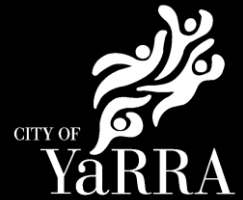


Garryowen Park upgrade Community Engagement Report



This report provides information on the community consultation for the Garryowen Park 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

The play equipment at Garryowen Park was installed in 2009. The 'Yarra Play Space Strategy 2025' therefore ranks the replacement of this play area as a 'high' priority at a small local level. The 'Yarra Open Space Strategy 2020' recommends maintaining the space for the predicted increase in the residential (55%) and worker (46%) populations.

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 help 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-up at the following locations:
Where: Garryowen Park, 20-32 Leicester Street, Fitzroy, 3065
When: Saturday 13th September 2025
What time: 9.30am to 11.30am
- Targeted stakeholder engagement with the following groups:
 - Fitzroy Early Learning Centre – 300 Nicholson Street, Fitzroy.

Engagement questions:

1. How do you/your family currently use Garryowen Reserve? Choose all that apply

- To relax in
- To eat lunch/take a break during the working day
- To play on the playground
- To play sports and informal games
- To gather socially (for example BBQs and picnics)
- To connect to nature
- I don't use this space
- Other (please specify)

2. What do you like most about Garryowen Reserve? (open text)

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

- Play (see options below)
- Traditional playground (various examples)
- Additional seating and picnic options -
- Improve the grassed surfaces (this will involve the removal of one or 2 trees)
- Improve garden beds
- Informal play options
- Improvements to access through the park

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 Garryowen Reserve 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 970 occupiers of residences and businesses in 200m radius of park.

Mail outs of postcards/letters to 970 owners of residences and businesses in 200m radius of park.

Digital boards at customer service desks, leisure centres and libraries.

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
193	63

In person engagement opportunities:

In-person session (including date and location)	Approx. number of people we spoke to	Responses
Garryowen Park pop-up Saturday 13 September 2025	28	Feedback impressions. • Dogs use the space regularly – generally would like dogs permitted. • Garden beds need to be more densely planted. • The play equipment is valued and used. • The grassed area should be improved. It is used for play – soccer and cricket. • The trees and bird life are valued.

		- Kids have parties there – the picnic tables and BBQ are used and valued. - Great place to sit and enjoy respite. - The delineated play area looks like it takes up too much space. - Basket swing Ideas - Basket swing - Nature play to edge play area - Tree house play – unit that is in the trees - Rather than cut down the Chinese Elm tree, thin it out to let more light in. - Could we have an area where dog pee is encouraged?
TOTAL	28	8 hard copy surveys

Engagement results

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data was collected via 63 online and 8 hard copies of the survey.

