

Melton Botanic Garden Nature Play Space Community Feedback

Between the July and August 2021 Melton City Council shared with the local community of Melton Botanic Garden, Melton a proposed landscape plan to create a nature play space to complement the existing garden.

Feedback was collected via an online survey, hard copy flyer, email and phone. A drop-in session at the Melton Botanic Garden was scheduled but had to be cancelled due to the Victorian State Government's outdoor gathering restrictions at the time. An online engagement session was held with the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden and its members. A total of 28 responses were received from the community, in addition to the feedback from the Friends Group members. Below is a summary of all the feedback that was collected.

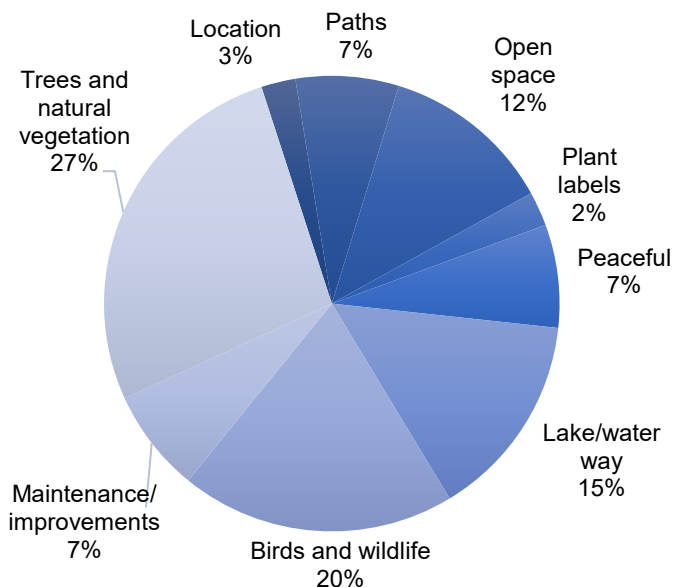
This feedback helps Council to understand what is important to the community and why, as well as identify any other opportunities for improvements. The feedback was reviewed and was used to update the play space design.

Project Scope

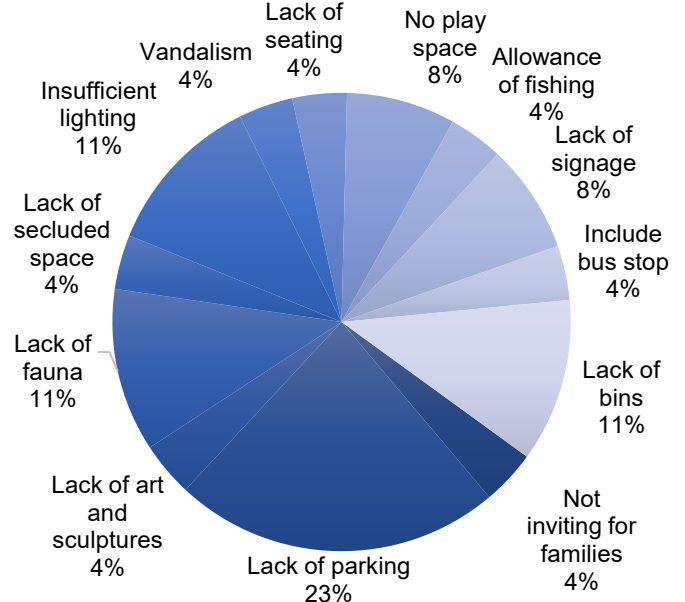
The project scope is to deliver a playspace that will complement the Garden, focusing on natural elements, utilising rocks, logs and plants to create an environment that fosters imaginative play as well as providing components that support gross motor development, cognitive and social skills in children.

