

Playspace Strategy Engagement Summary

Playspaces play an important role in community life, it's where we socialise, keep active, get outdoors and connect with each other. For our children, playspaces allow for play and learning that help develop their physical, emotional, social and cognitive skills.

Central Coast Council manages and maintains over 270 playspaces across the region. How we plan, build and care for these spaces is guided by our Playspace Strategy.

We asked for your feedback between Monday 10 November and Sunday 21 December 2025, to help us shape our Playspace Strategy for the next five years.

To share feedback, we invited the community to:

- Complete the online survey
- Participate in the online fund-it activity
- Attend any of the five pop-up events held across the Central Coast

This engagement summary details the key findings from the engagement, council's response to key feedback and the next steps for the project.



How you connected



A total of **1,093** survey responses



5 pop-ups at **5** locations within each Council ward, with over **65** attendees



461 fund-it-tool participants, generating **2,695** votes



Your Voice Our Coast **6,651** views from **3,727** visitors



Paid social media – reach of **40,509**



Social Media posts across Facebook, Instagram and X had a total of **112,543** views



Posters and flyers were installed in popular playspaces, with **186** people using the QR code



eNews – Opened and read by **6,718** subscribers, with **198** readers clicking to engagement page



Coast Connect print – readership of **62,000+**



13 different digital and print communication channels to promote engagement

Summary of engagement results

Current playspace usage



Most respondents **visit playspaces multiple times per week**, staying 30 minutes to two hours



Nearly half **travel 5-10 minutes** to a playspace, either by **car** or **walk**

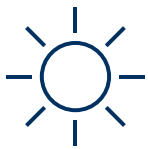


The most popular visit times are **mid-morning** and **late afternoon**



The most common user age groups are **babies/toddlers** and **preschool** kids

Priority playspace features



Shade structures **86%** of votes



Fencing **59%** of votes



Swings **58%** of votes



Slides **52%** of votes



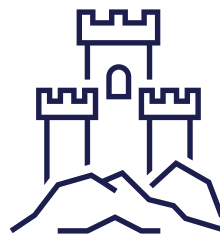
Toddler play **50%** of votes

Funding priorities



65% would prefer to **keep local playspaces** as they are, compared to removing some local playspaces to invest more district and regional playspaces

Diversity of play experiences



82% prefer a **range of play** experiences across nearby playspaces

Barriers to accessing playspaces



Lack of **shade** **73%**



No public **toilets** **50%**



Lack of **equipment** **40%** or **variety** **38%**



Poorly maintained spaces **38%**

Current playspace usage

Survey respondents generally use playspaces frequently, with most visiting multiple times per week and staying for extended periods, typically between 30 minutes and two hours. Most respondents visit playspaces by car or walk, and travel times are usually short (5 to 30 minutes). Respondents typically visit in the late afternoon or mid-morning, while early mornings and mid-afternoons are less popular.

Frequency of visits

Most respondents visit playspaces frequently, with 38.40% (n=404) visiting three or more times per week and 34.60% (n=364) visiting one to two times per week. In contrast, only 12.45% (n=131) visit once a month or less or one to two times per month (Figure 1).

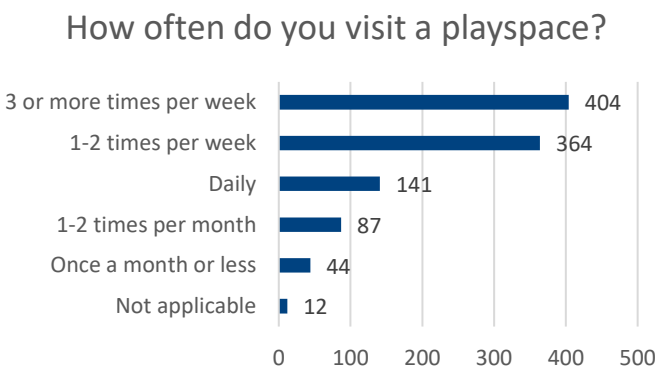


Figure 1: Frequency of visits, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1054 responses

Length of visit

Most respondents spend a significant amount of time at playspaces, with 44.06% (n=467) staying for 30 minutes to 1 hour and 39.34% (n=417) staying for 1 to 2 hours. Short visits of less than 30 minutes are uncommon, totalling only 12.08% (n=128), while 4.53% (n=48) stay for more than 2 hours (Figure 2).

