



Elder Smith Reserve Netball Facility Port Melbourne – Community Engagement Summary Report

May 2023





Executive Summary

With support from the Victorian Government, Council has an opportunity to develop a new netball facility at Elder Smith Reserve, Port Melbourne, inclusive:

- Four (4) outdoor netball courts with sports lighting
- A pavilion; and
- On-site car parking.

The project was endorsed by [Council resolution on 1 December 2021](#).

This document has been compiled following the conclusion of the initial round of community engagement (consultation), 27 February to 24 March 2023.

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the draft concept design along with questions regarding current usage and travel modes. Contributions could be made via the project Have Your Say page, direct email and during on-site pop-up sessions. Of the responses received the following key themes were identified:

- **Provision of netball facilities** was the most common theme, referenced 182 (47%) times. Of this 68% of responses were in favour of the proposed development, while 32% raised concerns.
- **Impacts to traffic and parking** was referenced 68 times (18%). 31% considered the inclusion of on-site parking to be of benefit, while 69% expressed concerns regarding traffic and parking.
- **Site access and safety** was referenced 47 times (12% of responses). Responses received all expressed concerns about safe site access and the need for a formalised crossing point over Williamstown Road.

When asked about their expected modes of travel to Elder Smith Reserve most respondents (69%) indicated active travel (i.e. walking, cycling, etc.).

- **Location** of the development was referenced 40 times (10%). Ten (10) or 25% of these responses were in favour of the location, while 30 or 75% identified concerns with the project location.

When asked if they currently use Elder Smith Reserve, 99 (74%) of survey participants answered no. 34 survey participants (26%) and a further five (5) participants who attended the on-site pop up at Elder Smith Reserve reported they currently visit the Reserve.

- 24 comments (6%) referenced **lighting** in their response. Of this 67% were supportive of the inclusion of lighting, while the remaining 33% raised concerns.
- There were an additional 27 responses (7%) that fell outside of the key themes identified above and have been categorised as **other** and recorded as a mixed or neutral response.

Information received from the community during this consultation period will be considered to assist with progressing the design.

Every effort has been made by the authors of this document to represent accurately participant feedback and insights.



Introduction

Project background

Thanks to \$2M in Victorian Government funding Council has an opportunity to develop a new netball facility at Elder Smith Reserve, Port Melbourne. The facility will support the growth of netball and improve the provision for female led sports within the municipality.

Elder Smith Reserve is close to the existing home of the Port Melbourne Netball Club, at RF Julier Reserve, and will connect with the future Prohasky Reserve sporting precinct, part of the Fishermans Bend urban renewal.

The project was endorsed by [Council resolution on 1 December 2021](#).

The proposed redevelopment Includes:

- Four outdoor netball courts with sports lighting
- A pavilion including new player and umpire change rooms that are inclusive for all, a first aid room, kitchen, social space and accessible public toilets; and
- On-site car parking.

Community consultation seeking feedback on the concept design was held over February/March 2023. Information received from the community during this consultation period is presented below and will be used to assist with progressing the design.

Every effort has been made by the authors of this document to represent accurately participant feedback and insights.

What we set out to achieve

The purpose of the engagement project was to:

- Build an understanding of the broad design requirements for the proposed netball facility to create a facility that aligns with how the community will use the space
- Build an understanding of participants' current use of Elder Smith Reserve; and
- Build an understanding of existing and future travel habits to inform the advocacy for a formalised crossing over Williamstown Road.

Engagement questions

Participants were asked the following questions:

- Do you currently visit Elder Smith Reserve?
- What do you do when you visit Elder Smith Reserve?
- What type of new amenities would you like to see around Elder Smith Reserve?
- How do you anticipate travelling to Elder Smith Reserve?
- Do you have any comments about the concept design?
- Do you currently use RF Julier Reserve for netball?; and
- How do you travel to RF Julier Reserve for netball?

Participants were also asked to respond to a range of demographic questions, including:

- Age bracket
- Gender; and
- Suburb.



Figure 1: Elder Smith Reserve – Proposed Netball Facility Concept ©nearmap



What we did

Engagement activities

The following engagement activities were undertaken during this project:

- An online survey hosted on Council's Have your Say project page; and
- Two (2) community place-based pop-ups held on-site, one (1) at RF Julier Reserve and one (1) at Elder Smith Reserve.

Feedback was sought from the broader community, as well as attendees onsite at Elder Smith and RF Julier Reserves.

Participation

Participation snapshot:

- 897 page views ((re)loading of a webpage) of the Have Your Say page
- 618 visits (page visits from an external link) to the Have Your Say page by 466 visitors
- 135 survey contributions were received from 121 Contributors, and
- 17 people following the project page.

A paid social media campaign was run on Facebook, the result of this campaign is as follows:

- Reach (total number of views): 4,569
- Landing page views (page visits from link clicks): 74; and
- Impressions (number of times the content was displayed): 16,108.

Unpaid social media posts on the City of Port Phillip's Facebook and Instagram accounts, attracted the following engagement:

- Facebook (14,000 followers): seven (7) reactions and one (1) share; and
- Instagram (6,754 followers): seven (7) reactions.

