

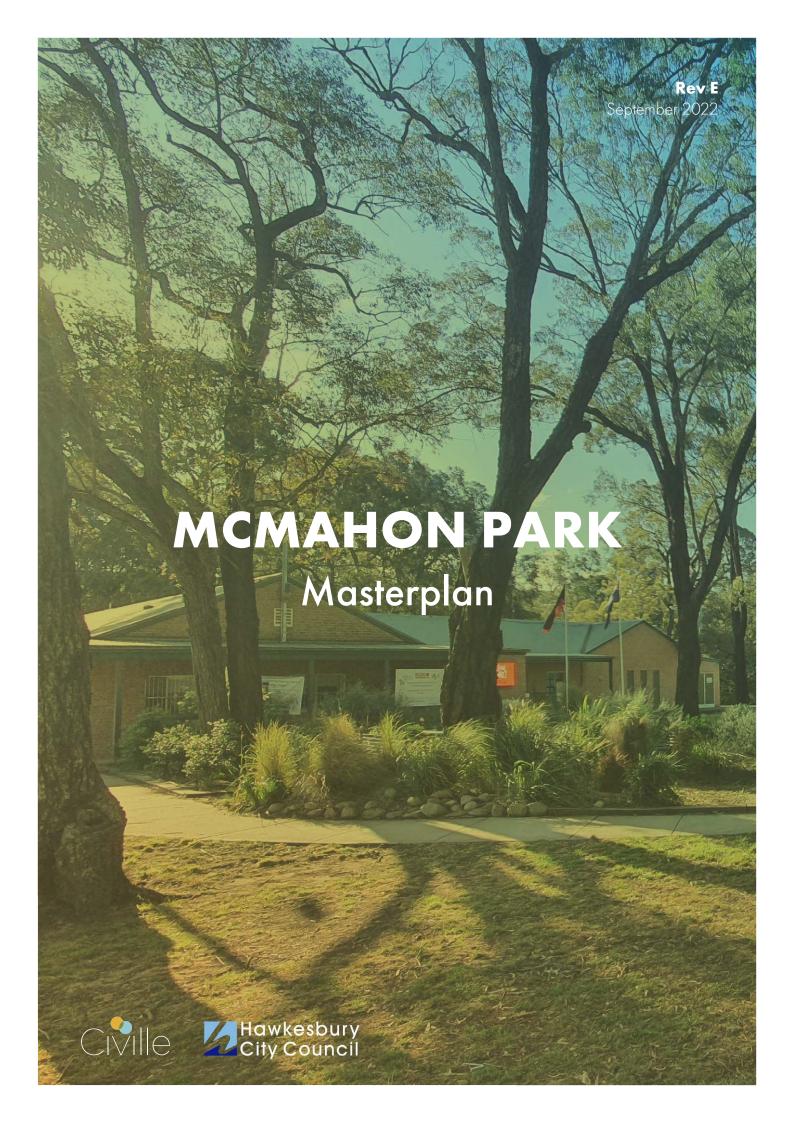
Attachment 1 to Item 172

Draft Masterplan - McMahon Park, Kurrajong

Date of meeting: 11 October 2022

Location: Council Chambers

Time: 6:30 p.m.



Client: Hawkesbury City Council

Project Name: McMahon Park Masterplan & Plan of Management

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MCMAHON PARK

Final Masterplan

Prepared for Hawkesbury City Council 06.09.2022







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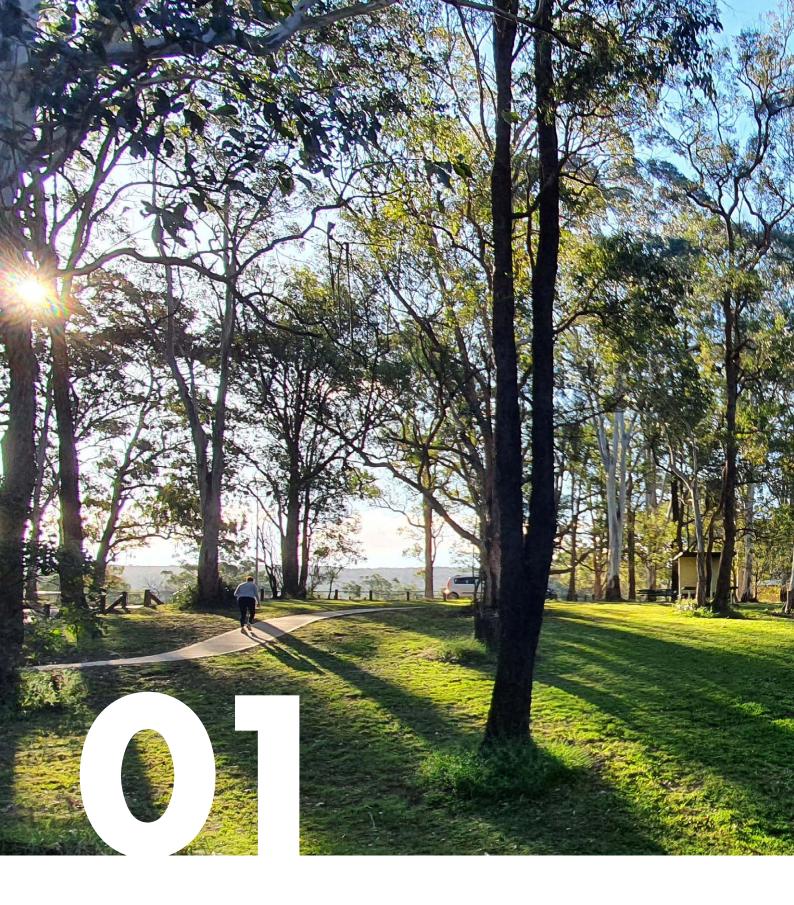
Valued park elements

