

# FACILITATOR SUMMARY | KEY STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

## ***North Carlton Bocce Courts Engagement***

Facilitator: Jessica Christiansen-Franks (CEO, Neighbourlytics)

April 2018

### **OVERVIEW**

On Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018, City of Yarra hosted a meeting with key stakeholders to discuss the future use of the North Carlton Bocce Courts, as part of a broader program of engagement with the local community. The session was structured to directly build upon feedback received via Your Say Yarra's online forum, and the public drop-in session held on site in March 2018.

The main objectives of the event were to provide key stakeholders and community representatives the opportunity to:

- Reflect on the outcomes of previous engagement activities
- Discuss key objectives for the space, as they relate to the organisations they represent.
- Hear from other stakeholders about the (perceived or actual) challenges or concerns relating to different uses.
- Find areas of consensus between one another.

***This document intends to provide a summary of the evening as recounted by the facilitator.***

### **THE PROGRAM**

#### **Part 1 | INTRODUCTIONS & KEY TOPICS TO COVER**

*At the commencement of the session participants were asked to introduce themselves, and each outline a key topic they wanted to ensure the meeting covered. The key topics are outlined below as presented by the group.*

- Planter bed accessibility
- Noise or other things that distract from local amenity
- Community building is important
  - Shared garden would connect local people
- Any community garden would need to consider:
  - Climate change
  - Social isolation
- Quiet seating space very important- bike activity can be hectic
- An educational space to cater to all ages
- Space should further enhance Neighbourhood House facilities and potentially bring in income
- Maintenance of space as 'public' is very important- community gardens should not take up space which is currently public
- Space should be attractive, lots of seating and usable space
- Think if different food growing models
- Space should be usable by all, meaning the fence should be removed
- Heritage of site, where bocce is relevant to cultural past.

**Parts 2 & 3 | MAIN DISCUSSION**

*As representatives of key groups within the local community, the participants were asked to reflect on the top 5 themes that appeared across the engagement process, and discuss the challenges and potential solutions for each. A summary of this discussion is represented as follows:*

	<b>Consideration &amp; Challenges</b>	<b>Solutions</b>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vandalism is concern</li> <li>• Respect heritage of the site</li> <li>• Drug users might hang out in a new space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space becoming an asset for the Neighbourhood House</li> <li>• A mix of uses could accommodate everyone's priorities</li> </ul>
<b>Productive Garden</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public space should not be taken for private use, and community gardens are exclusive</li> <li>• Who is entitled to take the produce/has access to the boxes?</li> <li>• Who maintains the garden year-round?</li> <li>• Gardening only appeals to select few, and is not inclusive for all</li> <li>• Produce will be eaten by rats and possums</li> <li>• Garden should be high quality design to improve amenity of the neighbourhood.</li> <li>• Waste disposal of productive garden can be a problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be inclusive, with open access for anyone to enjoy</li> <li>• Not an "allotment" style community garden</li> <li>• Garden open to all people</li> <li>• City of Yarra would maintain the garden, with assistance from Neighbourhood House for community access</li> <li>• Should be mix between productive garden and display garden (ie; French)</li> <li>• Involve school kids in programs</li> <li>• "Harvest Feast" as a way of getting together</li> <li>• Regular working bees</li> <li>• Excess produce should be given to food bank</li> <li>• Connect to VCAL program</li> <li>• Low maintenance plants (ie; fruit trees and herbs)</li> </ul>
<b>Bocce Courts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are other bocce courts in the area, so these ones are not needed</li> <li>• Needs a new surface, this can be time consuming to maintain</li> <li>• Bocce is only of interest to a small proportion of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bocce courts reflect the local heritage of local area</li> <li>• Keeping one lane open would allow other uses to also take place</li> <li>• ½ bocce courts and ½ passive seating would work</li> <li>• Fence must be removed to make accessible</li> </ul>
<b>Native Parkland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should be well maintained and look better than current natural reserves in the are/</li> <li>• There is enough native parkland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbish existing native parkland before adding more</li> <li>• Native corridors are important</li> </ul>

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	already	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bird life is important, and tree create bridges</li> </ul>
<b>Children's Playspace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are enough children's playspaces already, including one adjacent to the Neighbourhood House.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childrens play or education elements can be inciorporated into community garden</li> </ul>

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**FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS & COMMENTS**

*The following is the facilitator's summary of the key points of agreement reached by the participants. Note that this is intended as a distillation of the discussion held on the night, and has not been provided to the participants for comment.*

- All participants agreed that the space needed to be inclusive, and function as a key gathering space for the community. Despite this shared aspiration, the attendees had differing views about the best use to achieve this.
- The conversation was dominated by discussion about a productive community garden in the space. Discussion about use of the bocce courts was the second most popular topic.
- Some supporters of the community garden noted that this use should primarily be maintained and managed by the City of Yarra. Due to time constraints this topic was not able to be further explored and it is recommended that more direct consultation is undertaken should a community garden be pursued.

**Shared views**

- Social inclusion and isolation is very important to the community.
- The space should function as part of the cluster of community uses around the Neighbourhood House.
- The space should be for the community, accessible by all.
- A mix of uses may help the space appeal to everyone.
- Vegetation selection should be low maintenance to ensure the space looks tidy and discourage vandalism. Productive plants such as fruit trees and herbs may also conserve space and allow more areas for seating and socialising.
- Space should be high quality, and enhance the amenity of the local area. The design and maintenance of the space were identified as key considerations here.
- Allowing the space to be programmed with activities and events is important.
- Noise generating uses are not appropriate, especially active sports like basketball.

**Differing views**

- The use of space as community garden. All participants appeared to agree that an 'allotment' style community garden was not appropriate, but there was much discussion about what other form this might take.
- Retention of the bocce courts. Some people felt they were current not used and should not be retained, while others felt they were an important part of the site's heritage, and regular maintenance would encourage use.