

STANLEY BAY PARK PLAYSPACE RENEWAL

CONCEPT DESIGN
OCTOBER 2026





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STANLEY BAY PARK PLAYSPACE

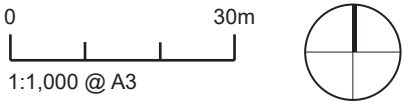
WIDER SITE / CONTEXT

This project forms part of Auckland Council’s ongoing renewal programme for local play spaces within the Devonport-Takapuna Local Board area. Stanley Bay Park playspace provides an important recreational space for the surrounding neighbourhood and contributes to the wider network of play opportunities across the Devonport peninsula.

Stanley Bay Park is located between Stanley Bay Beach Reserve and the Ngataranga Bay sports field facilities. The park functions as a local destination for organised sport and informal recreation, with football and cricket activities regularly taking place on the surrounding fields. The Ngataranga Tennis Club is also located directly adjacent to the playspace, contributing to the active recreational character of the park and attracting visitors from outside the immediate catchment area.

The existing playspace primarily caters to early childhood and younger childhood age groups and supports families visiting the park for sport and recreation. The surrounding park environment is characterised by open grassed fields, established trees and supporting recreational facilities.

This renewal project presents an opportunity to upgrade ageing play equipment, improve play experiences and enhance the overall amenity of the playspace while responding to the unique conditions of the site. This concept design aims to build on the existing character of Stanley Bay Park and create a more engaging and resilient playspace that can support a diverse range of users into the future.



EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The existing playspace comprises a small collection of proprietary play equipment including a two-bay swing set and a larger multi-play unit with slide elements. The multi-play unit is dated and shows visible signs of wear, indicating it has reached the end of its serviceable life and will be removed as part of the renewal. The swings remain in good condition and will look to be extended to provide an accessible play opportunity.

Play areas are currently surfaced with bark cushionfall retained by timber log edging. Much of the timber edging has deteriorated over time and is rotting, signifying the large amount of water on site. The existing bark cushionfall level has also dropped significantly and will be removed as part of the renewal process and reused as mulch within proposed planting areas where appropriate.

A key issue affecting the playspace is the presence of damp ground conditions across the site. Water frequently collects within and around the play areas following rainfall, creating muddy and saturated surfaces that reduce usability and overall play value. Addressing drainage and improving ground conditions will be an important component of the renewal to ensure the space remains accessible and functional throughout the year.

The playspace sits within a flat open park landscape associated with the surrounding sports fields. Several established trees are located within and around the playground area, providing shade and contributing to the green character of the park. These trees will be retained and integrated into the new playspace design.

Access to the playspace is primarily provided via a shared path and narrow driveway connecting to the surrounding park network. While the park attracts a broad range of users due to nearby sports facilities and the tennis club, the existing playspace provides a relatively limited range of play experiences. Activity types such as spinning and sound-based play are currently absent, presenting opportunities for enhancement through the renewal.

There are residential neighbours 6m from the playspace and need to be considered as part of the new design.

There is a wastewater pipe that extends under the existing playground. A Works Over permit will be required for construction.



STANLEY BAY PARK PLAYSPACE PLAYGROUND SURVEY

A playspace network analysis undertaken for the Devonport–Takapuna Local Board area assessed the existing play provision at Stanley Bay Park and its relationship to nearby parks. The study considered age group coverage, play value attributes and activity categories to identify gaps and opportunities within the wider play network.

The existing playspace currently provides core play experiences such as swinging, climbing and sliding. However, gaps were identified in several activity categories, particularly spinning/rocking and sound or musical play. These play types support coordination, sensory engagement and social interaction, and are important in creating a well-rounded play environment.

Stanley Bay Park currently caters primarily to early childhood and younger age groups (approximately 1–9 years). While census data indicates a strong and growing population of younger children, the surrounding play network already provides a range of junior-focused play opportunities. Nearby spaces, such as Melrose Reserve, offer well-established provision for younger age groups.

In contrast, census data from 2023 also highlights a significant proportion of children aged 5–19 within the local catchment. As this group matures, there is an increasing need for more challenging, higher-risk play experiences that support older children and early teens.