Strategies to support participation

Community participation was supported through the following initiatives:

- **Communications Campaign:** run through the City of Port Phillip. This included promotion on Council's corporate channels and social media as well as signage at the site.
- **Dedicated Project Page:** a dedicated project page was created on Council's Have Your Say, a consistent location for the community to access information and participation via the survey.
- **Site activation:** two (2) on-site pops were completed, one (1) at RF Julier Reserve and one (1) at Elder Smith Reserve on 9th and 20th March respectively.
- **Postcard letterbox drop:** to residents and businesses south of Williamstown Road within approximately 500 m of the reserve.
- **Social media posts:** on Council's Facebook and Instagram pages.
- **Council's Newsletters:** Divercity and Have Your Say newsletters.

Who we heard from

Age of participants

The highest represented age group of participants was 35 – 49 years, 63 participants or 47% of total participants. This contrasts with the demographics of the municipality, where 35 – 49-year-olds make up 25.4% of the City of Port Phillip's population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing 2021).

The two second highest represented age groups were 50 – 59 years (33 participants or 25%) and 25 – 34 years (16 participants or 12%).

A breakdown of participants' age groups can be seen in the chart below.

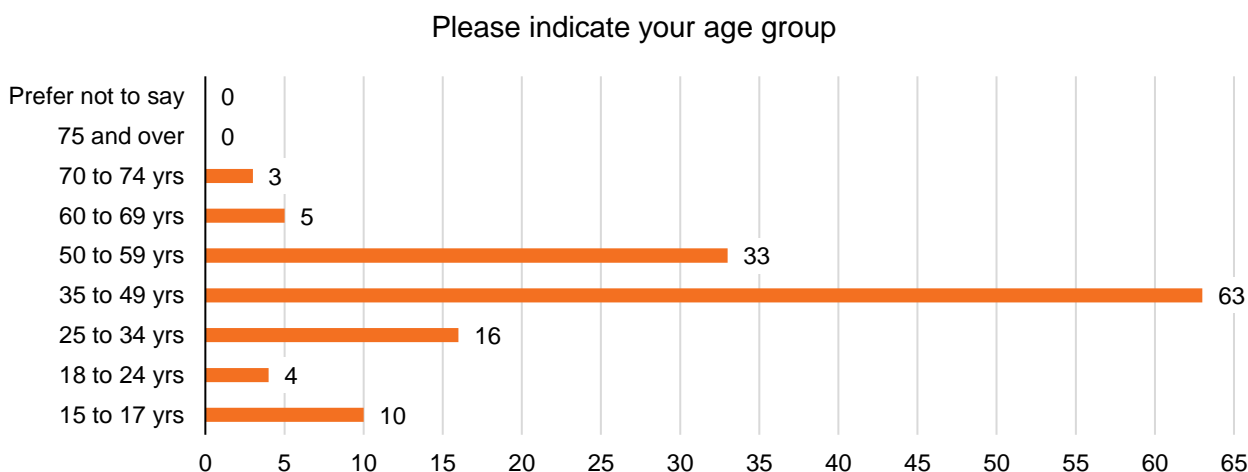


Figure 2: Participant age groups



Gender of participants

98% of participants identified their gender, with 2% of participants saying they preferred not to say. Of those participants who identified their gender, 78% (104 participants) reported to identify as a woman or female and 20% (27 participants) identified as a man or male.

A breakdown of participants' gender can be seen in the chart below.

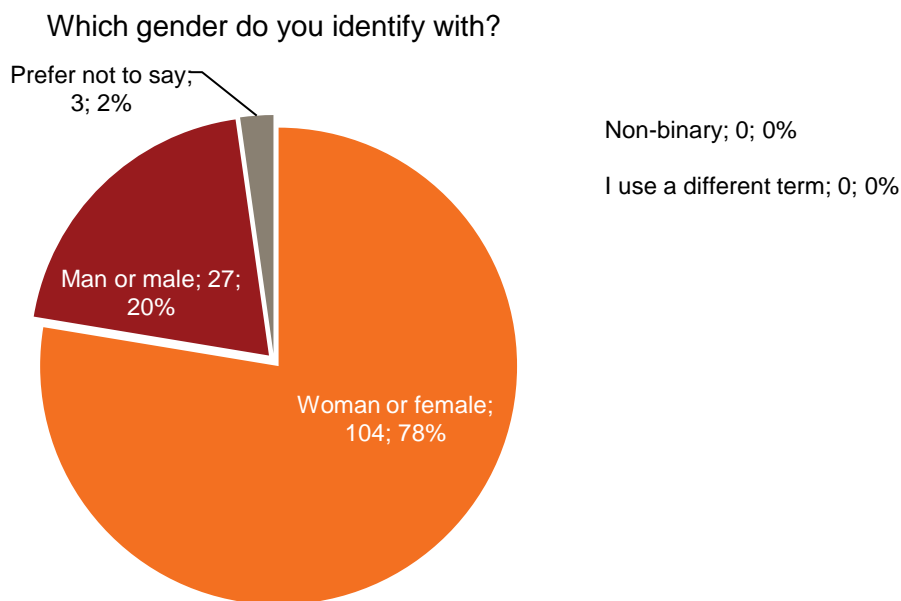


Figure 3: Participant gender

Participants by suburb

Participants were asked which suburb they lived in, with the majority of participants (76%, 101 participants) identifying that they lived in Port Melbourne. Five (5) other suburbs within the City of Port Phillip were represented, with these numbers shown in the chart below. A further eight (8) participants said they lived in other suburbs outside of the City of Port Phillip. Three (3) participants preferred not to identify their suburb.

