

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK REPORT

FUTURE USE OF FRANK SMITH PARK

SEPTEMBER 2022



INTRODUCTION

Frank Smith Park is located on council's northern boundary and services the communities of both the City of Onkaparinga and City of Mitcham. Frank Smith Park includes one of five council ovals contributing to the supply of outdoor turf playing spaces in the Northern District of the City of Onkaparinga. It is also recognised as an important open space for informal recreation and has high value to community.

Understanding and balancing the needs of all users is an important consideration when planning for future use of our open space and sports facilities.

For some time, the Coromandel Ramblers Cricket Club have been advocating for the formalisation of the turf playing field within the park. The Sturt Lions Football Club (based in the City of Mitcham) was granted use of Frank Smith Park for the playing of junior soccer in 2022.

On 15 February 2022, the City of Onkaparinga gave in-principle support for the future use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport, in order to allow stakeholders to seek external funding for playing surface upgrades. A permit for six months was also provided to Sturt Lions Football Club for junior soccer and feedback on this use is currently been sought from the park users and adjacent residents to support decision making on a possible extension of use.

To inform our ongoing planning for sport in this district, consultation is important to understand community views on the potential future increased use of the turf playing space at Frank Smith Park for organised sport.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of engagement was to gather feedback from the community and key stakeholders on the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sports.

The engagement objectives were to:

- **Inform** the community of oval/pitch pressures in the district and the work of both councils, seeking to better understand the needs for additional playing fields
- Seek feedback from the community and residents about the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park by organised sporting clubs
- **Consult** with local resident groups and the wider community to provide opportunities to give feedback about the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport.

ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

As per the Future Use of Frank Smith Park Community Engagement Plan the following engagement techniques and tools were used:

- A Your Say website page developed with a short online survey and Frequently Asked Questions to inform the community and capture feedback
- A letter drop to 356 residents surrounding the park
- Hard copy surveys and information available from Coromandel Valley Community Centre and Coromandel Valley National Trust (Watchman House)
- Two Your Say banners on site (entrance to park and near oval)
- A community information session on site 28 May 2022, 12-3pm
- Newsletter to all registered Your Say members
- A meeting with Coromandel Valley National Trust
- A meeting with Coromandel Valley Cricket Club
- One article in Onkaparinga Now
- Facebook post with links to Your Say page

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

The engagement ran from 21 April to 6 June 2021. A summary of all survey results is included in this report. In summary there were:

- 2300 aware participants (viewed the project page)
- 1300 informed participants (downloaded a document/visited multiple pages/provided feedback)
- 879 submissions/responses to the survey online
- Seven hard copy surveys received through Coromandel Valley Community Centre.
- 14 letters/emails

An on-site community information/drop-in session was also held on the 28 May between 11-3pm which attracted approximately 70 participants.

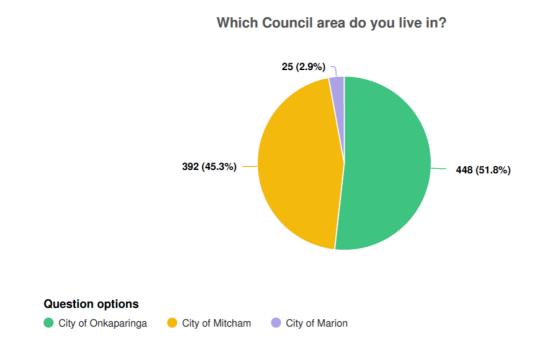
A petition against the use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport was also received with 215 signatures. The petition was managed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1999* and was formally presented and noted by Council at its meeting on 21 June 2022.

At this meeting (21 June 2022), Council also received deputations on the future use of Frank Smith Park from the Head Petitioner (Simon Potts) and the Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club (Jarryd Simister).

