



Barwon
Coast

What We Heard

A summary report on the engagement process for a new
playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach

October 2021





Barwon Coast acknowledges the coastline of the southern Bellarine Peninsulas as the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung people and wishes to recognise the Wadawurrung as Traditional Owners. The Barwon coastline is rich in Aboriginal culture, and we pay our respects to their Elders past present and future; and the Elders from other communities who may visit our coast. Barwon Coast acknowledges Aboriginal people as Australia's first people, and as Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we work and live. Barwon Coast recognises the intrinsic connection to Country, acknowledging the contribution of Aboriginal people to the management of land, water, the natural landscape and our built environment.



Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast) is appointed by the Victorian State Government to manage 15km of coastal Crown land through the Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads townships, along the Bass Strait coast of the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria, Australia. Our vision is that the natural environment of our coastline will flourish whilst meeting the needs of our engaged communities. A major local employer in Barwon Heads and Ocean Grove, we have more than 50 skilled employees from a diverse range of backgrounds working across the coastal reserve.

1. Executive Summary

In April 2019 Barwon Coast commenced a project to develop a new playground within the Ocean Grove Main Beach precinct. Community Engagement was conducted via community listening posts and an online survey. 196 individual submissions were made via these processes. 93% of submissions were in favour of the playground. Out of two proposed locations, 59% of submissions supported the playground being located at 'The Wave Wall Site' and 24% supported 'The Rotunda Site'. Four main themes emerged from the community feedback being - the need for a playground; playground location; playground construction materials and playground design.

Playground design was the most commented upon and sub-themes emerged in this area: catering for all ages and abilities; open-ended imaginative play; local coastal thematic design; reducing wait time for play equipment and safety. This feedback, together with the outcomes of our ongoing engagement with stakeholders and internal and external expert analysis has informed the final playground design. The playground is now under construction with an anticipated completion date of February 2022.

We sincerely apologise for the delay between engaging our community on this project and its implementation. The project was put on hold in 2020 due to COVID-19 impacts on our organisation. We recommenced the final design and construction phases of this project in 2021.



Figure 1. Wordcloud showcasing some of the issues and ideas we heard through the community engagement process on the Ocean Grove Main Beach Playground.

Definitions used within this Report

'Barwon Coast' – The Barwon Coast Committee of Management Inc. (Barwon Coast) is responsible for the management of the coastal Crown land reserves from beach access 7W at Collendina on the eastern boundary of Ocean Grove, through to 42W at the western end of 13th Beach, Connewarre. Barwon Coast is also responsible for the management of the Riverview Family Caravan Park, Riverside Camp Ground, Barwon Heads Caravan Park and the Local Port of Barwon Heads.

'Engagement' – In the context of this report "engagement" refers to a planned process involving two-way dialogue with communities and stakeholders to encourage discussion or active involvement to inform a project decision.

'Community' – In the context of this report, "community" comprises of local residents, visitors and businesses located near Ocean Grove Main Beach who may have an interest in the project.

'Stakeholder' – In the context of this report, "stakeholder" refers to key organisations or individuals who have an interest in the playground project.

BACKGROUND

The Crown land foreshore reserves of both Ocean Grove and Barwon Heads are extremely popular with residents and visitors. They provide a wide array of social, economic and environmental values, particularly through active and passive recreational activities.

Ocean Grove Main Beach is a recognised activity node which adjoins the Ocean Grove township and has a regional significance for safe aquatic access, a major toilet facility and large car park area. The development of a new Surf Beach Complex in 2019 which includes a Surf Lifesaving Club and café/restaurant can be expected to increase visitation to the precinct.

The *Draft Barwon Coast Coastal and Marine Management Plan 2020 – 2025* details that "A high level of visitor infrastructure, facilities and services" is a key value for the Ocean Grove Main Beach. A new playground will contribute to this identified value. Some community members identified that they would like a playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach through the consultation process for the CMMP.

