

Kid and Youth friendly Karamea - School Focus Group Write Up

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Summary

Karamea Community Incorporated's Community Coordinator, Karamea Area School and Karamea Youth Club leader ran a school and youth consultation in Karamea to understand what children and young people value, dislike, and want improved in local play and hangout spaces.

Who was consulted: A mixed-age school focus group of 14 students (Years 1–10) plus informal chats with youth aged 12–18.

What kids value now: Popular places at school included the swimming pool, backfield, gym, playgrounds. Outside school were RSA grounds, river areas, shops, and other outdoor spots that allow play, climbing, socialising, and shelter.

Main problems raised: The skate ramp was widely seen as poor and should be removed or replaced; other concerns included limited options for older students, lost zip lines/flying foxes, unsafe or unpleasant areas, and lack of appealing shared spaces.

Top ideas for improvement: Strong interest in adventurous, active, and social options such as a multi-use riding/skating track, waterslide, zip line, obstacle course, climbing features, better playgrounds, fitness equipment, and a workshop/maker space.

Broader takeaway: Young people want both more challenge and more places to relax, with ideas ranging from tracks and climbing structures to hammocks, calm rooms, better art/library spaces, and welcoming community hangout areas.

Recommended next steps: Share findings, build support for removing the old skate ramp, trial lower-cost quick wins to make Tamariki friendly public spaces, explore bigger capital projects, form a community working group, and investigate funding.

Purpose and format:

The purpose of the discussions was to get a sample of the voice of tamariki and rangatahi in Karamea area. We wanted to know:

- what they value around here when it comes to play, public places and activities outside of school,
- what they don't like, and
- what ideas they have for making it better

The results of the discussions would be shared with Karamea Area School (KAS) staff, the Youth worker (LK) and the Karamea Community Coordinator (LS).

Karamea Community Inc. (KCI) would use the results to inform its work in the community including finding common ground for new initiatives and helping gather the resources to do them (fundraising, volunteering etc).

All results were anonymised.

The format was

- A mixed age group of students at the school in a supervised “focus group” type session
- Informal chats with youth group members

School Focus Group

A session was held on 17 Feb with 14 Tamariki of mixed age - Years 1-10 (5 year olds to 14 year olds)- attending.



Students participating - dotting and writing for themselves.



All of the recorded results

- Anything you don't like? Places? (1 red dot)
- Follow up questions about why you don't like places? (Note down reasons)

Cat poo in the sand

The fact that seniors cannot play in the front playgrounds

The removed zip line

Formal school

Common room

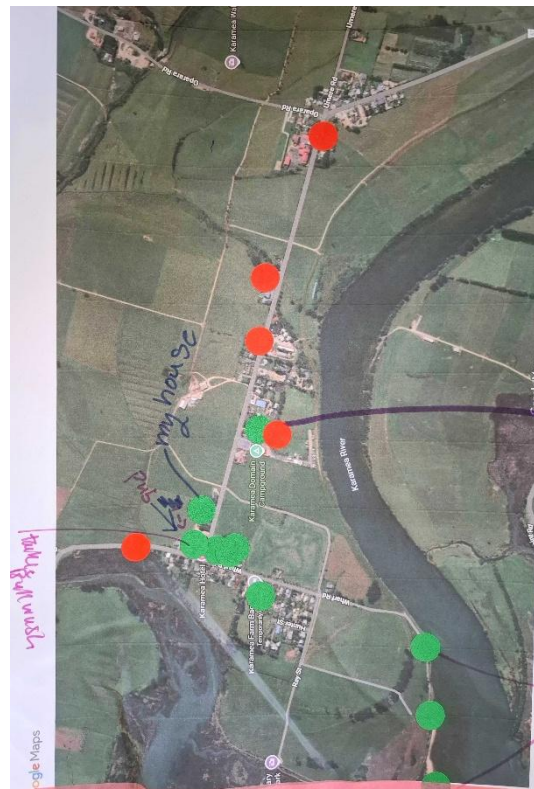
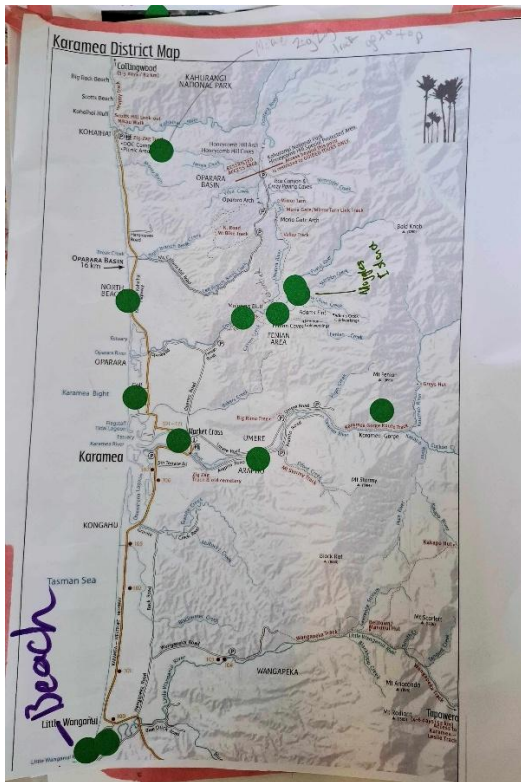
- If you had a magic wand and could put something new here to play or hang out what would it be?
- (Post it notes for drawings or words to place on map)

Magic wand list - school	
idea	Approx. freq of mention
Pump Track, Motorbike track, scooter track, skate park	
waterslide	
zip line (big, long) tree top, flying fox	
Tree house	
trampoline	
Obstacle course	
Better playground – slide, seesaw, swings, bars to swing on, round about	
Hammock	
Bigger Art room /for all	
Calming room /wood	
Bigger pool	
Make library bigger/better	
Climbing wall	
Platforms	
Water park with fountains	
Fitness equipment	
tightrope	