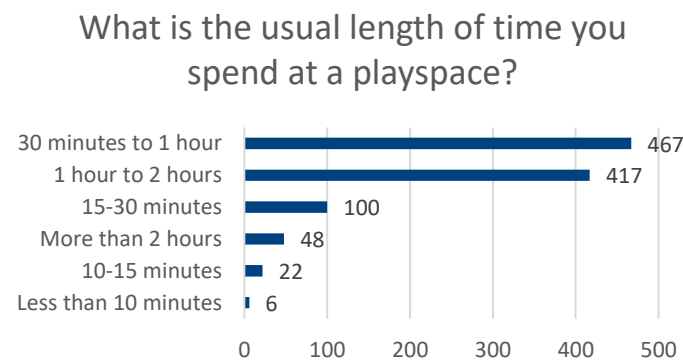


Figure 2: Length of visit, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1060 responses

Mode of travel

Most respondents travel to playspaces by car (47.49%, n=867) or walk (41.58%, n=759). Some respondents travel by bike or scooter 7.78% (n=142), while public transport and jogging are uncommon at 1.48% (n=27) and 1.53% (n=28) respectively (Figure 3).

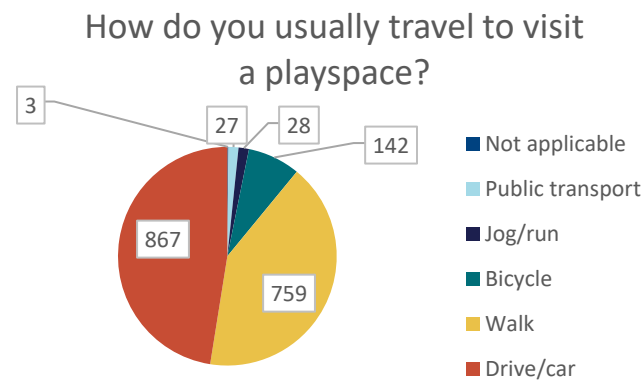


Figure 3: Mode of travel, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1090 responses

Travel time

Nearly half of respondents (48.81%, n=531) travel 5–10 minutes to reach a playspace, while 30.61% (n=333) travel 15–30 minutes. Short trips of less than 5 minutes account for 15.99% (n=174), and only 4.60% (n=50) travel more than 30 minutes (Figure 4).

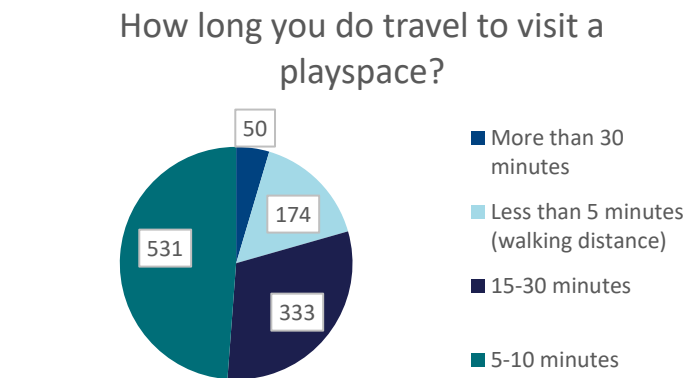


Figure 4: Travel time, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1088 responses

Time of visit

Most respondents visit playspaces in the late afternoon (30.97%, n=682) or mid-morning (30.38%, n=669). Early morning visits account for 24.11% (n=531), while mid-afternoon is less common at 13.71% (n=302) (Figure 5).

