

ITEM 4. PARK PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**FILE NO: S048763****SUMMARY**

A community group from Pyrmont, consisting of businesses and residents, approached the City in September 2013 to propose the installation of a Liberty Swing at Pirrama Park. The proposal involved community fundraising for the supply and installation of a Liberty Swing, supported by the charity, Variety NSW.

On 9 December 2013, Council requested the Chief Executive Officer work with the fund raising co-ordinator and the local community to consider options for the installation of the Liberty Swing in a park in Pyrmont.

Landscape architect and inclusive play specialist, Fiona Robbe, was engaged by the City to investigate inclusive play opportunities in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

The report has identified Pirrama Park Playground as a district level playground that was designed to be accessible, and provide some inclusive play opportunities for children with mild to moderate disabilities. While it does not cater to all types of disabilities, the park meets the needs of many, and was designed in accordance with the requirements identified in the extensive consultation process at the time of development.

The report advises that the Liberty Swing offers adults and children with a wheelchair an accessible swinging opportunity, but does not necessarily mean the area will become inclusive.

The report recommends the addition of a wheelchair accessible spinner. It has substantial advantages over the Liberty Swing within the Pirrama Park setting. The spinner suits the playground design, will extend current play options positively, can be used by up to three wheelchairs at once and accessed by multiple children, without the risk of impact injury arising from the swinging motion of the heavier Liberty Swing.

The addition of a Liberty Swing is not recommended as it will not create a positive message of inclusion in the playground setting at Pirrama Park. It would require substantial fencing to comply with the manufacturer's safety recommendations, in effect creating a sense of exclusion for those using the swing.

The City's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel was consulted regarding the provision of additional inclusive play equipment at Pirrama Park, and the panel supported the installation of a wheelchair spinner rather than a Liberty Swing. The Liberty Swing was not favoured by the panel at any City park because of its low inclusive play value.

It is proposed that the installation of inclusive play equipment be considered at the new playground proposed for Federal Park, Glebe and at the new park proposed for Bank Street, Pyrmont. Wentworth Park and the all-abilities playground at Sydney Park will also be considered as alternative sites.

Community consultation for the proposed additional inclusive play equipment at Pirrama Park will be undertaken following Council's consideration of the Inclusive Play Report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note that a wheelchair accessible 'spinner' is the preferred inclusive play element for Pirrama Park, as it suits the playground design, will extend current play options positively, and can be used by up to three wheelchairs at once and accessed by multiple other children;
- (B) the original design consultant for Pirrama Park be commissioned to site the spinner and integrate it with the existing park design;
- (C) Sydney Park, Federal Park, Wentworth Park and Bank Street Park in Pyrmont be considered for the installation of inclusive play equipment in consultation with the community; and
- (D) the City consult with the Liberty Swing proponents and Variety Club on their raised funds and offer them the opportunity to contribute to the cost of installing inclusive play equipment at either Sydney Park (St Peters), Federal Park (Glebe), Bank Street, (Pyrmont) or Wentworth Park (Glebe).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: City of Sydney Inclusive Play Report, Pyrmont and Surrounding Areas

Attachment B: Resolution of Council – 9 December 2013

BACKGROUND

1. A group of committed residents and local businesses have approached the City to request and partly fund additional inclusive play opportunities in Pirrama Park, Pyrmont. Their request proposes the installation of a Liberty Swing in or adjacent to the existing playground.
2. Pirrama Park is a 1.8 hectare harbourside space in Pyrmont, located on the western side of the city. This award winning landscaped site includes grasslands, lawns, rain gardens, native landscaping, wide avenues, a playground, cafe, public toilets, as well as picturesque spots for barbecues and picnics.
3. The Pirrama Park playground is a district level playground, and was designed to be accessible, and provide some inclusive play opportunities for children with mild to moderate disabilities. Whilst it does not cater to all types of disabilities, the park meets the needs of many, and was designed in accordance with the requirements identified in the extensive consultation process at the time of development.
4. The park has won multiple awards for its design and contribution to community facilities in Pyrmont including the Australian Institute of Landscape Architecture NSW Medal 2010, Walter Burley Griffin Award for Urban Design 2010, Kidsafe 2010 National Playspace Design Awards and Master Builders Association Award for 'Excellence in Construction' among others.
5. Pirrama Park has been investigated in light of the community request, as well as other locations to determine the site's capacity for further inclusive play elements. The City engaged an inclusive play specialist, Fiona Robbe Landscape Architects to provide advice on the installation of a Liberty Swing at Pirrama Park and other locations.

Inclusive Play Report

6. The Inclusive Play Report (refer to Attachment A) considers the overall context of inclusive play provision, provides background information on play equipment for children with disabilities, and reviews current and potential opportunities for improved inclusive play equipment in the City's LGA.
7. The report contains short, medium, and long term recommendations for inclusive play equipment in the City's parks.
8. The report advises that the Liberty Swing offers adults and children with a wheelchair accessible swinging opportunity, but does not necessarily mean the area will become inclusive.
9. An immediate solution for inclusive play provision in Pirrama Park is the addition of a wheelchair accessible spinner. It has substantial advantages over the Liberty Swing within the Pirrama Park setting. The spinner suits the playground design, will extend current play options positively, can be used by up to three wheelchairs at once, and accessed by multiple children, without the risk of impact injury arising from the swinging motion of the heavier Liberty Swing.
10. The addition of a Liberty Swing is not recommended as it will not create a positive message of inclusion within the design of the playground at Pirrama Park. It would require substantial fencing to comply with the manufacturer's safety recommendations, in effect creating a sense of exclusion for those using the swing.

