

BIRRARUNG MARR MASTER PLAN

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



CONTENTS

Engagement Summary	p.3
Birrarung Marr Precincts	p.4
Engagement Snapshot	p.5

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Greenery and Nature	p.6
2 Peace and Quiet	p.7
3 Views	p.8
4 The River	p.9
5 Activity	p.10
6 Events	p.11
7 Aboriginal Heritage	p.12
8 Public Art	p.13
9 Connectivity	p.14
10 Kids Activities	p.15



BIRRARUNG MARR, LOWER TERRACE

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

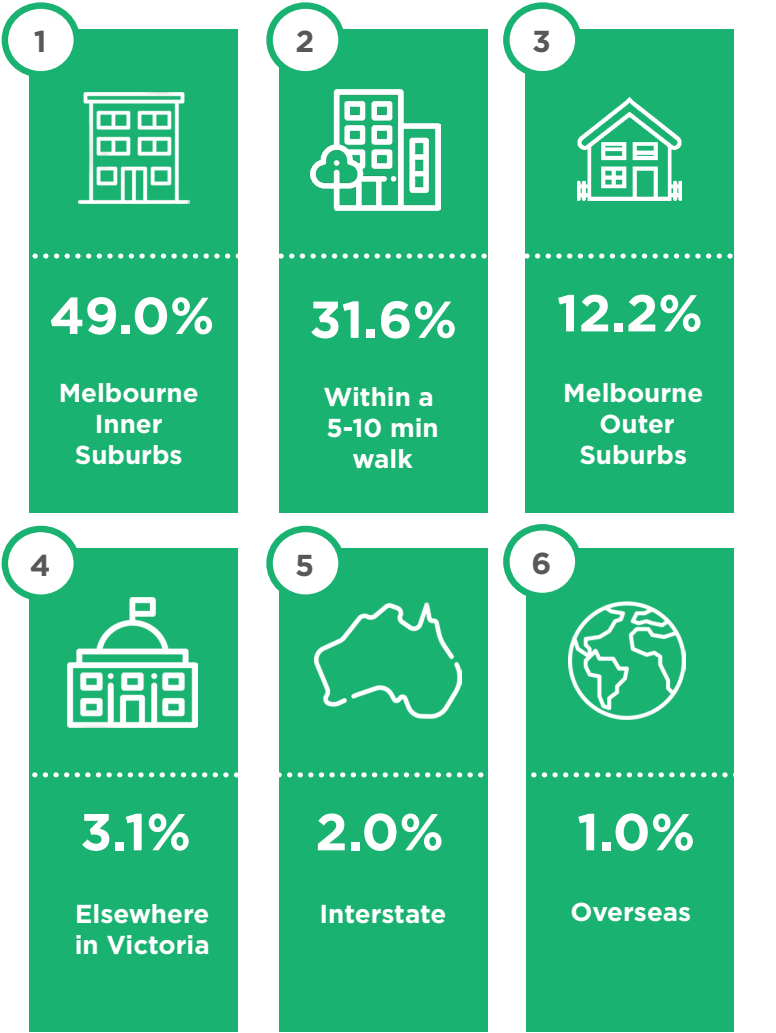
This summary document highlights the key themes uncovered through phase 1 of community engagement to support the creation of a Master Plan for Birrarung Marr - a new strategic document to guide the future of this significant public space. This document is structured according to the key themes that emerged from the engagement and are organised according to popularity. The full report can be accessed via: participate.melbourne.vic.gov.au/birrarungmarr

Running for the month of March until the 3rd of April 2018, The City of Melbourne coordinated a community engagement to help them better understand how people (including local area residents, people from across Melbourne, as well as visitors from interstate and overseas) currently use Birrarung Marr.

The aim of the engagement was to gather insights and feedback on the experience of visitors to the park, in order to help identify opportunities for improvement.