What time of the day do you typically visit a playspace?

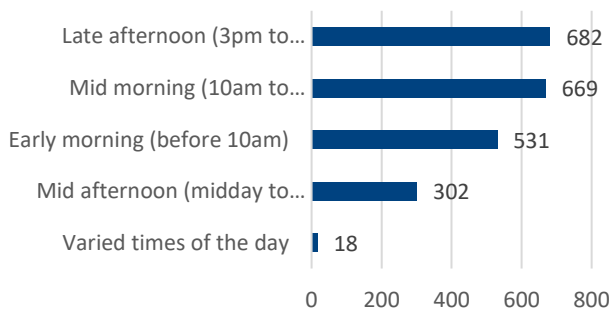


Figure 5: Visit time of day, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1086 responses

User age groups

The most common user age groups were preschool-aged children (62.87%, n=667) and babies/toddlers (46.84%, n=497). Older children (21.30%, n=226), teens (10.56%, n=112), and intergenerational use (11.59%, n=123) were less frequent (Figure 6).

Which of the following age groups are relevant for your survey response?

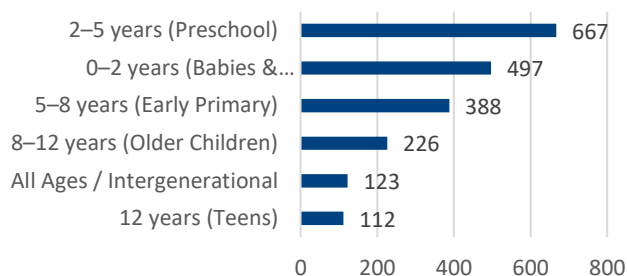


Figure 6: User age groups, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1061 responses

Priority playspace features

In our online 'fund-it-tool' activity, we asked the community what playspace features they would you like to see more of in Central Coast Playspaces. Respondents were given 12 points to spend, and each item cost 2 points. The suggested priorities come from the most frequently voted for features on the list.

The most popular features were **shade structures** (86.12%, n=397), **fencing** (58.79%, n=271), **swings** (57.92%, n=267), **slides** (52.28%, n=241), **toddler play** (50.11%, n=231) and **climbing structures** (49.24%, n=227 (Figure 7).