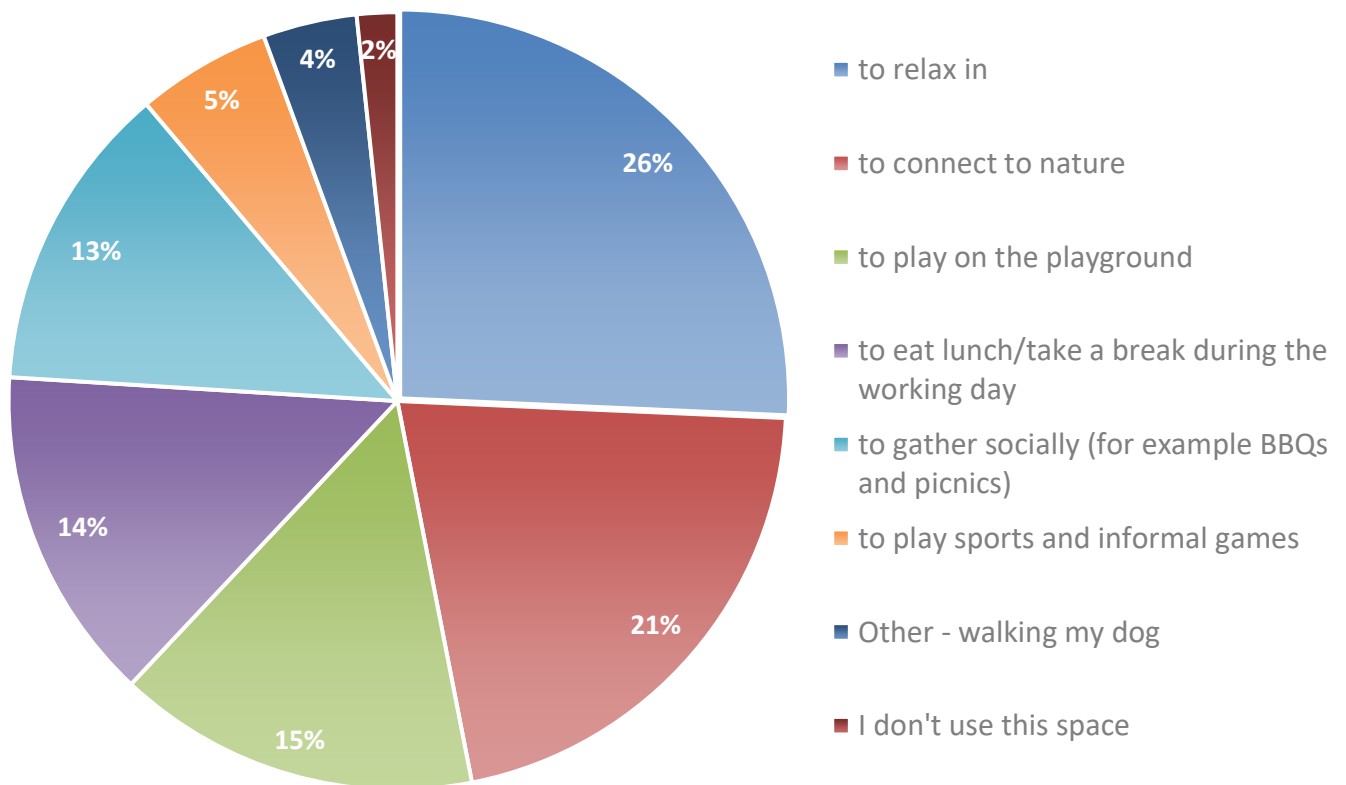
Are you a carer of a child/children who use this play space?	Numbers	Percentage
Yes	29	40.82%
No	42	59.15%
Total	71	100%
What's your connection to Yarra? (Responders can provide more than one response)	Numbers	Percentage
Live in Yarra, in a property I own (either outright or with a mortgage)	54	76.06%
Live in Yarra, in a property I rent	13	18.31%
Own a property in Yarra but live outside of Yarra	0	-
Work in Yarra	14	19.72%
Own a business / business occupier in Yarra	3	4.23%
Study in Yarra	4	5.63%
None of the above	1	1.41%
Prefer not to say	0	-
Total	71	100%
What gender do you identify as?	Numbers	Percentage
Man	31	43.66%
Woman	39	54.93%
Self-described	0	-
I prefer not to say	1	1.41%

Total	71	100%
What is your age range?	Numbers	Percentage
Under 11	0	-
12 to 17	1	1.41%
18 to 24	2	2.82%
25 to 34	14	19.72%
35 to 49	37	52.11%
50 to 59	7	9.86%
60 to 69	4	5.63%
70 to 84	2	2.82%
85 and older	1	1.41%
I prefer not to say	3	4.23%
Total	71	100%
What suburb do you live in?	Numbers	Percentage
Abbotsford	-	-
Alphington	-	-
Burnley	-	-
Carlton North	-	-
Clifton Hill	-	-
Collingwood	1	1.43%
Cremorne	-	-
Fairfield	-	-
Fitzroy	65	92.86%
Fitzroy North	1	1.43%
Princes Hill	-	-
Richmond	-	-
I live outside of Yarra	3	4.29%
Total	70 (one person didn't answer in the hard copy survey)	98.59%
Select all that apply. I am....	Numbers	Percentage
Someone who speaks a language other than English at home.	3	4.23%
A person who was born overseas	12	16.90%
A person living with a disability.	2	2.82%

A member of the LGBTIQA+ community.	10	14.08%
Someone of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.	0	-
None of the above.	37	52.11%
I prefer not to say.	11	15.49%
Total	71	100%

What did we hear?