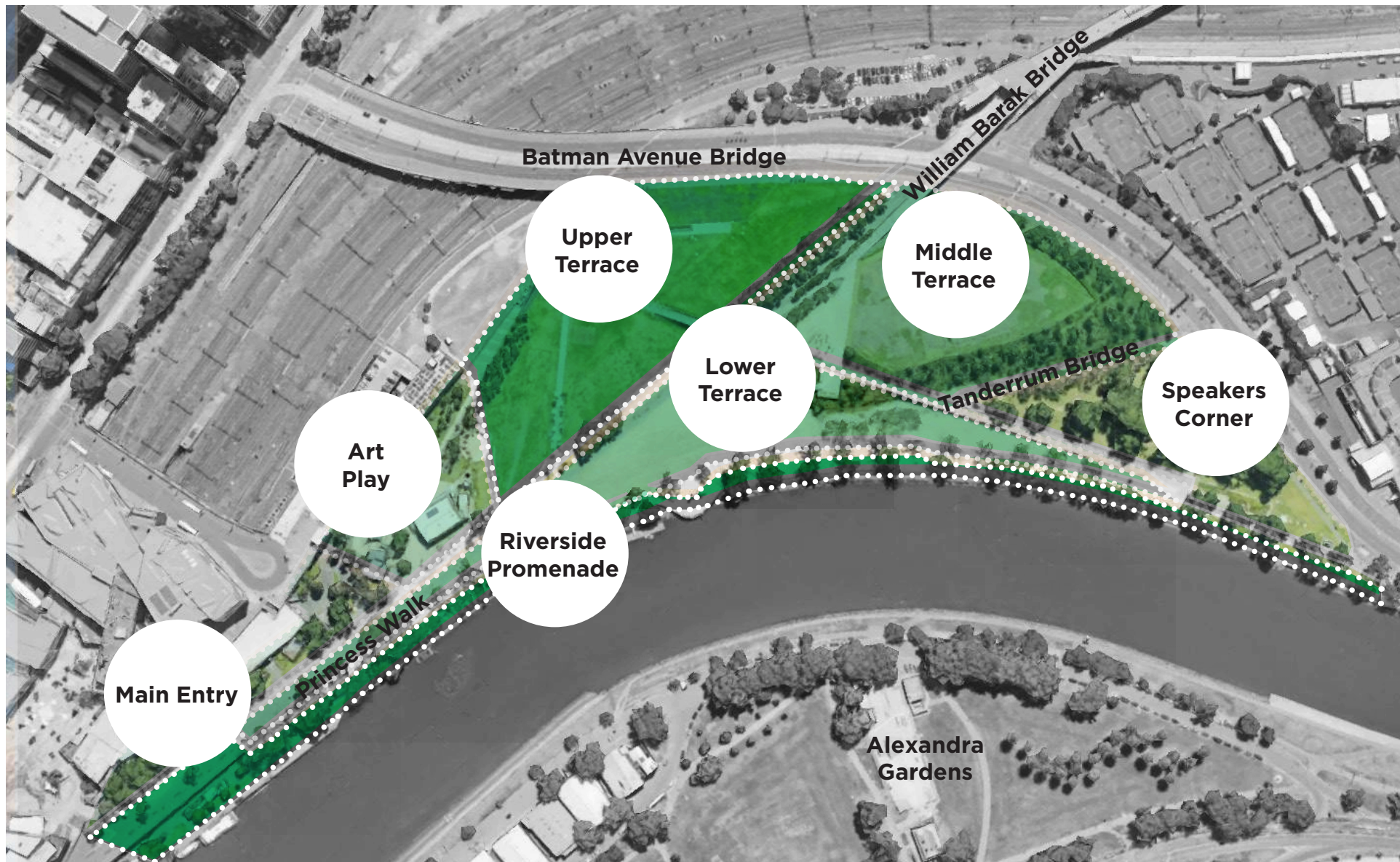
Through a combination of online and on-the-ground consultation approaches, the engagement identified 10 key themes and generated 121 recommendations from 98 participants.

Overall, participants were more likely to be over the age of 40, with nearly 60% of respondents (58 participants) being in this group. Only 9% of participants were under the age of 24.



