

# Cr Tracy Davis

Civic Cabinet Chair for Environment, Parks and Sustainability



Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner

29 September 2021

Ms Terri Butler MP  
Member for Griffith  
PO Box 737  
COORPAROO QLD 4151

Dear Ms Butler

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the former East Brisbane Bowls Club building, which is currently tenanted by Backbone Youth Arts. The Lord Mayor referred your enquiry to me as Civic Cabinet Chair for Environment, Parks and Sustainability to provide a response.

As part of Council's plans to improve inner city parks and their useability for the community, Council has been undertaking consultation on numerous parks in recent years, prior to funding improvements. Funding was secured from Brisbane City Council for community consultation to develop a vision and concept plan for this heritage listed park.

The draft plan delivers an iconic park destination back to the community with improved gardens and pathways, an upgraded playground and amenities, better lighting, a review of car parking, and reinstating a historical bandstand or rotunda.

Initial consultation was held from December 2020 to February 2021, with feedback from more than 560 residents. One comment which was often made in the survey and on-site information stalls was that the former bowls club buildings and former bowling greens may not be the best use of space in the park, so the draft plan proposes to transform these areas into additional greenspace. This space has not been used for its original bowling purposes for more than a decade now, and many people have raised concerns about the state of the building and also concerns around anti-social behaviour at the bottom of the building, not far from the children's playground (not related to the current tenant).

I can confirm that Council has no intention for the space to be converted into a development site.

The former East Brisbane Bowls Club vacated the Mowbray Park building over ten years ago. Since 2017, Council has provided a lease to Backbone Youth Arts to operate from this facility which is due to expire in November. This is a somewhat dated building which was never intended as a purpose-built arts facility.

Prior to putting this concept plan out to the public for consultation, Council met with Backbone Youth Arts to brief them on the community feedback and Council's intention to propose the removal of the building. Council also highlighted the value we place on the work the organisation does and, as part of the development of the concept plan, a new home for Backbone Youth Arts was a high priority consideration.

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This led to Council offering Backbone Youth Arts a new purpose-built arts facility which Council recently received as part of the redevelopment of the former Seven Hills TAFE site, about 4 kilometres from their current location. This site has a theatrette, kitchen and café space, outdoor amphitheatre and rehearsal spaces, meetings rooms and ample carparking.

Council and Backbone Youth Arts have had productive discussions about new premises, which has not been widely reflected in much of the commentary on this project.

Consultation on the Draft Concept Plan has now closed. Council will review the information received and make a decision about the future use of the site.

Thank you for contacting the Lord Mayor.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tracy Davis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Councillor Tracy Davis

**CIVIC CABINET CHAIR FOR ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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