



Gregson Park Playspace

Community Engagement Report

April 2023

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Executive summary

The Gregson Park Masterplan was adopted by Council on 23 November 2021, which incorporated the development of an upgraded playspace within the site.

Draft concept plans for an upgraded, inclusive playspace were developed and placed on public exhibition from 23 November to 16 December 2022. A total of 33 submissions were received.

Feedback from the community was broken down into three key themes:

Suggested improvements/alterations

18 submissions suggested potential improvements or alterations for consideration. The most common improvements suggested were:

- The inclusion of more seating – both covered and uncovered
- Climbing facilities e.g. rope climbing, bouldering, treehouse, monkey bars
- Further incorporation of historical/cultural aspects
- Larger slide
- Larger water play area
- Inclusion of exercise stations
- Provisions for active transport e.g. bike parking and accessibility

Statements of support

15 submissions made commented on one or more aspects that they liked about the design. The most common mentions were:

- General support or positive comments e.g. the plan looks great, is a wonderful upgrade
- Upgraded amenities
- Yarning spaces
- Accessibility of the playspace design
- BBQ facilities

Concerns/issues

14 submissions made comments about concerns or issues in relation to one or more aspects of the design. The most common concerns were focused on:

- Lack of pedestrian crossings/pedestrian safety around the park
- Need to incorporate shade/shade sails
- Selection/provision of trees to keep with existing character and provide shade
- Reduced open green space within the park
- Quality of materials/design e.g. looks cheap
- Negative impacts (e.g. parking, traffic, noise, loss of green space/scenery)

1. Background

In November 2021, Council adopted the Gregson Park Masterplan which will guide the vision and renewal of the park over the next 10-15 years. The Masterplan aims to celebrate the European and Indigenous heritage of the site, while meeting the recreational needs of the local community. A key priority of the adopted Masterplan, was to create a new inclusive playspace, allowing social interaction opportunities for people of all abilities.

Draft plans were created and placed on public exhibition from 23 November to 16 December 2022. Proposed improvements include:

- Formal and informal seating (Maddie's Bench to be retained and relocated)
- Native Garden with small yarning circle
- New Swale, footbridges and wetland area for water detention
- Re-aligned pathways
- Retention of fig trees with ground cover planting
- New tree planting
- Upgraded existing amenities building with disabled access and bbq facilities

A copy of the draft concept plan is available in

Appendix I – Draft Concept Plan – Draft Concept Plan.

2. Engagement objectives

To better understand community opinion on the proposed upgrades at Gregson Park, CN placed the draft Gregson Park Playspace concept plan (hereafter referred to as the 'draft concept plan') on public exhibition from 23 November to 16 December 2022.






More specifically, the engagement sought to:

- Raise awareness of the project
- Understand community views and opinions of the playspace among residents, community groups and park users.

3. Communication and promotion

During the engagement period, a communications campaign was implemented to raise awareness of the concept plan and promote the opportunity for community members to provide feedback.

Key communications activities are summarised below, and key pieces of communications collateral are included in **Appendix II – Promotional materials – Promotional materials**.

Channel	Description	Reach
 Have Your Say webpage	A dedicated project webpage was created on CN's Have Your Say landing page. The page aimed to provide information and raise awareness about the proposed upgrade to the Gregson Park Playspace.	530 visits
 Flyers and Signage	<p>Flyers were distributed to nearby Hamilton residents.</p> <p>Signs were also displayed around Gregson Park whilst the HYS page was open for submissions.</p>	n/a
 Social media	The draft Gregson Park Playspace Concept Plan was promoted via an unpaid post of CN's Facebook page on 29 November 2022. The post intended to raise awareness and encourage people to have their say.	<p>Reach: 6,697</p> <p>Engagements: 253</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link clicks: 214 • Comments: 9 • Likes/reactions: 27 • Shares: 3
 Newsletters	An e-newsletter was distributed to Newcastle Voice subscribers on 1 December 2022 raising awareness of the project and inviting community feedback.	Distributed to 2,433 subscribers
 Media coverage	A media release was issued on 24 November 2022 and was subsequently reported by Newcastle Live, Newcastle Weekly, The Maitland Mercury and the Gloucester Advocate	n/a

4. Engagement activities

The community were invited to provide feedback on the draft concept plan from 21 November to 16 December 2022.

The community were able to provide feedback by:

- Completing the online form via the HYS website
- Emailing engage@ncc.nsw.gov.au

A total of 33 submissions were made providing feedback on the draft concept plan, 31 of which were via the online form, and 2 via email. All submissions are analysed in Section 5. Key Findings.

Copies of submissions are available in **Appendix III – Submissions**

5. Key findings

All submissions were reviewed and broken down into three key categories:

Table 1. Key themes

Key theme	Net number of submissions
Suggested improvements/alterations	18
Statements of support	15
Concerns/issues	14

5.1 Suggested Improvements/alterations

18 of the 33 submissions (55%) commented on suggested improvements to the concept design.

The suggested improvements/alterations were further broken down into sub-categories as shown below. The main improvements suggested were:

- the inclusion of more seating
- climbing facilities
- further incorporation of historical/cultural aspects
- larger slide
- larger water play area
- inclusion of exercise stations
- provisions for active transport e.g. bike parking and accessibility

Table 2. Suggested improvements/alterations

Suggested improvements/alterations	Count
Include more seating	5
Climbing facilities e.g. rope climbing, bouldering, treehouse, monkey bars	4
Further incorporation of historical/cultural aspects	4
Larger slide	2
Larger water play area which caters for older children as well	2
Include exercise stations	2
Provisions for active transport e.g. bike parking and accessibility	2
Lighting over seating area to enable night time usage	1
Include a mural in the undercover picnic area	1
Integration of creek/rock bed	1
Multipurpose spaces for ball sports, movie nights etc	1
Include recycled materials e.g. outdoor benches	1
Undercover stage with electricity for music and other events	1
Water fountain/refill station	1
Community garden	1
Sustainability considerations	1
Include multiple swings	1
Flying fox	1
Manual digging equipment	1

Single submissions provided suggestions for lighting in the seating area, incorporating a mural, integration of the creek/rock bed, multipurpose spaces, using recycled materials e.g. for outdoor benches, an undercover stage for music and other events, water fountain/refill station, community garden, sustainability considerations e.g. community recycling facilities for vegetation and pet waste, solar lighting, water recycling.

