

# Manly Lagoon Reserve Landscape Plan (draft)

## Stage 1 Community Engagement Report

March 2018

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### Executive Summary

A first stage of community consultation was undertaken to help inform the design brief for preparing a draft Landscape Plan for Manly Lagoon Park.

A number of key findings were distilled from the community's feedback relating to lighting, landscaping, the natural environment, connectivity and dogs.

Further investigations on lighting and environmental aspects are to be carried out to address community concerns as well as careful consideration of all suggestions for improvements during the design process.

### Background

The Plan of Management (PoM) for Lagoon Park, Manly was published in 2001.

A lighting system was trialled by Council in 2016 along the shared pathway in the reserve. The adopted Walk Manly Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan 2017 included a recommendation for the implementation of lighting of the shared pathway through the reserve.

An ecology report on native fauna in the area was also prepared at the time to respond to environmental concerns raised in the trial.

In 2017, Council recommended that a facilities (landscape) plan be developed to address park functions and conflicting uses in Lagoon Park.

Council undertook extensive community consultation (Stage 1) to better understand the ways in which the community use this open space corridor and to identify opportunities for improvements.

The landscape plan is to include lighting of the shared pathway, which is a funded component of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan, and therefore would be implemented as a first stage of delivery of the landscape plan.

This report documents the key findings of the stage 1 community engagement for the draft Landscape Plan for Lagoon Park.

The feedback collected will inform the design brief for producing the Landscape Plan.

## Engagement objectives and approach

The engagement objectives for the first stage of public consultation for the Manly Lagoon Park Landscape plan were to:

- identify ways the community use the space, what they love about the reserve and opportunities to improve the area
- inform the community of the installation of lighting in the reserve as identified in the Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (2017)

Stage 1 engagement included the following:

Date	Activity
8 Feb 2018	Project webpage published
8 Feb 2018	Email to Council engagement database >17,000 addresses
Prior to 9 Feb 2018	Letterbox drop to surrounding residents Onsite project signage
10 Feb 2018	Manly Daily notice
14 Feb 2018	Project webpage updated Email sent to all people who had made a submission to date
17 Feb 2018	Onsite drop in session held
22 Feb 2018	Project webpage updated in response to feedback from the onsite drop in session Email sent to all people who had made a submission to date
22 Feb 2018	Email to Council engagement database >17,000 addresses
11 Mar 2018	Stage 1 engagement comments period closed

## Key findings: Stage 1 engagement

During the feedback period from 8 February to 11 March 2018, Council received 220 online submissions and 17 written comments.

A petition for the restriction of dog off-leash areas with 28 signatures was also received.

Approximately 30 people attended the drop in session held at Manly Lagoon Reserve on 17 February 2018.

Following the Stage 1 engagement period, all community feedback was reviewed and summarised in the table below according to the key themes – lighting, landscaping, natural environment, connectivity and dogs.

### Lighting

Twenty seven percent of all responses related to the proposed lighting plan. The dominant concern was that the proposed lighting will result in anti-social behaviour, will impact nocturnal animals and affect the sleep quality of nearby residents.

Other feedback identified concerns about the aesthetic impact of lighting on the natural environment. There was support for 'low key, unobtrusive lighting', sensitively placed that avoided impact on the adjoining properties.

## **Landscaping/infrastructure**

Comments spoke about the reserve as a peaceful, natural park which was popular with families for picnics, cycling, and walking.

Twenty-five percent of comments received suggested landscaping or infrastructure improvements or additions to the reserve such as more seating, showers, barbeques, signage, upgrades and maintenance of the gym equipment and the installation of shade and drinking fountains.

A few respondents wanted the reserve to remain unchanged.

## **Natural Environment**

The online survey results showed that the reserve is a valued natural asset, although it was noted that the foreshore vegetation/wildlife habitat was in need of protection and the water quality required improving.

Environmental protection was important to 20% of respondents. The area was noted for its flora and fauna including birds, bats, possums, bandicoots and frogs as well as plant species and patches of bushland. Several respondents noted the area as being particularly habitable for tawny frogmouths.

The responses identified a community concern with balancing the recreational use of the area with protective environmental measures. Multiple respondents identified the use of lighting as a threat to the nocturnal wildlife species in the area.

