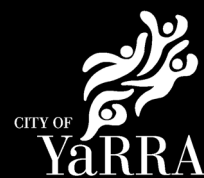


Gahan Reserve Playground Upgrade

Community engagement
Summary



Introduction

The playground at Gahan Reserve has served the community well for the last 18 years, but it is nearing the end of its useful life. Council is planning to upgrade the playground to ensure it can meet the needs of the current and future community. We are developing a new playground concept and sought community feedback in August 2018 to assist in developing a design for the upgrade. This report presents a summary of the consultation analysis, the key themes generated and the concept plan prepared.

Consultation Summary

We wanted to start with a blank canvas, we asked broad, simple questions to find out what works well, and how the playground can be improved. The main themes that emerged from the consultation are

What you like

The park setting and green surrounds – 26 responses

The boat – 19 responses

The natural theme and feel – 14 responses

Your ideas to improve the playground

Provide better equipment – 35 responses

Provide more shade – 10 responses

Cater to older age groups – 10 responses

Equipment you would like to see

Climbing equipment – 21 responses

Better swings - 13 responses

Better slides - 7 responses



Community Engagement

The engagement period ran from 30 July to 31 August 2018. We invited the community to participate via a variety of methods, listed below.

How we consulted

Letter drop to 350 residents in the adjoining area.

Signs placed in the park.

Your Say Yarra project page.

On-site meeting to gather feedback.

On site meeting with Collingwood College students.

Social media post via Council's Facebook page was made to inform Yarra's online community of the consultation.

What we asked

What you like about the playground?

What your ideas are on how to improve the playground?

How often you use the playground?

Participation

Community responses were received in the following ways:

- 51 via Council's Your Say Yarra Page.
- 5 responded directly via email.
- 18 people attended Council's on site meeting with 12 filling out a survey.
- An onsite session with Collingwood College students where they broke into small groups and developed playground designs for us.



Principles of development

We want the design of the playground to be based on a well thought out philosophy of what children require and how intelligent design can assist in their growth and development. We also want to ensure the amenity of the park is retained for other park users and the multiple functions of the park.

The new playground will be:

- Safe
- Fun
- Exciting
- A place that fosters an emotional connection
- A place that stimulates imaginative play
- Provides spaces for socialising and engaging with other kids
- Provides spaces to observe and hang back, feel calm and comfortable
- A space that allows children to grow and develop
- A space that brings the local community together

