

Introduction + Context + Principles

Introduction

Plummer and Smith were engaged by Tweed Shire Council to design the Tweed Regional Accessible Park and Playground. Tweed Shire Council have endorsed this park to be located in the existing public park currently known as Ebenezer Park on Coral Street, Tweed Heads.

The design process included engagement with a number of community working groups specialising in equitable access, local culture, and strategic open space requirements.

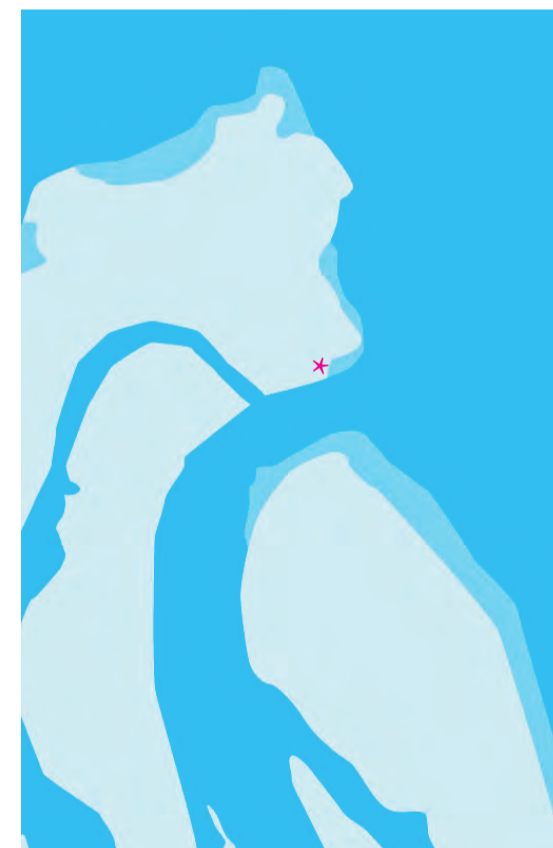
The site:



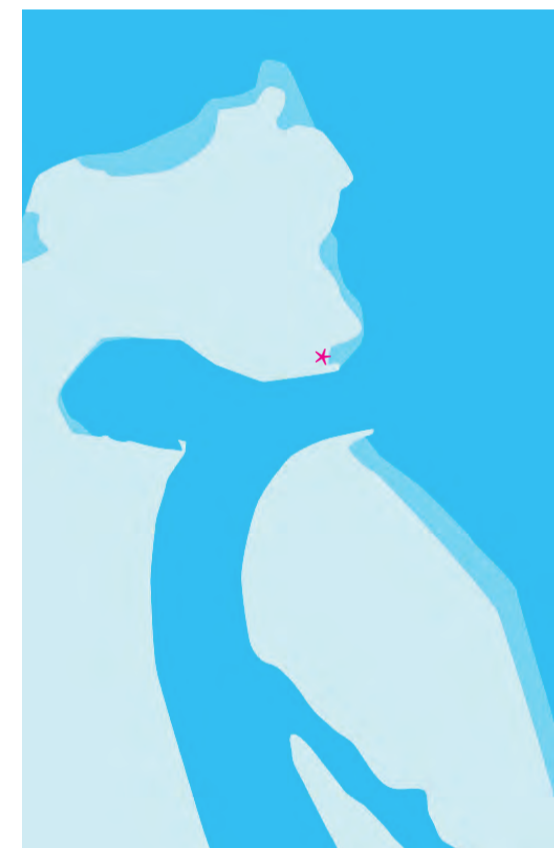
Context (where the river meets the sea)

The site is bounded by Coral Street, the Tweed River, Jack Evans Boat Harbour and Duranbah Beach. It is an unadorned piece of public space adjacent to the path joining the northern rock wall of the river mouth to Jack Evans Boat Harbour and Coolangatta.