Examples of comments for the most frequently mentioned improvements are shown below.

Table 3. Examples of comments mentioning seating

Examples of comments suggesting the need to include more seating (N=5)
<i>"As a neighbour of Gregson Park I've noticed the importance of seating for visitors. More seating would enhance the opportunity for people to rest and eat when they are in the park. During the week a group of about 20 parents supervise their children in after school play. Please ensure that seating is prioritised in the upgrading of the park."</i>
<i>"More seating places with tables are needed."</i>
<i>"...Please consider adding more picnic tables. The existing covered and uncovered picnic tables at Gregson Park (~4) are heavily used and given this is a much bigger and improved play space the addition of both covered and uncovered picnic tables seem warranted."</i>
<i>"...Please consider scattering some tables and chairs possibly around a few locations, maybe under large trees, other than the assigned picnic area..."</i>

Table 4. Examples of comments mentioning climbing facilities

Examples of comments mentioning climbing facilities (N=4)
<i>"...Rope climbing area is fantastic for older kids to explore risk taking in a safe environment..."</i>
<i>"...A small climbing/bouldering wall for more advanced or older children would be really fantastic..."</i>
<i>"...I am concerned the ropes/netting in particular will be too junior in design to challenge and engage older kids...my 9yo, cognitive disability child who regulates through climbing and hanging would say monkey bars. 2 sets preferred. Inclusion is not just about physical disability."</i>

Table 5. Examples of comments mentioning heritage and cultural aspects

Examples of comments mentioning heritage and cultural aspects (N=4)
<i>"...I would also like to propose that some sort of recognition is included about the post war migrants that made such a significant contribution to the city of Newcastle, and in particular the wonderful suburb of Hamilton. Can we have something that celebrates this incredible contribution that these people made."</i>
<i>"...I would like to see some recognition of the Lawn Bowlers from this Hamilton Bowling Club..."</i>
<i>"...The exposed solid wall to the undercover picnic area is a definite opportunity – a local artist to do an installation maybe? Some information on the area's history? A mural?..."</i>
<i>"...Is this design CALD inclusive? How could the CALD community be included in the design process? Could including a European/Arabic-style toilet communicate inclusion to different migrant communities?..."</i>

5.2 Statements of Support

15 of the 33 submissions (45%) provided statements of support for one or more aspects of the draft concept plan.

The main reasons for supporting the concept plan were:

- General support/positive comments
- Upgraded amenities
- Yarning spaces
- Accessibility of the playspace design
- BBQ facilities

Table 6. Statements of support

Statements of support	Count
General support/positive comments	13
Upgraded amenities	3
Yarning spaces	2
Accessibility of the playspace design	2
BBQ facilities	2
Indigenous elements	1
Gathering spaces for families, events and support	1

Single submissions commented on incorporating Indigenous elements and creating gathering spaces for families, events and sport.

Examples of comments within the top-mentioned themes are shown below.

Table 7. Examples of comments that are generally supportive/positive

Examples of generally supportive/positive comments (N=13)
<i>"It looks great and will be a marvellous improvement..."</i>
<i>"Absolutely wonderful!! Love it!"</i>
<i>"I think the plan looks really great – I hope it will be built as presented, this will be a wonderful addition to the Hamilton area and to the City."</i>
<i>"This is a wonderful upgrade of the iconic Gregson Park..."</i>

Table 8. Examples of comments mentioning upgraded amenities

Examples of comments about upgraded amenities (N=3)
<i>"...Upgraded amenities are essential..."</i>
<i>"This would provide a much better amenity for families in the area. Construction of the new play space should be high priority."</i>
<i>...A big congratulations on proposing the refurbishment of the existing toilets – very much needed..."</i>

Table 9. Examples of comments mentioning yarning spaces

Examples of comments about yarning spaces (N=2)
<i>"The whole concept look excellent. The different aspects and potential yarning spaces and play alongside family gathering looks good..."</i>
<i>"...Lots of cool features especially accessible play equipment and yarning circle..."</i>

Table 10. Examples of comments mentioning accessibility of the playspace design

Examples of comments about accessibility (N=2)
<i>"The accessibility elements of the playspace look great. The play structures need to engage ALL ages though, particularly older children..."</i>

Table 11. Examples of comments mentioning BBQ facilities

Examples of comments about BBQ facilities (N=2)
<i>"...Glad there will still be BBQ available."</i>
<i>"...BBQs are needed, they are very popular..."</i>

5.3 Concerns/issues

14 of the 33 submissions (42%) provided statements of concern about the concept plan.

The main concerns or issues highlighted in the feedback were regarding:

- pedestrian access and safety
- the need to incorporate shade/shade sails
- selection/provision of trees to keep with the existing character of the park and provide shade
- reduced open green space within the park
- quality of materials/design
- negative impacts (e.g. parking, traffic, noise, loss of green space/scenery)

Table 12. Concerns/issues

Concerns/issues	Count
Lack of pedestrian crossings/pedestrian safety around the park	3
Need to incorporate shade/shade sails	2
Selection/provision of trees	2
Reduced open green space within the park	2
Design/materials look cheap	2
Negative impacts e.g. parking, traffic, noise, loss of green space/scenery	2
Need to add CCTV cameras	1
Need to cater for older children as well	1
Design of toilets e.g. ventilation, proximity to BBQs	1
Need a safety barrier to stop children falling in the water	1
Money should be spent on other things	1
Width of bike paths	1

Single submissions mentioned adding CCTV cameras, catering play equipment to older children, design of toilets e.g. ventilation and proximity to BBQs, adding a barrier near the water for safety and prioritisation of spending, and the width of bike paths.

Examples of comments within the top-mentioned themes are shown below.