WHERE PARTICIPANTS CAME FROM

BIRRARUNG MARR PRECINCTS



ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

HOW WE USE BIRRARUNG MARR...

- Over 50% of participants visited Birrarung Marr on a daily or weekly basis (50 responses).
- One in three participants said they would come to Birrarung Marr to relax (36 responses).
- 16% of participants said they visit the park for recreational purposes (16 responses).
- 12% of participants said they visit Birrarung Marr for events (12 responses).



WHAT WE LOVE...

- Nearly half of all participants (45 responses) said that they liked the natural environment of the park the most.
- 22.4% of participants (22 responses) liked the views and access to the Yarra River the most about Birrarung Marr.
- Riverside Promenade was the most visited area within the park. Nearly 70% of participants (68 responses) said they generally visit this location, followed by the Lower Terrace (65.3%).
- The characteristics participants most valued regarding Birrarung Marr were its greenery and connection to nature, peace and quiet, as well as the vistas to the river and the city skyline.



WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED...

- Participants most wanted to see changes made to the Lower Terrace - including upgrades to the compacted gravel and segregated bike and pedestrian paths.
- Other recommendations included more planting and greenery, improvements to access and wayfinding, and more / improved public amenity in the park.



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

GREENERY AND NATURE

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

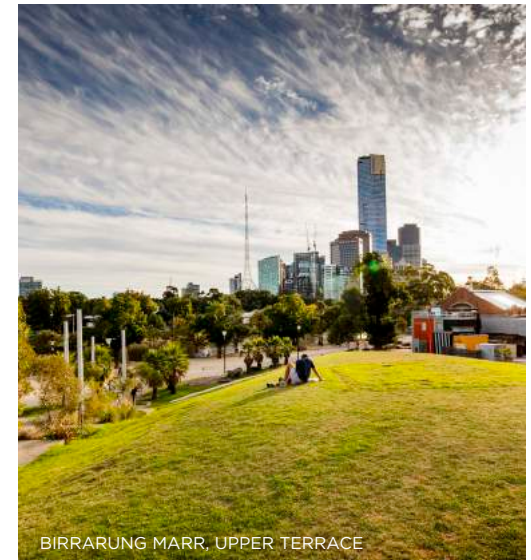
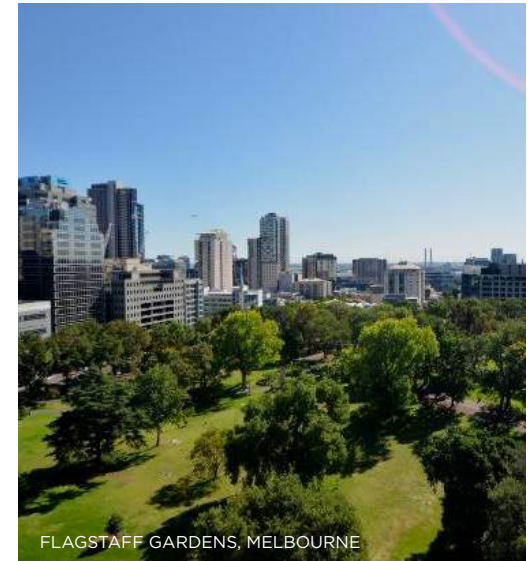
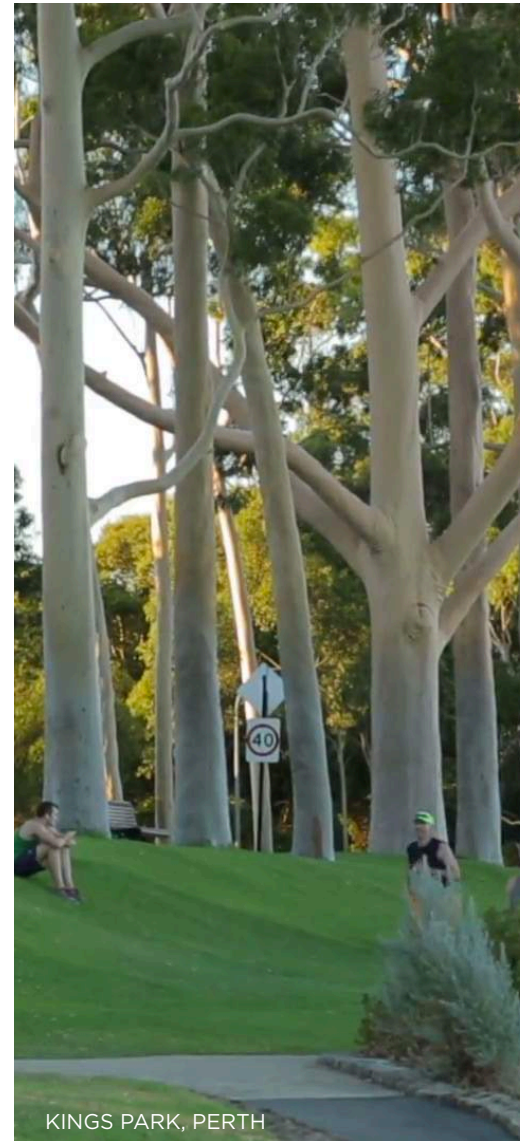
The natural environment of Birrarung Marr, its trees and green spaces was the most loved aspect of the park according to participants with nearly 30% nominating this as their favourite feature (42 responses) .