Site Analysis



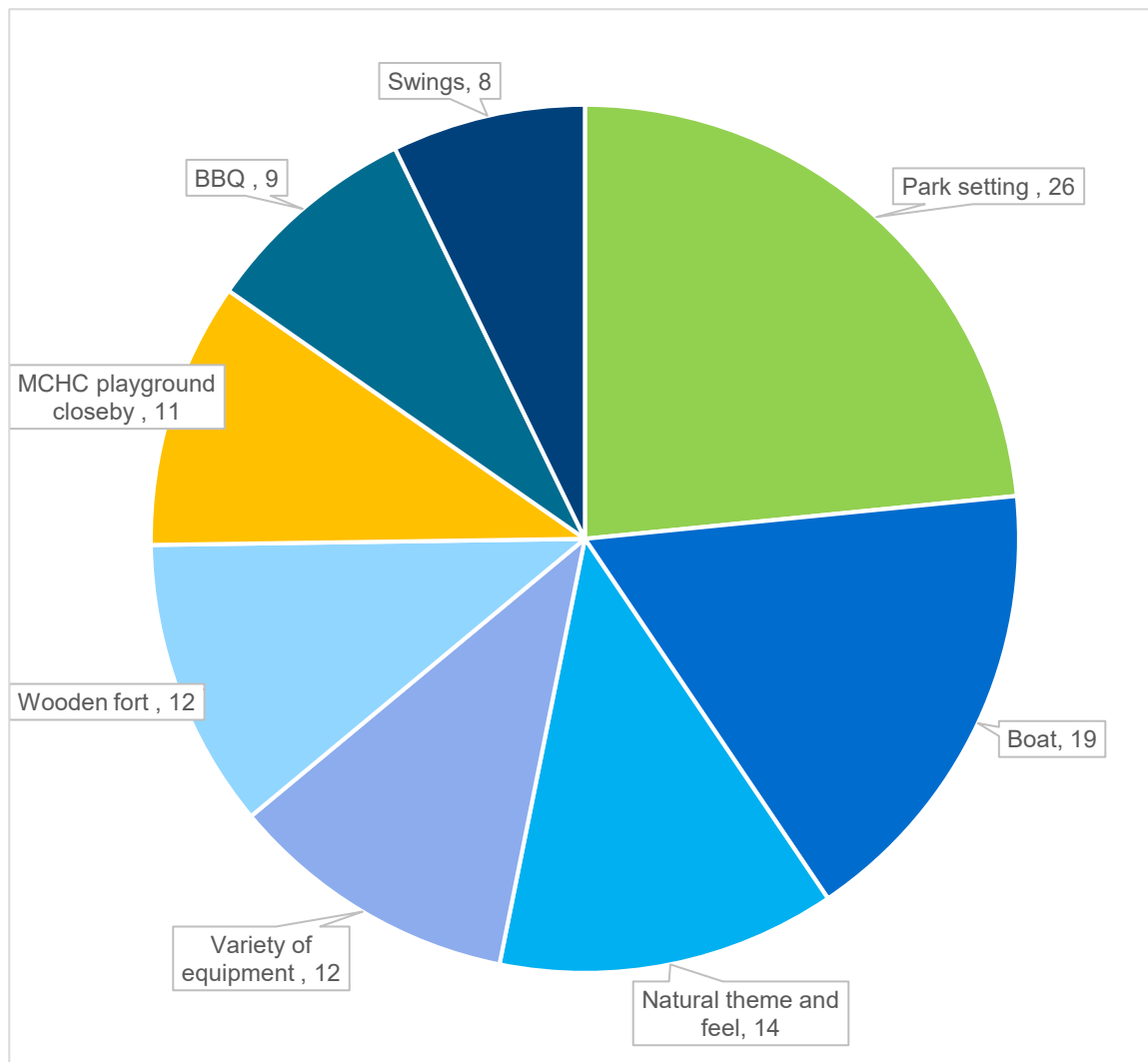
Analysis

Analysis of the feedback has focussed on the 68 responses received via the Your Say Yarra page, emails and the on-site meeting.

The main themes have been extracted into the charts in each section and a full list of themes that emerged during the consultation are provided in the proceeding tables. You can read all verbatim responses and submissions in the Appendix

What you like – Main themes

The playground is valued for the broader park setting, the play value it has and the natural materials which blend it into the surrounding environment.