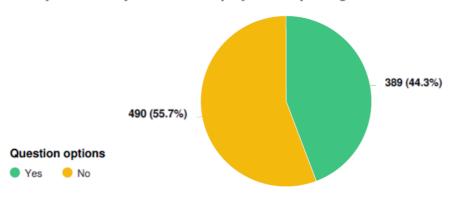
This report outlines feedback received through community engagement period. Detailed and verbatim responses to the survey are available to view <u>here (attachment 1).</u>

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results show that just over half (52 per cent) of survey participants live in the City of Onkaparinga, with 45 per cent living in the City of Mitcham. This shows that the park is equally important to the members of both council areas and performs an important open space role for the district. The survey highlighted that the park is well utilised with 56 per cent of the respondents using the park weekly or more.



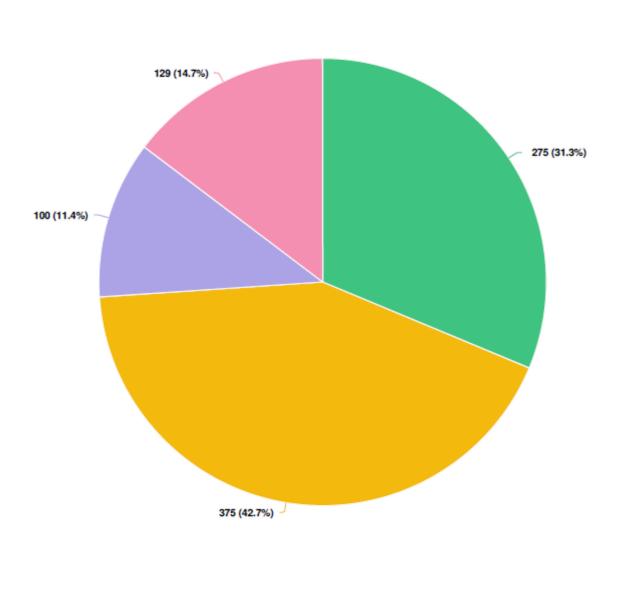
A breakdown of survey participants revealed that 44 per cent of respondents were members of a sporting club, whilst 56 per cent were not. See table below.



Are you currently a member or player in a sporting or recreation club/association?

Sports clubs or associations that survey participants were members of included:

Sturt Lions Soccer Club, Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club, Blackwood Football Club. Dover Gardens Dog Obedience Club, Flinders Soccer Club, Belair Primary School Cricket, Adelaide Mountain Bike Club, Woodville Hockey Club, South Adelaide Basketball Club, Stirling Districts Soccer Club, Adelaide Plains Football League, North Adelaide Basketball Club, Glenelg Lacrosse Club, Ironbank Football Club, Coromandel Valley Primary School Soccer, Blackwood Forest Football Club, Coromandel Cricket Club, Matrics, Equestrian SA, Horse SA, Marion Riding Club, Birkalla, Sturt Baseball Club, Cove Football Club, Adelaide Cobras, Ironbank Chery Gardens Football and Netball Club, Unley Rangers Soccer Club, South Adelaide Netball Club, Reynella Air Rifle Club, Smallbore Rifle Club, Dogs SA, SACA, Hills Football League, Glenelg Baseball Club, Inside Line Mountain Bike Club, Hills Hawks Soccer Club, Marion Swimming Club, Southern Pheonix Netball Club, Dragon Boating, Southern Ladies Mid Week Tennis Club, Blackwood Tennis Club, Woodville Hockey Club, Colonel Light Gardens Football Club, Adelaide Cricket Club, Orienteering SA, Adelaide Cricket Association, Eden Hills Soccer (Rovers), SA Masters Athletics, Seaford Storm Netball Club, Adelaide Angels, Flinders Universoty Ultimate Frizbee, Seacliff Hockey Club, Ironbank Cherry Gardens Tennis Club, Southern Hills Ultimate Frisbee, UniSA Hockey Club, Happy Valley Sports Club, Mount Barker Magic Basketball Club, Flinders Uni Korfball Club, Wallaringa Orienteers Inc, Woods Panthers Netball Club, St Johns Old Scholars Cricket Club. As shown by the graph below, when asked what best describes you, 43 per cent of participants selected they were a regular visitor/user of Frank Smith Park, 31 per cent a resident living near Frank Smith Park; 15 per cent a member of a sporting or active recreation/club or association that would like to use the park; and, 11 per cent selected they were a member of a sporting or active recreation club/association that currently use Frank Smith Park.

