Annettes Place upgrade Community Engagement Report

This report provides information on the community consultation for the Annettes Place upgrade project and reports on the engagement outcomes. The consultation opened on 18/8/2025 and closed at 9am on 15/9/2025

Overview

Project background

There will be a significant 235% increase in the residential population (additional 3,600 residents) and a 41% increase in the worker population by 2031 (Yarra Open Space Strategy). The YOSS recommends undertaking a major upgrade to Annettes Place to provide a greater diversity of spaces and facilities to better cater to the forecasted population as part of the major redevelopment in proximity to this open space.

The draft Play Space Strategy 10-year Priority Play Space Plan rated this project as being a high priority. It is recommended to upgrade Annette's Place to Small Neighbourhood Level to serve a wider catchment and cater to residential growth. The upgrade should factor in the following:

- Designated off leash area. Increase in demand and use of lawn areas for dog off leash with high levels of surrounding residential growth.
- Concern over safety and conflicts between cyclists and playground users. Paths through the site connect to the Main Yarra Trail.
- Large residential development site immediately north at 25 River Boulevard under construction. Existing direct residential abuttals at 11 River Street (Townhouses 1-29).

Objectives of this engagement

1. Inform the community that we are beginning the process of upgrading these reserves.
2. Promote the consultation and seek feedback from the community on what they would like to see in the designs for these upgraded reserves.

Level of community influence

- Community feedback could prioritise the features implemented in the design of the upgraded playground and reserve area (aligned with definition of a Small Neighbourhood Park).
- Community feedback could help us understand what aspects of the existing design should be retained.
- Community feedback could identify any other concerns or suggestions to be considered in the development of the Concept Design.

Engagement methods:

- Online survey tool hosted through Your Say Yarra engagement platform
- 1 place-based pop-ups at the following locations:
    - **Where:** Annettes Place, 5 to 11 River Street, Richmond, 3121
    - **When:** Saturday 6 September 2025
    - **What time:** 12.30 to 2.30pm
- Targeted stakeholder engagement with the following groups:
    - Yarraberg Children's Centre Richmond

Engagement questions:

1. **How do you/your family currently use Annettes Place? Choose all that apply**

- to relax in
- to play on the playground
- to play sports and informal games
- to gather socially (for example picnics)
- to connect to nature
- to walk/play with your dog
- I don't use this space
- Other (please specify)

2. **What do you like most about Annettes Place? (Please suggest any existing features that you would like us to incorporate into the new design) (open text)**

3. **What equipment or features would you most like included in the upgrade? (Select from list – select up to 3)**

- Structured play equipment
- Nature play elements (e.g. stepping stones, logs)
- Furniture provision to support social gathering and park amenity
- Shade provision
- Additional landscaping and tree planting
- Paths and connections
- Bicycle parking
- Other (text)

4 **What types of play equipment and informal play elements would you most like to see in the new design? Select up to 3.**

- Balancing / Clambering
- Climbing
- Spinning
- Nature play elements e.g. logs, rocks
- Traditional play e.g. swings, slides, play units
- Fitness-play combination
- Infant play

5 **Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve this space or any other comments about the Annette's Park playground upgrade? (open text)**

Engagement reach

Engagement promotion:
Social media channels (including social media advertisements) reaching over 4,444 people.
Council email newsletters including Yarra Life, Your Say Yarra email newsletter, Yarra Leisure news and Yarra Libraries email newsletter. This reached a total of 46,024 subscribers.
News story on Yarra City Council's website.
Postcards and other printed collateral available at events and postcards were distributed to 19 Council venues. These include town halls, neighbourhood houses, seniors' centres, libraries and leisure centres.
Postcards/letters distributed to 489 occupiers of residences and businesses in 200m radius of park.
Mail outs of postcards/letters to 489 owners of residences and businesses in 200m radius of park.
Promoted via digital screens at customer service desks, libraries and leisure centres

Your Say Yarra project page:

The success of the Your Say Yarra page is tracked against the following metrics:

- **Visitors** – The number of unique visitors that saw the page.
- **Responses** – The number of feedback responses that were submitted.

Visitors	Responses
276	79

In person engagement opportunities:

In-person session	Approximate number of people we spoke to	Responses
Annettes Place pop-up **Saturday 6 September**	10	**Cyclist Management** • Concerns about cyclists cutting through the park (e.g. goat track, Google Maps misdirection). • Suggestions for bike slow points and alternative bike paths (e.g. near Salta development). • E-scooter speed and attitude are problematic. General desire to reduce or manage bike traffic through the park.

