



**Item 7.1 - Petition – Request to Retain the Temporary Play Equipment erected in Murchison Street, St Kilda East**

A change.org Petition containing 120 signatures, was received from a resident of St Kilda East.

**The Petition states the following: -**

*I am submitting this petition for consideration in the hope that the City of Port Phillip will support the community's request to retain the temporary play equipment erected in Murchison Street St Kilda East.*

*On Friday the 3rd July 2020, an official from the Port Phillip City Council attended my property to request the removal of the temporary play equipment (a swing, climbing ladder and rope hanging from the tree on the nature strip. He informed me that an anonymous complaint had been made about the equipment and that council has to act on these complaints. Furthermore, he explained the risks and liability involved should injury occur. I informed my fellow neighbours of this incident via our Murchison Street Whatsapp group and all the responses I received conveyed their disappointment and sadness about the shared play equipment having to be removed.*

*On Monday the 6th July 2020, I started a petition on the Change.org website ( [change.org/savetheswing](https://change.org/savetheswing)) called "Retain a sense of family and community through locally led initiatives". I shared the petition with you, Mayor Voss, as well as the three Canal Ward Councillors. I also shared the petition on the Murchison Street Whatsapp and email groups, as this directly impacts them too, and we are a close-knit street of neighbours who are passionate about the community in which we live.*

*Within a few hours my petition received a multitude of signatures and currently, 18 days after it started, it has 120 signatures. I have closed the petition today, the 24th July, in line with council requirements for lodging an online petition.*

*The request to retain these community led initiatives is made obvious to me especially during the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent Stage 3 lockdowns we are currently experiencing, as the movements of our children have been so significantly restricted. With no outlet for their abundant energy, it is impacting on their health and mental well-being, as well as that of their parents. These are the main reasons why I believe this proposal is important to the community:*

- *The play structures have brought a real sense of community and joy to both the residents on the street as well as community members who pass by.*
- *The City of Port Phillip (hereon referred to as CoPP) is always promoting a sense of place and community and beautiful local initiatives such as these have increased personal and community well-being during the COVID-19 period. Due to the pandemic, children's movements and play have been so limited, and community structures such as these have brought a sense of lightness and joy to the heaviness and anxiety that occupies our everyday. It is so important for children to get out into the fresh air and be able to use their bodies and minds through physical play. In a time of excessive media and technology, we should be inspiring our children to find a*

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*lifelong love of movement. Stripping children of joy, healthy play, movement and community feels very un-Australian. The world needs all the joy and fun it can mustbr at the moment and the request to have the structures removed seems a bit counterintuitive to the Council's community building values.*

- *The children on the street who play on and enjoy these community initiatives range in age from 9 months old to 13 years old. As such, parental supervision and child safety is of utmost importance and is the one thing that is upheld when children are using the equipment.*
- *Prior to moving to Murchison Street we lived in Middle Park for five years and can recall at least five swing sets on the nature strips in the community. They were shared and enjoyed by all and integrated the community further by creating a sense of family and sharing, which in itself is a valuable lesson for children in their developing years. The immense delight it brought to those who used them made the walks in the neighbourhood that much more pleasurable and allowed greater community engagement, as we got to know our neighbours better, and improved mental wellbeing for both parents and children alike.*

*We urge you to reconsider your request to have the play equipment removed and to reflect on the benefits and positive impact such community initiatives have on us all.*

*We request that the structures and play equipment remain in place on the condition that the residents of Murchison Street tie up the equipment (swing, climbing ladder and climbing rope) when not in use, as has been seen at the front of various homes in the CoPP, as well as to erect a disclaimer notice stating, "Play at your own risk. The CoPP is not liable for injury or accidents that may occur on the equipment."*

*I have enclosed details of the petition and all the signatures and responses I have received. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this petition at a council meeting if you would like to do so. Please let me know if you would like me to attend a council meeting or require any more information or an update from the discussions on the subject within the Murchison Street and St Kilda East community.*

*Thank you for your attention and consideration of this petition and look forward to hearing your response in the future.*

## **OFFICER RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the petition and that officers provide a response at the next available Council Meeting.

**TRIM FILE NO:** F20/1

**ATTACHMENTS** Nil