



LatrobeCity
a new energy

Play Space Strategy



About this document

This document is the Latrobe Play Space Strategy.

This document follows:

- Site inspections and an analysis of existing assets and the supply of play spaces in Latrobe
- A literature review
- An assessment of Latrobe demographics
- Benchmarking of like LGAs

Detailed site specific recommendations and an implementation plan are provided in a separate volume.

Acknowledgements

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- Karen Tsebelis (Co-ordinator Recreation and Open Space),
- Kat Marshall (Recreation and Open Space Development Officer)
- Josh Whittaker (previously Acting Recreation and Open Space Development Officer)

Play DMC undertook the site inspections and condition assessment of Latrobe's play spaces.

Jeavons Landscape Architects undertook the assessment of the individual spaces and prepared the design recommendations.

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1. Introduction and Background

The brief

The brief identified the intent of the project as to:

- Provide an easily understood strategic vision for the future planning and improvement of play spaces across Latrobe City, ensuring a 'whole park' approach
- Provide a strong focus on the benefits of accessible play space's and embellishing parks to attract and retain a wide cross section of the community
- Improve existing spaces in line with Latrobe Community Vision, Council Plan and Public Open Space Strategy
- "When improving playgrounds consider opportunities for enhanced integration with the surrounding environment and use of natural features to increase play space opportunities and overall appeal"
- Review the existing Latrobe City Playground Strategy 2005-2021.

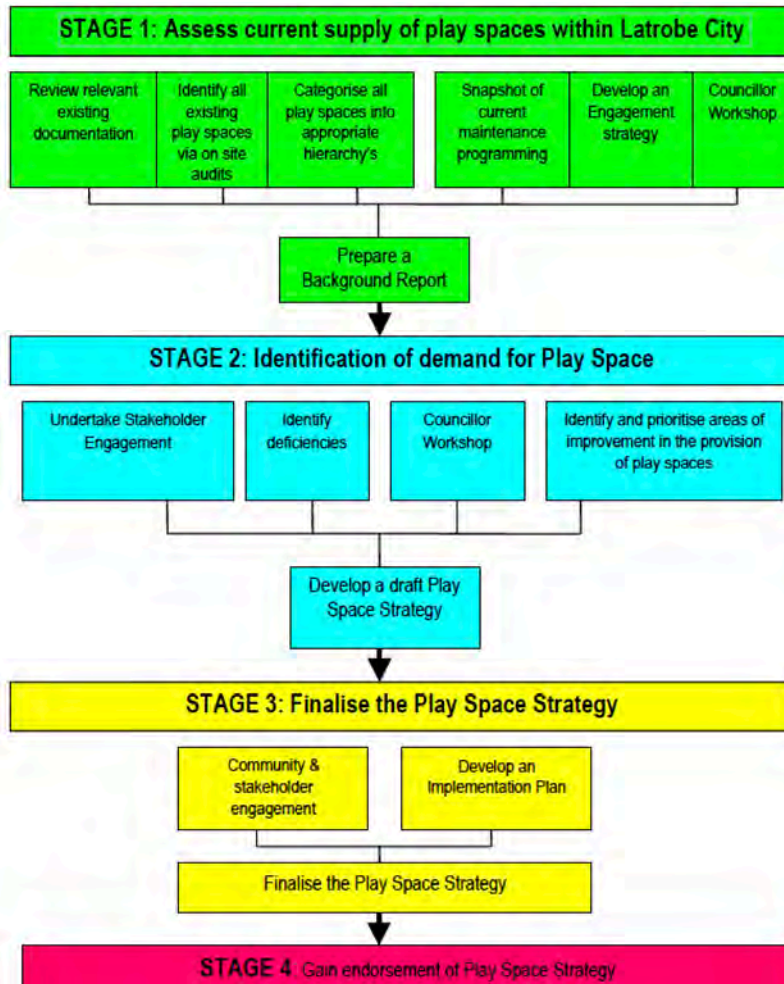
Tasks

Tasks conducted as part of this project included:

1. Identify the benefits of a range of aspects of play.
2. Provide clear definitions for each level of the play hierarchy (local, district & regional) based on Council's Public Open Space Strategy.
3. Provide benchmarked recommendations of distances between play spaces, based on safe walking distances.
4. Identify play provision based on localised demographic data.
5. Identify future regional play space locations and themes.
6. Provide a valuation of current equipment.
7. Provide maintenance resourcing recommendations based on Local Government Authorities benchmarking.
8. Provide a range of maintenance levels and standards (core service levels)
9. Provide recommendations on how maintenance can continually improve in the future.
10. Identify training and development opportunities for staff responsible for the maintenance of play spaces.
11. Develop a prioritised play space improvement plan on the basis of hierarchy and current provision.

Process

The process identified for the conduct of the strategy is as follows:



Community engagement

In preparing this strategy @leisure undertook the following community engagement:

- An online survey was available to the public 21st September - 26th November 2015. A total of 197 responses were received
- A workshop was held with a number of Councillors
- A benchmarking exercise was completed with 6 neighbouring Council's (Bendigo City Council, Wellington Shire Council, South Gippsland Shire Council, Kingston City Council, Ballarat City Council and Baw Baw Shire Council)
- Public were invited to provide written comments via the @leisure project webpage. Two submissions were made.
- The draft strategy was exhibited for comment between October and November 2015.

Why does Council need a play strategy?

A Play Strategy can help Council achieve:

- A Council-wide coordinated approach to planning, developing, and maintaining play spaces
- A more strategic and agreed basis for determining funding and capital priorities for developing and maintaining play spaces
- A planned approach to addressing the most challenging issues arising with regard to play space development and improvements. This will make it quicker and easier for Council to make decisions and respond to proposals and requests
- Better value from Council's investment in play spaces
- A better match between community expectations and what Council can and does provide
- Higher quality play spaces across the City, that include more spontaneous play, more natural elements, and spaces that foster learning and interaction
- Provide a more strategic basis behind directions, and a sound basis on which to discuss future and specific developments with residents
- An agreed, more holistic and broader, less equipment approach to play provision
- Intergenerational play opportunities for a wider spectrum of age groups, and people of all abilities; and
- A better understanding by the community about what Council is seeking to achieve through play opportunities

What is play?

Play is a complex behaviour that involves many different aspects of self-expression, and includes physical, social, creative and cognitive activity. Play is an enjoyable, non-threatening and legitimate activity for children, making it a primary communication and developmental tool.

Through play children are challenged and can test their skills and identity. By participating in different forms of play, children gain valuable developmental skills, such as the ability to interact with others and form friendships, as well as physical, neural, social and sensory development; crucial for good health outcomes.

Play is evident in all ages, but provision commonly focuses on children due to its benefits for development. At a young age, children have no comprehension of what it is to be healthy or physically fit, only what is fun or enjoyable to participate in, making play a powerful tool in development and health prevention.

Play occurs everywhere, not just in locations designed specifically for it. Play spaces however provide important and legitimate public places to play. Public play spaces should complement opportunities provided in private and other settings and thereby enhance opportunities for development for the benefits of the broader community.

Play spaces

The term "play spaces" is used in this document to describe outdoors facilities provided for play that include play equipment in public parks. These may include other facilities and landscape elements that contribute to a play experience.

This strategy acknowledges that play spaces may also be provided in children's centres and other community building and aquatics centres. These are not analysed in this plan.

The benefits of play

Play is a crucial part of childhood and an accessible, fun and stimulating way of staying active and healthy. It also provides an important basis for maximising development potential.

Key benefits of providing public play spaces include:

■ Physical activity

- Children are increasingly becoming overweight and this affects not only their health but also their ability to lead productive, active lives and perform in educational settings.
- Encouraging children to play outdoors can contribute substantial gains in aerobic activity as well as physical skill development outside of sport and education.

■ Mental health

- Play by nature is fun. It provides relief from routine roles and surroundings, and other stresses in daily life.
- Outdoor play has the added advantage of potential contact with nature and the associated restorative benefits.

■ Social inclusion

- Affordable places for children and families to meet and gather are important as households and yards decrease in size.
- Public play spaces that are accessible to children of all abilities promote social inclusion and interaction, tolerance and understanding.
- Play for children with a disability is especially critical to development. Play environments can provide additional social benefits for children who may have limited mobility and access to other children, and opportunities to develop vital social skills, such as persistence, resilience and empathy. Social interaction can provide valuable role modelling for basic physical activities.
- Families with children with disabilities often seek out things such as; opportunities to interact with others, graded physical challenges, and sensory stimulation. A play space can provide all of these.

Contact with nature

Encouraging children to connect with the natural world enables access to a diversity of affordable play stimuli, changeability, loose parts, and props that in turn stimulate play and learning.

Access to nature can promote environmental education and stewardship that will encourage a positive attitude to conservation and outdoor activity later in life.

The ability to see and interact with nature provides restorative benefits and contributes to a sense of wellbeing.

All children should have access to environments conducive to play, in order for the child to develop.

Policy and planning context

Council's Mission and Vision

Council's MISSION¹ is to provide:

The best possible facilities, services advocacy and leadership for Latrobe City, one of Victoria's four major regional cities.

Values

- Providing affordable people focused community services
- Planning strategically and acting responsibly, in the best interests of the whole community
- Accountability, transparency and honesty
- Listening to and working with the community
- Respect, fairness and equity
- Open to and embracing new opportunities

A key theme of Council's plan is:

- To promote and support a healthy, active and connected community
- To provide facilities and services that are accessible and meet the needs of our diverse community
- To enhance the visual attractiveness and liveability of Latrobe City

Open Space Vision

The vision outlined in the Open Space Strategy 2013 is:

- Latrobe City will plan, provide and manage a diverse range of attractive, appealing and sustainable public open space facilities that are welcoming, accessible, and enhance the character of individual townships or neighbourhoods.

Play spaces are highly valued. The community engagement process for the Open Space Strategy found that:

- 53% of residents responding to Open Space survey in 2013 use playgrounds (third after Local parks, and walking tracks and trails).
- 50% of respondents said usual activity was Playgrounds related.
- 58% said they value "playgrounds" most about Latrobe's parks, and
- 11% said the priority was to improve playgrounds.

• ¹ Latrobe City Council Plan 2013-17

The Council's Open Space Strategy identified the following key issues related to demand for play spaces:

- Linkages and connections (including those used for active transport)
- Physical accessibility
- Sustainability – standards, maintenance and acquisition
- Increase activation and appeal of existing spaces
- Way-finding signage
- Enhance what we already have
- Improve service / maintenance levels
- Improve public toilets
- Promote / market what we have
- Additional car parking
- Enhance planning provisions within the Planning Scheme and local planning policy
- Provide / upgrade public toilets, playgrounds and gathering spaces
- Improve maintenance standards and consistency (common issues highlighted include vegetation management, mowing frequency, tree litter and broken glass)
- Proactively identify reserves that are suitable for off-leash dog exercise areas
- The benefits of collaborative partnerships and a high degree of community involvement are recognized by all parties
- Council's role and capacity to provide additional support to groups and to encourage additional 'community stewardship' should be explored
- Core infrastructure including paths, seating, drinking taps, fitness stations, way finding signage and interpretive information.

The previous Play Strategy

A playground strategy was prepared in 2006. This strategy focused on rationalisation of play equipment areas. However this scale of rationalisation was later identified as unsustainable.

This plan seeks to acknowledge the benefits of play whilst recognising the challenges of maintaining play equipment. It takes a more strategic and whole of park approach to enhancing play experiences, use and value, through focusing on selective development to improve the quality of play opportunities.

Demographic context

Settlement and density

The nature of the settlement (for example whether people live in a locality that is a major and small town, rural village or rural locality) determines the likely availability of private open space, the availability of hard surfaces, access to nature and to other children and hence incidental play opportunities in an area.

The nature and density of a residential settlement therefore influences the need for play spaces and what Council provides, so as to complement the nature of play experiences likely to be available to children in their local environment.

The population density of Latrobe is relatively low with many children likely to have access to some private open space.

Newborough has the highest population density in Latrobe. See table 13 in Appendix 2. Increasing density means fewer households will have access to private space for play.

Age profile

The age profile of the City remains relatively 'young' (i.e. by 2021 20% of the total population will be aged under 15 years). Therefore provision of play opportunities will continue to be a priority. However an increasing proportion of older adults are in Latrobe – as is the case in most other regional locations. Traralgon has the highest number of children between 4-7 years out of all Latrobe localities. Traralgon South has the highest percentage of children in the 4-7 year age cohort.

As many people do not live in one house for more 5 years and it is expensive and difficult for Council to continually alter provision to suit the age profile of a locality, play spaces need to be provided on a relatively equitable basis that is not going to be significantly influenced by age profile.

Play spaces can be important to all people. Apart from young children they provide affordable non threatening places for: parents to meet while children play, families to go and meet other families, places where older siblings might need to wait, or for teenagers to socialise and hang out. As many grandparents now look after children play spaces also need to cater to older carers and people who just want to be where there is community activity.