Project Proposal Community Survey Feedback

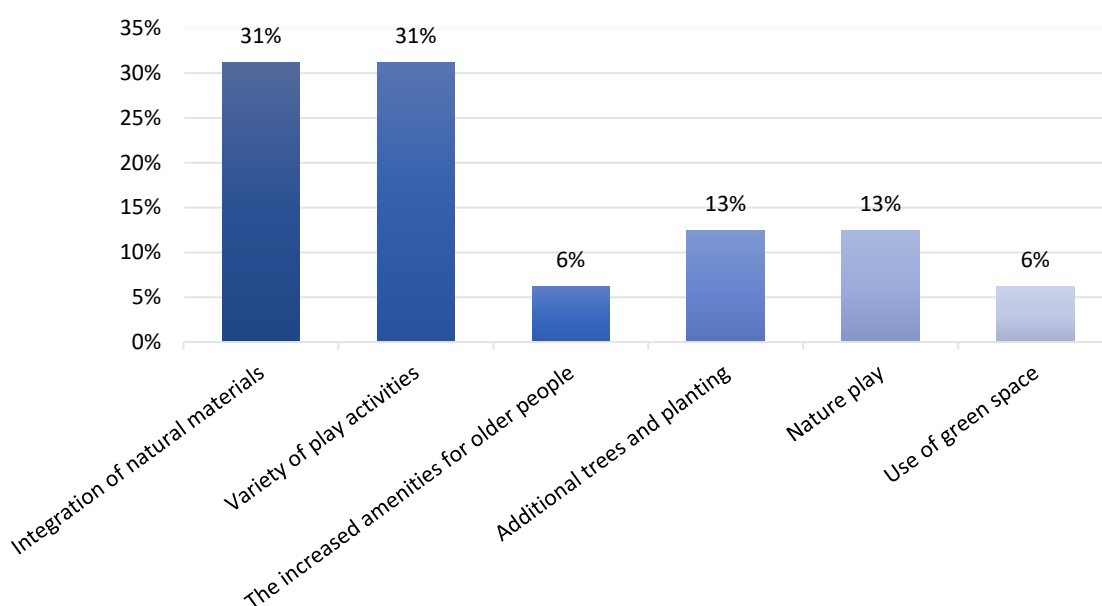
What the community loves
about the Garden in its
current form



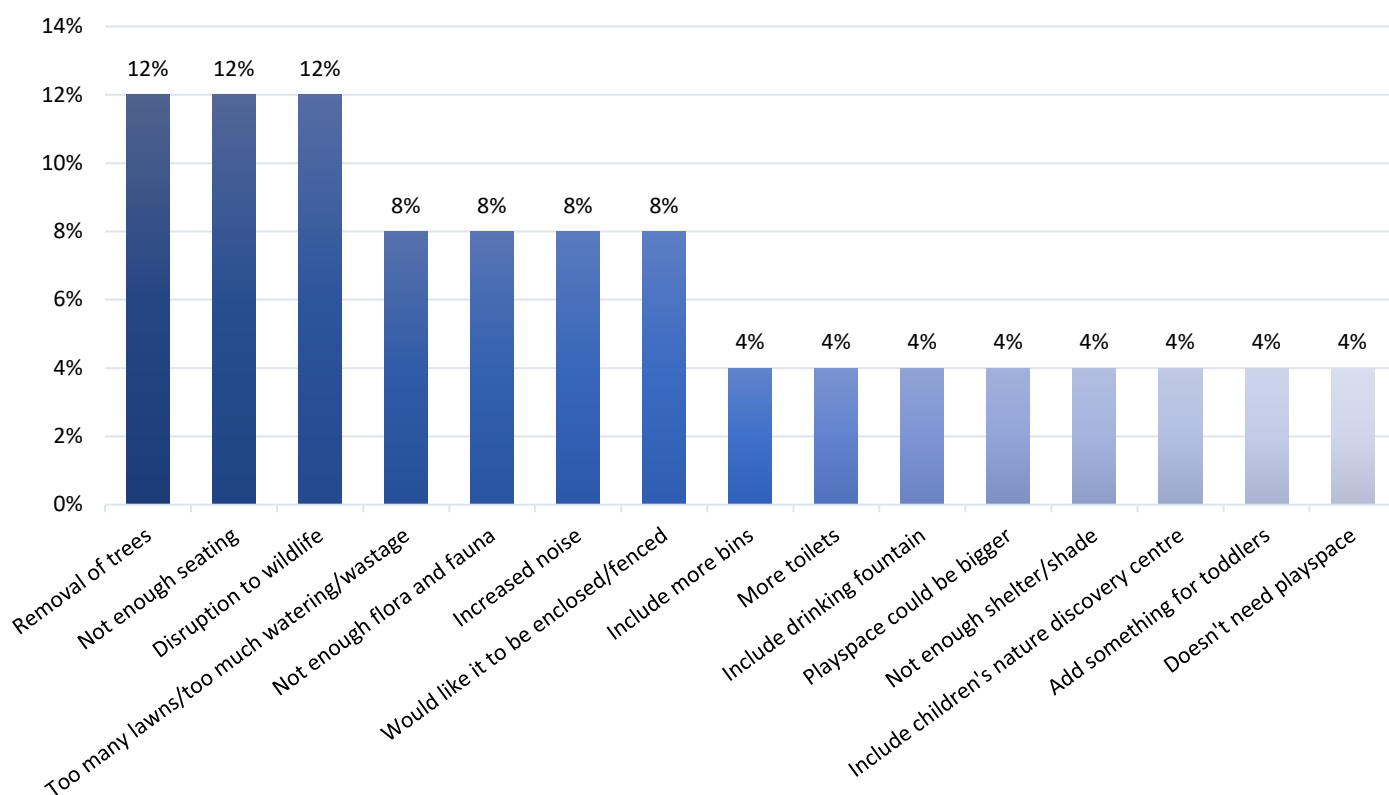
What the community didn't
like about the Garden in its
current form



