

The Manager, Land and Property,
City of Marion,
PO Box 21,
OAKLANDS PARK 5046

RE PROPOSED REVOCATION AND DISPOSAL OF COMMUNITY LAND:
LOT 189 MCCONNELL AVENUE, MARINO
(McCONNELL AVENUE RESERVE WEST, MARINO)

Please find attached my submission regarding the proposed revocation and disposal of community land, namely Lot 189 McConnell Avenue, Marino (McConnell Avenue Reserve West, Marino)

I welcome the opportunity to respond to the Council's intended proposal, however I oppose the proposed revocation and disposal of this parcel of community land.

It is evident that it has been the Council's neglect of McConnell reserve that has bought on this unpopular and unwanted proposal. Those in Council charged with the upkeep of McConnell reserve over many years have been negligent so as to allow it to be so degraded that the Council now finds it easy pickings to dispose of.

I have become acutely aware around the community that Marion Council is badly on the nose over this issue.

The reasons for my opposition to the proposed sale of the western portion are:

- the potential impact on my property
- it ignores the community's wish for the reserve to be retained as a whole and upgraded. To have the reserve severed in half strongly contravenes the community's wishes
- it contradicts in its entirety the important roles played by open public land for communities recognised by Marion Council itself
- it ignores many South Australian government authorities and countless evidenced research that are working hard to conserve and extend valuable open land for community use.

The proposal is short sighted in the extreme. The proposal robs the community of a much loved reserve and contradicts the Council's own manifesto Open Space Plan 2018-2028:

Access to local parks that provide opportunities for play, recreational fitness activities and non-organised sport will be key design elements to create liveable communities.

Instead, this is an excellent opportunity for the Council to showcase McConnell reserve, both eastern and western portions, to exemplify the Council's own objectives, and to show, namely:

- the importance of open space plays for the local and wider community as a place to come together to socialise
- the well documented benefits that open space has for residents' health and well being
- environmental sustainability – to address the City of Marino's poor green cover problem, among others
- **and importantly for elected representatives on the Council to respond to the wishes of their community.**

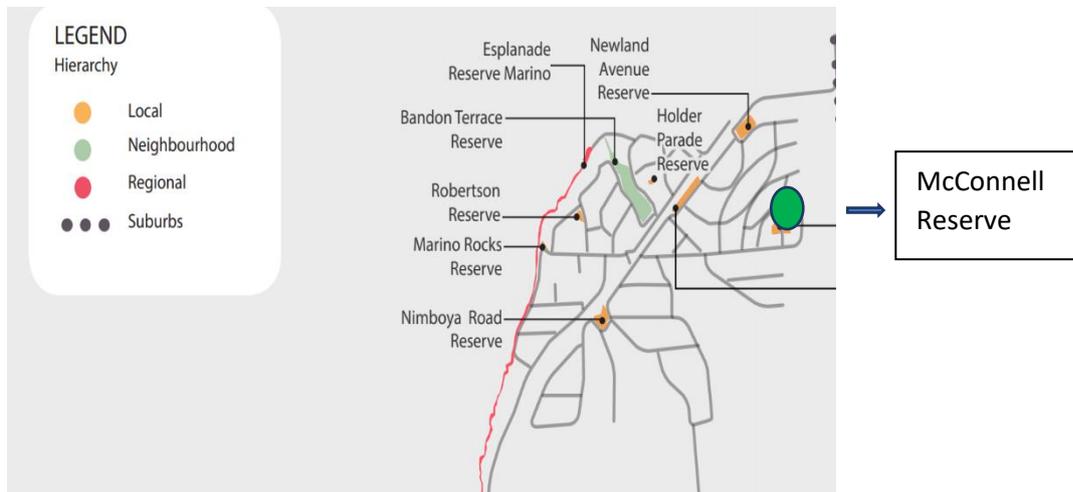
By contrast, I am also writing a submission to the Northern Beaches Council (NBC) in Sydney – having been invited by the NBC as a long-term resident prior to my move to Adelaide. My submission supports NBC’s proposal to **demolish a large house**, purchased by the Council for \$4 million, **in order to extend a small park**.

