



# **Recommended Improvements to Citizens Park Citizens Bark Club**

June 2015

# Foreword

---

## **Disclaimer**

This document has been prepared by members of the Citizens Park User Group, requested by the Council of the City of Yarra to provide recommendations for improvement of Citizens Park. The members authoring this document were selected for participation in the Group primarily based on our affiliation with the dog users of the park, however, our recommendations have been formed on the basis of attempting to represent all community users of the park

# Executive Summary

---

**Our objective is to ensure that the open space of Citizens Park is equipped to meet the current and future needs of the citizens and guests of Richmond**

- With limited open space in Richmond and a growing population, demand for Citizens Park will continue to intensify
- Recommendations for improvement need to consider this increase in intensity of use if they are to be sustainable

**We view the purpose of Citizens Park to be:** a) a shared space for the recreational, family and sporting needs of Richmond citizens, and; b) to serve as a place of natural beauty in a highly-urbanised area. Our recommendations are based upon preserving the park for these purposes

**The primary issues we're seeking to resolve relate to Health and Safety and Access and Sustainability.** Our recommendations are as follows:

## 1. Health and Safety

- **Increase paid and volunteer patrol/clean-up of the Park** – addressing concerns relating to animal faeces, litter and needles
- **Education and improved signage** – informing users of guidelines for use and schedules of exclusive usage
- **Re-install the Park gates and provide additional fencing in selected areas** – addressing compliance during organised sports and animal safety concerns

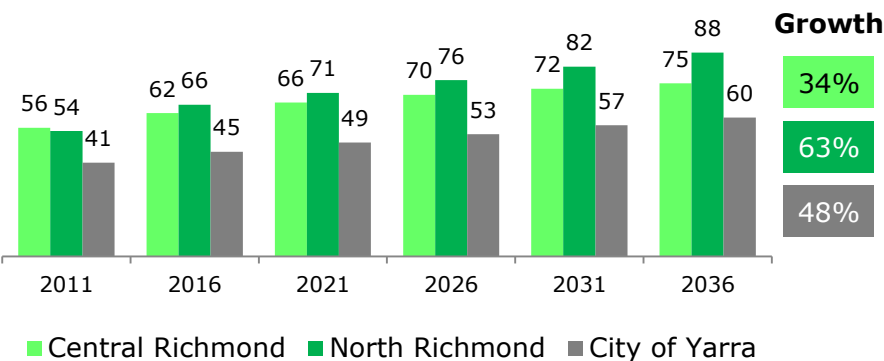
## 2. Access and Sustainability

- **Investigate alternative locations for all users** – dispersing user activities (particularly in times of high-demand) will reduce intensity of use and therefore conflict and wear and tear of the grounds
- **Enhance existing facilities** – improving quality and efficiency of the grounds

**Further to the above, we recommend a long-term open space plan be developed for Richmond, to cater for the increasing demand on public space (e.g., impact of Richmond High construction)**

