

Playground

Policy, procedure, protocol	Policy
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Objective	1.2 We will have a safe, active and healthy region
Strategy	1.2.5 Provide, maintain and develop children's play and recreational facilities to encourage active participation



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1. Purpose

This policy sets out guidelines for the provision of Council playgrounds.

2. Definitions

“All Abilities Playgrounds” this term reflects the inclusion of activities for disabled within the playground.

“Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)” is the use of effective design strategies to improve the safety and quality of urban environments. The aim of CPTED is to reduce opportunities for crime and create safe urban environments and in so doing increase the amenity, attractiveness and safety of our community.

“District Playground” means a playground that primarily services a major town or urban area, or a small area planning district most users drive more than 15 or 20 minutes to get there and are located within large neighbourhood parks or district parks which have a moderate carrying capacity. These playgrounds are ideally not cited within 1.5km of another playground and offer multiple play experiences and cater for a range of ages and abilities. District playgrounds have moderate support facilities (shade, seats, picnic tables, bins, public toilets, sporting or other recreation facilities, BBQ’s) and hold time greater than 30 minutes.

“Local: Level 1 Playground” means a playground that primarily services local communities that are within an easy and safe walking distance and are usually located within smaller local parks which have a low carrying capacity. Small playgrounds that contain basic play equipment which caters for smaller children, local playgrounds have limited support facilities (seat) and hold time less than 5 minutes.

“Local: Level 2 Playgrounds” means a playground that primarily services local communities that are within an easy and safe walking distance or a few minutes drive and are usually located within neighbourhood parks with mid range carrying capacity or associated with sportsground, community hall other publicly accessible asset. These playgrounds contain several items of equipment providing a variety of play equipment catering for a range of ages, have limited support facilities (seats, picnic table, bin) and hold time less than 15 minutes.

“Regional Playground” means a playground that services a region or portion of local government planning area, most users would drive more than 30 minutes to get there and are usually located within regional parks which have a high carrying capacity. These large sized playgrounds offer a range of activities for all ages and maximum infrastructure and are designed as a one off park and play environment with a high level of landscaping, public art and supporting facilities (shade, seats, picnic tables, bins, public toilets, drinking fountains, BBQ’s, lighting). Most facilities within the park will be fully accessible, with hold times of greater than 60 minutes.

“Softfall” means a material beneath and/or surrounding play equipment that provides standard compliant impact attenuation.



3. Background/legislative requirements

3.1 Background

Playgrounds are an asset that provides the community with an area for recreation, relaxation, learning and fun. They provide an opportunity for both active and passive play for children of all ages, in both a supervised and unsupervised setting. Council aims to provide the community with a strategic network of quality play areas, containing safe and compliant playground equipment that provide recreation and challenge for the users.

3.2 Standards and Commissions

- AS 4685.1:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - General safety requirements and test methods (EN 1176-1:2008, MOD)
- AS 4685.2:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for swings (EN 1176-2:2008, MOD)
- AS 4685.3:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for slides (EN 1176-3:2008, MOD)
- AS 4685.4:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for cableways (EN 1176-4:2008, MOD)
- AS 4685.5:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for carousels (EN 1176-5:2008, MOD)
- AS 4685.6:2014 Playground equipment and surfacing - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment
- AS 4685.11:2014 Playground equipment - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial networks (EN 1176-11:2008, MOD)
- AS/NZS 4422:1996 Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS 4422-1996/Amdt 1-1999 Playground surfacing - Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 Playgrounds and playground equipment - Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation
- AS 1428.3-1992 Design for access and mobility - Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities

3.3 Legislative Requirements

Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Regulation 2012

Companion Animals Act 1998

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

Smoke-free Environment Act 2000

4. Policy statement

This policy will -

- 4.1** Assist Council to fulfil its corporate objectives to provide, maintain and develop children's play and recreational facilities to encourage active participation;
- 4.2** Provide and develop playgrounds that align with the Parks Hierarchy framework, including higher level regional and district playgrounds as a key focus, with provision for neighbourhood and local park playgrounds within urban locations as determined through planning scheme approvals and development applications;
- 4.3** Ensure the appropriate allocation of resources and strategically review the locations of existing playgrounds to ensure there is provision to meet defined service level provisions and levels of service;
- 4.4** Ensure Council's Asset Management responsibilities are met; &
- 4.5** Reconsider or discourage the location of playgrounds in parks and reserves that are in the vicinity of perceived hazards or are inconsistent with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) strategies.

5. Procedures

5.1 Existing Equipment

Existing playground equipment shall comply with all Australian Standards relevant at the date of installation and / or modification.

5.2 Installation of New Equipment

All new playground equipment purchased and/or constructed shall comply with all current relevant Australian Standards and shall be installed in accordance with those Standards and any applicable manufacturer's instructions. This compliance will be detailed through certification.

5.3 Playgrounds on Council Managed Land under Lease

The lessee would not have the expertise to inspect and assess playground equipment and therefore it would be the role of the Council to inspect and assess. Identified problems or maintenance required would lead to a request that the lessee arranges repairs under clauses that maintenance of the leased area is the lessees responsibility. A playground specific clause will be incorporated into new agreements.

5.4 Playground Asset Register

Council will maintain a Playground asset register. The Open Spaces & Facilities Section of the Works & Civil Directorate is responsible for the maintaining of the Playground Asset Register. A copy of the current Playground Equipment and Softfall Register, owners manuals and certificates of compliance is to be stored electronically in Council's Record Management System (ECM).