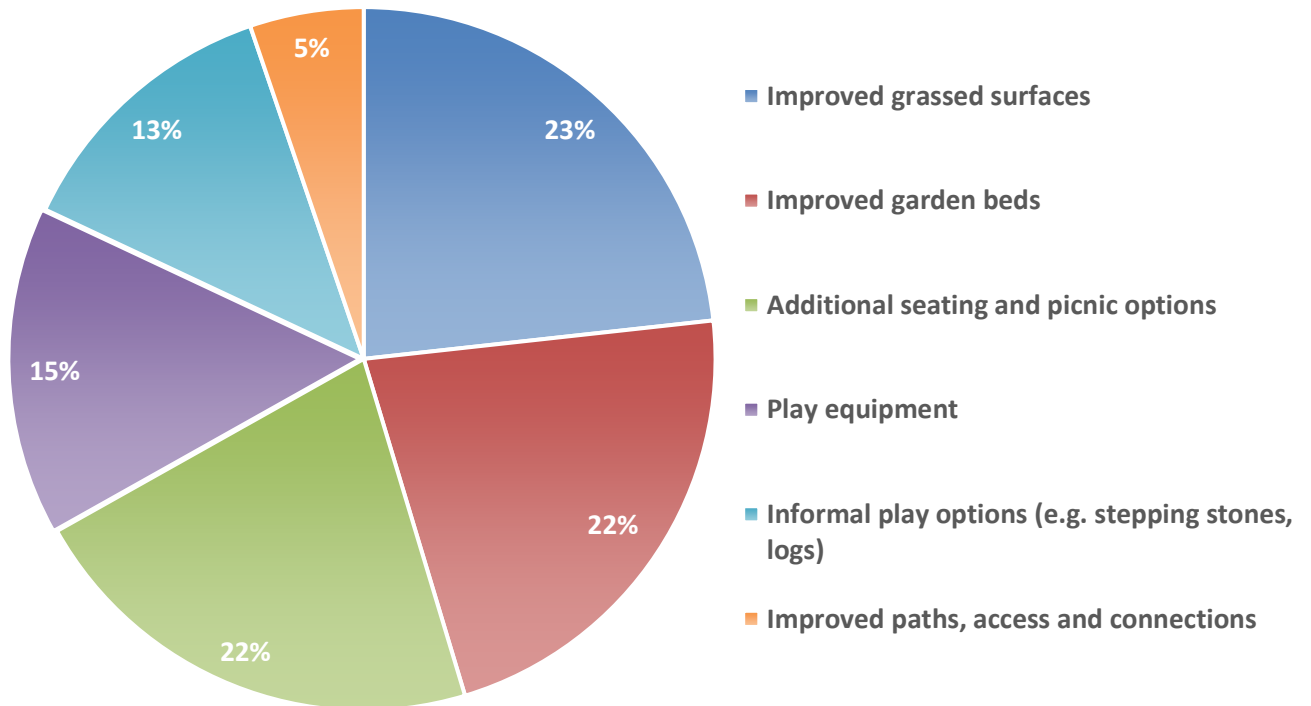
Q1. How do you/ your family currently use Garryowen Reserve?



