived experience workshop

A second workshop was held with 10 community members with lived experience of blindness or low vision, including people care for/support someone who is blind or has low vision. This workshop was held in Leslie Patrick Park. Holding this workshop in the park meant attendees could experience the environment first-hand and provide a deeper level of feedback.

Attendees brought a mix of perspectives and included:

- a woman who is blind and relies on digital communication tools and her support worker
- 3 children with varying degrees of vision loss and their parents/carers
- a grandparent with vision loss
- a woman who is blind and relies on the use of a cane
- a man with low vision who also uses a cane.

The workshop was a safe and comfortable opportunity to gather feedback on elements of the draft concept design, including materiality, colours, textures and general design. Attendees walked through the existing playground, experienced 3D replicas of the planned playspace features and saw examples of the proposed concrete colours for contrasting purposes.



Participants at the lived experience workshop



One of the younger workshop participants exploring a 3D replica of one of the potential features of the new playspace.

> *As a parent (who is blind) - to walk with my daughter just mother and child (through a playspace) and not have to include another adult gives us an experience that I felt we missed out on.*

Participant of the lived experience workshop

What we heard

This report summarises the findings from the two workshops and the online survey.

Of the 8 survey respondents, 50% identified as a carer of someone who is blind or has low vision, 25% work in a role with an interest in the blind and low vision community and 25% were a member of The Hills District community.



All survey participants and lived experience users resided within The Hills District or more widely in the City of Moreton Bay.

Some stakeholders provided detailed feedback on specific features of the playspace, while others provided more general insight into community needs and desires. All feedback has been provided to the project team for consideration. For the purposes of this report, feedback has been summarised under four key themes:

- exceeding minimum standards of what's required in a playground
- simplifying the flow of the playspace
- prioritising communication and education opportunities for users
- enhancing safety and independence of all users.

Exceeding the minimum

The draft concept plan was designed with the opportunity to exceed minimum standards in mind. While this was voiced by the expert advisory group, other consultation participants mirrored this feedback. Specifically, they focused on:

- ensuring luminance contrast is much higher than the minimum 30% required
- provision of ability to include unique digital and auditory elements to enhance navigation through the space
- prioritising unique sensory experiences for the safety of all park users.

> *Making the environment inclusive of the strengths of the individuals.*
> Expert advisory group participant

Simplifying the flow

The artist impression imagery shown to participants depicted a curved pathway which can be used as a 'shore line' (A "shore line" can incorporate a building line, kerb rail or wall used by a person who is blind or has low vision to maintain a consistent line of travel). A clear theme emerged in the feedback to simplify the design and focus on straight lines to enhance navigation, independence and safety for users. Ideas on how this could be improved included:

- the path of travel should be one colour and the elements in the other nodes coming off them to be in other colours with a 50-60% luminance contrast between them.
- using 300mm high sandstone blocks instead of curbing to shore line the edge of the playspace and create a defined line with the garden.

> *Clear flowing shore lines are recommended - little parts sticking out is disorienting for someone who is totally blind.*
> Expert advisory group participant

Prioritising communicative elements

There were suggestions about different ways to communicate with users and notify them of upcoming play elements. These included:

- 3D objects tethered to the rope tool to support navigation through the space
- audio guide upon gate entrance to enhance user independence
- implementing well-used mobile applications (e.g. NaviLens, Seeing AI)
- prioritising a uniquely designed communication board or using engraved symbols on playspace features

> *Please consider that braille traditionally should not overlay written text so that a braille user does not impact a visual users access. Clear, high contrast font for those who use accessibility apps e.g. Seeing AI.*
> Consultation participant

Two participants in the online survey provided extensive feedback about the potential use of a communication board. Some of the ideas shared included:

- engaging a specialist company to design communication boards
- considering what symbols are used on the communication board, e.g. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) or Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD).

> *My son uses switches which have a voice recording and pictures to make choices as well as a PODD book.*
> Consultation participant

Optimising safety and independence

Safety was a consistent theme during this consultation and was emphasised by parents in the lived experience workshop. Some of the considerations included:

- clearly spaced features to minimise trip hazards and enhance playspace flow
- ropes at multiple heights to support multiple users (e.g. children, people using a wheelchair and adults with an ambulant disability).

Some other ideas to support blind and low vision user independence included:

- considering Guide Dogs in the space
- attaching auditory elements to the rope tool to enhance navigation
- prioritising accessible information on the Council website so people can research the area before they go to the park.

> *Safety is an important element and distance between elements needs to be considered.*
> *Lived experience group participant*

Next steps

Thank you to everyone who contributed during the consultation period. Your feedback has given us important insights into enhancing accessibility in this playspace and what is needed more widely in City of Moreton Bay. It will help to shape the future of the new inclusive playspace in Leslie Patrick Park.

We will now consider feedback alongside best practice design principles, site constraints, project budget and market quotes to determine what can be designed and delivered here.

Any updates, plans and other opportunities for input will be provided on the Your Say Moreton Bay platform. Visit moretonbay.link/new-inclusive-playspace-leslie-patrick-park.

For more information on our new Corporate Plan and Pillars
scan the QR code or visit moretonbay.qld.gov.au

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