Table 13. Examples of comments about pedestrian crossings/pedestrian safety

Examples of comments about pedestrian crossings/pedestrian safety (N=3)
<i>"I am very concerned about the lack of pedestrian crossings and pedestrian islands around the park – particularly on Samdon Street, crossing Cleary St and Lindsay St. Gregson Park will be the most wonderful resource for our community and I believe we need children to be able to get to and from the park safely, particularly with ever-increasing traffic."</i>
<i>"...Samdon St on the western side of the park carries a lot of traffic, mostly vehicles using it as a shortcut between Tudor St and Donald St (though not as much as Tudor St of course)... For local residents and visitors to the park from the western side, the vehicle traffic along Samdon St during peak periods presents a hazard to crossing the road... Council should explore installing additional traffic calming devices on the street, closing it off so it cannot be used as a thoroughfare, or other options to reduce the level of traffic the park is exposed to (on) the Tudor St (southern) side."</i>
<i>"...Please make the entrances to the park/playspace easily accessible for bikes, cargo bikes, wheelchairs and scooters. This means wide, smooth ramps off Steel St, Lindsay St, James St..."</i>

Table 14. Examples of comments mentioning the quality of design/materials

Examples of comments about design/materials look cheap (N=2)
<i>"...Do not like the 'tunnels' – they look like a cheap addition of pipes being thrown in..."</i>
<i>"...This looks so budget. Very disappointing..."</i>

Table 15. Examples of comments mentioning negative impacts

Examples of comments about negative impacts (N=2)
<i>"The plan has its merits although there can be problems. Parking , traffic, noise, loss of scenery..."</i>
<i>"...Traffic, noise, pollution and safety..."</i>

Table 16. Examples of comments mentioning reduced open green space

Examples of comments about reduced open green space (N=2)
<i>"Looks good and like it won't take up too much more space - don't want the whole park turning into a playground..."</i>
<i>"...Loss of green open areas for ball sports: I observe with the realignment of the path from the central fountain to the intersection of Lindsay & Steel St that a large portion of the open green space has been reduced..."</i>

Table 17. Examples of comments about shade/shade sails

Examples of comments about shade/shade sails (N=2)
<i>"...Many playgrounds in Newcastle feature play equipment that is exposed, even if there is shade elsewhere... Play equipment in the sun is a safety hazard from both a skin/sunburn perspective, but also from potential burns. The playspace should incorporate shaded play equipment, ideally using native trees..."</i>
<i>"I just looked at the plans for the upgrade of Gregson Park. They look fabulous, but I wonder where the shade sails are? With the Australian climate and the incidence of skin cancer, I feel, at least, some shade sails would be a welcomed addition. Our grandchildren play in the park and at times it can be quite hot..."</i>

6. Next steps

The project team will finalise the concept plan for Gregson Park playspace based on community feedback. Following this, detailed design and documentation will occur to enable the project to be tendered for construction. Construction is expected to commence in early 2024. We will update the community as the project progresses.

Appendix I – Draft Concept Plan



- New inclusive play space with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating and native garden with small yarning circle. 'Maddies bench' to be retained and relocated in play space
- New swale, footbridges & wetland area for water detention
- Tree protection area- ground cover planting
- Enhanced Steel Street entry with floral garden beds
- Re-aligned path with seating opportunities
- New tree planting
- Upgraded existing amenities building providing disabled access and facilities

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Public Works acknowledges that we work on the land of the Australian people and pay our respects to all elders, past, present, and emerging, wherever our projects take us.



Landscape Masterplan - Stage 1 Works Gregson Park Playspace & Amenities Upgrade

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LEGEND

- ① Arrival / Orientation space with bike racks and bench seat
- ② Palm grove - Lookout deck/ resting point with sensory play
- ③ Refurbished amenities building with relocated picnic & BBQ area
- ④ Elevated walkway over swale
- ⑤ Discovery trail with sensory poles & interpretive element
- ⑥ 'Meeting Place' & Bushtucker garden
- ⑦ Climbing net structure
- ⑧ Play mound with slide, handholds, ropes & trampolines
- ⑨ Whizzer spinner & disable-accessible spinner
- ⑩ Seating wall
- ⑪ Small picnic setting
- ⑫ 3-Seater Swing and seesaw
- ⑬ Maddie's bench
- ⑭ Water & Sand play
- ⑮ Tunnel and Balance obstacle course
- ⑯ Shade sail
- ⑰ Bicycle racks
- ⑱ Drinking fountain

- Existing trees
- New tree planting
- New low shrub & groundcover planting
- New swale and wetland planting
- New turf areas
- New concrete circulation loop path
- Decomposed granite area
- Playmulch area
- Rubber softfall
- Informal and formal seating
- New bin station

SCALE 1:500 at A3
0 5 10 25m

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Detailed Concept Plan Gregson Park Playspace & Amenities Upgrade

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THE CREATIVE
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Visualisation - Steel Street Arrival Point
Gregson Park Playspace & Amenities Upgrade

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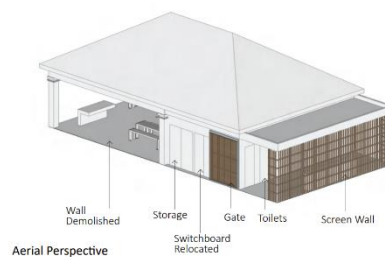
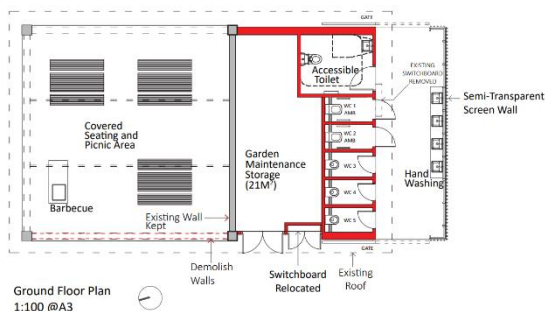


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THE CREATIVE
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Visualisation - View southeast over swale and new play
Gregson Park Playspace & Amenities Upgrade

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Design Rationale - Alterations to Existing Building

- Demolish external west solid wall to recover sense of original open-sided pavilion and enhance light and views
- Provide Garden Storage within existing building envelope and provide separation between open pavilion and toilets
- Building extension to south for toilets
- Provide semi-transparent external screen walls to toilets :
 - To allow overlooking and supervision of toilet entries
 - Can be secured after hours
 - Provide generous natural light and ventilation
- Shared public hand washing areas with views to south, east and west
- 5 Cubicles plus unisex accessible toilet



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THE CREATIVE
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Proposed Amenities Building
Gregson Park Playspace & Amenities Upgrade

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Appendix II – Promotional materials


Have your say webpage


Select Language

HAVE YOUR SAY

Gregson Park Playspace

Have your say on the proposed upgrades to Gregson Park featuring a new inclusive playspace with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating, and native garden with a small yarning circle.



