



Consultation Feedback Report on the North Eveleigh Precinct Plan

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Introduction

This report provides an outline of the consultation activities undertaken by UrbanGrowth NSW between 27 October and 30 November 2015 on new plans for North Eveleigh. Around 250 people participated in a range of activities including an online discussion forum and a large community workshop. Approximately two thirds of participants lived close to the site with the balance of participants mostly from other parts of the Central to Eveleigh study area or surrounding suburbs. As such, participants largely represented the people who are most directly affected by the proposed development.

North Eveleigh will be the first neighbourhood to be transformed under the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program (see Appendix A). Bordered by Wilson Street, Carriageworks, the railway corridor and Iverys Lane, the site is mostly disused RailCorp land. The site has one existing residential building comprising 88 units of affordable housing that was approved under the existing 2008 Concept Plan and opened in 2015.

Detailed planning for the North Eveleigh neighbourhood provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the vision and 10 key moves developed for the Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation Program can be implemented at a precinct scale.

During the consultation period we published responses to a number of frequently asked questions on the Central to Eveleigh website (see Appendix B).

This report provides a record of community feedback received. We will review the draft plans and carry out further consultation in early 2016 before finalising the North Eveleigh plans for public exhibition.

Report structure

This report contains three further sections:

- **Background and approach** – provides context to the project and describes the consultation we have undertaken
- **Summary of feedback** – presents feedback we received about the development proposal, the park and open space, heritage and public art, and proposed adaptive re-use for a historic building, the Clothing Store
- **Next steps** – provides an overview of further consultation to be undertaken in early 2016 and how we will use community feedback to finalise a proposal for North Eveleigh and inform the Urban Transformation Strategy for the broader Central to Eveleigh area.

Background and approach

Project overview

The proposal for North Eveleigh is for a part of the site covered by an existing approved development proposal (see Appendix A for detail on the 2008 North Eveleigh Concept Plan). The new proposal reflects our planning for the whole Central to Eveleigh area and includes:

- an increase in the size of the proposed public park from 3,350m² to nearly 4,500m² plus one proposed pocket park in addition to the existing pocket park
- use of the Clothing Store for retail and community uses, instead of residential, so that it functions as the heart of the neighbourhood
- change in the building layout and an increase in building heights from 3 to 12 storeys to between 3-4 storeys and up to 20 storeys next to the rail corridor where the least impact occurs
- an approximate 20% increase in development floor area to deliver 710 apartments in addition to the 88 affordable housing apartments already delivered
- provision of 531 parking spaces including the 35 car spaces already provided for the affordable housing apartments
- incorporation of heritage into public art
- allowance for a new pedestrian and bike crossing over the rail corridor.

Appendix C provides details of the new proposal and design options for the park.

Approach to engagement

We believe that good community engagement involves clear communication about the purpose of consultation and the ways in which public feedback can influence project decisions. Given the area's location close to public transport, education and employment opportunities, we have consistently outlined our ambition to deliver new medium and high density development in a way that balances metropolitan, inner city and local neighbourhood needs.

As such, while plans for North Eveleigh include a mix of medium and high density development, we are considering views about the scale of development on the site and seeking feedback on the layout and design of buildings to minimise amenity impacts on adjoining areas. We are also seeking feedback to inform decisions about the design of the park, the plans for heritage and public art and use of the Clothing Store. This is part of an ongoing program of engagement.

Community consultation activities from 27 October to 30 November 2015 included:

1. Community workshop

The community was invited to attend a workshop on 12 November where we presented the plan and invited feedback. Attendees were encouraged to ask questions during the workshop, leave written feedback and to complete an event evaluation form.

Around 60% of the workshop attendees lived near to, or adjacent to, the North Eveleigh site. This reflected a more localised level of participation than other workshops we have held over the last two years for the Central to Eveleigh Program, where participants have come from across the study area.