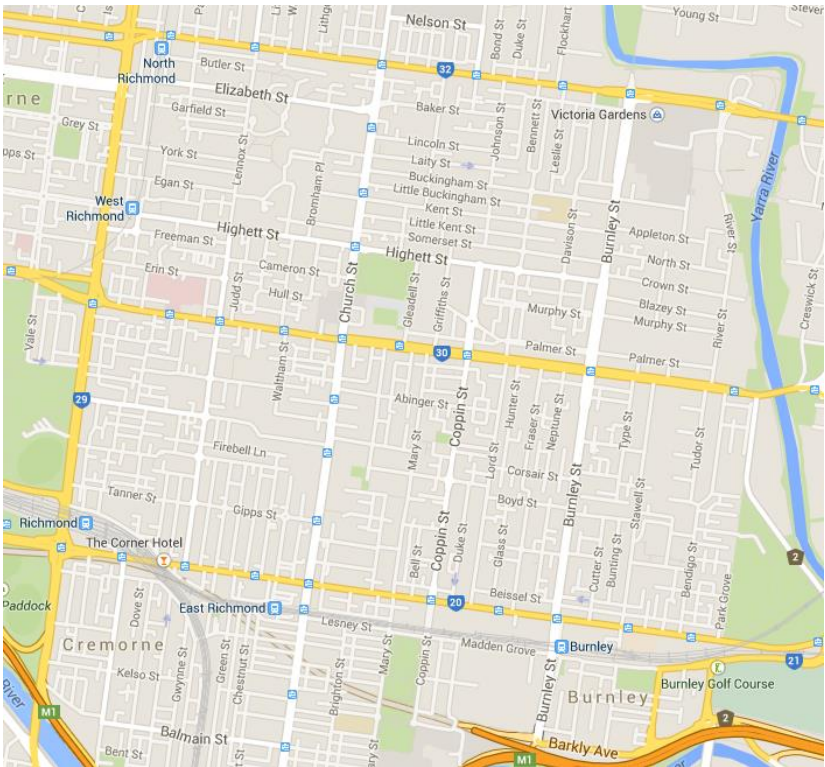
# Richmond has a high and growing population density and limited private and public outdoor space, placing Citizens Park under considerable demand

## Population Density<sup>1</sup> (Persons per hectare)

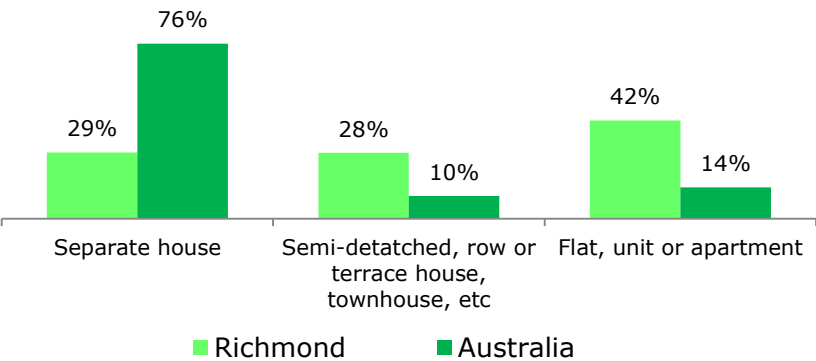


- Observations:**
- North Richmond is growing at a faster rate than the City of Yarra
  - Richmond citizens are living in smaller dwellings with limited private outdoor space

## Limited public open space



## Percentage of dwellings by type<sup>2</sup>



Notes: 1. Forecast.id; 2. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census

# There are Health and Safety concerns from all users of the Park

---

## Core Issues



- Some owners aren't cleaning up after their dogs
- Some users of the park are leaving litter (e.g., needles) behind
  - There are concerns for the safety of children and adults either from litter or dogs themselves
  - Current signage is ineffective in preventing disruptions to training and educating users of appropriate protocol
- Nearby busy roads are an injury or death risk to children and animals
- Current Park patrolling frequency/patterns and enforcement levels are ineffective