NBC’s consultation process has been exemplary, for example, the NBC asks residents *what areas [they] enjoy and what could make their open spaces even better*. And then acts on feedback. A great example of best practice.

This is an opportune time for Marion Council to pose the same question in relation to McConnell reserve and to act on the community’s wishes.

The NBC proposal makes no claims that there is an overabundance of parks or reserves in the area, unlike the spurious claim regarding the western portion of McConnell reserve in the Marion Council proposal. Instead, the park in question forms a natural corridor to the 156 hectares of national park on North Head on Sydney harbour.

Currently, there are no such natural corridors in Marion, instead pin pricks of parks.



Ref: City of Marion [Open Space Plan 2018-2028](#) Coastal Ward Open Space Snapshot January 2020 p.7

Discussing the proposal with neighbours in Marino, there’s no shortage of suggestions for use of the western portion of the reserve, they include: a dog park, facilities for the many cyclists who stop at the park, play equipment for older children (the lack of which is much complained about in the area), mixed activities for different generations (grandparents now providing the majority of childcare in Australia), nature playground (very popular), destination site for events and celebrations, a small market.

All agree McConnell reserve needs a toilet.

If further information regarding this submission is required, please contact me.

Regards,

Barbara Wake PhD AM
3 Short Street
Marino 5049

Background:

I bought my property immediately adjacent to the western portion of McConnell reserve two years ago. I consider the reserve in its entirety as *a pièce de résistance*. To have open public land at my back gate and the opportunity to shoot hoops and play on the reserve with my granddaughters and their friends is extremely enjoyable.

I was only aware of Marion Council's intentions regarding the western portion of McConnell reserve by a brochure in my letter box.

To say I was shocked at the proposal and the poor consultation is an understatement.

A coloured brochure and a notice of intention by the Council placed on the western portion of the reserve strongly suggests that the disposal of the land is *a fait accompli*

1. Personal opposition to the proposal

The proposal flies in the face of evidenced research which recognises the vital role that open space plays in the health and well-being of the whole community, particularly children as in my case and for many families in the area:

Contact with nature is thought to play a crucial role in the brain development of children (Dadvand, Nieuwenhuijsen et al. 2015).

While, exposure to outdoor greenness at home has been associated with improved wellbeing in children (Wells 2000), and particularly for girls, green space immediately outside the home is associated with increased self-discipline (Taylor, Kuo et al. 2002)

Ref: cited in "Better Greener", SA Health, Government of South Australia, 23 Sept 2020

My other objections to the possible sale of the reserve, being community land, have to do with the impact on my quality of life, including:

- **a loss of privacy.** A residence/s on the western portion of McConnell reserve would have clear sight into my bathroom and a bedroom which have windows facing the reserve
- **the water run-off from the reserve** through my property in winter is significant. I have sandbags to stall the water flow. It can only be imagined what it would be with impermeable surfaces. An onsite storm water detention system will be required to reduce storm water discharge
- Boral dust is already a significant problem. Having a building site so close to my home will bring **heat due to more infill, more unwanted dust, noise and potential damage** to property etc.

2. The proposal ignores the community's wish for both sides of the reserve to be retained and upgraded

I am impressed how much the entire reserve means to the community. The desire by the devoted group of residents wanting to retain the reserve in its entirety is evidenced by Travis Smith, spokesperson for the Friends of McConnell (2020):

- *Our vision is to combine the 2 halves and make it a much more usable and attractive space for all the community*

McConnell reserve has been an excellent focal point for social interaction over many years. Until covid, the Friends of McConnell had planned the Marino Masters as a fun day for the community. I understand they have had many get-togethers and events in the reserve over the years eg Christmas bbqs etc.

Long term residents tell of belonging to the tennis club located on the reserve and their kids playing in netball competitions. One neighbour told me his daughter began her netball career at the reserve eventually going on to represent the State.

