

Newcastle Voice Empire Park - skate park



Let's see some more trees for pedestrian shade

Yes, we think cycle racks will encourage people to leave the car at home

March 2010

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Executive Summary

The community consultation about the upgrade to Empire Park skate facility and batball court took place on 30 and 31 March 2010 at Cooks Hill Surf Club. There was intense public interest in the skate park and in the imminent release of the draft Newcastle Coastal Revitalisation Plan – a long-term plan for the coastal region.

All three sessions were filled to capacity, with a record total of 187 participants keen to discuss the decision-making process, details about the proposal for the skate facility, and the relationship of the skate park to other facilities within Empire Park and other coastal locations.

Community members heard from council management and a skate park designer and then discussed their specific requirements for the skate park and batball court proposal, worth approximately \$417,000.

A good deal of information was provided to the community about forthcoming plans and some non-skating local residents were relieved to see the scale and intent of the actual proposal. However, some participants in each of three sessions perceived that unanswered questions remained. Excellent attendance and heightened community interest are believed to have led to better outcomes for the draft proposal. A working party has been formed to fine tune the project during 2010.

Introduction

Council's *Newcastle Recreation Plan 2006-2016* gave rise to a review of all skate parks across the city from November 2008 to March 2009. The recommendations of that review were presented to Council and the Asset Board.

The project to build a federally funded skate park facility at Empire Park has been underway for several years. Extensive community consultation was undertaken before the creation of Newcastle Voice, the community reference panel

Federal funding was successfully obtained to the value of \$417,000, which led to the current round of consultation. These workshops were conducted to engage the local community, with all its disparate views, in the planning stages of the project. Construction of the park must be complete by the end of 2010 to meet funding requirements.

Report Purpose

This consultation sought to:

- Provide a status report on Empire Park (Master Plan)
- Engage key stakeholders before construction of new skate facility commences – defuse some misconceptions regarding a number of issues such as size and location of the facility.
- Provide a project update of the skate park upgrade, including a review of consultation to date.
- Share draft design plans and examples from other locations.
- Seek input from the community about desired modifications and requirements to finetune the draft design to increase its appeal for this location
- Inform residents and stakeholders of what is and what is not included in this construction
- Inform residents and stakeholders about what is happening in the immediate future at Empire Park (pathways, shelter and bbq)
- Inform and seek feedback from residents and stakeholders about the construction of a second batball court, as a component of this project.
- Seek expressions of interest

The information contained in this report will guide works towards the final design and project plan – including meetings of the Working Party to be formed for the purpose.

Scope of Consultation

The purpose of the community consultation is to increase the awareness in the community of the proposed work at Empire Park and to do so in a public, transparent way. All promotional tools used are included in Appendix III.

Information Distribution

A poster and information fact sheet were created and distributed. The poster was positioned at Bar Beach and in front of the Bar Beach Kiosk, at the Merewether Surf Lifesaving Club and in Empire Park. Over 200 information fact sheets were letterbox dropped to nearby residents (Memorial Drive, Bar Beach Drive, Parkway Avenue, Kilgour Avenue, Wrightson Avenue and cross streets), distributed at the Bar Beach Kiosk, by the beach inspector, at Dixon Park, and at Swell Café in Merewether.

Invitations to the three workshop sessions were sent to internal and external stakeholders. Invitations were also e-mailed to all Newcastle Voice members (over 1600 individuals) via e-mail as well as through the Newcastle Voice (MyVoice) newsletter.

The following key stakeholders were directly invited by mail, phone or email.

Organisations	Attended (Yes/No)
Cooks Hill Surf Lifesaving Club	Yes
Protect Empire Park	Yes
Merewether United Football Club	No
Newcastle hang gliders	Yes
Newcastle skateboard riders	Yes
Reid Park Tennis Club	No
Bar Beach Bowling Club	No
Cooks Hill Community Group	No
Cooks Hill Soccer Club	No
Darby Street Precinct	No
Empire Park Tennis Club	No
Merewether Carlton Rugby Union Club	No
Newcastle City and Eastern District Cricket	No
Newcastle District Cricket Association	No
Newcastle Souths Rugby League Club	No

Media

Throughout the consultation program, local media was used to inform the public about the workshop sessions. Specifically, a media release and 'This Week at Council' were created and distributed.

Information on the workshop sessions was provided on Council's website. The weekly Council e-newsletter also had a standing item about the consultation's progress.

In this instance, an active community group extended media coverage and generated strong interest in the progress of the project, contributing to the large number of participants offering different views.



Paid Advertising

An advertisement was run in both the local Newcastle Herald and The Star free local newspaper, to ensure broad information about the workshops – on the following dates: 17 and 24 March 2010 (Star); 20 and 27 March 2010 (Herald).

Methodology

Data Collection

Workshop sessions can build a sense of community and are a useful tool to seek the opinions of a small group, allowing many differing contributions. Unlike a survey, they enable the discussion of complex issues and underlying concerns and allow for deliberation and the brainstorming of ideas.

Session	Location	Time	Participants
1.	Cooks Hill Surf Club, Bar Beach	30 March, 10-12 noon	47
2.	Cooks Hill Surf Club, Bar Beach	31 March, 10-12 noon	45
3.	Cooks Hill Surf Club, Bar Beach	31 March, 6-8pm	95
Total			187

The workshops were semi-structured to allow participants to gain information about the project’s progress so far, air their reservations, and discuss their requirements to aid project planning. At the outset of each workshop, participants named their objectives for attending the session and some of these remained unanswered at the conclusion of the session. The intent is for the outstanding objectives to be addressed through Council’s website.

Consultation Area

Because both Bar Beach and Empire Park are well used by all residents and ratepayers throughout the city, invitations to the workshop sessions encompassed the Newcastle City Council local government area (LGA).

The entire Newcastle Voice panel was invited and promotional activities were aimed at both the residents and ratepayers in the immediate vicinity as well as the entire LGA.

Representation

The views collected in this report are not statistically valid, however they represent the views of some high user groups and nearby residents. Consistent themes presented in this report are derived from workshop contributions and the reliability and validity of these interpretations can be assessed.

Participants

The community workshop was open to all residents and ratepayers of Newcastle. The workshop sessions were facilitated by Newcastle Voice, whose responsibility as researchers is to protect the privacy of individual participants.

The Lord Mayor and/or a number of Councillors, as well as a number of Council officers attended each of the sessions. All of the participants were community members and key stakeholders.

Participants who registered for the sessions were asked to identify the suburb they live in. Those participants who had not registered prior to the session were only asked their name upon arrival.

- Participants live in Bar Beach, The Hill, Merewether, The Junction, Hamilton (including South and North), Maryville, New Lambton, Newcastle East, Mayfield, Swan Bay and Warners Bay.
- 37% of participants were women, 63% were men.
- Participants were aged from late teens to over 70 years of age.
- Less than a third of participants are members of Newcastle Voice.

Data Handling and Analysis

The data handling and analysis was carried out by Council staff from the Customer Service, Communication and Consultation Service unit. The consultation was designed to increase inclusiveness and generate data for analysis into themes, using worksheet templates to guide discussion and receive feedback.

All participants were informed of workshop objectives and how the information provided will be used. All responses are treated in confidence, to ensure the anonymity of respondents. No identifying information is included with any responses for this report.

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked to provide feedback about the conduct of the sessions. A total of 71 community participants completed the feedback form. Of those who chose to complete the question referring to overall satisfaction (60 individuals), responses divided across the spectrum of satisfaction – with approximately half satisfied to some extent and the other half dissatisfied to some extent.

All materials available during the consultations are included in the Appendixes to this report.

Key Findings

The current area of the park is used for a wide range of recreational activities, from passive enjoyment of ocean views to active team sports, and linked to beach and oceanfront usage. Activities are pursued individually and in large groups at public or sporting events.

Project Consultation to Date

The Director, Liveable City, spoke to the project background at two workshops once it became evident that this was a driving concern for some participants.

Council's *Newcastle Recreation Plan 2006-16*, adopted in 2006, gave rise to the city-wide Skate Parks Review late in 2008 and early 2009. Some participants disputed the degree and nature of consultation which occurred; specifically questioning letterbox drops and media distribution between November 2008 and January 2009.

The results of the Skate Park Review were presented to Council in April 2009, subject to funding being sourced. The authority to seek federal funding was delegated to council administration, resulting in a successful federal grant application for \$807,000. This amount was to be split between two district level skate park upgrades located at Bar Beach and Wallsend Park, and include the batball extension at Empire Park.

Coastal Revitalisation

The Director, Future City, spoke to participants about the work completed by Urbis Pty Ltd towards the draft Coastal Revitalisation Plan and the timeline for publication, exhibition and finalisation of this document.

The document itself had only been received by Council officers from the Lands and Property Management Authority (LPMA), the day before these consultations and was due to go on public exhibition from 6 April – 24 May. Public exhibition will include the following items, all of which will be advertised in the local print media during April:

- Hard copies of the report available at all surf clubs, branch libraries and the Council Administration Centre. Soft copy of the report at LPMA, surf clubs and Council's websites.
- A summary flier of the key findings to be distributed to every letterbox in the local government area on the weekend of 17-18 April.
- Submission forms available for posting to Council administration.
- A survey to the recommendations conducted through Newcastle Voice – sent to Newcastle voice members and open to all members of the community.

The Draft Newcastle Coastal Revitalisation Masterplan is a document to guide the long-term developments along Newcastle's coast. Works at Empire Park continue in a shorter timeframe.

Work at Empire Park is consistent with this document, as Council's draft Empire Park Masterplan and the consultation report which guided its preparation, were forwarded to the consultants during the preparation of the draft Newcastle Coastal Masterplan.

Empire Park Master Plan

The draft Empire Park Master Plan was distributed to each table grouping as the Recreation Projects Coordinator addressed key aspects.

There are a number of key items of community interest gathered during the Newcastle Voice community consultation, which took place in October 2009, that have been accommodated in the plan:

- Retention of open space for emergency helicopter and hang glider landings
- Retention of low plantings around this area to reduce air turbulence
- Playground extension to increase perceptions of safety and play appeal
- Continuation of pathways to join key access points.
- Additional batball court
- Increased BBQ facilities, shade, bubblers and toilet facilities
- Increased pedestrian crossings to the beach – at the midpoint of the beach and another close to Parkway Avenue.