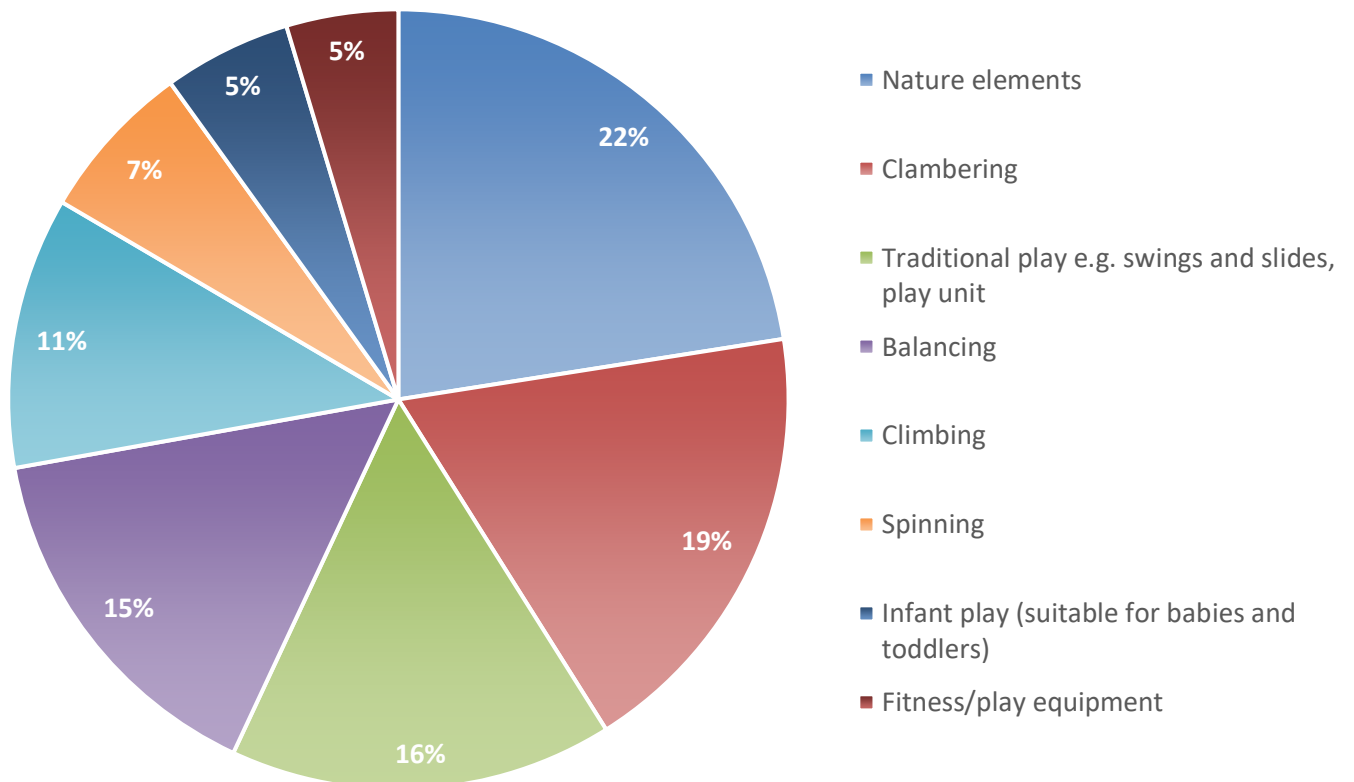
Q2. What do you like most about Garryowen Reserve?

Themes	Comments
Playground & Child-Friendly Amenities	We call the park 'Grasshopper' park Like that dog are not allowed The swings and play unit provide good play Like the double slide The grass area is good for ball games
Nature & Environment	Peaceful, quiet atmosphere with big trees and bird life The open grass surface for picnics and play It's a nice, secluded spot to sit for lunch Like that it is not 'too developed' Enjoy the natural shade Provides respite in a built-up area
Seating, Picnic & Social Spaces	Good for children's birthdays Good to sit and enjoy a break – have a coffee or eat lunch Like the BBQ and picnic tables
Accessibility & Safety	It's close to home and coffee shops I like the fencing so balls don't roll onto the road
Dog-Use (current status is 'dogs prohibited')	Like that dog are not allowed Good for walking my dog

Q3. What equipment or features would you most like included in the upgrade?



Q4. What types of play equipment and information 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 Garryowen Reserve upgrade?