Gregson Park Playspace

An exciting new playspace is coming to Gregson Park! The concept design features an inclusive playspace with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating, and native garden with small yarning circle. Madder's Bench will be retained and relocated in the playspace.

Other improvements include: new seats, footbridges and wetland area for water detention, retention of figs with ground cover planting, realigned pathways and new tree planting. Upgrades to the existing amenities building will provide disabled access and bbq facilities.

What play equipment will be included?

The playspace will include:

- 3-seater swing set with basket swing, strap seat and toddler seat
- climbing net structure
- whizzer spinner, accessible spinner and seesaw
- a tunnel and balance obstacle course
- play mound with slide, handholds, ropes and trampolines
- water and sand play
- sensory and nature play

Why is a new playspace being developed at Gregson Park?

A Masterplan for Gregson Park was developed to guide the vision and renewal of the park over the next 10-15 years. An inclusive playspace and amenities upgrades were identified as key priorities during 2020 community consultation for the Gregson Park Masterplan. The Masterplan was adopted by Council in November 2021. For more information about the Gregson Park Masterplan, visit the Have Your Say page.

When will the playspace be constructed?


The playspace is scheduled for construction from mid-2023 subject to funding.

Have your say

The concept design for Gregson Park Playspace is currently on public exhibition for community feedback until 5pm on **Friday 16 December 2022**.

Next steps

The project team will review any feedback and use this to finalise the Gregson Park Playspace design. Detailed design and documentation will then be produced in order for the project to be tendered for construction. For any projects over \$1 million, Council will need to approve the tender.



Playspace Concept Design

- [Depth Gregson Park Playspace Concept Design \(Full document\)](#)
- [Depth Gregson Park Playspace Concept \(1 page Summary\)](#)

Supporting documents

- [Gregson Park Playspace FAQs](#)
- [Gregson Park Masterplan - Adopted Nov 2021](#)

Project timeline

- 23 Nov - 16 Dec 2022**
Public exhibition
 Concept designs for the Gregson Park Playspace will be on public exhibition from 23 Nov to 16 Dec 2022.
- Early 2023**
Review feedback from Public Exhibition
 The project team will review any feedback received and use this to finalise the Playspace design.
- Early 2023**
Detailed design and documentation
 Detailed design and documentation will take place in order for the project to be tendered for construction.

[Expand timeline](#)

Your Say

Please provide your comments on the Gregson Park Playspace:

If you would like to provide more detailed feedback, upload a Word or PDF document here (Optional):

No file chosen

Your Details

First name:

Last name:

Email:

Suburb:

Postcode:

Contact us

Engagement team
 Phone: 02 4976 2000
 Email: engage@ncc.newcastle.gov.au

Flyer and onsite signage



Gregson Park Playspace Hamilton

The proposed Gregson Park Play Space and Amenities Upgrade is now on public exhibition for community feedback.

Proposed staged upgrades include a new inclusive play space with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating and native garden with small yarning circle. Amenities at Gregson Park will also be upgraded to provide disabled access and facilities.

 **Have your say**

Have your say by visiting newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay



Proposed Upgrade

Gregson Park Playspace Hamilton

The proposed Gregson Park Play Space and Amenities Upgrade is now on public exhibition for community feedback.

Proposed staged upgrades include a new inclusive play space with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating and native garden with small yarning circle. Amenities at Gregson Park will also be upgraded to provide disabled access and facilities.

 **Have your say**

Have your say by visiting newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay

Social media



Newsletter



Have your say until 5pm **Friday 16 December 2022**.

HAVE YOUR SAY

An exciting new playspace is coming to Gregson Park

Have your say on the proposed upgrades to Gregson Park featuring a new inclusive playspace with nature play, water feature, shade, formal and informal seating, and native garden with a small yarning circle.

Upgrades to the existing amenities building will provide disabled access and BBQ facilities.

An inclusive playspace and amenities upgrades were identified as key priorities during 2020 community consultation for the Gregson Park Masterplan.

Media release

<https://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-and-updates/latest-news/inclusivity-at-the-heart-of-new-playspace-for-greg>

Inclusivity at the heart of new playspace for Gregson Park

23 Nov 2022

An inclusive playground enriched with traditional indigenous elements are key features of a new million-dollar playspace proposed for Hamilton's most historic park.

City of Newcastle has unveiled a concept design for the larger, reimagined playground and amenities upgrade at the much-loved Gregson Park, which will be placed on public exhibition for community feedback from today.



Alongside a variety of traditional play equipment, the playground features a range of accessible, sensory and nature-based play options, with an array of traditional indigenous elements including a yarning circle to encourage knowledge sharing, bush tucker garden to enrich learning of native edible plants and a 'meeting place' to signify where people meet and gather round in circles.

Additional shade, a water feature, formal and informal seating, and footbridges are also featured as part of the concept design, complemented by an upgraded, accessible amenities building and new covered picnic area to ensure the park is an inclusive place for all.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes said creating a new inclusive playspace enhanced by traditional Indigenous elements form part of the overall vision for Gregson Park in line with the adopted Gregson Park Masterplan.

“City of Newcastle is committed to delivering quality playgrounds and green spaces across the Newcastle LGA for locals and visitors to enjoy,” Cr Nemes said.