Barwon Coast has a funding agreement with the [Department of Environment Land Water and Planning](#) for \$180 000 to fund the construction of the playground.

Barwon Coast undertook a planning process for a new playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach. As part of the planning process a community engagement program was conducted.

Engagement Objective

Barwon Coast conducted engagement activities with stakeholders and the community on the planned playground. The goal of these activities was to assist Barwon Coast in designing a

playground which meets all coastal management requirements as well as taking into account the desires of stakeholders and the community.

Methodology – Communications & Engagement Approach

Barwon Coast conducted a planned engagement program consisting of various activities designed to engage with identified stakeholders and the general community.

All stakeholders and community members who took part in the engagement process were informed that Barwon Coast have considered our obligations as a coastal manager and feedback from previous community interactions and have identified the following as important for the proposed playground:

- An imaginative destination attracting both local residents, visitors and potentially users of the new Surf Beach Complex facilities;
- An interactive playground with both passive and active play equipment and spaces, recognising the four types of play physical (gross motor), social (dramatic play), creative and cognitive (intellectual);
- Accessibility to all ages and abilities;
- Equipment that is creative, robust, environmentally sustainable, blends with the surrounding environment and that meets current design standards;
- Consideration of harsh marine environment in design and future maintenance;
- Important links to the surrounding environment including beach, town, Surf Beach Complex and other local tourist destinations;
- Availability to toilet amenities where relevant; and
- Improved access to playground, BBQ's and toilet facilities where relevant.

The following parts of the project were negotiable:

- Whether a playground is built
- The location of the playground with the Ocean Grove Main Beach precinct
- The design of the playground

The following items of the project were non-negotiable, ie. 'must-haves':

- The playground must be for children
- The playground must be located within the Ocean Grove Main Beach Precinct
- The playground must not impact on existing old-growth vegetation or sensitive areas of the dunes.

Two potential playground locations were proposed:

- Option 1 'The Rotunda Site'- next to the rotunda area
- Option 2 'The Wave Wall Site' - next to The Dunes café.



Stakeholder Engagement

The stakeholder engagement activities aimed to ensure that the new playground meets the requirements that these stakeholder's have to enable them to perform their specific functions. This was also a process which enabled stakeholders to impart their knowledge and expertise to help guide the playground design. Stakeholders we consulted with included Traditional Owner groups, the Ocean Grove Surf Lifesaving Club, the Lessee of The Dunes Restaurant at Ocean Grove Main Beach, the Disabled Surfers Association, The Bellarine CFA and licensed tour operators and activity providers who use the foreshore in the Ocean Grove Main Beach precinct.

Community Engagement

The engagement process also included public consultation. This entailed:

Step 1: INFORM the public of the proposed playground and the chance to get involved in the consultation process. This was achieved through onsite signage, newspaper and social media advertising, school visits and the distribution of flyers on the project to local kindergartens, mother's groups, schools and childcare centres.

A new playground is coming to Ocean Grove Main Beach!



Barwon Coast is currently planning for a new playground and we would like your input. There are two ways you can have your say:

Come chat with us at our **Community Listening Posts** at Ocean Grove Main Beach (near Kettlefish Cafe) on:

Tuesday 14 May
from 10am – 12pm
or 3.30pm – 5.30pm

OR visit www.barwoncoast.com.au/playground for information on the proposed playground and fill in our online survey.



Who we are

Barwon Coast is a Committee of Management appointed by the State Government with responsibility for the management of 13km of coastal crown land at Ocean Grove, Barwon Heads and 13th Beach.

Contact: (03) 5254 1118 | office@barwoncoast.com.au

[f](#) BarwonCoastVIC [t](#) @BarwonCoast

www.barwoncoast.com.au

Figure 2 Poster used to advertise the community consultation for this project

Step 2: CONSULT with the public on draft plans for the playground. This was achieved through two listening posts held at Ocean Grove Main Beach on May 14th 2019 and through an online survey (Appendix A).