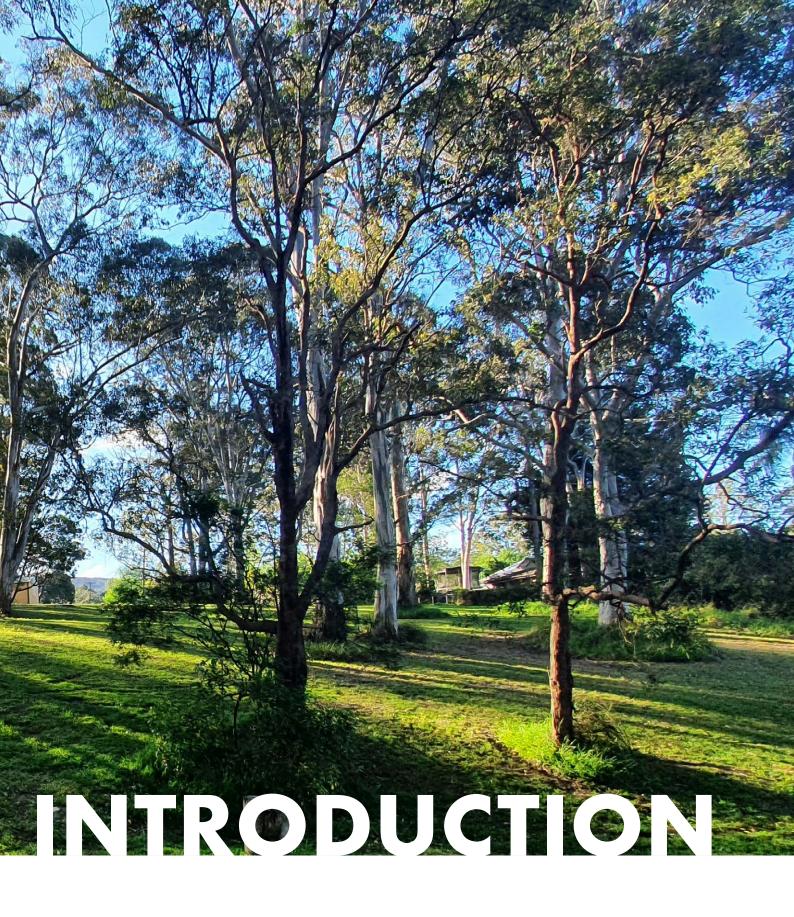
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1.1 BACKGROUND

Site context

McMahon Park is a well-used park with a total area of approximately six hectares, located at the foot of the Blue Mountains in Kurrajong, Hawkesbury Council.

The park is surrounded by beautiful bushland and Little Wheeny Creek to the west, mature native (Eucalyptus) tree species to the east, agricultural land to the south, and residential properties to the north. The space is characterised by its natural features, including the bushland, the creek and the mountains as backdrop.

The park is organised around a sports oval and over the years McMahon Park has been upgraded to include a community centre, pavilion, amenities blocks, playground, equipment storage building and picnic facilities. The park is used by local residents, schools, sport groups, child care centre, and visitors. McMahon Park Management Association (MPMA) are responsible for the management and maintenance of the park.

Masterplan objective

The aim of this Masterplan is to provide direction and strategies to improve the overall amenity of McMahon Park by:

- Providing clarity, consistency and legibility to the site
- Improving the entry and arrival experience for visitors
- Improving accessibility for all users
- Upgrading and future proofing the parklands
- Enhancing ecology and providing sustainability principles.

A Plan of Management (PoM) has also been prepared as a separate document. The PoM and the Masterplan should be read in conjunction with each other.



1.2 HISTORY

The area now known as McMahon Park has a long history as a centre of social significance. The earliest known written reference is found in a 1822 report by the staff of the then Surveyor -General John Oxley, where the area of flat land with permanent water amongst the foothills of the Kurrajong district, is referred to as:

"a sheltered area amongst the tallest of Curryjong (sic) brush where the steep hills form a ring around a flat area bounded on two sides by the clearest of mountain streams."

With the opening of Bells Line of Road in 1841, the area was used for more than 30 years as a resting, watering and feeding area for the many bullock drays travelling over the Blue Mountains to the Western Plains.

In the 1870's it became the site of the Kurrajong Race Course and was being used for this purpose, when Colo Shire Council was established in 1906.

On June 14, 1911, an area of 15 2/3 acres was proclaimed as "Kurrajong Park" and used as a site for public meetings, gymkanas, football, cricket, athletics, picnics and as a destination for tourists from Sydney.

In honour of the late J.E.McMahon, an eminent citizen and long serving member of Colo Shire Council, the park was renamed "McMahon Park" on March 29, 1947.

Since the 1940's, McMahon Park has developed as the natural geographic centre for cultural, social and sporting activities for the local community.







2.1 SITE ANALYSIS

Key qualities

Some of the key qualities of the site that characterise the park

- Existing vegetation, mature trees, and bushland. The natural environment provides a beautiful contrast and addition to the parkland setting.
- The creek and bush tracks
- Bushland interpretation signage
- The oval surrounded by mature trees
- The Blue Mountains backdrop
- Abundance of lawn and natural shade
- Community gardens
- Kurrajong Community Centre

Natural landscape setting

McMahon Park is a precinct surrounded by bushland, a creek and mature native trees. This natural landscape setting is a major asset of the park and future upgrades to the park should be in keeping with this quality.