There was some concern expressed by participants about park elements which had been reported by interested community members or the media over the past six months which the draft plan was able to address, namely:

- Closure of Memorial Drive to traffic (excluded, i.e. not part of the draft plan)
- The construction of a road through Empire Park (excluded)
- Commercial buildings in Empire Park (to be addressed through the draft Newcastle Coastal Masterplan, open for community discussion)

Participants were able to deliberate about the draft Empire Park Masterplan and suggest further improvements – specifically, about the preferred location for a second batball wall and other items not included in the plan. The following comments were received, as transcribed from maps and notepaper used during table discussions.

Batball Locations

The following preferences and comments were transcribed from maps used during table discussions – from a total of 20 tables across all three sessions, the following emerges:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Close to the skate park | 6 |
| 2. Close to the tennis courts, on old playground site | 3 |
| 3. Southern end near the Bowling Club | 2 |
| 4. Northern side near Bar Beach Avenue | 2 |

- “Four bat courts”
- “Constant noise will be a nuisance – hence request skate park location”
- “Keep the noise down – batball wall at skate park location”

- “Less cuts and fill involved - with batball wall near tennis courts”

Other Comments Received about Empire Park

- “This is a small public reserve with lots of facilities – don’t clutter the park”
- “Good idea, it slows traffic. This is a busy egress to and from the city especially in peak hours.” (Pedestrian crossing at centre of beach)
- “Security issue with foliage (trees).”
- “Gutters on old pathways on Memorial Drive need to be replaced.”
- “Is Empire Park Tennis Club to be merged with Reid Park courts?”
- “Very happy with proposal – open space for hang gliders”
- “Maximise open space”
- “Rebuild degraded seating in the bank around the large playing field.”
- “Priority – good path completed in Empire Park along Memorial Drive”
- “Good location for skate park”
- “Good lighting at beach and at Bar Beach Kiosk”
- “Leave skate park open, relocate south”
- “Bus stop on Bar Beach Avenue”
- “Reposition skate park to current half pipe location; other facilities (basketball/netball courts) – closer to Bowling Club”
- “Can the Council work with the Bowling Club to establish a plan for the Club and its surrounds? The Club could provide some commercial opportunities and perhaps toilets. What can the Club do to influence alcohol consumption in the park? What can the Club do to improve the appearance of the lease? What obligations does the Club have under its lease conditions? Does Council know?”
- “Barbeque area for families on site of old playground”
- “Toilets open”
- “No tall trees for NE of park that will affect air flow for hang gliders; low grasses and bush is acceptable. Curfew would need to be focused.”
- Frederick Street park access: safety fence or railings at Frederick Street entrance, mentions of skateboard riders travelling at speed. (composite of four separate mentions)

Skate Park Draft Designs

The skate park designer from Convic Design presented an overview of other skate facilities which had been constructed over the past few years, in a variety of locations worldwide, similar to the Empire Park location. He had conducted an audit of the location and explicitly stated that each design is customised to a location and that the 'cookie cutter' approach is a dated method of skate park design.

The nature of contemporary skate parks was illustrated with a variety of streetscape designs, integrated into broad community usage as opposed to skater-only facilities: walkways, lighting, seating and wall heights appropriate for skating and to reduce anti-social behaviour; a variety of skateable elements; disability and pram access; shade and other informal gathering spaces for all ages.

Questions were put forward about the area of concrete versus the total area of the proposed skate park; the appearance of similar facilities several years after construction; specifics of the design and relative costs of various designs. The design consultant was able to address each of these points, and also answered individuals' questions at length during table discussions. A specific concern was that the grant submission stated that the skate park would consist of total area of 1000 square metres. It was confirmed during the presentation that the grant submission stated 1000 square metres however the funding received would only provide for a skate park with an area between 500-700 square metres.

A draft design based on the smaller area was then distributed across the table groups for discussion: a design which would approximately suit the available location and budget, illustrating the landscape and skating elements, as well as seating, lighting and pathways. This was used as the starting point during table discussions.

Exploring the Options

The key concerns regarding access across the park and specifics around the skate park facility were discussed in table rounds, and then shared with the whole group. Interestingly, disparate demographic groups were able to identify similar subjects for most urgent action. Other issues remained with widely divergent views, as the following direct quotes illustrate.

Access

The access to Empire Park was much discussed, specifically the reinstatement of certain bus routes. It was believed that public transport would need to be improved to the area to accommodate the increased number of skaters.

This view was contradicted by skaters who stated that they use their skateboards to arrive at skating venues. Furthermore they mentioned that Empire Park will remain a district park and therefore will primarily attract local skaters.

Parking was discussed, with views put forward that the skate park would reduce the already limited parking around Empire Park, and the community supported the retention of open space.

Pathways within the park were identified as requiring upgrades or extensions, matched with some criticism of the current footpath works.

The following quotes illustrate the breadth of opinion received:

- “Pathways link open plan and upgrade present parks.”
- “Bar Beach only ever full on Nippers Carnivals.”
- “How people get here, where they park, competition with beach goes. This skate park should not be here, good location is Railway Avenue side of National Park.”
- “No significant public transport, very little parking, pedestrians through park – skate park would interfere.”
- “No parking cutting into green areas.”
- “Regardless people will find their way there.”

Family Friendliness

Family friendliness appears to mean different things to different people, with comments addressing a range of subjects about which age group would be included or excluded by a skate park upgrade.

The provision of toilets, more picnic or barbeque facilities and evening lighting was of interest, as well as the suggestion of curfews, noise reduction, good design, improved maintenance and more policing. A number of participants mentioned that the 1000m² design which was reported in the media early in 2010 would not be family friendly, suggesting that a park smaller than 500m² would be more desirable. Furthermore, park design to cater to all ages of skaters, from beginners to advanced users, was specifically mentioned on numerous occasions throughout the sessions.

The following comments illustrate the span of comments received:

- “BBQs gas, several toilets. Picnic tables and shade several. Limit footprint of hard surface, picnic shelters, viewing benches, alcohol and smoke free.”
- “Very concerned about Council ability to maintain skate park – how will this be done to achieve family friendliness?”
- “With regard to friendliness, are we forgetting that the people using the park from the local area alone are all part of families?”
- “Toilets for park and families, require alcohol free zone, beach heavily occupies parking, where will skaters park?”
- “Cater to all skill levels, providing good seating and common areas, aesthetically pleasing.”
- “The skate park needs to be smaller, no more than 500m². Empire Park will remain family friendly if a district level skate park was not put in such a residential area!”
- “A basketball court would not go unused...all skaters enjoy flatland skating and this would be a perfect extension/inclusion to make the park more diverse.”

Safety

Safety issues spanned two dimensions: safety within the skate facility and safety across the park from skaters and antisocial behaviour which would, according to workshop participants, perhaps/allegedly/certainly accompany an upgraded park.

In terms of antisocial behaviour, a distinction was made between skaters and undesirable persons attracted to the park later at night. To this end, lighting, emergency telephone, fencing, an alcohol-free zone or curfew with police enforcement were suggested.

Pathways were identified as a possible safety concern with prams, skaters and possibly wheelchairs on the same pathways across the park, and along the beach.

Safety within the skate facility will be enhanced with lighting, passive surveillance made possible by good design and suitable open location and regular cleaning to ensure no glass or sand remain on the park.

The following comments illustrate the breadth of responses from the three workshops:

- “Alcohol-free, much more safety at night. Vandalism, broken glass and rubbish is already a daily problem – this will increase graffiti.”
- “Lighting – functional non-intrusive. Solar lighting can be arranged.”
- ““Locked up at night, absolutely! Security, lighting and obviously fenced.”
- “Bowls aren’t really affected by wind – there has been a skate park for years.”
- “Walking access along the old path should be safe and not restricted by possible collisions with skate boarders. Issues with being right next to a licensed pub bowling club.”

A police officer with NSW Police, and Newcastle’s first professional skater, was able to shed some light on these concerns, addressing the group during two of the three workshops. He assured participants that there were ways in which the location could be monitored for anti-social behaviour late in the evenings, especially if Council and Police co-operated with formal arrangements. The limitations of alcohol-free zones are that they are universal: preventing late night drinking sessions and early evening family barbeques alike.

Appearance

Once participants addressed the appearance of the skate facility, they included the aesthetics across the park in their considerations.

The type and location of trees and other plantings was raised, again by the hang gliders needing open access to the north eastern corner of the park, as well as those concerned that antisocial behaviour proliferates in planted areas.

The skate park’s appearance itself was considered in aesthetic terms by some participants and in functional terms by others. The colours and scale of the park, as well as water drainage, and seating were all raised. The following direct comments illustrate community views as captured during this consultation round:

- “I quite like the North Shore concept and colours. I feel this is a similar demographic to ours.”
- “Are you making it able to expand? Water in bowl, how does it drain? What is planned for lights? Sensor lights. Check of underground services. Excavated soil from bowl: where will it go?”
- “No shitty little scooter parks like Cardiff, Lambton etc. The quality of parks in Newcastle is outdated, the skate parks in Newcastle are 15 years behind the times...there is nothing for advanced skaters/riders.”
- “Winds are very strong summer and winter with sand being blown across Memorial Drive. Trees do not grow in this area, if they do they grow in the direction of prevailing winds.”
- “Seating along the Memorial Drive boundary under trees overlooking the ocean. No retail inclusion. Yes to bat ball courts beside tennis courts.”

Maintenance

The primary concern about maintenance of the skate park beyond construction was Council's poor track record with Newcastle South skate park – and indeed the perception of lacking maintenance at many other Council facilities. There is wide community reservation about council's ability to maintain its existing assets, and hence mistrust about its ability to maintain a new skate park.

A suggested remedy is to allocate certain funds to the maintenance of this park facility or the formation of a community group to be involved with park maintenance. Indicative direct quotes follow:

- “24/7 graffiti response team, eg the current half pipe has at least three icons of a penis/testicles plus the word ‘penis’. Not child friendly!”
- “Maintenance money to be used. Will South Newcastle be closed? Maintain and upgrade Newcastle South – transport to there is good.”
- “Will the concrete stand up to the elements? No plastic bins, they can be burnt! Also waste removal.”
- “Skate Board Association to help with the management and funding. Why so much emphasis and money over skate boarding – what about other sports like cycling which is family-oriented?”



