Bunbury Water Playground Consultation Summary September/October 2014
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Overview

The City of Bunbury is in the preliminary stages of designing and building a water playground on the Leschenault Inlet in Bunbury. This project forms part of the Leschenault Inlet Master Plan, however no funding has been committed by Council at this stage.

There are a number of water playgrounds across Western Australia, predominantly in the northern region where it is hot year-round. Recently in Western Australia water playgrounds have been installed in the Perth CBD and Cockburn Central.

In Bunbury, there has been pressure from the community to install a water playground which has seen a Facebook page created specifically for the purposes of lobbying.

Prior to commencing the design process the City conducted community consultation throughout the months of September and October 2014. The aim of this consultation was to gauge support and ascertain what equipment and supporting infrastructure both children and adults would like. The parameters set were the location, that it would be focussed on play as an integral part of a child’s development, and that it should be able to be utilised year-round.

Examples of other water playgrounds in Western Australia were included as part of the consultation process in order to clearly demonstrate the project scope. Also available were examples of the types of equipment available from WALGA preferred suppliers Waterplay Solutions Corp and Water Features by Design.

The consultation was widely advertised including:
- Information on the City of Bunbury website;
- Distribution to all members of the City of Bunbury Household Panel (486 members);
- Two media releases to all local media that attracted radio and newspaper coverage, both print and online;
- Information included in five editions of the City Focus;
- Article in the City of Bunbury e-newsletter (total of 548 subscribers);
- Information emailed to 14 schools and family centres in Bunbury;
- Regular Facebook posts on the City of Bunbury page, including a paid post that attracted 90 shares, 112 comments, 613 likes, and a total reach of 19,824.
- Posters, surveys, and boxes were displayed at the South West Sports Centre, Bunbury Wildlife Park, City and Withers Libraries, and the Customer Service Centre.

It is envisaged that the community will have further opportunities to comment as the process continues.

Methods and Results

Survey

(Submissions open from 9 September 2014 to 12 October 2014)

A short survey was available online and at the South West Sports Centre, Bunbury Wildlife Park, City and Withers Libraries, and the Customer Service Centre. It was distributed via the Household Panel at the start of the submission period and to new members upon subscriptions.

The survey comprised 10 questions and respondents were asked to rank their preferred equipment from one to 14 and based on the example types provided. Respondents were also asked to rank their
preferred supporting infrastructure, identify the age of their children, make suggestions as to safety and accessibility features, and select if they would like it to be free or at a cost.

A total of 322 people completed the survey.

Q1: Would you like a water playground in Bunbury?
Results: 100% of respondents said yes

Q2: In what age bracket is your child/children (or children that you care for)?
Results: There was a fairly even distribution of people with children aged in the toddler, child, and youth brackets, and 15% indicated that they did not have or care for any children. These results indicate that the water playground should have an equal distribution of equipment appealing to each of the age-groups.

<p>| In what age bracket is your child/children (or children that you care for)? |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Toddler (0-4 years)</th>
<th>Child (5-8 years)</th>
<th>Youth (9 years+)</th>
<th>I don't have/care for any children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Q3: What is your favourite water playground equipment (1 being most favourite, 14 being least favourite)?
Results: The most popular equipment type was bucket spillers, followed by ground sprays then slide-activity centres. A full list in order of popularity is:
1. Bucket spillers
2. Ground sprays
3. Slide activity centres
4. Activators
5. Characters and play arches
6. Water canons
7. Toddler-friendly
8. Spraying objects
9. Spirals and arches
10. Spray poles
11. Flowers and trees
12. Fibreglass animals/objects
13. Columns

Q4: What other equipment would you like?
Results: There were 100 suggestions received, with some distinct themes among the comments. Features or equipment that were mentioned four times or more were (in order of popularity):
1. Water slides
2. Swimming and/or wading pool
3. Things for older children and adults
4. Themed-based on our region. Ideas included dolphins, whales, the ocean, crabs, mangrove, ships, port, trees, lizards, kangaroos, fish, and sharks.
5. Shade
6. Dry playground areas
7. Natural features
8. Interactive features
9. Toddler-friendly areas separated from other areas

Q5: Would you like to see playground equipment or facilities that can be used year-round included as part of the project?
Results: 93.2% of respondents would like the water playground to be used year-round. 109 suggestions were received, with some distinct themes among the comments. Features or equipment that were mentioned four times or more were (in order of popularity):
1. Regular (non-wet) playground
2. Undercover or shade area
3. Nature play
4. Slides and equipment that can be used wet or dry
5. Toilets
6. Climbing equipment
7. Heated water
8. Swings
9. Trampolines
10. Cafe

Q6: Which support infrastructure do you consider most important (1 being most important, 12 being least important)?
Results: The infrastructure considered most important was toilets, followed by shade structures then BBQs. A full list in order of popularity is:
1. Toilets
2. Shade structures
3. BBQs
4. Change rooms
5. Tables and chairs
6. Fencing
7. Water fountain (drinking water)
8. Cafe
9. CCTV monitoring
10. Proximity to parking
11. Open space

Q7: What other supporting infrastructure would you like at the water playground?
Results: There were 85 other suggestions received, with some relating also to question 5 – equipment or facilities that can be used year-round. Features or equipment that were mentioned four times or more were (in order of popularity):
1. Bike racks
2. Wheelchair accessibility
3. Café or place to purchase coffee/food/drink
4. Trees/gardens
5. Activities in the Inlet, such as a jetty, paddleboats, canoes.
6. Nature play
7. Shade

Q8: What safety and/or accessibility features do you consider essential?