Community precinct

The Kurrajong Community Centre, amenities building, community gardens, playground, and shelters are located in the northern corner of the site. Having these facilities clustered in an activity hub works well and creates a real heart to the park. The community garden is in good condition and provides a welcoming entry to the building. The spatial organisation and layout of this space could be improved by:

- The picnic shelter and seating could be better integrated into the central part of the park, making it feel connected to the community space.
- The existing space to the north of the playground could be better integrated into the overall space, reinforcing the central community space.
- One of the amenity buildings is no longer used and has a large crack in the wall. Removing this building would open up views towards the bushland and free up this beautiful space.



ed from the north side of the HO







The existing exercise equipment



Native vegetation and lawn along pathway



Little Wheeny Creek



Existing bush tracks & interpretation signage



The oval surrounded by mature trees



Mature native trees



The Blue Mountains backdrop



Shade and lawn under the mature native trees



Well maintained community gardens

- The play space west of the Community Centre is fenced off and along this fence a hedge is planted. This breaks up the parkland space and obstructs views through this area. This area is not well connected to the hall with no windows or outlook over the play space reducing its use by after hours school care.
- The northern aspect of the community hall has a great northern outlook providing good light. This northern outdoor space could be better connected to the park through changes to the levels and enhancing the view to the bushland.

There is an opportunity to restructure this precinct, connect and activate spaces, and provide greater functionality to the spaces.

Arrival experience

Towards the end of McMahons Park Rd, a gate marks the arrival to the park.

Next to the gate is a mailbox and a driveway to a private property. After entering the gate, another two driveways provide access to private properties. The driveways and letter boxes make the arrival experience feel like entering a private property.

An entrance sign is placed metres after the gate and has limited visibility from the entrance.

After entering the park and arriving at the car park, a large utilitarian-garage is visually dominant from both the arrival road and carpark. There is an opportunity to provide greater clarity to the entry space of the park and to improve the arrival experience for visitors.

Existing park amenities

The park provides a range of amenities, including sporting facilities, a community centre, playground, pathways, shelters, BBQs, tables and benches, exercise station, and a community garden. The park has recently undergone some upgrades, including a new loop path and car park extension.

The playground is currently located under existing mature trees, which provide good shade and add to the character of the space.

The playground is situated directly adjacent to the car park. The play equipment is is reaching the end of its useful life and will require upgrading in the future. More diverse and creative play elements could be considered. Upgrading the playground would also provide the opportunity to move it away from the car park and closer to the child care centre, improving its safety and overall use.



The gate and entry signage at arrival of McMahon Park



The shed at the entrance of the car park



The existing playground next to the car park



The existing exercise equipment

Some of the park furniture, including the exercise equipment, picnic benches, tables and shelters could also be upgraded.

Existing parking and driveway

The existing car park is well located close to the community centre, amenities and sports field. There is an opportunity to soften this space by providing new planting along the car park.

East of the sports oval, an informal driveway connects to a 'overflow' parking space under the mature trees. This area extends to the site boundary on the south. This informal parking area divides the space and makes this area unusable for other uses. By rationalising this area for parking, a section of the park could be reinstated as parkland.

Along the main driveway and throughout the park, different fencing types have been placed, which clutters and divides the park.

The loop walk is a great feature of the park and is well used by a diverse part of the community. The pathway crosses the car park and driveway at several locations, creating potential points of conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.

One of the challenges this masterplan will address, is providing additional parking spaces, while also enhancing the quality of the park and minimising potential conflict between vehicles and park users, including pedestrians and children using the footpaths.

Park edges

The eastern and western boundaries of the site are 'natural' and hardly noticeable. The northern boundary feels more residential and changes the park's character. Softening this edge and providing additional native vegetation could buffer this edge and make the park feel more coherent, by increasing the feeling of being a public space

To the south, the site boundary is marked by a barbed-wire fence. This fence type is not as safe for park users and similar to the northern edge, additional planting could soften this edge.



The existing car par



The area currently informally used as overflow car park



Residential tences + tootpath crossing the car park



Rusty barbed wire fence along the footpath (south of park)





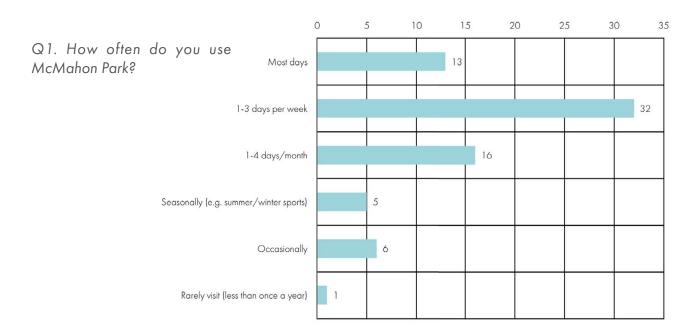
3.1 SURVEY SUMMARY

In 2020, Hawkesbury City Council undertook community consultation for McMahon Park and received 73 submissions to their online 'Have Your Say' survey.

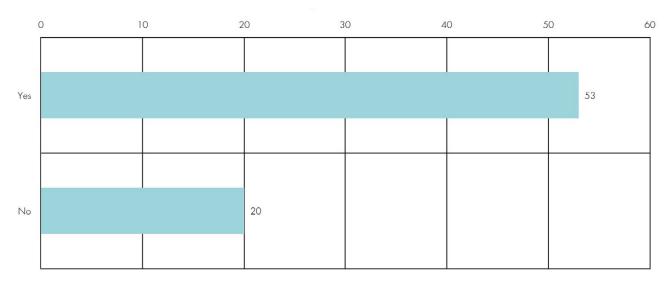
This section provides a summary of the survey results. The survey found that:

- about 60% of the respondents used the park on a weekly basis
- about 70% of the respondents live in Kurrajong

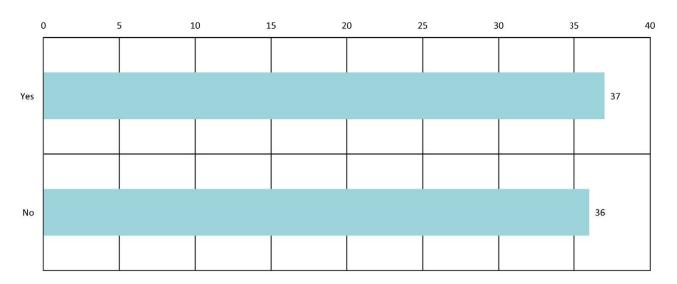
- about 50% of the respondents used organised sport or activities at the park
- about 70% of the respondents drive to the park
- the walking, tracks, bushland, playground, picnic shelters and sports facilities were the most valued facilities
- about 70% valued the park extremely highly
- about 5% of responded identified as having a disability.