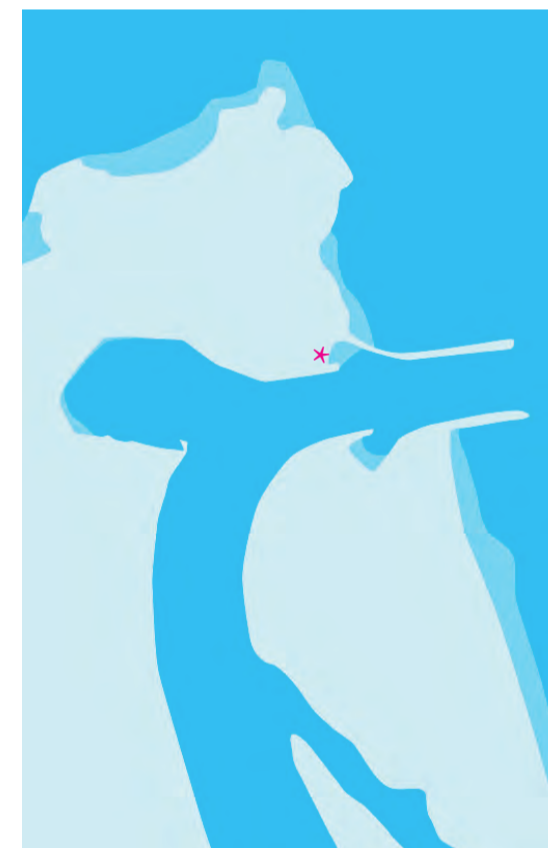
An important element of the site which is currently obscured by the presence of the rock walls is that this is the mouth of the Tweed River- a place of regional landscape and cultural significance. Mapping shows how the landscape has been modified over time.



Environmental flows



River and landscape manipulated



Tweed River mouth walls extended



Historic photo showing the site and its river mouth location and context

Strategic Context

Connecting people to amenity: the site is the last link in a chain connecting Tweed Heads and Coolangatta to the mouth of the river.

Environment: the environmental performance of the park can be significantly improved- this can become a small regional showcase for local ecology

Economic potential: accessible tourism is a significant growth area of the tourism sector- this park can play a significant role in providing services and amenity to local communities and visitors

Social / Community service: an accessible park such as this services an existing need- the closest such regional parks are in Kurrawa (to the north) and Coffs Harbour (to the south)

Future / Context: the site is adjacent to future commercial expansion areas and will be an important piece of public space amenity aligned with new urban areas

What does an accessible park mean in this location?

- + access to environment and amenity
- + access to history
- + access to cultural heritage
- + access to play and recreation
- + opportunities for social exchange and inclusiveness

Principles

The key goal driving the park proposal is the creation of a space for everyone that showcases the local environment, landscape features, and culture.

A space for everyone means just that- a space for all people; of all ages, of all abilities, and of varied backgrounds.

A space for social and environmental connection.

Key principles include designing for:

- + inclusiveness and a variety of uses
- + flexibility
- + varied emotional and physical responses and abilities
- + accessibility

Special Considerations

As well as the complexities that are part of any good public space there are special considerations and techniques that have been used in establishing this proposal for an Accessible Park and Playground.

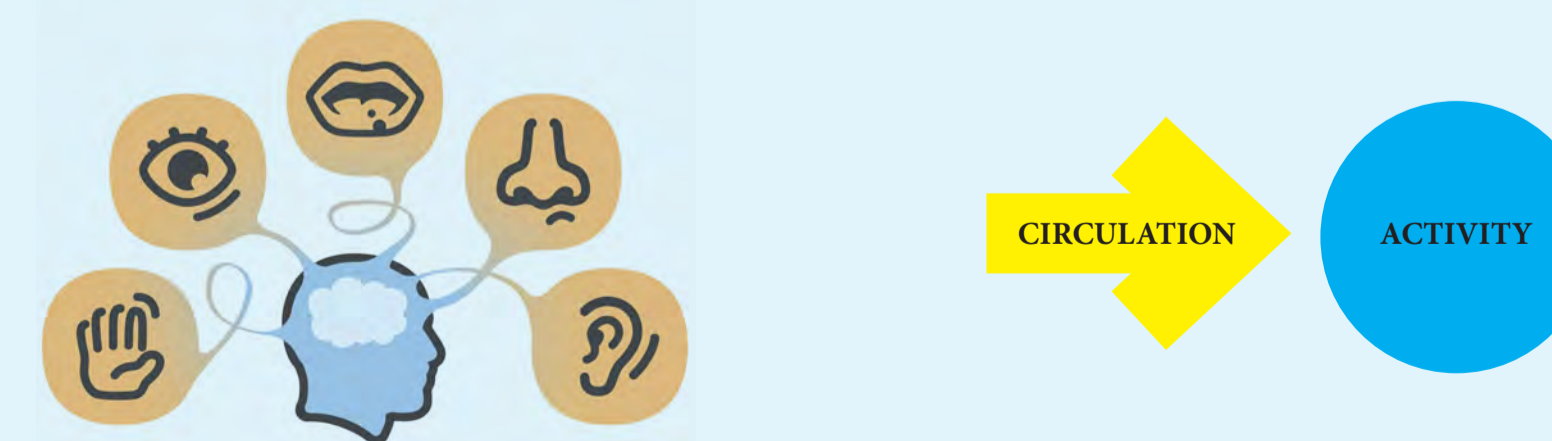
The design and the resulting landscape aims to engage all the senses. The site provides considerable assistance- breezes, sounds, smells etc of the river, the beach, the trees.

