



**CITY OF  
PARRAMATTA**

# **Lake Parramatta Swim Upgrades**

## **Engagement Evaluation and Key Findings Report**

**May 2023**

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# 1. Introduction

In 2021, City of Parramatta commissioned a concept plan for improvements to the Lake Parramatta swimming area and began the process of applying for NSW Government grants to fund the project.

The aim of the project is to:

- Improve user safety
- Improve swimming capacity
- Improve access to the designated swimming area
- Reduce Council's ongoing yearly maintenance costs

Council's grant application was successful, and the concept plan was approved under the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) 'Places to Swim' Program 2021/22.

In December 2022, Council invited the community to view the concept plan and provide feedback on the Participate Parramatta project page. During this stage of consultation, the draft concept plan was viewed 3,413 times on Participate Parramatta and 370 submissions were received. Of these, 51 indicated strong opposition to the proposal and a further 22 indicated they would like to see some changes to the draft concept plan.

In response to the community's feedback and recommendations in the safety report, Council revised the draft concept plan. Changes to the plan include:

- Removal of the pontoon
- Removal of some seating/benches and shade sails to minimise impact on the natural setting
- Modification of the landscape design to complement the natural setting
- Inclusion of tactile surface indicators
- Retention of the safety enhancements.

The revised draft concept plan was exhibited from 24 April 2023 to 25 May 2023. To assist with the accessibility of the engagement, the community were provided with the following:

- An interactive revised draft concept
- The revised draft concept in PDF
- An outline of changes to the original draft concept plan
- Renders of the anticipated space post-construction
- Answers to anticipated frequently asked questions

## 2. Engagement Evaluation

The project was open for consultation for a four-week period from 24 April 2023 to 25 May 2023. This section provides a summary of the community-facing communications and engagement channels undertaken by Council during the consultation period to encourage community feedback.

Overall, **approximately 141,280 people** saw the opportunity to share feedback based on the data captured from the following communications and engagement channels.

### Participate Parramatta

The project page on Participate Parramatta was viewed 4,060 times during the exhibition period by 3,405 unique visitors, resulting in 128 submissions received via the online feedback form.

### Social Media

The project was promoted across Council's social media channels through both paid advertisements campaigns and organic posts.

An approximate **62,217 people** were reached across Council's main social media accounts and the Participate Parramatta social media account.






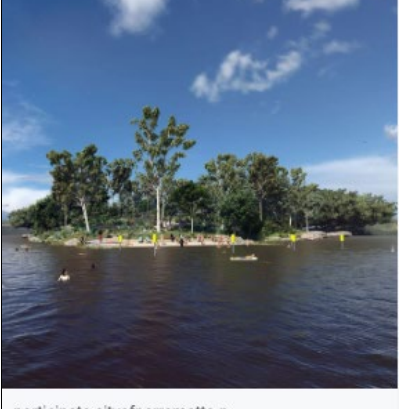
- City of Parramatta Facebook – approx. 43,000 followers
- City of Parramatta Instagram – approx. 12,300 followers
- Participate Parramatta Facebook – 6,917 followers

The following results were achieved via the paid campaign on Council's main social media channels.

Paid ad campaign		
Metric	Campaign Result	Benchmark
Spend	\$499.78	n/a
Reach	41,808	n/a
Impressions	68,607	n/a
Frequency (no. times ad seen p/p)	1.70	2-3
Link clicks	2,691	n/a
CPC (cost per click)	\$0.19	\$0.50-\$1
CTR (click through rate)	3.92%	More than 1%

Post engagements	2,970	n/a
Engagement rate (ER)	4.33%	More than 2%

Overall, the paid campaign performed well with good CPC, CTR and ER surpassing CoP benchmarks. The ER performed particularly well. This can be attributed to the high interest in the project from the community as well as the imagery used. Some of the top performing ads are featured below.