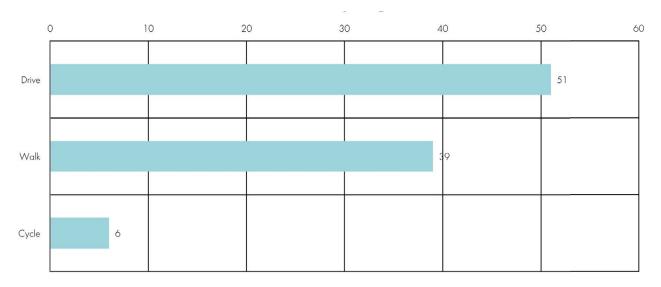
Q2. Do you live in Kurrajong?



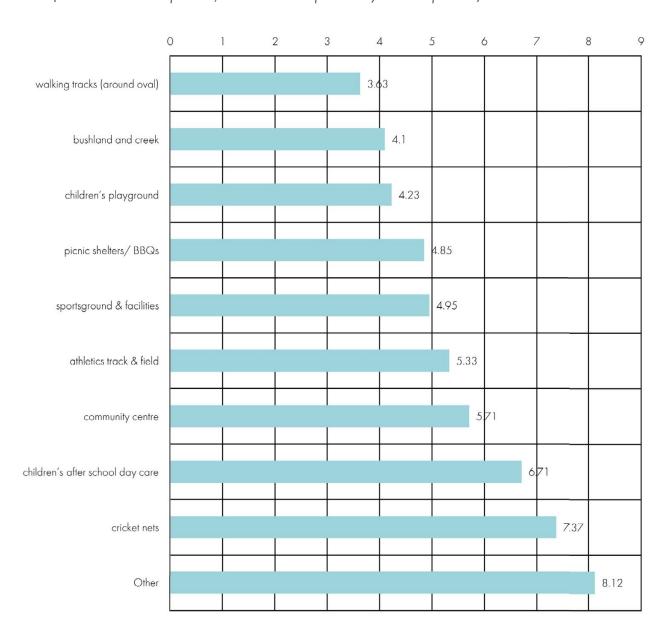
Q3. Do you, or any member of your family, attend any regular community programs, functions, events or sporting fixtures in the park (e.g. HCOS after school care, Little Athletics, cricket, soccer, or pilates)?



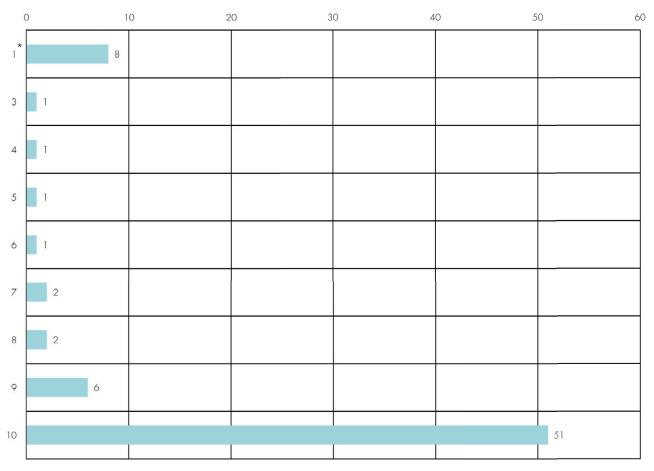
Q4. How do you get to McMahon Park?



Q5. Which of the park's recreational spaces or facilities do you use and/or enjoy the most? Please number items (where 1 = most important, and 10 = least preferred/least important)?

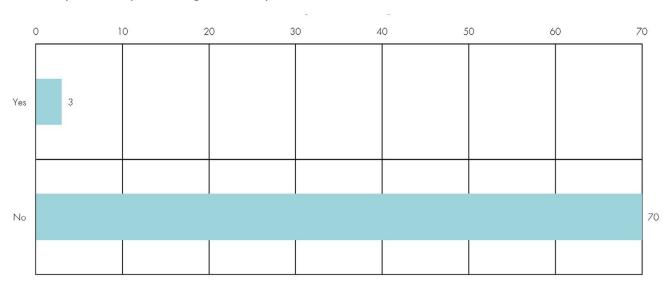


Q6. How would you rate McMahon Park's importance to the local community on a scale of 1-10 (1 = not important and 10 = extremely important)?



^{*}note that most people who rated the park with a 1 (not important), provided comments indicating they highly value the park. In the previous question a ranking of 1 was 'most important', the opposite of this question, which might have confused people.

Q7. Do you identify as having a disability?



3.2 SURVEY COMMENTS

The online survey included some open questions to which the community could provide their comments. These comments illustrate the valued qualities of the park that should be retained, as well as the opportunities for improvement. Of all comments and written submissions received, several recurring themes can be identified.

Below a summary of the community's feedback is provided.

Valued park elements

Of the 73 submissions, 51 people ranked the park with a 10/10 (extremely important). In the provided comments, the following elements, character, and uses in particular were highly valued.

