



# Engagement Summary Report

St Vincent Gardens Playground Upgrade

November 2023



# Contents

Engagement .....	1
Summary Report.....	1
Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Project background .....	4
What we set out to achieve .....	6
What we did.....	6
Communications activities.....	6
Engagement activities.....	7
Reach and participation. ....	7
Reach through communication activities.....	7
Participation by engagement activity .....	9
Who we heard from.....	10
Demographics.....	10
Gender.....	10
Residential Suburb.....	11
Family structure .....	11
What we heard.....	12
About the draft concept plan .....	12
Elements that were missing .....	17
Next steps.....	17
How this report will be used .....	17
Next steps.....	17



Please consider  
the environment  
before printing.

# Introduction

## Project background

The upgrade of the St Vincent Garden playground is a short-term action in the City of Port Phillip Public Space Strategy.

In recent years, the playground equipment has started to decline, and some elements have been removed. This upgrade will ensure that in addition to meeting the Australian Safety Standards, the playground will continue to be a safe and fun place for our community to enjoy.

### **Draft Playground Upgrade Plan (2019)**

In June 2019, we asked the community how they used the park and for ideas to improve it. From those ideas, we developed a draft concept plan and asked the community to share their feedback on the draft plan during September 2019.

St Vincent Gardens is of national significance and is on the Victorian Heritage Register. Any works to the gardens outside of general repairs, maintenance and tree management require a permit under the Heritage Act 2017. In addition to the community consultation with the public, we also engaged with Heritage Victoria to provide preliminary advice on the concept design, prior to a formal permit application being sought.

Their feedback required some redesign work to meet their permit requirements. The project was put on hold due to COVID.

Since the project restarted, the updated concept plan shared in 2023 captured the feedback received from Heritage Victoria along with the feedback received from our community.

### **Draft Playground Upgrade Plan (September 2019)**

Council presented a draft plan for a new playground to the community in September 2019. Some of the key features in the design included:

- New entrance to the park with new pedestrian access ramps and stairs.
- Bluestone paved meeting area with irregular seating walls, picnic tables and bespoke mesh shelter.

- Sandpit bounded by play silhouette edge including timber decking and water pump
- Large treehouse built around existing trees with enclosed rainbow slide and accessible activities under deck.
- Sculptural play acorns.
- Activity play area including: carousel, single point suspension basket swing, twin in ground trampolines, monkey bars and balancing logs.
- Improved path surface and access throughout the park.

## **Updated draft Concept Plan (August 2023)**

Following on from the feedback provided by the community in 2019 and the workshops with Heritage Victoria, an updated concept design was shared with the community.

The updated draft concept plan was tested with the community in this engagement process. The design sought to:

- Retain the existing character
- Celebrate the cultural and historic setting of the park.
- Respond to the communities feedback
- Respond to the heritage guidelines
- Ensure the playground caters for all ages and abilities.

Key features of the updated draft concept plan that changed post community consultation included:

- Removal of new Eastern entrance
- Reduction in size of central meeting area
- Removal of sandpit shadow wall and water play due to some safety concerns
- The treehouse was reduced and relocated to ensure no loss of existing trees.
- More diverse range of equipment added to allow a range of age groups to be catered for
- Inclusion of additional assets as required (bins, bike hoops and relocation of drinking fountain)
- The colours of the playground were amended to fit with the Heritage of the grounds
- Inclusivity was considered important to the community and improvements were made to consider accessibility within the design.

This report explores how Council engaged the community about the updated draft playground plan, and the feedback we collected.

## What we set out to achieve

This engagement process was designed to:





- share the reworked concept plan with the community to ensure the proposed works to the playground and surrounding areas meet community needs, and
- gather both specific and general feedback from the community about the proposed upgrade.
- Participants attending the pop ups and taking part in the Have Your Say were self-selecting. As such, the key themes of conversations illustrated below may reflect only a limited proportion of the local community

## What we did

**Between 22 September and 15 October 2023**, Council delivered a range of communications activities to let the community know about the reworked concept plan and collected feedback via a mix of different activities.

## Communications activities

In order to get the word out about the draft plan, we did the following:

	<b>Project posters in the park</b> 4	Posters promoting the engagement process were placed at strategic locations around the park to inform park users how to have their say.
	<b>Postcards to community</b> 1450	Postcards were printed and delivered to the local area surrounding St Vincent Gardens to inform residents about the engagement process and how to have their say.
	<b>Social media posts</b> 2,443	Council utilised social media to promote the engagement process as well, with posts on Facebook and Instagram.
	<b>'Have Your Say' website</b>	Council's dedicated engagement page, 'Have Your Say' had a project page for the St Vincent Playground Upgrades, with information via a link to the 2019 engagement process, the draft concept plan for feedback, project timelines, contact details, and opportunities to engage.