Why has the Council allowed this reserve to be so downgraded that these valuable activities have been allowed to disappear? And now claim the western portion is *underutilised*.

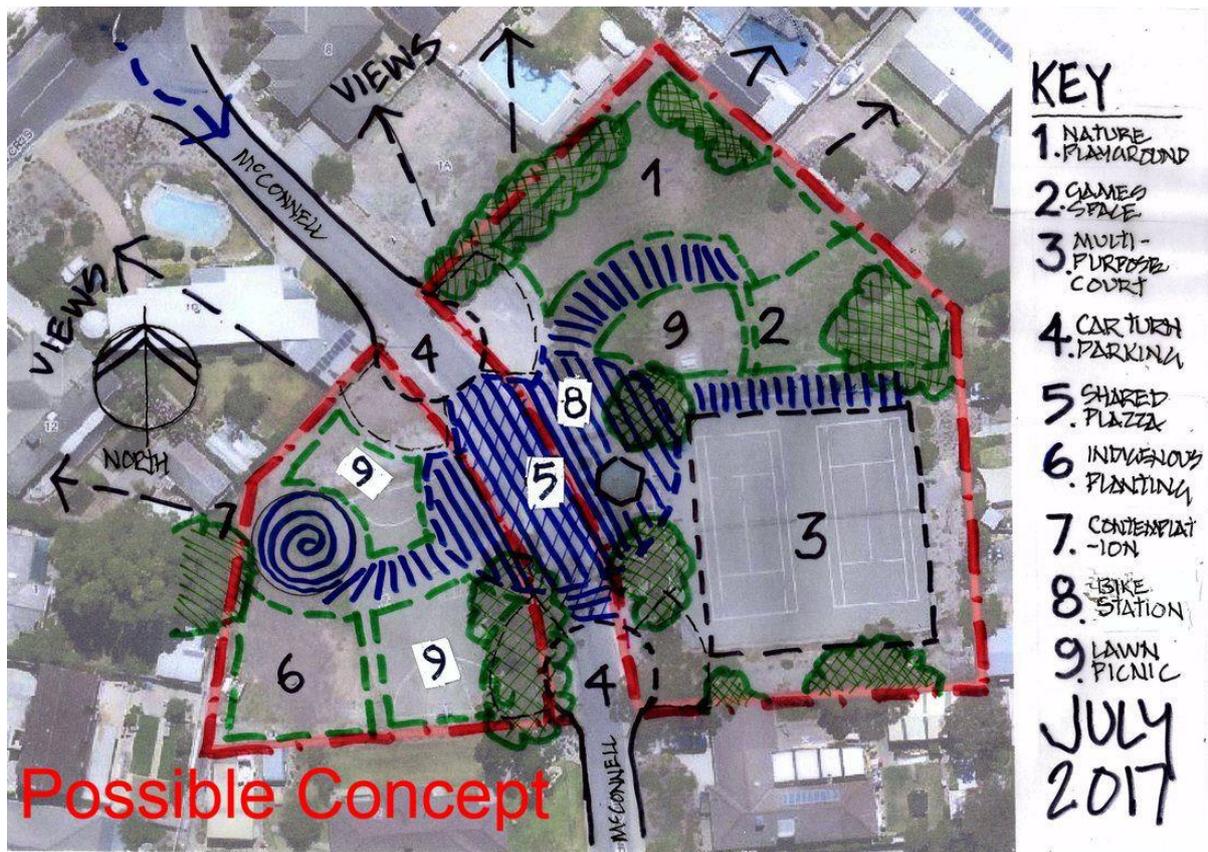
Again the proposal contradicts the Council's own objectives in relation to partnership projects: Open Space Plan 2018-2028 p.2

- Focus Area: Partnership Projects
- Objectives: Develop partnerships to support the delivery of open spaces to maximise community outcomes

The desire to work with Council in the upgrade of the whole reserve is a strongly held view in the community, as Travis Smith (2020) points out:

- *We would like to work collaboratively with Council and the wider community on achieving this.*

Why has the proposed vision of McConnell reserve by the Friends of McConnell not been considered by Council? Yet it is what the community wants!



