

Parks Findings (cont.)

RAY PARK

Plympton Road, Carlingford

Category: local park

Facilities: small playground, bush walking paths and a bike path

Value experienced by key stakeholders

Strengths

- Opportunities for physical activity
- A place for socialising and relaxing
- Sense of community connection to the park
- Unique characteristics (bush walking track and exercise equipment)

Weaknesses

- Minor complaints regarding litter
- Lack of toilets
- Lack of shade

SROI Valuation

of the total social and economic value produced:

- 74%** was experienced by general park users
- 19%** was experienced by children using the park
- 5%** was experienced by local residents neighbouring or adjacent to Ray Park
- 2%** was experienced by children using the park as part of formal school/childcare excursion or activity

"Many generations of family getting together. Friends from the local area coming together. Lots of kids parties on the weekend"
– SROI survey response

Valuing Our Green Places

Our Aim

To understand & quantify the social & economic value created by the parks & sportsgrounds provided & maintained by Council

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation of parks and sportsgrounds in City of Parramatta.

City of Parramatta provides around 350 beautiful and diverse parks and sportsgrounds for residents, visitors and workers to enjoy. With the population expected to reach nearly 400,000 people by 2036, there will be increased pressure on existing parks, sportsgrounds and other open spaces in our Local Government Area.

How will these findings inform council's decision-making?

- To help make decisions about Council's investment in parks and sportsgrounds
- To advocate for adequate green open space in Planning Proposals and in precinct renewal and infrastructure renewal projects - with State Government and Developers
- To advocate for higher quality (higher cost) sportsgrounds and parks in certain locations to meet the needs and expectations of the community
- To add a health perspective to support Local Government and Health in advocating for increased open space during planning negotiations
- To provide evidence and local information to use when commenting on or contributing to District Plans, Land Use and Infrastructure Plans, State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs), Local Environment Plans, Community Strategic Plans, Planned Precincts and Development Control Plans
- To be used as a baseline for future evaluations and comparative data

This SROI evaluation tells a unique story about the social impact and value of City of Parramattas parks and sports grounds and helps us understand why preserving these valuable local assets is so important for the community.

What is an SROI evaluation?

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) evaluation identifies the investment that is required to deliver a service, asset or activity and compares it with the value of the outcomes experienced by stakeholders.

The seven core principles of SROI are:

- Understand what changes
Involve stakeholders
- Value things that matter
- Only include what is material
- Do not over-claim
- Be transparent
- Verify results

What did we do?

City of Parramatta Council (Council) in partnership Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) commissioned this SROI evaluation to assess the social and economic value created by Council's parks and sportsgrounds.

The methodology will determine for every dollar spent, how much social and economic value has been created in dollar terms.

The value created for the community was determined based on site evaluations of two sportsgrounds (Max Ruddock Reserve and Robin Thomas Reserve) and three parks (Jubilee Park, West Epping Park and Ray Park).

The findings of these site-based SROI evaluations were then used to scale the results across all 33 sportsgrounds and 124 local and district parks in City of Parramatta.

Why is green space valuable?

- Access to quality green open space is beneficial for physical and mental health and wellbeing
- Green open space improves social connections and supports the development of vibrant communities by providing a place for activity and opportunities to interact
- Accessible and safe green open spaces foster active play, which is associated with physical, cognitive and social benefits for children
- Green spaces function as a 'back yard' for residents in high rise dwellings

To our knowledge, this SROI evaluation was the **first undertaken in Australia** to measure the value of the social change created by public green space.

For the full report by Council's Social Outcomes team and Western Sydney Local Health District, contact the Customer Contact Centre on 9806 5050.

For translation, please contact Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National on 131 450.



Health
Western Sydney
Local Health District

What did we find?

For every dollar invested in Council parks and sportsgrounds, **\$10 of social and economic value** is created for and experienced by a range of stakeholders per year.

Input costs (Total Council costs on parks and sportsgrounds for 2018) = **\$36,715,326**
Outcomes valuation = **\$366,827,093**

Sportsgrounds Findings

For every dollar invested in Council sportsgrounds, \$38 of social and economic value is created for and experienced by a range of range of stakeholders per year.

MAX RUDDOCK RESERVE

200 Junction Road, Winston Hills

Category: local sports ground
Facilities: 2 playing fields with lighting, 2 synthetic cricket pitches, cricket nets, closed circuit television and an amenities building

Value experienced by key stakeholders

- Strengths**
- Strong sense of community engagement
 - Considered an essential community infrastructure
 - Viewed as welcoming environment

- Weaknesses**
- Minor concerns about parking challenges
 - Lack of lighting at night
 - Lack of shade

SROI Valuation

of the total social and economic value produced:

74% was experienced by general sports club participants and non-sporting observers

23% was experienced by children participating in sport

1% was experienced by local residents neighbouring or adjacent to Max Ruddock Reserve

“Coming for more than 35 years, children played soccer and cricket and now grandchildren do the same. Affiliated with sports field for so long and would hate to see it go” – SROI survey response

ROBIN THOMAS RESERVE

103 Harris Street, Parramatta

Category: local sports ground
Facilities: 2 playing fields, 1 cricket pitch and an amenities building. James Ruse Reserve (adjacent to RTR) includes play space, water play space and a skate park

Value experienced by key stakeholders

- Strengths**
- Offers experiences not available in smaller parks
 - Need for an upgrade of the fields and parks facilities

- Weaknesses**
- Opportunities for physical and social activity, including meeting new people

SROI Valuation

of the total social and economic value produced:

77% was experienced by general sports club participants and non-sporting observers

23% was experienced by children participating in sport

1% was experienced by local residents neighbouring or adjacent to RTR

“A place of relaxing, all high rise around, only place with trees, this place is used every day, over used, we need more of these spaces” – SROI survey response

Parks Findings

For every dollar invested in Council parks, \$7 of social and economic value is created for and experienced by a range of range of stakeholders per year.

JUBILEE PARK

7A Parkes Street, Parramatta

Category: local park
Facilities: open space, trees to climb, a path to walk/ride on, a maze and a creek bed with a small bridge

Value experienced by key stakeholders

- Strengths**
- Safe and accessible environment during the day
 - Space to connect with others
 - Facilities to exercise, relax and socialise
 - Proximity to CBD

- Weaknesses**
- Safety at night
 - Lack of lighting and security

SROI Valuation

of the total social and economic value produced:

65% was experienced by general park users

17% was experienced by local residents neighbouring or adjacent to Jubilee Park

16% was experienced by children using the park

2% was experienced by children using the park as part of formal school/childcare excursion or activity

“This park gives us an opportunity to get out of closed spaces and mix with other people which doesn’t happen often otherwise. It also makes us that much more active” – SROI survey response

WEST EPPING PARK

Dent Street, Epping

Category: district park
Facilities: multiple play spaces, opportunities for passive recreation such as walking, jogging, picnic activities, skateboarding, basketball, tennis

Value experienced by key stakeholders

- Strengths**
- Provides for a variety of exercise needs
 - Proximity to YMCA and local primary school
 - Play equipment suited to children of all ages
 - Provides a place for socialising and relaxing

- Weaknesses**
- Minor complaints regarding cleanliness and overcrowding
 - Lack of toilets
 - Lack of shade

SROI Valuation

of the total social and economic value produced:

73% was experienced by general park users

21% was experienced by local residents neighbouring or adjacent to Jubilee Park

4% was experienced by children using the park

2% was experienced by children using the park as part of formal school/childcare excursion or activity

“The layout, different activities, having the tennis courts... pack in a lot of things for different people. Feels open and you feel comfortable here” – SROI survey response