## Engagement activities

A range of engagement activities were undertaken during this project:



### Online survey (Have Your Say website)

An online survey was available on the 'Have Your Say' engagement website. This survey collected demographic details about participants and asked for community feedback on the proposed St Vincent Gardens Playground upgrade.



### Pop-ups in the gardens

A pop-up was delivered at St Vincent Gardens to engage with playground users who may not otherwise contribute via the website – particularly parents of young children and residents.

The pop-up was delivered on:

- Saturday 7 October, 10.30am to 12.30pm.


People were invited to hear about the draft concept plan, complete a paper-based survey, or plot their comments on a printed map.

## Reach and participation.

### Reach through communication activities.

Activity	Reach	Insights
<b>Social media posts</b> <b>Social platform distribution</b> Facebook reach: <b>1,861</b> / <b>99 link clicks</b> Instagram reach: <b>582</b> / <b>27 link clicks</b>	<b>2,443</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impressions (# of times that the ad was on screen): 5,347</li> <li>• Post reach (# of people who saw any of your posts at least once): 2,117</li> <li>• Post engagement (# of times that people engaged with your post through reactions, comments, shares, views and clicks): 126</li> </ul>


<b>Newsletters</b>	<b>2,579</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More than two thirds of recipients opened this newsletter, and almost one in eight recipients clicked through to the 'Have Your Say' website.</li> </ul>
<b>'Have Your Say' website</b>	<b>716 views</b> <b>428 visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most visitors (83%) came to the website directly or were referred from social media (32%).</li> <li>The draft Playground Upgrade concept plan was downloaded 133 times.</li> </ul>


**City Of Port Phillip**  
 Sponsored ·

We're seeking feedback on the draft concept plan for the St Vincent Gardens playground upgrades to ensure the proposed works to the playground and surrounding areas meet community needs.

The concept plan has been developed in line with what we heard during the previous consultation program and from Heritage Victoria.

Tell us what you think by midnight on Sunday 15 October 2023.



[haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov...](https://haveyoursay.portphillip.vic.gov.au)  
 Help shape the upgrade to St Vincent Gardens...

Learn more

## Participation by engagement activity

We heard from **more than 41 community members** through this engagement process. A break down of participation by activity is included below:

Activity	Participation	Insights
<b>Online survey (Have Your Say)</b>	<b>30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>86% of participants have children in their household/family that visit the St Vincent Gardens playground.</li> <li>82% of participants completed the survey identifying as 'woman or female' compared to 14% identifying as male.</li> </ul>
<b>Pop-ups in the park</b>	<b>11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most participants engaging in pop-ups were supportive of the playground upgrade.</li> </ul>

# Who we heard from

## Demographics

**Between 22 September and 15 October 2023**, we heard from more than 48 participants about the draft concept plan. Via our online and face-to-face surveys, we collected demographic details about the people we engaged.