Priority playspace features

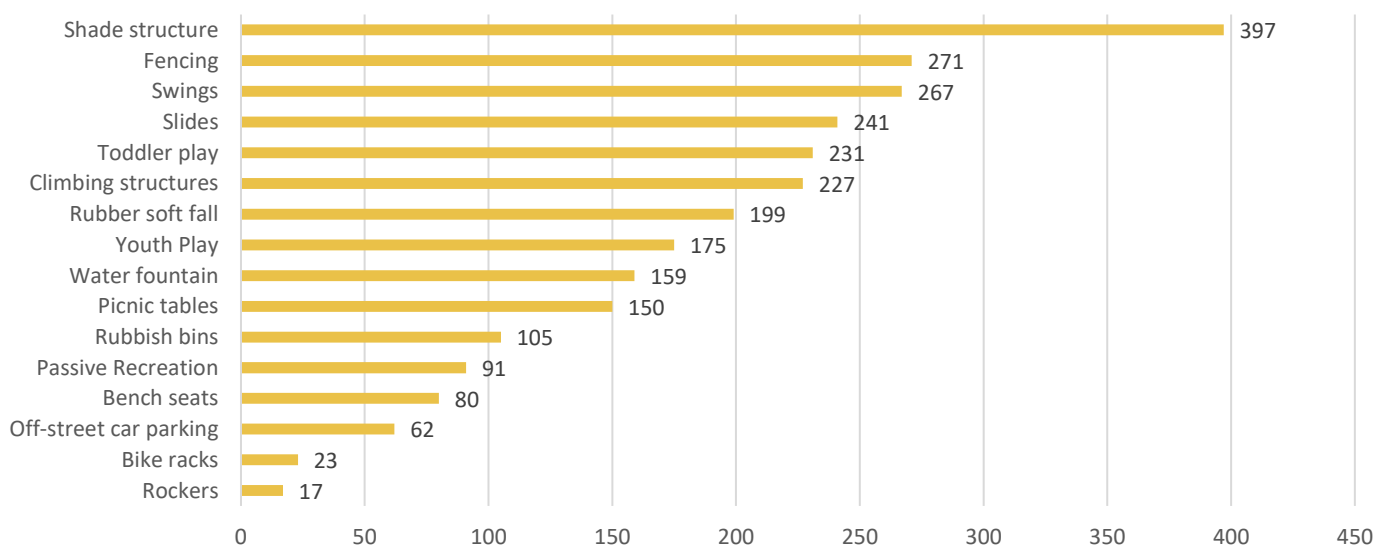


Figure 7: Priority playspace features: Fund-it tool on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 461 respondents. Note: Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of votes each playspace feature received by the total contributions across the project, showing which features participants chose to fund most and least.

Barriers to accessing playspaces

The most common barriers to accessing playspaces are **lack of shade** (73.45%, n=783) and no **public toilets** (50.00%, n=533). Other significant barriers include **lack of equipment** (40.34%, n=430), **lack of variety** (38.09%, n=406), and untidy or **poorly maintained spaces** (37.52%, n=400) (Figure 8).

Of those who indicated ‘other’ (n=130), the reasons included a lack of **fencing** (n=47), lack of **age-appropriate** equipment (n=28), lack of appropriate **seating** for elderly and children with back support (n=6), and lack of Softfall for young children (n=6).

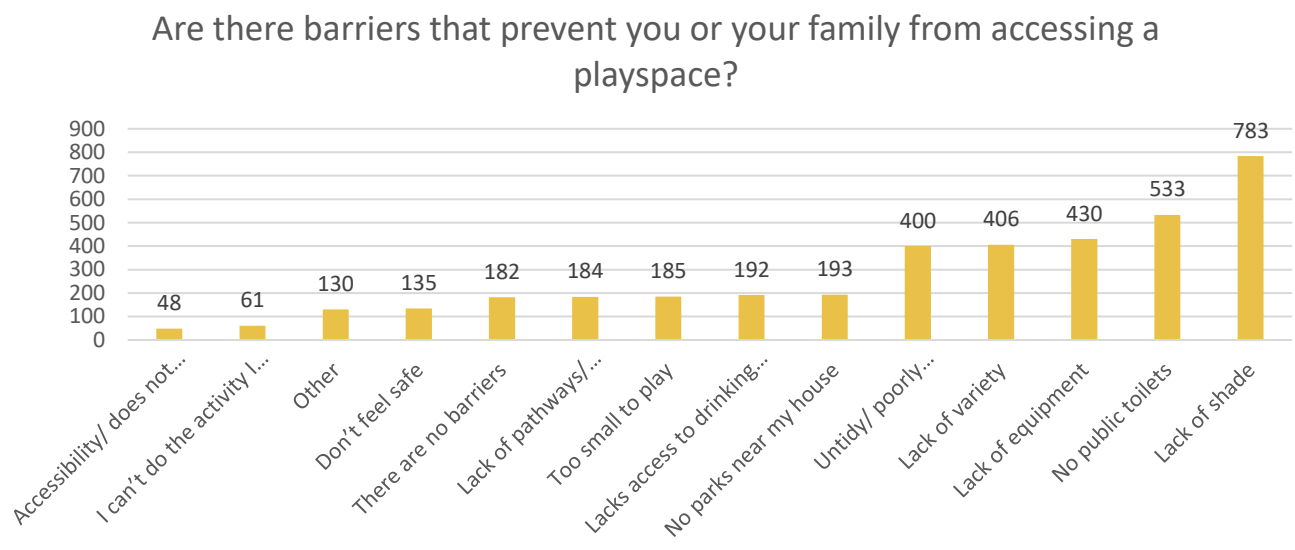


Figure 8: Barriers to accessing playspaces, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1066 responses