A natural, quiet and peaceful park

The community highly values the natural environment that characterises the park and sees this as drawcard for the area. The creek, the bushland, the large trees and the walking tracks are key elements of the park that the community love. This quiet and peaceful park is also valued for its passive recreation opportunities.

Preservation of this natural quality and quiet, peaceful atmosphere is critical for McMahon Park. New park upgrades should not detract from these qualities.

Heart of the local community

Several people described the park as the heart, or backbone, of the local community. The park is a place to gather and meet people. People of all ages visit and use the park.

The childcare centre and the Hawkesbury Community Outreach Service (HCOS) contribute to the park being important for the local community.

Great sporting facilities

The available sporting facilities of the park attract many users to the park. It was mentioned that its the largest and best sporting facility west of the Hawkesbury River (in the area) and attracts many users, including schools who use the park for their school carnivals.

Additional suggestions

As part of the online survey the community was also asked to provide additional comments and suggestions for improvement of McMahon Park.

The following key park improvements were identified:

- Playground upgrade: it was suggested to upgrade and expand the existing playground, consider water and adventure play, and move the playground away from the car park.
- Provide youth facilities: the park lacks recreational opportunities for teenagers and young adults. It was suggested to provide youth facilities to also cater to this group of the community.
- Improved parking: the overflow carpark could be rationalised and more parking spaces could be realised.
- Exercise stations upgrade: the existing exercise stations need an upgrade. It was suggested that they were moved away from the driveway and carpark. Several people mentioned it would be good to have several fitness stations along the walking track around the oval.
- Improved access: for both vehicles and pedestrians access and connectivity into the park could be improved. The entrance experience could be improved, by providing a wider driveway, accessible footpaths, and clear entrance and information signage. It was also suggested to close the park's gate at night to avoid cars entering and doing burn-outs.
- General upgrade and maintenance of park facilities, such as shelters, BBQs, cricket nets, toilet blocks, tables, benches, lighting and security, bush track maintenance, removal of barbed wire fence and weed control in bushland.
- Provide new park facilities: new park facilities were suggested, including more rubbish bins, dog waste bags and bins, shelters and BBQ areas, seating, bubblers with dog bowls, basketball hoops, interpretation / information signage about the park's history, and sustainability initiatives.







4.1 RESTRUCTURE THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The spaces around the Community Centre precinct could be enhanced through improved connectivity and structure. It is proposed to restructure, activate and connect this precinct. A new path structure provides connectivity, while also clearly defining the spaces. The spaces provide flexibility in how they are programmed.

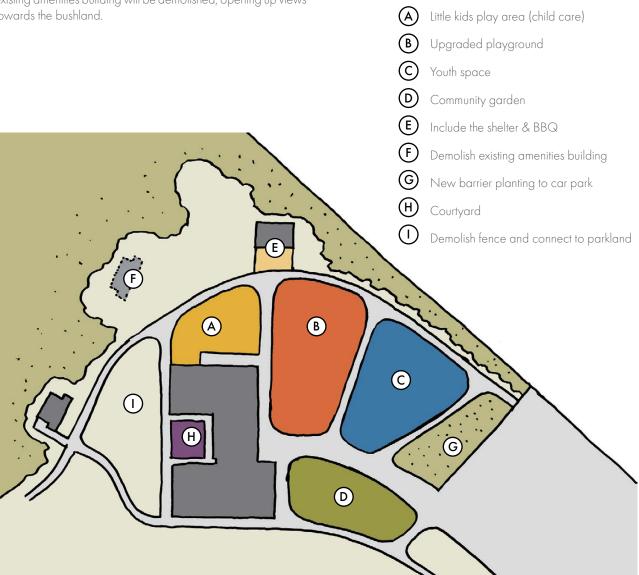
There is an opportunity to provide a play space for younger children directly connected to the child care facility. An upgraded playground and new youth play area could be provided for older kids and teenagers.

The new spatial structure also incorporates the existing shelter into the composition, providing a space for people to gather, while the kids use the adjacent playground. The most northern existing amenities building will be demolished, opening up views towards the bushland.

New vegetation is proposed between the playspaces and the car park, which would improve safety and amenity of the space. Native vegetation is also proposed along the existing property boundary, softening the edge and providing a backdrop for the park.

With the provision of the new play space, the lawn area west of the building could be reconnected to the parklands, by removing the fence and clutter in this space.

The space within the building can be transformed into a courtyard for the building.



4.2 PARKING & ARRIVAL EXPERIENCE

Parking has been identified as an issue and the survey identified most people drive to the park. Currently during peak demand people are parking informally to the south of the oval reducing the amenity of the park and impacting on trees and the use of the space. A key strategy for the park is to formalise the parking to enhance the overall park.

Extend existing car park

The existing car park has 32 parking spaces, including 1 accessible parking space. It is proposed to extend the existing car park to provide an additional 16 spaces. It could be considered to relocate the existing shed from its prominent central position to the back of the car park, which would improve the entry experience, as sigh-lines would be opened up.

New planting along the car park softens the area and would be more in keeping with the natural character of the park.