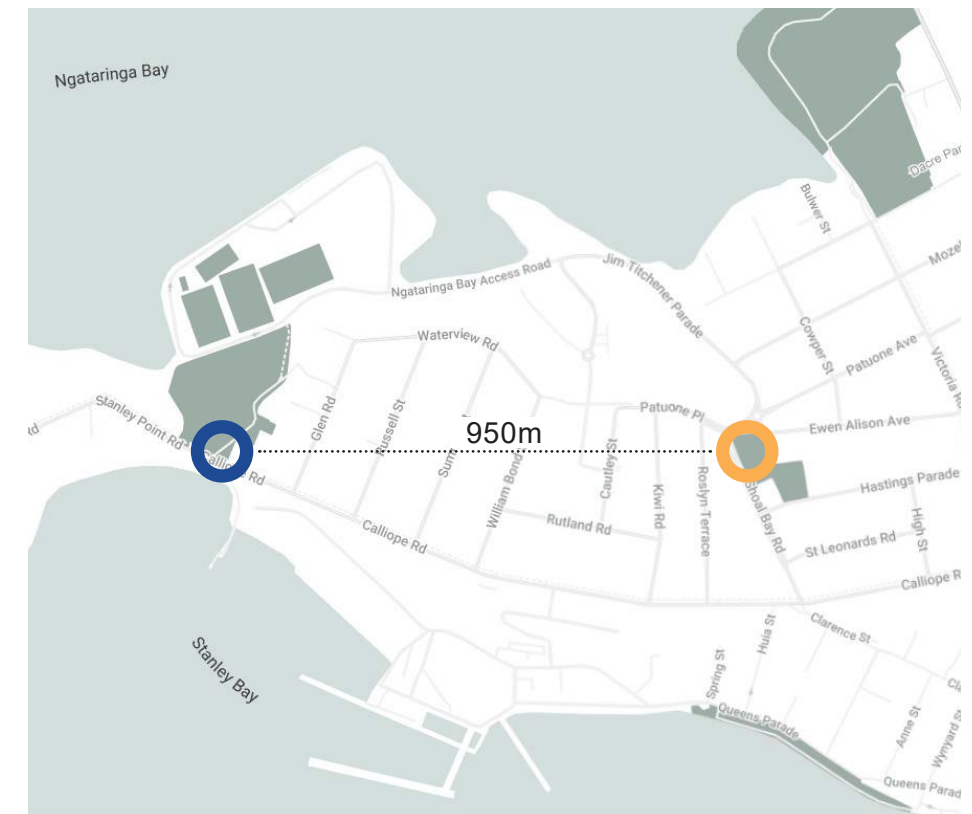
Within this context, Stanley Bay Park presents an opportunity to complement the wider network by expanding its play offering beyond junior-focused activities. This includes exploring more adventurous and higher-risk play elements that encourage physical challenge, independence and social interaction for older users.

The existing playspace was assessed as having moderate play value, largely due to ageing equipment and limited diversity of play experiences. The analysis recommends that future renewal focus on increasing play value through a broader range of activities and more engaging, self-directed play opportunities.

In particular, future upgrades should aim to:

- introduce spinning or rocking play elements
- incorporate sound or sensory play opportunities
- provide more challenging and higher-risk play for older children
- encourage collaborative and social play experiences
- support imaginative and self-directed play

Responding to these gaps will help position Stanley Bay Park as a more balanced and complementary playspace within the local network, better supporting a wider range of ages and play preferences.



Top Image:

Google maps streetview of the playground in Melrose Reserve. Showing the provisions for junior play

Bottom Image:

Map of proximity between Melrose Reserve (Orange) and Stanley Bay Reserve Playspace (Blue)

STANLEY BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL CONSULTATION

To support the development of the Stanley Bay Park playspace concept design, targeted engagement was undertaken with local school students to better understand how local children use the park and what types of play experiences they would like to see in the future.

As Stanley Bay Primary School is located within close proximity to the reserve and forms part of the local community catchment, an in-person engagement session was held with students to capture their perspectives and ideas.