Playground Use and Improvements

Playground is well used, especially by younger children and Yarraberg excursions.

Positive feedback on current equipment (swings, ramp, climbing wall, water play).

Suggestions for upgrades: sandpit with rocks, basket swing, higher tower, seesaw.

Safety concerns: fencing between playground and dog areas, bin placement.

Concrete barrier around playground seen as multi-purpose but not fully effective.

Dog Use and Management

Grassed NW corner popular with dogs.

Concerns about dogs interfering with recreation and playground areas.

Suggestions: fencing between dogs and playground, more seating near dog areas, keep dog bags, consider increased dog use from nearby developments.

Recreation on grass is difficult due to dog activity.

Park Amenities and Infrastructure

Picnic tables and seats are well used; some need refurbishment.

Lighting is generally adequate.

Requests for shaded seating and seating in sunny areas.

No BBQs due to rat concerns.

Drinking fountain with dog bowl appreciated; suggestion for another deeper in the reserve.

Garden beds near development fence could be more defined.

Safety and Accessibility

Concerns about adjacent street connections and safety.

Overshadowing from adjacent developments.

Google Maps misdirecting traffic through River Street.

Need to consider low planting due to snake concerns (though no recent issues reported).

Community Use and Social Interaction

Space used by high school kids, families, and for excursions.

Opportunities for kids to socialise.

Some organised sports nearby (pickleball, rowing), but limited active recreation in the park.

People bring food from Vic Gardens; occasional picnics (e.g. Yarraberg).

Space is valued as a quiet area.

Expansion and Strategic Planning

Support for purchasing River Street property from the State Government.

Support for road discontinuance to expand park space.

		Interest in activating underused areas of the reserve. Consideration of population growth and adjacent developments influencing future use.
TOTAL	10	

Engagement results

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via the 79 online copies of the survey.

Are you a carer of a child/children who use this play space?	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	53	67.09%
No	26	32.91%
Total	79	100%

What's your connection to Yarra?	Numbers (people could select more than one response)	Percentage
Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)	57	72.15%
Live in Yarra, in a property I rent	17	21.52%
Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra	0	-
Work in Yarra	18	22.78%
Own a business / business occupier in Yarra	3	3.80%
Study in Yarra	0	-
None of the above	2	2.53%
Prefer not to say	0	-
Total	79	100%

What gender do you identify as?	Numbers	Percentage
Man	24	30.38%
Woman	51	64.56%
Self-described	1	1.27%
I prefer not to say	3	3.80%
Total	79	100%

What is your age range?	Numbers	Percentage
Under 11	1	1.27%
12 to 17	0	-
18 to 24	1	1.27%
25 to 34	14	17.72%

35 to 49	46	58.23%
50 to 59	6	7.59%
60 to 69	4	5.06%
70 to 84	3	3.80%
85 and older	0	-
I prefer not to say	4	5.06%
Total	79	100%

What suburb do you live in	Numbers	Percentage
Abbotsford	2	2.53%
Alphington	0	-
Burnley	2	2.53%
Carlton North	0	-
Clifton Hill	0	-
Collingwood	1	1.27%
Cremorne	3	3.80%
Fairfield	0	-
Fitzroy	0	-
Fitzroy North	0	-
Princes Hill	0	-
Richmond	67	84.81%
I live outside of Yarra	4	5.06%
Total	79	100%