Figure 3 Receiving community feedback at listening posts at Ocean Grove Main Beach

Step 3: INFORM the public of the issues and ideas that were raised through Step 2 of the consultation process, how we considered those and integrated them into the final plans for the playground. This is achieved through this summary report and the final playground designs which can be seen at www.barwoncoast.com.au/playground.

Community Engagement Findings

The public engagement element of this project attracted feedback from 196 members of the community, many of which were from the local area (Appendix B). 80 individuals attended our community listening posts and 116 responses were received through our online survey. This is a significant number and we are confident that the wide range of issues and ideas provided by the community has given Barwon Coast a clear understanding of the needs and wants of the community for a new playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach.



Figure 4 Word Cloud exhibiting some key ideas expressed through the community engagement process

The following analysis focuses on the overall community response and the top four themes that were identified through community engagement.

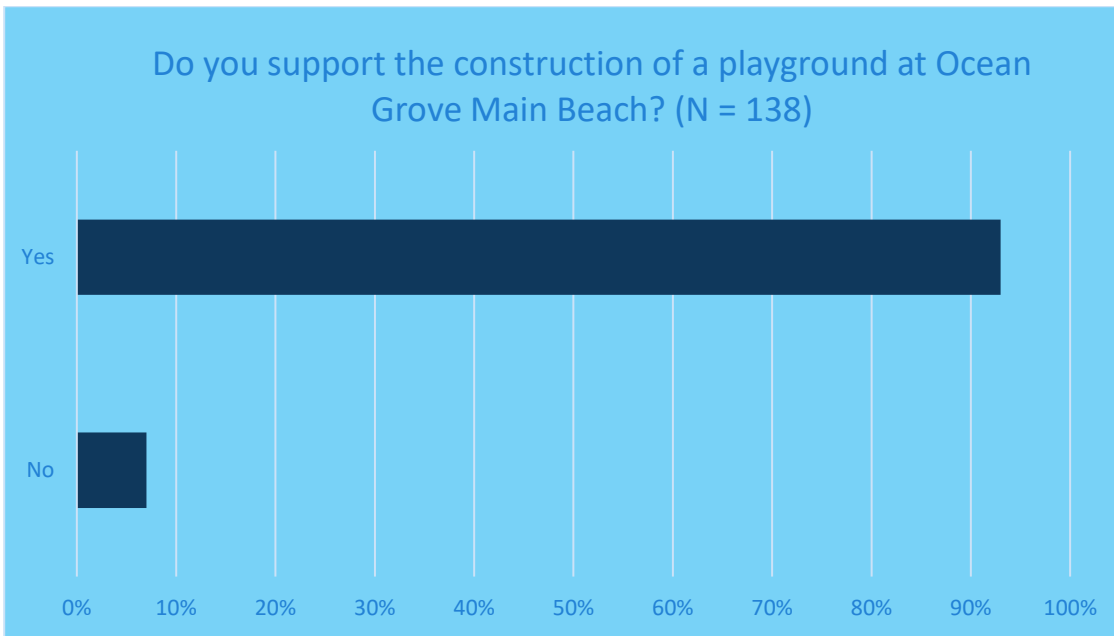


Figure 5 Collation of community responses to a question posed in online survey and at community listening posts