Playspace funding priorities

A key question we asked the community was regarding the future investment towards local vs district or regional playspaces. When asked “Would you support having fewer local playspaces, if this meant Council could invest more in the district and regional level playspaces, even if your local playspace was removed or not upgraded?” most respondents (64.88%, n=704) preferred to keep local playspaces as they are (Figure 9).



Would you support having fewer local playspaces, if this meant Council could invest more in the district and regional level playspaces, even if your local playspace was removed or not upgraded?

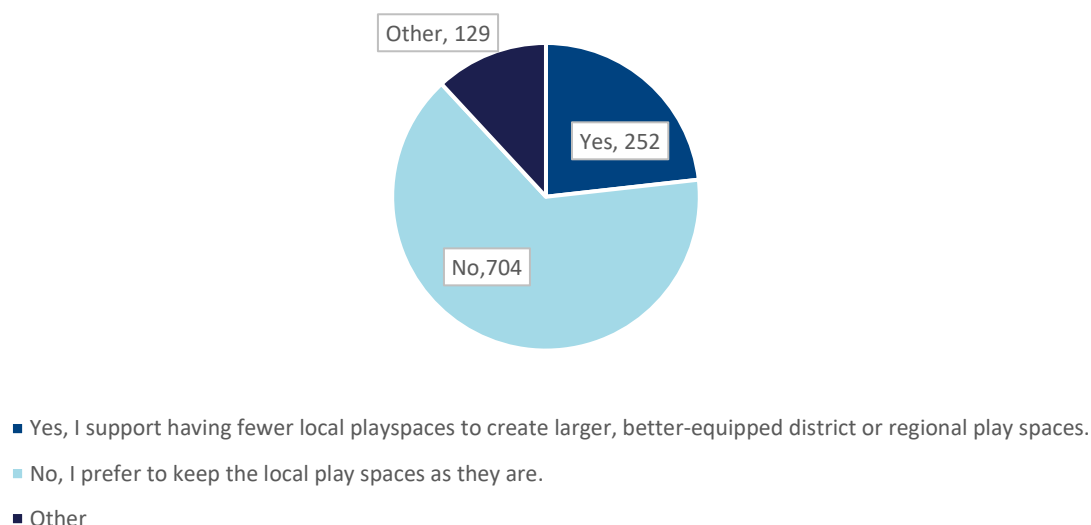


Figure 9: Preference for local or district/regional playspaces, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1085 responses

Of those who selected 'Other' (n=129), majority (n=101) indicated that they think keeping both the different types of playspaces is important, and that maintaining the existing parks is important to them and their family.

"I support both. Small and large playspaces serve their purpose"

"How about we have both? Local parks one can walk or cycle to, quickly before a baby naps or after dinner. I don't want to have to drive miles to find a big playground, that's for special events, not the everyday play and exercise. I would visit a large "better-equipped" formal play space only a few times a year. I want local play areas and green spaces and facilities close to where I use which I could use every day if I wanted to."

The next most common response from those who indicated 'other' was the desire for spending money on upgrading all the existing parks (n=26), rather than making any new parks.

"Upgrade parks we already have"

"While I understand and appreciate the significant costs involved with upgrading play spaces, I think it's really important. I have been to many local play spaces in the area that just aren't safe, are old and rundown and have very little equipment. There are many families that live / are moving to areas along the central coast, and I think our communities need to reflect this by updating our play spaces, both big and small. Because it's such a vital part of childhood, and in a world where technology is robbing children of play, I think it's important that we have outdoor areas that encourage children to go outside, be imaginative and make new local friends."