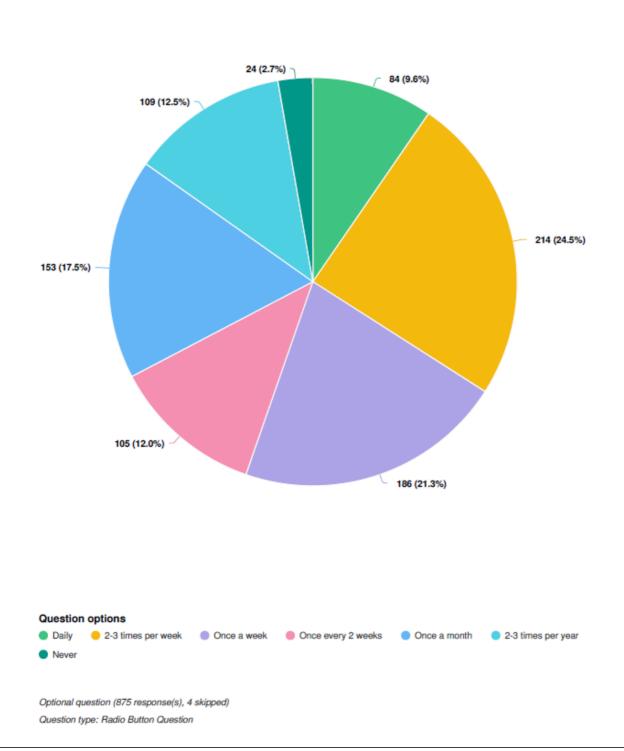


Which of the following best describes you?

Question options

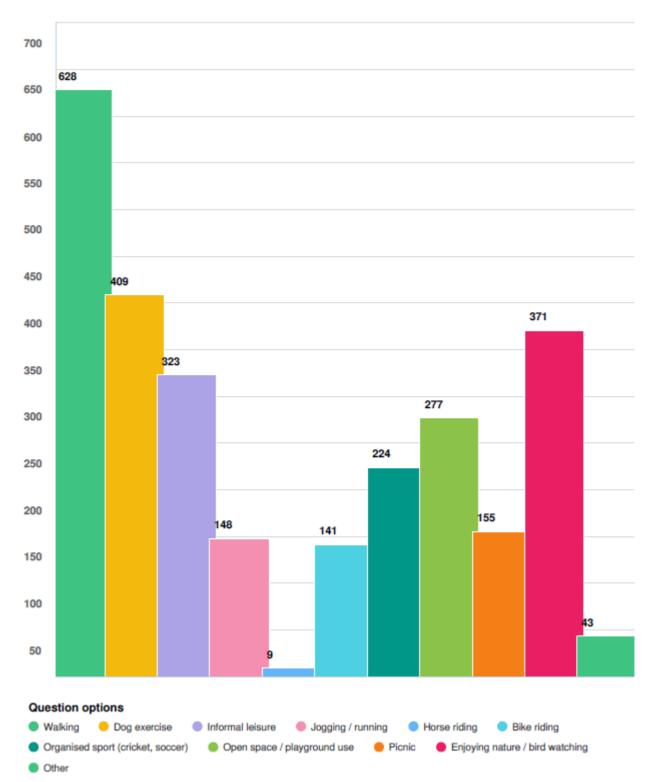
- Resident living near Frank Smith Park
- Member of a sporting or recreation club/association that currently uses Frank Smith Park
- Member of a sporting or recreation club/association that would like to use Frank Smith Park in the future

Survey respondents were able to indicate how often they use Frank Smith Park. The graph below shows that more than half of survey respondents use Frank Smith Park once a week or more. Almost 25 per cent of survey respondents use Frank Smith Park two-three times per week and 10 per cent of respondents use the park daily.



On average, how often do you use Frank Smith Park?