3. The proposal ignores the important roles played by open public land for social cohesion, health and wellbeing recognised by SA government authorities and evidenced research

To dispose of land classified as Community Land beggers belief considering the proposal flies in the face of the Council's own Open Space Program Planning p. 5 :

The Open Space Plan provides an eight year plan of works to ensure that the City of Marion plans, manages and develops a variety of open space to improve sustainable environmental outcomes and our community's individual and collective health and wellbeing.

The proposal also ignores overwhelming evidence of the importance of open space recognised by many South Australian government authorities as well as evidenced research in relation to:

- social cohesion, eg by SA Health among others :

For example, presence and ease of access to outdoor green space within neighbourhoods has been associated with an increased sense of community (Kearney 2006, Sugiyama, Leslie et al. 2008, Francis, Giles-Corti et al. 2012) and are considered inclusive spaces that promote social interactions (Peters, Elands et al. 2010).

Ref: cited in Better Greener SA Health, Government of South Australia, 23 Sept 2020

- improved physical and mental health eg by MLC Minister for Health and Wellbeing & David Speirs MP Minister for Environment and Water:

Green spaces are critical for providing healthy places for people, wildlife, trees and plants. They provide many advantages including: improved physical and mental health and wellbeing, improved community and social connectedness, opportunities for sport and recreation activities ...

“Creating Greener Places for Healthy and Sustainable Communities Ideas for Quality Green Public Space” Govt of South Australia & Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (2019)

- reducing the incidence of chronic disease, and in mental health by reducing stress and anxiety among other conditions by evidenced research:

The scientific evidence base has strengthened substantially ... building upon unequivocal evidence of the physical, mental and social health and well being benefits of spending time in nature.

Healthy Parks Healthy People South Australia, Action Plan 2020-2022, Government of South Australia, p.5

4.The need for more open space for future generations, not less

The need for more open space is highlighted by David Bagshaw President of the 5049 Coastal Community Association who states:

The diversity of our population and number of young families is increasing in the area, particularly as the new Seacliff Park Development is now proceeding; there will be potentially 600 more homes in our suburb as well as the impact of the new planning and design code allowing more subdivisions.

Our population could double in the next 10-15 years, and the new developments will only provide the minimum space so will not compensate for our current (open space) under-provision.

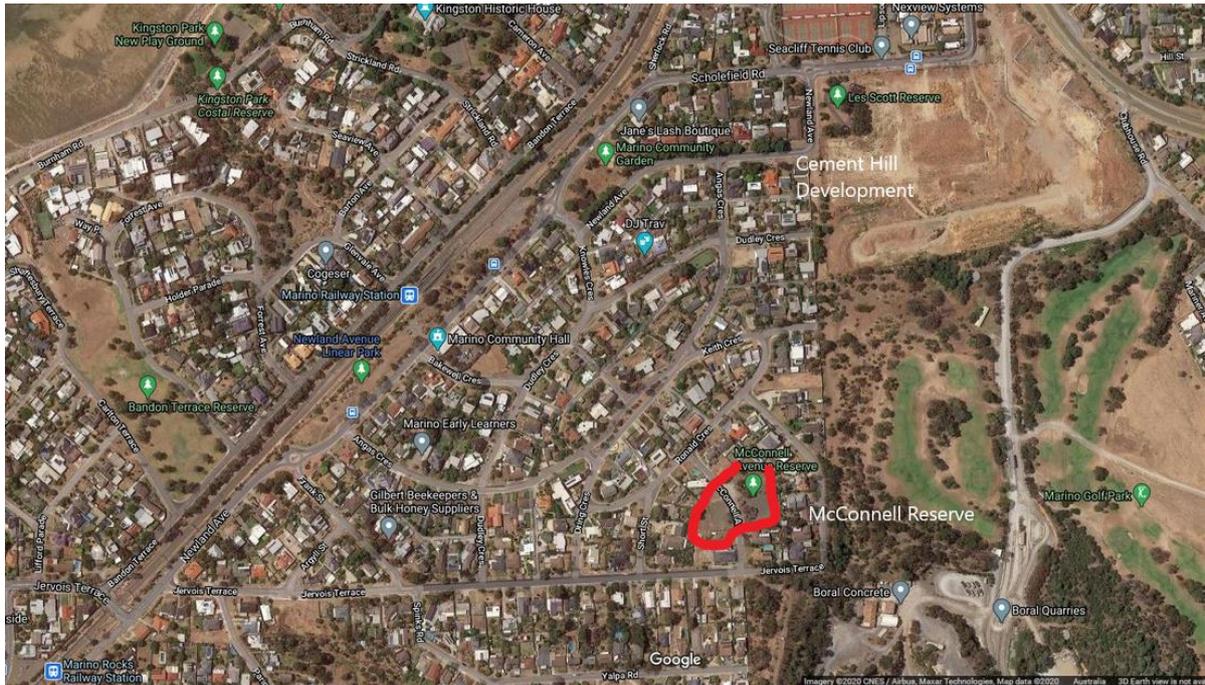
Council appear not to have taken this into account in their deliberations, or if they have they haven't shared it with us.