2. Community panel workshop

A workshop with a randomly selected and broadly representative group of community members was held on 5 November where we presented the plan and invited feedback.

3. Interactive online forum

A website with an online discussion forum inviting feedback.

4. Door knock of local businesses

Door knocks and informal discussions were held with local business owners and staff in Darlington and Redfern to raise awareness of the plan and to encourage feedback.

5. Market stalls

Market stalls were held in at Carriageworks Farmers Market in October and November to raise awareness of the plan and to encourage feedback.

6. Communication and promotion

Engagement opportunities were promoted with:

- a letterbox drop of a printed project update that was distributed to over 41,000 properties in and around North Eveleigh
- advertisements in local newspapers including Central Sydney, Inner West Courier, City Hub, South Sydney Herald and the Australian Chinese Daily
- personally addressed letters to 500 randomly selected local residents
- e-newsletters issued to over 1,500 people
- face-to-face promotion at local market stalls
- website, Facebook and Twitter notifications
- promotion via community group networks.

In addition we briefed local Members of Parliament, Councillors and a number of government agencies, service providers and community groups. We sought assistance from these stakeholders to promote engagement activities through their networks and also invited their feedback on the plans for North Eveleigh.

As a result:

- 116 people attended the community workshop on 12 November
- 17 people attended the community panel workshop on 5 November
- 130 people participated in the online forum
- 3,300 people visited the project website during the consultation period from 27 October to 30 November
- Written feedback was received from 26 people, mostly via email.

Analysis of registration data from both the workshop and online forum indicates that 44% of participants were from the 2042 (Newtown) and 2008 (Darlington) postcodes, with a further 19% from 2015 (Eveleigh) and 2016 (Redfern) postcodes. The balance came from other postcodes in the Central to Eveleigh area or surrounding suburbs.

Summary of feedback

This section summarises the feedback we received, primarily from the community workshop and online discussion forum.

Development proposal

The proposal for 710 new apartments in buildings up to 20 storeys along the rail line reflects the opportunity to provide housing for our growing city in an area that is well serviced by infrastructure and close to jobs. Expert studies carried out to inform our plans identify that infrastructure systems have the capacity to support the proposed development. Our studies confirm that new development will have no overshadowing impact on surrounding homes and minimal impact on local roads. While new buildings will significantly alter the skyline and change the character of the area, building heights can transition upwards away from existing buildings to respect the scale of the existing surrounding development.

Most of the participants felt the proposal did not provide the right balance of housing, open space, heritage and community facilities. There were concerns that buildings were too high and not suitable for the area and that the increased population would overly impact infrastructure and services.

Other concerns related to building design, overshadowing and overlooking, the size of open space, infrastructure capacity and funding, site access, parking provision and traffic impacts on the local road network.

Others who participated thought the proposal provided a reasonable development balance. These participants felt, given the site's location close to the city centre and public transport services, that higher density development was appropriate. Their support was generally conditional on new buildings reflecting architectural design excellence and being supported by upgraded infrastructure, accessible open space and affordable housing.

Building heights and density

The proposed maximum building height of 20 storeys generated strong opposition from participants both online and at the workshop, with many expressing the view that 20 storeys would over develop the site and be out of keeping with the adjoining low rise conservation area. There was no agreement on suitable alternative building heights with suggestions of five, 10, 12 and 16 storeys as being more appropriate.

A number of participants questioned the need for the proposed number of apartments on the site and suggested that lower densities be considered. Participants wanted more information about the rationale for the proposed 20% increase in development floor space from the 2008 plan.

Participants who indicated provisional support for proposed building heights, said that architectural excellence had to be achieved. Some of these participants commented that buildings of comparable scale have been built at Central Park and Moore Park Gardens and demonstrated how well-designed tall buildings can contribute to highly liveable neighbourhoods when they are coupled with open space and community amenities.

A few participants did not support increased height as a trade-off for retaining the Clothing Store for community use and suggested it be used for residential purposes to reduce heights of other buildings.