Appendix I – Maps, Plans and Designs

Empire Park Aerial Photograph

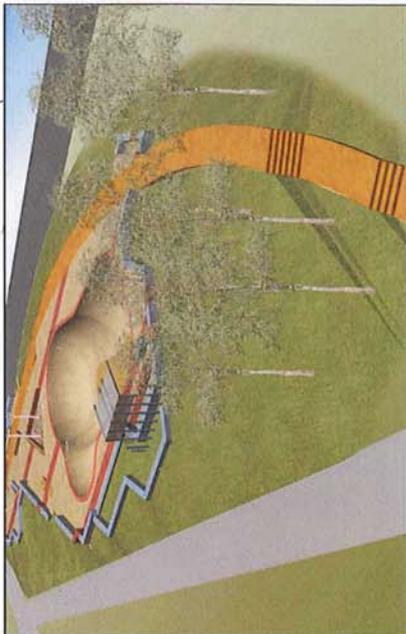
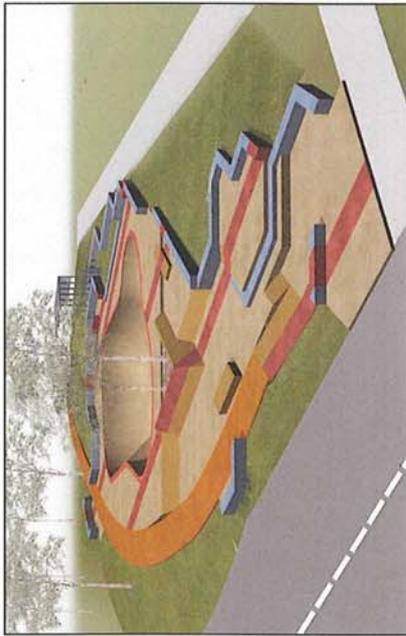


Convic Draft Skate Park Design



CONVIC DESIGN

BAR BEACH SKATEPARK
SPACE FOR THE CONVIC DRAFT DESIGN
MARCH 2010



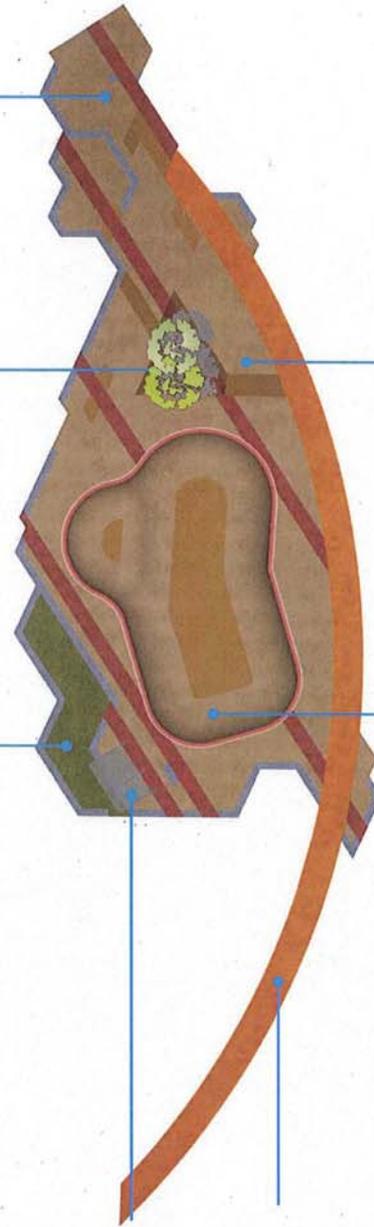
GRASSED PLANE WITH SEATING WALL FOR SOCIALISING AND SPECTATOR VIEWING INTO BOWL. TREES TO MAXIMISE SHADE

BANKED INTERNAL PLANTING BED WITH SHADE TREES

FORMALISED ENTRY WITH SEATING AND CONNECTION TO EXISTING PATH ENTRY

REFUGE AREA WITH FEATURE SHELTER, FORMAL SEATING AND INFORMAL GRASS BANKS FOR SEATING/SOCIALISING.

DDA COMPLIANT ACCESS PATH FROM ENTRY TO EXISTING PATH CONNECTION. ELEVATED PATH ALLOWS VIEWS INTO FACILITY AND TOWARDS BEACH.

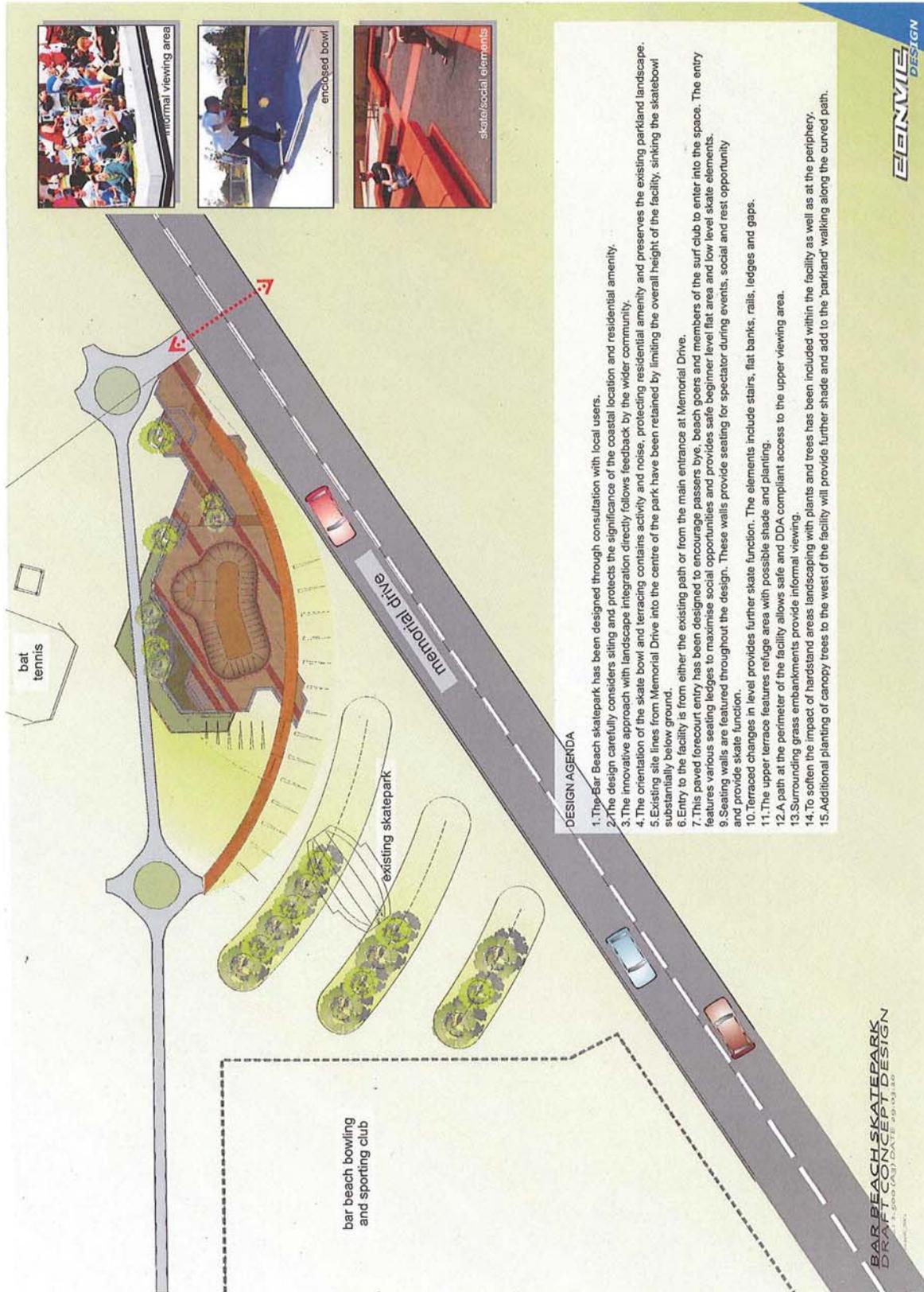


FEATURE BOWL WITH VARYING HEIGHTS. BOWL SUNKEN TO MINIMISE NOISE, CONTAIN ACTIVITY AND RETAIN SITE LINES

TERRACED PLAZA AREA WITH STAIRS, GAPS, BANKS, RAILS AND LEDGES. AREA FEATURES SEATING WALLS FOR USERS AND WIDER COMMUNITY

BAR BEACH SKATEPARK
DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN
10/11/2010 10:25:03 AM

PERNIX
DESIGN



DESIGN AGENDA

1. The Bar Beach skatepark has been designed through consultation with local users.
2. The design carefully considers siting and protects the significance of the coastal location and residential amenity.
3. The innovative approach with landscape integration directly follows feedback by the wider community.
4. The orientation of the skate bowl and terracing contains activity and noise, protecting residential amenity and preserves the existing parkland landscape.
5. Existing site lines from Memorial Drive into the centre of the park have been retained by limiting the overall height of the facility, sinking the skatebowl substantially below ground.
6. Entry to the facility is from either the existing path or from the main entrance at Memorial Drive.
7. This paved forecourt entry has been designed to encourage passers by, beach goers and members of the surf club to enter into the space. The entry features various seating ledges to maximise social opportunities and provides safe beginner level flat area and low level skate elements.
9. Seating walls are featured throughout the design. These walls provide seating for spectator during events, social and rest opportunity and provide skate function.
10. Terraced changes in level provides further skate function. The elements include stairs, flat banks, rails, ledges and gaps.
11. The upper terrace features refuge area with possible shade and planting.
12. A path at the perimeter of the facility allows safe and DDA compliant access to the upper viewing area.
13. Surrounding grass embankments provide informal viewing.
14. To soften the impact of hardstand areas landscaping with plants and trees has been included within the facility as well as at the periphery.
15. Additional planting of canopy trees to the west of the facility will provide further shade and add to the 'parkland' walking along the curved path.

BAR BEACH SKATEPARK
DRAFT CONCEPT DESIGN

EBENVIS
DESIGN



Appendix II - Workshop Materials

Agenda

Empire Park Skate Park Workshops 30-31 March 2010

Welcome and Introductions	10 mins
Coastal Revitalisation Project Update	10 mins
Empire Park Master Plan	15 mins
Empire Park Skate Park	10 mins
Break	15 mins
Exploring the Options	45 mins
Conclusions and Next Steps	15 mins

Ground Rules

- Today is about gathering community perspective broadly, so every contribution is valued.
- Please speak one at a time, so that all can be heard.
- A range of views, perhaps divergent from your own, may emerge today: that's fine. Not every idea will be discussed; it's about gathering information.
- Photographs may be taken and used on the Council's website and to promote future Newcastle Voice events. Please let us know if you would **not** like to be photographed.
- Thank you for your participation today.

