

Mr Chairman and Councillors, thank you for this chance to speak to you about the proposed changes to Mackey Park.

I'm sure all the local residents welcome the funds obtained from the Federal Government.

It may come as a surprise to Councillors that there was an early proposal to continue Premier Street straight across Mackey Park to what is now the exit of the current pathway to Richardson Crescent. In fact that is how Premier Street is shown in this copy of the 1934 edition of Gregory's Street Directory.

The proposed removal of the central pathway is clearly the main issue in the residents' feedback, but the Council Officers' report attempts to wish the issue away. The report discounts each one of the resident objections, making the consultation process a farce. The report is trying to shoe-horn too much into one small space, four football fields plus a cricket oval and a circuit track.

Our well-used pedestrian path is to be sacrificed despite having served us well for many decades. The two alternatives are unsatisfactory, the river path being dark at night and providing the danger of collision with bicycles. The roadside path involves a steepish hill in both directions, and goes alongside busy roads. The timings for the alternative routes shown in the report are optimistic, particularly for older folk and for anybody hurrying for a train.

The current design indicates space is available between the two large football fields. Why can't a new masterplan be prepared that retains a path between these two fields?

Finally – and most importantly, this process is about consultation, so why not listen to residents and change the plan, instead of just coming back and justifying the existing plan and downplaying each of the residents' objections.

In short, Councillors – please save our pathway!