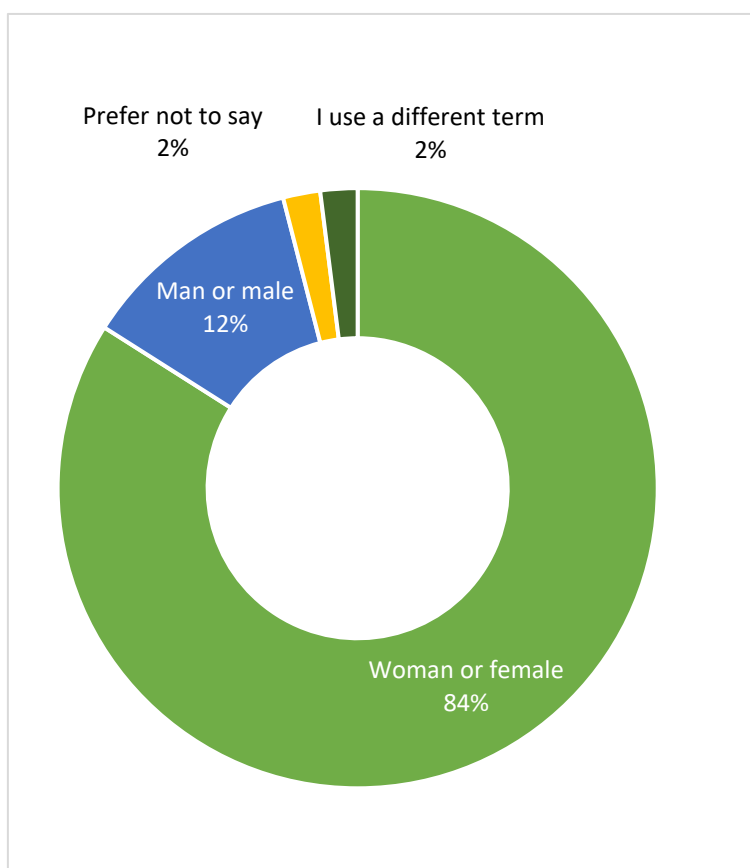
### Gender

**Overall, the most participants we heard from were ‘woman or female’ (82 per cent) compared to (18 per cent) identifying as ‘man or male’.**

Most participants (82 per cent) who completed the survey identified as ‘woman or female’ compared to (14 per cent) identifying as male.

Most people who attended the pop-up identified as ‘woman or female’ (82 per cent) compared to (18 per cent) identifying as male.

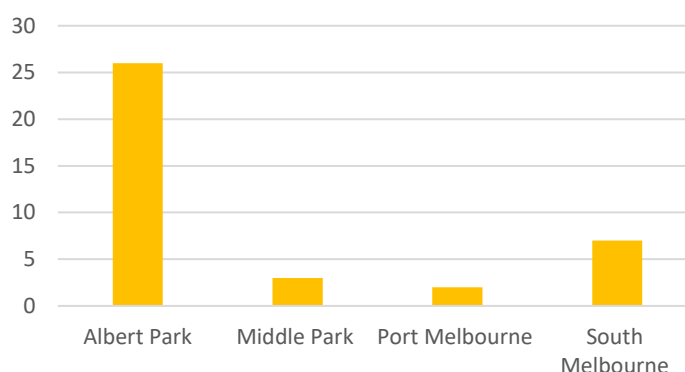
Across the City of Port Phillip, there is a higher proportion of women (51.2 per cent) to men (48.8 per cent), and across engagement projects in 2022, the balance was 46 per cent ‘female’ to 45 per cent ‘male’.



## Residential Suburb

In total, 38 participants online and at the pop-up provided their suburb. More than half of participants came from **Albert Park (68 per cent)** or **South Melbourne (18 per cent)**.

Other suburbs represented were Middle Park (8 per cent) and Port Melbourne (5 per cent).

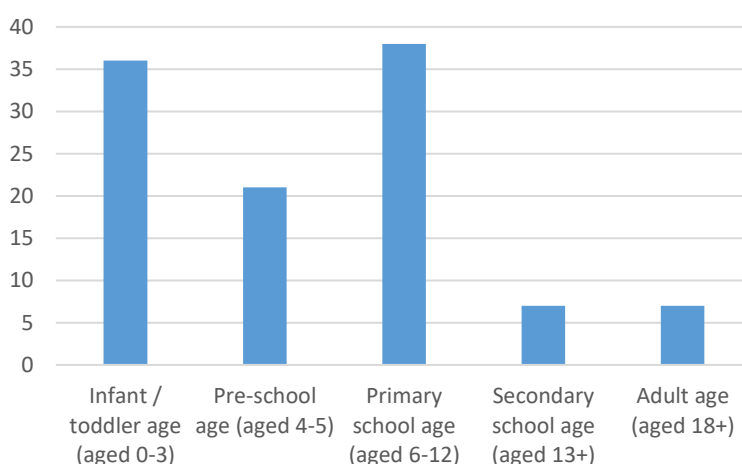
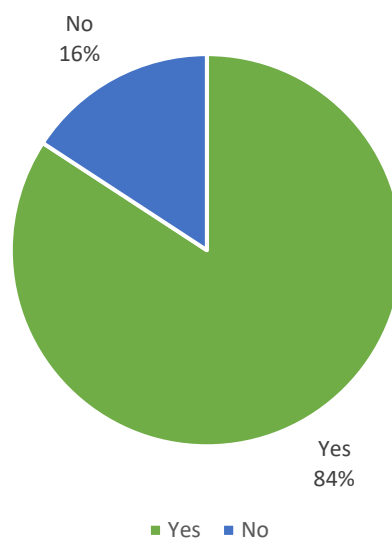


## Family structure

Participants were asked if they have children in their household/family that visit the St Vincent Gardens playground. Most participants via the survey online (**84 per cent**) stated they did.