Shadowing

Questions were raised about whether new buildings may overshadow existing properties adjoining the site and on the other (southern) side the railway line. People asked for extra shadow diagrams before 9 am in winter and in summer.

Some questions were about how adequate solar access could be provided to new apartments given the proposed densities. Other comments reflected the view that high buildings take away the feeling of light, not just direct sunlight.

Building design controls and standards

Most participants commented about the need for world-class architecture to minimise negative visual impact of new buildings. There was some support for vertical gardens, like at Central Park, to soften the look of buildings.

Some participants expressed concerns about loss of privacy and made suggestions for building designs to minimise overlooking, particularly to existing houses on Wilson Street.

Parking

Views were mixed about the number of planned parking spaces. Some participants were of the view that street parking was inadequate and additional on-site parking was needed. Other participants were in favour of the proposed parking rates to discourage car use and supported initiatives such as car share schemes, bicycle racks, and a walking/cycling bridge over the railway to encourage people to choose active transport.

Traffic and access

Comments and questions related to:

- the safety and adequacy of a single entrance and exit from the site onto Wilson Street, with suggestions for a roundabout or traffic lights
- the need to upgrade public transport given the capacity of train services at Redfern, Macdonaldtown and Erskineville, which people believe are close to capacity, particularly during peak times
- the need to provide bicycle infrastructure, including more bicycle lanes and storage
- safety concerns about increased traffic on local streets, specifically for pedestrians and cyclists on Wilson Street
- safety concerns about increased pedestrians using Iverys Lane and cars accessing driveways
- amenity concerns about increased traffic on local streets, including Queen Street
- suggested measures such as congestion charges to deter cars from coming to the area.

Railway crossing

There was support for a pedestrian and bicycle crossing over the railway to make it easier for people to move around by foot and bicycle. Participants asked about when a crossing would be delivered and where it would be located.

Infrastructure

There was broad agreement on the need to address impacts of increased population on:

- local primary and high schools
- hospitals and healthcare facilities
- public transport services and stations
- waste collection services.

Participants questioned the capacity of existing infrastructure and services, and agreed with the need to upgrade Redfern Station.

Funding and proceeds from the sale of government owned land

There was some discussion on infrastructure funding, including support for reinvesting the Australian Technology Park sale proceeds and value capture. Many participants requested that proceeds of the sale of government owned land in the area be reinvested back into the area.

Some comments reflected the view that development was profit driven by “greedy” developers. This view underpinned many people’s concerns about the proposed density of development on the site.

The development funding model was discussed and additional information requested about whether water, sewer and other infrastructure costs would be fully paid by developers or subsidised by tax payers.

Housing affordability

There was full support for affordable housing.

Sustainability

There was agreement on the need for new development to be sustainable, with the potential to use renewable and locally generated energy and to reuse waste materials. More information was requested about sustainability provisions associated with new development and opportunities for green infrastructure.

Air quality

The need to manage air quality and the potential impact of development on air quality was raised.

New public park

The proposed designs for the new neighbourhood park take into consideration previous feedback from the community (see Appendix A) and respond to the changed configuration of the site to maximise the usability and accessibility of the park. Several layout concepts and two broad design concepts were prepared (see Appendix C), but not discussed in detail at the community workshop because participants requested that time be spent responding to questions about the development proposal. The feedback below is from those who participated in other ways, mostly using the online forum. We will seek more feedback on the design of the park at future consultation events.

Park design

Some participants requested that the park be bigger to provide more open space.

Several park design options were provided for comment. Of the 75 responses to an online poll about which new park option was preferred:

- 32 responses preferred option two
- 21 responses preferred option one
- 22 responses chose option three.

Qualitative feedback reflects mixed views about options one and two with marginally more support for option one which has a larger kick-about space.

Different aspects of the park design

The online discussion forum posed six questions about different aspects of the park design (see Appendix D).