Multiple comments were registered recommending additional planting, including trees and other greenery. Some participants wanted the space to resemble a native forest, while others were more concerned about shade and access to nature.

Providing an overall increase in trees may alter the functionality of some of the spaces for hosting events. This should be considered in the placement and location of additional greenery.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **INCREASE PLANTING AND TREE COVER**
- **SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY**
- **ENHANCE THE NATIVE ENVIRONMENT**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PEACE AND QUIET

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

Peace and quiet was one of the most loved characteristics of Birrarung Marr according to participants, with nearly 20% of participants (28 responses) nominating this as their favourite aspect of the park.

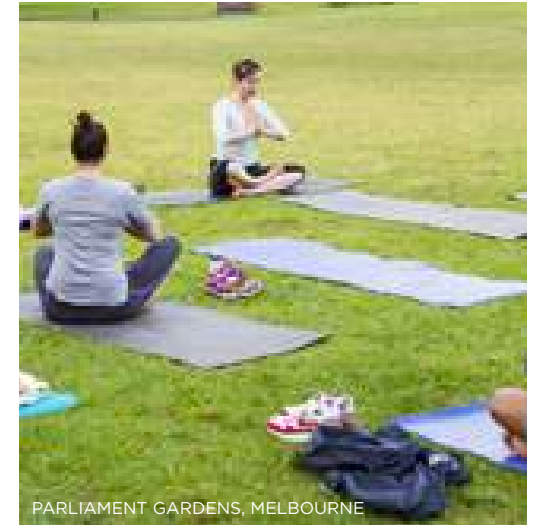
As such, preserving this characteristic is an important consideration for the master plan. Ensuring that there are areas for quiet enjoyment segregated from active areas will be important. In addition, ensuring spaces that are quiet are also welcoming and safe is another consideration.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **RETAIN THE EXISTING AREAS FOR REST AND RESPITE**
- **ENABLE SPACES FOR PASSIVE RECREATION**
- **SEGREGATE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE SPACES**



BIRRARUNG MARR, RIVERSIDE PROMINADE



PARLIAMENT GARDENS, MELBOURNE



YARRA RIVER, MELBOURNE

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

VIEWS

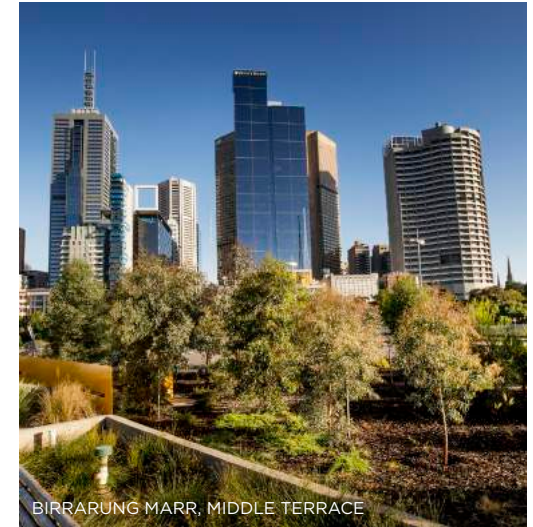
WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