**Of those who had children (87 per cent) were aged Under 12.**

Primary school students made up 35 per cent, pre-school aged children made up 19 per cent, Infant/toddlers 36 per cent, secondary school age 7 per cent and adult age 7 per cent.



## What we heard

**Please note: This section uses a thematic analysis of the comments from participants.**

Comments from participants that related to multiple themes have been split to allow for accurate theme counts. As such, the number of total comments may differ from the total number of people who participated in the engagement activities.

## About the draft concept plan

The following themes have been drawn out of the consultation feedback around **elements within the concept plan the community like/ dislike**. The key themes and some comments are explored below.

### Playground equipment:

- Play tower**

A strong theme that came out through the consultation process is that the community support the existing playground layout, with separated areas for younger and older children.	
Have Your Say (3 comments)	Pop up (2 comments)
<p><i>"Currently I love the two playgrounds - one for older children and one for toddlers in two different areas."</i></p> <p><i>"Also specific play areas for younger children is nice in the current set up."</i></p> <p><i>"It would also be good to consider an area that is more appropriate for toddler play with proper age appropriate equipment..."</i></p>	<p><i>"Really need a toddler play area - the current toddler area is used frequently."</i></p> <p><i>"Separate adult and child play - small kids get trampled."</i></p>
<p>Some common features highly suggested to be included in the younger playground included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shop front area</li> <li>• Spring rockers</li> <li>• Slides</li> </ul>	
Have Your Say (5 comments)	Pop up (4 comments)

<p><i>“ Could you please ensure you still have slides and a shop area for younger children”</i></p> <p><i>“ Please also have some spring rockers as the younger children like these.”</i></p> <p><i>“Swings can get a little repetitive if that is the only equipment available for babies aged 8 months to 2.5 years”</i></p>	<p><i>“ Like the shop front and spring rockers. Small slide (variety of small slides)”</i></p> <p><i>“ spring rockers are great.”</i></p> <p><i>“ More elements for the younger ones.”</i></p> <p><i>“Keep shop front, slides”</i></p>
--	--

## - Slides

Majority of requests suggest the design needed more slides that are catered to different age groups and abilities	
Have Your Say (4 comments)	Pop up (2 comments)
<p><i>“Could you please ensure you still have slides and a shop area for younger children”</i></p> <p><i>“More towers, slides.. would be great”</i></p> <p><i>“This design only seems to have one slide where as the existing design has 4 for all levels of children. Please include more slides.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Include small slide, variety of small slides”</i></p> <p><i>“Keep shop front, slides.”</i></p>

## - Swings

A strong theme that came through is the communities love for the swings within the park.	
Have Your Say (5 comments)	Pop up (2 comments)
<p><i>“I think that the new basket swing is a good idea if you make it big enough, but I don't think the original swings should be replaced with the joey swing. The swings in the playground are my favourite part and it would be heartbreaking to see them go”</i></p> <p><i>“Please have the same amount of swings as there currently is. Having two Joey swings side by side and two regular swings side by side mean kids of similar age can swing together and parents can chat while pushing them on the swing.</i></p>	<p><i>“Include a toddler basket seat - like England.”</i></p> <p><i>“Trampoline, sandpit, hammock, spring rockers, swing - all great”</i></p>

<p><i>"Everyone loves the swing so please keep 2 x Joey swings and 2 x swings"</i></p> <p><i>"Please keep 4 swings - two for older children and two for toddlers and babies."</i></p>	
---	--

## • Sandpit

Very limited support was presented from the community regarding the sandpit.	
Have Your Say (4 comments)	Pop up (3 comments)
<p><i>"sandpits can make clothes dirty and can be a bit unsanitary."</i></p> <p><i>"There are sandpits in nearby parks so additional seems repeated."</i></p> <p><i>"Elements like sandpit diggers break quickly and are never fixed"</i></p> <p><i>"I didn't like the sand digging pit - it always ends up dirty/watery and disgusting."</i></p> <p><i>"As for the nature play elements and the sandpit, I think they're a bit unnecessary"</i></p>	<p><i>"Don't need a sandpit - they can go to the beach"</i></p> <p><i>"Cats are an issue with sand pit - cover it."</i></p> <p><i>"No to the sand pit, it is dirty."</i></p>

## • Nature play

There was equal support for and against nature play within the park	
Have Your Say (3 comments)	Pop up (1 comment)
<p><i>"Nature play should be optimised."</i></p> <p><i>"As for the nature play elements and the sandpit, I think they're a bit unnecessary"</i></p> <p><i>"Water or other nature play is preferable."</i></p>	<p><i>"I like the nature play"</i></p>