5.5 Playground Asset Management Planning

Open Spaces & Facilities staff will undertake asset management planning to assist Council as it works towards more proactive and sustainable management of its playgrounds. An adaptive Replacement Program will be developed to ensure playgrounds meet community and technical levels of service whilst providing a diverse range of service level provisions within financial limitations (see Attachments). Playgrounds may require removal at short notice based on circumstances identified in inspection audits. Council will be advised as soon as possible of the circumstances and outcome.

5.6 Establishment of New Playgrounds

Council may resolve, in addition to any Planning Scheme requirements, to make budgetary provision for the establishment of a new playground. All new playgrounds shall be assessed for suitability of location based upon the hierarchy of parks and proximity to areas of population growth or renewal of housing projects. Playgrounds will also be assessed against the Playground Strategy and Playground Renewal, Relocation and Removal Program.

5.7 All Abilities Playgrounds

The network of Council playgrounds will include an All Abilities Playgrounds at the Regional Playground, All Abilities Playgrounds at other playgrounds where possible, including three (3) Liberty Swings (Grafton Jacaranda Park playground, Maclean Wherrett Park playground and Yamba Oval playground) in line with the Open Space Strategic Plan and Standards.

5.8 Nature Play

Nature play elements will be incorporated into playgrounds, where possible, in line with the Open Space Strategic Plan, budget constraints and Standards.

5.9 Recurrent Budgetary Provisions

Council will make a provision in its Operational Plan and Annual Budget for the progressive renewal and / or upgrading of playground equipment.

5.10 Temporary Closure of Playgrounds

Council may temporarily close a playground for the purpose of ensuring user health and safety or to carry out works of any kind.

5.11 Community Consultation

The Council will consult with the community with regards to the renewal, relocation, upgrade and removal of playgrounds.



5.12 Playgrounds Inspections

Council's Open Spaces & Facilities staff will establish and implement Playground Inspection Procedures based on relevant Standards and defined service levels. Routine visual and operational inspections will be completed by suitability competent and qualified Council staff, with comprehensive inspections to be completed annually by independent Level 3 accredited inspectors.

5.13 Incidents / Customer Requests

Council will maintain records for playground related incidents / customer requests that it receives from public and staff reports.

5.14 Softfall

Council will provide softfall areas as required under the Standards. Over-specification, although aesthetically interesting, places an increase burden on capital and recurrent spending. Council will only use synthetic softfall in All Abilities Playgrounds and high wear areas (eg under swings & slides). All softfall products will be certified to meet relevant Standards.

5.15 Shade

Council will provide natural shade wherever practical and effective in preference to built shade structures.

5.16 Fencing

Council will not be required to fence-off playground areas. However, if a playground is established close to a hazard (eg. busy roadway, waterway) a separation barrier may be installed to prevent direct access to the hazard.

5.17 Resale of Playground Equipment

Council will not sell or donate playground equipment that has been removed from service for reuse in any location.

5.18 Regulations

Dogs are prohibited within 10 metres of playground equipment to meet the statutory requirements of Section 14 of the Companion Animals Act 1998. Smoking is also prohibited within 10 metres of playground equipment to meet the statutory requirements of Section 6A of the Smoke-free Environment Act 2000.

6. Attachments

Playground Service Hierarchy and Service Level Objectives

Service Hierarchy	Service Level Objective
Local playgrounds: Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily services local communities that are within an easy and safe walking distance • Usually located within smaller local parks which have a low carrying capacity. • Small playgrounds that contain basic play equipment which caters for smaller children. • Limited support facilities (seat). • Playground consists of 1 or 2 pieces of play equipment (swing / side unit). • Maximum value of the playground facilities is approximately \$20,000 • Maintain a current play rating score of 1 or 2.
Local playgrounds: Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily services local communities that are within an easy and safe walking distance or a few minutes drive. • Located within neighbourhood parks with mid range carrying capacity or associated with sportsground, community hall, other publicly accessible asset. • Playground that contain several items of equipment providing a variety of play equipment catering for a range of ages. • Support facilities (seats, picnic table, bin). • Playground consists of 3- 5 pieces of play equipment. • Maximum value of the playground facilities is approximately \$70,000 • Maintain a current play rating score of 1 or 2.
District playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily services a major town or urban area, or a small area planning district most users drive more than 15 or 20 minutes to get there. • Located within large neighbourhood parks or district parks which have a moderate carrying capacity. • Ideally not cited within 1.5km of another playground • Playground that offers multiple play experiences and cater for a range of ages and abilities. • Support facilities (shade, seats, picnic tables, bins, BBQ's). • Playground consists of 6-8 pieces of play equipment. • Maximum value of the playground facilities is approximately \$140,000. • Maintain a current play rating score of 1 or 2.
Regional playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services a region or portion of local government planning area, most users would drive more than 30 minutes to get there. • Usually located within regional parks which have a high carrying capacity. • Large sized playgrounds that offer a range of activities for all ages and maximum infrastructure. • Designed as a one off park and play environment; a high level of landscaping, supporting amenities, public art. • Most facilities within the park will be fully accessible. • Support facilities (shade, seats, picnic tables, bins, public toilets, sporting or other recreation facilities, BBQ's). • Playground consists of 10+ pieces of play equipment. • Maximum value of the playground facilities is approximately \$280,000. • Maintain a current play rating score of 1 or 2.