Survey responses show that the park is currently well used for walking, dog exercise and enjoying nature/birdwatching (see table below). Organised sport is currently the sixth highest use identified by survey participants, noting the park is used for junior sport only at this point in time.



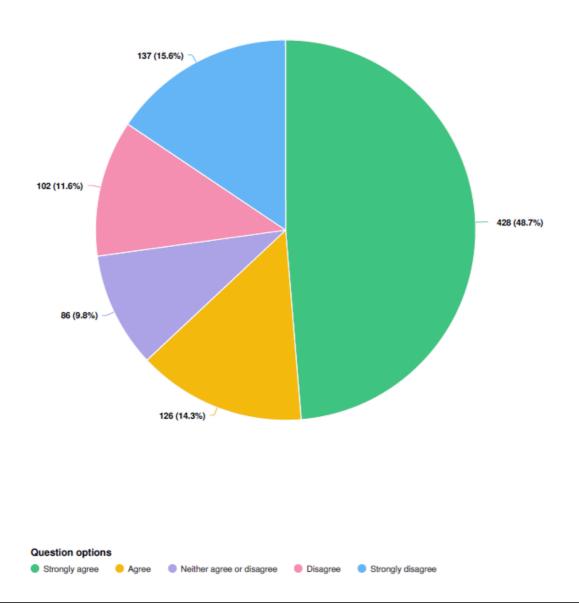
How do you currently use Frank Smith Park?

When asked to what extent do you support the increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport:

- 63 per cent of respondents strongly agree or agree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 27 per cent of survey participants strongly disagree or disagree with the increased use for organised sport.
- 10 per cent neither agreed or disagreed with increased use for organised sport at Frank Smith Park.

The graph below shows the overall response to this question.

To what extent do you support the increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport?



When broken down further the data shows that:

Of the 'residents living near' Frank Smith Park:

- 58 per cent strongly agree or agree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 31 per cent strongly disagree or disagree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 11 per cent are neutral

Of the 'regular visitors' of Frank Smith Park:

- 47 per cent strongly agree or agree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 40 per cent strongly disagree or disagree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 13 per cent are neutral

Of the respondents who were not an 'existing member/player at a sporting club or association'

- 49 per cent strongly agree or agree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 38 per cent strongly disagree or disagree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 13 per cent are neutral

Of the respondents who were an 'existing member/player at a sporting club or association'

- 80 per cent strongly agree or agree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 14 per cent strongly disagree or disagree with the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport
- 6 per cent are neutral

Participants were also given an opportunity to elaborate on their responses, and 676 (77 per cent of total) participants provided further comment. Full verbatim comments are available to <u>view here</u> as part of the survey results.

The themes from the comments in support of an increased future use of organised sport include: (472 comments)

- The benefit of sport for children active and healthy outdoors
- The encouragement of active lifestyles
- Good to see more people connect with the space
- The oval needs more maintenance and organised sport will assist with this
- Sport it builds and connects community
- Team sport at a community level supports young people and improves health and wellbeing
- Fantastic location and excellent environment to play sport in great size for all sports
- It is an under-utilised space
- Excellent local facility reduce travel for community sport
- There is a lack of oval space in the area
- A lot of demand for sport in this area and not enough ovals
- It is good to encourage young people in their passions and pursuits
- It is currently used for sport and an upgrade will benefit all users
- Low impact sports some of the time would be fine