Income and social disadvantage

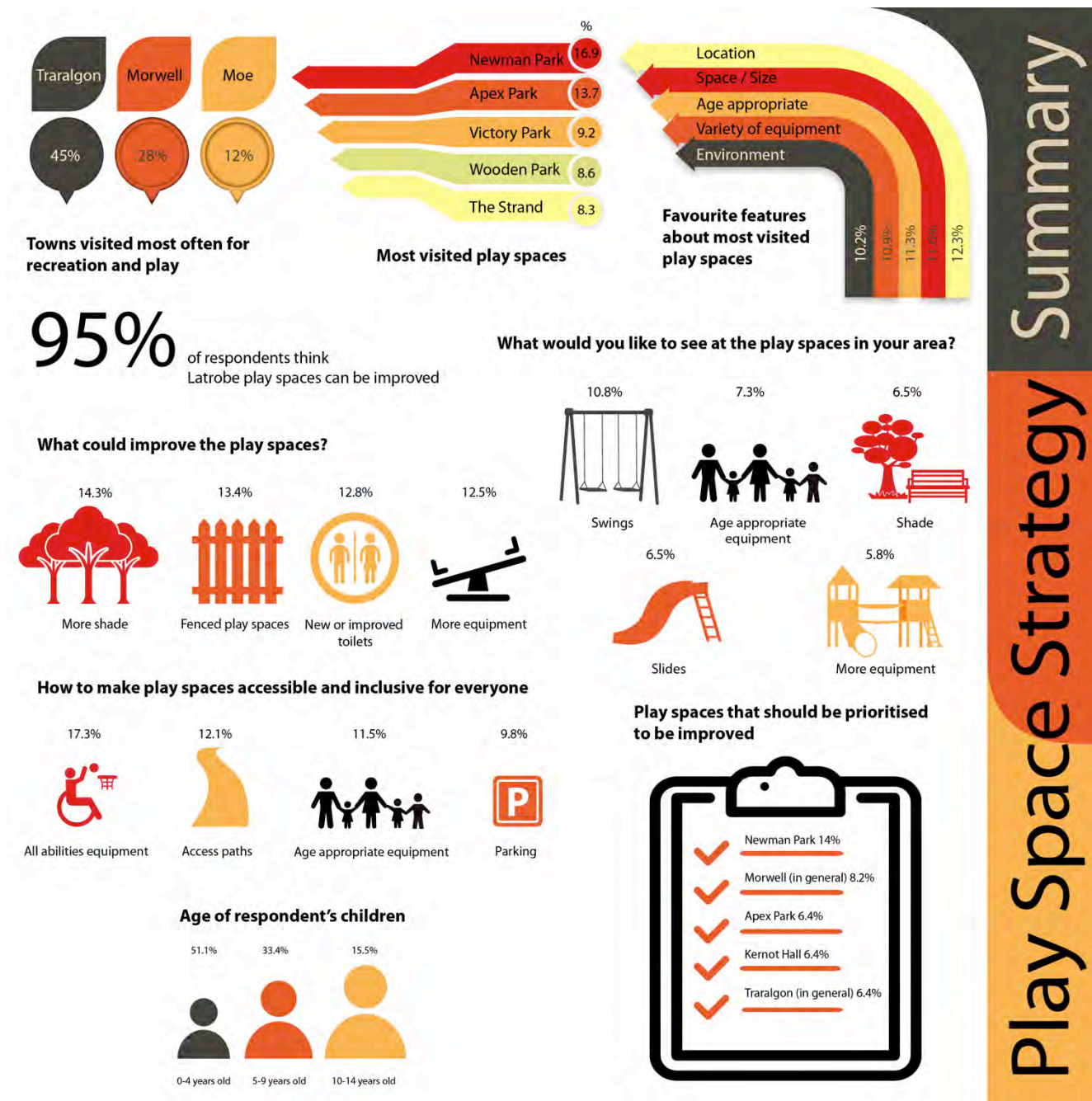
In some areas due to the social determinants of health, some children will be developmentally vulnerable, and may benefit more from the availability of good play experiences. The indicators of these can be found in the Aust. Early Development Census and the SEIFA index that provides an indication of social disadvantage (see table 15 in Appendix 2). Areas with industry may also affect health and development opportunities for children.

The Aust. Early Development Census shows that Moe/Hernes Oak, Morwell and Yallourn have the highest number of developmentally vulnerable children less than 5 years of age, based on scores for more than one vulnerability. These localities also have the lowest SEIFA scores for 2011. In these areas a good distribution of social and physical play opportunities will be very important.

Some families will be more dependant on a local play space than others, such as those with low incomes, or without a car, that have fewer leisure choices.

Key issues raised in community consultation

One hundred and ninety surveys were completed. Key points raised through the survey are illustrated below.



Submissions

One submission was received from an interested resident recommending a fenced play space be developed at Granya Grove in Morwell. Another was received requesting Macy Park in Brereton Street in Traralgon be improved to become a safe and enjoyable play environment.

2. Guiding principles

The following guiding principles are proposed to guide the future planning design and management of play spaces in Latrobe.

These principles have been applied when assessing the current provision of play spaces.

Nine key guiding principles are summarised below and outlined in the following pages.

- P1. Accessibility and social inclusion**
- P2. Equity**
- P3. Diversity and uniqueness**
- P4. Environmental integrity and amenity**
- P5. Play value: social, imaginative, creative and physical**
- P6. Integrated design**
- P7. Degree of dependence**
- P8. Risk and challenge**
- P9. Colocation**
- P10. Complexity of design**

P1. Accessibility and social inclusion

Play spaces should be provided in parks that are central, prominent and connected to residential areas they serve by a footpath or a shared path. In urban areas play spaces should be within a walkable distance of all residences.

Specific site features should be provided in all play spaces to encourage social interaction. Easy circulation routes should encourage multiple types of users. Seating should be located where adults can interact with each other and with playing children and desirably be located on a seamless accessible path system.

Play spaces must be able to encourage people of ages and abilities to play together. As a minimum, people of all ages must be able to easily get to and into the park, and to the social focus of the play space.

District and regional play spaces should have a higher degree of accessibility than local spaces and provide an internal path system, appropriate elements and specifically provided equipment for people with a disability, as well as support facilities.

Within every precinct children with a disability and of different ages should be able to find some moving equipment that suits their needs (e.g. children with a physical disability, toddlers, and teenagers etc).

P2. Equity

Where possible in urban areas play spaces will be distributed in a relatively equitable way, within walking distance of all residences. In small rural villages one central play space will be supported instead of multiple spaces.

The community survey identified that the key feature liked about play spaces is their location.

Equity also means that all types of people will have access to a play space that is appropriate to their needs.

P3. Diversity and uniqueness

Diversity enhances the likelihood that all children will be motivated to play and find play experiences that are of interest and appropriate to them regardless of age, ability, cultural background and social economic status, and where live.

A diversity of landscape elements, types of play, and play stimuli, as well as types of equipment, are to be encouraged; within each play space, as well as across each precinct, each town, and across the City.

Any equipment selected for one park should meet a gap identified as well as offers a different choice or style of play from other nearby parks.

Play spaces should complement rather than duplicate what opportunities there may be available for play in the environment where children live. For this reason parks for play in rural settlements should be different to those in urban areas.

Where budgets are limited, it is preferable to select play items on the basis of whether many different people can use them, and in how many different ways.

Many parks are memorable to children and families because there is something special that gives a unique local identity to the park or play space. Children might give the park a local name like “egg park”, “rocket park”, or “train park”. These may include a unique tree or iconic structure, a special landform, a hiding space, or some other special feature. Such “signature” items, no matter how small, are a good landmark for parents.

Parks dominated by natural elements may not always ‘read’ as a play space at first, and parents may not think to take their children there. Items that are special to children might not be those that are obvious to adults.

P4. Environmental integrity and amenity

Play spaces should be integrated into, rather than separated from, the surrounding landscape. Natural elements should be part of all play spaces, and encourage children to be familiar with and curious about and interact with nature. This will enhance the potential for children to become passionate about natural systems and protecting the environment.

Because natural and living things are not manufactured, they offer far more variety and complexity than most purpose built play structures. Loose natural materials offer opportunities for open-ended play and children benefit from: nature’s changeability, and the ability to freely gather and use natural elements in their imaginative games in whichever way they see fit. Natural elements can define some very beautiful and appealing spaces that children as well as adults enjoy.

P5. Play value: social, imaginative, creative and physical

Value is not only represented in the assets and their monetary value (even though these are considerable). It is also the benefit to children (and society) from all the developmental opportunities that quality play experiences deliver to them. The community benefits from having ecologically stable, healthy environments in parks, from the opportunities to meet one another in highly amenable outdoor settings, and from opportunities to build social relationships.

Play value is about maximising a child’s potential by facilitating the development of specific skills and attributes through particular features of a play space. Play value relates to social, imaginative, creative and physical play.

From birth, babies work on balance and hearing and connecting these to vision, through movement and play. All the senses thus learn to work together. In addition to the five ‘external’ senses, three internal (‘hidden’) senses play a huge role in children’s development:

- Vestibular sense (head position)
- Kinaesthetic or body movement sense (feedback about changes made in body position)
- Proprioceptive sense (held together by a sense of feeling where the body is in space).

Movements such as spinning, swinging, rocking, balancing, sliding, hanging upside down, bike riding, jumping and rolling all contribute to this vital development.

In addition to equipment and exercise paths that support physical activities (such as climbing, ball games and running for example) play spaces should specifically cater for social opportunities (i.e. by group seating and tables by equipment that encourages co-operation, multiple children using (i.e. double swings multiple seat rocker), and loose and nature materials and props for imaginative and creative play.

Features in play spaces will typically need to be purpose-built to be attractive, and to facilitate particular types of play for development opportunities (such as swinging). However, at least some elements in the space should be open ended and adaptable for different uses, or have no particular purpose, in order to provide for children's own imaginative /creative play. This "open ended" play provides scope for children to invent games of their own. Research² has shown that this kind of play rarely relates to an adult devised theme set by the play space designer (such as a boat or train or other idea) and comes from the children themselves. It can be facilitated by placement and choice of infrastructure and landscape elements.

Physical activities can also be made social: make climbing sociable; going somewhere and connected to other elements. Provide multiple seat rockers – not just single seat. Provide basket/ bird nest swings so multiple children can swing together, or carousels for spinning.

P6. Integrated design

In future the focus of planning and design should be parks for play, rather than play spaces or playgrounds.

Play space design should not be seen as separate from the design of park. Equipment, paths, social and support facilities as well as landscape elements are all key parts of an integrated play space design.

Because all equipment, furniture, paths, trees and landscape elements make up a play space, play space upgrade budgets, the design and the maintenance process needs to ensure all elements are included.

The physical location of elements in a park and their relationships to one another, are critically important in how and whether a park or the play space is used, or used to its maximum potential.

There are two broad aims as described below.

1. Avoid conflicts by:

- Separating busy active zones from sedentary play
- Separating noisy from quiet
- Separating vulnerable children from boisterous more risky activity areas

Some items need to be located where vulnerable children don't cross their path.

Sand play needs to be protected from busy activities.

2. Maximise the benefit from locating two zones next to one another. For example:

- An open grass or paved ball game area near a play and picnic space will provide convenience and supervision for parents as well as activities that can flow easily between the two zones for most age groups.

²Herrington, Susan with Chandra Lesmeister, Jamie Nicholls, and Kate Stefiuk) 7c's An information guide to young children's outdoor play spaces 2007 Vancouver: Westcoast Childcare Resource Centre. <http://www.wstcoast.org/playspaces/outsidecriteria/7Cs.pdf> Accessed 20 Feb 2013

- Co-location of areas can stimulate games and play between more than one area. For example: the combination of a cubby space with a sand pit and some loose materials such as water, twigs or flowers that can all enhance the cubby play.

Linking social /seating spaces with an active area such as skating areas, ball courts or an exciting feature like a flying fox work well together and enhance interaction.

P7. Degree of dependence

In some areas due to the social determinants of health, some children will be developmentally vulnerable and more dependant on a local play space than others. For example children from households with low incomes, low education and experiencing other social disadvantage, or those without a car. These children may benefit more from the availability of good play experiences.

In some locations due to the placement of local parks, subdivision design, and physical barriers to other parks such as major roads, railways and river corridors, fenced sites etc. some residences will be dependant on one existing play space. These key spaces need to be identified and enhanced because of this dependence.

P8. Risk and challenge

Children need to be able to test, develop and extend their abilities, as they grow older.

A play space needs to provide choice and graded challenges or children will seek it elsewhere.

The ability for children to climb and test themselves physically is linked to the development of self-confidence and autonomy, as balance, co-ordination and strength develops along with children's sense of judgment, decision-making and persistence.

Risk is an inherent part of life. Attempts to eliminate all forms of risk taking behaviour are unrealistic and counter-productive, resulting in children unable to recognize or deal with serious dangers when they do arise. It is preferable that children have opportunities to learn to take graduated risk in settings where the price of failure is not life threatening or serious injury.

Risk and challenge is necessary for learning. Danger on the other hand is when risk cannot be easily understood due to the development age. For example for children under 12 years of age judgement has not developed to the point where the child can judge the speed and the risk associated with traffic, or deep water for example.

Play spaces should be designed so as to:

- Offer children the chance to acquire skills at their own pace
- Allow children to opt in or out by choice
- Provide support in learning to climb
- Test their skills and judgment through climbing (for example trees) within the relative safety of a park.

When risks in play space are being considered, the benefits of providing challenge and learning must also be considered, in line with the principles outlined in the Aust. Risk Management Standards.