“Extensive community engagement was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Gregson Park Masterplan 2021, with feedback into the concept design for a new playspace and upgraded amenities including consultation with First Nations Australians to appropriately capture indigenous elements in the design with further consultation still to be undertaken.”

Councillor Carol Duncan, who is also the Chair of the Community and Culture Advisory Committee, encouraged the community to have their say during the public exhibition period to ensure Gregson Park’s playspace continues to be enjoyed by families for generations to come.

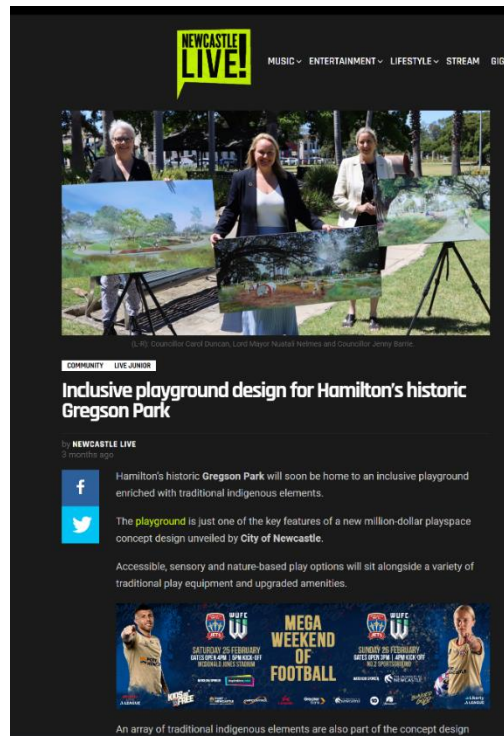
“Gregson Park provides a green heart for the unique and historic suburb of Hamilton and is much loved by local families and the wider community,” Cr Duncan said.

“A reimagined playspace and upgraded amenities will enhance the future enjoyment of the park for the next generation, which is why we’re seeking feedback from a broad spectrum of our community to ensure we have it right.”

The detailed concept designs for Gregson Park playspace and amenities upgrade will be placed on public exhibition for three weeks from today until Friday, 16 December 2022.

Example media coverage

<https://newcastlelive.com.au/inclusive-playground-gregson-park/>



An array of traditional indigenous elements are also part of the concept design including a yarning circle to encourage knowledge sharing, a bush tucker garden to enrich learning of native edible plants and a 'meeting place' to signify where people meet and gather around in circles.

"City of Newcastle is committed to delivering quality playgrounds and green spaces across the Newcastle LGA for locals and visitors to enjoy," **Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes** said.

"Extensive community engagement was undertaken as part of the preparation of the Gregson Park Masterplan 2021, with feedback into the concept design for a new playspace and upgraded amenities including consultation with First Nations Australians to appropriately capture indigenous elements in the design with further consultation still to be undertaken."

The plan also includes a water feature, formal and informal seating and footbridges

Detailed concept designs for the Gregson Park playspace and amenities upgrade are on public exhibition until Friday, 16 December 2022.

Appendix III – Submissions

I think the Indigenous elements proposed as part of the Gregson Park upgrade sound fantastic. I would also like to propose that some sort of recognition is included about the post war migrants that made such a significant contribution to the city of Newcastle, and in particular the wonderful suburb of Hamilton. Can we have something that celebrates this incredible contribution that these people made.

It looks great and will be a marvellous improvement. Do not like the 'tunnels' - they look like a cheap addition of pipes being thrown in. Build a treehouse instead.

I would like to see a slippery dip for kids added to the playground equipment. Kids love them!

Absolutely wonderful!!! Love it!

Build a splash park instead Newcastle has all of these things but not one splash park the tiny amount of water play suitable for a toddler doesn't include much of the region children.

The whole concept look excellent. The different aspects and potential yarning spaces and play alongside family gathering looks good. Upgraded ammenities are essential. Space for markets, community events and active sports will give Gregson Park new life. Well done.

As a neighbour of Gregson Park I've noticed the importance of seating for visitors. More seating would enhance the opportunity for people to rest and eat when they are in the park. During the week a group of about 20 parents supervise their children in after school play. Please ensure that seating is prioritised in the upgrading of the park.

The proposed play space looks terrible. All these other suburbs get great play sets in their park and this is what's been proposed to us? this looks so budget. Very disappointing. Newcastle council can do better than this. Whoever designed this obviously has no kids

Is there a possibility of exercise stations put in the park in the future. Thinking there may be avenues for a health related space and grants.

See attached - The accessibility elements of the playspace look great. The play structures need to engage ALL ages though, particularly older children. My 9yo loves parks but is tall and many of your newer parks seem targeted at toddlers and lower primary. I am concerned the ropes/netting in particular will be too junior in design to challenge and engage older kids. This is the case with the Honeysuckle pirate ship park and the Park Rd Kotara Station park. Space is plentiful in both locations but the play equipment excludes older children. This then becomes either an additional cost burden to families when we need to go to paid facilities like Revolution or Howzat to engage these older kids in play, or they become sedentary. Smith Park playspace in Hamilton North is a great example of a space that caters to all age groups and you will see it regularly used by older children. They still love to play, we need to let them!!!!

And my 9yo, cognitive disability child who regulates through climbing and hanging would say Monkey Bars. 2 sets preferred. Inclusion is not just about physical disability.

Please do not plant eucalypts in the park. Or is in your artist impression. It would not be in keeping with the existing trees.

The park has a theme with the fig please continue even with a smaller fig but preferably with another Morton Bay Fig.

I am very concerned about the lack of pedestrian crossings and pedestrian islands around the park - particularly on Samdon Street, crossing Cleary St and Lindsay St. Gregson Park will be the most wonderful resource for our community and I believe we need children to be able to get to and from the park safely, particularly with the ever-increasing traffic.

Refer to attached file please - The Playspace area you have proposed looks most engaging and makes one want to explore the area.

Some general considerations for you to ponder with your design going forward however:

- The Picnic BBQ area:

- Position in relation to the toilets – I did question the positioning in such close proximity to the public toilets but I can see how the maintenance shed will act as a buffer. It is evident that you have given consideration to the ventilation at the wash basins but I hope this attention to detail flows through to the individual toilet cubicles as well as it will be needed here over time.