The views of the city, Art Centre, river and Alexandra Gardens is an important aspect to how people experience Birrarung Marr. 13% of participants (19 responses) nominated this aspect as their favourite feature of the park.

Participants were keen to ensure that construction would not limit or diminish views from the park. Participants were particularly keen to maintain spaces such as the Upper and Middle Terraces as well as the Riverside Promenade where extensive vistas could be enjoyed.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **PROTECT EXISTING VIEWS OF THE CBD**
- **EXPLORE HOW LANDSCAPING CAN BE BETTER USED TO FRAME VIEWS AND CREATE VANTAGE POINTS**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

THE RIVER

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

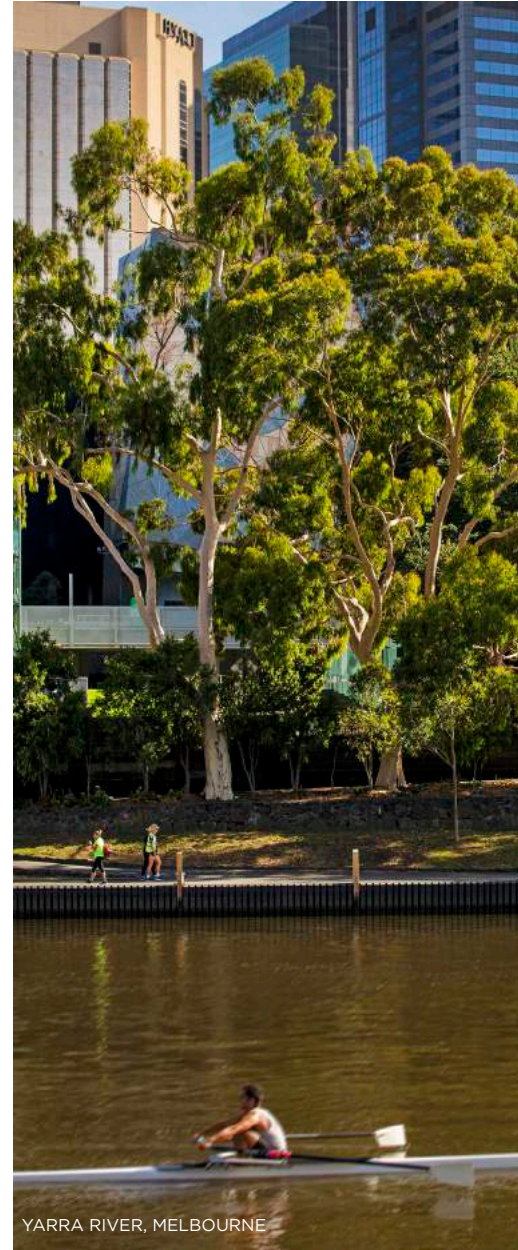
The connection that Birrarung Marr facilitates to the River is an important quality and characteristics of the park. For many participants, the space is used to access the river in order to watch rowers, reflect or relax. 22.8% of participants (22 responses) said that access to the Yarra was what they liked most about the park.

Views of the Yarra from the Upper and Middle Terraces which look down towards the river, and the Lower Terrace which opens up onto the river were mentioned as favourable spaces within Birrarung Marr for this reason.

It was also mentioned that the aboriginal representation / artwork, and the trees along the banks of the river created spaces participants wanted to spend time in. They felt this created a special connection and sense of place.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **KEEP THE YARRA AS A FOCAL POINT**
- **ENSURE THAT SPACES WORK WITH THE RIVER**
- **SHARE THE STORY OF THE RIVER AND USE IT TO ENHANCE A CONNECTION TO ABORIGINAL HERITAGE**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

ACTIVITY

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

Participants commented on the existing public amenity (benches, toilets and BBQ facilities), and recommended upgrading or increasing the number of these features to improved the functionality of the public space.

