

## **Project Scope - Woolloomooloo Playground Upgrade**

**File No: X025400**

### **Summary**

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Woolloomooloo Playground located adjacent to Dowling Street and Pring Street, Woolloomooloo. Woolloomooloo Playground has been identified for renewal as part of the Stage 15 small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the playground area, replace end of life equipment and soft-fall, provide a range of play experiences for children of different ages and abilities, and improve accessibility and circulation into and through the playground, as well as provide additional seating to the playground and associated landscape improvements. Opportunities have also been identified to remove walls and other visual barriers to create a more open and welcoming environment.

Draft concept plans were presented to the community between 20 July and 24 August 2020 and were exhibited on the City's website. Community feedback was broadly in support of the proposal with community suggestions to be incorporated into the Final Concept Design. These include a review of the Pring Street edge condition and provision of playground equipment.

The key principles of the proposal are to renew the playground to provide a local scale play space which maximises play opportunities for children of different ages and abilities, improve access in and around the park, increase activation and passive surveillance, improve lighting conditions and use simple, robust, high quality material which reflects the local neighbourhood character.

## Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of work for improvements to Woolloomooloo Playground as described in the subject report and shown in the concept design as Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction; and
- (B) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

## Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Revised Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

## Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program for parks that are in need of upgrade or enhancement works, replacement of end of life equipment, and to provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Woolloomooloo Playground is located adjacent to Dowling Street and Pring Street, Woolloomooloo.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. Woolloomooloo Playground was identified for an upgrade due to the playground's overall condition including: aging play equipment and soft-fall surfacing, limited range of play experiences and seating provision offered, poor integration and passive surveillance with adjacent park areas, and poor access in and around the playground. No works are proposed to the tennis court, basketball court or community garden.
5. During the 1930s-40s, tennis courts, a small playground and an amenities building were constructed on a 'vacant plot of land' between Dowling Street and McElhone Street. The amenities building was upgraded and extended in 1957 to include additional toilets, storage facilities and an assembly room with a stage. In 1982, the streets surrounding Woolloomooloo Playground were closed and rezoned; McElhone Street (between Pring Street and Sydney Place) changed from road reserve to residential, and both Dowling Street and Sydney Place were transformed into pedestrian plazas. Subsequently the park was re-designed with the amenities building removed and replaced. The park was later upgraded again in 1992, and in the early 2000's, a new playground, barbecue area and community garden were installed to the west of the tennis and basketball courts on what was previously a turf area.
6. The playground is characterised as a large, shaded and fenced neighbourhood playground catering for children of all ages. Planting is limited to one *Populus deltoides* tree. Access to the playground is via the picnic space which has a barbecue and small turf area surrounded by trees. The upgrade site is approximately 1,152m<sup>2</sup>.
7. The existing play equipment includes a seesaw, a rocker, a spinner, a set of pull-up bars, two balancing beams, a toddler play structure with a ladder, tower and telescope, and two older child's play structures with slides and climbing nets. Seating within the play-space is limited.
8. The park is well used by a variety of community members for play, rest, relaxation and exercise, however some anti-social behaviour has been reported. The upgrade aims to improve access and amenity as well as safety.
9. An Indigenous Cultural Consultant has been engaged as part of this upgrade process, to ensure that the project contributes to recognising the City's Indigenous heritage, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, and enriching local knowledge about the cultural landscape.
10. Consideration has been given to the provision of play equipment in surrounding parks within a 500m radius, to ensure a coordinated network of facilities that caters for a broad range of park users.

**Draft Concept Design**

11. A Concept Design was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken (refer to Attachment B).
12. The concept plan sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
  - (a) improve access and passive surveillance in and around the park;
  - (b) renew the playground to provide a local scale play space which maximises play opportunities for children 0-11+;
  - (c) provide a range of seating opportunities which encourage social interaction; and
  - (d) use simple, robust, high quality materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.
13. The proposal includes the following works:
  - (a) a new open entry comprising of brick bleacher stairs and access path from Pring Street;
  - (b) a new fitness area with fixed equipment such as pull-up bars and dip bars;
  - (c) a new play structure with climbing and sliding components as well as imaginative play panels/elements;
  - (d) a new double swing set with one toddler seat and one swing for all ages;
  - (e) new soft-fall across the play area. Soft-fall is to be minimised and colours muted;
  - (f) retaining existing shade structure;
  - (g) a range of seating within the playground in both sun and shade, including bench seats with backs and arm-rests;
  - (h) new bin and bubbler with dog bowl;
  - (i) improved lighting; and
  - (j) new park signage.
14. In response to community feedback, the following will be incorporated/investigated in detailed design as noted on Attachment C:
  - (a) provide additional play equipment where possible, minimise rubber soft-fall and maximise play experiences;
  - (b) provide additional low playground fencing to fully enclose the play area,
  - (c) review the layout and material of the Pring Street corner bleacher to address concerns about people congregating there;
  - (d) relocate the two seats adjacent to the tennis courts to the BBQ area. Review the provision of picnic table; and

- (e) a lighting design will be prepared as part of the detailed design and will reflect City of Sydney Lights Code requirements for park lighting.
15. An Indigenous Cultural Consultant has been engaged as part of this upgrade process to undertake Indigenous community engagement and institution/organisational consultation. In addition, the consultant has produced a 'Narratives' report, which broadly identifies project opportunities for the integration of Indigenous themes and narratives.
- (a) The key themes and narratives for Woolloomooloo Playground include:
    - (i) celebrating the theme 'Grass tree Mob';
    - (ii) provide a place where people can sit together / bring people together; and
    - (iii) engage and educate the next generation.
16. As part of the next stage of the upgrade, the consultant will review how the key themes and narratives should be implemented into the project design and delivery.
17. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) retain and protect all existing trees;
  - (b) improve the existing surface treatment around the *Populus deltoides* within the play area to manage tree health and minimise trip hazards;
  - (c) provide additional planting and new trees within the play area and provide supplementary planting as required; and
  - (d) preparation of an Aboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology when installing equipment and soft-fall.
18. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF), and any other required approvals, will be lodged for the park upgrade in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the State Environmental Planning Policy Infrastructure 2007.