Participants identified the following open space features as having the most benefit for local residents:

- barbecues and shaded picnic area (37 responses)
- kick-about lawn (33)
- community gardens (32)
- wildlife attracting native garden (30)
- informal seating (29)
- kids play area (23)
- toddlers play area (20)
- sculpture garden (10)
- event space (nine).

Comments from workshop participants were generally consistent with the online responses, suggesting support for shaded passive recreation areas, barbecues, kick-about lawns and community gardens.

Other suggestions included the need for dog-friendly fenced off areas, a skate park for teenagers, a climbing wall, full size football fields, ping pong tables and multi purpose space.

The following facilities were identified as priorities for a recreation space:

- fitness equipment (17 responses)
- basketball half court (nine)
- table tennis (nine)
- a giant chess set (two)
- other (10) ideas included facilities for skateboarders, a fenced off dog run, jogging loop, passive recreation and a zen garden.

Participants identified preferences for the following theming around play areas:

- nature/imaginative play (36 responses)
- adventure play (20)
- sculptural play (16)
- water play (15)
- sensory play (11)
- interactive electronic play (four)
- other (four) including grass, minimal features and “there may not be a need for a play area”.

Participants identified the following preferences for playground equipment:

- climbing (30 responses)
- inclusive design and equipment (27)
- swinging (21)
- sliding (17)
- balancing (14)
- rocking (six)
- bicycle circuit (three)
- other (three) including goal posts, a question on a need for play equipment “if all the apartments were to be studio apartments”.

There were mixed views about dog off-leash areas. Generally comments reflected the view that dogs need to be managed and that if an off leash area is provided it should be separated from other parts of the park.

Other comments about the design of open space reflected the need to:

- ensure safety at night with appropriate lighting
- minimise visual clutter
- minimise hard surface
- manage wind tunnels
- ensure creative and imaginative design
- provide public toilets
- ensure children’s safety with fenced off play areas
- improve accessibility to Iverys Lane by removing the stairs and levelling the slope
- use landscaping along Iverys Lane to screen development
- reduce or eliminate private open space by maximising publicly accessible open space.

Heritage and public art

The proposal includes strengthening the arts, cultural and heritage attributes of the site. Participants responded favourably to ideas to use public art to celebrate the site's past.

Workshop participants preferred approaches that use public art to interpret heritage. Online participants preferred the following approaches:

- small to medium pieces of art woven through the public domain (25 responses)
- public art and heritage embedded into the landscape design (17)
- public art used to support people finding their way (14)
- other responses (12) including greenery, trees, natural music bowl/amphitheatre, outdoor exercise equipment, contemporary art, art that could be incorporated into play space design and temporary art spaces
- network of heritage interpretation panels (nine)
- single large piece of public art (six).

The most popular storylines identified both at the community workshop and online related to:

- rail history (44 responses)
- Aboriginal communities (36)
- industrial development (24)
- natural history and topography (24)
- education and innovation (six)
- other responses (five) including the history of workers, stories of the local community and caution against assigning a purpose to art
- connection to the Australian Technology Park (three).

The Clothing Store

Previous feedback has been that there is support for the Clothing Store to be used by the community rather than for private residential uses. Feedback was now sought on the uses that may be appropriate, including a small supermarket and café on the ground floor and space for creative community uses on the second floor.

Participants suggested the best activities to bring people together in and around the Clothing Store were:

- small business and start up businesses (35 responses)
- markets (30 responses)
- festivals and events (19 responses)
- pop up art and cultural activities (15 responses)
- music performances (14 responses)
- other suggestions (two) included a natural music bowl/amphitheatre for small performance events.

Some participants expressed concern about buskers and large events such as concerts using amplified music due to the noise impacts on the surrounding properties.

Feedback about the type of retail needed in the neighbourhood indicated support for small

businesses that sell fresh food and other everyday items as well as cafes and markets. However, some participants opposed a supermarket, noting there were supermarkets nearby and that it was not appropriate to have a supermarket in a heritage building.