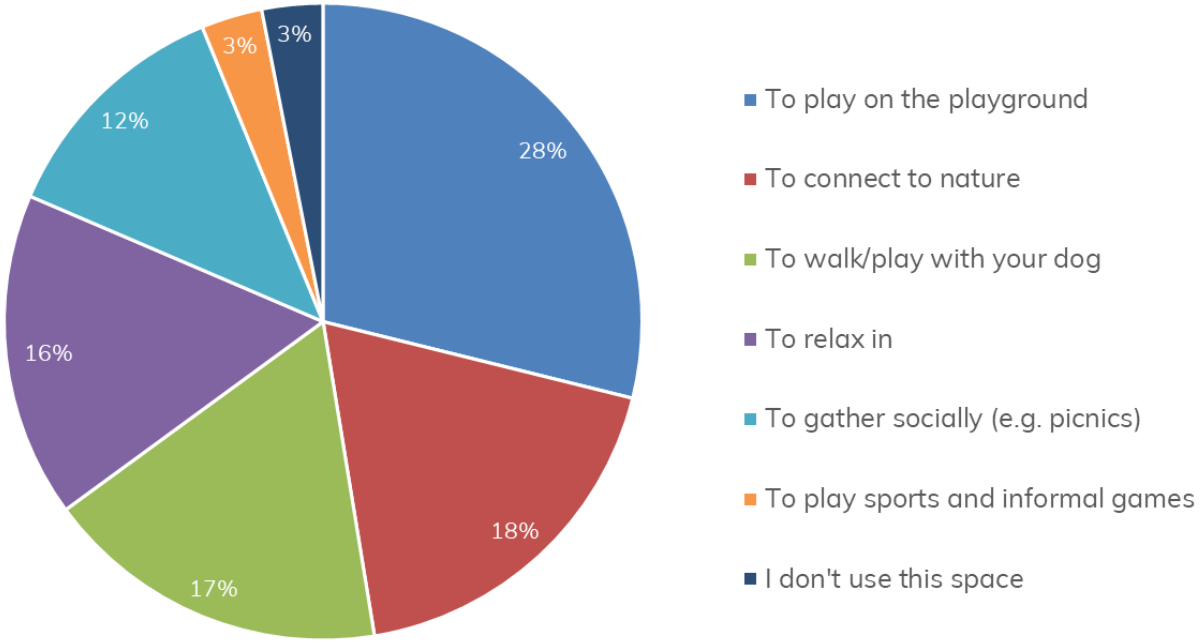
Select all that apply. I am….	Numbers (people could provide more than once response)	Percentage
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	11	13.92%
A person who was born overseas	19	24.05%
A person living with a disability.	4	5.06%
A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	7	8.86%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	1	1.27%
None of the above.	47	59.49%
I prefer not to say.	7	8.86%
Total	79	100%

What did we hear?

The feedback received reflects strong community appreciation for Annette's Place. Residents value its natural setting, dog-friendly atmosphere, and child-focused amenities, while also offering thoughtful suggestions for future improvements.

Responses to Q1: How do you/your family currently use Annette's Place?

Community members use the space:



Responses to Q2: What do you like most about Annette's Place?

Feedback Theme 1 : Playground Features

- Existing swings, track rider, toddler size slides, monkey bars and the playground shopfront
- Suitable for toddlers and young children.
- Shaded play areas are highly valued.
- Desire for more exciting and inclusive play equipment.

Feedback Theme 2: Natural Environment

- Quiet, peaceful setting with trees, greenery, and birdlife.
- Connection to nature and proximity to the Yarra River.
- Rural feel in an urban area; relaxing and scenic views.
- Appreciation for native vegetation and seasonal beauty (e.g., wattles in spring and Eucalyptus).
- Large grassy areas for picnics, ball games, and relaxation.
- Space for both kids and dogs to run and explore.
- Secluded and away from traffic, making it feel safe.

Feedback Theme 3: Dog-Friendly Area

- Off-leash space for dogs, valued by dog owners and non-owners (dog watching).
- Social interaction opportunities for locals.
- Cleanliness and availability of dog waste bags appreciated.