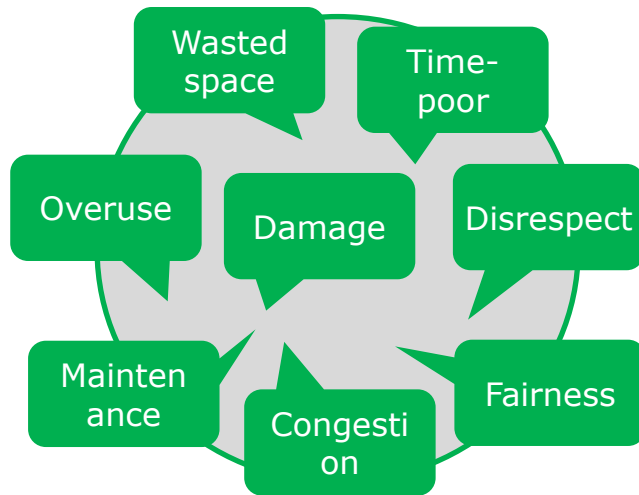
# Recommendations: Health and Safety

Core Issues	Recommendations
Public liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Increase paid and volunteer patrol/clean-up of the Park</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Appoint at least one more permanent park ranger</li><li>2. Run periodic 'blitz's of the Park</li><li>3. Engage volunteers for periodic clean-up</li><li>4. Ensure fine amounts are prohibitive</li></ul></li></ul>
Dog poo	
Children	
Needles	
Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Re-install the Park gates and provide additional fencing in selected areas</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Re-install Park gates</li><li>2. Additional fencing (see Appendix) at Gleadell St, Highett St and between the oval and BBQ area</li></ul></li></ul>
Litter	
Busy roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Education and improved signage</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Review signage to include items such as expected behaviours of park users and more prominent schedules of organised sport</li><li>2. Periodic newsletters/bulletins to Park users</li><li>3. Visits by council representatives to verbally reinforce appropriate use of the Park</li></ul></li></ul>
Understanding	