P9. Colocation

Play spaces should not be single-purpose spaces designed only for children. Play spaces should be part of social, family recreation parks that are designed to provide social and physical opportunities for the whole family and for people of all abilities. These parks should be colocated with sporting and other community facilities to enhance their use and attractiveness and provide economies of scale in management.

Colocation of features in a park that stimulate games and play between more than one area can enhance play experiences. For example: the combination of a cubby space with a sand pit and some loose materials such as water, twigs or flowers that can all enhance the cubby play.

P10. Complexity of design

When spaces within a park or play area vary in size, and when there is some visual complexity within a play space, children benefit from the potential for more complexity and variety in their play.

Planting and changes of level contribute to visual and spatial interest and complexity.

Space itself suggests and encourages some types of behaviour to children:

- Long narrow spaces (such as at an airport terminal) seem to suggest running.
- When you can't see all of a space it encourages you to explore, play chasey or play hide and seek games.

Changes in level within a park or play space provide opportunities to look down, roll down, jump down, balance along and enjoy in any number of ways that children will devise for themselves.

Quite small, seemingly insignificant sub-spaces within a park can have value to children. The divisions that separate and define individual spaces might be quite subtle. Where solid walls, plants, hedges, fences, or other built features define smaller spaces, children adapt these 'rooms' for imaginative/role play in smaller groups.

Frequently children need to construct their own small cubbies and dens to enclose themselves and provide the right-scaled spaces for their play. In parks where there are loose thin branches and leaves available, these might be used for this purpose. This kind of play is very important to children and there are fewer and fewer places where it can take place.

Routes up and down, over and through, and complex levels that offer opportunities to run and climb through three dimensional space provide benefits for play that are not available in flat spaces with a simple array of open decks and thin posts. Some games require smaller spaces and simply would not occur in flat, open, exposed terrain.

3. Play spaces in Latrobe

There are currently one hundred and eighteen play spaces in Latrobe that are owned and managed by Council. These are the focus on this strategy.

For the purposes of this each of the main towns: Traralgon, Morwell, Moe, and Churchill have been divided into precincts that reflect residential areas served by play spaces.

Additionally, there are play spaces on crown land and or managed by committees of management, in preschools and on sporting reserves, for example, within the City of Latrobe. These were not assessed as part of this project.

A second volume to this strategy: Locality Analysis provides an analysis and images of play spaces by town and precinct, and recommended actions. A summary of actions per precinct is provided in Chapter 5 of this volume.

Play space are provided in some twenty localities in the City. These localities are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Moe | 11. Hazelwood North |
| 2. Newborough | 12. Traralgon |
| 3. Yallourn North | 13. Traralgon East |
| 4. Morwell | 14. Traralgon South |
| 5. Churchill | 15. Jeeralang North |
| 6. Jeeralang Junction | 16. Tyers |
| 7. Yinnar | 17. Callignee |
| 8. Yinnar South | 18. Flynn |
| 9. Boolarra | 19. Glengarry |
| 10. Hazelwood | 20. Toongabbie |

A list of play space by locality and hierarchy is provided in Appendix 1.

Maps for each locality with play spaces are provided in the Recommendations document (which is primarily a locality analysis) – a separate volume to this.

Due to the number and spread of facilities in the area, separate area maps were produced for easier identification of facilities.

3.1 Classification of play spaces

Play spaces in Latrobe are primary classified by a catchment hierarchy. This largely determines the core services levels in terms of infrastructure provision and management.

Catchment hierarchy

The Open Space Strategy 2013 identified the hierarchy of open space as follows:

- **Local** - The majority of houses in residential areas should have access to a minimum of 0.5 hectares of public open space within a 500-metre radius. Local parks shall generally comprise a minimum area of 0.75 – 1.0 hectare.
- **District** - The majority of houses in residential areas should have access to district level public open space within a 3 km radius.
- **Regional** - Each town with a population of over 10,000 people should have regional level public open space within the township boundaries.

Generally these descriptions of catchment hierarchy are valid for play spaces however, the size of a space doesn't necessarily have to be directly related to hierarchy.

In addition to the catchment hierarchy it is suggested that the nature of settlement is also considered when planning and managing play spaces (See distribution of play spaces section).

Catchment hierarchy of existing spaces

Latrobe's play spaces have been classified as either local, district or regional level facilities.

Play spaces in Latrobe are predominantly local level (104 play spaces, or 88%).

There are nine district-level play space and five regional-level play spaces.

The following table shows the catchment of play spaces by location in Latrobe.

Table 1: Location of play spaces by hierarchy and locality

Hierarchy	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Local	28	33	43	104
District	1	5	3	9
Regional	3	1	1	5
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

Some play spaces require embellishment to meet the consistent standard of their hierarchy. Some areas would also benefit from additional district or regional open spaces.

Play spaces with a regional catchment

Three of the five regional play spaces in Latrobe are located in Moe [Apex Park (central), Apex Park (east) and Lions Park (west)]. These three play spaces are located in the same precinct, in the north west of the town, and north west of the railway line. The railway creates a barrier to access for the majority of residences in the town.

Town Common Playground (Morwell), and Newman Park (Traralgon) are other regional play spaces in Latrobe. The Town Common Playground (Morwell) is located in the south of the town, away from the majority of the population, and south of the railway line.

An additional regional level park for social family recreation is warranted in Churchill. The most appropriate site for this would be Mathieson Park.

Regional destination play spaces often have a theme. However themes do not often add to the play value provided. The theme is often something that appeals more to adults and the designer, than provides play stimuli for children.

It should be noted however that the cost of the managing regional level play spaces to accommodate high use including the cost of wear and tear, traffic management, waste rubbish for example may be considerable higher than other spaces.

Regional play spaces will generally be developed to a higher standard, include more specialised equipment such as: elements modified for people with a disability, more expensive feature equipment, or water play. These may also have a higher standard of landscape amenity, be serviced by a car park (or bus parking) and provide for a longer length of stay for visitors, for example picnic facilities and shelters.

These sites will generally be inspected more regularly than other sites, and receive more regular maintenance as they may receive higher levels of use.

Play spaces with a district catchment

There are some areas of the City that would benefit from a slightly higher catchment play space, to serve multiple suburbs.

The Botanic Gardens has great potential to be district-level play space in Moe, located east of Narracan Reserve. A district-level play space would also be desirable in the south western part of Moe.

Morwell town has one district-level play space – Immigration Park. This play space is located in the south (south of Princes Dr). A district-level play space would also be desirable in Morwell's north.

The Newman Park play space is well located in the centre of Traralgon. The play space however is at the rear of the open space not in a very prominent location, and subject to barriers to access in the Princes Highway and railway line.

Traralgon town has one other district-level play space – Bradman Reserve. This park is located in the north of Traralgon and services a wider neighbourhood with a street network of mainly cul-de-sacs.

A district-level play space would also be desirable in the west of Traralgon.

District spaces should have a higher standard of maintenance and more regular inspections than local spaces.

District and regional play spaces as venues for events

District and Regional level parks can often provide a community focus point and are in demand as a venue for events such as markets and community celebrations.

Provision of shelter, car parking and three-phase power and lighting can be important in facilitating such events. Their location in a larger green space can facilitate activities such as markets, or, camping and over flow car parking etc, for events and can build community capacity and provide economic benefits.

The need for open spaces to be programmed as a venue, is increasing. This programming may be small scale “programs” such as fitness training and group exercise, school excursions as well as community fun runs, large scale sporting carnivals and events, and private celebrations. As the population density increases in the major towns, the demand for public open spaces for events and private celebrations is likely to increase. Regional and district spaces with play spaces are likely to be the most appropriate sites for community events.

Where possible, any future planning and design of play spaces, which may hold events, should consider the availability of three-phase power, car parking and buffers from immediately adjacent residents.

Open space function type

The Open Space Strategy 2013 did not have a park type such as Play space/social/ family recreation etc. The only one similar was “General Parkland”.

In future, it is desirable that play spaces are not located as small single purpose spaces – but are parks for play: provided as part of an integrated neighbourhood or district park that serves people of all abilities from a wide range of age groups.

Play spaces are also appropriately located in reserves dedicated for sport.

Settlement type

The nature of the Settlement (for example whether the locality is a major and small town, rural village or rural locality) determines the likely availability of private open space, the availability of hard surfaces, and incidental play opportunities in an area. The nature and density of a residential settlement therefore influences the need for play spaces and what Council provides so as to complement the nature of play experiences likely to be available to children in their local environment.

In rural villages (with some community, school or commercial facility) one play space should be provided in a central location such as in conjunction with the hall, community centre of sports reserve, or in a central civic reserve. Rather than multiple sites equitably distributed.

Hardstand for skating and ball play may provide the best complement to availability of wild spaces, and nature based experiences for children living in rural areas, than equipment to facilitate climbing for example.

In urban townships play spaces should be distributed equitably, to reflect the distribution of residences- preferably within walking distance (500m) of each.

In dispersed rural areas – typically there would be no separate play space provision – as the nearest village would service these localities.

3.2 Distribution of play spaces

In the urban areas the following principles underpin the analysis of play space distribution:

- Walkable distance
- Physical barriers define precincts, and
- Children's dependence on a space

Walkable distance

Generally speaking most parents will not walk much more than 500m with young children to a park, and most children will not walk independently more than this distance to the average park. This only applies to the urban townships. In small rural localities play spaces should be in a central hub with other community, sporting and recreation facilities.

Physical barriers define precincts

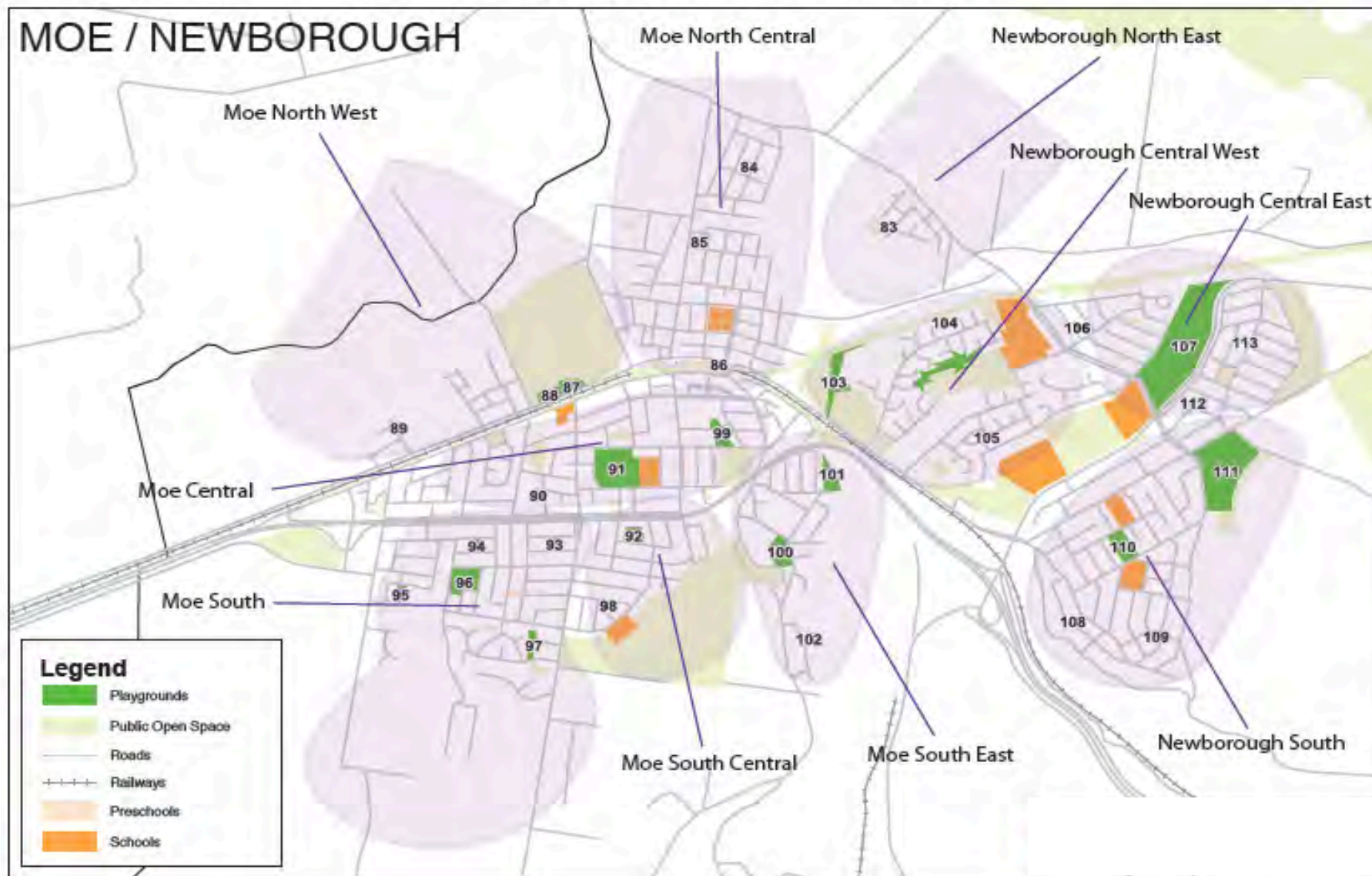
Major roads and other physical boundaries may provide barriers to children and families walking to spaces, or undermine their prominence. These distances and boundaries have been taken into account in identifying precincts for each main town. These are mapped in the locality analysis and spaces have been analysed by precinct. Multiple spaces in a precinct need to complement each other to provide a diversity of play opportunities.