Specifically, participants recommended adding toilets near ArtPlay, and improving the lighting across Birrarung Marr in order to make it safer and more welcoming/functional at night.

Participants flagged that keeping the site tidy and maintained at all times was important. Another participant recommended including water stations where bottles could be filled.

A significant group of participants comments recommended adding shade structures within the different areas of Birrarung Marr in order to better weatherproof the site.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

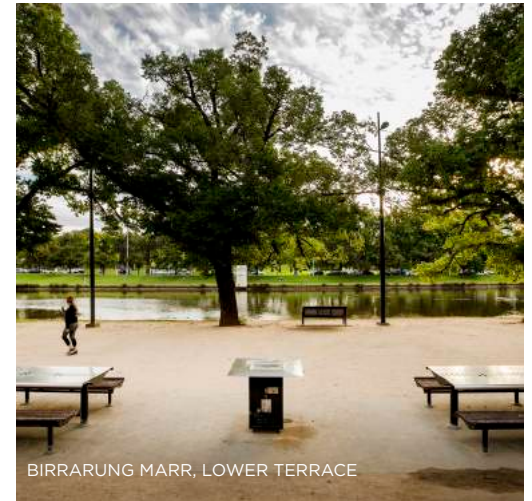
- **IMPROVE THE PUBLIC AMENITY**
- **INTRODUCE MORE WEATHER PROTECTION**
- **IMPROVE PARK-WIDE LIGHTING**



THE ROCKS, SYDNEY



SAKURA BRIDGE, TOKYO



BIRRARUNG MARR, LOWER TERRACE



WATER FOUNTAINS, SYDNEY

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

EVENTS

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

5% of participants (8 responses) provided recommendations specific to the way events are currently run at Birrarung Marr. It was noted that participants felt the park was a great location for hosting events, however the enjoyment of the public space was often diminished when events were taking place.

Overall, participants recommended better event management to reduce the impact of major events on the enjoyment of the space (including for relaxation and commuting).

Participants also recommended that more local community events and activities would be beneficial. These smaller events would fill the gaps in the current event calendar.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **IMPROVE EVENT MANAGEMENT TO MAKE EVENTS SAFER AND LESS OBSTRUCTIVE TO THE ENJOYMENT OF THE PARK**
- **PROVIDE A WIDER RANGE OF THINGS TO DO THAT ADDRESS GAPS IN THE EXISTING EVENT CALENDAR**



CARNIVAL OF LEARNING, BIRRARUNG MARR MAIN ENTRY



EVENT STAFF, BIRRARUNG MARR NIGHT NOODLE MARKET



BIRRARUNG MARR UPPER TERRACE

KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

4% of participants (6 responses) spoke to how Aboriginal history and connection to place had been represented in the landscaping and public art located throughout Birrarung Marr.

Participants reflected on how the Aboriginal significance made them think more about the history of the area. Of this group, many suggested how the natural environment complimented the site's Aboriginal story.

Two participants recommended including more information, or better signposting to help visitors discover the aboriginal heritage of the site, with one participant recommending a collaboration with the Koori Heritage Trust to coordinate walks and tours.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **INCREASE GREATER REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL HERITAGE**
- **IMPROVE INFORMATION REGARDING INDIGENOUS SIGNIFICANCE / HISTORY AT BIRRARUNG MARR**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PUBLIC ART

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

Six participants mentioned the Federation Bells as an important element of Birrarung Marr. Others spoke more generally about how the public art within the park greatly enhances the space.