## Key Implications

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

19. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - this project will provide an improved open space infrastructure which meets the needs of a wide variety of user groups and provides opportunities for social interaction.
  - (b) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design - this project is part of wider program of ongoing renewal of small parks across the LGA; it will provide improved quality of open space infrastructure.

**Organisational Impact**

20. This upgrade will provide improved amenity for the community visiting the park. The rectification of the wall and installation of handrails and balustrades on the stairs represent a removal / mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

**Risks**

21. There is an ongoing risk of anti-social behaviour within the park. This includes potential vandalism of any works undertaken, drug-use related paraphernalia and general anti-social behaviour. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles will be applied during the detailed design including ensuring passive surveillance is achieved and appropriate lighting levels are provided.
22. Risks of not implementing the scope of these works include potential failure of play infrastructure and risk to the community. Daily inspections are carried out by the City as per standard parks and playground maintenance operations.
23. Risks of not implementing this scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

24. The site is an important open space within the Woolloomooloo area and has the only playground within a 400 metre radius. It is located 75 metres away from the Juanita Nielsen Community Centre and is adjacent to Plunkett Street School. Improving the amenity and play offering within the park represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people of different ages and abilities to use the park alongside each other.
25. An Indigenous Cultural Consultant has been engaged as part of this upgrade process, to ensure that the project works towards recognising the City's Indigenous heritage, celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, and enriching local knowledge about the cultural landscape.

**Environmental**

26. Protection and enhancement of the existing planting through this works is in line with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.

**Financial Implications**

27. There are sufficient funds in the current year capital budget and future year forward estimates to deliver the project. Current cost estimates and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment D.

### Relevant Legislation

28. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a Council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
29. Attachment D to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
30. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.
31. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
32. State Environmental Planning Policy Infrastructure 2007.
33. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
34. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.
35. Companion Animals Act 1998.

### Critical Dates / Time Frames

36. Current Program Dates:
  - (a) Council Approval of Concept Design      October 2020
  - (b) Detailed Design      October 2020
  - (c) Tender      July 2021
  - (d) Construction Start      November 2021
  - (e) Construction Duration      20 weeks

### Options

37. Proceed with progression of improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction.
38. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the current condition of the playground has a number of associated risks and compliance issues.

## Public Consultation

39. Public consultation was undertaken as a two-part process: pre-consultation/early engagement and public consultation/exhibition. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings refer to Attachment C.
40. A pre-consultation notification letter/email was issued to a number of local stakeholders and 599 local residents to notify them of the project, provide a link to a pre-consultation survey and offer to meet on site to discuss the proposed upgrade.
41. A pre-consultation workshop with 15 children from Plunkett Street Primary School as well as a meeting with the Woolloomooloo Community Gardens Group was held to provide feedback for the draft concept design.
42. There were nine submissions during the pre-consultation period.
43. The public consultation/exhibition involved the following:
  - (a) A letter sent to 599 local residents about the concept design and inviting them to provide feedback.
  - (b) A stakeholder email sent to local stakeholders, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal. The email was sent to:
    - (i) Youth and Family Connect;
    - (ii) Juanita Neislon Community Centre;
    - (iii) Plunkett Street Public School; and
    - (iv) Woolloomooloo Community Garden.
  - (c) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans for the consultation from 20 July to 24 August 2020. One hundred and sixty-eight individual users viewed the page.
  - (d) Two Have Your Say A2 panels were installed in the park notifying the park users of the proposed works, providing contact details of the Design Manager and a web address to the SydneyYourSay page.
  - (e) An online briefing was scheduled for 4 August. Two people registered but did not attend. An additional meeting was scheduled for 25 August and three residents attended.
44. There were 13 submission received during the consultation feedback. This included submissions via email and the online feedback form.
45. The proposed works were well supported by the community and the responses highlighted that the playground and its play offering is well used and well loved.
46. There were two main areas of comments including: broader comments on the park amenity and its layout, and specific requests around play equipment. These have been addressed specifically in the Engagement Feedback Table (refer to Attachment C).

47. Key feedback included:
- (a) support for upgrading the playground with nine of the submissions requesting specific play equipment/elements;
  - (b) one submission requested that the play area remain fully fenced;
  - (c) sixty per cent of respondents supported the fitness equipment; and
  - (d) two submissions raised concern about anti-social behaviour in the park with the placement of seating, picnic facilities and the proposed new Pring Street entry.
48. In response to community feedback, the following will be incorporated/investigated in detailed design as noted in Attachment C:
- (a) provide additional play equipment where possible, minimise rubber soft-fall and maximise play experiences;
  - (b) provide additional low playground fencing to fully enclose the play area;
  - (c) review the layout and material of the Pring Street corner bleacher to address concerns about people congregating there;
  - (d) relocate the two seats adjacent to the tennis courts to the barbecue area. Review the provision of picnic table; and
  - (e) a lighting design will be prepared as part of the detailed design and will reflect City of Sydney Lights Code requirements for park lighting.
49. Indigenous community engagement and institution/organisational consultation was led by the Indigenous Cultural Consultant engaged as part of this upgrade process.
50. As part of the next stage of the upgrade, the Indigenous Cultural Consultant will work with the project team to identify how the key themes and narratives identified from the consultation should be implemented into the project design and delivery.

**AMIT CHANAN**

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