## **Connectivity**

The paths and connections through the park between Queenscliff Beach and Pittwater Road was included in 12% of comments. People said they loved the accessibility and functionality as a shared, multi-use space. Facilities such as a shared bike track, playground equipment and exercise amenities were also noted as benefits of the area. Multiple respondents valued the area as a safe and encouraging space for exercise and recreation for a range of different age groups.

Suggested improvements to the path systems include the widening of the shared path, the addition of a separate path and the relocation of the path closer to the water. Improved signage and speed bumps were mentioned to help prevent conflicts on the path and to ensure safety is maintained.

## **Off-leash dogs**

Thirteen percent of comments listed the lagoon reserve as family-friendly and an inviting space for dogs and dog owners.

While the majority of those value having a place to exercise unleashed dogs, a number of concerns were raised. These included reports of conflicts between people and dogs in the area and the need for control measures near the children's playground. A need was also raised to enforce behaviours to encourage owners to 'clean-up' after their pets.

A number of suggestions were made to address these issues. These included improved signage to inform and educate dog owners, restricting times for dogs to be off-leash, and measures to discourage dogs swimming in the lagoon.

## Table 1: Summary of comments

The submissions were separated by topic into 678 separate comments.

<p>Connectivity (12% of comments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support off-road shared path</li> <li>• Support widening shared path</li> <li>• Support separate cycleway</li> <li>• Re-route bikes away from reserve</li> <li>• Move shared path closer to water</li> <li>• Formalise shared path closer to water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage conflicts on track (including speed bumps on track to slow bikes, painting the word 'slow' on it, cyclists not wearing helmets)</li> </ul>
<p>Dogs (13% of comments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support area for dogs off-leash</li> <li>• Oppose area for dogs off-leash</li> <li>• Fence the area</li> <li>• Enforcement (including of dogs running people over and getting in the way of bikes, as well as poo pick ups)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand off-leash area to beach</li> <li>• Introduce time restrictions</li> <li>• relocate dog swim area away from playground</li> </ul>
<p>Landscaping/infrastructure (25% of comments)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's a peaceful quiet place (including family friendliness and that it's a relatively natural area; a low key passive area, that people share and coexist peacefully through this area)</li> <li>• Support open spaces</li> <li>• Like access to water</li> <li>• Retain tree cover (including removal of non-native trees)</li> <li>• Retain bike track and playground</li> <li>• Enhance playground (including shade/ rain protection; consider a water play area)</li> <li>• No overflow parking</li> <li>• Incorporate fishing platforms</li> <li>• Incorporate artwork</li> <li>• Consider a deck or boardwalk by the water</li> <li>• Ongoing maintenance (including cleansing, gym, spraying weeds in the grass, trimming trees, reducing impacts of broad leaf weeds)</li> <li>• General enhancements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Need: -</li> <li>- shade at gym</li> <li>- watering system</li> <li>- signage (way finding, interpretive including less signage as well)</li> <li>- bubblers (including western end and gym)</li> <li>- facilities for dog exercise (including a shower to rinse dogs after swimming)</li> <li>- more bbq areas (including picnic tables near existing bbq areas, or move existing bbqs away from dog area and shade)</li> <li>- more trees (including native flora)</li> <li>- showers near beach</li> <li>- separate dogs from gym</li> <li>- café</li> <li>- more litter bins</li> <li>- more parking</li> <li>- removal of barbecues</li> </ul>

Lighting (27% of comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the need and installation of lights</li> <li>• Install solar lighting</li> <li>• Avoid impact on adjoining properties</li> <li>• Request for more information - (including another trial. Another fauna study, why needed at all)</li> <li>• Lighting encourages antisocial behaviour</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for less bright lighting</li> <li>• Opposition to lighting</li> <li>• Impact to nocturnal animals</li> <li>• Lights are ugly</li> <li>• Restrict length of time lights are on at night</li> <li>• Safety and security – prevent antisocial behaviour (underneath bridge)</li> </ul>
Natural Environment (20% of comments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect natural environment by improving water quality (including selective dredging, stormwater management, entrance management, clearing lagoon edges, manage the entrance for environmental flow)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevent erosion (fence area near waterfront to restrict dogs)</li> </ul>
Support no change (3% of comments)		

## Conclusion

The lighting design would be developed on P4 lighting levels to deliver a safe cycling and pedestrian facility whilst addressing the community's concerns and minimise any perceived impacts.

An ecological survey and assessment of the lighting proposal is also being undertaken to address the community's concerns on the environment.