What is your residential suburb?

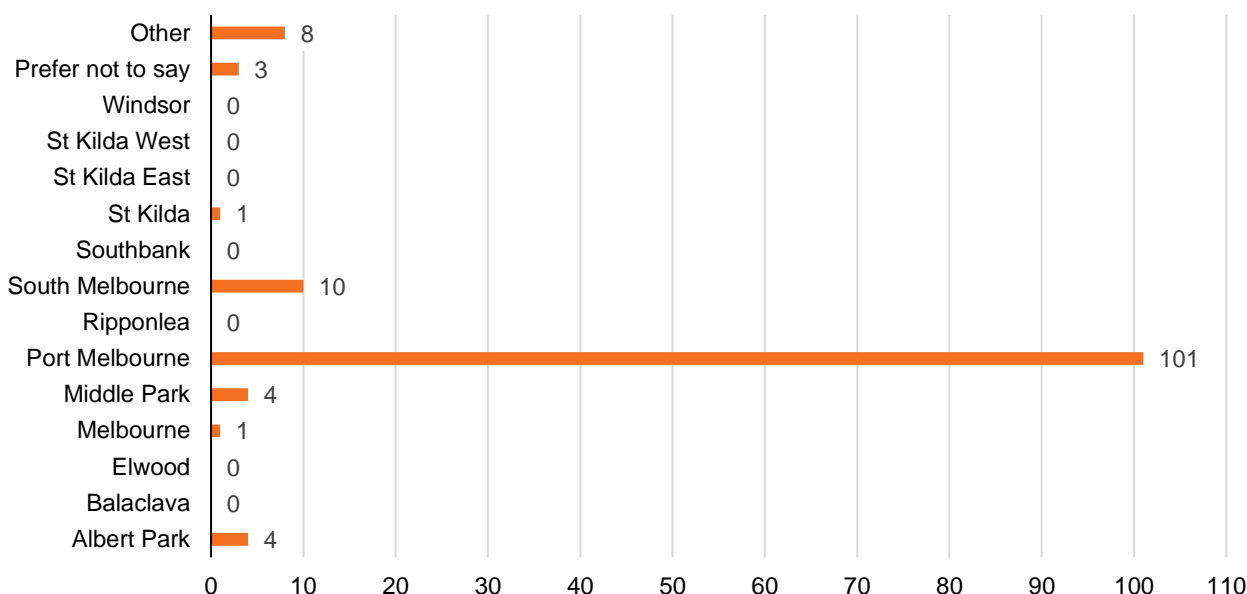
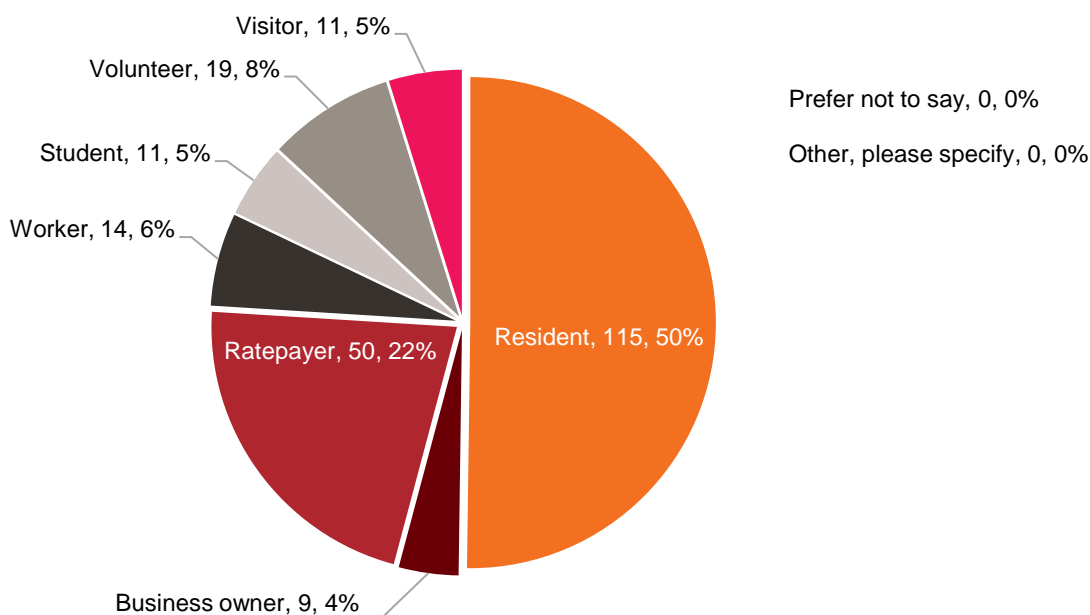


Figure 4: Participants' suburbs

Participant connection to the City of Port Phillip

Participants were asked to describe their connection to the City of Port Phillip. The highest reported response (50%, 115 responses) being a resident, followed by ratepayer (22%, 50 responses). 19 (8%) of responses identified as a volunteer while 14 (6%) as a worker within the municipality. Student and visitor received 11 (5%) of responses respectively.