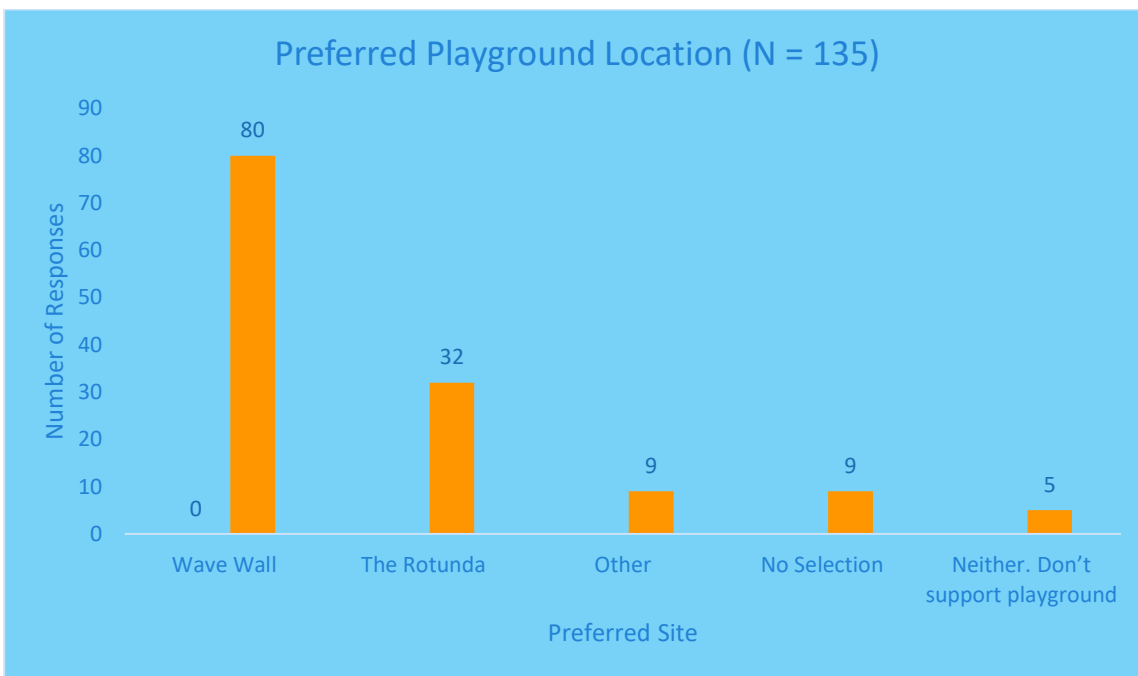


Figure 6 Collation of community responses to a question posed in online survey and at community listening posts

The top four themes identified through community engagement were:

- The need for a Playground
- Playground Location
- Playground Construction Materials
- Playground Design

Overall, playground design dominated community feedback. This includes the sub themes of catering for all ages and abilities, open-ended imaginative play, local Aboriginal and coastal thematic design, reducing wait time for play equipment and safety. This focus can be linked to the key need of the consultation process and the specific design questions posed through the online survey and at Listening Posts by Barwon Coast staff. Within each theme there are a range of issues and priorities identified by the community. This is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Key Themes and Issues Identified Through Community Engagement

THEMES	KEY ISSUES	SUB THEME
The need for a playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A playground close to the beach at Ocean Grove has been an identified need for many years by a large number of community members • Having a playground will be helpful in winter when it is too cold for children to play in the water • A playground will be somewhere for children to play when the tide is high and the beach is inaccessible • Many other foreshore areas in Australia have highly utilised playgrounds and Ocean Grove is lacking this resource for families • A playground is not needed as the beach provides a natural playground for children 	N/A
Playground Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate the playground close to toilets. This is important for all children using the playground, particularly those not yet toilet trained • The Wave Wall location is ideal for parents and carers to access food at drinks at The Dunes cafe 	N/A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A view from the playground would be preferred. This is only possible at the Wave Wall • The Wave Wall area is very busy in summer and may get congested with a playground there also • The Rotunda area is protected from the wind and has BBQ facilities close by • The grassed area at the Rotunda Area is highly valued for group fitness, picnics and family gatherings. These activities could not continue with a playground there • The Rotunda Area is more secluded and so may be subject to vandalism • Parking is more accessible at the Rotunda Area 	
Playground Construction Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A sand base underfoot at the playground is preferable to tan bark as this gets very dirty • Do not use plastic, unsustainable materials. Prefer natural materials such as wood, ropes, recycled or repurposed items • The construction materials should blend with the local environment and not have an urban feel • Play equipment should be designed so as not to get hot in summer • Pine bark underfoot can be a fire hazard so prefer rubber surfacing 	N/A
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The placement and variety of equipment in the draft designs does not cater for all ages of children • Shade is very important • There should be play equipment which enables play for children of all abilities • Seating for parents and carers is important 	Catering for all ages and abilities
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The playground should allow for adventure, imagination and exploration 	Open-ended imaginative play