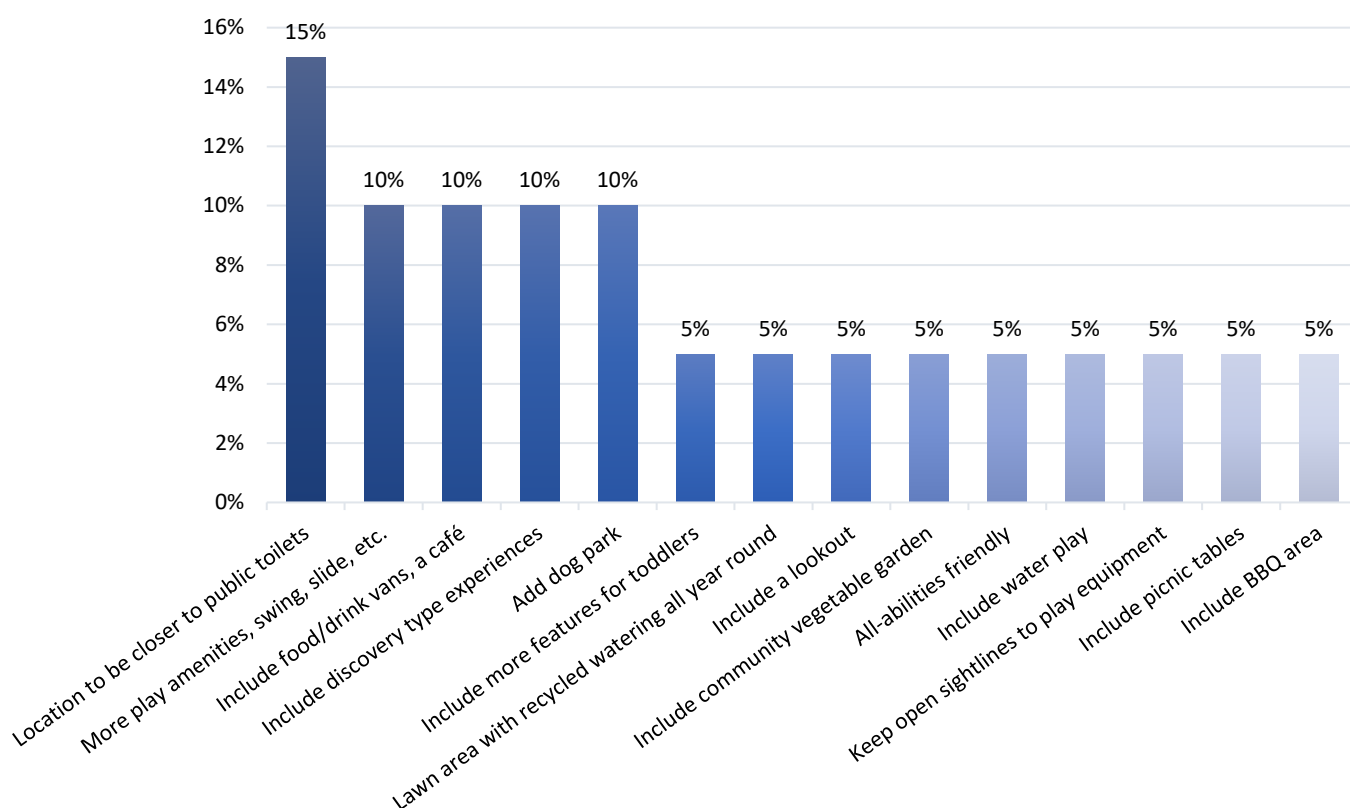
What the community likes about the proposed landscape plan



What the community doesn't like about the proposed landscape plan



The communities suggestions for other improvements



Community Feedback Summary

The below table is a summary of the community's suggestions and other feedback. Council have reviewed and provided a response as it relates to the project's scope and budget.