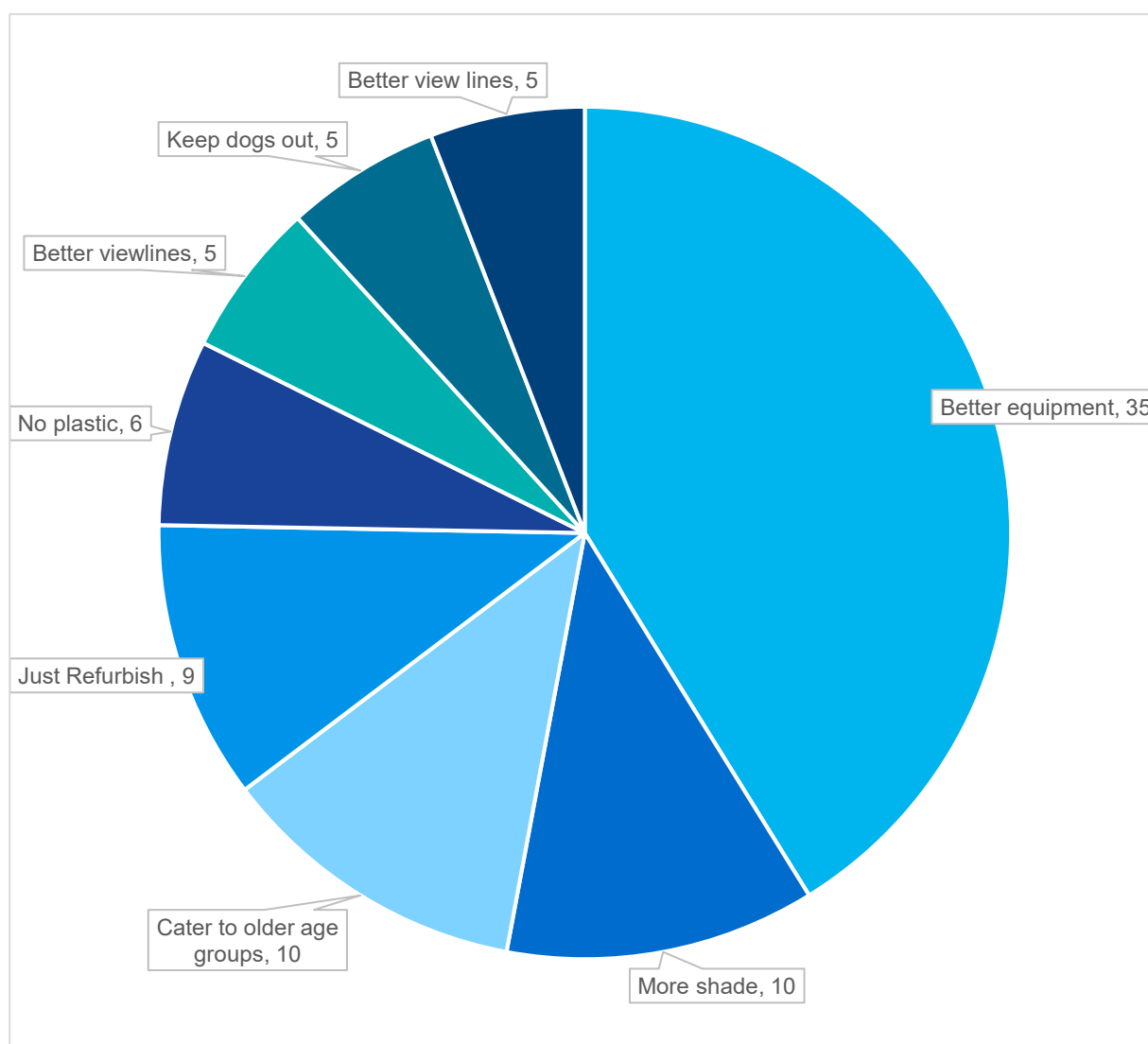


No.	Like – Overall themes	Responses
1.	Park setting - green space, large trees and planting	26
2.	Boat	19
3.	Natural theme and feel use of wood and surrounding environment	14
4.	Fort (wooden central piece)	12
5.	Variety of equipment/activities	12
6.	MCHC playground for smaller children is close by	11
7.	BBQ close by	8
8.	Swings	8
9.	Good size and layout	7
10.	Slides	7
11.	Overall great	6
12.	Encourages imaginative play	5
13.	Level changes	5
14.	Train going past	4
15.	Community hub and sense of community	3
16.	Safe	3
17.	See-saws	3
18.	Can see kids from the BBQ	2
19.	Clean	2
20.	Sense of community	2
21.	Dog free space	2
22.	Flying fox	2
23.	Facilities in Abbotsford are close by	2
24.	Separation from road	2
25.	Tan bark as a surface material	2
26.	Basketball	1
27.	Climbable	1
28.	Covered area (shelter on the fort)	1

No.	Like – Overall themes	Responses
29.	Fun	1
30.	Multi age play facilities	1
31.	Privacy in some parts (to encourage imaginative play)	1

How can we improve the playground – main themes

The natural feel should be retained but the play value of the equipment can be largely improved. The amenity around the playground and its surrounds can also be enhanced.