Diversity of play experiences

A strong majority of respondents (82.03%, n=890) prefer a greater range of play experiences across nearby playspaces, compared to only 12.63% (n=137) who would prefer similar play experiences. This clear preference highlights the importance of variety and diversity in play experiences (Figure 10).



In areas where several playspaces are located close together, would you prefer each playspace to offer similar play experiences, or a greater range across the sites?

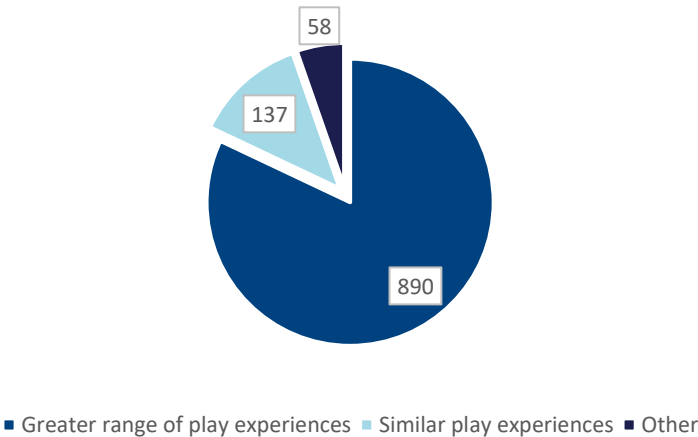


Figure 10: Diversity of play experiences, Survey on Your Voice Our Coast, 10 November to 21 December, 1085 responses

Council's response

Due to the large volume and variety of content contained within community feedback, not every issue or theme can be included and responded to in the following table, however all feedback has been read and will be considered by the project team.

Theme	Theme summary	Council's response
Priority features	Preferred features are shade, fencing, swings, slides and toddler play	The Playspace Strategy recommends a playspace hierarchy to inform the planning and upgrade of a playspace based on across the Central Coast (ie. local, district or regional). Design considerations will include the targeted age and type of play equipment, the need for fencing and the level of shade provision.
Barriers to access	Common barriers include lack of shade, no public toilets, lack of equipment/variety and poorly maintained spaces	When planning new or upgraded playspaces, Council will undertake site-specific assessments to identify barriers to access across the network. The Playspace and Park Infrastructure Hierarchy will be used to ensure playspaces are fit for purpose in line with the recommended hierarchy.
Local over district/regional	Most respondents would prefer to keep local playspaces as they are, compared to removing some local playspaces to invest in more district and regional playspaces	Council will continue to plan for and maintain the playspace network which currently provides over 200 local play opportunities close to home, and the ability to travel to larger playspace (district/regional) for different play opportunities.
Desire for investment in both local and district/regional	Some respondents expressed both kinds of playspaces are needed, as	

	they each serve different purposes	
Improved quality and maintenance of existing playspaces	Some respondents expressed desire for Council to invest in upgrading and maintaining existing playspaces, as opposed to investing in more district/regional playspaces	Council will develop a Park and Playspace Management Plan to review the level of service and management of all playspace across the Central Coast. The development of the management plan will be a key priority for the revised strategy (2026 to 2031).
Diversity of play	Most respondents prefer a range of play experiences across nearby playspaces	Council understands the need for diversity of play experiences across the playspace network, with Diversity of Play a guiding principle of the Playspace Strategy.

What's next?

The team are now reviewing your feedback and developing Council's new Playspace Strategy. The Playspace Strategy will then go on public exhibition mid 2026 for further community feedback to make sure we got it right.

The Playspace Strategy introduces a Playspace Hierarchy to help apply community feedback to future playspace planning and upgrades, recognising that local, district and regional playspaces serve different functions within the network.

Find out more and stay up to date at: www.yourvoiceourcoast.com/reviewing-our-playspace-vision