## Access and Sustainability are key concerns for all Park users

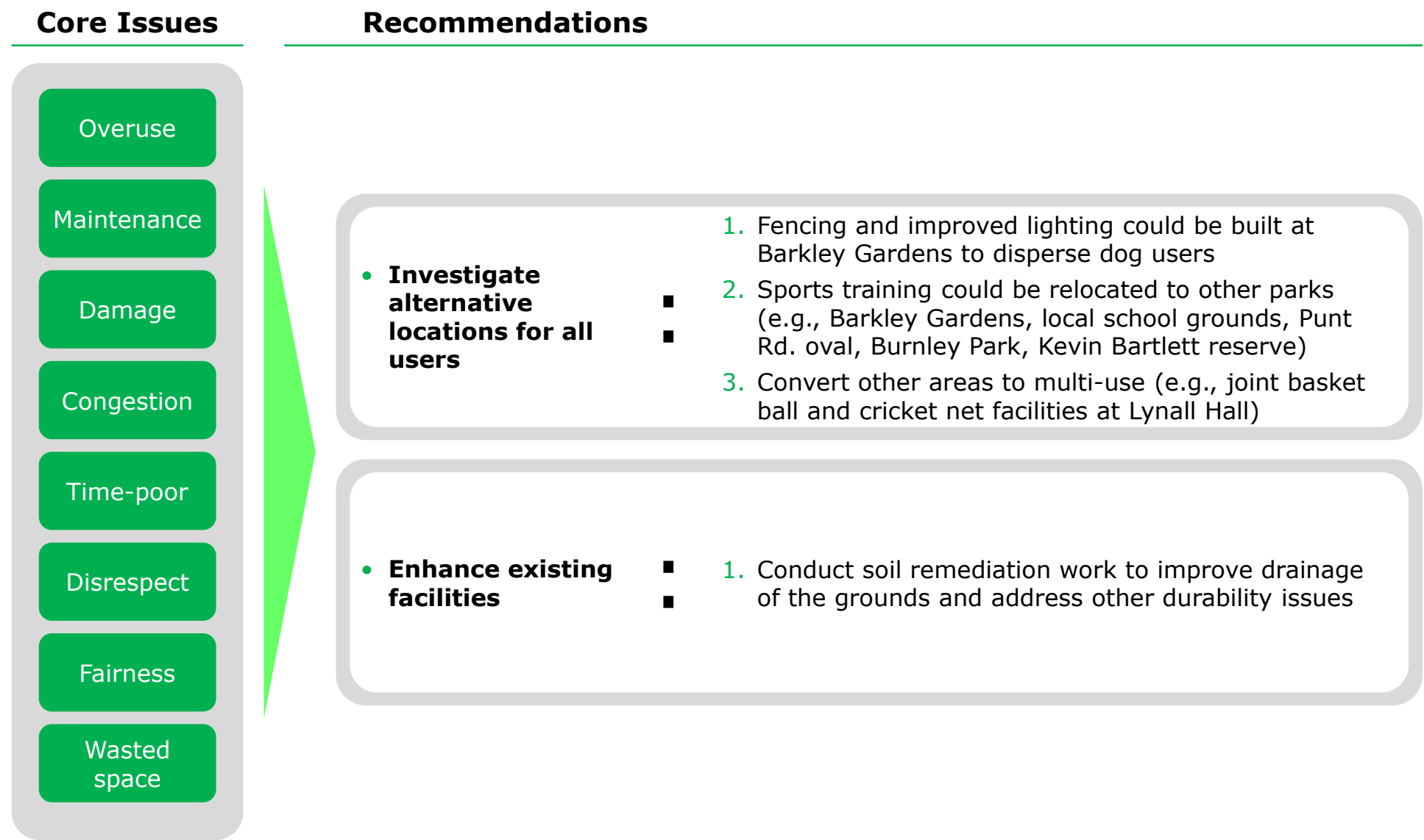
---

### Core Issues



- Conflict between users of the park due to congestion and other issues leads to a degradation in the community 'feel' of Richmond
  - Some training is perceived as not fully utilising the grounds, leading other users to perceive the remainder of the grounds to be 'wasted space'
    - All forms of use of the grounds are leading to wear and tear. The intensity of use is leading to poor-quality grounds
  - Absence of alternatives for organised sports during winter months leads to accelerated degradation of the grounds and reduced safety (i.e., mud more likely to lead to accident/injury)
- Weeknights (depending on individual work commitments) allow a ~2-4 hour window for users to enjoy the park – this time is hotly contested by all users

# Recommendations: Access and Sustainability



# Additional recommendation: Open space plan for Richmond

Issue	Recommendations
<p>There is no long-term plan in place to manage for the amplification of all these issues as population, and consequently intensity, increases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Develop long-term open space plan</b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ 1. Develop a long-term open space plan for Richmond, to cater for the increasing demand on public space (e.g., impact of Richmond High construction)</li></ul></li></ul>

## Appendix

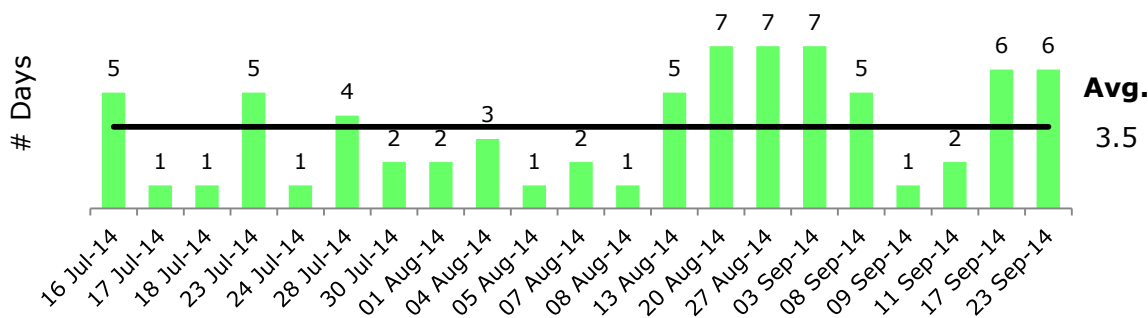
---

- I. Citizens Park patrolling statistics
- II. Additional fencing recommendations
- III. Our position regarding the establishment of a separate Dog Run
- IV. Our position regarding the off-leash status of the park

Appendix I.