- Lighting: the removal of the existing rear wall will brighten up the proposed picnic space, but I hope you can propose some form of lighting over the seating area that will allow it to be usable at night, and for it to not be as harsh as the current exposed fluoros.

- 2 BBQs are needed, they are very popular.

- The exposed solid wall to the undercover picnic area is a definite opportunity - a local artist to do an installation maybe? Some information on the area's history? A mural?

- General seating & tables: Currently it is very popular to sit under the shade of the large trees, at a

small distance away from the playground but in easy eyesight for a picnic. I see you have proposed

only tables in the undercover area. A lost opportunity as not everyone wants to sit with the masses.

Please consider scattering some tables and chairs possibly around a few locations, maybe under large trees, other than the assigned picnic area please.

- The creek/ rock bed: a lovely idea & it's hard to see the detail however of how the creek finishes when it meets the park boundary. Some consideration may be required for a smoother integrated end.

- Loss of green open areas for ball sports: I observe with the realignment of the path from the central

fountain to the intersection of Lindsay & Steel St that a large portion of the open green space has been reduced. These spaces are often utilized for soccer, AFL, Ai Ki Do, and Tai Chi etc. If you are

going to remove their current playing field please give some thought as to alternative locations in the

park. Not near seating and at I'd suggest two open spaces so that multiple groups can play at the same time. Open air concerts & movie nights also occur in these open green spaces.

And a big congratulations on proposing the refurbishment of the existing toilets – very much

needed & well
done containing the footprint.

Hello... I would like to see some recognition of the Lawn Bowlers from this Hamilton Bowling Club. Refer attached of my grandfather, well known from the early days of Hamilton. I'm very happy to contribute some funds if there is some permanent recognition of these four players and/or their bowling mates. I also rescued the Hamilton Bowling Club Honour Boards from the club many years ago which are in storage at Eleebana. Very happy to discuss at any time.

It appears that there's a path running over an open body of water with nothing at all to prevent kids from falling in. Is there a plan to have some sort of barrier here to prevent children from stepping over the edge or riding scooters or bikes off into the water?

Play space looks great! Please consider adding more picnic tables. The existing covered and uncovered picnic tables at Gregson park (~4) are heavily used and given this is a much bigger and improved play space the addition of both covered and uncovered picnic tables seem warranted

Need to add cctv

This would provide a much better amenity for families in the area. Construction of the new play space should be high priority.

The plan has it's merits although there can be problems. Parking, traffic, noise, loss of scenery. Over development reduces open space which can cause crowding, loss of natural light and heat or cold environments, vandalisms and thefts.

I think the plan looks really great -- I hope it will be built as presented, this will be a wonderful addition to the Hamilton area and to the City.

Hello, all good ideas. I would suggest you contact Redcycle, who make outdoor products - benches, seating, paths from recycled soft plastic.
Have seen their seating benches outside the Coles Supermarket at Tea Gardens. And there were similar seats along the Myall River at Tea Gardens.
Contact Great Lakes council for more information. And here is the Redcycle website:

<https://redcycle.net.au> › where-does-..

This park is not at risk of closing due to infrastructure failure. This should not be a higher priority. Spend the money on Lambton Pool instead.

Looks good and like it won't take up too much more space - don't want the whole park turning into a playground. Lots of cool features especially accessible play equipment and yarning circle. Glad there will still be bbq available.

More seating places with tables are needed.



That is great

It would be great to have some designated exercise equipment in the park.

This is a wonderful upgrade of the iconic Gregson Park. Congratulations!
As an addition to the play space is it possible to have a permanent covered stage space with electricity for music in the park and other events. I see this as an valuable investment for the park into the future, to best utilise the space not only for children but adults also. Thankyou

Please see the attached document - More and more people are choosing a bicycle for short trips. Active transport to Gregson Park Playspace should be prioritised because it benefits our health, our most vulnerable (children, disabled, low-income earners) and our businesses. My points below pertain to bike accessibility, shade and the drinking fountain. The photo below was taken at Gregson Park on Tuesday 6 December 2022 at the Xmas markets. The park's only 3 bike racks are full, fitting just 6 bikes. There is not much room between the racks to get your bike in and out without hitting someone else's bike.

1. It would be great to have lots of bicycle parking. I think at the very least 16 individual bicycle parking spots at the playground would be good, so 8 "racks". Bike parking is essential. If people can't park their bike in a convenient location, they may choose to drive to the park creating air and noise pollution, congestion and taking up on-street car parking spaces.
2. Please have at least one bicycle parking spot allocated specifically for cargo bikes. This parking spot will have enough room to fit the cargo bike and enough room for the adult to comfortably stand beside it and get the children in and out. I know families in Hamilton who use electric cargo bikes. There is a business in Hamilton that sells cargo bikes. Two kids can sit in the front. For one lady I know in Hamilton her cargo bike is her main mode of transport for herself and her young child; she cannot drive due to a medical condition. She uses it to take her child to the park and the shops. Cargo bikes or bikes with a front or back tray will only become more popular. They should be encouraged as they are an equitable and sustainable form of transport.
3. Please make sure the bike racks are on level ground so the bike isn't sliding downhill as you try to attach the lock. Many bikes are electric now or have a seat for two children on the back. These bikes are heavy and flat ground makes a huge difference.
4. Please don't have the bike racks too close together. Between each rack there needs to be enough space to fit one bike to the left, one person, and one bike to the right.
5. It would be really great if the bike racks were undercover, protected from the rain. It's not infrequent that it's only forecast to rain during the time your bike is parked. This is not good. Rain causes wear and tear to the many exposed moving parts of a bike. It strips the chain of oil. It only takes a couple of minutes of rain to soak a bike seat, which causes a wet backside. It's important to keep a bike as dry as much as possible. If I know that it is forecast to rain while my bike is parked, but not while I'm riding, I will consider other transport options because it's such a fuss to put a plastic bag over the seat or change trousers, and add oil to the chain again.