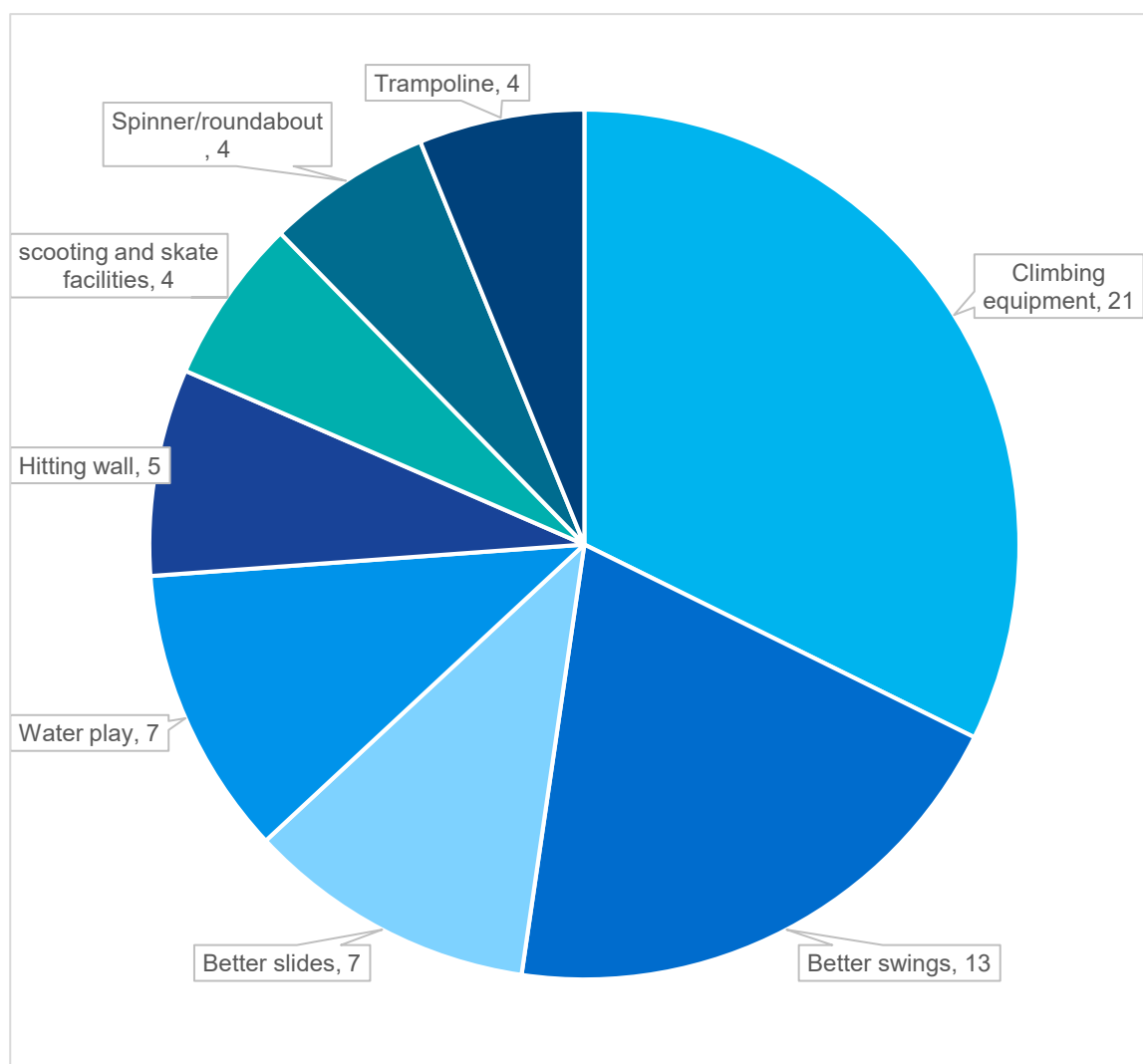


No.	Improve – Overall themes	Responses
1.	Better equipment	35
2.	Keep it as is and just refurbish it	10
3.	Provide more challenging equipment which caters to older age groups	10
4.	Shade provision	10
5.	No plastic	6
6.	Keep dogs out	5
7.	Better view lines through the park	5
8.	Add toilets	4
9.	Improve safety	4
10.	Fencing	4
11.	Include more natural materials	4
12.	Address the traffic issues in the surrounding streets	3
13.	Incorporate nature play elements	3
14.	Water play	3
15.	Improve accessibility and inclusiveness	3
16.	More equipment	3
17.	Provide a completely different type of playground	3
18.	Discourage loitering and congregation	3
19.	Close off the walk-through space behind the MCHC	3
20.	Shelter for the BBQ	3
21.	Surface material – rubber	2
22.	Encourage more imaginative play	2
23.	Keep dogs in the park	2
24.	More grassed areas	2
25.	Improve lighting	1
26.	Modify the path network	1

No.	Improve – Overall themes	Responses
27.	Improve the signage	1
28.	Surface material – sand	1
29.	Provide spaces to explore	1
30.	Better basketball facilities	1
31.	Reference to Aboriginal history	1

What equipment would you like

When we drilled down into what type of equipment the community was asking for, we found most respondents want more challenging items that provide a feeling of risk and thrill, within the safety of the playground environment.