Other participants supported use of the Clothing Store for a kindergarten, after school activities and childcare, one-stop community health clinic, Aboriginal art gallery, performance space, community hall or shops selling books, art and music.

A minority of participants suggested the Clothing Store be left as an industrial building. Others expressed a preference for the Clothing Store to be developed for residential uses in return for lower building heights across the site.

Other issues

A number of additional issues were raised through the consultation:

Communication of the workshop and need for more consultation

Questions were raised about how the workshop had been promoted, with a number of participants saying they had been unaware of the workshop. Participants requested more consultation to enable plans to be considered in more detail.

Purpose of consultation and transparency of the process

Questions were asked about how we were intending to report feedback received and whether a report would be publicly available. In response, we committed to both publicly report on the feedback and to provide the opportunity for participants to advise us if they felt the reporting did not provide an accurate reflection of community feedback.

Some participants were disappointed at not being able to participate in small group discussions at the workshop to provide feedback on the development proposal, the design of the park and uses for the Clothing Store. This occurred because the workshop format was altered as the majority of participants requested an extended plenary question and answer session instead of small group discussion.

Sale of the Australian Technology Park (ATP)

The workshop was held at ATP on the same day as the NSW Government announced the sale of the Park to a Mirvac led consortium. A number of questions were raised about how heritage at ATP would be maintained and managed and whether the proceeds from the sale would be reinvested in the local area.



Images from the community workshop on 12 November 2015.

Next steps

The response from local residents to plans for North Eveleigh will be considered together with the response from other stakeholders, including the City of Sydney. We are also considering feedback in the context of what we have heard over the last two years, which has helped shape a vision for the Central to Eveleigh area. In response to this feedback we are assessing how we should refine the proposal for North Eveleigh by adjusting the massing and layout of buildings to lessen their visual impact and improve the park. We will then undertake further consultation on the refined proposal before finalising the plans for public exhibition.

Some participants said it was difficult to provide considered feedback as material was not presented because people with strong opinions dominated the proceedings. Given this feedback, future consultation will need to provide an effective forum for full participation and may include a drop-in session, a new online forum on a modified proposal and a workshop focusing on the park and Clothing Store. We'll also undertake several focus groups to get feedback from members of the local community that are hard to reach, such as young people. All of these activities will be promoted to ensure that people are aware of what is planned and the opportunities to participate.

We will do further community consultation before finalising and lodging a development proposal for North Eveleigh with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment. The proposal will be placed on statutory exhibition when the community will have the opportunity to make submissions. The Minister for Planning will then make a determination on the proposal.

We will be seeking feedback on the draft Urban Transformation Strategy for the Central to Eveleigh area in mid 2016. The display of the draft strategy will be supported by extensive communication and community engagement activities.

Your feedback on this report

This report summarises feedback received from around 250 people regarding new plans for North Eveleigh. It documents concerns and feedback from residents living close to the site about proposed building heights and densities, and feedback on a number of other community issues related to the plans.

In keeping with our commitment to accurately document consultation outcomes, please email us at c2e@urbangrowth.nsw.gov.au if there are issues that you feel we have not captured or if you have other feedback about this report.

Thank you to everyone who has participated to date. We welcome your continued input and encourage others to join in.

Appendix A – Background information

About the Central to Eveleigh Program

The Central to Eveleigh Urban Transformation and Transport Program is a 20 to 30-year project that aims to gradually transform land in and around the three kilometre Central to Eveleigh rail corridor in the inner city.

It will help to meet current and future needs for local residents and a growing global Sydney by providing a mix of new housing and employment opportunities, new community facilities and open space and improved connections across the rail corridor.