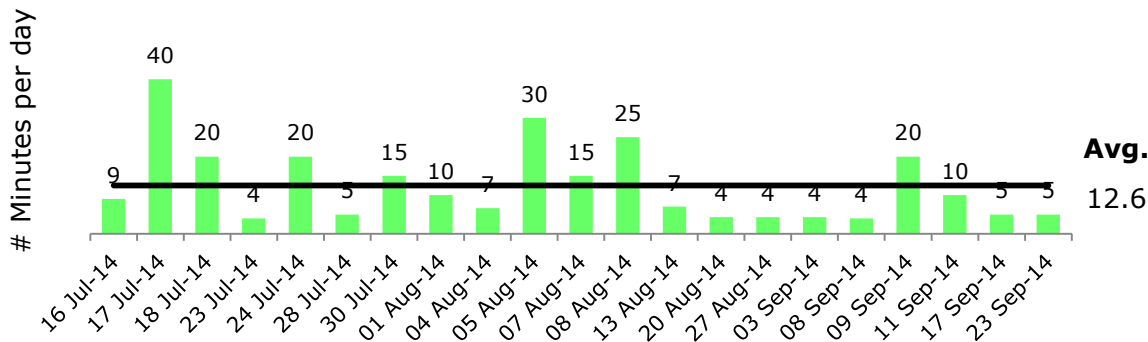
**While the issue of litter is not unique to Citizens Park, the Park is woefully under-patrolled relative to the intensity of use**

**Days between patrols at Citizens Park<sup>1</sup>**



- Observations:**
- There can be up to 7 days between patrols on the park
  - On average a patrol occurs once every 3.5 days

**Patrol Minutes Per Day at Citizens Park<sup>1</sup>**  
(Patrol duration/no. days between patrols)



- Observations:**
- The Park is patrolled on average 12.6 minutes per day

Notes: 1. Yarra City Council, 'Citizens Park User Group: Data, Demographics and Ground Maintenance'

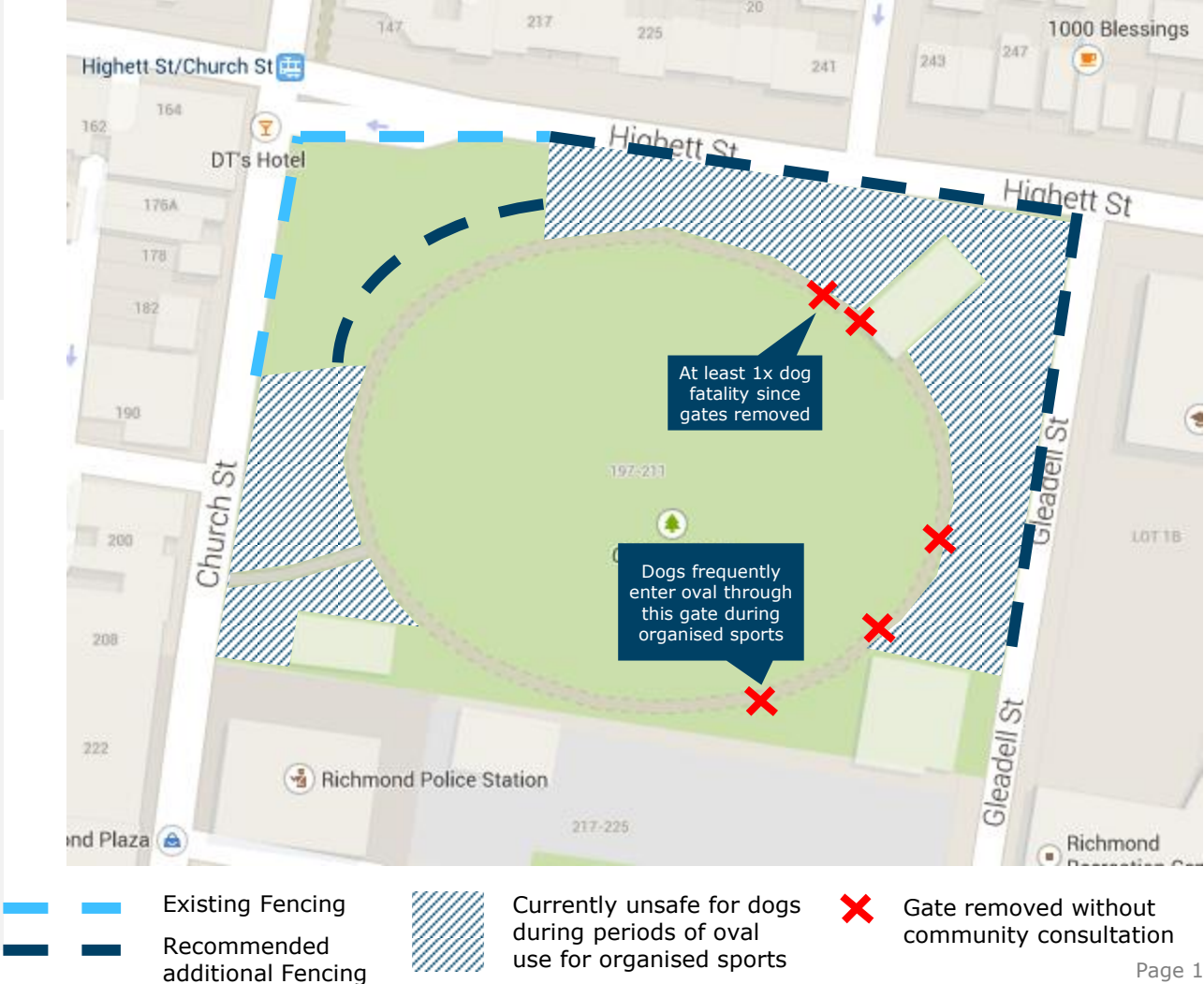
Appendix II.