Feedback Form

Your feedback is important to us - thank you for taking the time to complete this sheet and provide us with your comments.

1. What did you particularly like about this workshop?

2. Please suggest any improvements that could be made.

3. Any other comments?

4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop.

<input type="checkbox"/> 1- Completely dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 2- Somewhat dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 3- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 4- Somewhat satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/> 5- Completely satisfied
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5. Would you attend another group like this– on a different subject?

YES / NO

NAME: (optional) _____

Display Materials

Consultation Timeline

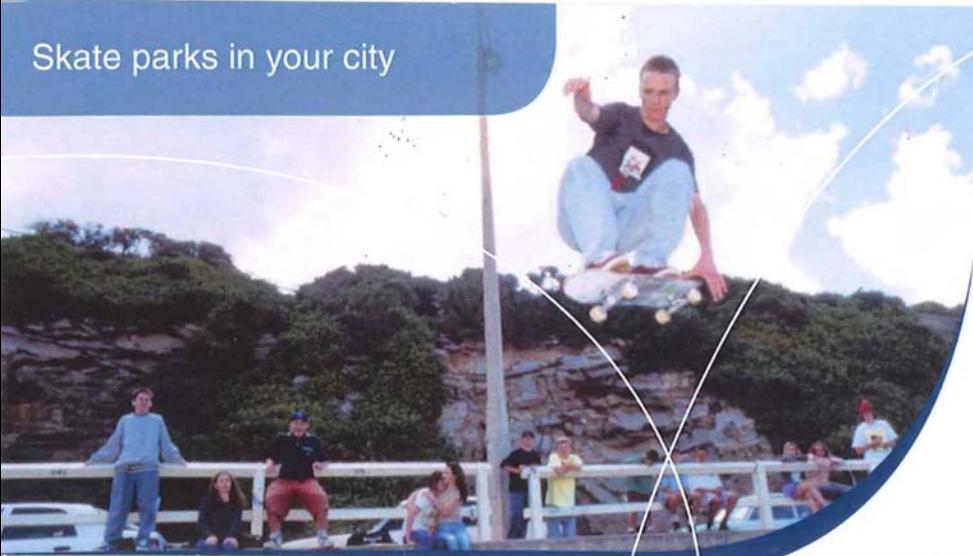
Sept 2006	<i>Newcastle Recreation Plan</i> adopted.
Oct 2008	Skate park review commences.
Nov – Dec 2008	Advertising and media coverage on forthcoming consultation: NBN, The Herald, The Star and local radio.
Dec - Mar 2009	Site-specific consultations at 10 locations. Information sessions held at Wallsend Library, The Loft, Netball Administration Building, National Park.
Apr 2009	Skate Park Working Party formed. Public Voice presented to Council by community members and council officers.
Oct 2009	Newcastle Voice conducts consultation on Bar Beach/Empire Park.
Dec 2009	Urbis conducts consultation towards Coastal Revitalisation Study.
Mar 2010	Newcastle Voice conducts consultation on Empire Park.



Geelong Skate Park (\$1.6m)



Consultation materials 2008-2009



Skate parks in your city

Newcastle City Council is planning for the future of skate spaces across the City. We welcome your input at any of the consultations.

Come along and have your say at the first session on **Thursday 4 December 2008** from 6pm to 7.30pm at multi-purpose building (next to the netball courts), National Park, Parry Street, Newcastle.



There will also be on site consultation sessions at existing skate parks (details below) starting at 4pm.

When	Where
Monday 12 January 2009	Stockton Skate Park (outside pool)
Tuesday 13 January 2009	Empire Park, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach
Wednesday 14 January 2009	Islington Park, Maitland Road, Islington
Thursday 15 January 2009	Walker Fields, Elernmore Vale (behind shopping centre)
Friday 16 January 2009	New Lambton Park, Wallarah Road, New Lambton
Monday 19 January 2009	Grange Avenue Reserve, Maryland Drive, Maryland
Tuesday 20 January 2009	South Newcastle Beach Skate Park
Wednesday 21 January 2009	Wallsend Park, Thomas St, Wallsend
Thursday 22 January 2009	Dangar Park, Maitland Road, Mayfield
Friday 23 January 2009	Heaton Park, Mordue Pde, Jesmond

Can't make it to a consultation but would like to be kept informed?

Call us or send us your email address at mail@ncc.nsw.gov.au and we'll send you our eNewsletter. You can also visit our website at www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and fill out a feedback form.

Need more information?

Call Youth Activities Officer, Dale Garbutt, on 02 4974 2094 or Council's Parks and Recreation Section on 02 4974 2807.

You asked:

“We know the current pipe is 166 square metres. How big is the new one going to be?”

We answer:

The footprint of the existing skatepark and surrounding area is 700 m². The footprint of the new skatepark area is yet to be determined and will include landscaping, seating, tree planting, walkways, shaded areas, and a second batball wall.

You asked:

“What is going on with the playground?”

We answer:

Works on the new playground are continuing, and are in line with the recommendations of the Coastal Revitalisation Strategy. This Strategy will be available for community comment in April.

You asked:

“Where’s the money coming from for all this construction in Empire Park?”

We answer:

Newcastle City Council obtained \$807,000 from the federal government under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program (RLCIP), half of which is being allocated to Empire Park. In addition, there are two state government grants totalling \$71,000 to upgrade the playground, and Council is topping up those funds with \$30,000 of its own during this financial year.

You asked:

“What’s this about a road being built through Empire Park?”

We answer:

The road was a suggestion included in an early concept from the Coastal Revitalisation Strategy, and is not included in the final version. This Strategy will be available for community comment in April.

You asked:

“I believe skate parks attract bad elements. What is Council going to do about that?”

We answer:

The design of any facility needs to include methods to reduce anti-social behaviour. In this case, it will include lighting, seating and landscaping to integrate the skate facility into the park. Our annual maintenance budget is allocated across the city.

You asked:

“Why do we have to have a new skate park here at all?”

We answer:

In light of the work done to date on the skate park strategy, and in the interests of addressing the recreational needs of youth in Newcastle, Council will allocate the federal funding equally towards the upgrade of two skate parks.

You asked:

“I’ve already seen a design in the paper – why are we here today?”

We answer:

An early concept was published in *The Newcastle Herald* earlier this year. It has not been approved by Council. Many of the design details are undecided. There is the opportunity, through this consultation, to offer suggestions to integrate a skate facility into the park.

Workshop Notes

Workshop 1: Tuesday 30 March, 10-12 noon

Participant Objectives

- Why upgrade Empire Park at all? Relationship to South Newcastle skate park? Role of Mirvac?
- Is a Working Party being formed?
- Knowledge about the proposal? Better information?
- Decision-making process transparency – before today and forwards from here.
- Timelines towards implementation?
- Grant conditions?
- Is this a fait accompli?
- Access for all – community involvement

Access

- Buses routes? Lack of transport affects environmental foot print. Should it be closer to existing transport
- Not easy public transport. Car only will add to parking problems and help justify metered parking. Council say there is for the kids but they will need to drive here and it will encourage old skaters and BMX riders rather the leads this is supposedly for.
- Better suited for a centralised location with rail access to whole of Hunter Valley eg Broadmeadow
- Lack or parking will be terrible, lack or public transport – how do the young intended users get there? Is Civic train station a real option?
- Please leave a minimum of 5m buffer between the skate park and the pathway (Kilgour to memorial) Families teenage girls or the elderly do not want the skaters “in our face” as we walk trough.
- None existent to and from. Why move from Newcastle beach?
- Public Transport is not good. Car parking? Already for beach goers- parking meters?
- Bus transport, rail transport? How will kids get there? more car parks , paid parking?, bike riders
- How will children access the park , who come from Maitland and Toronto- currently they have very easy access to Newcastle Skate via Newcastle rail station
- Transport isn't so great but what else is there?
- Kids will travel , parking, bus to Kilgour and one extra bus from Newcastle
- Insufficient public transport to area. How to fix it?
- No parking cutting into green areas
- Are there any restrictions which affect carrying bikes, scooters, skateboards on buses? Bike racks.
- Car parking
- This facility should have been located near public access – given its not, maybe bus stops could be marginally changed to provide better access for youth

Family friendliness

- BBQ's gas several toilets. Picnic tables and shade several. Limit footprint of hard surface picnic shelters viewing beaches, alcohol and smoke free.
- More tables and shade areas
- Maximum size of 400-500m2 which is approximately size of Mayfield. Any bigger and it change the use and friendliness of Empire Park
- Lots of reference to "kids". Concern that this skate facility will target an insular demographic which will intimidate kids not fitting the "culture"
- BBQs, picnic tables, take it further the path within Empire Park as people still need to walk within EP without being part of the skate park. Make it smaller 400m mean a great park for users.
- Please do not put all of the BBQ, shade area etc only in the skate area
- Lighting , eating facilities
- Noise? Residents won't be happy
- Toilet facilities, grass areas
- Variety of usage so that it attracts older skaters as well as younger skaters- design aspects, landscaping, shade etc.
- It's next to a road! floodlighting
- Present S. Park not maintained, broken glass etc. Need to assurance it will be managed better. Shade please.
- Picnic tables, BBQS, shading, toilets. Very concerned about Council ability to maintain skate park- the current skate park is frequently dirty, littered with smashed glass; how will this be done to achieve "family friendliness"
- Noise? skate boards make lots of noise, can the surface minimise noise?. Toilet facilities for parents, kids. Non summer good break
- BBQ's x 2 , picnic tables, shared areas, must integrate with other park user needs, Heritage park, noise surface
- Need chairs and tables over our former half pipe, back support on chairs for older people and BBQ needed

Safety

- Lights, CCTV, fences?, more police, toilets
- The people are not knocked down by random skaters
- Fence and locked like tennis courts, brightly lit, curfew of 10pm, sunken – will it be visible from ground level
- What are the liability issues? Intrinsically dangerous facility. Are rate payers liable to costs involved in a legal suit?
- CCTV, New design still has "hidey holes" .What about a fence that is locked at night? Lighting and alcohol and smoke free please
- Please leave a 5m buffer so all rubbish, broken glass etc does not impact the park and so wayward skaters don't fly across the park
- Lighting , user friendly
- Is it visible
- More alcohol free zone, police surveillance, local rules, curfew? no fence.
- Emergency tamper-roof phone, good lighting design, No water – present tap handle has been removed
- Passive surveillance from road (free selection)
- Lighting Scrubs- low line, Alcohol and smoke free area, CCTV, Kilgour increasing anti-social behaviour Bar Beach Bowling Club