STANLEY BAY PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Location: Stanley Bay Primary School
Date: Tuesday 18 November 2025
Participants: 30 students (25 Year 4 students and 5 Year 6 students)

The engagement session was facilitated by the design team and ran for approximately one hour. Students were split into two groups and participated in a series of interactive activities designed to encourage creative thinking about play.

The session began with a short introduction to the project and a discussion about Stanley Bay Park, including aerial images and photographs of the existing playspace. Students were asked about their familiarity with the park, how they typically access it, and what they currently enjoy about using the space.

Students were then invited to explore different types of play experiences through a series of inspiration images representing activities such as climbing, balancing, sliding, spinning and nature-based play. Students were asked to identify their favourite types of play and discuss why they enjoyed them.

The final activity encouraged students to develop their own play ideas. Working in small groups, students used sticky notes and drawings to show what they would most like to see included in a future playground at Stanley Bay Park.

KEY THEMES FROM STUDENT FEEDBACK

Overall, the students responded enthusiastically and generated a wide range of creative ideas. Several strong themes emerged across both groups.

Climbing and Adventure Play

Climbing activities were consistently identified as a favourite play experience. Students expressed interest in challenging climbing structures that allowed them to stretch, climb high and test their abilities. Net climbing structures, rope elements and obstacle-style play were commonly suggested.

Students also expressed interest in taller play structures that incorporated slides, climbing and lookout platforms.

Spinning and Movement Play

Spinning elements were particularly popular, with many students mentioning the enjoyment of fast spinning equipment. Several students asked for spinning or rotating play elements.

Sliding and Towers

Slides were also highly popular, particularly larger slides connected to taller structures or towers. Ideas included long slides, spiral slides and slides integrated into climbing structures.

Balancing and Nature Play

Some students expressed interest in natural play experiences, including balancing logs, stepping stones and pathways through longer planted areas. These types of elements were described as fun challenges that encourage exploration and imagination.

Flying Fox / Fast Play

A flying fox was one of the most frequently requested pieces of play equipment. Students described the experience as fast, exciting and fun. Although not feasible in the budget and location, this is something that could be looked into in the future using the surrounding space within the wider reserve.



DESIGN ETHOS

Stanley Bay Park is a well-used neighbourhood open space that supports informal recreation and play within the wider park and sports field setting. The playspace renewal provides an opportunity to improve the quality and diversity of play experiences while retaining valued elements of the existing playground.

Engagement with students from Stanley Bay Primary School highlighted strong interest in active and adventurous play, particularly climbing, sliding and spinning activities. These preferences have helped guide the direction of the concept design.

A key feature of the existing playground is the interactive “playable edge” that encourages children to move around the perimeter while completing small physical challenges. The concept design looks to retain and build upon this idea, introducing a central spinning element that acts as a playful way to “roll the dice” and determine the next movement challenge.

Improving accessibility is also an important part of the renewal. Strategic wetpour surfacing will provide accessible connections to key play elements, including an accessible spinner and a basket swing, supporting inclusive play for a wider range of users.

Across the concept options, climbing, sliding and spinning play experiences are arranged to encourage movement, exploration and social play within the park setting.

KEY PRINCIPLES

- Replace and enhance the playable edges to the playground in durable natural materials
- Introduce spinning as a central interactive play element
- Provide diverse climbing, sliding and movement play
- Retain and reuse existing swings
- Improve accessibility through targeted wetpour surfacing

Image:
Collage of design ideas and sketches created by local children during the engagement session with Stanley Bay Primary School



CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 1



PRECEDENT IMAGERY - OPTION 1

OPTION 1 KEY EQUIPMENT (COLOURS SHOWN ARE INDICATIVE ONLY)



ALL OPTIONS EQUIPMENT



CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 2



PRECEDENT IMAGERY - OPTION 2

OPTION 2 KEY EQUIPMENT (COLOURS SHOWN ARE INDICATIVE ONLY)



ALL OPTIONS EQUIPMENT



CONCEPT PLAN - OPTION 3



PRECEDENT IMAGERY - OPTION 3

OPTION 3 KEY EQUIPMENT (COLOURS SHOWN ARE INDICATIVE ONLY)



ALL OPTIONS EQUIPMENT



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