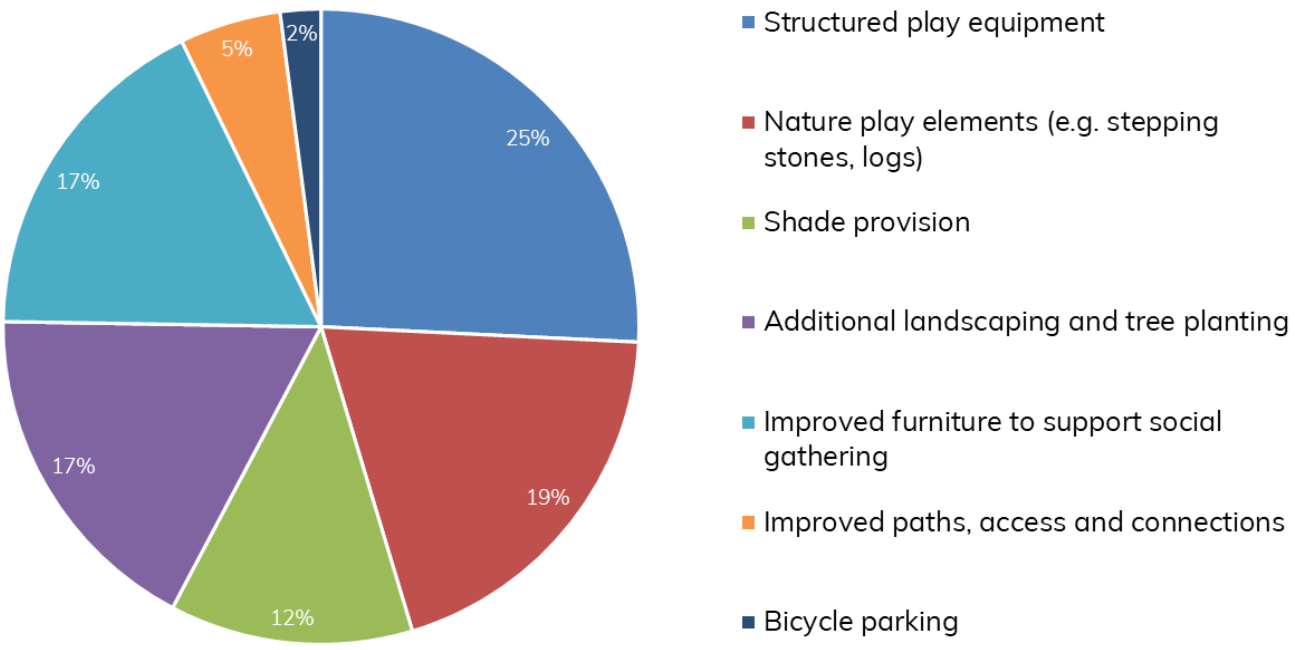
Feedback Theme 4: Amenities

- Picnic tables, benches, and shade structures.
- Drink facilities and rubbish bins.
- Access to the Yarra River Trail.
- Desire for more shade and improved drainage near the playground.

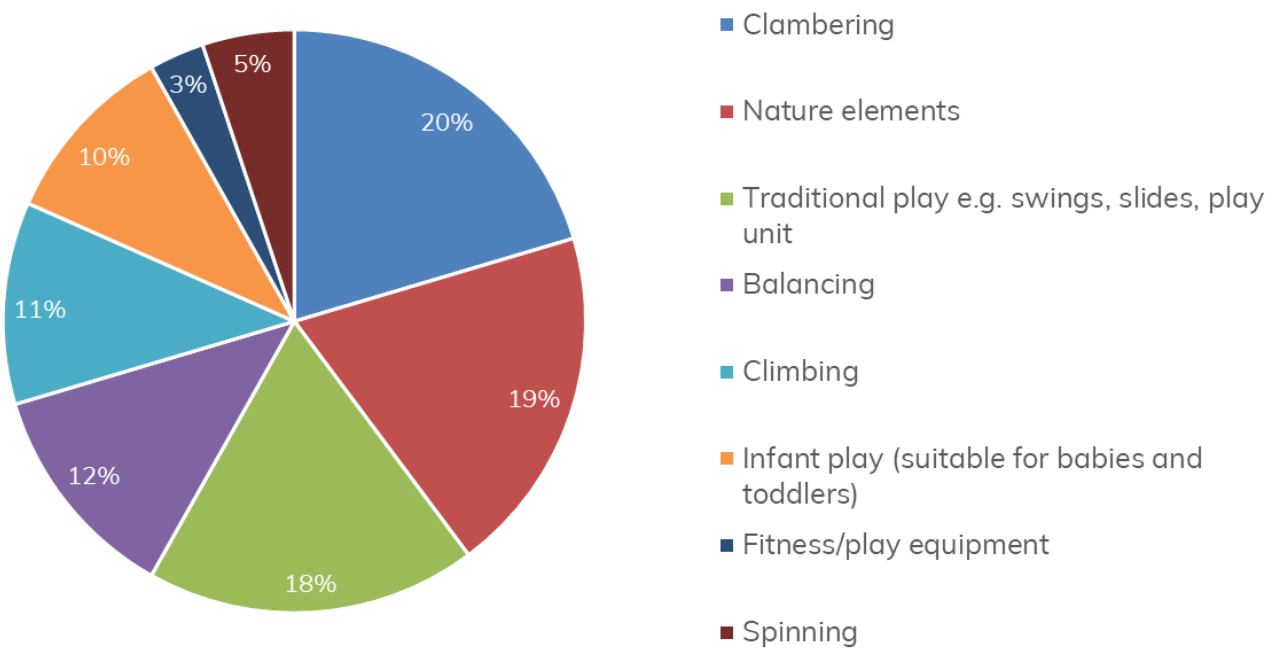
Feedback Theme 5: Community & Accessibility

- Meeting place for families, dog walkers, and locals.
- Close to childcare and residential areas.
- Integration with Yarra Trail and bike paths (though some concerns about bike safety).

Responses to Q3: What equipment or features would you most like included in the upgrade?