6. Please have the tables (no.3 on the map) undercover. Please have the roof wide enough and low enough so as to adequately provide protection from sun and rain. The current structure over the existing picnic tables is great.

7. Please have a water-bottle refilling tap on the drinking fountain.

8. Please don't make the paths through the park any narrower. It would be great if these were shared paths, for pedestrians and people on bikes. They need to be wide enough for bikes, including cargo bikes, to pass pedestrians. Pedestrians should have priority and there should be a 10km/hr limit. The park is used by kids (Hamilton Public, Merewether High) to get to school on foot, bike and scooter.

9. Please make the entrances to the park/playspace easily accessible for bikes, cargo bikes, wheelchairs, and scooters. This means wide, smooth ramps off Steel St, Lindsay St, James St.

10. Trees are wonderful, providing shade, reducing temperatures and calming the mind. Playgrounds with lots of trees are more enjoyable.

11. Out of the scope of this project I assume, however I would like to suggest the following. It would be great if James St could be made into an attractive active transport boulevard, linking Beaumont St, James St Plaza and eastern Hamilton/Hamilton South/city to Gregson Park. This would make it easier for families to cycle and walk between the playspace and the shops on Beaumont. This would be great for businesses. Could James St be blocked off at Beaumont St to cars? Could it be residents-only? Could it be a quietway? Or, at least a pedestrian and bike crossing to the park at the Steel St and James St intersection would make access to the park safe. The Samdon St and Lindsay St corner of the park is also sorely in need of a pedestrian and bike crossing; it is such an unpleasant and unsafe spot, a fast, busy spot during peak hour and used by families walking/cycling their children to school.

Please see attached document

1. Water play and risk-based activities

One of the best playgrounds I know of is the one at Royal Park in Parkville, (in Melbourne). In particular, the water play feature there which includes a number of fountains operating in sequence, that is enormously fun for kids on hot days. There are a few similar places in NSW, but nothing that quite matches the feel and quality of that area. It would be wonderful to see this opportunity used to create something similar that would

The rope climbing area is fantastic for older kids too to explore risk taking in a safe environment, though it takes up lots of space. If there was a way to incorporate something similar, it would make the playground one of the best in Newcastle and likely the state!

2. Shade

Many playgrounds in Newcastle feature play equipment that is exposed, even if there is shade elsewhere (e.g. King Edward Park, Stockton). Play equipment in the sun is a safety hazard from both a skin/sunburn perspective, but also from potential burns. The play space should incorporate shaded play equipment, ideally utilising native trees.

3. Traffic, noise, pollution and safety.

Samdon St on the western side of the park carries a lot of traffic, mostly vehicles using it as a shortcut between Tudor St and Donald St (though not as much as Tudor St of course). Although I understand the playground will not be directly adjacent to Samdon St, having the relatively small park bounded by two busy roads (as opposed to one) will impact negatively on the playground

and its users in multiple ways. These effects will be magnified with increased traffic and visitation to the park itself, which will hopefully occur if the park development is well implemented. For local residents and visitors to the park from the western side, the vehicle traffic along Samdon st during peak periods presents a hazard to crossing the road, and for park users increases the noise and pollution they are exposed to, thereby reducing the utility of the park. The council should explore installing additional traffic calming devices on the street, closing it off so it cannot be used as a thoroughfare, or other options to reduce the level of traffic the park is exposed to to only the Tudor St (southern) side.

I have just looked at the plans for the upgrade of Gregson park. They look fabulous, but I wonder where the shade sails are? With the Australian climate and the incidence of skin cancer, I feel, at least, some shade sails would be a welcomed addition. Our grandchildren play it the park and at times can be quite hot. Thankyou for your time

Good morning,

I have included feedback on the plan, and also ideas for the community garden.

I love the idea of bush tucker in the design. This could work either as an independent garden or even just general planting of bush tucker in the design such as muntries, midyims, chocolate lilies, native ginger, and wombat berries (this also climbs) amongst other sweet-smelling natives like the port wine magnolias.

<https://tuckerbush.com.au/midyim-berries-austromyrtus-dulcis/>

<https://tuckerbush.com.au/muntries-kunzea-pomifera>

<https://tuckerbush.com.au/wild-currant-antidesma-erostre/>

It would be great to see an entryway through a mini macadamia nut, Illawarra plums and quandong forest.

A European-style community garden would be awesome.

They are a great place to grow some of the large trees wh

ich you can't grow in a suburban garden....trees like nut and fruit trees eg paw paws, blueberry, mango, desert limes, lemons, avocados, and more macadamia's....

They could be supported by community Vege scraps inground compost towers, and wood piles. Community recycling stations for twigs, chopped wood and vegetative matter could help reduce the maintenance costs for the overall garden design. Whilst helping the community keep their bins empty and gardens

An Australian European community garden designed around the concept of low-maintenance herbal perennials, rosemary, sage, and thyme, with the larger trees could work with small round raised garden beds and archways to grow fruit and vegetable vines eg snake beans, wombat berries, kiwi fruits creating mini microclimates to keep the garden and the community cool.

Garden beds could be built to maximise growing space.

Tall circular multi-level towers with wicking beds inside, and include in-ground worm towers (the community could add fresh vegetable scraps) to help maintain the garden's beauty,

manageability, and moisture.

Attractiveness, while a community garden is not being used to grow annuals, is often an issue non-gardeners complain about...Tidy multi-level circular pyramid growing towers could create more growing space, enabling the growth of low maintenance and tidy shrubs /trees around the garden They could be a kind of tidy sculpture whilst not in regular use.

They could be made cheaply, maybe even a place-making project.

Fruit and nut trees in an Australian-style European garden could add to the overall garden's microclimate and heat reduction. A wood clipping drop-in amongst them could contribute to the ongoing maintenance of tree fertilization as well.

A community garden could mimic the circular features of the overall design.

It would be great to see thyme in amongst lawns, where people could lie down and smell the time...thyme comes in a few different colours...they look magical as well. It's a great ground cover and unlike grass, thyme lawns need limited maintenance. Pennyroyal could be good in that area too. I remember there are ants in the lawn penny royal deters them.