Dependence

The layout of urban areas and physical barriers isolate some residential areas from parks and play spaces. In some instances this leaves an area dependent on one space and where this occurs this dependence has been identified. Where residents are dependent on one space then even if this space is poor quality it may be more important and there is a greater need to enhance the experiences available at this space.

The distribution of play spaces across the three main localities: Moe, Morwell and Traralgon, is quite equitable. Small areas of residential outside a 500m catchment of play spaces are shown on the following maps.

LATROBE PLAY SPACE STRATEGY - PRECINCTS



LATROBE PLAY SPACE STRATEGY - PRECINCTS



LATROBE PLAY SPACE STRATEGY - PRECINCTS



3.3 The quality of play spaces

Overview

Detailed site inspections were undertaken of all key play spaces, and the quality of existing play spaces was assessed based on the guiding principles identified in Chapter 2.

Whilst there is a good distribution of play spaces across Latrobe, there is some disparity in the quality of play spaces. Play spaces in the Moe area are of a higher quality, and better distributed, than those in the Morwell area and Traralgon area.

One of the major issues is that there is no obvious use of many play spaces and local parks, with the exception of swings. This suggests that many play spaces lack the interest, amenity, equipment or infrastructure to entice users to regularly re-visit the areas and that the current facilities available do not meet the needs of the community.

The key features that survey respondents said they sought were: in descending order: swings, age appropriate equipment, and shade. The community survey for this project found that the play spaces used most by survey respondents because they serve multiple age groups.

The majority of survey respondents ranked shade, fencing and support facilities as “poor”. Toilets, followed by play equipment were the improvements to play spaces identified as desirable, by the most people.

Many play spaces have equipment that is in a poor condition and are not being adequately maintained. This also reduces the perceived value of them to their local communities.

Better play value would be created if parks were developed with additional landscape elements, seats, and paths circuits etc. - so they are nice places to be, and they are easy places to get around. These will encourage children and families outdoors. This is especially the case in Morwell where park and play environments are often unappealing.

There is an increased interest and understanding of the value of play by the general public, and what contributes to this. However, this is not reflected in the current provision or design of existing facilities. Sites appear to project an image that could be perceived as disinterest in children and families, and a lack of understanding about both play itself, and about the value of amenity, social interaction and community building. Currently existing play spaces are not providing a good return on investment.

Core Service Levels

One way of ensuring that there is consistent quality of play spaces provided and being maintained in a satisfactory condition is to define acceptable core service levels for play spaces of different hierarchies.

Location, distribution, size, quality and design and management requirements that ensure that play spaces are “fit for purpose” are defined as **core service levels** in this plan.

By having these Council can more accurately cost future provision of play spaces, assist service organisations who may come to Council with proposal to build play spaces, as well as respond equitably to pressure to provide high quality facilities that may not be warranted, or that may be considered over serving in some areas.

The following tables outline draft recommended service levels for provision of access and infrastructure in play spaces, by the catchment hierarchy. These also include maintenance levels.

These will assist with aligning Council resources and community expectations, and responding to requests from the public for additional facilities.

The following table outlines the suggested core service levels for elements in play spaces at local, district and regional hierarchies.

Legend

✓ Will include /require this feature

x Will not include /require this feature

O This feature is optional, based on the site, adjacent opportunities, funding etc.

Table 10: Proposed core service levels for access

Catchment	Car parking immediately adjacent	Accessible car space	Bicycle parking	Accessible path into park and to social area/ seating/ shade/ equipment 3	Formed/ sealed path linking all elements	Accessible path of travel to car park	Site served by shared trail	Park perimeter path	Accessible path linking play elements 4	Specific accessible play equipment 5
Local	X	X	√	√	X	X	√	X	O	O
District	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	O
Regional	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 11: Proposed core service levels site and associated infrastructure – new play spaces

	Centrally located park, overlooked by house frontages	Social, environmental and sporting elements	Min park size 1ha	Located on prominent site/ main road	Seating/ tables	Play Equipment	Drink-ing water	Lighting	Fence	Built shade / shelter	Toilet	Tree shade & soft landscape	Water play element	Park name signs	Free access tennis/basketball or multi-sport court	Solar access-not directly overshadowed by multi-storey buildings.
Local	√	Min. social and environmental	√	O	√	√	X	O	O	X	X	√	X	√	X	√
District	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	O	√	O	√	X	on a structure or In-ground paving etc.	O	√
Regional	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	O	√	√	√	O	√	√	√

3 Accessibility Level. Can get to at least a social area with mobility devise or along a path – i.e. picnic, hub, around the equipment etc.

4 Accessibility Level. Can get to social area, and there is an accessible path that moves around the space to equipment, activities etc.

5 Accessibility Level. Some equipment suitable for people with ambulatory impairments/ have mobility devise e.g. sand play table, hammock swing, arm operated swing / bucket swing with back support / straps, ramped equipment or accessible path of travel to facility with right height e.g. with shop/ steering wheel, cubby under etc.

Table 13 Maintenance core service levels

Hierarchy of play space	Local	District	Regional
Type of management action			
1. Comprehensive post-installation inspection (Level 3 as per AS standard)	On renewal major upgrade or replacement	On renewal major upgrade or replacement	On renewal, major upgrade or replacement
2. Visual routine inspection: removal of debris, broken glass, needles, animal fouling and contaminates, top up /review loose-fill surfacing, damage to equipment, trees, paths, fence, furniture, surfaces, shade, graffiti. (Level 1 as per AS standard)	Weekly	Weekly	Daily
3. Mowing	As required	4-5 week cycle	3-4 week cycle
4. Rubbish collection	Weekly	Twice weekly	Twice weekly
5. Operational inspections: to assess excessive wear of moving or 'sealed-for-life' parts (including chain, secure bolts and fasteners) structural integrity and/or stability of structures, clearances, corrosion, fraying of ropes, impact and attenuating edges of other moving equipment, foundations- for rot, exposure. gate closer and locking mechanisms. (Level 2 as per AS standard)	Quarterly	Quarterly	Monthly
6. Comprehensive annual inspection (Level 3 as per AS standard)	Annually	Annually	Annually
7. Regular testing of impact attenuating surfaces (Level 3 as per AS standard)	Post-installation, and annually	Post-installation, and annually	Post-installation, and annually
8. Training of maintenance staff	Annually if and when staff have turned over	Annually if and when staff have turned over	Annually if and when staff have turned over
9. Record issues			

4. Key Issues, Policy Principles and Actions

4.1 Planning and design of play spaces

In most cases the quality of a play space is as dependent on the overall siting and design of the park – as on any play equipment area. In future, a stronger focus on the park design is desirable to provide parks for play, rather than separate play equipment areas.

All parks need a design concept prepared by a professional, that considers:

- The site's potential for play
- Any unique features on the site that should be protected and enhanced
- The best way to ensure accessibility to key features and facilities
- Siting and orientation for any infrastructure to ensure the best relationship of the play space to adjacent residences or adjacent facilities,
- The nature and location of planting and landscape elements and pathways
- The nature and range of play experiences to be provided
- Activities to be facilitated in the choice of equipment

When a new space is to be designed, or an existing one redeveloped it is desirable to ensure that a master plan and design does not focus just on the one space – but considers at least all of the adjacent spaces, or all play spaces in the same precinct. In this way, the diversity of play opportunities across multiple spaces can be enhanced.

The core service levels for each hierarchy of play space is outlined in Chapter 3.3. These need to be addressed when the location of spaces is being determined, and when play spaces are being designed.

As a priority: a framework of canopy trees, other landscape elements and a path network should be provided before play equipment. This would make a significant difference to the use and the play value of spaces.

In their current form, primary equipment areas don't reflect the value of play, or the amenity, social interaction and community building opportunities they could do, if they were better designed.

More integrated form of play space design and management

The shift to a different and more integrated form of play space and a cost effective process will require:

- A new multi-skill set in play space planning and design
- A compressed and affordable design and construct process
- Additional training of maintenance staff
- Changes in asset management to include landscape and art whose specific purpose is play
- A different process for inspections of non-equipment items
- More horticultural and path maintenance and cleaning, potentially, in some areas (compared to mowing and equipment maintenance)
- Additional resourcing and staff training about constructing and managing play spaces

The key to integrated design is the employment of a design team with skills and experience in:

- horticulture / landscape and play space design
- managing sub-consultants (for example artist artists), a knowledge of play equipment safety and in using all elements in a play context
- being able to articulate what is required to ensure all elements are compliant for public use, and
- how they should be managed to meet management and play value requirements.

The site assessment identified the need for more integrated landscape design of play spaces and benefits of the additional horticultural and natural elements, paths, and possible artworks.

A compressed design process

A compressed design process is a common practice in other Councils in recognition that local play spaces are typically low budget jobs that can be done in partnership with design consultants and in-house horticultural and construction staff. The process includes a sketch design for the whole play space and surrounds (this might be a whole local park or a small section of a larger park) if skilled staff are available to implement it.

Council could consider issuing a group of play space redesign projects at once. This can make small budget jobs cost effective for staff, or experienced consultants from elsewhere, and ensure that multiple spaces complement each other and together create a diversity of opportunities

Construction management skills will be needed in house if detailed design documentation isn't provided, so as to meet horticultural, landscape construction and play value requirements.

Designers of non-equipment and landscape, elements should, as part of the design exercise, be required by Council to specify how these elements should be managed and maintained as play elements.

Policy Principles: Planning and design of play spaces

- The design of new spaces should focus on providing play opportunities for people of all ages and abilities in central social community hubs that are not single-purpose play equipment areas for children.
- Council shall deliver an integrated overall landscape outcome rather than just provide play equipment, and use a process that is cost effective.

Actions: Planning and design of play spaces

- Adopt the guiding principles as proposed to guide the future planning design and management of play spaces in Latrobe.
- Consider providing an additional regional level park for social, family recreation in Churchill. The most appropriate site is the Civic space adjacent to the library – and the skate park.
- Consider using a play space designer to prepare a sketch design concepts for multiple play spaces in the one precinct to ensure they can be developed to complement each other.

4.2 The importance of trees and access to nature

Objective: Provide canopy trees and landscape elements as part of all play space developments

Trees, flowering plants, other vegetation and plant materials; sand, boulders, branches and soil (to name a few), offer environmental and amenity value in parks and also provide considerable interest and play value to children.

No built structure can provide the depth of diversity and changeability for play and interactions that nature can. Nature brings access to loose materials, opportunities to learn about life stages, growth and decline, and diversity due to variations in colour, perfume, the positioning of elements and the presence of wildlife, that changes over time, and in different the seasons and weather patterns.

Nature is fundamental to children understanding and protecting the natural world, and all children should experience direct, intimate knowledge of natural elements.

Research suggests that the scale of nature is not important to children as long as elements are there – a small puddle in the City might be as relevant as a small lake, or exposure to native mice as important as elephants.

Children's play is strongly affected by the opportunities they find in their environment. Children see their surroundings in different ways from adults. They often see the small details that adults miss. Whereas an adult may appreciate a tree for its beauty, its shade or the habitat it provides for birds, children may see a wide, low branch that invites them to climb or swing; some weeping boughs amongst which they can build a cubby, or some gum nuts that they can use to decorate their sand castle.

When the environment surrounding a playground provides additional interest to children over and above the play equipment, the whole space will engage them in more complex play, for longer duration and on return visits. Enabling better value to be derived from areas associated play equipment that is provided should be a key objective of design. One example is providing sand or, at least, vegetation near an under deck cubby house or shop, where children can use flowers, leaves etc. in play.

Existing vegetation and landscape amenity

Many sites could be considered as environmentally impoverished. Even on creek lines, there is little evidence of revegetation works. This evidence suggests that in environmental and landscape works are not a priority in design and construction.

Some residents concern that vegetation can make people feel unsafe by obscuring people or activity, can be overcome by the configuration of space, maintaining good sight lines through play spaces, limbing up boundary trees planted, and minimised dense vegetation that blocks casual surveillance (between 0.7m and 2.4m above the ground).

As the municipality becomes more urbanised, a more conscious planned access to nature will be required as the pockets of incidental open space and vegetation disappears in townships. More natural elements and landscape elements are required in the design of new play spaces and the renewal of others.

A major greening program for play spaces would be beneficial – for play value, the general amenity for those other than the “players” and for mental health, well-being and biodiversity benefits.

Trees

There are many beautiful open spaces in Latrobe and many have large mature trees. These include Bayley St Reserve in Moe and Reservoir Park in Churchill.

Most play spaces, however, do not have trees well integrated into the design, and there is limited shade or trees near play equipment in most parks.

Trees provide considerable value to users and adjacent residents, and to the environment in parks and play spaces. Some of these include:

- Considerable health benefits and restorative psychological values for users of parks, as well as for people who live nearby
- Air and water filtration, as well as soil enhancement
- An opportunity to mitigate climate change, capture carbon dioxide, and reduce the heat island effect
- Habitat for a wide range of native species, important for ecology, environmental education and enjoyment of children and people generally, as well as protection of cultural and biological heritage
- Wayfinding landmarks
- Enhanced amenity, shade and visual character for a park and neighbourhood
- Trees provide cooler form of shade that any built shade structures
- Aesthetic appeal that can contribute to civic pride, neighbourhood character and result in increased house values.