We have been working with the community and other stakeholders since 2013 to develop a long-term plan that will guide the redevelopment of mainly government-owned lands and act as a catalyst to develop a thriving, vibrant and more connected area for people to play, work and live. Previous activities have included workshops, meetings with government stakeholders and the community, newsletters and updates, an interactive online forum and information stalls and activities at local markets and events.

For more details of the Program, including the vision and 10 key moves that are guiding our planning, go to www.centraltoeveleigh.com.au.

North Eveleigh plans and previous consultation

A Concept Plan for North Eveleigh was approved in 2008 for a large site between Macdonaldtown and Redfern stations. For North Eveleigh West (the part of the site affected by the current proposal), the approved plan provided for:

- 3,350m² public park plus two pocket parks
- retention of the Clothing Store for residential use
- provision for 700 to 750 apartments
- buildings ranging from 4 to 12 storeys
- 1,800 parking spaces across the larger North Eveleigh area.

Community feedback regarding the Concept Plan identified:

- concerns about traffic impacts
- concerns about provision of parking with mixed views about need for more/less parking
- desire for more open space and for design of open space to limit hard surfaces and provide for active recreation
- concerns about the amenity impacts of 12 storey buildings – overlooking and overshadowing and impact on character of area
- need for pedestrian and cycle access and active transport infrastructure
- concerns about impact on heritage values
- need for childcare and concerns about impact on local public schools
- need for more stringent sustainability measures
- concerns about impact on public transport services

- need to improve links to Redfern Station
- need for more affordable housing.

Community feedback about open space design identified:

- support for a mix of amenities including shade, sheltered seating and tables, toilets, bubblers and barbeques, children's play equipment, a community garden
- need for appropriate maintenance
- need for the site's history to be reflected in the design
- need for space to relax and space for gathering.

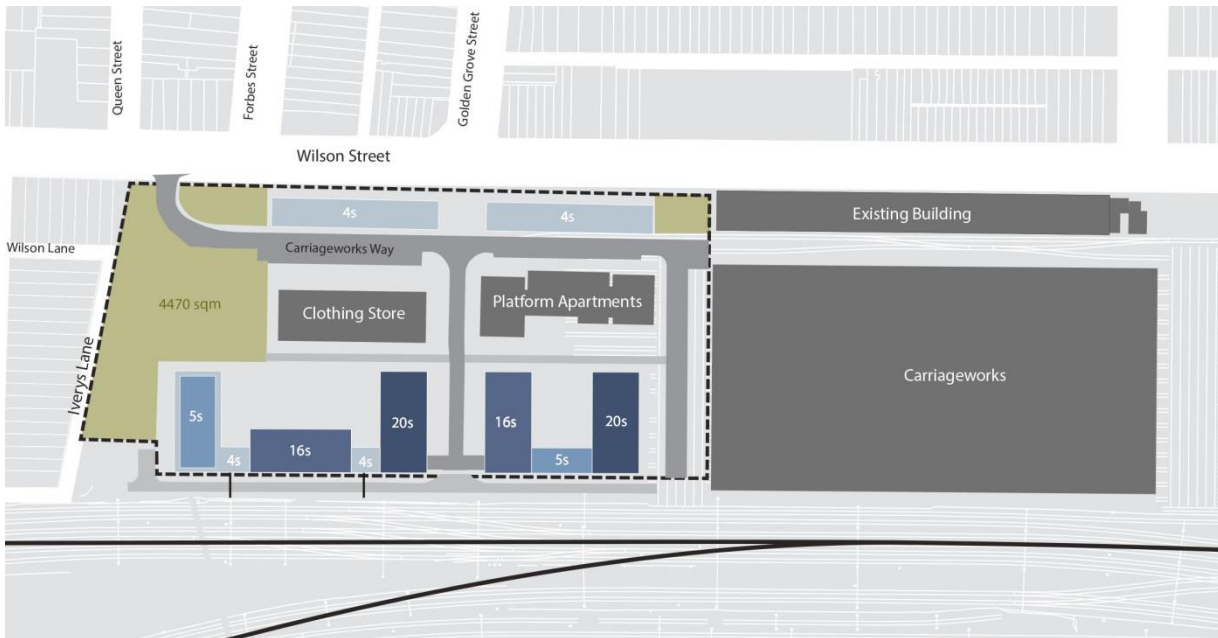
Several development scenarios for North Eveleigh were discussed at a community workshop on 30 May 2015 that was attended by over 200 people. There were a variety of views about density but there was general consensus that:

- varying building heights with good design is preferred to lower buildings of uniform height
- the heritage building known as the Clothing Store is a key community asset, which should be transformed into a community hub
- a connection across the railway is important with most support for a pedestrian and cycle access way.

Appendix B - Frequently asked questions

Answers to frequently asked questions relating to plans for North Eveleigh are available on our website. Link: <http://www.centraltoeveleigh.com.au/about/frequently-asked-questions>

Appendix C – Precinct proposal and park options



Precinct proposal for North Eveleigh (November 2015)



Park Option 1



Park Option 2

Appendix D - Online discussion forum questions

The online discussion forum was live between 27 October and 30 November 2015.

Park design

1. Which 6 features do you think will provide the most benefit for the majority of local residents? (select up to 6)

- kick-about lawn
- community gardens
- barbecues and shaded picnic area
- toddlers play area (1–4 years)
- kids play area (5–12 years)
- informal seating
- active recreational area
- wildlife attracting native garden
- sculpture garden
- event space (paved)
- other (please describe below)

2. If a recreation area is a priority feature for the park, which activity do you prefer? (select 1)

- table tennis
- basketball half court
- fitness equipment
- giant chess set
- other (please describe below)

3. What type of theming around play areas would you like to see? (select up to 3)

- nature / imaginative play (vegetation forms, logs, natural rocks, sand pit)
- interactive electronic play (new smart technology integrated into play elements e.g. lights music, connections to smart phones)
- adventure play (challenging physical activities, exploration)
- water play (pop jets, water stream, spouts)
- sensory play (musical, textural, touch and feel)
- sculptural play (animal or botanical forms, reinterpreted heritage forms, art elements, landforms)
- other (please describe)

4. What types of playground equipment should be included in the kids play area? (select up to 3)

- sliding (thin slides, wide slides)
- swinging (seat swing, tyre swing, rope swing)
- climbing (climbing net, climbing wall, climbing poles)
- rocking (sea saw, spring loaded rockers)

- spinning (standing spinners, sitting spinners)
- balancing (balance beams, steppers, rope bridges)
- inclusive design and equipment for all abilities
- small children's bicycle circuit (note: this would require more space which might reduce space for other play equipment)
- other (please describe below)

5. Do you agree that part of the park should be a dog off-leash area?

- yes
- no
- don't know

6. Are there any other essential design details we need to consider? For example, shade over the playground/s, bins with lids, doggy-do bins.

Approach to heritage and art

1. Which of these approaches to public art would work best in North Eveleigh? (people could select up to 3)

- a single large piece of public art
- small to medium pieces of art woven through the public domain
- public art is considered part of heritage interpretation for the area
- public art and heritage is embedded into landscape design
- network of heritage interpretation panels
- public art is used to support people finding their way to and from the park
- other

2. Which storylines should be prioritised in North Eveleigh? (people could select as many as they thought applied)

- rail history
- the stories of Aboriginal communities
- industrial development
- education and innovation
- connections to Australian Technology Park (ATP)
- natural history and topography of the site
- other

The Clothing Store

The community workshop and online discussion forum included a quick poll that asked people which activity would bring the site to life and bring people together. A dropdown menu of options included markets, small business and start up businesses, music performances, pop up art and cultural activities and festivals and events.

Retail and creative uses

1. What kind of retail do you think is needed in the neighbourhood?

2. What kind of creative community uses should the Clothing Store be used for?