Which of the following describes your connection to the City of Port Phillip?



What we heard

Participants were asked if they had any comments about the concept design presented, refer to Figure 1. A range of responses were reported. Key themes that arose from this question are tabulated below, including frequency of themes (shown in brackets) and extracts from comments received.

Table 1: Consultation themes

Theme	% of Responses	Feedback
Provision of netball facilities	47%	OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Dedicated netball facility (23) ✓ Safe and fit-for-purpose netball facilities (59) ✓ Support existing netball clubs and future growth associated with redevelopment of the Fishermans Bend area (24) ✓ Support informal community use (1) ✓ Create an opportunity to host competition netball (2) ✓ Provide job opportunities for local youth (4) ✓ Investment in female dominant sport (6) ✓ Free up existing courts at RF Julier Reserve for basketball use (4) <p><i>"It is fantastic to finally have a modern facility for all the netballers in the community. Julier reserve has been untenable for years. The club rooms are horrible and the toilet facilities unsafe."</i></p> <p><i>"Great to see a Netball ONLY dedicated space for the growing number of players in the City of Port Phillip."</i></p> <p><i>"I think it's a great idea and will be well received by the community. The growth of the Port Melbourne netball club has been significant it's well run and respected. These new courts will give the club the ability to take the club to the next level and provide grassroots netball to the surrounding suburbs."</i></p>
		CONCERNS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Netball only facility. Should provide for multiple uses/ user groups (10) ✗ Excessive development for usage hours (11) ✗ Facility type not inclusive to all of community (8) ✗ Loss of green space, mature trees, and biodiversity (24) ✗ Paving permeable surface and impacts to flooding and heat island (7) <p><i>"So much space for single-purpose (one sport) facilities would be a waste."</i></p> <p><i>"Please keep our green space - don't turn it in to these netball courts."</i></p> <p><i>"Should be an inclusive not exclusive development, proposal is limiting and appears to be only for netballers."</i></p>

Theme	% of Responses	Feedback
Impacts to traffic and parking	18%	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Addition of carparking (21) <p><i>"On-site parking included on the plans is welcomed."</i></p> <p><i>"On-site parking a necessity to ensure ease and convenience of use."</i></p> <p>CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Insufficient number of on-site car spaces, considering current and future club growth (23) ✗ On-site carpark visible from the road (1) ✗ Impacts of headlights on adjacent residents from cars existing on-site parking (3) ✗ Truck/freight route associated with dock and container adjacent yard (6) ✗ Introducing additional traffic to the area and impacts to traffic flow (14) <p><i>"I am concerned that there isn't a lot of parking on the concept plan & needs to be increased. When Melbourne grammar use their football ground on Saturdays & some other times during the year, Williamstown Road parking is very limited due to buses, spectators/families attending. Trucks park along Williamstown Rd to get food at the shops & also at times trucks line up on Williamstown road to queue to get into the container depot on Prohasky St."</i></p> <p><i>"The traffic backs up there with all the trucks constantly. The new houses being built nearby will cause even more traffic and backed up traffic."</i></p>
Site access and safety	12%	<p>CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Lack of formalised crossing/intersection in proximity over Williamstown Road (25) ✗ Concerns about how pedestrians (children) will access the facility (14) ✗ Truck/freight route associated with dock and adjacent container yard (8) <p><i>"Traffic lights/pedestrian lights across Williamstown Road would be very important. Lots of kids will walk/ride from garden city and traffic lights will make it much safer to cross Williamstown Road."</i></p> <p><i>"We would like to be able to take children from our childcare to use this site, but it would be too dangerous without proper pedestrian access to cross Williamstown Road."</i></p> <p><i>"It must be built with adequate pedestrian crossing points on Williamstown Rd. This road is extremely busy during the evening when most children will be attending netball training. They must have safe ped crossing facilities to access the courts in this location."</i></p>

Theme	% of Responses	Feedback
Proposed Location – Elder Smith Reserve	10%	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Good use of underutilised space (10) <p><i>“Space has been wasted so will be great use of space.”</i></p> <p>CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Better located (9) ✗ Developed in partnership with a university/ school and/or existing sporting precinct to maximise usage (9) ✗ Existing Council use for storage/ stockpiling of materials (1) ✗ Concerns about safety adjacent major road (3) ✗ Impacts of noise in a residential area associated with courts and pavilion space (8) <p><i>“I would love it to be a more dedicated park space but this plan is too much development. The lights will have a huge negative impact, as we live across the street from the reserve. And the courts are taking away a beautiful green space from the quiet neighbourhood.”</i></p> <p><i>“Shouldn’t this be at Murphy reserve? Closer to the other sports clubs and schools”</i></p> <p><i>“Facility will sit idle for large parts of the day. Should be developed and shared with a school / university to encourage daytime use.”</i></p>
Lighting	6%	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sport lighting and carpark to support feelings of safety (3) ✓ Support usage hours year-round (13) <p><i>“Lighting on the courts will help to provide an all-year-round sporting experience.”</i></p> <p><i>“Pavilion and lighting will provide a safer environment for users.”</i></p> <p>CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Impacts to residents (7) ✗ Impacts to wildlife and Melbourne pollinating corridor (1) <p><i>“I am concerned about the proposed lighting which would affect many households as it is a high resident area, and the parking along a 4-lane road.”</i></p>
Other	7%	<p>OPPORTUNITIES / CONCERNS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arrangement of elements on site; lessen impact to adjacent residential area, connection with future Prohasky site (3) ○ Drop-off zone better alternative to small carpark (2) ○ Roof over court(s) or indoor stadium; support use during poor weather i.e. storm or extreme heat (4) ○ Playground/ play-space; create a family hub (7) ○ Swimming pool better use of space (1) ○ Include outdoor exercise equipment (1) ○ Include community garden (1) ○ Good location for a BMX track (2) ○ Enclosed off-leash dog park (1) ○ Insufficient number of courts for demand (3) ○ Existing Argentine ant infestation reported (1) ○ Construction works and noise (1)