Trees and shrubs also contribute to children's play, providing:

- a source of inspiration and 'treasures', and loose materials for children to use in play
- opportunities for hiding behind and in some cases climbing and props for games.





The selection of tree species is important, as some species may be inappropriate to the locality or the position, soil type, or may be unsuitable in a play space. (For example, those that have a tendency to drop large limbs – (such as river red gums), and those with toxic fruit, sap, etc.)

Trees in play spaces need to be regularly inspected for their health and condition.

Planning, design and maintenance regimes need to include trees and natural elements along with all other play equipment, fences and paths in play spaces and ensure the condition of trees and the need for management, and replacement/renewal is included along with other play elements.

Policy guidelines: trees

Council shall:

- Provide trees in all play spaces.
- Ensure all play space developments including a planting plan, that provide shade trees as well as flowering and feature plants.
- Introduce a no net-loss tree policy for parks. For all trees lost or removed, Council should replace at least an equal number (and desirably 20 trees) for each tree removed.
- Ensure developers provide suitable species of canopy trees in all new play spaces, and these are from a Council approved species list.
- Include the management of trees, plants and landscape elements in the roles of play space maintenance staff.
- Minimised dense vegetation in urban play spaces that blocks casual surveillance (between 0.7m and 2.4m above the ground).

Actions: trees

- Consider undertaking community education about the value of trees and undertake a major program, to include trees, and horticultural/ landscape elements in all parks.
- Provide landscape elements including trees as a priority in all new play space developments.
- Introduce landscape features for play in all play spaces to encourage contact with nature, a diversity of play experiences and greater exploration, and manipulation of elements by children.
- Ensure maintenance staff include trees and other vegetation, as well as supporting infrastructure in addition to equipment in inspection, maintenance and renewal programs.
- Consider undertaking community education about the value of trees and undertake a major program, to include trees, and horticultural/ landscape elements in all parks.
- Consider planting boundary trees for screening purposes at reserves such as Morwell East (Nindoo Dr Reserve) Traralgon Central West (Brooke St Reserve), Carrington Park, Traralgon South Central (Hugh Court Park), Churchill (White Pde Reserve), Churchill (Glendonald Park), Yallourn North (Anderson Ave Reserve), Rossmore Ave Reserve.

Provide trees for amenity and shade at:

- Morwell Central East (Ronald Reserve and the Boulevard Play Spaces), in Morwell East (Angela Ct Reserve), in Newborough Central East (Stearman St Reserve), Newborough Central West (Jeeralang Ave Reserve) and Traralgon North (Rod Dunbar Park).

4.3 Socially inclusive spaces that enhance development opportunities

Objective: Deliver an integrated overall landscape outcome in play spaces that enhances specific development opportunities

Accessibility and social inclusion

Play is an essential part of child development and vitally important to children with disabilities. As most families rely on parks for play experiences the design of public play spaces must facilitate social inclusion and facilitate access to essential learning and fun experiences for all children.

A diverse choice of play opportunities makes it more likely that every one can find some way to participate, and children can maximise their development potential. Inclusion requires a high level of attention to detail and multiple access options, and a combination of elements suitable for people with different abilities.

All play spaces should be able to include all people, by enabling them to get into the space and being with their peers, family and friends in a social setting. More specific provision for people of all abilities can be made in play spaces of a district and regional nature.

The site visits indicated that a greater focus on accessibility and social inclusion in play spaces would be desirable. Only one site in Moe (Apex Park Central) and one in Morwell (Town Common Playground) has play elements that are accessible to people with a physical disability. Better provision for older children and carers could encourage greater use of play spaces and local parks as well as additional provision for seating.

When asked about what could make play space more accessible and inclusive, respondents of the community survey said, in descending order of frequency: All abilities equipment, access paths, age appropriate equipment, parking, toilets, fencing, and more equipment.

It is not possible to make all places or all play elements accessible to all people. However it is possible to make one area in all play spaces accessible –for example providing social elements such as a BBQ and seating area and a path network accessible from the street, and a circuit adjacent to equipment suitable to people using a mobility aid or those with a vision impairment.

District and regional-level play spaces should have higher levels of accessibility than local parks that should also have accessible path of travel into the play space from the street, and between the play space and the car park.





Wheelchair swings

A question was asked during this project as to whether it was beneficial to have an additional wheelchair swing such as a Liberty Swing.

Some parent's have said that their children don't like using these swings, as they don't want to "be made to look different" or "singled out". In this way wheelchair swings may be seen as promoting segregation and thus are not all-inclusive. However many children with high support needs are unlikely to be able to use a swing unless such as swing is provided and therefore will not otherwise be able to gain access to this type of

movement.

Signs provided with the fencing around wheelchair swings often say "restricted area" and this implies "keep out" to some members of the community.

Children can be fearful of these swings as they are fenced off and as they are told "this swing is only for children "with a disability or with special needs".

Wheel chair swings typically have a seat and can be used by people without a wheel chair.

The cost of buying the wheelchair swing apparatus, providing a wheelable all weather surfaces and a fence, makes these swings very expensive.

If Council is to install a wheel chair swing, the swing should be:

- Located adjacent to a managed centre where access to the key is convenient at all times when the swing is likely to be used, and on an accessible path of travel
- Sited as a central feature of the space and so a child swinging can see other children playing and a feel they are a part of the action.
- Placed so there is some shade and so as to avoid sun in the eyes of the users.
- Sited on an interesting route within the play space, and close to where other children are swinging, with clear views through fences to other activities.
- Importantly, if the wheelchair swing is fenced it must be signed to encourage use, not as if it is an area for exclusive use.

Existing access conditions

Levels of accessibility were assessed in this project, in the following way:

- **Lowest level 1.**
Criteria: Cannot access the site from path /road into property due to physical barrier – or absence of path, no way finding for blind person etc.
- **Level 2.**
Criteria: Can get to at least a social area with a mobility device or along a path – i.e. picnic, hub, around the equipment etc. but nothing more
- **Level 3.**
Criteria: Can get to social area, and there is a accessible path that moves around the space to equipment, activities etc. – but no access to, or no specialized equipment

- **Level 4.**

Criteria: Can get to equipment and some equipment suitable for people with ambulatory impairments, or has a mobility device such as: sand play table, hammock swing, arm operated swing / bucket swing with back support / straps, ramped equipment or accessible path of travel to facility with right height e.g. with shop/ steering wheel, cubby underneath.

The following table describes the level of access as defined above, by location in Latrobe.

Table 2: Level of access of existing play spaces, by location

Level of access	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Level 1	27	31	41	99
Level 2	3	7	5	15
Level 3	1	0	0	1
Level 4	1	1	1	3
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

The following district and regional-level play spaces do not have an accessible path of travel into the play space; they only have grassed access:

- Apex Park (east), Moe
- Lions Park (west), Moe
- Yinnar Skate Park, Yinnar
- Hazelwood Pondage Reserve, Hazelwood
- Apex Park, Glengarry.

Across the City a grading of play space accessibility is desirable, and information about access should be available and provided so people can make choices about accessibility before they arrive.

Internal and park perimeter circuit paths

The benefits of paths

Paths are a key indicator of accessibility for people relying on wheelchairs and mobility aids, for people with impaired vision, but for families with strollers and older people who are more subject to falls from uneven surfaces.

Paths can facilitate a large range and types of play –both fine and gross motor skill development, and the learning of how to ride a bicycle, a skateboard, and other wheeled toys.

Paths are often used in play for games like hopscotch, with marbles or small balls, and toy vehicles for example. They are often the canvas for young children’s drawings, and are sought after as the only hard surface in play spaces in some small rural communities.

Paths address the significant increase in the number of children using balance bikes, scooters and a wide range of small toy vehicles, as well as people using mobility aids. Paths are also a great way for all family members to be encouraged to go outdoors, exercise, socialise and to allow the development of basic skills such as riding a bike in a safe location.

A path system orders the space and provides links between elements and access to the key areas of the park.



Access to park via off-road trails

Off-road trails to parks and play spaces provide opportunities for people to be physically active, socialise and experience nature, as well as move safely around the neighbourhood. They are important as active transport and essential for younger and older people who cannot drive.

Links to off-road trails provide valuable extensions to the recreation and play activities available locally.

As a minimum district and regional-level play spaces should be serviced by paths, both from the street and footpath to the play space. Currently several district or regional-level play spaces do not meet this criterium.

Path surfaces

Loose surfaces with large particles such as Lilydale Toppings should be avoided in public places, as these are slippery and difficult to manage for frail and older people and people using mobility devices.

Where appropriate, surfaces such as granitic sand can be used for circuit pathways provided for exercise. These are best not relied on for all-weather access for people using mobility devices- unless they are frequently maintained, are not loose in the dry and boggy in the wet.

Existing provision of paths

Under half of Latrobe's play spaces have a path leading to the play space. These are however generally concrete or other hard surface path. This is consistent across all localities.

The following table describes the nature of play space paths by locality in Latrobe.

Table 3: Nature of paths in play spaces, by locality

Path /access	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Over grass only	19	23	21	63
Gravel path	2	2	1	5
Hard surfaced path	5	1	6	12
Combination of above	6	13	41	38
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

Currently several district or regional-level play spaces are not serviced by paths, both from the street and footpath to the play space

Policy guidelines: Access and inclusion

- The principles of universal access shall be applied in play space design that includes and encourages people of all ages and abilities.
- Play spaces shall be provided in parks that are central, prominent and connected to residential areas they serve by a footpath or a shared path. In urban areas play spaces should be within a walkable distance of all residences.
- Specific site features should be provided in all play spaces that will encourage social interaction.
- All district and regional play spaces should have an accessible path of travel with a suitable surface for mobility devices, into and around the core areas of the play space.
- Easy circulation routes should be provided to encourage multiple types of users, and seating located where adults can interact with each other and with playing children. Seats should be located on a seamless accessible path system.
- Play spaces must be able to encourage people of ages and abilities to play together. As a minimum people of all ages must be able to easily get to and into park as well as to the social focus of the play space.
- District and regional play spaces should have a higher degree of accessibility than local spaces and provide an internal path system, appropriate elements and specifically provided equipment for people with a disability, as well as support facilities.
- Within every precinct children with a disability and of different ages should be able to find some moving equipment that suits their needs (e.g. children with a physical disability, toddlers, and teenagers etc).
- All play spaces in the City should be designed to meet level 2. Access:
Access to and into the site from a path /roadway, include basic way finding for a blind person. Ability for everyone to get to at least a social area within the play space and to be seated or included in some activity.
- As a minimum district and regional-level play spaces should be serviced by paths, both from the street and footpath to the play space.
- District spaces should be designed to meet Level 3. Accessibility and regional spaces; level 4.
- Where possible play spaces should have an internal path network connected to an off-road trail or footpath serving the park.
- If the path network is unsealed it should have a surface that is neither loose nor boggy, and can be used by people using mobility devices.

Actions: Access

- As a priority seek to provide access into the following district and regional-level play spaces that do not have an accessible path of travel into the play space:
 - Apex Park (east), Moe
 - Lions Park (west), Moe
 - Yinnar Skate Park, Yinnar
 - Hazelwood Pondage Reserve, Hazelwood, and
 - Apex Park, Glengarry.

- Incrementally upgrade the accessibility of play spaces starting with district and regional spaces.
- Provide information about the level of access to all play spaces in all publications and park directories.

Age groups catered for and types of activities

Age groups

One of the main comments made by respondents to the householder survey was the need for, and the value of multi aged spaces and equipment suitable for specific age groups.

District and Regional-level play spaces should cater to multiple age groups.

Most of Latrobe's regional play spaces have elements suitable for older children – except Lions Park (west) and Apex Park (east).

The following table describes the age groups catered for in play spaces by location in Latrobe. In most cases play spaces will cater for multiple age groups:

Table 4: Age groups catered for in play spaces by main locality

Age groups cater for	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
<4 years	30	36	46	112
4 – 7 years	32	38	47	117
8 – 12 years	30	37	46	113
13+ years	3	6	6	15

Types of activities

Specific types of equipment encourage specific type of skills and brain development in children. Therefore conscious choice of equipment can influence play value, and the ages and abilities of people who can use them.

Some types of equipment are inherently more popular than others – largely because of the ability to interact with others and move –like swings and hammocks.

Existing equipment types and issues

Issues associated with the nature of play equipment in Latrobe, identified during site inspections, include the following:

- The types of equipment commonly provided are repetitive. Many are small combo climbers with a double swing.
- Most items (other than swings) do not provide any movement, or encourage activity or group interactions, and items are typically dotted singly around a park.
- Many horizontal ladders are not graded in height and there is no deck or bar to aid access to them.
- Many spaces have opportunities to build on physical features of reserves (e.g. through planting on creek line etc.) More opportunities for creative and imaginative play and nature interaction could significantly add interest and play value to play spaces.

