

Revitalising St Mary's – Summary of feedback from Community Engagement.

Background

Community consultation followed the 2022 State Government elections, where a pledge was made to invest \$520,000 to 'revitalise reserves in St Marys'.

The engagement process saw 94 respondents participate in an online survey, 18 community members attend an in-person session, and two residents submit feedback via email during the engagement period.

The summary of all the feedback is below:

St Marys Street Reserve

- Feedback highlighted the need for a fully fenced dog park due to limited off-leash areas.
- Suggestions for a mini botanical garden with local plant species for education and awareness.
- Desire to increase vegetation and biodiversity for wildlife habitat.
- Requests for re-alignment and creation of green pathways to connect with other reserves.

Donald Street Reserve

- Very strong support for the playground to be fenced.
- Recommendations for re-aligning green spaces to create interconnected pathways.
- Suggestions for a sensory garden using Australian native plants.
- Calls for accessible facilities like toilets, picnic tables, additional seating and pergolas.

Thurles Street Reserve

- Community members suggest adding facilities like toilets, water fountains, and BBQs.
- Desire for accessible pathways, better maintenance, and community gardens.
- Proposals for various play equipment and recreational facilities.
- Safety concerns prompt requests for shade sails over the playground.
- Calls to enhance the landscape with native vegetation for supporting local wildlife.

We have received a lot of feedback on linking drainage reserves with open spaces to create green corridors. There is a desire for converting drainage reserves into green spaces with native plantings. Calls for better maintenance to address issues like dust, water discharge, rubbish, and weeds.

The online survey also focused questions specifically on the three reserves stated in the grant agreement. A summary of feedback received on the three reserves is below:

St Marys Street Reserve

Community feedback for St Marys Street Reserve reflects a variety of recreational preferences, including desires for outdoor fitness equipment, a dedicated



running/walking track, basketball/netball hoops or soccer goals, and an improved surface. People also expressed interest in play equipment like a flying fox, water play features, climbing walls, swings, and nature play elements. The feedback emphasised inclusivity by suggesting spaces for different age groups, including older children and teenagers, with features like parkour areas, hanging bars, and designated spaces for biking or roller skating.

Feedback identified an opportunity to connect St Marys Street Reserve and Donald Street Reserve by removing the road and adding a waterway for rainwater. This would create a continuous green pathway in Mitcham for everyone to enjoy. This could be a longer-term vision for the two reserves and recommended to be considered as a future option.

Community feedback indicated a support for the creation of a dedicated dog park within St Marys Street Reserve with 60.9% supported an area to exercise dogs specifically. Overall, residents are interested in a designated dog area but emphasise the importance of considering potential disruptions and impacts on the broader community and wildlife. While some support the idea of a dog park, others prefer to maintain the organic dog exercise areas and believe the existing dog-friendly spaces are sufficient.

Feedback was identified that some residents would like to maintain the reserve's openness and accessibility for all residents, expressing concerns about noise, parking, and exclusivity associated with a dedicated dog park.

Donald Street Reserve

Feedback identified that residents appreciate the reserve's convenient location, it is near La Crema café and is easily accessible for everyone in the suburb. It is used daily, especially for dog walking. Many suggest it could be developed into a versatile space for various age groups and gatherings.

The reserve is large and has the potential for improved playgrounds, equipment, and biodiversity. The community feedback highlights the importance of preserving open space for exercise and upgrading the playground, picnic facilities, and providing more shaded areas.

Suggestions for a wider range of recreational facilities, including a running track and basketball court improvements, are also mentioned. There was also a desire for a well-equipped playground suitable for young children and a fenced-off play area, with some mentioning the idea of a roller-skating area.

80.4% of participants indicated that it was important to have a designated recreational area for younger children (aged 2-5) with 76.3% indicating it is important to have a designated area for older children (aged 6-12). With 83.7% of participants telling us that it is important to fence the play area.

Thurles Street Reserve

Residents expressed that this reserve is conveniently located, central, and frequently visited as it is within walking distance from homes. It serves as a common gathering spot and good space for both kids and pets.

Feedback identified upgrades were needed to the play equipment as it is outdated and in need of improvement. Suggestions include a covered trampoline, improved basketball

court, and play equipment suitable for various age groups.

Residents expressed a desire for additional features including toilets, an extra bin, a BBQ, a drinking fountain, as well as enhanced general facilities and furniture.

Revitalising St Marys Next Steps

Administration have considered community feedback, past works and future work plans and developed a recommended suite of new, renewed, and upgraded features to be installed that will 'revitalise the suburb of St Marys' in line with the intent of the grant funding.

Due to the number of reserves in the suburb of St Marys and the available amount of pledged funding, it is proposed to focus on the three reserves stated in the grant purpose - **Thurles Street Reserve, St Marys Street Reserve and Donald Street Reserve**. Based on the feedback, the upgrades to each reserve will consist of the following:

St Marys Street Reserve	Donald Street Reserve	Thurles Street Reserve
Shelter	Playground	Playground
Picnic Table	Shade over playground	BBQ and Shelter
Two bench seats	Fence	Bin
Soccer Goals	Drinking fountain	Drinking Fountain
Two Reserve Signs	BBQ and Shelter	Two Bench seats
Drinking Fountain		Remove planter boxes and replace with garden beds

The consultation on the Donald Street Reserve and Thurles Street Reserve playgrounds will provide specific and detailed feedback regarding the type of play equipment that is preferred by the community for each play space to inform the selection of these elements.