Formalise the overflow car park

It is also proposed to formalise the overflow car park. In principle, there are two options:

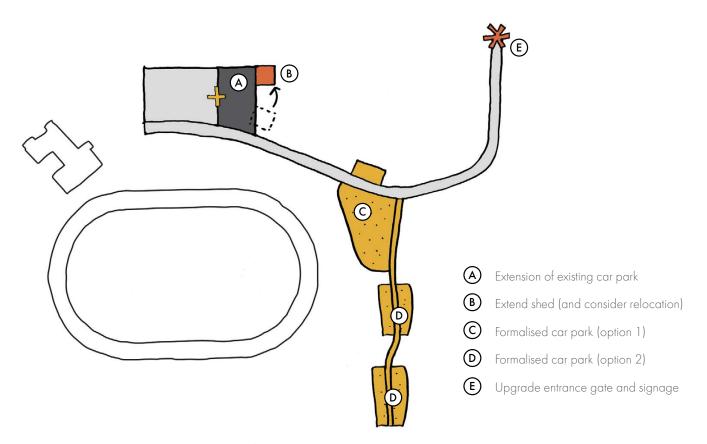
- Option 1 is to use the space directly south of the driveway.
 providing approximately an additional 44 car parking spaces. The area to the south of this parking area can be revegetated and incorporated in the parkland.
- Option 2 is to formlise the car park under the existing trees along a driveway. This option would provide approximately 58 spaces. A safe pedestrian crossing over the car park would be required in this option, as the loop path crosses the car park.

During next design stages, careful consideration should be given to the integratino of the car park amongst the existing trees, to minimse impacts to the trees. A detailed survey and arborist assessment should be prepared to enable this.

Improve the arrival experience

To improve the arrival experience, it is proposed to upgrade the entry 'portal'.

A new entrance sign at the gate could be provided to clearly mark the entrance and welcome visitors to the park. This could include information on the park's history. A new gate could be provided to close the park at night.



4.3 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The new loop

The existing concrete loop path crosses the driveway, the overflow car park and the main car park, reducing its safety particularly for young children. It is proposed to providing a new section of pathway that creates a new loop that does not require pedestrians to cross any roads. This additional pathway improves connectivity throughout the park and improves parental supervision, as the loop is mostly visible from the oval.

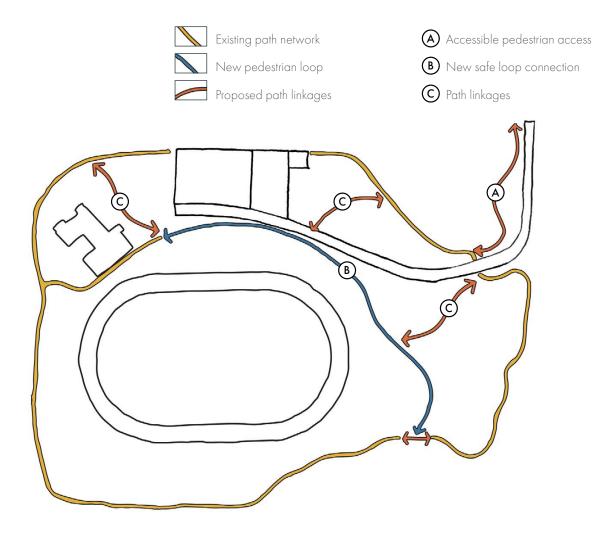
Due to limited space between the long-jump and the driveway, it might be required to relocate the fence, or remove the sandpit on the northern side of the long-jump. The long-jump also has a sandpit on the southern side.

Pedestrian access

In the existing situation, no accessible pathways are provided into the park. It is proposed to provide a new accessible pathway from the entrance to the existing path network.

Path linkages

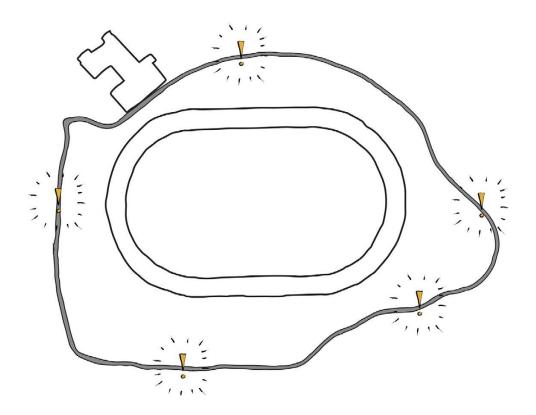
The existing pathways from the car park will be retained, providing access to and from the car park. New path linkages could further improve connectivity and accessibility throughout the park.



4.4 ACTIVATE THE LOOP

The community raised the idea to activate the loop around the oval by providing a range of exercise stations along the pathway. This strategy would provide the opportunity to upgrade the existing exercise stations south of the car park, while also providing activation around the oval and throughout the park.

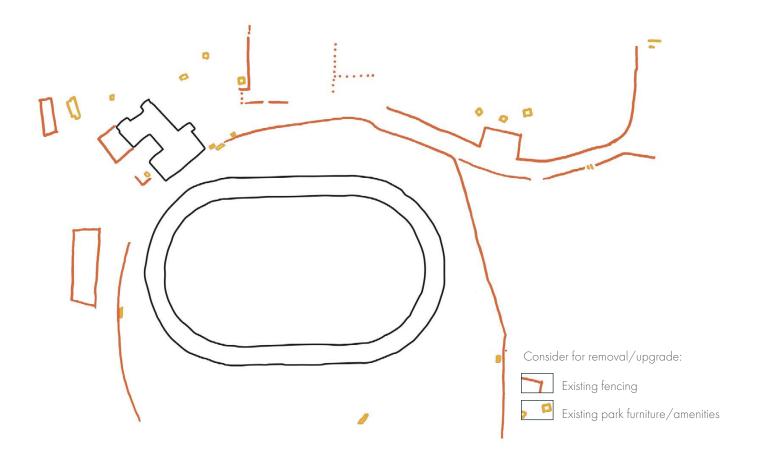
People can incorporate the fitness equipment in their exercise around the oval.



4.5 Declutter the park

Throughout the park different types and styles of fences, bollards, benches, tables, shelters and bins are scattered around. The arrangement of the park furniture could be rationalised and the broad palette of styles and materials could be simplified to be more consistent.