No.	Specific equipment	Responses
1.	Climbing equipment (Domes, nets, walls)	21
2.	Better swings (bowl seats, swings for older kids, more swings)	13
3.	Better slides (bigger, longer, curly)	7
4.	Water play and fountains	7
5.	Hitting Wall	5
6.	Scooting and skating facilities	4
7.	Spinner or roundabout	4
8.	Trampoline	4
9.	Better see-saw	3
10.	Monkey bars	3
11.	Exercise equipment	2
12.	Flying fox	2
13.	Hiding places	2
14.	Tree house	2
15.	Tunnel	2
16.	Balancing equipment	1
17.	Better cubby	1
18.	Better sandpit	1
19.	Bouncing pillow	1
20.	Bridges	1

No.	Specific equipment	Responses
21.	Car	1
22.	Hills	1
23.	Kid congregating space	1
24.	Musical equipment	1
25.	Plant maze	1
26.	Sensory equipment	1
27.	Soccer goals	1

Outcomes

The playground concept considers the directions of the consultation themes and the site analysis against the available project budget.

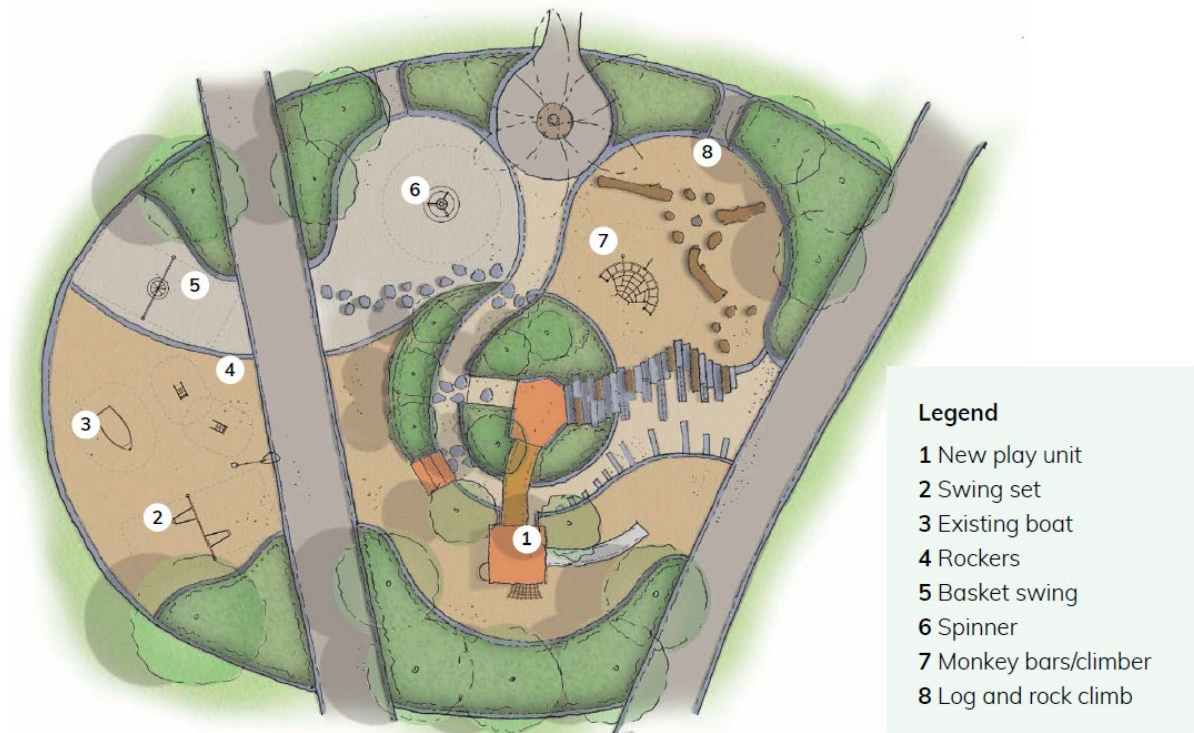
Design Intent – Light & Shadow

One of the interesting features of Gahan Reserve is the quality of light, the shadows that are cast as light filters through the established trees, and how it changes through the seasons. Silhouettes of the railway infrastructure, outlines of the Victorian era buildings and their facades, the shadow and rhythm of the timber balustrades of the play structure add to the atmosphere of the park and playground.