- As many items are not integrated with surrounding features, landscape elements or have paths systems supporting them, there few benefits derived from spinoffs of play between the structures, or between the structures and the landscape.
- All the sites therefore rely on the structures for all play experiences, which provides poor value (especially as these structures themselves are so uninteresting).
- Equipment can be consciously provided to reflect the need for specific type of activity or development: i.e. a carousel can assist with vestibular development in early childhood. There are no items conducive to group activity such as a carousel (there is only two: in Elgin Park, Morwell and Yinnar Centenary Garden). Spinning is a very important activity for children's vestibular (brain) development. On many sites (especially Moe) there is over emphasis on individual spring toys (for example versus a group rocker).
- Similarly there are not enough swings, which are one of the few well-used items. These also provide important development and social opportunities for children. There are no bird's nest swings or other inexpensive ways of providing group interactions.
- The Moe area has a lack of diversity of equipment types compared to the Morwell area and the Traralgon area.

There could be a better distribution of some types of play equipment components. For example:

- Only one of ten track glides in Latrobe is found in Moe.
- Only eight of 39 seesaw spring rockers in Latrobe are found in the Moe.

The following table describes the play space equipment types by location in Latrobe.

Table 5: Play space equipment types by location

Equipment types	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Junior combo	26	31	47	104
Double/triple swing	23	34	45	102
Seesaw spring rocker	8	18	23	49
Spring rocker*	17	23	27	67
Freestanding slide**	8	8	6	22
Monkey bars	6	5	5	16
Track glide	1	4	6	11
Basketball/netball tower	2	2	1	5
Climbing frame	3	2	2	7
Exercise equipment	1	1	1	3
Helicopter	0	0	1	1
Hippo (Little Tykes)	0	0	1	1
Maze	0	1	1	2
Flying fox	2	0	1	3
Sandpit digger	0	1	2	3
Liberty swing	0	1	1	2

* Includes multiples

** May not all be freestanding



Inclusive equipment for movement and risk taking: back support, handholds, and space for a carer to support.

Policy guidelines: type of play activities

- Type of play equipment items shall be selected so as to provide: high play value, a diversity of options for people of different age groups and abilities, graded challenges to enhance learning, and to provide a diversity of options across each locality in Latrobe.

Actions: type of play activities

- Upgrade district play spaces to provide social, physical, imaginative and creative play experiences, landscape elements and an internal paths system. Provide a strong social focus in each space, and select play items on the basis of whether many different people can use them, and in how many different ways. Provide space and service that will enable use of these spaces for events.
- Design play spaces as integrated opportunities in central social community hubs that are not single-purpose play equipment areas for children, and so as to that serve people of all abilities from a wide range of age groups.

Water play

The value of water for play

Water is a highly sought-after medium for play. It is sensory and valuable for creative/interactive play. It is changeable in appearance, in form and in temperature. It affects change; it can be a vehicle, a digging instrument, an ornament, a binding agent and a solvent all in one.

Water can have a very calming effect on people- the sound of a bubbling brook or fountain can provide respite and peace in a busy urban space or park.

Water forms the foundation of our whole ecosystem, and the edge of water bodies, however small, (such as an ephemeral watercourse or natural creek) is the most diverse of all environments, supporting a huge variety of life forms and elements that greatly interest children.

Catching tadpoles and yabbies, watching water boatmen and dragonflies around water, or sending seedpod boats or flowers on a journey down a stream, have been the pastimes of many generations of Australian children.

Water and risk⁶

The availability of water in environments accessible to children does carry risks. Most of these risks relate to pooled water. The risks include:

- Deep water (over 100 mm in depth)
- Water quality
- Steep or unstable banks or edges that prevent children climbing out
- Sudden changes in water depth / pot holes
- Thick vegetation/ structures obscuring the water
- The velocity
- Slippery surfaces that may cause falls into water and incurring spinal or head injury and drowning
- Submerged obstacles and hazards
- Impeded search and rescue

Most of these risks can be avoided by providing shallow water that does not pool, by managing access to the water in a controlled way, and by encouraging supervision.

There are many ways that water can be provided in a play space that still provides the fun of interacting with moving water, but that reduces the risk of drowning. Some of these include

- Spray aprons, misters and jets
- Ephemeral or low flow creek beds or channels (<2cm depth)
- Press button showers or fountains
- Channels, troughs and pipes with weirs and mechanical gadgets
- Hand or button-operated pumps.

The following images illustrate some common forms of water play facilities: the spray apron, the water pump, channel of water, the push button fountain or tap, and the natural dry creek bed.

6 Note: This report does not address the management of water provided for specifically for swimming, which is a different topic.



Water play features

Water pumps, taps or fountains can be manipulated by children, and deliver water to a basin that drains away relatively quickly, or into a sand area or nature play space such as a dry creek bed area.

In some instances, the design of water features may enable the capture and recirculation of water, and the use of tank water.

Water play features in play spaces need to be very robust and regularly inspected and maintained. Water features are typically very popular, and have moving parts or fittings that wear out, or that may clog with sand or leaves or foam that may damage them. Therefore, water features commonly require frequent inspections and maintenance.



Water play features may be very expensive to install and operate, especially if they require connection to and the use of potable water, and due to the regular need for replacement of taps or moving parts such as levers and buttons.

If a water feature is designed for recycled water, the supply needs to be guaranteed and water quality must be able to meet the guidelines for "primary contact".

The water source must be regularly monitored to

ensure there is no contamination.

The edge and the bottom of a pool or water chute, channel etc. or splash area must be regularly cleaned and otherwise managed to prevent the build up of algae, and ensure it doesn't become slippery.

Water bodies/ courses adjacent to play spaces

Play spaces can be provided in parks with water bodies or natural watercourses or creeks through them. However access to water in or adjacent to play spaces must be managed very carefully, as children can easily drown in water of 100 mm deep.

Play equipment areas should be positioned away from any permanent water body, unless it is very shallow (<2 centimetres deep) and designed for access by children, allowing time for a caregiver to see an absconding child, before they reach the water body/course.

Play equipment areas and social /picnic areas should generally be more than 30 metres from any water body retaining water of 100 mm depth or more, or there should be fencing separating the two.

Where there is access to a water body in a park with a play space, Council should refer to safety and design guidance related to inland water bodies provided by Royal Life Saving.

Water accessible to children must not be allowed to pond or be dammed to allow a pool of 100 m of water in depth.

Children must not be exposed to high-velocity water such as a creek in flood -that can bowl a small child over, and or sweep them away.

The design of any creek bank or watercourse adjacent to, or in a play space must provide a gentle gradient such that a small child is able to easy climb out.

Sightlines into any watercourse or water body from the rest of a play space and especially any social area must be clear.

Water bodies can provide some unwanted features such as mosquitos and water born parasites that can make people sick. Water can also be attractive to dogs that may foul water or damage the edges of watercourses when accessing the water.

Policy guidelines: water features

- Consider the provision of a water feature in regional level play spaces in Latrobe.
- The most suitable form of water play features for Council to consider in play spaces include:
 - a spray apron, with misters and water jets
 - water pump
 - channel of water
 - push button fountain or tap, and
 - a 'natural 'creek bed.
- The following factors must all be considered when planning a water play facility:
 - The cost of on-going, regular maintenance as well as the capital works cost
 -
 - The suitability of a proposed design for the nature and context of the space
 - The availability of support facilities required for a regional play space (e.g. car parking and change facilities)
 - Whether the space will operate all year round
 - The availability of water in other parks and public spaces nearby
 - Play equipment areas and social /picnic areas should generally be more than 30 metres away from any water body retaining water of 100 mm depth or more, or there should be fencing separating the two.
 - Water accessible to children must not be allowed to pond or be dammed to allow a pool of 100 mm or greater in depth.
 - The water feature should not be located close to sand as this will clog up the system.

4.4 Environmental integrity and amenity

Objective: Provide a higher level of amenity in play spaces to increase use from people of all ages and abilities

Shade

SunSmart's Shade Policy Framework suggests play spaces are considered a high priority for shade provision. Sun protection in childhood and adolescence reduces the future risk of skin cancer. Priority areas for shade provision are places in a park where people will sit, or gather at times of peak UV, in particular between 10 am and 2 pm Eastern Standard Time and 11 am and 3 pm Daylight Saving Time from September to April. In a play space areas that attract children for extended times should, at least, be part shaded- such as sand pits.

There are many ways to provide shade. Generally, a combination of trees and other forms of shade are preferred.

Trees for shade

Trees are the coolest form of shade and if species of canopy tree appropriate for the locality are planted in a play space, they can also considerably enhance the amenity of the park and contribute to play value, for up to 80 years. Trees can screen unwanted views, provide wind protection and provide privacy or separate areas for different activities.

When selecting a site for a play space or new park, land that has a framework of established trees is preferred.

The use of existing shade can be optimised in siting any play equipment and social elements can be added to a shaded area. Any low branches could be pruned from trees to allow children to play underneath.

Some native species of tree may not provide good shade cover, because of their habit. These may need to be supplemented with additional species that have a wide dense canopy or select specimen trees may be added for shade and other interest. Alternatively, shade structures may be included in the design of suitable play equipment, or provided as an adjunct to social areas of a district play space for example.

Shade sails

Shade sails can provide immediate shade when a play space is first developed and supplement permanent and tree shade, however, shade sails are not preferred as permanent shade solutions. They are easily damaged during storm events and by vandalism. Shade sails are relatively expensive considering their relatively short life, and the effectiveness of shade sails in blocking UVR also diminishes over time. Generally, shade sails are less effective than permanent shade structures if positioned correctly. Where shade sails are to be used, the fabric should be a rated to a minimum 94% UV block out or (UPF 15) or greater.

Permanent shade structures

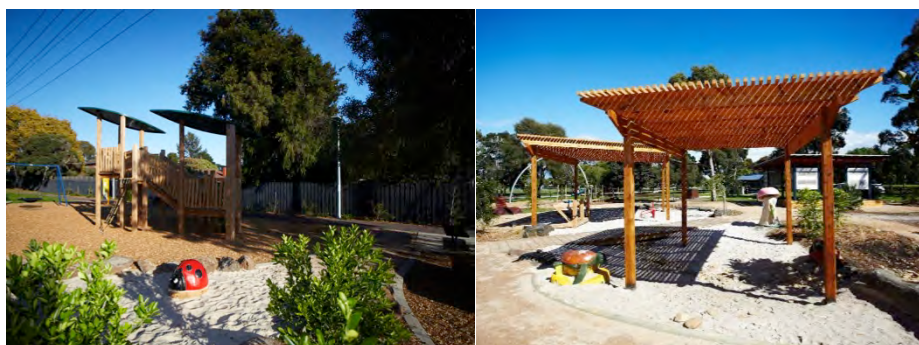
Permanent shade shelters can attract a wider range of ages and larger groups to outdoor spaces, and encourage users to stay longer.

There are some relatively cost effective off the shelf shade structures available that may be suitable for installation in play spaces in Latrobe. However, the design and positioning of shade structures requires specialist expertise and needs to complement planting and the design of any permanent play equipment structures. All elements must work together to provide a park setting with areas of sun and shade, and for district level and regional play spaces- shelter from wind and rain.

Where play equipment structures are provided key elements can be designed to provide roofs over areas where children spend a lot of time.

The combination of planting and structures should not obstruct supervision to key areas within a play space.

Examples of play space shade options are shown in the following images.





Existing spaces without shade

Lions Park (west) (Moe), Newman Park (Traralgon), Immigration Park (Morwell), and Hazelwood Pondage Reserve (Hazelwood) only have treed shade.

The following play spaces do not have any, and require some shade:

- Botanic Gardens, Moe (district level play space hence it requires both natural and built shade)
- Smallburn Avenue Reserve, Newborough
- The Boulevard Reserve, Morwell
- Angela Court Reserve, Morwell
- Nindoo Drive Reserve, Morwell
- Jack Harrison Park, Traralgon
- Rod Dunbar Park, Traralgon
- The Downs Reserve, Traralgon
- Bradman Boulevard Reserve, Traralgon
- Explorers Park, Traralgon – (district level play space hence it requires both natural and built shade)
- Hugh Court Park, Traralgon
- Milligan Park, Traralgon
- Southdown Way Reserve, Traralgon.

Policy guidelines: Shade

- Natural (trees) and permanent built shade are preferred over the use of shade sails in play spaces.
- Positioning play spaces and equipment in parks to utilise existing natural shade is a priority in design.
- District and regional-level play spaces should have both natural (trees) and built shade facilities (e.g. a BBQ shelter).
- The combination of planting and structures should not obstruct supervision to key areas within a play space.
- Where shade sails are to be used to complement or allow natural shade to establish, the fabric should be rated to a minimum 94% UV blockout or (UPF 15), or greater.

Actions: Shade

- Introduce more trees, shade and landscape features, paths and seats and tables into play spaces to encourage older people and more social groups to use them.
- Upgrade shade and landscape amenity in all play spaces starting with district play places.
- Prioritise the provision of shade trees and structures in district play spaces and then seek to provide more trees for shade in all local play spaces.
- Upgrade shade and landscape amenity in all play spaces starting with district play places.
- Provide trees for shade and permanent shade structures as a priority, over shade sails.

Other support facilities

Off-street parking for play spaces

District and regional-level play spaces should have off-street parking.

Some 21% of Latrobe's play spaces have off-street parking. Only 13% of play spaces in Traralgon have off-street parking, compared to 25% in the Moe area and 28% in Morwell.

The following table describes the off-street parking provision at play spaces, by location in Latrobe.

Table 6: Off-street parking provision by location

Off street parking	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Yes	8	11	6	25
No	24	28	41	93
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

Policy Guidelines: Off street parking

- Provide all District and regional-level play spaces with off-street parking.
- One accessible parking space should be provided at district and regional play spaces with dedicated parking areas.
- An accessible path of travel should be provided between a car parking area and adjacent play space.