Response to Q4: What types of play equipment and informal play elements would you most like to see in the new design



Response to Q5: Do you have any suggestions on how we can improve this space or any other comments about the Annettes Place upgrade?

Feedback Theme 1 : Playground & Child-Friendly Amenities	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Playground is central and well-loved • the shop window in the playground is well cherished and used • Requests for updated equipment: swings, larger slides, monkey bars, roundabout, flying fox, musical/noisy elements and playground trampolines • Support for nature play • Requests for water play • Safety concerns: fencing to keep dogs out • Desire for age-appropriate play areas especially for toddlers • Proximity to childcare and parking appreciated • Appreciation for inclusive, all-ages design • Suggestions for outdoor fitness equipment such as chin up bars and inclined sit-up set-up, and a structure for bodyweight exercises, especially a lateral pull • Half basketball court	The proposed concept includes: • Retaining the playground in the central area and defining the play space as separate to the dog off-lead areas with nature play edging. • Panels, shop windows and play under the new unit. • A play unit with more challenge than the existing play. • A trampoline, carousel and basket swing in rubber paving to be accessible for all. • A younger children's area in the shade. • Rocks and logs as nature play elements. • Two play units to provide a broader range of play across ages. These items have not been included due to the limited size of the park: • A half court and separate fitness equipment – these would be considered if the park footprint expands in the future. • Water play. This is more suitable to Neighbourhood and Citywide level play spaces.

Feedback Theme 2: Nature & Environment	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Connection to the Yarra River and natural bushland • Peaceful, quiet atmosphere with birds and eucalyptus • Desire for more trees, wattles, and native and indigenous vegetation • Wildlife-friendly features • Improved drainage • Protection of the gum trees	The proposed concept includes: • Retaining existing trees and vegetation. • More native trees and garden beds. • Drainage for the playground area.

Feedback Theme 3: Dog-Friendly Features	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Off-leash dog area highly valued • Social space for dog owners and dog watchers • Dog poo bags and bins appreciated • Requests for fencing and safety measures to separate the dog park and playground • Concerns about bike traffic near dogs • Positive feedback on dog amenities (dog poo bags, bins).	The proposed concept includes: • Nature play elements to define the playground as separate from the dog off-leash areas. • Improvements to the grassed surface for all users. • Improvements to the irrigation to sustain grassed surfaces over summer. • A new path to separate shared path users from the play area and formalise an existing desire line. These items have not been included in the design due to the limited size of the park: • A fully fenced area for dogs. A small fully fenced area for off-lead dogs would remove that area from other park users and could not be sustained as a grass surface.

Feedback Theme 4: Seating, Picnic & Social Spaces	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Picnic tables, BBQ, and benches near playground • Shade awnings and spacing between tables • Open grassy areas for picnics and ball games • More shelter around the picnic area • BBQ placement concerns • Drinking tab and fountain to kids and washing hands • Community garden	The proposed concept includes: • Picnic tables integrated into the play area and connected to accessible paths. • Picnic tables under shade

	These items have not been included due to the limited size of the park and community feedback: • A shade structure. We have proposed picnic areas under the shade cloth and will plant more trees to provide natural shade. • A BBQ. • A community garden. We will be increasing the biodiversity planting appropriate to the Yarra River Environs and the Significant Landscape Overlay.

Feedback Theme 5: Accessibility & Safety	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Direct access to river requested • Concerns about shared paths & bicycles • Quiet location away from roads appreciated • improve accessibility for prams and people with disabilities. • improve access to the playground and surrounding areas.	The proposed concept includes: • A new path to formalise the existing desire line and separate the shared path from the play area. • Improved access in the play space with the use of new paving and rubber surfaces.

Feedback Theme 6: Community Connection	
What did we hear	**Our response**
• Recognition of Annette Mastrowicz to Annette's Place and its namesake • Requests to preserve original layout and enhance with native planting • Used by local daycare and families	The proposed concept includes: • Retaining the existing memorial to Annette Mastrowicz. • More native trees and garden beds. • Consultation was undertaken with Yarraberg Childcare centre and considered in the design.

Summary

The engagement responses highlight a strong desire to preserve for the park's existing natural character. Residents value the peaceful environment and playground. Responses reflected the need for improvements such as upgraded play equipment, water and nature play elements, shaded seating, and better separation between dogs and children. Concerns about cyclist and e-scooter safety, shared path conflicts, and the impact of nearby developments were also raised. Overall, the engagement highlights the importance of maintaining the park's quiet, inclusive atmosphere while responding to the needs of a growing and diverse community.