Results: 203 responses were received, with some distinct themes among the comments. The top 10 features mentioned were (in order of popularity):
1. Fencing
2. Wheelchair and pram accessibility
3. Non-slip surfaces
4. Shade
5. Lifeguards
6. Separate areas for different areas, particularly for toddlers
7. CCTV
8. First-aid station
9. Sponge flooring
10. Lighting

Q9: Would you be prepared to pay a small fee per child to use the water playground to offset operating costs?

Results: A majority of respondents said they would be willing to make a gold-coin donation (48.8%), followed by people considering it should be free (30.7%), those who would pay $5-$10 (16.8%), and $10 or more (3.7%). This data indicates the water playground should either be free or $1-$2 to use, or free to use with a donation box for those who choose to contribute.

Q10: If you have any other suggestions or concerns that you would like considered as part of this consultation please comment below.

Results: 128 people responded to this question, however due to the variety of responses there was no obvious themes for the purposes of this report.
Community meetings

Four community meetings were held at locations across Bunbury during the school holidays. At these sessions Officers were on-hand to discuss the project, surveys were available, and a board was set-up with pictures of the equipment types and children were encouraged to vote for their favourite three equipment types by placing a dot sticker on the pictures.

The locations were:
- As part of the FUNbury event at the Accessible Playground on 4 October.
- Bunbury City Library on 6 October.
- Withers Community Library on 7 October.
- South West Sports Centre as part of its open day on 12 October.

Over the course of the four sessions 642 dot stickers were placed on equipment items, equating to 214 people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Playground equipment</th>
<th>Number of Votes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spirals and arches</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucket spillers</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters and play arches</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slide activity centres</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibreglass animals/objects</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water cannons</td>
<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ground sprays</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spray poles</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flowers and trees</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler-friendly</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spraying objects</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activators</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Columns</td>
<td>4</td>
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Facebook

84 people made comments on Facebook across the City of Bunbury, Bunbury Mail and Radiowest posts. There were 21 Facebook comments indicating people would like a water park, in particular Bali’s Waterbom Park, Adventure World, or adult slides and wave-makers. Many comments also requested things to do for teenagers and adults. Shade was mentioned 11 times and water buckets, accessible equipment, and a kiosk were mentioned multiple times.

Schools

Councillors Steele and Morris were involved in making presentations to children at Maiden’s Park Primary School and Bunbury Primary School. The children were invited to write to council and draw pictures about what they would like at the playground. A total of 49 letters with drawings were received, and a summary of responses are in the tables below.
**Written/emailed submissions**

A total of five submissions were made in writing or via email. Three of these included photographs of water playgrounds the respondents had visited previously and enjoyed. There was also one submission from the Community Access Committee.

**Summary of Findings**

The consultation revealed key equipment, facilities and safety features the community would like to see at the water playground.

The most popular pieces of water playground equipment were bucket spillers, water cannons, slide activity centres, ground sprays and character/play arches.

Question two on the survey revealed a fairly even spread of ages of children, and the results of the safety features revealed a lot of people would like separate areas for specific age groups, particularly for toddlers. There were also a large number of people who asked for equipment or facilities suitable for teenagers and adults, so this should be taken into consideration as part of the design of the playground and supporting infrastructure.

While having a café ranked only eight out of 11 in question 7, having somewhere to purchase food and drink was mentioned frequently in the open comments field. Suggestions ranged from restaurants through to food vendors or coffee vans.

Other popular suggestions for supporting infrastructure was bike racks and bicycle paths, as well as toilets, BBQs, tables and chairs and change rooms. Nature play, trees, gardens and grassed areas were also mentioned frequently and there were multiple requests for environmentally-friendly features such as solar lighting and recycled water.

In terms of safety features, fencing were overwhelmingly the most sought-after feature followed by accessibility for wheelchairs and prams. The Community Access Committee made a formal submission as part of this consultation and their recommendations and inclusion as part of the design process should be considered in order to ensure the playground is accessible for all abilities.

Shade was ranked highly for supporting infrastructure as well as in the safety comments, indicating this should be an essential component of the playground. Other popular safety features were non-slip or soft-fall flooring, and lifeguards and/or first aid stations.

A large majority of people wanted the playground to be utilised year-round, with popular suggestions being the inclusion of dry playgrounds or slides that can be used wet or dry; nature play; climbing equipment; and a café or kiosk.

**Lessons Learned**

Overall, the consultation process was successful with a large number of adults and children contributing. Of particular success were the visual examples and opportunities for children to participate in a hands-on and visual way through the use of the sticker dots on the board. In future phases of this consultation it is recommended visual examples are utilised to capture the minds of children while clearly demonstrating the project scope, thus managing expectations.
The face-to-face component of the consultation also proved successful and was an excellent opportunity to be active within our community. It was very beneficial to be able to speak to people one-on-one about the project and explain the scope, location, and likely timeframes.

Despite providing visual examples some people still commented they would like large adult slides or wave makers, particularly via Facebook. Moving forward it is important to continue to emphasise in all communications and future consultation that the project scope is for a free or low-cost community playground, and not a theme park.

**Next Steps**

1. Prepare Expression of Interest (EIO) documentation October - Week four
2. Advertise EOI November - Week one to three
3. Assess EOI November - Week four
5. Public consultation stage two January - Week two to five
6. Finalise report on consultation February - Week one
7. Report to Council February – Week two to three
8. Finalise Business Paper February - Week four
9. Seek grant funding for final design and construct March - June

The Expression of Interest is to advertised on the WALGA Tenders on Line site with the outcomes sought being for companies to provide:

- Company profile and staff experience relative to the project
- Demonstrated capacity to design and install a water playground
- Design flair and flexibility
- Provision of a concept plan based on City of Bunbury consultation outcomes
- Provision of indicative costing including operating and life-cycle costs.