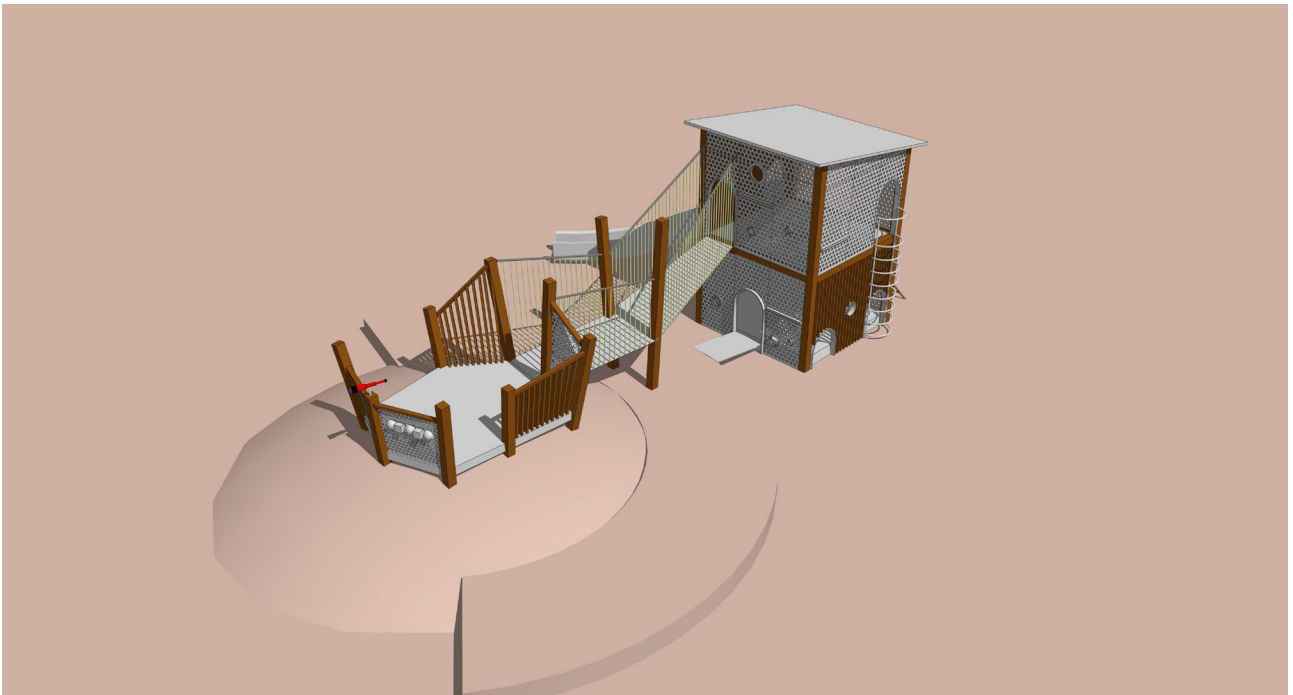
In the Gahan Reserve play environment, the experience of 'light and shadow' has been explored and amplified. This has been done through material selection and the creation of interesting shadow patterns. It has also been explored symbolically through the patterning of materials, varying scales, establishing interesting contrasts and compositions, reminiscent of the varying patterns and densities of the shadows and silhouettes throughout Gahan Reserve.

One of the main aims for the new playground is to use Australian made equipment through collaborations with local manufacturers and using recycled materials where possible.

Playground concept



New central play structure





New central play structure – design objectives

The proposed custom play tower will explore the experience of 'light & Shadow' through material combinations that will create varying levels of transparency and shadow patterning. The tower will incorporate light-play elements such as prism and telescope.

- Provide a custom play element that has the natural quality of the existing custom piece and enhances the play value provided.
- Develop a design that stimulates and intrigues park users of all ages, while facilitating an exploration of the theme 'light and shadow'.
- Provide a usable cubby space underneath the new tower.
- Retain and protect the existing trees.
- Create a play space where passive surveillance is possible.
- Considers ongoing maintenance and life-span when making choices around design and materiality.

Wider playground

The broader circulation patterns of the mound are being retained and the surrounding play areas are being connected and contained in a way that aims to improve the function of the spaces. The form of the proposed play space aims to respond to the existing layout of the park and its Victorian era heritage. Material selection and combinations aim to explore the theme of 'Light & Shadow' while recognising the important aspects of the site and durability. Timber, steel, perforated metal, reclaimed bluestone and red brick are some of the materials proposed.

Planting

The proposed plant palette aims to deliver interesting textural and spatial experiences while being integrated into the Victorian era of Gahan Reserve.