Wider Karamea

Outside of School

- Where are your favourite places to play/hang out? (three green dots each to place on map)



Favourite places now- wider Karamea	
place	qualities
Swimming pool llllll	
RSA grounds llllll	Sitting, eating stuff from the shop, shelter from the rain
Karamea hotel llll	Near my house Area out back for bullrush
Fenian area- caves, walkway llll	Having had a good experience there – naming places after it e.g. maggles island
Karamea river near domain and fishing rocks area lll	fishing
Shops lll	
Shopping mall area ll	Tables and seats and steps to hang out on
Beach at little Wanganui ll	
Skateramp ll	
Outside music room	
Kohaihai	
North beach	
Flagstaff	
Market cross	
Arapito	
Karamea gorge route track	

- Follow up questions about why places are good for them? (Note down reasons)
- Anything you don't like? Places? (1 red dot) Follow up questions about why you don't like places? (Note down reasons)

Skate park – its no good

School

Back of shops

Roads

Kohaihi zig zag track should go to the top

(some red dots on highway “67” as a joke about six seven)

- If you had a magic wand and could put something new here to play or hang out or an out of school activity - what would it be?
- (Post it notes for drawings or words to place on map)

Magic wand list - wider Karamea	
idea	Approx. freq of mention
Skate Park - re do	III
Outdoor fitness machines, outdoor gym	III
Obstacle course	II
Tree top walkway/high ropes	II
Small park near the shops – swing, roundabout, platforms, monkey bars	
Rock climbing	
Community water balloon fights	
Scooter places	
Water slide	
Community tech room	
Trampoline park	
Movie theatre- big screen /outdoor and indoor	
Arcade with games, big couches and online games	
Amusement park with rides	
Comic shop	
Dog park	
A better playground	
Go carts	
Shops	
swing	
Zip line	

Prompted questions:

What do you think of the Skate ramp?

Broad majority opinion that it is no good and that **it should be taken down** (and a new thing be built)

What if any of this lot (named pictures) of ideas for activities would you like? (you have 5 dots to spend)

Activities shown in order of number of dots



Long undulating “detour“ multi use sealed track **15 dots**



Community workshop/maker space **11 dots** (one student put all their dots on this)



Nature Play -Wooden traversing/balance **10 dots**



Large rope climbing frame **9 dots**



Pop up scaffolding swing/hammock **6 dots**



Orienteering **5 dots**





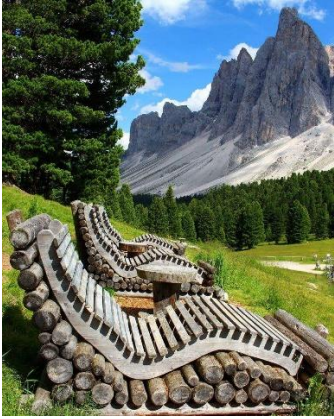
Junk free-play making marble-runs and go-carts -**3 dots**



Sound play installation **3 dots**



Pallet park – loose play **3 dots**



Hang out chairs/fire pit **3 dots**



Outdoor chalk play spaces **2 dots**



- Beach volley ball **2 dots**

Informal Youth Group Chats

Further informal chats were held with members of the Youth Group – age 12 – 18. The consensus again was to pull down the skate ramp but still have something cool there to hang out on/under - a dry space was mentioned - they usually use the skate ramp to sit underneath when it's raining.

Discussion

The Tamariki were engaged and were able to identify what they liked and didn't like. They had lots of ideas for new places and activities and responded positively to all the prompt options.

Existing favourite places sometimes involved adapting the place for their use (climbing on things) – not necessarily for the intended purpose. This could show a desire for more climbing and balancing places for all ages.

Some new ideas were liked by many students.

But there was also a wide range of ideas.

Particularly for the older students and in general there was a desire for adventurous and real activities like:

- Riding/skating/biking on a made track

- Big swings and slides and zip lines

- Things to climb and traverse /with logs and trees

- Things outside of the school – something to make the communal spaces -like at the shops, the walk to and from school, the pub - more welcoming and interesting – seats/play equipment

- Access to a real workshop with tools

- Challenging courses to follow – orienteering, obstacle

Also things for relaxing featured:

- Hammocks

- Seats and platforms

- A calm room

- Enriched art and library spaces

Things that were not liked included the existing skate park, the lack of access to equipment for older students, the loss of flying foxes/zip lines.

This was just a sample of students at the school - the current roll is 95 students (Years 0-13). Approx. 15%. The percentage is slightly higher if the youth group participants are included.

The purpose of this exercise was not to (yet) test the feasibility of any new options. We know that some of our existing play equipment at school needs to be completed and maintained.

Possible next steps

These are options for the next steps

1. Share these results more widely- in the school, with KCI and the community and with selected potential funders
2. Seek community support for removing old skate ramp
3. The school (including the wider parent network) and community consider developing ideas for **quicker and easier** activations without new capital works: for example:

Pop up obstacle courses

Orienteering course around Karamea

Temporary pop up swings and hammocks

Calm spaces in existing buildings/areas

Lower cost log structures

Tamariki and youth involvement in developing a community workshop/tool shed

Play friendly pop-up at market cross

Keep up out of school play days like Beach day

4. The school (including the wider parent network) and community could consider developing ideas for **new capital works**: for example

Some form of track suitable for the use – e.g. mt biking, skate boarding, scootering etc – a dirt pump track, for example would only be suitable for bikes.

A flying fox/zip line

Other equipment like trampoline, large rope frame,

5. Form a small community working group
6. Investigate funding options for making these activations happen