These key themes are presented in Figure 5 below.

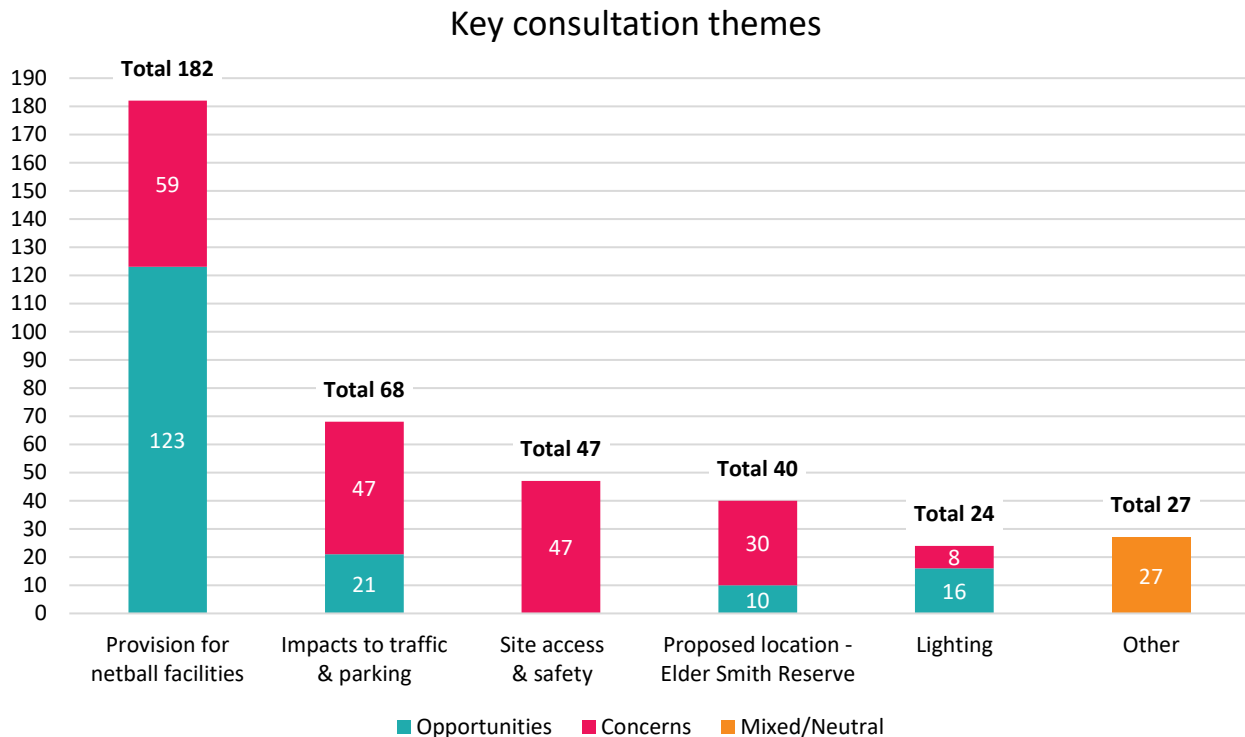


Figure 5: Key consultation themes

182 responses (47%) referenced the **provision of netball facilities**, of these responses 123 or 68% were in favour of the proposed development. Responses concerned with the development (59 or 32%) referenced environmental impacts, inclusivity of the development for all of community, along with scale of the development for hours of use.

Impacts to traffic and parking was referenced 68 times. 21 responses (31%) considered the inclusion of on-site parking to be of benefit, while 47 or 69% of responses expressed concerns with the impact to parking and traffic flows. The main concern being the allocation of on-site parking which is considered insufficient for the proposed development. Other concerns included the introduction of additional traffic to an area heavily utilised by freight vehicles coupled with the new residential developments in the area.

Site access and safety was the only theme where all respondents both in favour of and opposed to or questioning the project expressed concerns about the lack of resolution. 47 responses referred to the need for a formalised crossing over Williamstown Road being a dual carriageway heavily trafficked by freight vehicles.

