

Lyttelton Civic Square

Summary from Lyttelton's Civic Square community meeting 17 April 2013

On the evening of the 17 April 2013, around 40 Lyttelton residents attended a meeting hosted by the Lyttelton/Mt Herbert Community Board to discuss ideas and design concepts for Lyttelton's Civic Square space and build on the feedback from previous consultation in March. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Consider the design features put forward from the March consultation – discuss how these elements could be incorporated into a plan that, overall, meets the needs of the community.
- Consider the type, scale, function and look of each design features, and how the features might integrate and work well together.
- Consider how and which design features might be prioritised, and where tradeoffs might be made if necessary.
- Develop a plan with a clear reason as to the design features the group had chosen and how the design features worked together.

People worked together in nine design groups to develop options for the layout of the space. Reference material was provided including a site plan and images of a wide selection of design features. Groups were guided by, but not limited to, topics including the nature of the square and its use, the playground, play areas including water play and positioning or inclusion of public toilets and the Cenotaph war memorial.

Of the many ideas the groups explored, some key themes emerged:

One theme is to retain the site's current three levels and incorporate these into the design – recognising the opportunities that the different levels provide in terms of views, a natural amphitheatre effect. Groups also highlighted the ways the three distinct spaces could be treated to provide for different uses and to create different atmospheres.

Another theme is the need for an organic and flexible approach to the space to enable its use by a wide range of people for a variety of activities – including a performance space, active space, areas to meet and socialise and an area for contemplation.

Connections to different spaces within the site, with opportunities to cross paths, meet people, stop for a chat, and share a meal appeared in all of the plans in some form. Integrating the space and its activities with the town centre also featured. The groups also explained the types of activities they wanted for the site, with the majority of groups describing a relaxed informal use at the top of the site (the space adjacent

to the Recreation Centre) to a more lively, active and colourful space where the site connects with London Street.

The integration of Lyttelton's history into the site also featured. Examples included the creative reuse of materials, interpretation and the need for cultural representation. Groups also mentioned the need for design elements that support play for everyone – fun, creative and challenging without necessarily resulting in specific areas of play or play equipment.

The groups had a mixed response to the placement of both the cenotaph and the toilets in the space, recognising their desirability and importance, but also the potential impacts that they might have on the usability and feel of the space. However, where the toilets and cenotaph were incorporated in the design by some groups there was a strong desire to ensure they were well-integrated into the space, through their placement, design and connection with the other design features of the space. The majority of teams felt that if the toilets and cenotaph could be located off-site, but in close proximity to the space, that would be a good outcome.

The groups also spoke about the need for textural, colourful and interesting plantings, including trees, grass and appropriate shade. Opportunities for a more sustainable or indigenous approach to planting was also raised, including the use of native species or fruiting plants. The words 'playful' 'original' and 'local' were well used in relation to the overall flavour of the space, and as desired aspects of any permanent or temporary artworks, including a water feature.

The key theme could be summed up as a space for all, improving wellbeing for as many people as possible.

Overall, this was a very positive meeting that provided some strong themes and ideas for the Council's landscape architects to consider as they develop draft design option(s). These will be presented to the community for further consultation in June/July 2013.

What are the next steps?

- Council staff will develop draft design option(s) based on the community's input from the drop-in sessions, submissions and community meeting.
- These draft design options will be peer reviewed by a group of local design professionals selected for this project.
- Council staff will report on the draft design option(s) to the Community Board in May or June 2013.
- Pending a formal Council decision on project funding in the Three Year Plan at the end of June 2013, formal consultation on the draft design option(s) will then proceed in June/July 2013 to determine the community's preferred option.
- Council staff plan to present a report on the preferred option to the Lyttelton/Mt Herbert Community Board for its approval in August or September 2013.