## Playground colour:

All responses leaned towards a Heritage sympathetic playground material – the preference being natural tones rather than bright colours

Have Your Say (2 comments)	Pop up (1 comment)
<p><i>"A wooden playground like at the end of Armstrong street in middle park, no plastic eye sore."</i></p> <p><i>"Ideally the new playground will have a warmer feel using natural materials and equipment that lends itself to multipurpose creative play"</i></p>	<p><i>"Not bright - in keeping with heritage"</i></p>

## Other park elements:

### • Seating

Have Your Say (2 comments)
<p><i>"More seating options and places to wheel and park prams close to equipment."</i></p> <p><i>"I can see some bench-type seats, but I'm hoping you will include seats with backs suitable for breastfeeding mothers."</i></p>

### • Shelter

Have Your Say (2 comments)	Pop up (2 comments)
<p><i>".. like to have shelter from sun and wind"</i></p> <p><i>"A small shelter in heritage sympathy with the one across from the bowling green has always been the missing link."</i></p>	<p><i>"Shelter space for parties."</i></p> <p><i>"Would like some shelter."</i></p>

### • Path network, lawn area and picnic tables

Accessibility is important to consider but minimise the dividing up of the park and much loved lawn area	
Have Your Say (4 comments)	Pop up (2 comments)
<p><i>"Don't take away the grassed areas as they are great to sit on. The new plan has too many structured areas and paths."</i></p> <p><i>"What I do appreciate it offers is accessibility to a broader spread of children.."</i></p>	<p><i>"Not happy with it. It's important to have a large open space to kick a ball, play sport"</i></p> <p><i>"Love grass, Open space for trees"</i></p>

<p><i>“ The lawn area should be maximised so that families can sit for picnics and to watch children playing.”</i></p> <p><i>“ Don’t take away the grassed areas as they are great to sit on.”</i></p> <p><i>“ I don’t think picnic tables are needed as most people bring their own for gathering in the playground”</i></p> <p><i>“ The trampolines and picnic area are a bit excessive, and I don’t think they’re needed.”</i></p>	
---	--

### Overall satisfaction with the new Concept plan:

<p>Generally across both the HYS page and pop-up conversation of those that provided feedback, the community responded favourably to the proposed design, with approximately 90% of the responses containing positive feedback</p>	
Positive	Negative
<p><i>“ We are regular users of the playground. The proposed plan is a big improvement on what is currently there.”</i></p> <p><i>“ The enhancements sound great as long as we don’t lose some of the basics”</i></p> <p><i>“ That looks great”</i></p> <p><i>“ I am happy that finally the final draft for the park is available. It is great that there is something for every age.”</i></p> <p><i>“ We are so pleased the park is being brought back to life it could be truly wonderful for the community.”</i></p> <p><i>“ Looks great, good range of things to do for kids of different ages, and preserves the overall logic and existing trees.”</i></p> <p><i>“ Looks great, so needed!!”</i></p> <p><i>“ It definitely needs upgrading”</i></p> <p><i>“ Overall the plan looks good.”</i></p>	<p><i>“This is a waste of money. Whenever I walk past this playground it is full of people who love it.”</i></p> <p><i>“Not happy with it. It’s important to have a large open space to kick a ball, play sport. We don’t want anything changed in the park.”</i></p> <p><i>“Why are you taking away perfectly good structures.”</i></p>

## Elements that were missing

The community made some suggestions as to elements they thought were **missing from the draft concept plan**? The key themes are explored below.

Have Your Say	Pop up
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgrading toilets</li> <li>• Incorporating adult fitness equipment</li> <li>• Water based play</li> <li>• Scooter/ bike/ skateboard areas</li> <li>• Improvements to park entrances</li> <li>• Fencing the playground</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian crossing</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• Equipment/ shelter that produces energy</li> <li>• Basketball hoop</li> </ul>

These suggestions fall outside the scope of works for this project and have been referred to the relevant teams within Council where appropriate.

## Next steps

### How this report will be used

Thank you to everyone who provided their feedback about the St Vincents Playground Upgrade.

This report, and the underlying feedback will be used by the project team and the designers to finalise the plan for detailed design.

The report will also be used to share with Council how the engagement process went, and what changes (if any) have been made as a result of this engagement.

### Next steps

Work will now begin to revise and finalise the concept plan for St Vincent Gardens Playground. We will share this report, and updates on the project with you via the 'Have your say' project page.