Lighting

Lighting will enhance the use of parks and play spaces and provide some users with a greater sense of security. Lighting may also prevent some vandalism at play spaces.

Some 68% of play spaces do not have a source of lighting. In Traralgon 80% are not lit, this is significantly higher than those in the Moe and Morwell areas. Whilst it is not imperative that play equipment area are lit per se, most play spaces should in the most social and community hubs to be successfully and these spaces should be the ones that encourage use and movement around the neighbourhood in the evening.

District and regional-level play spaces should have access to lighting. The following district or regional level play spaces are not lit.

- Lions Park (west), Moe
- Newman Park, Traralgon
- Immigration Park, Morwell
- Mathison Park, Churchill
- Yinnar Skate Park, Yinnar
- Yinnar Centenary Garden, Yinnar
- Hazelwood Pondage Reserve, Hazelwood
- Apex Park, Glengarry
- Tyers Recreation Reserve, Tyers.

The following table describes the source of play space lighting by location in Latrobe.

Table 7: Source of play space lighting by location

Light source	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
None	15	27	38	80
In play space or nearby	11	5	6	22
Street lighting	6	7	3	16

Policy guidelines: lighting

- District and regional-level play spaces should have lighting, which will encourage additional use of spaces, by a broad range of people.

Actions: lighting

- Incrementally provide lighting at all district and regional level play spaces.

Fencing***Purpose***

Fencing contributes to the package of features that some families seek in association with using a park for play. Some families with toddlers, a large number of children or multiple births, or whose children may have a hearing impairment, or be on the autism spectrum and have a tendency to abscond for example, may seek out fenced play spaces.

Fencing may be required when hazards such as a water body or busy road are located adjacent to an area where children play, and to keep dogs out of the play space.

Internal fences may also be required to prevent children running in front of equipment such as swings.

Fences are not always beneficial

Fences can present barriers to people using wheelchairs or other ambulatory aids because of the design i.e. narrow openings, difficulty in reaching child proof latches on gates, or other obstructions to the path of travel etc.

Some parents have complained that bullies can trap a young child inside a fence.

Fences are only as good as the gate. If the gate is left open then the fence is not effective.

It has been argued that a fence can create a false sense of security for some people who like to use play space as child minding centres and don't want to actively supervise their children (even though they are able to).

Fencing is expensive and therefore often, if it is provided, it is as short as possible to reduce costs, and therefore very close to equipment and not well integrated onto the landscape. The cost of fencing may double the budget required to build a playground.

The way in which a site is fenced will impact on how a park or play space is used. Fences around a small area within a park (for example around just equipment) may prevent children from accessing other valuable areas of the park and can reduce the play value of the whole site.

Because of the cost of fences cheaper less aesthetically pleasing fences may be installed– and may give a place an institutional feel if care is not taken to design them with other landscape elements. The edges of parks are very important in determining appeal. They need to tantalise and welcome the user.

The broader space around play equipment is often critical to many play activities, and caging it in with a fence can limit the games that spin off from the equipment and its environment. McMillan St Reserve in Morwell is an example where the siting of the fence provides a cage-like affect – which detracts from use and play opportunities. See image following:



The image above on left shows how a fence can create a cage effect. On the right above the image shows a nice way to fence a site even though the fence is not all that attractive.



Decorative fencing as shown in the to images above can add to the character and play value of a site.



This above image shows a box gate. It slows the exit of children and enables a person with a dog to leash/unleash and scan the space, prior to entry/exit.

Fences, supervision and dogs

Sometimes fences encourage poor practices by both the carers of children, and dog owners. Carers sometimes place their children inside a fenced area, instead of supervising them. Dog owners have similarly been observed leaving their dogs within fenced play spaces while they run errands or pick up children.

Where play spaces are fully fenced, signs should make it clear that dogs are prohibited, and could also advise that children are not to be left unattended inside a fenced enclosure.

Fence design

Play space may be partly enclosed with other landscape features walls, living fences, hedges or other plant material, that provide greater aesthetic appeal than a space totally enclosed by a fence.

In some parks with heritage or environmental considerations fences can be visually intrusive. The design of a fence can however also be a positive feature in the landscape. In many countries, historic parks are frequently fenced with beautiful cast or wrought iron fences.

Council has had feedback that rural style fencing (post and wire fencing) is inappropriate for play space fencing. Any horizontal element that is climbable could render a fence ineffective.

Ensure:

- Fencing material is suitable to the context and durable and that does not get too hot in summer:
- Cappings and edging will remain secure
- There are no points of entrapment
- There are no horizontal rails that can be easily climbed.
- There are no sharp and projecting fittings
- Any preservative treatment used is suitable and compliant with relevant safety standards
- Avoid using cables or wire fencing that are not easily seen at night or by a person with a vision impairment
- Timber fencing has any necessary capping to protect it from deterioration.

Promotion

Fenced play space sites should be promoted, in directories of parks and be viewable and downloadable on Council's website so that residents and visitors can seek them out.

Gates

The presence or absence of a gate will be a critical factor for some parents who really need a fully fenced space for their children.

Gates with high, difficult to reach latches can make access for wheelchair users difficult. The latches on gates need constant maintenance and are also expensive to replace.

Types of fencing

There are many different fencing products and styles on the market, each with its own purpose, cost, benefits and disadvantages.

If a community expresses a justifiable need for a high, difficult to climb fence, the economical choices are essentially:

- Pool type fence (flat topped)
- Chain mesh (black coated mesh with timber posts creates a less utilitarian appearance)
- Timber slats

The fence will need to be approx. 1800 mm high if it is to act as a serious barrier to absconding children who are good climbers. This is a major visual imposition onto a landscape so the careful positioning is vital. Views into the site need to be maintained.

Shrub planting in places against fences can improve the appearance but they should not block views in from a street.

For lower fences, a height of approx. 1200 mm high is typically used to act as a barrier to prevent a quick escape.

Coated chain mesh with a pipe rail and timber posts is an economical material choice and black or dark grey wire coating improves the appearance.

Flat-topped, low fences with vertical members of steel and aluminium are also easily available; black or dark grey colours are less visually prominent than white or dark green.

Low planting along the fence line can be used for visual interest and does not block the view into the play space.

Ensure that if the fence is timber, it has any necessary capping or protective coating to protect it from deterioration.



Sometimes suppliers recommend fencing around items such as wheelchair swings (such as a Liberty swing) to prevent people running in front of it. Generic signage provided with this equipment is sometimes quite negative, implying it is a “restricted area” – and only for wheelchair users.



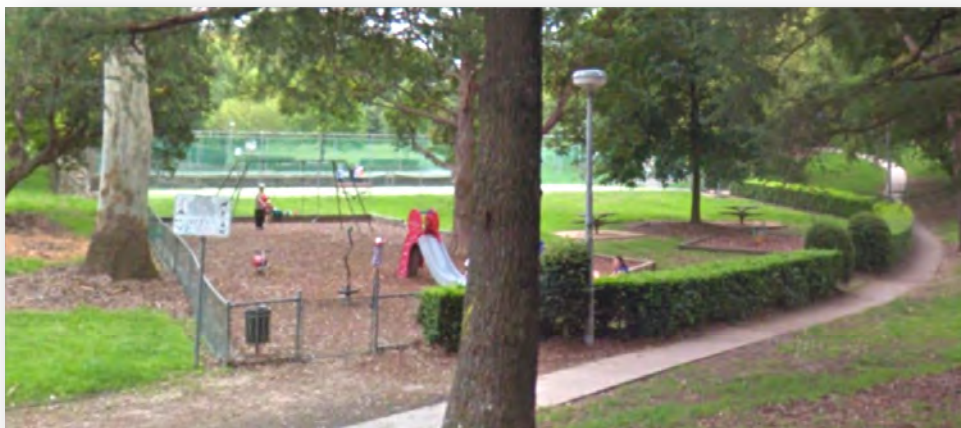
A Liberty swing does not need to be sited so it is away from other swings.



Exclusive signage is not recommended.



Partial fences or decorative barriers may slow children down and direct activity away from hazards without being a traditional fence or in some instances; a major expense. Where only a partial fence has been provided, it is useful to provide a seat near the opening, so that parents can more easily supervise the exit point.



Hedges can be used to form part of a barrier around a play space, without restricting site lines.

If a play space is located within a much larger reserve, care needs to be taken with the placement of the fence and how it sits within the larger park.

Costs of fencing

To minimise the cost of fencing, choose a site that only requires minor additional fencing because of existing configuration of the site, partial enclosure, or the presence of some existing fences.

It is not worth fencing a play space if the play space is not worth playing in, especially for the target user group who seek a fence.

Fencing across Latrobe's playgrounds

The majority of Latrobe's play spaces are not fenced (84%). Only four of the play spaces across Latrobe have full fencing (two without gates). The majority of sites with some fencing are in Moe. The following table describes the status of fencing in play spaces by location in Latrobe.

Table 8: Status of fencing by location

Fence type	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
Full (with gate)	1	0	1	2
Full (no gate)	1	1	0	2
Part fenced	7	3	5	15
Not fenced	23	35	41	99
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

Two sites are already fenced in Morwell:

- 49 Town Commons Reserve. This is a well-located site for a fenced play area.
- 54 McMillan St Reserve (however the fence is poorly placed)

The following sites are already fenced or partly fenced in Traralgon:

- 32 Freeman Park West (poorly located at the backs of houses from a surveillance perspective, but partly fenced)
- 34 Rod Dunbar Reserve (Local)
- 39 Gilwell Reserve- (a poor play space but is partly fenced).

Policy Guidelines: Fences

- A selection of play spaces should be fenced across the municipality.
- Every township should have at least one fenced play space of least a district level hierarchy.
- Select some accessible sites to fence first.
- Fenced sites should be distributed reasonably equitably, be a district or regional level play space
- The decision to fence a play space should be made on a case-by-case basis, considering factors such as:
 - the catchment hierarchy of the site
 - the nature of the park and **any other** parks and playgrounds nearby

- the size and configuration of each park and **any** play space within it
 - the purpose of the fence
 - the type, height, and design of appropriate fencing and gate, and
 - the cost of fencing the site.
- Where play spaces are to be fenced ensure that the fence includes open space around any equipment and does not create a cage effect. Alternatively the fence could enclose the whole site.
 - Council should only fence play spaces with high play value.
 - Dogs should not be allowed inside a fenced play space.

Placement of fences

- Fences should not be too close to play equipment, or to create a corral effect that effectively limits play to just the equipment. Where possible locate the fence around the perimeter of the park, or at least include a larger area to include some grass, trees or other activity areas.
- If a fence is intended to prevent climbing, avoid placing structures too close that will provide a foothold.

Fence design

- Fences need to reflect the character and significance of the site. They may need to be designed to minimise the visual impact on a space, but they can also offer a strong positive visual feature and can be a playful element in their own right. Most importantly, the providers need to be clear as to the purpose of any particular fence, as this will establish its design requirements.
- External fence heights should be at least 1800 mm high, with multi-latch gates, to effectively contain older children who abscond.
- If a site is fenced, a double gate for maintenance access must be provided.

Promotion of fenced sites

- Fenced play spaces and parks should be promoted so that they are easy to find by people who need them.
- In order to remain welcoming and inclusive, signs around wheelchair swings should be positive and encourage all users.
- Where a site is fenced, Council should indicate that a condition of use of a fenced playground is (as with any water body) that all children under 10 years of age be supervised at all times by an adult.

Actions: Fencing

Moe

It is recommended that the following sites should be considered for fencing, where budgets allow:

- 87 Apex/Lions Park (Regional)
- 91 Ted Summerton Reserve (District)

The following sites could be fenced if the community requests further fencing, and if the budget allows:

- 110 Hearn Park (District)
- 107 John Field Reserve (District)

Additional sites that could be fenced if the play space is upgraded include:

- Ronald Reserve (Local/District) (however this site is away from the road and may not need fencing)
- 51 Northern Reserve (District)

Consider fencing of Moe South Central (Stoddart St Reserve) street frontage.

Churchill

Either one of the following sites may be worth investigating for fencing:

- 74 Glendonald Park (Local). This site has been recommended for upgrading to District and may be suitable for fencing, or
- 68 Watson Park (Local/District).

Traralgon

If the community values additional fenced play spaces, 37 Bradman Reserve (District) could be investigated

Redesign of the fence is recommended at reserves such as Traralgon North (Rod Dunbar Park) Morwell Central (McMillan Reserve), Newborough North East (Montane Blvd. Reserve), Traralgon North East (The Strand Reserve) to reduce the cage effect.

Toilets

It is generally not affordable or necessary to provide toilets in play spaces unless sited in conjunction with facilities that encourage a long duration of stay. Therefore toilets should not be provided in play spaces of a local hierarchy.

Regional play spaces should have a toilet -unless toilets are available in a community facility immediately next door.

Where toilets are to be provided they should comply with current Access and Mobility Standards, and desirably provide a “Changing Places” style of toilet with an adult sized change table and an accessible path of travel to it.

The following table describes the status of play space toilets by location in Latrobe.