5.Environmental sustainability – the proposal fails to address the City of Marino’s poor green cover problem, among others

The proposal contradicts the Council’s own intentions to achieve environmental sustainability set out in Open Space Plan 2018-2028 p. 4:

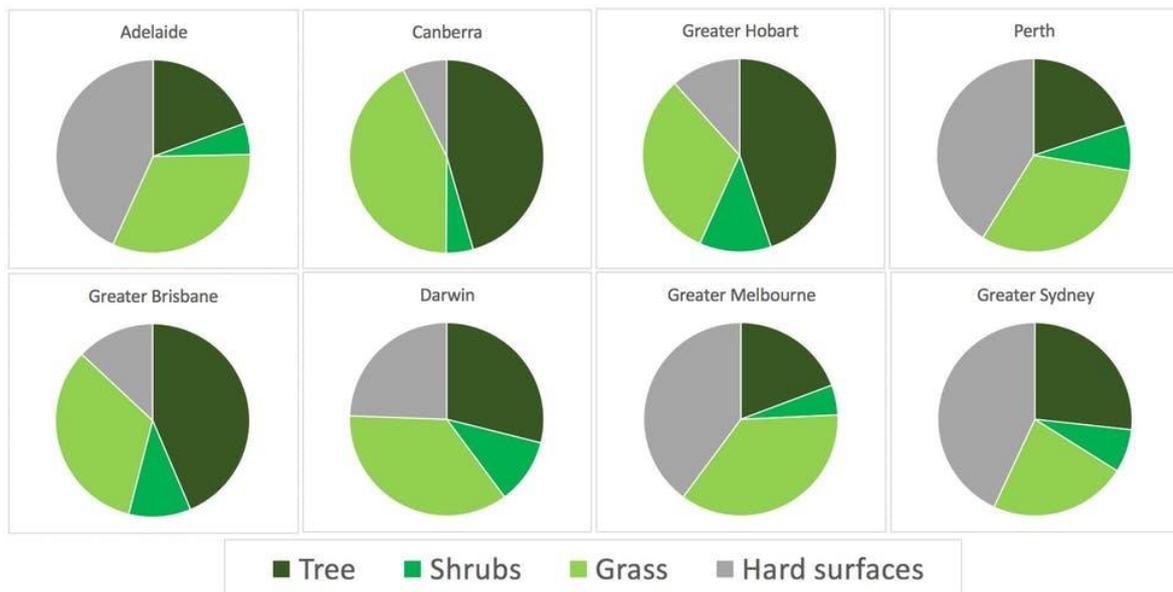
SUSTAINABILITY 1. Design principles for open space will consider environmentally sustainable principles and City of Marion policies and programs relating to the environment.