- Lighting essential, secure phone, alcohol and smoking free zone, CCTV. The Bowling club might actually need to be considered – often anti social behaviour from Club would impact on Youth

Appearance

- Water Bubblers, it is a unique park, needs its wide open space. Steel bins
- Please go with ocean colours in the skate park. No trees along Memorial Drive. Use tables and covered roofs do provide shade and dual use. I like the merge of skate park and park idea best
- Not anything that attracts after dark anti social behaviour, landscaped, heritage value
- Trees should be native variety attracting native birds. Exotics such as Norfolk pines are inappropriate and are neither people nor bird friendly
- Graffiti, glass, steel bins, make the concrete green like the basketball court
- I quite liked the North Shore concept and colours, I feel this is a similar demographic to ours
- Seating that doesn't look like seating
- Will these be light for night skating?
- Shading, lighting if possible
- Nothing like south Newcastle, shade
- Picnic tabled and chairs; some seats with back supports for elderly, respect for heritage plan of original park (interpretation sign)
- Different natural materials or more natural colours like the style of the Geelong skate park. Current design still looks too "concretey" and already dated 1980's colours. Drought, salt, wind resistant plants
- What can be done to restrict graffiti on the surrounding area? Seating that doesn't look like seating
- Need to plan and lay conduit for lighting and then do progressively as concrete and landscaping done. Lighting to be sympathetic. Limited footprint no greater than 700sqm. Telephone, sympathetic colours
- Preferred trees Norfolk pines for identity, shade climbing. Toilets must be opened and cleaned more regularly. Mix of textures and finishes. There must be efforts made to minimize noise – surface and trees etc. Also respect heritage: Burley Griffin

Maintenance

- Graffiti removal, sound and glass removal, Council Committed to regular maintenance
- Cleaning and repair. Removal of water and sand of the storms is that a problem?
- Cost of cleanup of rubbish, graffiti and wear and tear. Check daily for cleanup
- 24/7 Graffiti response team. Eg the existing half pipe in Empire Park has at least 3 icons of a penis and testicles plus the word "penis" in at least 3 spots. Not child friendly!
- Heritage listed park is being abused with unplanned work in progress, which epitomises incompetence which erodes confidence.
- Who will pay? Other users of Empire Park (rugby, tennis, bowling) why not skaters. NCC to commit to renovating graffiti and glass and sand within 24h
- Ongoing maintenance money
- Graffiti cleanliness of garbage etc.
- Maintenance money to be used for Newcastle...

- Funding allocated by Council for maintenance
- Budget for ongoing maintenance graffiti removal
- Budget for constant upkeep and cleaning; asset preservation funds available
- Ongoing maintenance – rubbish, painting, asset preservation
- Maintenance money to be used. Will Newcastle South be closed? Maintain and upgrade Newcastle South transport to Newcastle South is good.
- Graffiti management respect for new facility, user pay for offset costs for graffiti, salt water/ storms.
- Asset preservation budget, weekly cleaning and maintenance, need to ensure vegetation is nurtured so that it doesn't die.

Workshop 2: Wednesday 31 March 10-12 noon

Participant Objectives

- Impact study?
- Will there be daily cleaning?
- Closing time and operations of the skate park?
- Noise impacting the Bowlo? Safety of the park? Transport to the park?
- Security fence? Will it be landscaped? What size is it?
- Why a skate park here at all?
- Timeline going forward - implementation?
- Maintenance?
- Have our rates been wasted on this project so far?
- Feedback from October?
- Are there shops coming into Empire Park?
- Council approval of the location?

Access

- Acknowledge transport links that needs enhancing. Agree wide pathways and ensure disability/pram friendly
- Inadequate transport access. Why not design a new skate park at Newcastle South beach?
- Limited public transport
- Should a parking facility be included near the skate park? We need a bus stop. Nothing comes directly to the beach. It is a two bus job to get here took me 40 mins to get by bus from Mayfield
- Not existent, where would a bus stop go?
- Buses Darby St access. Bike racks, disability access, pathways link park open plan and upgrade present paths
- Poor public transport, non existent. Don't want more of the park given over to car parking. Excessive concrete not environmentally sound

Family friendliness

- Sufficient shade/shelter for family and supervision. Toilets and water
- More covered shelters in parks
- Will the existing toilet block be opened up? Are they going to be additional toilet clocks? Agree tennis location
- .If there is something for everyone it will be well used make it young and old. Toilet amenities, café kiosk, setting / covered seating in skateboard zone.
- Keep as much open space as possible. Shelter and lighting to overcome bad elements to stabbing previously in park
- Maintain Empire Park as a high quality public domain with open space, keep tennis courts, shade and shelter

- Setting open green space with BBQ's, shaded picnics, water bubblers, toilets, bar ball court near the skate park

Safety

- Low level Lighting throughout the park, review of traffic MGT and pedestrian movement (at large)
- Alcohol free, much more security at night. Vandalism, broken glass and rubbish is already a daily problem – this will increase graffiti
- Needs to be an alcohol free zone and to be policed. Designated closing park
- Low level night lighting essential, alcohol free zones and disability and pram friendly
- High bushes and low trees, new pathway is a safety risk
- Alcohol free zone, lighting, noise, police /rangers , antisocial behaviour
- Prompt police response, Alcohol and smoke free zone. What about the slipperiness of the skate park in the fog and sea mist? Is it safe for skaters? Curfews needed Police enforced

Appearance

- No commercialization or additional car parks, more bat ball facilities (all 3 as designed)
- Extremely difficult to grow trees etc. shelters will be ugly. Limit foot print of hard surface to less than 500sq
- What is the lighting plan?
- Seating along the Memorial Drive boundary under trees overlooking the ocean. No retail inclusion. Yes to bat ball courts beside tennis courts
- Neat seating. No bat ball court near tennis courts
- Absolutely no commercial activity, no shops cafes on this public reserve
- Limit the footprint of hard surface less than 500sq. We question the type of planning to ensure successful growth natural lighting please not overbright

Maintenance

- Adequate facilities for waste disposal by skate park users and daily cleaning of site.
- Ongoing maintenance and cleaning. Council has no money how much will State provide
- Ongoing founding for long term maintenance. Designated Council crew?. Who is responsible for mini-putt upgrade? Is there a skate board organisation to take up some of the management?
- Ongoing maintenance and cleaning. Will the concrete stand up to the elements? No plastic bins – they can be burnt! Also waste removal.
- Cleaning around the area
- Garbage, surveillance, management plan / curation of facilities, recreational concept/focus of park , toilets open during day
- Council to commit cleaning daily, graffiti within 24 hrs, steel bins, no commercial activity at all. Skate board Association to help with the management and funding. Why so much emphasis and money over skate boarding? What about other groups like cycling which is a family oriented sport?

Workshop 3: Wednesday 31 March 2010, 6pm – 8pm

Participant Objectives

- Where's the second batball court going?
- Was there a risk assessment, a social impact study conducted?
- When was the decision to upgrade the park made?
- Why weren't we consulted?
- Details about the skate park – design, timelines, maintenance and management beyond construction?
- Why is the district park here?
- What's going on with Newcastle South?

Access

- Nowhere to park now, so it will get worse
- This location is very exposed to string wind and will discourage usage. None of the Park taken for parking and move Skate Park towards bowling club fence
- No significant public transport, very little parking, pedestrians through park- skate park would interfere
- Good beach access maintained, parking needs upgrade? Parking good – people can get to beach so they can get to park
- You may have got public transport. Regardless people will find their way there
- Round about added to ease turn around problems and prevent excess traffic going into residential area, corner of Kilgour Ave and Memorial. Parking already difficult on summer days
- Bar Beach only ever full on nippers or surf carnivals plenty of transport via Darby St
- Better transport to the park coming along Memorial rather than Darby St
- Poor transport system in the area, inadequate ramp access around Whole Park. Bike storage arrangements required. Disability friendly. Reconfigure to buck on building club area thus maintain current pedestrian routes
- Skate boarders and bike riders use their own as primary modes of transport. Transport has been discussed prior to this meeting this is a site downside, however all sites have their bad points.
- Clear pathway access for all skate holders to have to the beach- possibly move skate park away walkway, closer to existing ½ pipe foot print
- Would be better somewhere that is more accessible and has better parking. Empire Park is not suitable
- Can the money be spent upgrading a different skate park, where public opinion is all in agreement?. New pathway into park area to Bar Beach Ave! Just an extension of park, surely this was recognised. ASB not acceptable
- Current transport infrastructure is adequate. Cater for young children
- Closed to town, buses Darby St/Junction, skate boards resourceful, Is not taking area used by any existing activity
- No need for additional transport. This is a district park; I feel people are forgetting this is sporting park. I haven't heard any disapproval for a 15ff bat ball wall

- Keep existing pathway connecting Memorial Drive to Oval closest to Bowling Club
- How people get here, where they park, competition for parking with beach goes. This skate park should not be here, good location is Railway Ave side of National Park
- Unless youth drives a car they will have to use two buses to gain access

Family friendliness

- Curfew no later than 8pm and must be realistically policed
- Needs to be much smaller than proposed 1000sq, 500 sq tops
- Smoke and alcohol free Zone
- Wide range facilities BBQ/ Shelters, toilets open, relocate close to Bowling Club. Remove Skate Park from Empire Park
- What maintenance programs? Heights and levels to suit all ages. Eg scooter curve for beginners. Appearance? Family friendly. More tables and chairs, basketball hoop and access to public, toilets please.
- Shelter/ make sure the park caters for everyone
- Strict graffiti laws, curfews or early closing, alcohol free zone and low lighting at night
- Variety – add parks and bbq's around to appeal ages. Encourage food venue's
- Limit the skate park size to under 600 sq hard surface. Cater to all skill levels including young kids. Also bat ball court should be integrated into skate park, like the examples had basketball
- Toilets for park and families, require alcohol free zone, beach heavily occupies all existing car parking, where will the new skate users park?
- Lighting, open space, landscaping, bike racks, metal vision, shade, bins, drinking fountains, aesthetic quality. A basketball court would not go unused. There are no good quality basketball courts around this area. Also, the open concrete area can be used for a lot of specific activities, all skaters enjoy flatland skating and this would be a perfect extension/inclusion to make the park more diverse
- 24 hour security guard, impact on other users
- The Skate Park need to be smaller no more than 500qm. Empire Park will remain family friendly if a district level skate park was not put in such a residential area!
- Security cameras, daily clean up
- Sheltered tabled and chairs close to park to provide parents a comfortable area to dine and supervise children in skate park
- Cater to needs of all skill levels, provide good seating and common areas, aesthetically pleasing
- With regard to friendliness are we forgetting that the people using the park from the local area alone are all part of families
- Toilets, how does cleaning of rubbish glass work?
- Limit the size needs to be less than 500sq metres, BBQ, shelters, on windy days this facility will not be used (most of winter)
- Families will not leave the beach to view skater's activities and where are the conveniences for them. Tables and shade