The **location of the development** was referenced 40 times. Ten (10 or 25%) of these responses were in favour of the location, being Elder Smith Reserve, while 75% (30 responses) identified concerns with the project location. These concerns were typically not opposed to the project concept, however, queried the project location to better maximise facility usage and provide

surrounding residents access to inclusive open space. Other concerns referred to impacts to residents associated with increased activity in the area and user safety.

24 comments referenced **lighting** in their responses of this 67% (16 responses) were supportive of the inclusion of lighting referencing usage hours and feelings of safety. The remaining 8 responses (33%) referred to impacts to residents and wildlife.

27 responses that fell outside of the key themes identified have been categorised as **other** and recorded as a mixed or neutral response.

Printed materials promoting this project contained birds-eye view images of privately owned residences that were sourced via mapping software. Privacy concerns were raised by a participant in relation to this and Council has since reviewed its practices. In the interests of taking an active role in protecting privacy of residents, Council will make every effort to not publish imagery of private spaces in the future.

Current usage

Current use of Elder Smith Reserve

Participants were asked about their current use of Elder Smith Reserve, and the kinds of activities they did while at the Reserve.

99 (74%) of survey participants said they did not currently visit Elder Smith Reserve. 34 survey participants (26%) and a further five (5) participants who attended the on-site pop up at Elder Smith Reserve reported they currently visit the Reserve.

Do you currently use Elder Smith Reserve (survey participants)?

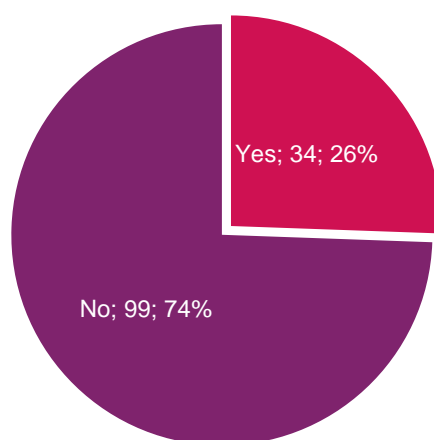


Figure 6: Survey participants' current use of Elder Smith Reserve

When asked what they did when at the Reserve, the 39 participants currently visiting Elder Smith Reserve reported a range of activities, with the highest number of responses (22 responses) being dog walking at the Reserve.

Use of the reserve for recreation and sport activities was the second highest response to this question, with 23 responses identifying activities including walking/ jogging, bike riding, golf, netball and sport.

Other uses of the reserve also included family and social gathering (15 responses) and one (1) response identified enjoying the current aspect of the Reserve.

Participants could report multiple responses.

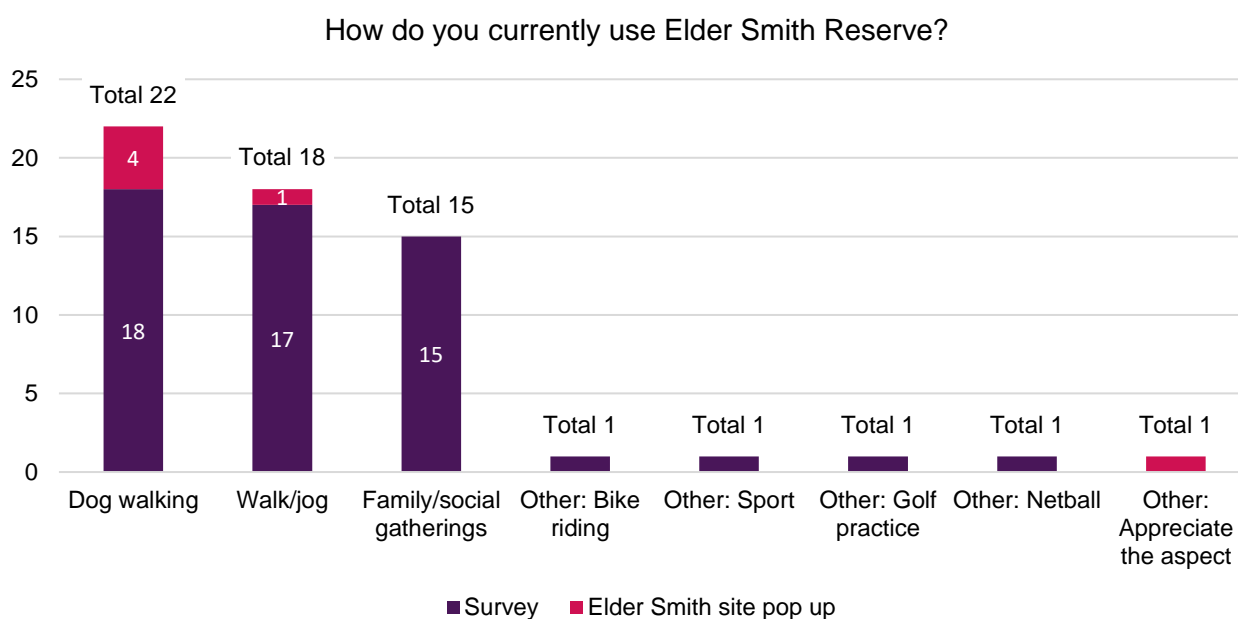


Figure 7: Participants' current activities when visiting Elder Smith Reserve

Use of RF Julier Reserve

As netball is the primary purpose of the proposed development with the intention to relocate current tenant clubs from RF Julier Reserve to the new location, participants were asked if they currently use of RF Julier Reserve for netball. This question helped inform existing user travel habits to help understand the potential impacts associated with the relocation and explored further in the following section.