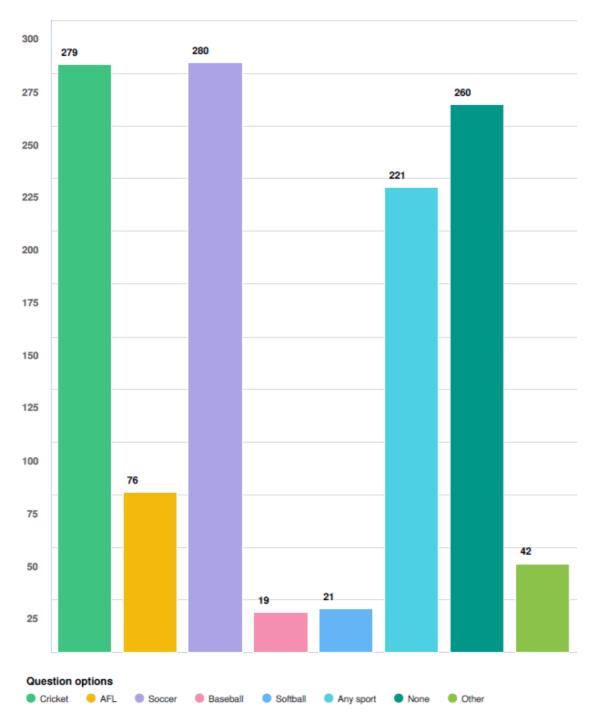
- There is a shortage of space for junior sport in the area I agree to limited increase in use for junior sport
- Agree with school sport only, clubs have no need to be here and not enough facilities
- Having regular sport would result improved upkeep of the grounds.
- If sport is played there will also support Coromandel Valley Primary School
- Sporting events in open fields that attract small crowds for only part of the day are a good use of open space
- Large site with other areas community can access when sports are on
- Historical community sport is why Frank Smith built the oval
- Not enough sportsgrounds in the Blackwood area, makes sense make better use of the ones we have

The comments from respondents who disagreed with the future increase use of Frank Smith Park included the following themes: (204 comments)

- Poor road access to Frank Smith Park
- Quiet peaceful nature of the park will be lost
- Increased traffic/congestion within grounds parking concerns
- Keeping the natural environment and impact on the environment and biodiversity of the site
- Increased use by organised sport precluding and impacting access/use by others
- Concern about increasing infrastructure
- Having dogs off-lead not possible if large crowds/organised sport
- There are other ovals in the area for organised sport
- Leave it as is, supports walking, dog walking without crowds
- Keep Sundays free of sport
- Retain public green space
- Must be prioritised for community groups, families
- To develop for sport would change the nature of the space
- Sporting clubs are increasingly taking over community space
- Love that it is natural, wild and largely not upgraded access to this type of open space the reason why we live in the area.

When asked what sport survey participants were interested in at Frank Smith Park the top three responses were soccer (280), cricket (279) and none (260). 'Any sport' also received a high number of responses (221).

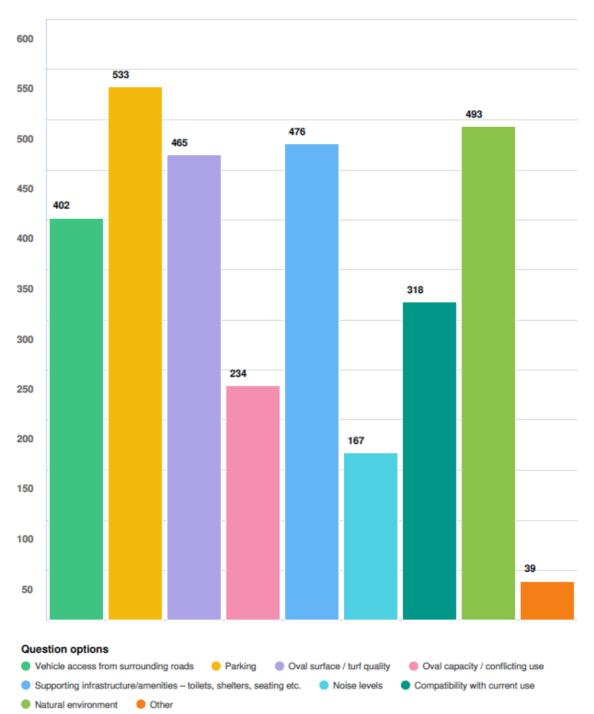
It is assumed that the support for soccer and cricket is largely driven by the clubs with an interest in the oval/pitch space.



Please tell us what sport you are interested in at Frank Smith Park

Other responses included: dog agility, un-organised activity, local, sky diving, mountain biking, dirt jumping, walking/jogging, basketball 3x3, ultimate frisbee, touch football, field hockey, lacrosse, horse riding, netball, half court tennis, personal training, primary school sport

Survey participants were able to select for a pre-defined list in the survey the considerations arising from the potential of increased use by organised sport at Frank Smith Park. The responses were captured and represented in the graph below.