## Additional Citizens Park fencing recommendations

**Below are the recommended fencing additions. We also recommend restoring the park gates to increase safety and minimise disruption of organised sports**

- Additional fencing between the oval and the BBQ area (Open ended)
- Discourage dogs running into the BBQ area/playground and ensure compliance with existing signage
  - Will also address the feedback where parents didn't want the playground fully enclosed so they could easily attend to children while enjoying a family BBQ

- Additional fencing at Gleadell St and Highett St (similar to the Church St end)
- Not an enclosed area, just additional fencing along the edge of the park and another gate at the bottom of the steps near the child care centre and at the corner of Highett St and Gleadell St path
  - Will give people a safer open grassy area while oval is being used for organised sports.



## **A separate dog run is not supported as it segregates the community, limits others' use of the space, and would be too small for safe use**

---

### **What do you think of the proposal to construct a dog run at Citizens Park?**

- As part of the CPUG process, people were invited to respond to the above question. There were no responses in favour of this proposal

### **Three key issues were raised in response to this question:**

#### **1. Community segregation**

- Segregating users is seen to reinforce an 'us vs. them' mentality between user groups, rather than nurturing a sense of community in Richmond

#### **2. Unfair impost on available space**

- Recognising the limited public space in Richmond, dog owners would not want to take away any space from other users (e.g., family space, exercise, general leisure users)

#### **3. No space large enough for safe use**

- The surrounds of the oval on Citizens Park are quite narrow. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals recommends for dog runs that *'The area should be big enough for dogs to run around and space themselves out. If there's not enough square footage available, a park can easily get crowded. Crowding can lead to tension among dogs and, as a result, fights can erupt'*

## **We in no way support the proposal to change the off-leash status of the park**

---

### **What do you think of the proposal to change the status of Citizens Park to on-leash dog walking?**

- As part of the CPUG process, people were invited to respond to the above question. There were no responses in favour of this proposal

### **We are strongly against the proposal to change the off-leash status of the park**

- The park is neither a dog park, nor a sports park, it is Crown land and a shared space for the recreational, family and sporting needs of Richmond citizens, and to serve as a place of natural beauty in a highly-urbanised area