 <p><b>City of Parramatta</b> <span>Sponsored · 🌐</span></p> <p>Share your feedback on the revised draft concept plan for upgrades to the Lake Parramatta swimming area. This project aims to improve safety and accessibility at this much-loved location. We have taken on board much of the community's feedback about preserving the natural setting and removed the pontoon due to safety concerns.</p> <p>View the plan and artist's impressions at Participate Parramatta. Submissions close at 5pm on Tuesday 23 May 2023.</p>  <p>participate.cityofparramatta.n... <b>Lake Parramatta Swimming Area Upgrade</b> <a href="#">Learn more</a></p>	 <p><b>City of Parramatta</b> <span>Sponsored · 🌐</span></p> <p>Share your feedback on the revised draft concept plan for upgrades to the Lake Parramatta swimming area. This project aims to improve safety and accessibility at this much-loved location. We have taken on board much of the community's feedback about preserving the natural setting and removed the pontoon due to safety concerns.</p> <p>View the plan and artist's impressions at Participate Parramatta. Submissions close at 5pm on Tuesday 23 May 2023.</p>  <p>participate.cityofparramatta.n... <b>Lake Parramatta Swimming Area Upgrade</b> <a href="#">Learn more</a></p>	 <p><b>City of Parramatta</b> <span>Sponsored · 🌐</span></p> <p>Share your feedback on the revised draft concept plan for upgrades to the Lake Parramatta swimming area. This project aims to improve safety and accessibility at this much-loved location. We have taken on board much of the community's feedback about preserving the natural setting and removed the pontoon due to safety concerns.</p> <p>View the plan and artist's impressions at Participate Parramatta. Submissions close at 5pm on Tuesday 23 May 2023.</p>  <p>participate.cityofparramatta.n... <b>Lake Parramatta Swimming Area Upgrade</b> <a href="#">Learn more</a></p>
<p><b>2,614 link clicks, \$0.19 CPC</b></p>	<p><b>34 link clicks, \$0.18 CPC</b></p>	<p><b>43 link clicks, \$0.16 CPC</b></p>

## EDMs

The feedback opportunity was promoted through the Participate Parramatta EDM. It was featured in the May edition of the Participate Parramatta Community Newsletter on 3 May 2023. It was sent out to 14,841 community members. Of these, 44% (6,508) opened the email resulting in 153 members clicking on the link to the Lake Parramatta Swimming Area Upgrades project page.

It was also promoted in the May edition of Your City News, Council's main EDM. It went out to over 30,000 subscribers on Tuesday 2 May 2023.

## **City of Parramatta Homepage Slider**

The revised draft concept plan for the Lake Parramatta Swimming Upgrade was also promoted via the City of Parramatta external website homepage as a slider item for the duration of the exhibition.

Between 24 April 2023 to 25 May 2023, the homepage was viewed over 34,000 times by community members.

## **Parra News**

The revised draft concept plan for the Lake Parramatta Swimming Upgrade was featured in the Lord Mayor column of Parra News on 2 May 2023.

## **On-site signage**

The project was also promoted via on-site signage which included the QR code that led people to the project page on Participate Parramatta. The QR code was scanned by 22 people over the exhibition period.

## **Mailout**

A brochure mailout was sent to 200 adjoining properties along North Rocks Road (on the eastern side between the Cumberland Highway and William Place), Burke St (between Davies St and Gloucester Ave), Byrnes St, Davies St, and Lake St. to promote the project and the feedback opportunity.

# 3. Key Findings

A total of 128 contributions were received for the revised draft concept plan for the Lake Parramatta Swimming Area via the online submission form on Participate Parramatta.

This section of the report focuses on the findings from these contributions.

## What is your relationship to Lake Parramatta?

128 responses were received. Participants stated they:

- Live nearby – 89 (69.5%)
- Frequently visit – 61 (47.7%)
- Occasionally visit – 43 (33.6%)
- Swim at Lake Parramatta – 48 (37.5%)
- Never visited – 2 (1.6%)

## Do you support the revised draft concept plan?

All 128 participants responded to the question, stating:

- Yes – 69 (53.9%)
- Yes, to an extent – 37 (28.9%)
- No – 18 (14.1%)
- Unsure – 4 (3.1%)

## Do you have any comments or feedback regarding the revised draft concept plan?

This question has been analysed in relation to the level of support for the revised draft concept plan.