In your opinion, what are the main things to consider about the potential increased use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport?

The top three considerations were parking, natural environment, and supporting infrastructure/amenities. Each of these areas warrant further exploration when considering the future use of Frank Smith Park. Key themes and considerations can be summarised as below:

Vehicle Access/parking

Survey respondents highlighted that increased use of Frank Smith Park by organised sport and clubs could further contribute to vehicle access and parking challenges associated with the site. Parking was the number one concern with 533 respondents (61 per cent) selecting this. Vehicle access from surrounding roads was the fourth highest concern with 402 (46 per cent) responses. Comments relating to vehicle access and parking generated from the online survey and feedback at the community information included:

• Magarey Road Width

Magarey Road is a narrow road (almost single lane) that can become difficult to navigate with increased traffic and further complicated when vehicles park alongside the road. At peak times, parking along this road is a concern and if there was large increase in the extent to which the oval was used for organised sport then this could potentially be exacerbated.

Magarey Road/Acklands Hill Road/ Main Road Intersections
 The intersections of Magarey Road/Acklands Hill Road, and Acklands Hills Road/Main Road has
 been identified by survey respondents as a hazard, particularly with regards to limited vision
 and clear sightlines. Main Road often experiences a high volume of traffic, along with limited
 sightlines makes this intersection difficult to navigate at times.

• Traffic Management and Parking

Informal parking currently occurs around the reserve when the park is opened for junior soccer on Saturday and Sunday. There is concern from some survey respondents that increased traffic associated with an increased use of the park by organised sport could impact the natural environment and be a precursor to formalisation of parking and roads within the park. This could impact the sites natural setting e.g. removal of trees, formal carparking inside the grounds etc. Throughout winter some of the access roads are boggy which presents a minor hazard/risk to users.

Survey participants also identified Frank Smith Park as part of a broader network for cycling and walking either to and from Coromandel Valley Primary School, or within the park itself for utilisation of bike track and facilities within the park. Traffic management and keeping the park safe (both within and surrounding) for pedestrians, cyclists and school children who use it as a thoroughfare is seen as an important consideration with any future use. Examples of survey responses included:

"The traffic coming onto Acklands Hill Road from Magarey road and waiting then to join Main Road will be a nightmare and create a very dangerous situation. That corner is bad enough now with drivers whizzing around from Main Road to Acklands Hill Rd. Also many pedestrians use that intersection to cross and a safety refuge has already been needed due to the busyness of that intersection." Survey response.

"Don't want to lose the natural feel of the park and have More car traffic coming through. It is a nice quiet park." Survey response.

Natural Environment

The natural environment was the second highest consideration of survey participants, with 487 responses (56 per cent selecting this response). The natural environment, informal setting including watercourse flora and fauna is highly valued by survey respondents and users of the park. Survey participants identified the natural setting of Frank Smith Park as one of the major aspects of the park that must be retained amid any future use by sporting clubs. Participants took the opportunity to highlight the significant trees, creek and wetlands that provide important habitat for wildlife.

"This area is an invaluable natural space for the local, and broader communities. People come from further afield to use the area where the Sturt River flows through a natural setting. Pudna Wirra forest plantings happened decade ago by Coro Primary School students. The grassed area is OK for occasional sport e.g. soccer but NOT to have large structures. The beauty is nature and areas like this once built over are gone forever." Survey response.

"There are very limited spaces left in the City of Onkaparinga that haven't been touched and modernised, it should be left as it is and kept in its most natural state. It should be protected from any further development." Survey response

Oval Surface

The impact that increased use by organised sport would potentially have on the oval surface was also seen as an important consideration with 465 participants (53 per cent) selecting this response. The main survey commentary that accompanied this selection was twofold.

- 1. There was concern that an increased use in sport on the oval/playing surface at Frank Smith Park would lead to a deterioration in oval and surface quality, and;
- 2. Many respondents also stated that improvements to irrigation and oval quality would support increased use by sports and benefit regular park users. The need for better turf quality to support existing and potential increased use, particularly for cricket in summer as it is currently unirrigated was highlighted.