The play areas in particular need to engage the senses, promote inclusiveness, allow for rest and recharge areas (or opt-out zones), provide challenges, allow for equitable access, and promote engagement and cooperation.

With emotional responses in mind the programme for the play area is based on the concept of a 'gentle introduction'. This allows users to 'warm up' to the space as more activity is gradually added to the experience. This enables users to make informed decisions regarding their level of participation and engagement.

Colour is also used as both a way of adding playfulness but also for programming space and use. Yellow and blue are used to communicate circulation and activity. These colours are chosen for their site relevance (sand and water) but also, crucially, for their emotional and visual attributes:

- yellow, blue and white are the last colours lost when one experiences visual impairment
- yellow attracts attention faster than any other colour



Park Zones

There are four key zones in the park that are largely based on existing park characteristics such as car park locations (accessibility), topography and landforms (park programme), views, and exposed edges.

The four key zones of the park are:

1. NATURE BUFFER EDGE
2. DEDICATED PLAY AREA
3. OPEN SPACE / FLEXIBLE USE
4. FORESHORE / PROMENADE



Precedent Images

Natural / Tactile Play Elements



Lizard Log Park (McGregor Coxall)

Fitness / Exercise



Prince Alfred Park (Sue Barnsley Design)

Water Sensitive Urban Design



Pirrama Park (Aspect Studios)

Durable materials



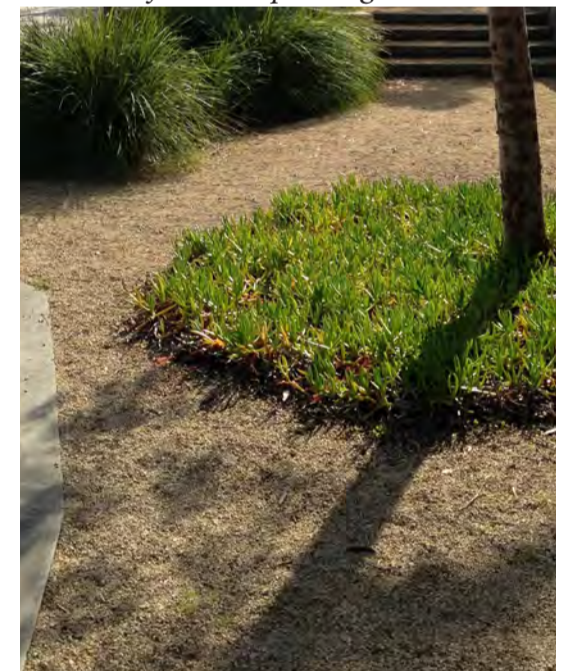
Prince Alfred Park (Sue Barnsley Design)