Safety

- Council rangers at night, also need security police antisocial behaviour that will occur there at night time
- Curfew, police regularly, No lights at night , alcohol free zone
- Curfew and alcohol free zone, broken glass maintenance

- More lighting – events planned at night?, encourage formal community use; shade shelters additional to existing adjacent to skate facilities
- Lighting and Alcohol free zone
- No tall trees NE of Skate park that will affect air flow for hang gliders; low grasses and coastal bush is acceptable. Curfew would need to be focused
- Lighting times? Solar lighting can be arranged
- Lightening – functional non intrusive. Possible signage around park for pedestrians police patrols or security of a night. Walking access along the old path should be safe and not restricted by possible collisions with skate boarders. Issues with it being right next to a licensed pub bowling club
- Sand on Skate Park is unsafe. Capacity for joggers/ runners / children's to fall into skate area as has happened- legal liability. Cost of lighting will be phenomenal plus the impact of high lighting on the street scape. Resourceful skate boarders regularly use the road creating high risk to self and others.
- Bowls aren't really affected by wind- there has been a skate park there for years
- Lighting retained - The pathways date from depression times. I would like some historical aspects being retained on the pathway
- Fencing, polices, don't put a skate park next to a licensed pub! Which will cause antisocial behaviour at night
- Locked up at night, absolutely!. Security / Lighting and obviously fenced
- Emergency phone within park that connects to 000, night lighting, high exposure from street visibility, Signage to alert people that they are in proximity to a skate park.
- Lighting, bubblers
- Push for adequate night lighting (this also comes under appearance)
- Will fill with sand? May be dangerous for skaters and all users. Curfew and alcohol free zone
- Lighting, no alcohol, Toilets
- Unless well lit will not encourage walkers in the evening

Appearance

- Not too big, no bigger than the Mayfield
- Flood light like tennis courts, turned down at 10pm; leave open space for access to beach.
- Complement parks aesthetics
- More lighting, good pathways, more seating and shade, include features for young children, toddlers and up. Good design – some name gentle curves for younger skaters
- Current design aesthetically pleasing for the eye
- When do lights shut off? Only Norfolk pines will grow here.
- More advanced parks for advanced riders- progression of sport. Bowl needs to be at least 8ft minimum to appeal to advanced BMX riders. Not little shitty scoter parks like Cardiff, Lambton etc. The quality of parks in Newcastle is outdated the skete parks in Newy are 15 years behind the times and skate parks in Lambton, Cardiff, Wallsend are for beginners there is nothing for the advanced skaters/ riders
- More focus on the 'street plaza' elements of the park as majority of skaters are more interested in this. Move vegetation on northern side to protect appearance from NR; over emphasis on green space/ paths etc, could mean that actual skate park plaza area loses functionality. Break up the current design with more green space. It should be less ugly if it were not an ugly concrete mass
- Well site. Shade from trees- questionable as the wind impact on trees flatters them, cleaning

- Make it look nice Convic knows how to do this. Newcastle South was a legal graffiti zone set in place by local government. This won't be
- Consider using palms such as Miami instead of Norfolk pines which as seen in Parkway Ave can't be maintained by council.
- I think everyone is under the impression that it has to be here and that the full \$4000.0000 needs to be spent here. Why not spend the money on doing up South Newcastle Skate park
- Graffiti management in the park and radius from the park – houses fences etc. Regular maintenance. Is the members tennis court (closest to the beach) staying? It should stay
- Night lighting, incorporate various colours and materials, colours sympathetic to ocean tones and park greenery. Some landscaping between Memorial Dr and Skate Park.
- All seem well catered for in the plan, authentically pleasing design incorporating surrounding
- Rubbish disposal
- Could it be reoriented back to the location of existing half pipe? We think the 3 rows of trees is where the park should go, otherwise, it's a "no man's land" hidden by trees. Are you making it able to expand? Water in bowl how does it drain, creates a swimming pool. What was planned for lights? Sensor lights?. Check of underground services, noise modelling, excavated soil from the bowl where will it go? Is it contaminated? What listing has been done? Multipurpose for Skate Park – basketball ½ court - open meeting point.
- Will be covered in sand blown from the beach
- Winds are very strong summer and winter with sand being blown across Memorial Drive. Trees do not grow in this area, if they do they grow in the direction of the prevailing winds

Maintenance

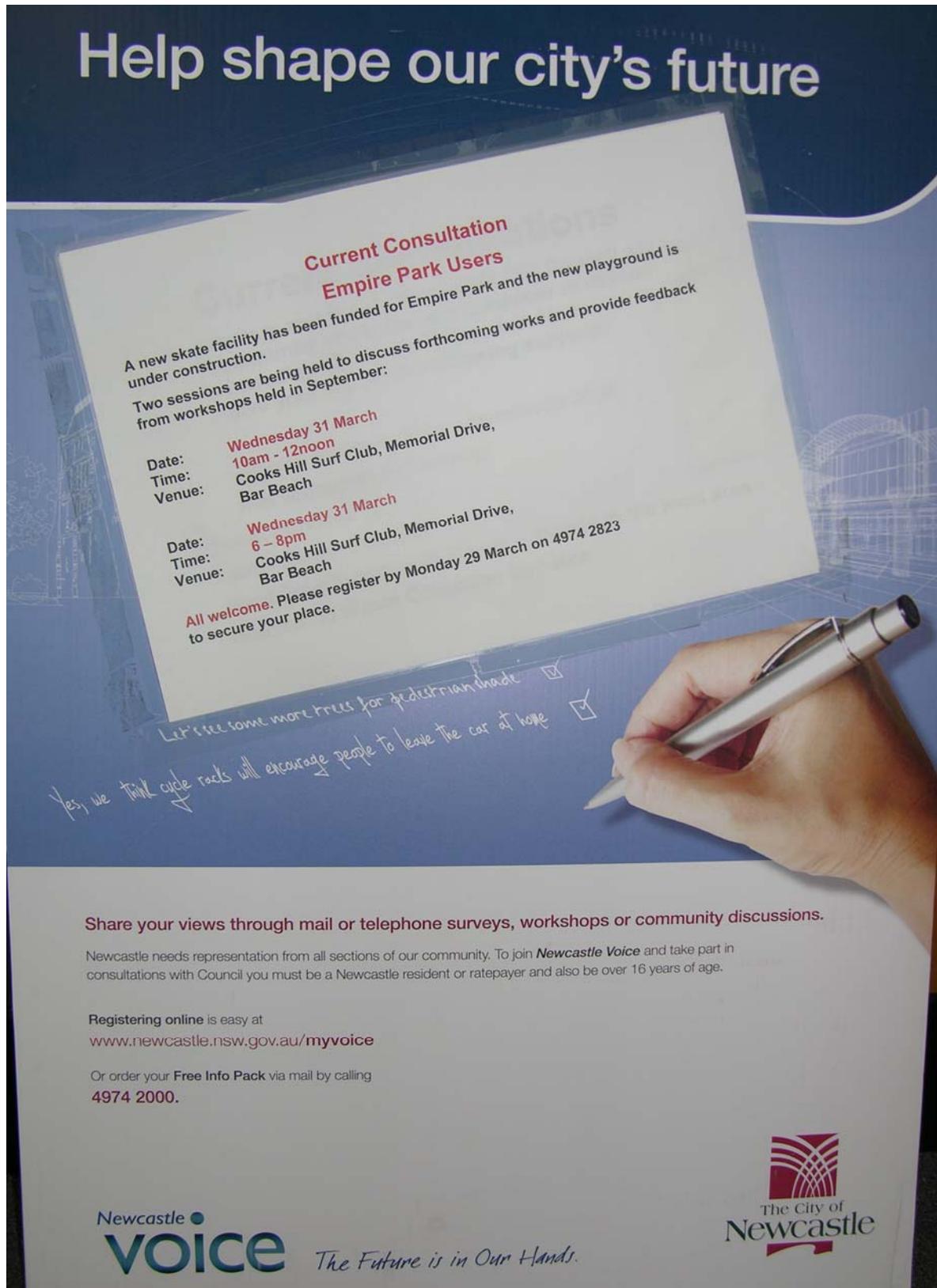
- Council needs to have its beach and park cleaners visit every day at early morning to clean up before daily walkers exercisers and young people who want to use the skate park
- Daily cleaning rubbish, don't want it to look like Mayfield, Newcastle South Warners Bay. Bins
- Hash salt air, sand from high winds, graffiti needs daily cleaning. What is the estimated cost?
- Users management committee. Council maintenance of rubbish, needles, glass etc. "Convict" to built or project manage to achieve quality, no "lemons" please. Also contractors to advice of satisfactory maintenance to name skate board park experience
- Ongoing maintenance required will be minimal if built property in first instance
- Daily cleaning from Council? Will this be maintained regularly
- They need to get artwork, great pictures to avoid tagging etc. Encourage competitions as it is a spot the Council should support. Need more than just a bowl. All park users will converge and use that area the most causing congestion, need more ramps etc.
- Continual cleaning of entire park graffiti, glass on sports field. Merewether maintenance crew budget to include provision for adequate ongoing maintenance
- Ocean environmental effect eg rust, sand, wind. Funding for ongoing maintenance, high maintenance costs , building materials suitable to the environment, greened area too will required significant maintenance

- Well Council needs to come up with a plan for maintenance. Cleaning needs to be regular. The parks built by Council won't need much though however some funds should be allocated
- Sand Ingress to the skate area- prevailing SW/SE wind for 6 months /year. Salt and seawater corrosion, degradation of park until other works completed
- Cleaned frequently; Council need to promise that they will take on their responsibility to maintain it. Clean the vandalism, broken glass, graffiti not just on skate park but on the houses nearby which will get vandalised. (Not necessarily by skaters, but by vandals who are attracted to the skate park at night
- Security fencing, daily clean up, patrols, district 24 hr graffiti management plan. Maintenance huge, possibly quite difficult and will run down. How many people are expected?
- Ongoing removal of graffiti, removal of sand as required or regular commissioning of artist to rejuvenate the oval appearance. Consideration to ongoing cost of maintenance
- Maintenance. Having lots of fun skateboarding!
- For any surface based sport the user is generally focussed in preparing the surface
- Can the Council afford to maintain the park? What is the cost? Including graffiti and cleaning
- Sand blown who cleans?. Commitment to clean graffiti and glass within 24 hours, maintenance at Nesca National. There are already many activities in this park. Do we need more?
- Interaction with other park facilities. Correct use of cement and stone. As a resident of 80 years in this area, corrosion of property is the main worry.