"I am heavily involved with school sport at CVPS which uses Frank smith for cricket and soccer. It is a wonderful setting however the grass is often far too long for a junior game of cricket mowing more often would make a huge difference to the playing surface for what would be minimal cost in the short term. I believe if clubs want to use the ground they could contribute to an upgrade of the playing surface." Survey Response.

"The oval is currently in very poor condition. In summer it is a park full of bare patches and weeds, and in winter it becomes a muddy bog whenever it rains. It is so underused at the moment, and the only care it gets is a regular mowing. If there is the opportunity to improve the ground with irrigation and drainage, why wouldn't people jump at it. It's a sports ground, let them play sports there." Survey Response.

Oval capacity/conflicting /compatibility with current use

The capacity of Frank Smith Park oval was also raised as a consideration with 234 responses (seventh highest – 27 per cent respondents selected). The high level of existing informal use of the park by walkers, dog owners, adjacent residents and nature enthusiasts was considered something that could be impacted by increased use for sport. Compatibility with current use was also selected 318 times (36 per cent of survey participants). In this regard, many survey participants highlighted that if Frank Smith Park is increasingly utilised as a sports ground that hosted multiple teams or became a venue for large sport teams/clubs then it could potentially preclude recreational use that residents and current users enjoy. For example, if club use increases in peak times there would be less opportunity for local informal use.

"As a Coromandel Valley resident with a dog, Frank Smith Park is our go to for walks/play time with our dog, especially on weekends. It is the only place close by where we can exercise our dog off leash as there are not many dog parks that are close enough within either the Onkaparinga or Mitcham council areas and Sturt Gorge and Blackwood Forest are both on-lead only recreation parks." Survey response

There was support for existing use for junior sport but a wariness of providing sporting clubs exclusive access to the park.

Some survey participants highlighted that the park has always been used for sport and the original intention of developing an oval was to provide a venue to host community sport in the area. Other survey participants highlighted that there would be little impact by increasing the ovals use for sport, acknowledging that community use would still be possible if and when the oval was being utilised by sport.

Supporting Infrastructure/amenities

Most survey participants highlighted concern with the construction of infrastructure to support sport, reinforcing the natural values and informal nature of the park as key attributes as to why it is enjoyed by the community. Whilst there was some commentary supporting sporting club infrastructure such as lighting, changerooms and clubrooms, many of the survey participants indicated their preference for minimal changes to the park. Some improvements to the oval and for additional infrastructure that supports informal use and some sport usage were considered favourable, such as irrigation upgrade.

Survey respondents identified that improvements to the turf and pitch, including irrigation and maintenance regimes, may not only meet the growing demand for community club cricket at the casual end of the sport but also support informal use of the oval.

"I strongly believe no more infrastructure is needed, just a better playing surface for the children. Toilets are fine and plenty of parking." Feedback from Community Information Session, 28th May 2022.

"I am happy to see the venue used for (more) organised sport, and for the surface to be upgraded for that purpose. My concern will arise if the organised sport means significantly more vehicles (parking/traffic) OR requires substantial additional buildings on site." Survey response.

Noise Levels

A total of 163 (19 per cent) of survey respondents raised noise levels as a consideration. This was the least selected consideration. Residents immediately adjacent to Frank Smith Park have reported that at times when in use for sport (particularly soccer), noise from whistles, coaches and players can be heard. Whilst this is currently a small inconvenience (given the current low use by sport), if the frequency of organised sport increased, noise levels may cause further concern for residents.

All survey comments are available for reading in attachment 1.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION/DROP-IN SESSION – 28 MAY 2022

A community information session was held on 28 May 2022 from 12-3pm with six staff attending along with Acting Mayor and Ward Councillors Themeliotis and Eaton. Approximately 70 surrounding residents, sporting club members, community groups and users of Frank Smith Park attended to share feedback on the future use of Frank Smith Park.