Subject	Community Feedback	No# of people in support of this comment	Melton City Council Review Response
General	Support the overall proposed design	25	
	MBG should be a natural habitat for plants and animals without any active play space.	4	The playspace is being delivered as per the Melton Botanic Garden 2009 Master Plan. The play space design will be modified with respect and consideration of the environment of botanic garden and other users interests.
	The scope of play space could be bigger	1	The size of play space considers the other users, purpose, available space and functionality of the botanic garden.
	Minimise the disruption to the birdlife under construction works	1	This has been considered in the design. We don't anticipate there to be any disruption to wildlife. There will also be an Environmental Management Plan in place during construction.
Playspace and Nature Play	Inclusive, accessible by all capabilities	2	There are elements in the playspace that will be accessible and inclusive. All our parks are also designed to be DDA compliant.
	Include water play	1	Water play is included in the design.
	Climbing rocks or similar for teenage	1	There are rocks included in the design and there are balance logs and ropes, log hut and tower.
	Include discovery play, imagination play	1	This is included in the design through the planting, sand and water play, and tower.
	Retain passive surveillance to the cubby and labyrinth	1	There will be clear views to all equipment with parts of the equipment kept open to avoid anti-social behaviour.

	Play space to be enclosed as it is too close to the water	2	The playspace elements close to the water have been removed. Shrubs and grasses will be planted to the south of the playspace to discourage access to the water.
	Include swings and slides	1	A slide and climbing equipment are included in the design.
	Ensure equipment is robust	1	The equipment proposed is very robust.
	More shades in the playground to protect kids from sun	1	Mature trees will be planted for shade.
	Make the park like Frontier Park in Woodlea	1	Similar elements from Frontier Park such as timber/rope play equipment, rock/timber edging, water hand pump and a sand pit will be installed. Frontier park is a district level play space and designed to cater for a higher number of visitors.
Vegetation	More trees and screening plants at the border to reduce the noise from freeway	2	This is outside the scope of the project and has not been considered in this project. The playspace is located 250metres from the freeway.
	Extend lawn space to play area	1	A lawn has not been able to be included in these works, however the existing grass area could be upgraded in the future.
	More canopy trees	4	This has been considered in the design with 20+ additional trees to be installed.
	Less lawn due to its poor performance in other parks	3	A lawn has not been able to be included in these works. However Council specify different grass in new park works to ensure better performance.
	Incorporate a fruit and vegetable garden	1	Council do not typically install edible gardens into public spaces. Melton's Community Garden Policy provides direction and guidance should a community member or group be seeking to install one.
	Retain existing trees	3	Considerable effort has been made to retain as many existing trees as possible. 20+ additional trees will also be installed.
Facilities	More seats	4	Seating will be provided in the form of benches, boulders and log seats.
	More bins	4	We will review this in the design. There is an existing bin in each of the nearby picnic shelter.
	Solar lighting	1	Lighting to paths in Botanic Garden have recently been installed.
	Include toilet near the play space	3	There is an existing public toilet less than 100m away from the playspace.
	Include a BBQ	1	There is an existing picnic shelter with picnic tables and a double BBQ unit adjacent to the playspace.
Other Comments	More car parking spaces	6	This is outside the scope of the project and has not been considered in this project.
	More signage to tie in with the garden	1	Signage will be considered a part of the scope of the project.
	Off leash dog park	1	This is outside the scope of the project. Melton City Council is preparing a Dog Off-Lead Strategy that looks at the appropriate locations and distribution of dog off-lead spaces within the municipality.
	food/drink vans, coffee shop	2	This is outside the scope of the project and has not been considered in this project. Melton City Council is preparing a Masterplan review of the Melton Botanic Garden that looks at the Garden and new infrastructure developments.
	More enough fauna	1	New planting is included in the design which should support local fauna.
	Needs a bus stop	1	This is beyond the scope of the project.
	Pest control (ants)	1	This is beyond the scope of the project.
	Include a bird lookout	1	A play tower overlooking the Main Lake is included in the design.

The Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden Engagement Feedback Summary

The below table is a summary of the Friends of the Melton Botanic Garden's suggestions and other feedback. Council have reviewed and provided a response as it relates to the project's scope and budget.

Subject	Community Feedback	No# of people in support of this comment	Melton City Council Review Response
General	DDA compliance	2	There are elements in the play space that will be accessible and inclusive. All our parks are also designed to be DDA compliant.
	This is not nature play by the definitions provided.	1	We will improve the design to better connect the play space with nature
	Engage children in the design of the play space	8	Unfortunately, we are not able to do a physical community consultation due to the restrictions of lockdown however they were able to participate in the online consultation with consent from their parent or guardian. Melton City Council have also drawn on the feedback from the previous 5 years of engagement we have undertaken with children on play spaces within the municipality and applied those learnings to this project.
Nature Play Space	Enable collecting bugs for play	1	Particular plants that attract butterfly and insects have been included in the design.
	Adventure play and being challenged	1	Adventure play is included in the design through the balancing equipment, climbing equipment and tower.
	Enable collecting leaves for play	3	There are different tree species included in the design with different leaves.
	Water Play, muddy puddles	2	Water play is included in the design.
	Rocks, boulders, big trees climbing	2	Rocks and logs are included in the design for climbing.
	Include a flying fox	1	This is against the definition of nature play.
	Rope bridge	1	A rope tunnel and balance ropes are included in the design.
	Passive surveillance – no hiding holes	1	There will be clear views to all equipment with parts of the equipment kept open to avoid anti-social behaviour.
	No plastic equipment	2	Play equipment are primarily made of timber, ropes and steel. The slide is made of fibreglass.
	Reuse fallen down tree branches as furniture	1	Log seats and edging made of storm-struck trees are included in the design
	Include imagination play	1	The flexibility in the equipment type and it not being too prescriptive, allows and promotes children to use their imagination.
	Include log steppers	1	Log steppers are already included in the design.
	Include movable materials for collecting	1	Pebbles, sand and plant materials can be collected as part of play from the dry creek bed, sand pit and sensory plants.
	Include aboriginal elements	1	Due to the timing of the project and the time needed to ensure Traditional Owners are accurately and respectfully represent, we weren't able to include aboriginal elements in this project, however we are very supportive of this and can include it in the future. Melton City Council are also engaging with Traditional Owners to manage the sites cultural heritage appropriately. Currently, there are already existing indigenous themed garden areas in the botanic garden.
	Include activities for school holiday program/workshop	1	This is outside the scope of the project and has not been considered in this project.
	Include a mini volcano		This is not deemed suitable for the nature play space and has not been included in the design.

	Include musical instruments like woodwind chimes	1	These were considered in the initial design but were not included in the final design. They were deemed inappropriate for the location due to the tranquil atmosphere of the botanic garden and possible disruption to wildlife they might cause.
	Need constraints at the boundary of play space to stop kids damage trees / plants outside the play area.	1	This will be considered in the design.
Vegetation	Include screen planting but still be mindful of view lines	2	Trees and large shrubs are proposed in strategic locations to provide shade and enclosure.
	Include sensory plants	1	There will be a variety of sensory plants included in the soft landscaping.
	Retain existing trees	1	Considerable effort has been made to retain as many existing trees as possible. 20+ additional trees will also be installed.
	Ensure lawn with good maintenance, and drainage	1	A lawn has not been able to be included in these works, however the existing grass area could be upgraded in the future.
	Don't include weedy species like willow.	1	Willow or other invasive weed species are not included.
	Exclude lawn space	2	A lawn has not been able to be included in these works, however the existing grass area could be upgraded in the future.
Facility	Seating of various heights for all abilities	2	Seats with backrests and armrests are going to be provided, in addition to informal seats made of logs.
	Don't include bins around play space	1	Bins are not included in the play space.
	Don't include too much signage	1	The only signage that was considered in this project was plant labels.
	Fencing to creek side to keep kids away from water.	1	The play space elements close to the water have been removed. Shrubs and grasses will be planted to the south of the play space to discourage access to the water.
Others	Protect birds and vegetations during construction works	1	This has been considered in the design. We don't anticipate there to be any disruption to wildlife. There will also be an Environmental Management Plan in place during construction.
	Encourage local resources for logs/rocks.	1	Log seats and edging made of storm-struck trees are included in the design