11. It is recommended that the City investigate the installation of inclusive play equipment at the new playground proposed at Federal Park, Glebe or at the new park proposed at Bank Street, Pyrmont. The all-abilities playground at Sydney Park and Wentworth Park will also be considered as alternative sites.

Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel Meeting – 9 April 2014

12. The Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel was briefed on the Inclusive Play Report and the community proposal for a Liberty Swing at Pirrama Park on 9 April 2014. All ten members of the Panel were present and their view is that Liberty Swings are not inclusive and accessible to everyone due to:
 - (a) fencing required due to safety issues;
 - (b) MLAK key requirement;
 - (c) supervision requirements;
 - (d) safety issues for parents with vision impairment using the swing; and
 - (e) segregation from other children.
13. The Panel supports the use of wheelchair accessible spinners as a more inclusive option as:
 - (a) children with and without disabilities have access to inclusive play;
 - (b) a wheelchair user can independently access the spinner; and
 - (c) there would be no MLAK key or fence.
14. The Panel recommended that the City does not install Liberty Swings in parks within the LGA. In the long term, the Panel recommended that the City investigate creative and fun universal playgrounds at locations across the LGA. The Panel would like to be involved in the consultation for the development of inclusive playgrounds for children with a disability and children without a disability.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

15. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This proposal is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – the provision of additional inclusive play equipment, such as the wheelchair spinner at Pirrama Park, will enhance its play offering and the recreational opportunities available for all park users. Inclusive play is an important part of playground design and helps to encourage physical activity for children of all ages; and
 - (b) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – the City will seek to work with Pyrmont residents and businesses and Variety NSW to improve inclusive play elements within Pirrama Park.

16. This proposal complies with the following conventions, strategies, acts and plans as endorsed by the City of Sydney. These form the framework of inclusive playground provision and are consistent with the key elements in the delivery of Sustainable Sydney 2030:
 - (a) United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child 1989 (Article 23 and 31);
 - (b) United Nations General Comment no. 17 on Article 32 2013 General Comment;
 - (c) United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006;
 - (d) The National Disability Strategy 2010-2012;
 - (e) The Disability Discrimination Act 1992;
 - (f) The City of Sydney: Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-2017; and
 - (g) City of Sydney regarding Design for all Children.

Organisational Impact

17. Delivery of these recommendations will be through the City's Capital Works program. Project management resources will need to be allocated to carry out the necessary design, consultation and construction work.

Risks

18. It is imperative that a universal design approach for inclusive play is undertaken. This will provide the greatest possible range of interactions and will ensure a whole of space approach to accessible play provision is considered.
19. The placement of an accessible play item in an isolated location, 'because it fits', can result in further segregation of children with a disability.
20. These risks can be mitigated by ensuring a specialist consultant is employed to advise on the projects, and by consulting with the community to let them know how and why various play elements are being selected for installation.

Social / Cultural / Community

21. Increasing the park/play options for children with disabilities will have benefit to the broader community by increasing social interaction and engagement.
22. Through provision of a range of play facilities, the City caters for various age groups, from toddlers through to school aged children and teenagers. The recommendations proposed will enhance the current play offerings throughout the City's LGA.
23. Well-designed play spaces provide a range of cognitive, physical and social opportunities; encourage social interaction; and improve environmental performance and sustainability.

Economic

24. The City will consult with the Liberty Swing proponents and Variety Club on their raised funds and offer them the opportunity to contribute to the cost of installing a wheelchair spinner at Pirrama Park, or inclusive play equipment at Sydney, Federal, Bank Street or Wentworth Parks.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

25. The cost of a wheelchair accessible spinner is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$100,000. Provision has been made in the draft 2014/15 Capital Works budget for this expenditure.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

26. Community consultation and detailed design works will commence from May 2014. It is anticipated that the inclusive play equipment would be installed in the 2014/15 financial year.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

27. The City will consult with the Liberty Swing proponents and Variety Club on their raised funds and offer them the opportunity to contribute to the cost of installing a wheelchair spinner at Pirrama Park, or inclusive play equipment at Sydney, Federal, Bank Street or Wentworth Parks.
28. The City's Inclusion (Disability) Advisory Panel was consulted regarding the provision of additional inclusive play equipment at Pirrama Park, and the Panel supported the installation of a wheelchair spinner rather than a Liberty Swing. The Liberty Swing was not favoured by the panel at any City park because of its low inclusive play value.
29. Further community consultation will occur during the design phase to site the spinner within Pirrama Park.

GARRY HARDING

Director City Operations

Joel Johnson, Manager City Greening and Leisure