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a chance to stimulate children’s minds about the local environment and Aboriginal Australian culture • The playground could be visually appealing. 	
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft designs do not have a central imaginative theme that links the playground to the environment that it is within. They do not interact with nature or Aboriginal history. • The play equipment should be linked to an ocean, nautical, local environmental or surfing theme • The playground should be bespoke • Acknowledge and celebrate indigenous culture through the playground 	Local coastal & Aboriginal Australian thematic design
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monkey bars and other equipment that allows climbing is very popular and can be scaled or designed to allow for all age groups 	Climbing apparatus
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ocean Grove is one of the busiest beaches in summer in Victoria and so the playground needs to be designed to cope with high volumes of children • Equipment needs to allow for more than one child to play at a time 	Reducing wait time for play equipment
Playground Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fence or plantings around the playground may be helpful to stop children exiting to the carpark at the Wave Wall site • The Rotunda Area has a natural barrier to stop children leaving without their carers • Don’t include play equipment that cannot be easily checked for dangers • The Wave Wall is a busy site and the congestion created from a playground may create a safety hazard for others using the area 	Safety

Conclusions

The feedback collected through the engagement process was highly valuable in guiding planning decisions on the proposed playground. The feedback was collated and analysed by the Barwon Coast management team. Importantly it showed there was considerable community demand for a playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach. The depth of feedback meant that not all suggestions could be accommodated, but key thematic suggestions were integrated into the final design.

Alongside the Wadawurrung – the Traditional Owners of Country at Ocean Grove and a consultant playground designer, the community feedback was used to guide the design of playground which meets many of the identified key themes outlined in this report.

The community feedback was analysed against the identified guiding principles for the playground:

- An imaginative destination attracting both local residents, visitors and potentially users of the new Surf Beach Complex facilities;
- An interactive playground with both passive and active play equipment and spaces, recognising the four types of play physical (gross motor), social (dramatic play), creative and cognitive (intellectual);
- Accessibility to all ages and abilities;
- Equipment that is creative, robust, environmentally sustainable, blends with the surrounding environment and that meets current design standards;
- Consideration of harsh marine environment in design and future maintenance;
- Important links to the surrounding environment including beach, town, Surf Beach Complex and other local tourist destinations;
- Availability to toilet amenities where relevant; and
- Improved access to playground, BBQ's and toilet facilities where relevant.

The final playground design is safe, accessible, integrates and celebrates Wadawurrung cultural knowledge and the local coastal environment. We hope that generations of Ocean Grove children and visitors enjoy playing there with their families and carers.

To see the final playground design and further information visit

www.barwoncoast.com.au/playground

Next Steps

This report will be distributed to all stakeholders and community members who took part in the playground engagement process and any other interested people.

The playground construction process has commenced in October 2021 and it is anticipated the playground will be ready to play on in early 2022. A design of the final playground can be found at www.barwoncoast.com.au/playground

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Playground Online Survey. Open 13/5/19 to 2/6/19.

Have your say on the design of a new playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach

Preamble: Barwon Coast are planning to build a new playground within the Ocean Grove Main Beach precinct. We are consulting with a range of relevant stakeholders and the general public on this project. This survey forms part of that consultation process. This survey closes at midnight on Sunday 2nd June 2019. We will use the information obtained from this consultation alongside other project considerations (such as budget, vegetation management, safety, amenity etc.) to decide on a final design for the playground. Please ensure you have viewed the DRAFT Playground Plans and associated information on our website prior to filling out this survey. They can be found at www.barwoncoast.com.au/playground

If you would like to be kept updated on the progress of this playground project please enter your details at the end of the survey. We will not use your contact details for any other purpose than for this consultation process. Your survey answers will be considered regardless of whether you leave your contact details.