Varied recreational options



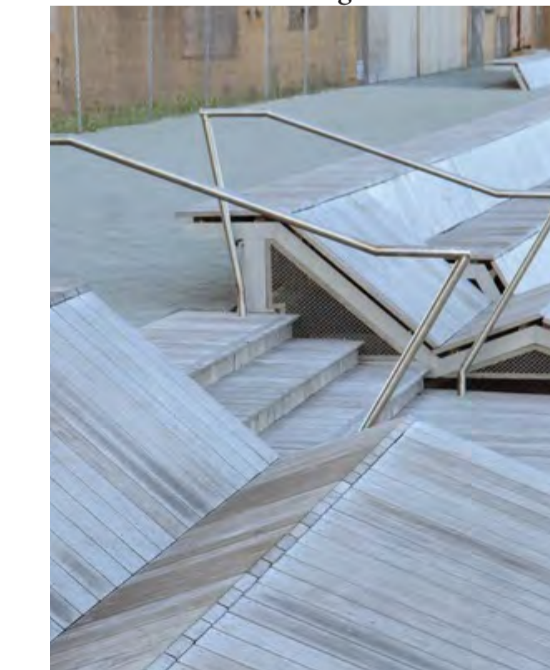
Current site river edge

Tactile surfaces and planting



Pirrama Park (Aspect Studios)

Timber deck and seating



City Deck (Stoss Landscape)

View / Lookout Pods



Tongva Park (JCFO)

Community use, flexibility



Current site

NOTES

1. Existing vegetation to be retained
2. New trees- providing additional shade, habitat and amenity value
3. Main circulation path- potential to include markings to allow for this to double as an exercise track
4. Concrete paths
5. Feature paving denoting nodal, entry, or destination zones
6. Concrete seating and/or retaining walls
7. Open grassed area for a variety of passive and active recreational uses
8. Primary foreshore area with increased paving, views maintained, additional seating, formalised beach access, deck areas, and natural shade
9. Existing grass bank areas retained to provide informal picnicking space, sheltered parkland setting (refuge) and river and parkland views (prospect)
10. Formalised car park areas (utilising existing car park areas)
11. Proposed car park entry
12. New car parking and landscaped bays introduced along northern park boundary
13. Buffer/ threshold park zone incorporating picnic spaces, BBQs, exercise and play equipment, sensory gardens, textural variety, significant shade planting to improve amenity along northern park edge and of the central open space
14. Park shelters with associated picnic settings
15. Amenities block- accessible from both the play area and the park side
16. Play area fence
17. Play area (and park) entry zone including entry features, seating, play area access
18. Principle play area
19. Destination viewing pods- one for the river and one for the park and Pt Danger- ensures that this prospect experience is accessible to all park users
20. Two way shelter- part play area, part park river edge
21. Viewing and fishing platform offering views up and down the river
22. Exercise pods- rubber softfall
23. Amenity planting- with a dominance of locally occurring species for improved habitat value
24. Gravel bocce court
25. Rain garden
26. Timber decks and seating
27. Shade Structure and 'yellow gates' path
28. BBQ
29. Rubber softfall
30. Mulch softfall
31. Proposed location for registered vendors



Play utilising natural, tactile elements



Play providing challenge and interaction



Exercise and recreational options for all ages



Inclusive play



Robust materials



A sense of arrival and intimate scale



Engaging the senses- playful



Varied parkland activities- social connection



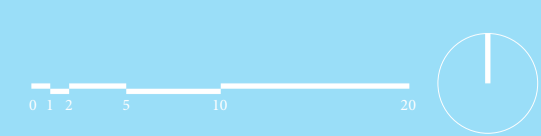
Equitable access- providing experiences for all users