Written comments and responses from the community information/drop in session have been collated and are available to view <u>here</u>.

COMMUNITY PETITION AND COUNCIL DEPUTATION – LOCAL RESIDENTS

A petition with 215 signatures (attachment 3) was also received on 2 June 2022 opposing the future use of Frank Smith Park for increased organised sport. It was requested that this petition be included in the community engagement feedback as part of this consultation.

A deputation to Council to present the petition was made on 21 June 2022.

The petition was signed by 215 residents and users of Frank Smith Park and drew Council's attention to the following:

"Recently the City of Onkaparinga has put out a consultation for the future of Frank Smith Park exploring future use for sport. Frank smith Park is a beautiful and rich environment, that is not fit for any organised club sports or major redevelopment that might be required to accommodate the needs regular club sport would require. Additionally, regular club sport use will preclude the local community from having first access to the use of the oval and facilities there, which are commonly used by local families for picnics, parties, exercise and other forms of recreation."

The petition requested that in relation to Frank Smith Park, council:

- prevent any future leases of the ovals to any club sports (short or long term) and exit from existing club leases at the earliest opportunity
- take active steps to involve the local community and users of Frank Smith Park in any future leases and redevelopment of the park
- minimise any future development to minor works, including and not limited to no additional buildings or structures, no clearing of vegetation for roads or carparks
- make improved efforts to conserve the natural area from the endangered species that are well documented to inhabit this area, such as the Southern Brown Bandicoot.

The petition was received by Council on 21 June 2022 and it was noted that the feedback within the petition will be included as part of the final community engagement report on the future use of Frank Smith Park for organised sport.

COUNCIL DEPUTATION – COROMANDEL VALLEY RAMBLERS CRICKET CLUB

Council received a deputation about future increased use of Frank Smith Park from the Coromandel Valley Ramblers Cricket Club on 21 June 2022. The purpose of this deputation drew Councils attention to the demand for oval and turf playing that cricket is facing in this catchment area (Mitcham Hill and Northern Onkaparinga). The cricket club took the opportunity to highlight the minimal impact cricket would have in terms of disruption to the wider park and parking. They reaffirmed they are only seeking upgrades to the playing surface for cricket, not for clubrooms, lighting or formalisation of the park in any way.

ELECTED MEMBER ENQUIRIES, EMAILS AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

Throughout the consultation period, staff also captured feedback received via email via letter or email. This correspondence can be viewed <u>here.</u> There was a range of feedback, both in support and not in support of increased sport. These participants were encouraged to fill out the online survey via Your Say and are represented in the survey results.

SUMMARY

In summary, the consultation period has provided a significant opportunity to engage with key stakeholders, the local and broader community on the future use of Frank Smith Park.

The high number of responses show that there is an active and interested community who are passionate about where they live and highly value natural open space and amenity of Frank Smith Park for a range of recreational uses, including sport.

In general, feedback is in support of potentially increasing organised sport use of Frank Smith Park in the future. It should be noted that organised sport use of Frank Smith Park needs to be balanced in the context of existing use and managed to account for key considerations raised by the community. These include *natural environment, vehicle access and parking, supporting infrastructure/amenities, oval playing surface, oval capacity/conflicting use and noise levels)* and must be addressed in any future planning for the site.

EVALUATION

We believe the engagement results are representative of the community's views on Frank Smith Park in relation to organised sport provision and current use.

We are comfortable that we have achieved a high level of participation and we have delivered the consultation and met the evaluation expectations set within the community engagement plan.

Overall:

- 2300 people were made **aware** of the project
- 1300 people were informed about the project
- 880 people **provided feedback** via surveys and approximately 70 people attended the drop-in session

ATTACHMENTS LIST

Attachment 1 – Future use of Frank Smith Park – Your Say Survey Comments (names redacted)

Attachment 2 – Community Information/Drop in Session Summary 28 May 2022

Attachment 3 – Collated community correspondence during consultation period

SIGN OFF

All feedback reports are to be reviewed by the Engagement Unit (engagement@onkaparinga.sa.gov.au)

Officer who prepared the document

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