Has wind management been considered in the design? Increased winds from climate change...seasonal winds in that area?

Could trees, and/ or sound shields be planted to slow and limit gusty winds? Well-designed natural-looking sound shields could also host community events providing a space for the community to advertise events both in the park and the community. Eg the food pantry in Hamilton.

Also, It would be great to have some kind of misting water feature for heat waves as a way of saving plants, but also cooling children in the play space.

Could vertical gardens be built on the refurbished amenities walls....as a way of increasing growing spaces with low-maintenance herbs with distracting smells, lemon balm could be good for this.

Are the bicycle stations e-bike friendly ie with cover and access to power? Could this be incorporated into the amenities design?

A community growing program could be a way of reducing costs and increasing awareness around bushtucker foods and how they grow in Newcastle.

Maybe a few entry archways in the general design to help with shade on super hot days and support some scented local vines which could grow along the fence lines,...or bush tucker vines.

Is there room for a Christmas Bunya Nut Tree somewhere for Christmas rituals? Or an Illawarra plum pine. Or a Burdekin Plum

<https://tuckerbush.com.au/burdekin-plum-pleiogynium-timorense/>

Are there any habitat trees? Could some of the amazing habitat trees being removed from

the Jesmond Bypass Site be upcycled here as a feature-preserving cultural heritage?

Has the design considered the existing animals that live on the site?

Will their waste impact the plant design, or add to it?

I know bats live in the park as well.

Have food sources been provided and or considered?

Will they continue to have somewhere to live?

Will they co-exist with new creatures who will move in with the increased water access?

What will their relationship be?

Has the balance of insect life been considered in the design?

Are there any cat-safe bird boxes in the design? Would birds change their current birding routes to visit this park...what could be the impacts of that?

Will they be safe from dogs and cats and or other predators?

Could owl roosts be incorporated into the design to limit the introduced rat communities and as a demonstration model for the community on how to manage rat issues without using poisons? I can see the climbing gym posts might be used by owls.

I notice there is wood chip on the ground in one of the pictures this is awesome, and it is also used by some ground mammals to eat and nest with. Is there a plan to restore this?

Is there a water management plan for a drought?

Could a community group be established for the community garden now, and a growing project started for bush tucker plants? Could workshops be run by the local mob?

Could the council provide recycled white food-grade buckets to the community and start a recycling project today to help with increasing soil fertility and reducing the overall costs of the project whilst increasing community connectivity and placemaking?

Maybe the food buckets could have pictures taped to them of the animals/creatures that live in the park? And instructions on what to put in and why?

Dog owners will use the park and I think it is unrealistic to expect dog owners without cars to walk several suburbs away and walk their dogs, on or off leash.

Also are there any discreet underground dog toilet composting facilities for recycling pet waste in the design? Wind factors could be a consideration in the location..

Basically, a hole in the ground with a liftable pet-friendly grate so soil ect can be added on top of the worms occasionally.

Dogs can be trained to use these toilets which keeps the dog community and the rest of the community co-existing together, whether someone has a plastic bag or not.

How will the toilet and amenities be cleaned? Could the water be recycled and utilised on-site in the gardens?

Could they be cleaned without the use of toxic chemicals? Is that building collecting water?

Could the handwashing facilities be built into the toilet using the water to first wash your hands on the top of the cistern and then push the water through to flush the toilet?

Will there be solar lighting in the park for night use?

Could the eating area have a washing basin instead?

Is this design CALD inclusive? How could the CALD community be included in the design process?

Could including a European/Arabic-style toilet communicate inclusion to different migrant communities?

Has this design considered how the homeless will use the park to sleep at night?

Has the increased use of the park and noise impacts been considered?

Could sound/wind barriers be used in the design to limit sounds coming from the street but also from the park to the community? Or in the design to redirect sounds coming from the eating area?

Idea, could a forest entry point be used for wedding photos for the community in the future when it grows to full height?... An entry archway of fragrant native vines could add to the appeal. Macadamia have beautiful fragrant flowers.....

A mixture of hoyas and other decorative wedding flower Australian vines in an arched entranceway could contribute to the general wedding vibe and create an archway for wedding photos.

Getting married in amongst the trees in summer would add to the community vibe of the space and bring in the income required to maintain the park.

I love this play design design. It's amazing! Thank you! It puts the heart back into the community...children and mob are central!

And it's a tourist destination!

Hopefully, waterdragons and other creatures will move in as well. Water brings life! Thanks for all of your work on this!

Examples of bouldering walls I left out. This might be better located in proximity but just outside the playground area. These are becoming very popular in the big cities and would be a great drawcard for a park in Newcastle. Again, doesn't have to be Gregson Park, but it would be very popular in somewhere in inner Newcastle. (Bar beach park / Dixon park?)

Some feedback for consideration:

- Note: Risk based nature play and water play are always implemented in good playground design. This seems to be reasonably well considered here.
- Suggest connecting the loop path through as this will be difficult for prams/bicycles/scooters to cross through and will become worn/trodden/muddy? over time

- Any parent will tell you that swings are screamed over by children. Strongly suggest two swings with straps are installed. There is often a line of children awaiting the strap swing currently. If required sacrifice the cargo swing but there should be plenty of space for the addition.
- Second importance to most children is a large slide - there appears to only be a small slide here? Very disappointing. For reference, the slide at Speers Point park is phenomenal (it doesn't have to be of that scale), the slide at Blackbutt is great.
- Flying foxes and manual diggers are probably next on the drawcard list and both give great coordination exercise (may not be adequate space for a flying fox)
- A small climbing/bouldering wall for more advanced or older children would be really fantastic. This doesn't have to be large and can look like a 2m diameter rock
- Overall the design looks good, however it really is missing one or two drawcards. please strongly consider what these can be - again if space or cost is an issue it is strongly recommended to swap out rather than just settle with ordinary.

Note: While improvements could be made, the general public considers a lot of the design and content of Speers Point park playground as very good - a good benchmark in the local area. Of course the scale is huge there, but that is only a matter of selection/rescaling.

Please feel free to contact me at any time, I'd be more than happy to help in any way I can.