Appendix III - Promotional Materials & Media

Signage



Help shape our city's future

Current Consultation Empire Park Users

A new skate facility has been funded for Empire Park and the new playground is under construction.
Two sessions are being held to discuss forthcoming works and provide feedback from workshops held in September:

Date: Wednesday 31 March
Time: 10am - 12noon
Venue: Cooks Hill Surf Club, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach

Date: Wednesday 31 March
Time: 6 - 8pm
Venue: Cooks Hill Surf Club, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach

All welcome. Please register by Monday 29 March on 4974 2823 to secure your place.

Let's see some more trees for pedestrian shade

Yes, we think cycle racks will encourage people to leave the car at home

Share your views through mail or telephone surveys, workshops or community discussions.

Newcastle needs representation from all sections of our community. To join **Newcastle Voice** and take part in consultations with Council you must be a Newcastle resident or ratepayer and also be over 16 years of age.

Registering online is easy at
www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/myvoice

Or order your **Free Info Pack** via mail by calling
4974 2000.

Newcastle
voice
The Future is in Our Hands.



Fact Sheet

Empire Park Skate Park and Masterplan



Redevelopment of the skate park at Empire Park will be the focus of discussions at consultation workshops being held at Cooks Hill Surf Club.

There are a number of different projects planned for the Empire Park and while some details have already been finalised there is opportunity to make changes to some aspects and this will be the focus of the workshops.

Topics covered at the workshops include:

- status report on the whole of the park (Masterplan Empire Park)
- project update including a review of consultation to date
- what is/isn't included in this construction
- view draft design plans and examples work by Convic skateparks, learn about the construction timeframe and offer suggestions to finetune the draft design plan and
- what is happening in the immediate future at Empire Park

There are three sessions available:

Tuesday 30 March
10am to 12noon

Wednesday 31 March
10am to 12noon

Wednesday 31 March
6pm to 8pm

All sessions are being held at Cooks Hill Surf Club, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach.

All welcome.

Newcastle Voice will be hosting the workshops. To secure your place, call 4974 2823 by Monday 29 March.

For further information please contact Deborah Alterator, Manager Place Management Services on 4974 2688 or email dalterator@ncc.nsw.gov.au



Print Advertisement: *Newcastle Herald H2 20 and 27 March*; and *The Star 17 and 24 March*.

Consulting with our community



Do you use Empire Park?

Two community workshops are being conducted by Newcastle Voice to discuss future works at Empire Park, and provide feedback from the sessions held in September 2009.

Time: **10 - 12 noon or 6pm to 8pm**

Date: **Wednesday 31 March**

Venue: **Cooks Hill Surf Club, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach**

Come and have your say about this important community facility.
All welcome.

Register by **Monday 29 March on 4974 2823** to secure your place.



Media Release

16 March 2010

Empire Park on the agenda

Redevelopment of the skate park and the addition of a bat-ball court at Bar Beach will be the focus of discussions at consultation workshops being held on Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 March at Cooks Hill Surf Club.

Director Liveable City FRANK CORDINGLEY says “The local community is really interested in the different projects planned for Empire Park and while some details have already been finalised, these workshops are an opportunity for members of the community to fully understand the proposed changes, and to have their suggestions heard as well”.

“The skate park and bat-ball court projects have generated much of this interest and we are keen to hear how the proposed design can be tweaked to better suit the both users of the facility and the park.”

“The Federal Government has given the project the go ahead and provided \$417,000 for construction. The workshops will clarify what is and what is not part of this project.”

The workshops will be an opportunity for the community to:

1. receive a status report on the whole of the park (Empire Park Master Plan)
2. see a project update including a complete review of consultation undertaken so far
3. understand what is and what is not included in the proposed construction
4. see the early draft design plans and examples of other projects completed by Convic
5. have the construction timeframe explained
6. offer suggestions to fine-tune the draft design plan and
7. understand what else is happening in the immediate future at Empire Park including pathways, shelters and playgrounds.

Empire Park consultations

Tuesday 30 March
10am to 12noon

Wednesday 31 March
10am to 12noon

Wednesday 31 March
6pm to 8pm

Cooks Hill Surf Club, Memorial Drive, Bar Beach

Register now for workshops by calling 4974 2823, registration closes on Monday 29 March. Find out more about [Empire Park](#).

For interviews call Frank Cordingley on 4974 2409.

Appendix IV – Participant Feedback

Participant Feedback

1. What did you particularly like about this workshop?

- There was a good mix of people around the table and most topics were covered
- Numbers good
- Venue was appropriate for the subject
- Lay out good
- Opportunity for everyone to speak freely, very fair facilitation
- Well controlled discussion with opportunity for anyone to speak.
- Ground rules were excellent
- Group discussion and feedback at the end from groups
- Well presented and illustrated information
- Large attendance signified wide public interest
- Venting allowed but focused on positives outcomes
- Some information given out was great
- A chance for the community to finally have a voice on the skate park
- At least they run
- The opportunity to talk to people involved in the Council. Also being able to meet other interested locals was great.
- I did learn a lot from this workshop
- The opportunity for people to be at least heard, lets hope council listens
- Liked interaction with other attendees
- Adequate time to air most points of view regarding the park
- Skate designer presentation
- The fact that it was held
- Overall the plan presented was good plan and should be applauded.
- It was professionally run, everybody had their say
- I gained some knowledge about the Empire Park debate on all the areas
- The opportunity for all views to be expressed and noted
- Location - proximity to site
- Location suitable to site under discussion
- Varied input, police suggested curfew
- I mainly came for information and to obtain a clearer idea of the size of the proposed skate park. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that the park will not be nearly as intrusive in its size as I had been previously led to believe
- Everyone had an opportunity to ask questions
- Hearing everyone's point of view- more people had much the same ideas

- Opportunity to see who the stakeholders are and hear different viewpoint
- Well facilitated
- I appreciate the efforts of council to allow community consultations to occur more often. The workshop was well organised and respectful. Very informative
- We had a chance to have our say
- The many different perspectives covered
- Able to see the actual plan of proposed skate park, Good morning tea!
- Having the opportunity to listen to more payers concerns
- Opportunity to express opinion
- Structured well, able to highlight issues concerning residents
- An opportunity to have a say in a public issue. Gained awareness and knowledge of coastal revitalisation strategy. Good size plan of park for group to view
- Well organised and controlled by facilitator, good information – details of skate board plans, size, design
- The residents/ users had a choice to have input
- Location, gathering the large number of interested parties and stakeholders
- It was very informative, well run
- Variety of views
- There was an “attempt” to enable community engagement
- The information was well deserved to be known and told to the general public
- Well controlled
- Very well put together and presented
- It was ok; I feel I have a little more knowledge. Meeting well run.
- Well run. could have been held earlier
- Good mix interested parties unfortunately too late and after “decision” made
- Public voice
- Most people got a chance to speak
- Hearing what the main concerns were regarding the skate park

2. Please suggest any improvements that could be made.

- Introduction was far too long
- Presentation poor
- Coverage of the objectives outlined in the first 10 minutes
- Early part could be shortened to make time for more pressing questions that arose at the end
- Facilitation was rude and strongly opinionated
- While more information was provided on the day misinformation was sustained by the facilitator
- Do not evade issues. This challenges meeting outcomes credibility. Eg The South Newcastle / Mirvac issues
- More time , too rushed
- Detail transparent process
- More information needed, timelines per grant not answered in 2 hr workshop
- Young and older recreational areas (all together) well adjusted youth
- More time on discussion- not on what the council proposes
- Why show a NCC MP which we from heard won't mean anything when the state Government one comes out tomorrow!
- Batter timing and take more input from key stakeholders to set realistic agenda.
- The made presentation was irrelevant because the skate park is being built regardless of Coastal Master plan
- It was a big topic. The objectives at the beginning were to for reaching for the time available
- Less time spent on silly games! our time is too valuable to be wasted
- Too much spin from presenter overtime and full of clichés much talk little information. Conduct to time frame less spin/crap and more information
- Did not discus all the points raised by participants in detail eg. Mirvac, implementation issues and grant issues
- Perhaps more information distributed to participants prior to workshops so time in workshop could be better used to discuss finer details than rushing through
- Registration should be available online as well as phone. If workshops book out bigger venue or schedule more workshops. Meetings been scheduled after CMP on display 12/04.
- Put name of speakers beside agenda topics
- Put all the concerns on an expanded list and address those concerns, Convenor went out with too much 'waffle"
- Timekeeping , get to the guts of the presentation done much easier
- While the appearance and presentation seemed to fulfil the need for consultation with community it still too little too late. Will anything that was said actually be heard?
- It seemed to have been "hijacked" by the skating community as it is already a "done deal" the meeting seems to have been a waste of energy
- We didn't address the issues that we identified at the beginning of the meeting, not well run, not well mediated. Stay on the "advertised" topic.
- Get an independent mediator in future. The facilitator is a Council employee so therefore compromised, and not in a position to be totally impartial. The facilitator often relayed Council's previously known position on certain issues. Keep a list of action items as a result of workshop e.g. NCC manager and directors promising to follow up specific points