Of the 69 participants who **stated yes** to the previous question, 43 provided additional feedback. A further breakdown of these comments revealed that 14 of these comments stated they had no further feedback or were general statements of support, leaving 29 participants who provided feedback for further consideration. Key considerations raised by these participants include:



- **Amenities:** While participants supported the design, they expressed a desire for greater amenity to support the use of the space such as outdoor showers, bike racks, a change area, and a nice café/coffee cart.
- **Natural environment:** Participants also noted the need for these works to have minimal impact on the natural environment i.e. retention of trees and plantings, as well as exploring the more direct paths to the lake to ensure people don't walk over the existing vegetation.
- **Access:** The participants saw the need for greater accessibility features on-site, including handrails, ramps for the mobility impaired. They also wanted further accessibility features including an accessible kayak launch point, more accessible parking, and accessible bathroom facilities.
- **Safety:** Safety was also mentioned by these participants. They expressed the desire for a buoy in the lake to prevent drowning as well as a defibrillator on-site. They also enquired as to whether or not the lighting on-site would be sufficient.
- **Parking:** Parking was frequently mentioned by these participants. There were enquiries around the exploration of further parking options, with some noting the current provision is at capacity. Participants also mentioned the exploration of alternate methods of getting to the lake (active and public transport) to ease the congested parking situation.
- **Ready for summer:** Participants expressed excitement over the project and the desire for the works to be completed and ready for community use by summer.

Of the 37 participants who stated that they supported the revised draft concept plan **to an extent**, 36 provided further comment. The prevalent themes in the feedback provided by participants included:

- **Amenities:** Participants noted that while they largely support the design, there needs to be greater consideration to the on-site amenities in order to create a better user experience. They expressed the desire for outdoor shower facilities, changerooms and bathrooms. They also noted the area could benefit from the installation of bike racks, picnic facilities (included picnic tables as well as grass space near the lake for picnics), seating, and the provision of more shade.
- **Natural setting:** The participants saw the need for these upgrades to have minimal impact on the existing natural setting. They also felt the desire for more tree plantings and bush regeneration as well as the retention of trees and the existing planting that lines the water's edge.

- **Parking:** Participants expressed the need for more parking to service future visitors, noting that the existing provision is at capacity. They noted that these upgrades would result in more people using the lake and as such, greater consideration needs to be given towards parking to service these new users.
- **Access:** Some participants expressed a desire for further exploration of opportunities to make the area more accessible. Some suggestions included a ramp beside the stairs and accessible facilities i.e. parking spots and bathrooms.
- **Safety:** Safety was a consideration for some participants. They noted the need to clear the water banks of the swimming area of tree trunks, logs, and overhanging rocks to minimise risk of slips and of being caught by them. They noted that the area would benefit from more seating near the water for greater supervision, as well as general path improvements throughout the rest of the lake. They also noted the presence of a buoy in the swimming area would help minimise the risk of drowning and the need to consider how to minimise the risk of slips on the stairs (particularly if they become slippery due to the growth of algae).
- **Pontoon retention:** Some participants felt the pontoon should have been retained in this design as it is particularly engaging for older kids.
- **Play and exercise facilities:** Some participants desired play and exercise facilities adjacent to the swimming area. Some also noted that the swim area would benefit from a swing rope, a diving/jumping platform, and a lap swimming section.

Of the 18 participants who **did not support** the plan, all provided further comment. Of the 18 participants who did not support the revised draft concept, 7 opposed the project entirely. Of the remaining 11 participants who opposed the design, the reasoning included:

- **Natural environment:** The natural environment was a priority for participants, and they felt the upgrades would have a negative impact. They also noted that the lake is currently used as an escape from the 'overdevelopment' taking place in Parramatta, and felt frustration that the development of Parramatta was extending to the lake. Participants also wanted greater consideration given to tree and planting retention.
- **Access:** Accessibility for people with impaired mobility (people living with disability, older residents) and prams was a large concern for these participants. They noted the need for access ramps, paths with no

steps, and handrails. One also noted the need to balance the natural environment with the accessibility of the space.

- **Parking:** Participants expressed frustration over the lack of further exploration in regard to parking, citing that the parking is already at capacity and cannot service more visitors.
- **Value for money:** Participants felt that the money allocated to this project could better serve the community if directed elsewhere, as a large amount of money will be spent upgrading a facility that will not be open or usable year-long.

Of the 4 participants who felt **unsure** about their support of the revised draft concept plan, all provided further feedback for Council's consideration. Key considerations raised by these participants included:

- **Transport and mobility:** Participants noted the need for the lake to be more easily accessed via public transport. They also saw the need to re-examine the location of the parking lot, to expand the grass area near the lake, and for an entry road to turn directly towards the parking adjacent to James Ruse Drive.
- **Access:** The participants saw the need to include ramps in the space for people with reduced mobility (wheelchairs and walkers).
- **Upgrade to existing wharf:** Participants expressed a desire to upgrade the existing wharf to improve safety.

For more detailed comments, please refer to the raw data in the excel document provided with the reporting package.