93 or 82% of survey participants reported using RF Julier Reserve for netball activities, while 20 (18%) of participants indicated they did not.

Do you currently use RF Julier Reserve for netball (survey participants)?

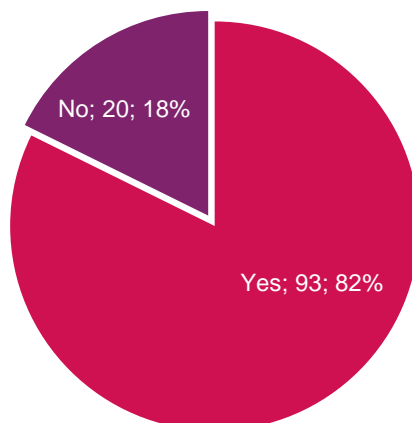


Figure 8: Survey participants who reported using RF Julier Reserve for netball activities

Modes of transport

To help understand potential impacts of the project to the road network participants were asked questions about their current and/or future expected travel habits.

Participants who currently use RF Julier Reserve for netball were asked about how they currently travel to netball activities and how the expected travelling to netball activities at Elder Smith Reserve. Existing users of Elder Smith Reserve along with non-netballers were asked how they currently and/or how they would expect to travel to Elder Smith Reserve. A summary of the responses is detailed below.

Feedback obtained regarding modes of transport will be used to inform Council's advocacy for a formal crossing over Williamstown Road.

Netballer current travel habits – RF Julier Reserve

Of those participants who reported using RF Julier Reserve for netball activities the following travel modes were identified, note participants could nominate more than one response.

Active transport inclusive, walking (60 responses, 37%), bicycle (31 responses, 19%) and scooter (1 response, 1%) was the most common mode of transport identified. Total combined responses for active transport 92 or 57% of responses.

The single highest mode of transport identified was car (private vehicle) with 66 responses (41%). A further four (4) responses (2%) nominated public transport.

Elder Smith Reserve

Existing and/or future anticipated travel modes to Elder Smith Reserve were also considered as part of this consultation to understand existing habits and changes that may be associated with the new proposed netball facility location. Participants could once again, nominate more than one response.

241 responses were received, with the breakdown of transport modes identified generally reflecting the trends for RF Julier Reserve.

A total of 166 responses (69%) identified active transport inclusive, 108 (45%) for walking and 58 (24%) for cycling.

Private vehicle (car) was the second highest single mode of transport identified with 69 responses (29%). A further six (6) responses (2%) nominated public transport.

