

8 August 2023

Deputation relating to Ceasing the proposed work on the Thompkins Park Equipment Renewal

Good evening your Worship and Councillors. My name is Umberto Mondello and I reside at 5 Dunkley Ave Applecross with my wife and 3 young boys. I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present the views of close to 200 City of Melville rate payers regarding the proposed upgrade to the exercise equipment at Tompkins Park.

During June, a number of Dunkley Avenue neighbours and I met with Diana Gomez and Jeff Bird from the Natural Areas & Parks regarding our concerns with what has been proposed. We were advised the only course of action available to revisit the proposed renewal was through a petition. Accordingly, our petition sought signatures from City of Melville ratepayers to cease the proposed work and re-visit the consultation process.

Regarding the community consultation process, Diana advised at our meeting that all residents within a 500m radius received physical letters in the mail regarding the phase 1 consultation and proposed changes. However, to the best of our knowledge and during our collection of signatures, it became apparent that many within this area didn't receive this letter. In fact, my wife and I at 5 Dunkley Ave where the only residence between 1-9 Dunkley to receive the letter dated the 8th of June 2023 advising a decision had been made. This means, at a minimum, key stakeholders were not given an opportunity to review and comment on these proposed changes.

We do not believe that the community consultation process by which the City of Melville conducted gives a mandate for dramatically changing the current format. I will briefly refer you back to key respondent numbers in the two phases of consultation that was conducted by the City of Melville.

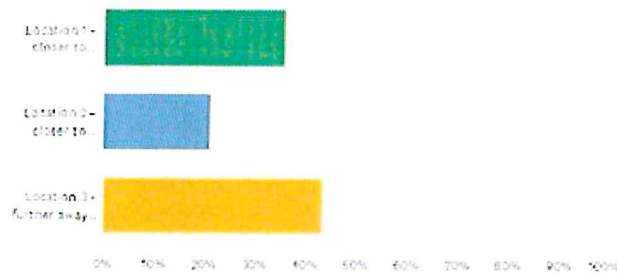
- Phase 1, the initial consultation dates the 28th of November 2022 there was a total of 78 respondents. 32 respondents (41%) which was the majority voted in favour for

the equipment to remain in the current position. This would mean along with our 197 signatures a further 32 were in favour of the current location totalling 229.

- In Phase 2 of the Council’s consultation process which only received 62 responses, the question (Q4) regarding location acknowledged that the majority preferred current location, however made reference to the lack of shading which potentially may have skewed the community’s responses. Its noteworthy that this question was design to look for a shady location, yet the final location has no shade and if they were to have a shade sail this would be a lot more visually intrusive.

Q4 During the first stage of this engagement, we asked where you would like the equipment to be located. Most respondents prefer the current location along the footpath, while some want the equipment relocated closer to the playground. Considering that no shade sails will be installed over this exercise equipment, please consider the location options presented and select your favourite location.

Answered: 62 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Location 1 - closer to playground	35 32%	22
Location 2 - closer to existing footpath	30 27%	18
Location 3 - further away from footpath	42 55%	27
TOTAL		62

When compared to nearly 200 signatures of City of Melville ratepayers who are all in support to retaining the current equipment positioning, the proposed format does not reflect the community views. It is noteworthy to point out that these handwritten signatures were obtained in a very short period of time compared to the City of Melville’s community consultation timeframe which spanned over approx. 5 months. Additionally, if our petition was allowed to be accessed over a digital medium, such as the City of Melville’s use of Facebook, we are confident we would have been able to access more consultation and support from ratepayers.

I will now discuss the Petition and community concerns over the cluster format that were discussed during the collation of signatures that we would like the Council to consider.

We would like to firstly point out that there was no opposition raised to having the equipment upgraded. Some respondents didn't feel it necessary but certainly none were directly opposed to renewing the equipment.

However, it was highlighted numerous times in our collection of signatures that the proposed location of the cluster format will directly impact the natural aesthetic and current use of the area and it is not in the community interest. This section of Tompkins Park is a highly popular location in all seasons for picnics and social activities. On the weekends, especially during favourable weather, this area is full of groups of people enjoying this wonderful section of the foreshore. Whilst not a huge area compared to some other foreshore picnicking locations, it is perfectly formed for its use by the community. It's popularity is no doubt due to views of the river, wonderful selection of bird wildlife and well-spaced trees to find pockets of shade for multiple groups to sit comfortably. It truly offers the best of nature in Applecross and we have observed a variety of age groups utilising the space. The playground provides a safe and importantly gated area for children unlike other similar locations. The BBQ and toilet facilities are amenities that make this area additionally attractive. Finally, another vital aspect of this location is the large "oval style" area to the left of the trees (when facing the river) which allows for break-out activities such as kicking a footy or soccer ball, playing fetch with dogs or other similar activities. The proposed location and cluster format of the exercise equipment would substantially take up much of the space of both the oval and shade. It would certainly break up the natural flow of the space and does not align with the current popularity of use for the area.

Please Refer to Annexure A for examples of the community activities in this area

There are a number of stakeholders living across the road and within short walking distance from the existing equipment. Many have lived here before the original equipment was installed in the linear formation that now stands. This formation has had minimal intrusion

into our lives or views. In fact, it is wonderful to see people walk or ride past and stop to use one or more pieces of equipment. It works so well in its current formation as users are spread out and have no interaction, intimidation or issues with other users which may detract them from using more traditional venues of accessing exercising equipment such as a gym. Most users are on their own and do not come in groups. The format works well with the current use of the whole area on which it sits without detracting from picnicking groups and other recreational uses by the public.

Another major issue for that was discussed during the collation of signatures relates to a welfare concern. There are general concerns that the cluster format acts as a centralised area that may attract unruly people to loiter at all hours of the day and night. Especially considering there is the facility of the toilet. A further concern is the cluster gym will attract commercially organised groups which will not allow for the public to use at certain times. Furthermore, parking will likely be an issue as this cluster is more designed as a destination point and many will come via car adversely affecting traffic congestion and parking on Dunkley Ave.

We feel that a local Council's main duty is to represent and listen to the local community's wants and needs. With such limited amount of direct involvement and responses from the community and key stakeholders, we feel the city has incorrectly judged the importance of the current use of this area to the community. We believe our petition is an accurate representation across different demographics to identify that the proposed cluster format and location will not be in the best interests of the community. Thank you for your time.

Annexure A

Location for picnics and families to enjoy celebrations.



Group Sporting activities, in break out area next to picnic area and playground