More infill and impermeable surfaces mean increased heat. To build on McConnell reserve is a lost opportunity to address the significant problem, confirmed in scientific research, that the City of Marion rates poorly in terms of green cover evident in the following photo. The rationale in this proposal to reduce even more open space is unfathomable.



The driest state in the driest continent ...

Adelaide has the poorest green cover per capita, with Sydney.



Ref: [Amati, M et al., We're investing heavily in urban greening, so how are our cities doing?](#)
CSIROscope 27 September 2017

MARION HAS



10.8%

canopy
(typically over 3m)

⊖ **DOWN -0.3%**
since 2016



6.2%

shrub
(typically below 3m)

⊕ **UP 1.1%**
since 2016



36.3%

grass
and bare ground

⊖ **DOWN -1.9%**
since 2016



46.7%

grey
(hard surface, e.g.
pavement, roads and roofs)

⊕ **UP 1.1%**
since 2016

← **Your green cover** →

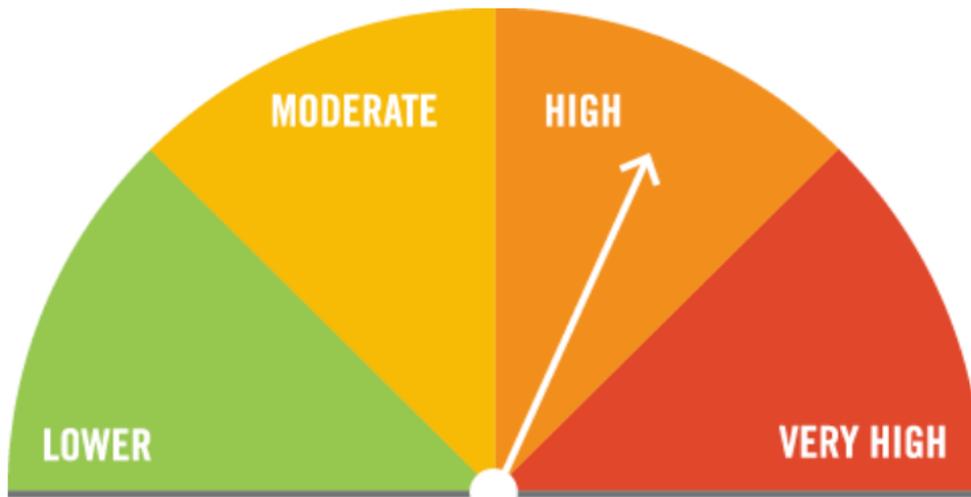
← **Your green space** →

Ref: Hurley, J., et al. (2020) *Where will all the trees be? - an assessment of urban forest cover and management for Australian cities*, RMIT University, Melbourne and Greener Spaces Better Places.

This means there is a

HIGH

challenge rating for **Marion** in maintaining and growing future green cover



Ref: Hurley, J., et al. (2020) *Where will all the trees be? - an assessment of urban forest cover and management for Australian cities*, RMIT University, Melbourne and Greener Spaces Better Places.

Marino needs more open green space for the community's use, not more urban infill and impermeable surfaces!

References

Amati, M., Saunders, A., Boruff, A., Devereux, D., Phelan, K., Caccetta, P., We're investing heavily in urban greening, so how are our cities doing?" CSIROScope 27 September 2017

City of Marion Open Space Plan 2018-2028

5049/FoMcC submission to Messenger, November 2020

Govt of South Australia & Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (2019) *Creating Greener Places for Healthy and Sustainable Communities Ideas for Quality Green Public Space*"

Government of South Australia, *Healthy Parks Healthy People South Australia, Action Plan 2020-2022*

Government of South Australia, *Better Greener SA Health*, 23 Sept 2020

Hurley, J., Amati, M., Deilami, K., Caffin, M., Stanford, H., Azizmohammad, S. (2020) *Where will all the trees be? - an assessment of urban forest cover and management for Australian cities*,

prepared for Hort Innovation by the Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University, Melbourne
and Greener Spaces Better Places

www.5049coastalcommunity.com/mcconnell-reserve--open-space.html