- Not enough time- too much time spent on Convic previous development
- Smaller groups, less numbers , more meetings on evenings
- Sufficient time to enable the “voices” be heard without cutting off and speaking over them. Respect was required but often not showed by NCC speakers
- A less condescending and rude host. Actually having the forum at reasonable hours. How many people of working background and of reasonable intellect can make day forums it is councils shady way to sneak their agenda through
- Did not address the majority resident concern that Empire Park was the wrong site and the community consultation was a total farce
- Glass of wine
- Have information in media and better drops in this location which have not been available to all of us as shown by these members' views tonight.
- More evening meetings for those who work and also not near public holidays or school holidays. It occurred better late than never because many of us had no consultation and feel very left out.
- I thought a workshop is meant to be about having the public's opinion instead of constantly telling us to be quiet and move on to the next topic, without resolving the topic at hand
- Felt bullied
- An independent mediator would make a huge difference
- Hold earlier in process, have independent MC
- The lady presenter was poorly biased towards the skate park
- The lady running, as skill and competent as she was, frequently railroaded ideas. She was on the side of the skaters and there was zero objectivity. Frequently patronising she was a bit schoolmarmish, but she had great hair. An independent mediator would be much more helpful
- Outline that the subject of the meeting is the discussion topic and that meetings are not a soap box for exterior topics
- The facilitators listened to the concerns of the assembled and addressed those issues rather than dogmatically adhering to the present agenda. Sit on those participants who impede the process of the workshop with grievances about the past conduct of this matter
- The MC was stopping the discussion when it was difficult for Council to answer. Made rude comments such as “sorry we didn't phone you personally” very condescending attitude!
- Simple minders of Council to push on with an agenda – a determination not seen in it's actions on resolving other issues. Follow the inputs of participants not of the facilitator – this was not a forum for “open” discussion. Professional facilitator closed off any discussion not wanted
- Not great deal. Proved that this consultation could have been useful if it had taken place earlier. By not having them tensions between skaters and non skaters have become the issue not the park. There is too much time spent explaining every section of the program. It wastes time when there is a lot to be said. It would go a long way if an independent mediator held the meetings. Its very frustrating when a mediator is biased and defensive.
- Limited access by timing
- There wasn't enough time to discuss everything
- Better times for workshops so young persons can attend
- Make them more accessible to young people. Today's representation was heavily skewed against the young people who would desire such facility. There needs to be a way to include them
- Longer time, perhaps communicate more prior being released- appears the older people who are already opposed purely due to feeling is already decided
- Longer time to be made available

- Previous public input and discussion, drawn from results
- Convener very rude/ abrupt and defensive, The facilitator should be amenable to people's differences and opinions
- Please make sure you communicate more openly about any proposals
- Make same, it caters for all skaters young and older
- I found it stressful and very frustrating, there was no clear answer as to why we have to put a bigger skate park in and hope the council will be able to fund all maintenance. It would be nice or helpful to have all questions answered...
- The organisation of the time schedule needs to provide more time for a group Q & A. This workshop should have been held after the plan was available for the community to review, then questions could actually be given a clear, true answer.
- More focused on answering the objectives of the group
- Control the meeting presentations at first. All questions after presentation. Although a little difficult, questionnaires sent out 2-3 weeks before may allow you a chance to plan the meeting a little better
- Obviously more time
- More time given to answer concerns. The money questions that were talked at the start of the meeting – were they all addressed?
- More evening sessions, people work and study
- More time for participants discussion. Document outcomes place on website
- Those present were concerned about discussing objectives of workshop rather than complete the sheet in 15 mins
- Involvement of police to comment on the main concern relating to anti social behaviour and alcohol consumption
- Replaces farce that didn't happen when council said we had community consultation. Run by independent, no one beholdng to Council for their employment.

3. Any other comments?

- I have been happy with the consultation process , I think that further meeting need to held to discuss the concerns raised
- Thank you for the opportunity a better or earlier communication in the future
- We are really being railroaded, no voting on skate location
- Its all too late, why are we here
- It was disappointing that Skate board Park already decided to built Empire Park
- Encourage more people who support the projects to attend so the arguments are more balanced
- Increased police input with history of frequency of calls to skate parks
- Disappointed decision already made, no answers to lots of things
- Input allocated information from the workshops on the website to examine the outcomes
- Thanks you ! appreciate that the Lord Mayor popped in
- Interesting the community had concerns that we agreed on, but that was it. No one concern was given concrete answer
- The facilitator appeared to be defending the Council, very defensive
- A bit sad that it seems fait accompli before these groups. Don't know how this can be avoided people feel rushed and that their concerns are not really taken seriously; good to hear opinions of others
- Survey ideas by use of the web site on the internet
- Impact studies – this needs to be addressed. An impact study does need to be completed. Previous consultation concentrated on skaters and not on general public
- Sad not have cross sections of the community that would be affected by decisions made by council
- A fait accompli – be upfront – yes it is going to happen – who are the stakeholders? Good to have a time plan but appears NCC is being driven by Commonwealth/ State funding impact study- is there one?
- I have a problem that the issue is a fait accompli - consultation was not adequate , information to community was poor
- Some of council staff appeared to be defensive
- It was done before the Coastal Plan was presented to Council on April 6, combining the two is absolutely necessary
- This should have occurred much earlier
- Huge mistrust exist- some was named today but not over come
- “Meeting-games” belong to kindergarten. We are here to be serious, not frivolous
- I disliked the point scoring game, while I understand the point of it, introduction too long!
- Questions still need to be answered
- Very little information discussion on actual park facilities
- Presenter spent time defending Councils positive on consultation while led to arguments among attendees and took up more time
- I was worth my time. I came away better informed than I was
- A long winded, talkfest by The facilitator, we didn't answer the initial questions, too much time wasted by the allowed time

- It had to be better than previous consultation and communication which was non-existent. Shame on you NCC.
- Would have been much better to have the actual master plan for Park, rather than discussing a draft. Many participants did not feel that the process and workshop will actually influence the Council's decision making
- Focus on subject of workshop – less intro and reference to Newcastle Voice and other projects. Item # 3 started 10:42 not 10:20 as per agenda. Keep time as far as possible
- Much confusion about facts obtained from Council papers. Too much 'draft' proposals
- Welcomed, thank you
- Inappropriateness of Council representatives carrying on their own conversations at a time when microphone was passed around the room- surely this is when they should be listening!
- Too much "padding" didn't address "objectives" until 20.05 hours
- Agenda, the time of the Coastal Master Plan was irrelevant because it is to be released tomorrow and is still secret.
- No break required
- Too little too late too narrow as the focus needed to be on the whole park. The whole Master Plan provided and the feedback sheet was headed "Empire Park Skate Park". Bully stie facilitation
- As it did not address the local residents concerns, then unfortunately not satisfactory. Why Empire Park
- It was informative and easy to follow
- Be consistent if you take a question at end of meeting why only one question and not allowing comment to the general form (this was after each group commented)
- The facilitator was very one-sided, she was not objective.
- I don't believe we got to resolve the objectives we named at the start of the session. At the end she very quickly wanted to just tick off all the objectives even though many of us didn't feel they were resolved, because we ran out of time
- The facilitator seemed to feel a need to protect skaters and defend Council. Is her role a facilitator?
- Think is too late
- Maybe two or three people to chair the meeting not one!
- It seems too little too late. There was too much skater friendly discourse, which is fine, but council is not facilitating a discussion regarding the issues. You are driving a wedge between skaters and residents. You are trying to put people off, to paint yourself as lights for youth. You are lights for your own bottom line. You are government and I am not going to wash you as far as I can throw you EVER. Be honest straightforward, fair and faithful. You are government for the love of God transparency
- A firmer approach to people trying to leverage personal concerns not relevant to the topic at hand
- Can we have some feedback via Voice, NCC Website as to general consensus? Also don't provide so much food! We don't need it.
- No one could actually answer if Newcastle South Skate was staying. Councillors had different views.
- This was a long overdue consultation and was not open to the diversity of opinions, this was a forum for a pre-determined agenda and outcome .
- It seemed pointless at this stage. Some construction began 3 weeks ago so this consultation will likely have little effect. It has come far too late. Being considered sooner could have been appreciated and would have allowed skaters to talk and realise the main problem is Council's secrecy! Not something you look for in your representatives

4. Please rate your overall satisfaction with the workshop.

Completely dissatisfied	11	18%
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	15%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	10	16%
Somewhat satisfied	23	38%
Completely satisfied	7	11%
TOTAL	60	100%

5. Would you attend another group like this – on a different subject?

Yes 49
No 9

NB: Not all participants completed a feedback sheet; not all questions were answered on each sheet received. It's a voluntary step, to aid continuous improvement.

Other Feedback

- Use of word “upgrade” in regards skateboard rink plan, better articulation of NCC’s plan for upgrade of skateboard rink. Historical context 2006.
- The “pie in the sky “idea that Chris Skate Park will lead to a safer local community. If we are going to be having walk throughs by police, why is that not happening already as there is quite a deal of antisocial behaviour occurring already?
- This was already a done deal and ran by the Council. All the talk of police, lighting, maintenance seems to be as lightly impractical as the walk throughs by the police.
- Why isn’t the Skate park built in Dixon Park where the community is more than happy to facilitate the skate park!!! But we wouldn’t wait to disturb after residents. Why Empire Park ! Not much commercial development in the park, is completely ridiculous, no market for it
- Put the skate park further back from the ocean, this would stop skateboards going into traffic and have less maintenance costs due to sand. Maybe where the 2 bat ball courts proposed together are. Also if people also complain about wind elements then National Park on Union St is a fairly good place
- Too many skate people making comments on their experiences in NSW, not addressing this location on a main road for safety reasons. No-one mentioned children using this park
- Haven’t surveyed local residents about what recreational uses are preferred. Skate park appeals for young boys/men – how about young girls/ women? Most of them don’t skate. Do you know if the community would want to spend grant funds differently
- More determination to fix other issues would be great Surf House, Surf Club amenities, Amenities blocks , BBQ’s Shelters, pathways
- Most Bar Beach people oppose closing Memorial Drive; we don’t want this Council Master Plan to be superceded by the Coastal Revitalisation Plan. The bat ball players group and other users support the double sided court location near the existing tennis court, not the one near the existing bat ball court, which would be too close dangerous involve removal of existing trees, aesthetically less appealing etc. We need a double bat ball court to meet existing identified demand; toilets open daylight hours, BBQ facilities and user friendly , capture its natural attributes and make it all even better more beautiful place. Keep the commercial facilities on the beachfront/ in the Surf Club pavilion or extension.