Questions

1. Do you support the construction of a playground at Ocean Grove Main Beach? (Choose one)

- Yes
- No

2. Which of the proposed playground sites do you prefer? (Choose one)

- Site 1. The Rotunda Area
- Site 2. The Wave Wall (adjacent to 'The Dunes' restaurant)
- Neither. I don't support the playground construction.
- Other (please explain your alternate site preference)

3. What do you LIKE or NOT LIKE about the playground design for Site 1 - The Rotunda Area?

4. What do you LIKE or NOT LIKE about the playground design for Site 2 - The Wave Wall?

5. Is there any play equipment or design attributes that you would particularly like included or not included in the playground design? Please explain why.

6. Do you have any other comments on the planned playground that you would like us to consider?

7. Name

8. Email Address

9. Postcode (choose one)

- 3226
- 3227
- Other (please specify)

Appendix B: Results displaying postcodes of online survey respondents (N = 114)

95: Postcode 3226 – Ocean Grove

6: Postcode 3227 – Barwon Heads

13: Other – A mix of Victorian postcodes

Appendix C: Option 1 Rotunda Site Draft Playground Design for consultation



Combination Play Unit – Front Elevation



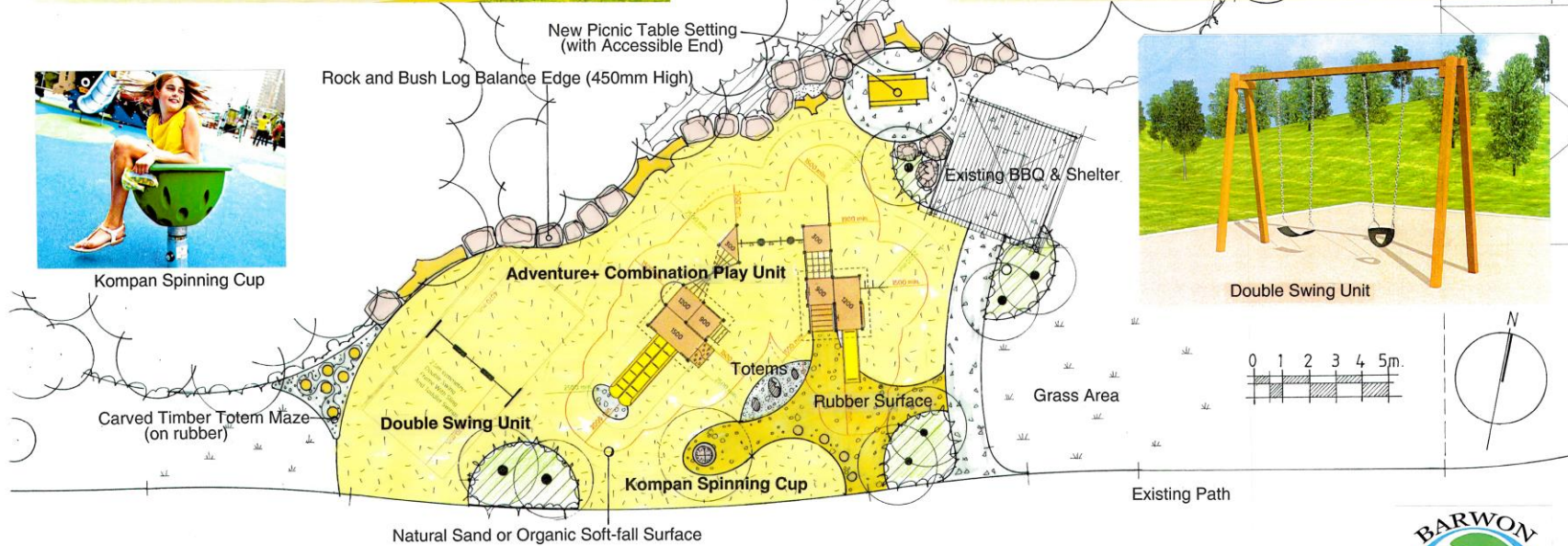
Musical Sculpture



Combination Play Unit – Rear Elevation



Kompan Spinning Cup

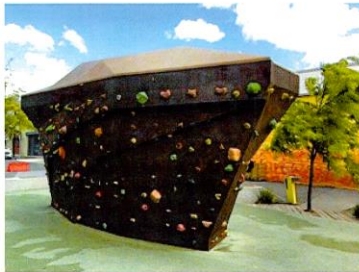


Double Swing Unit

OCEAN GROVE MAIN BEACH – ROTUNDA 14W AREA PROPOSED PLAYGROUND OPTION 1



Appendix D: Option 2 Wave Wall Site Draft Playground Design for consultation



Bouldering Wall Sculpture



Bouldering Wall (in use)



Kompan Multi-play Spinner

Tornado

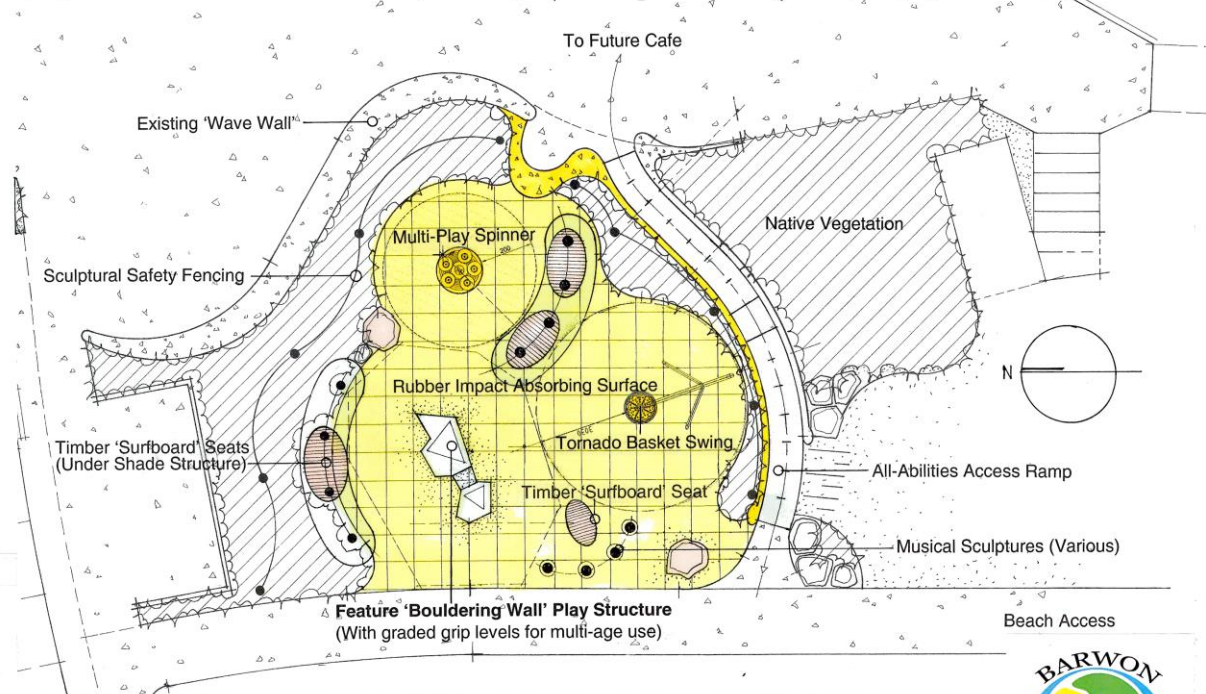
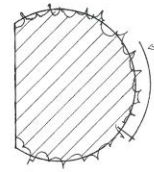
'Tornado' Basket Swing



Tuned cowbells



Musical Sculpture



OCEAN GROVE MAIN BEACH – WAVE WALL AREA PROPOSED PLAYGROUND OPTION 2





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