Where possible, fencing can be removed, which would open up the parkland. The timber posts and steel wire fencing can be replaced by boulders and dense barrier vegetation, which would better suit the natural look and feel of the park. The old shelters and benches can be demolished and new benches, tables and shelters could be provided.



4.6 SOFTEN THE EDGES 4.7 BUSHCARE

The northern side of the park borders the back fences of private properties. New native vegetation could be planted along the fence-line to soften the boundary and to create a more natural looking edge to the park in keeping with the bushland character of the site.

Overhead powerlines run above this space, limiting the possibility of planting trees and restricting vegetation to 4m in height.

A barbed wire fence marks the southern border of the park. As the area to the south of this is in agricultural use, it may not be possible to replace the barbed wire fence. Similar to the northern boundary, it is proposed to plant native vegetation to soften this edge and to enclose the park space.

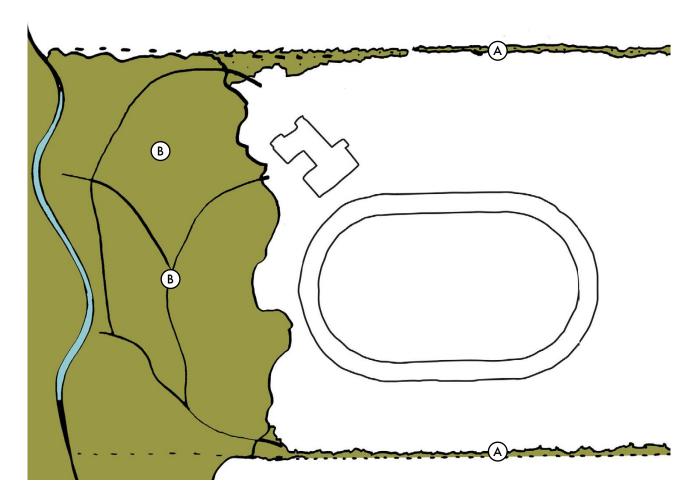
The native bush vegetation and Little Wheeny Creek to the west of the park is one of the community's most valued aspects of the area.

New tracks are being created as visitors wander through the bushland. This can negatively impact flora and fauna, while also causing erosion problems.

It is proposed to formalise trails, provide signage, wayfinding and indigenous interpretation, and implement erosion control measures.

To maintain the recreational and ecological values of this pocket of native vegetation, ongoing bush care is proposed.

- A Soften park edges
 - B) Bushcare, erosion control and formalised trails



4.8 Kurrajong Community Centre upgrades

There is increased demand for services provided in the Kurrajong Community Centre, including services offered by HCOS. The demand for OOSH places at the centre has increased and the current space has reached its capacity.

Strategies have been developed to guide future upgrades and expansions of the Community Centre, while also improving the building's and the park's amenity, optimising the use of the building's northern aspect, and efficiently using the existing available space.

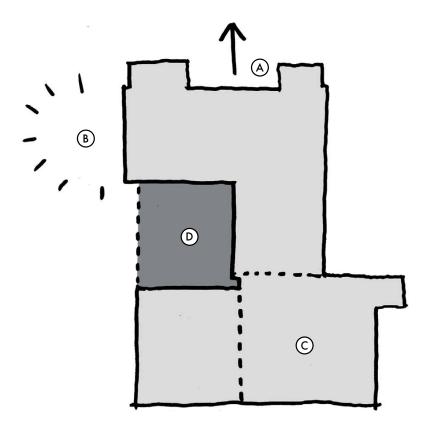
There is an opportunity utilise the north facing aspect of the building and provide a junior's play space directly connected to OOSH. The new play space would also be accessible for the general public. The existing fenced lawn west of the building has poor visual connections to the building. The provision of the new play

space provides the opportunity to reconnect this space to the parklands, by removing the fence and clutter in this space.

Before considering further building expansions, it is proposed to redesign the existing building's interior office areas for an efficient use of space and through more efficient storage space.

It is preferred to use the space between the north and south arms of the building for potential future building expansion. This space at present is not well used and there is a preference to expand the building within its current footprint rather than further expanding into the park.

For any future works to the building, it is recommended to engage an architect to further develop the strategies for the building upgrades.



- (A) Connect to the north facing aspect
- (B) Reconnect the lawn to the parklands
- © Efficiently use interior office areas
- D Potential future building expansion
- E Engage an architect to further develop the strategies

4.9 Staged approach

The Masterplan sets out long-term aspirations, provides a framework and vision for future developments, and is a representation of the community's wishes and needs for McMahon Park.

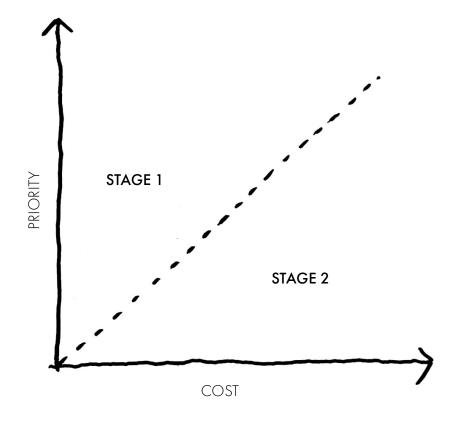
Some of the proposed upgrades might be achievable with the available funds, while other works might require substantial funding, which might not currently be available.

A staged approach is proposed, which takes into account the cost and priority of the proposed upgrades.

Stage 1 works include upgrades to the park that have a high priority and/or low cost. These works can gradually be realised over the next 5 years and can be funded through existing funding mechanisms.

Stage 2 includes the longer term works with lower priority and/or higher costs. These proposed upgrades will require additional funding, for example through state grants. The Masterplan will assist Council in future grant applications.

Providing the staged approach adds flexibility to the plan and helps both Council and MPMA to prioritise the upgrades to the park.