Health, well-being and community use



Using nature as a recreational asset



PLAY AREA SNAPSHOT



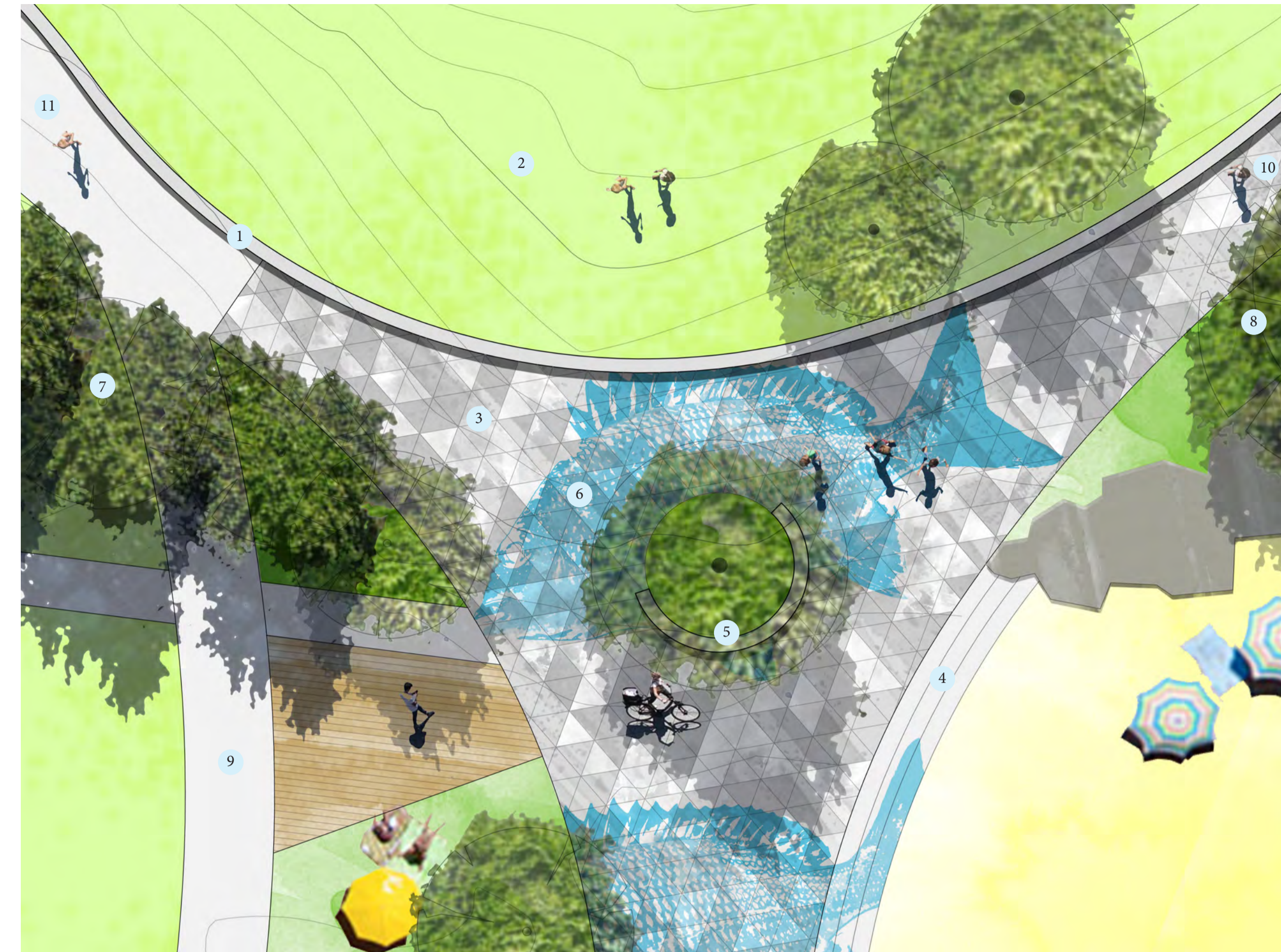
NOTES

1. Play area entry
2. Portal / gateway framing elements along main path- provide a sense of arrival, human scale, and the structure for a shade / shelter element the length of this central path connecting the entry to the amenities block
3. Fixed umbrellas provide shade, shelter, and playfulness
4. New trees provide natural shade and habitat value
5. Sand play
6. Nature play and balancing logs
7. Gathering / music circle
8. Mulch softfall
9. Rubber softfall
10. Sensory garden / creekbed zone
11. Liberty Swing with river views
12. Planting
13. Primary circulation path linking all play spaces
14. Turf for picnics and informal use

Play Elements and Activities:

- Swings, Net Swings, Liberty Swing
- Climbing, Net Structures, Balance Elements
- Nature play, Tactile elements
- Slides, Embankment slides
- Sand play, Creative play
- Music Elements
- Cooperative play
- Sound funnels- tree top sounds, river edge sounds
- Equitable access view pods
- Drawing wall
- Poll forest