Themes	Comments
Playground & Child-Friendly Amenities	We call the park 'Grasshopper' park Like that dog are not allowed The swings and play unit provide good play Like the double slide The grass area is good for ball games
Nature & Environment	Peaceful, quiet atmosphere with big trees and bird life The open grass surface for picnics and play It's a nice, secluded spot to sit for lunch Like that it is not 'too developed' Enjoy the natural shade Provides respite in a built-up area
Seating, Picnic & Social Spaces	Good for children's birthdays Good to sit and enjoy a break – have a coffee or eat lunch Like the BBQ and picnic tables
Accessibility & Safety	It's close to home and coffee shops I like the fencing, so balls don't roll onto the road
Dog-Use (current status is 'dogs prohibited')	Like that dog are not allowed Good for walking my dog

Feedback Theme 1 : Playground & Child-Friendly Amenities

What did we hear	Our response
- Keep the grasshopper - Keep swings and play unit but install climbing options - Install a basket swing - Include monkey bars - Include play for older children/ adults "Can we have a tree house?" - Integrate the play better into the existing park - Put in a basketball hoop	What we are doing in response to this feedback theme: - The existing playground, constructed in the 1990s, has been identified for renewal in Council's Draft Play Space Strategy to better meet community needs. The proposed upgrade will provide significantly greater play value, catering to a wider age range and incorporating inclusive, and nature play elements. - While most equipment will be replaced to achieve these improvements, the Grasshopper Rocker will be retained and integrated into the new design. - The concept design has proposed a basket swing as per the feedback. - While traditional monkey bars are not included, the proposed play equipment offers a variety of climbing and hanging opportunities through dynamic rope structures, encouraging similar physical activity and play - The proposed play space caters to a broader age range, featuring equipment suitable for children under 3 as well as engaging elements designed for children up to 12 years old - The concept plan integrates play across the entire park, rather than confining it to a single area. Play elements are embedded throughout the landscape, supported by clearly defined boundaries that ensure safety, accessibility, and a cohesive user experience. - Due to limited green space and the absence of a suitable location for safe installation, a basketball hoop has not been included in

the design. This decision also reflects budget constraints, the need to prioritise core upgrades, and consideration of potential noise impacts on neighbouring properties.

Feedback Theme 2: Nature & Environment

What did we hear

- Improve the grassed surface
- Plant more into the garden beds
- Keep the park as an undeveloped oasis
- Increase the sun into the park
- Keep all of the trees

Our response

What we are doing in response to this feedback theme:

- The grasses in the rear section of the reserve are quite worn, largely due to shade and soil compaction. To address this, we'll be pruning the existing tree canopy to allow more sunlight through and re-grassing the area to improve its condition.
- The concept design retains all existing trees and introduces underplanting to help define and enhance the garden beds.

Feedback Theme 4: Seating, Picnic & Social Spaces

What did we hear

- Install extra seating
- another picnic table.

Our response

What we are doing in response to this feedback theme:

- Currently, there is one picnic table and four benches in the reserve. The concept plan proposes adding a second picnic table, along with nine new seating options, including a mix of versatile seats and benches.

Feedback Theme 5: Accessibility & Safety

What did we hear

- Fence the playground to keep dogs out
- Keep access through the park from Garryowen Lane

Our response

What we are doing in response to this feedback theme:

- The concept design proposed boundary around the playground area using edging and benches. This will help maintain sightlines and openness across the park while ensuring the space remains welcoming.
- The concept design recognises the importance of access from Garryowen Lane and has retained and formalised this connection within the plan.

Feedback Theme 6: Dog -use

What did we hear

- Make it a dogs allowed park (17)
- Keep the park dog free
- Fence the park for dogs off lead
- Can we stop the park from being used as a dog toilet?

Our response

What we are doing in response to this feedback theme:

- Given the small size of the reserve, its primary function as a local green space and play area, and the need to balance diverse community needs, Garryowen Reserve will remain a dog-prohibited area. This approach helps protect the limited green space, ensures safety for children and families, and supports the park's role as a quiet, passive oasis.
- In accordance with Council Domestic Animal Management Plan and policy, dogs must be kept on-leash within 10 metres of unfenced playgrounds, BBQs, and picnic facilities. Additionally, dogs must remain on-leash when using shared paths, including 5 metres on either side.

Summary

The engagement responses highlight a strong desire to preserve for the park's existing natural character with trees and birds. Park users value the peaceful environment and respite from the city. The grassed area and playground are used for play but could do with some improvements. Responses reflected the preference to not change the park significantly. The park is currently 'dogs prohibited'. Many park users take dogs to the park. While some would like it to remain 'dogs prohibited' the feedback indicates this is not how the park is used.