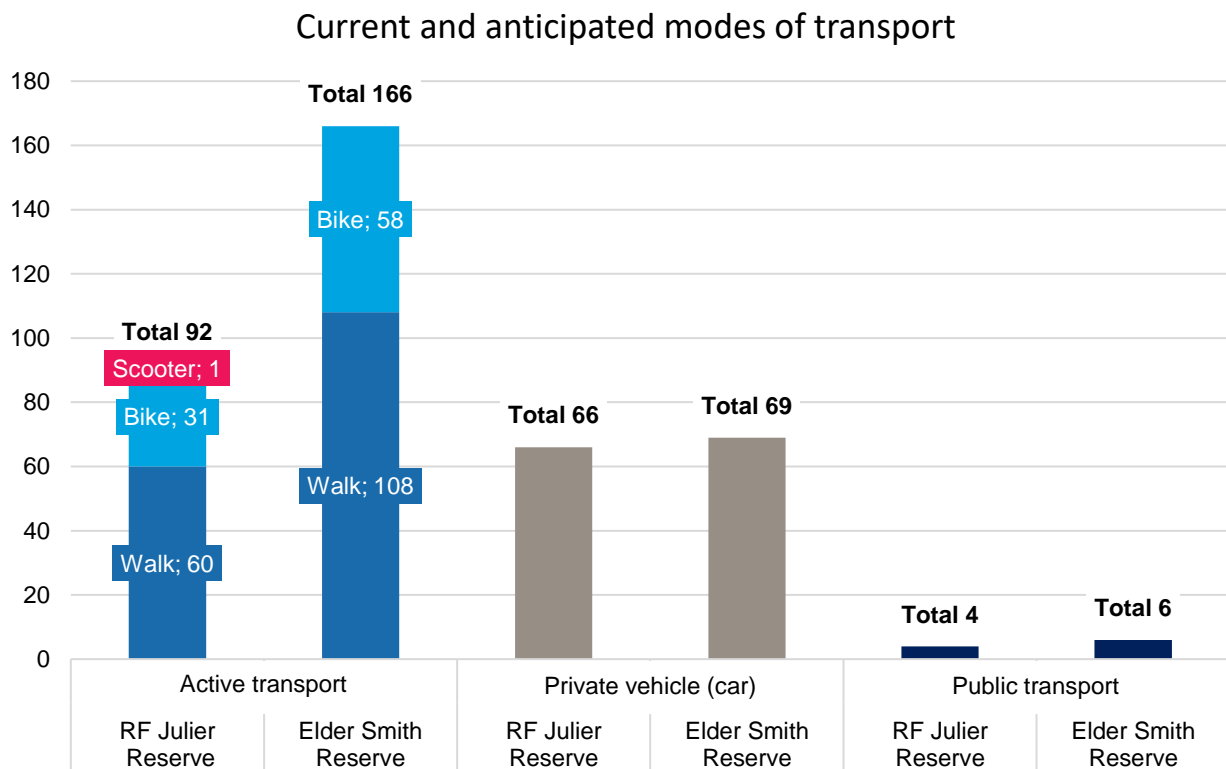


Figure 9: Current and anticipated modes of transport

Type of new park amenities

Participants were asked what new amenities they would like to see included as part of the netball facility development. Participants could nominate more than one (1) amenity. 473 responses were received. A breakdown of the responses can be seen in Figure 10 and Figure 11 below.

What types of new amenities would you like to see at Elder Smith Reserve?

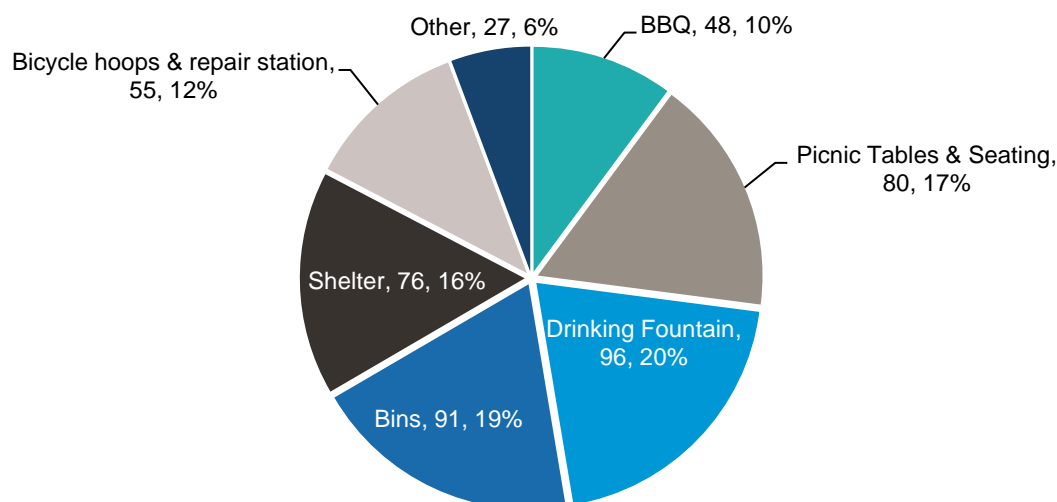


Figure 10: New amenities identified by participants

Of the other amenities nominated by participants, other than netball facilities, the highest nominated amenity was green space followed closely by toilets and bicycle related facilities.

Other amenities nominated by community members for inclusion at Elder Smith Reserve

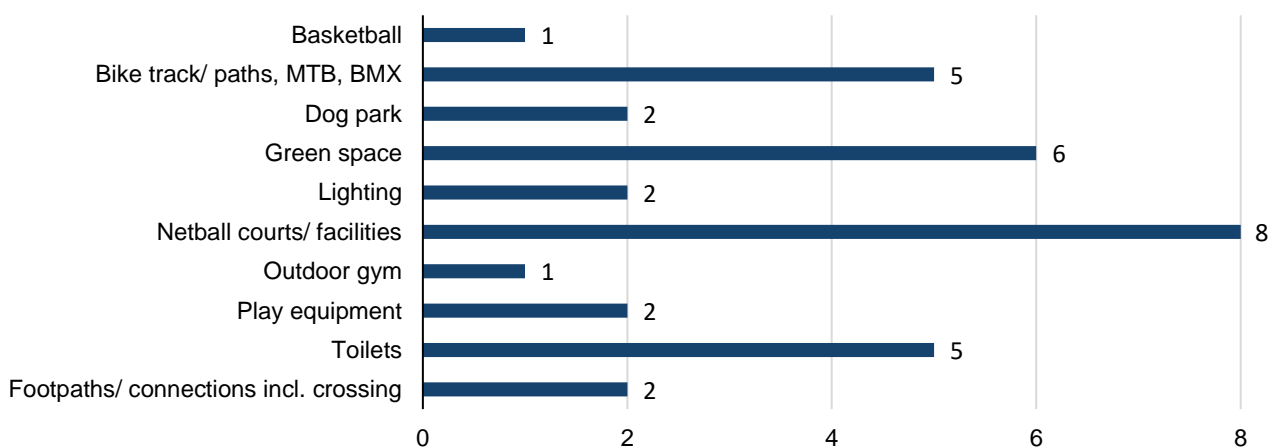


Figure 11: Other new amenities nominated by participants

Inclusion of these amenities will be explored through the design development stage of the project.



Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback about the proposed Elder Smith netball facility development. Your feedback will help Council to make decisions to create a facility that aligns with how the community will use the space and inform Council's decision making about this project.

Next steps for this project are:

- Findings from this report will be shared with Councillors; and
- Communicated with the community on the project Have Your Say page.