

Bega District News Article – 13 March 2024

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\$2 million vision for Tura's multi-generational inclusive recreation area



By [James Parker](#)

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After 100 presentations and a nearly three year journey, an architect has been employed by the Pambula-Merimbula Lions Club to design a concept for an inclusive community recreation space in Tura Beach.

The project aimed to utilise the gravelled car park and grassed space at the base of Tura Beach Drive, to build an all-ability space that's fully accessible to the community and the varying demographics of residents as well as visitors.

Example of an all abilities playground in North Wollongong.

Jon Webb, vice-president of the [Lions Club of Pambula-Merimbula](#) and project manager, said he wanted the [Multi-generational Inclusive Recreation Area \(MIRA\)](#) to be a safe, free and inspiring outdoor community space where everyone could meet, connect and enjoy.

"It will be just as much for our seniors as it is for young families and will be designed for people of all abilities," he said.

"That's why it is so important to have a good user-centric design from the outset, [and] Fiona and her team will help us achieve this."



Members of the Lions Club of Pambula-Merimbula with architects Fiona Robbe and Rolfe Chrystal, and Graham Stubbs from Bendigo Community Bank. Picture by James Parker

If all goes well with the concept design process, Mr Webb said they planned to submit a Review Environmental Factors assessment, similar to a development application, for council consideration.

"If we get approvals, we will be seeking further grants and philanthropic donations as we anticipate the cost to be around \$2million," he said.

With more than 30 years of experience designing outdoor children's environments, public playgrounds, and play areas in schools, zoos, churches and museums, including [Ford Park in Merimbula](#), Fiona Robbé and her husband Rolfe Chrystal have begun sketching the concept for the MIRA project.



Lions club members stand around a barbecue and across the grass of an area being redesigned at Tura Beach. Picture by James Parker

"We see a space that would welcome everyone, and we see it straight away because it's a wonderful blank slate, you stand here and you wonder how you can make everyone happy by coming to this space," Ms Robbé said. "We really are in that pursuit of enjoyable experiences, but particularly for all ages and all abilities.

"Ultimately the carpark will always be over on that south end because that's where the road crossings are and where the access to the beach is. Flat spaces are needed for certain activities so we can start surmising there will be a big social gathering spot, and then there will be activities around it."



Jon Webb, Lyn Matthews, Graham Stubbs, Fiona Robbe, and Rolfe Chrystal.
Picture by James Parker

She said possibilities included a sensory walkway in the quieter natural spaces or swings, which need to be out of the main area because children don't always understand pendulums.

Using the traditional medium of A1 paper, her trusty 0.7mm automatic pencil, and tracing paper over the survey plan that provided site constraints with pipes, storm water and electricity, Ms Robbé estimated the concept drawing would be quite a quick process taking approximately six weeks. She stated consultations with community groups, advisory committees, disability providers, and schools would take the most amount of time as they discuss options.

The project had been made possible thanks to consulting surveyors Caddey Searl and Jarman.

Grants from Bendigo Community Bank of Pambula, Bega and Bombala, and the FRRR through ANZ's Seeds of Renewal Program, and fundraising through the Lions Club of Pambula-Merimbula, have allowed the concept design process to start.