FORESHORE AREA SNAPSHOT

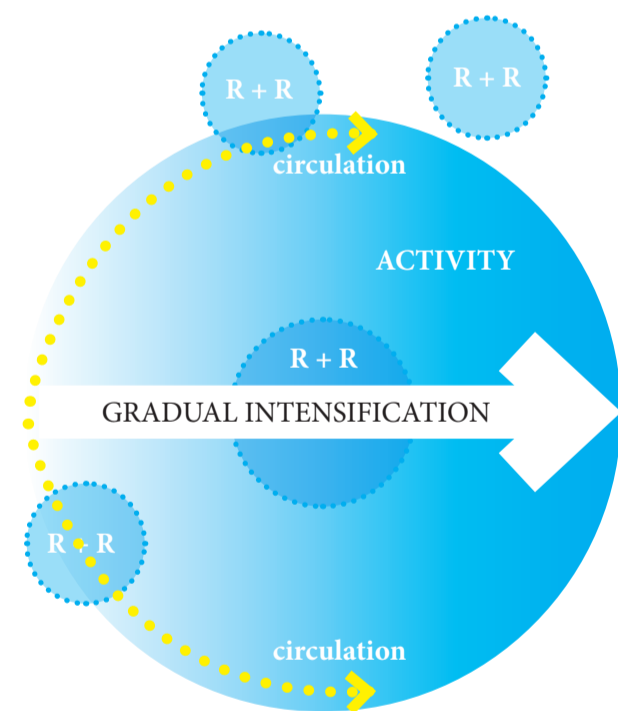


NOTES

1. New concrete retaining wall allows for improved foreshore area circulation and connections and establishes a seating edge to a hardstand gathering area and the open space
2. Existing hill / bank maintained as an area of repose and prospect overlooking the foreshore, beach, and overall park
3. Feature pavement treatments help establish a sense of character and place- unique finishes
4. New concrete terraces improve connections to the river beach and improve safety. An equitable access ramp to the sandy beach is also proposed
5. New seating and planting
6. Potential for art features to be integrated into the finishes and fixtures- embellishments that can tell a story about culture and place
7. Existing Norfolk Island Pines to be retained
8. Existing Casuarinas to be retained
9. Equitable circulation paths
10. Path connects to Duranbah Beach and Tweed River rockwall
11. Path connects to Coral Street car park and is part of open space circuit path

PLAY AREA

PROGRAM DIAGRAM (the gentle introduction)



ACTIVE ELEMENTS



REST + RECHARGE (R + R)



SENSORY PLAY



IMAGINATIVE PLAY



DESTINATION / OBSERVATION



CONNECTION TO LANDSCAPE, THE SEASONS, CULTURE & HISTORY

SITE PATTERNS- EXISTING & PROPOSED





SECTIONS KEY



INDICATIVE SKETCH- looking across the river beach to the beach ramp and foreshore area



INDICATIVE SKETCH- looking across the open space from the foreshore area (play area and view pods in the distance)

Coral Street

New 90 degree parking along Coral Street frontage

Landscape buffer, sensory gardens and shade. Improving habitat value of park, mitigating the impacts of traffic on public space and providing park amenity

Open space allowing for flexible use- maintaining a sense of openness as a key existing feature of the park

Existing vegetation and landform retained to keep a sheltered zone within the park- existing trees complimented with new planting

Upgraded river edge walkways enhancing the connection between the rockwall / rivermouth and Jack Evans Boat Harbour and Coolangatta



Existing bank provides a place of repose overlooking the upgraded foreshore areas and the park open space

Main river and beach access point. Maintain open views to the water- avoid structures such as shelters in this area

Open space allowing for flexible use- maintaining a sense of openness while allowing existing landform to provide shelter from coastal winds

View pod providing equitable access to outlook locations and audio sensory forest

Play area providing a range of play experiences and spaces, sensory elements, challenge, cooperation, rest and recharge etc. Planting and umbrellas provide shade and amenity

Existing landform utilised for lookout areas and embankment slides. Existing vegetation complimented with new trees and planting to create a nature zone

Upgraded river edge walkways enhancing circulation connectivity while maintaining and promoting recreational activities such as fishing



TWEED REGIONAL ACCESSIBLE PARK & PLAYGROUND

access play environment water people sounds fish laughter nature birds picnic exercise views relaxation gathering sun rest listen taste grass trees bocce run walk sit breeze shade kayak roll climb slide swim driftwood tides waves salt air fun river mouth ride kite flying snorkel rocks history culture stories learn all ages connection fresh