5.1 Overview

Masterplan

This section provides an overview of the Masterplan for McMahon Park. The Masterplan is the result of the site analysis, community consultation, and strategies for McMahon Park.

The nine strategies, as discussed in the previous section, are implemented in the Masterplan and provide a framework for future upgrades to the park. The annotated plan on this page provides an overview of the design proposal.

Proposed 'Stage 1' works are shown on the next pages.

Detailed plans are provided for the western and eastern parts of the park, including precedent images to illustrate opportunities and the look and feel of proposed upgrades and interventions.

Materials, finishes, and planting

To ensure clarity, consistency, and legibility throughout the site, a simple and consistent materials, finishes, and planting palette should be used. Proposed selection of materials should connect to the natural character of the site, adopt materials and colours sympathetic to the natural environment, and preferably local materials are used.

A family of park furniture should be selected, to provide consistency of colours, materials and styles.

Legend

- A Upgrade/restore entrance 'portal' & new gate
- (B) New entrance pathway
- © Formalise overflow parking
- D Extend existing car park
- E Upgraded community precinct
- F Additional loop path
- G Exercise stations (active the loop)
- H New/upgraded parkland
- Park benches & picnic table settings
- (J) Formalise bush tracks and wayfinding
- New buffer planting / bush regeneration
- (L) Extended three bay garage
- M Possible future relocation of garage





5.2 Stage 1 Masterplan

The masterplan sets out a framework for future upgrades to the park, in line with the community's wishes and needs. Some of the proposed upgrades to the park are aspirational and would require substantial funding, which might not be readily available.

The plan on this page show 'stage 1' works, which the community and MPMA have indicated as priorities. Subject to funding, these works could gradually be constructed over time.

Some of the key elements indicated as stage 1 works include:

- The extended and formalised car parking spaces
- The extended garage
- The additional loop path (note: to construct this path, the northern sandpit of the long-jump might need to be removed. Alternatively, some cut/fill might be required to make the levels work).
- Pedestrian link at community centre with ping-pong table(s)
- New exercise stations along the loop

For the design of the proposed elements, a detailed survey will be required, as well as an arborist assessment, to ensure impact on existing trees is kept to a minimum

The complete overview of proposed stage 1 works is outlined in the legend below and on the plan.

Legend

A Upgrade/restore entrance 'portal' & new gate

B Extend existing car park

© Formalise overflow parking

D New pedestrian link and ping-pong tables

E Additional loop path

F Exercise stations (active the loop)

G Formalise bush tracks and wayfinding

H New buffer planting and seating wall

Existing garage + extension (three bay garage)

Removal northern sandpit long-jump

(K) Possible future relocation of garage







5.3 McMahon Park east

Parking

It is proposed to expand the existing car park and provide an additional 14 parking spaces. It is also proposed to formalise the overflow parking area to provide an additional 38 car parking spaces as well as an additional 6 car parking spaces along the existing entrance road. By concentrating the overflow parking in a number of defined spaces, the south-western corner of the park is 'unlocked' for other uses, while also minimising impacts on existing trees. New trees at the edges of the car park will provide additional shade. New trees along east of the garage will screen the garage building and car park from the access driveway.

Activated space

The space south of the formalised overflow car park could be activated for recreation. A new path structure is proposed, as well as picnic facilities, nature play elements, and native planting.

It is proposed to regenerate the south western part of the site and the boundaries, to soften the spaces, improve the ecological value of the area, and enhance the natural character of the park.

Access & movement

To improve access, movement and the arrival experience, it is proposed to upgrade the entry 'portal'. A new entrance sign at the gate could be provided to clearly mark the entrance and welcome visitors to the park. This could include information on the park's history. A new gate is proposed to allow the park to be closed at night.

A new accessible pathway would provide pedestrian access into the park and a new path structure would increase access and movement throughout the park.

A new section of pathway would create a new loop that does not require pedestrians to cross any roads. This additional pathway improves connectivity throughout the park and improves overall safety, particularly as the loop is mostly visible from the oval and would allow, for example. young children to do a loop without having to cross any roads or car park areas..



Nature & adventure play



Shelters



Formalised & extended car parking with shade trees



Path network and new pedestrian loop path



Upgraded wayfinding & signage



Revegetate and regenerate degraded and compacted areas



5.4 The community centre

It is proposed to restructure, activate and connect the HCOS precinct. A new path structure provides connectivity, while also clearly defining the spaces. The spaces provide flexibility in how they are programmed.

There is an opportunity to provide a junior's play space directly connected to the community centre and replacing the existing play space, which has poor visual connection from the building. With the provision of the new play space, the lawn area west of the HCOS building could be reconnected to the parklands, by removing the fence and clutter in this space. A new fence & gate could be placed around the junior's play space, if it was required for safety. An upgraded children's playground and new youth play area is proposed for older kids and teenagers.

The space within the building could be transformed into a courtyard for the building. This space could also be used for potential future building expansion. It is proposed to redesign the existing building's interior office areas for an efficient use of space, before further expanding the building.

The new spatial structure also incorporates the existing picnic shelter into the composition, providing a space for people to gather, which also provides a good connection to the proposed playground.

New vegetation is proposed along the fence-line and along the car park, which would soften the spaces and improve amenity.

It is also proposed to formalise trails, provide signage, wayfinding and indigenous interpretation, and implement erosion control measures in the bushland area to the west of the park. To maintain the recreational and ecological values of this pocket of native vegetation, ongoing bush care is proposed.

It is proposed to activate the loop around the oval by providing a range of exercise stations along the pathway. The existing exercise stations south of the car park could be removed or upgraded with new fitness equipment.



Upgraded playground









Native vegetation along fence and car park



Exercise equipment along the loop