There were no other references to the public art along riverside terrace, however it was noted that the Aboriginal artworks together with the landscaping makes the space feel Australian, and not European.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **RETAIN THE CHARACTER AND INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION AT BIRRARUNG MARR THROUGH THE PUBLIC ART AND LANDSCAPE**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

CONNECTIVITY

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

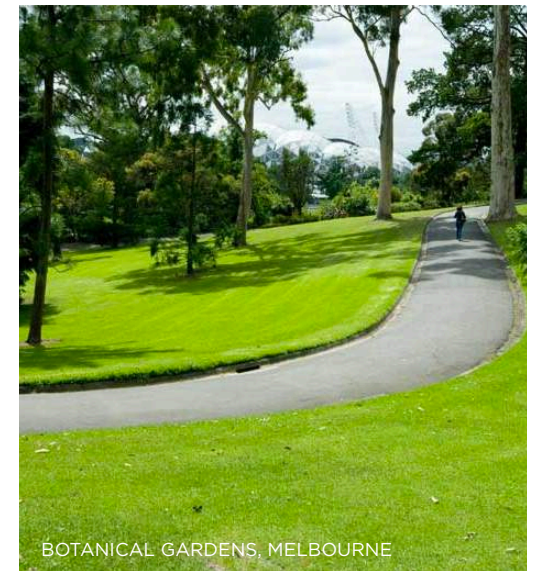
15% of participants (18 responses) recommended segregating the cycle and pedestrian paths along the Lower Terrace. Overall, participants felt that it was dangerous to have cyclists and pedestrians moving in the same space and that cyclists would benefit from a dedicated path.

It was also noted that the access and wayfinding around Birrarung Marr (from one space to another as well as to and from the CBD) needs to be better articulated and represented.

Throughout the engagement, a number of participants commented on the existing gravel finish of the Lower Terrace, and suggested it be changed in order to combat the issues relating to dust in the dry weather and the unpleasant surface that it created when it rains, for both pedestrians and cyclists.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **SEPARATED BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATHS**
- **RESURFACING THE LOWER TERRACE TO REPLACE THE CURRENT CRUSHED GRAVEL**
- **IMPROVE ACCESS AND WAYFINDING**



KEY THEMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

KIDS ACTIVITIES

WHAT PARTICIPANTS SAID:

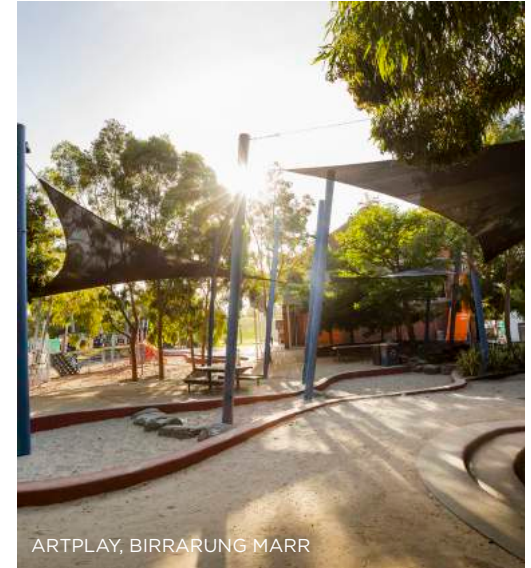
One participant commented on the safety of Birrarung Marr, in relation to the lack of surveillance around the ArtPlay area.

Another participant commented that there was a lack of information relating to ArtPlay, and what takes place within the space and when.

Participants also commented on the addition of more toilets located next to ArtPlay, and to bring back the cafe offering that once operated from ArtPlay.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECOMMENDED:

- **IMPROVE THE SAFETY AND PASSIVE SURVEILLANCE AROUND ARTPLAY**
- **PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE KIDS ACTIVITIES THAT ARE HELD WITHIN BIRRARUNG MARR**



Document Date: 18.05.2018

This engagement summary has been commissioned by The City of Melbourne and completed by The Space Agency - an independent consultancy specialising in stakeholder engagement and placemaking. The Space Agency was engaged, as an impartial, external consultant, to review and analyse community feedback in order to identify key themes and recommendations. Every effort has been made by the authors of this document to accurately represent participant feedback and insights.

For recommendations or questions, Please contact:
parkplanning@melbourne.vic.gov.au