Table 9: Status of play space toilets by location

Toilets	Moe	Morwell	Traralgon	TOTAL
None	26	31	42	99
< 100 m	4	6	5	15
> 100 m	2	2	0	4
TOTAL	32	39	47	118

All Latrobe’s regional play spaces are currently in close proximity to toilets.

If a play space does not have a toilet and a public toilet is available in adjacent parkland or sports facilities, a sign should indicate the direction and distance to adjacent public toilets, and whether they are accessible.

Policy guidelines: toilets

- Provide access to a toilet at district and regional play spaces.
- Where toilets are to be provided they should comply with current Access and Mobility Standards.
- Where possible provide access to a “Changing Places” style of toilet with an adult sized change table and an accessible path of travel to it at all regional play spaces.

Drinking fountains

District and regional-level play spaces should have drinking fountains.

Eleven of Latrobe's play spaces have drinking fountains (9%). Only two of these play spaces are in Traralgon.

The following district or regional-level play spaces do not have these facilities:

- Lions Park West, Moe
- Yinnar Skate Park, Yinnar
- Hazelwood Pondage Reserve, Hazelwood
- Explorers Park, Traralgon.

Policy guidelines: drinking fountains

- District and regional-level play spaces should have drinking fountains.

Seating

Provision for seating in a play space can enhance length of stay if a caregiver is comfortable, for example, and other family members can sit and watch or read.

It is also desirable that tables are provided in play spaces to complement seating. These can facilitate picnicking and other group activities and provide a social focal point for the space.

Multiple seats and the configuration of seats (for example facing each other) can encourage more social interaction.

Current provision of seating

Twenty five percent of Latrobe's play spaces do not have seating. A larger number of play spaces in Morwell do not have any seating.

The Moe area is better served for seating where only 13% of play spaces do not have seating, and there are 2.3 seats per play space.

Policy guidelines: Seating

- Council will provide seating and a least one table in every place space.
- Seating areas should be provided in such a configuration to include prams and mobility devices.
- An accessible path of travel from the street/ nearest path should be provided to all seating areas in play spaces.

4.5 Managing play equipment and associated infrastructure

Objective: Provide adequate resources to maintain all play assets in a compliant way and to enhance the value of those to users.

The condition of existing play spaces

Play DMC undertook a condition assessment of Latrobe's play spaces for this project in March 2015. A separate summary was submitted to Council with the results of the onsite assessment, as well as replacement value of assets. An analysis of the each play space and recommended actions is provided in the recommendations report which is a separate volume to this report. Summaries of recommendations, per play space and by locality are provided later in this document. The condition of play spaces was rated out of a possible 5.

Moe area

The condition of play spaces in the Moe area averaged 3.4/ out of 5.
Play spaces with the poorest condition were:

- Cross St Reserve (1/5)
- Jeeralong Avenue Reserve (2.5)
- Scott Avenue Reserve (2/5)
- Ted Summerton Reserve (2/5)
- Apex Park (central) (2/5)
- Randall Crescent Reserve (2/5)

Morwell area

The condition of play spaces in the Morwell area averaged 3.0 out of 5.
Play spaces with the poorest condition were:

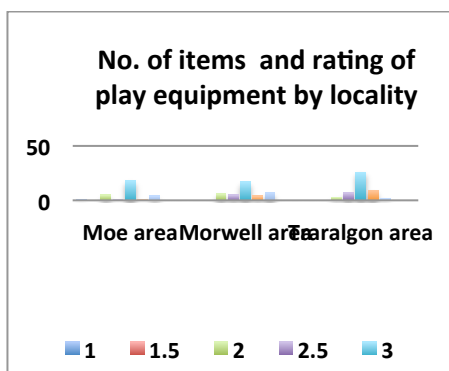
- Immigration Park (2/5)
- Tulloch Street Reserve (2/5)
- Town Common Playground (2/5)
- Berg Street Reserve (2/5)

Traralgon area

The condition of play spaces in the Traralgon area averaged 2.9 out of 5.
Play spaces with the poorest condition were:

- Hubert Osborne Park (2/5)
- Sir Frank Macfarlane Burnet Reserve (2/5)
- Apex Park, Glengarry (2/5)

The following graph describes the condition of play spaces (on a 0-5 scale), by location.



Asset management

An asset management plan is a tool combining management, financial, engineering and technical practices to ensure the level of service required by users is provided at the most economical cost to the community. Assets must be considered inputs not outputs. The play experiences children receive as a result of use are the real outputs.

Additional work may be required by Council to provide an asset management plan for play spaces that addresses the following issues:

- The levels of management required by recently revised Australian Standard
- The changing nature of play space provision to include more than just traditional play equipment
- Inclusion of trees and other landscape elements as assets
- The need to acknowledge that the design life of some play and recreational infrastructure is a lot longer than its functional life (i.e. the physical equipment is likely to last longer than its market appeal). When recreational assets reach the end of their useful life, replacement with the exact same asset is not likely to meet service levels or community demand
- Replacement may trigger the need for redesign instead, and in some cases relocation of play equipment into more sustainable hubs elsewhere
- A practical and simple asset management system that is cost effective to use is required.

Asset replacement and renewal

Asset renewal priorities will need to be compared with major improvements recommended in the locality analysis, that are based on precinct wide assessments, play value, demand and core service provision.

An important asset management issue is that assets are not replaced like for like when they are replaced. The functional life of play equipment and sports facilities is considerably less than the durability of most components, and the community demand for specific design equipment and attributes will fluctuate on more frequently in line with commercial trends and availability. When equipment is due for renewal, the nature of what is required, and the design of the space it contributes to, must be reassessed as part of an asset renewal process.

Replacement value of play assets has been estimated from site inspections, based on other examples elsewhere.

Condition, design life and replacement value was estimated based on site inspections.

Council estimates that the total value of all play equipment is \$2,761,682. This appears to be an under estimation of replacement value. The overall replacement value of play equipment assets estimated following site inspections was as in order of \$3,596,000.

Risk management and maintenance

There are six key elements to a play space risk management system. These are outlined in the forthcoming Australia Standard: AS 4685 - Playground Equipment and Surfacing Part 0: Development, Installation, Maintenance and Operation. The key elements are:

- Systematic record keeping
- Post-installation inspection of new or refurbished play spaces
- Routine inspection and maintenance (Level 1)
- Operational inspection and maintenance (Level 2)
- Comprehensive inspections (Level 3)
- Accident reporting procedures.

Standards Australia has recently updated the previous AS 4486-1997 and this document will become AS 4695 - Part 0 (in 2016). This Standard clearly outlines in detail the number and types of inspections, the accompanying maintenance tasks, and the recordkeeping practices that are required.

The maintenance regime for existing play spaces

There are some key challenges faced by Latrobe City Council in maintaining play spaces. These include the following:

- There is demand for higher standards of play space design there is also reduced availability of funds due to rate capping, for both capital and maintenance
- The increasing number of custom designed and landscape play elements and proportionately less off-the-shelf equipment requires different approaches to assessment and different maintenance tasks, procedures, systems and training
- Assessing the condition, service standards, cost, risk and financial projections of elements that are not off-the-shelf equipment

- Asset managers will need to be trained in play value and play, as well as managing landscape and art elements through the design process and maintenance.
- Council will need designers to provide a vision for management of nature play elements and an intention of how landscape and art are to be managed. This will also ensure that designs are grounded and practical to manage, and management is considered during the design process.
- Where possible the management of the whole place needs to be embraced by staff – not just the maintenance of play equipment components.
- Not all elements in a play space are being renewed or maintained at the same time as play equipment – paths fences, taps, trees and garden beds – all need to be maintained and when in need of renewal all elements should be upgraded.
- Better record keeping of inspections, repairs, upgrades and common faults is required to comply with AS 4695 - Part 0 (forthcoming in 2016), and the Australian Risk Management Standards. Record keeping is also valuable for planning and budgeting purposes.

Council has a program of maintenance and a budget allocation set each year for the maintenance and upgrade of equipment. However this program appears to be significantly under funded. The current budget does not allow all spaces to be maintained adequately to enhance use, provide good play value, reduce long terms maintenance costs through preventative management and meet community expectations.

Currently, staff have to either maintain all spaces to a lesser level or service only a proportion of the necessary sites. This means the program of required maintenance tasks continues to escalate.

The site inspections indicated that no mulch provided as a softfall meets current depth requirements. In addition Swing S-hook openings of approximately 10mm do not meet current requirements.

Policy guidelines: Asset management

- Council shall ensure that all play space management activities are in accordance with the forthcoming Standard AS 4695 - Part 0 (in 2016).
- All elements in a play space will be included in renewal and maintenance activities not just play equipment, but paths fences, taps, trees and garden beds for example.
- Council shall ensure an assessment of need -taking into account core service level and new standards will determine renewal of play elements, and play equipment renewals will not be “like for like” replacements.

Actions: Asset management

- Seek additional resources to increase the level of maintenance of play spaces in Latrobe as per Australia Standard: AS 4685 - Playground Equipment and Surfacing Part 0: Development, Installation, Maintenance and Operation.
- Plan to reduce the cost of mowing, in the budget, in favour of an increase in the cost of maintaining, landscape, furniture and cultural elements in play spaces.
- When a play space is due for asset renewal, ensure a review of design is conducted with adjacent residents.

- Provide additional training for Council staff involved in the planning design, management and maintenance of play equipment, and provide more formalised opportunities for communication between these staff.
- Continue to provide horticulture, landscape and play space design skills internally along with Construction management skills in the play space design and management team.
- Expand on the draft core service levels provided, to include maintenance tasks.
- Revise the current inspection and maintenance activities in line with the Australian Standards AS 4695 - Part 0.
- Introduce a record keeping system in line with the Australian Standards on Risk Management.
- Increase the frequency of softfall top up and replacement.
- Utilise an asset management system to record audits electronically, be able to track actions, works requests and repairs. This should be accessible to multiple officers for the purpose of budgeting, compliance and planning.
- Revise job descriptions for play space maintenance staff to include landscape elements, trees, fencing, and paths etc.
- Undertaking training of maintenance staff about play value and play spaces design and management.

Supporting partners, staff and committees of management involved in play spaces

There are other partners involved in the provision and management of play spaces in Latrobe. These currently include committees of management and service clubs and could include schools.

Committees of management

Committees of management for kindergartens and preschools and for sports reserves may provide and look after play spaces. This may include: the purchase, design and maintenance of equipment. Typically these committees rely on manufacturers to design play spaces, and they undertake play space related management tasks.

Volunteer members of committees of management are essential in the cost effective and democratic local processes employed by Council. However the provision of planning, design and management of play spaces needs to be undertaken by qualified staff with adequate training and appropriate levels exposure to risk.

If there is too much exposure to risk of volunteers undertaking all tasks, and the risk of not providing users with the benefits of high play value, then additional training, supervision, or delegation of some tasks may be necessary. The roles of committees and Council include planning, design, construction, inspection and maintenance and risk management of play spaces and all infrastructure. Some of these tasks, with higher risk to users and the committee may be more cost effectively provided by Council. However it is not possible to maintain additional play spaces within the current Council budget.

If staff and volunteers have appropriate qualifications such as landscape design, recreation planning or engineering or asset management they may be able to undertake some relevant tasks related to play equipment provision or management, however it is likely that

maintenance staff and volunteers will need additional play and play equipment related training.

Training concerning play equipment, and the relevant Australia Standards is regularly available through Play Australia. Additionally early childhood, landscape and play design training is also available. Volunteers will also need to follow the steps required by the Australian Standards to manage the risks associated with play equipment.

Schools

The relationship between schools and local play spaces can be beneficial. Local parks and play spaces can provide a location for parents and children meet and play before or after school. In some cases there may be opportunities to share the development and management of school and community place spaces to reduce duplication and costs, or provide one better quality play space rather than two lesser quality ones.

Council could enter into a joint agreement with a school to develop a new space and/or manage an existing play space.

Service clubs

Service clubs can make a major contribution to the funding and construction of play spaces. Spaces designed and constructed by a service club should be:

- In accordance with the guidelines, principles and the core service levels identified in this strategy
- Subject to an MOU prepared before the project is approved and construction is commenced
- Designed by a professional. Include materials, design elements and generally in keeping with the standard that Council can affordably maintain
- Assessed as compliant before use and
- Provided and maintained in accordance with Australian Standards, and Council's agreed processes

The process described in the planning and design chapter where a professional play designer prepares a sketch in conjunction with the group and an in-house horticultural and construction staff, and the service club constructs the facility under supervision of a Council project manager, could alleviate issues that can be experience in using volunteers. Construction management skills will be needed in house if detailed design documentation isn't provided, so as to meet horticultural, landscape construction and play value requirements.

Policy Guidelines: Supporting partners, staff and committees of management involved in play spaces

Where Council works in conjunction with other partners and volunteers on the provision of management of play spaces, Council should ensure:

- A design concept is prepared by a play designer and personnel with horticultural experience and is agreed with Council prior to construction
- That such concepts include landscape, planting and other equipment or infrastructure
- That such play spaces conforms to the guiding principles and directions of this document
- That prior to construction some training occurs with any volunteers
- That the construction is supervised
- That on completion, the facility is assessed and deemed compliant before it is open for public use.
- That an a management plan and maintenance schedule for the space is agreed with Council prior to construction, and the responsibility for inspections, monitoring and maintenance of the space is agreed.
- If Council supports committees providing and managing play spaces then committees and staff will need to be appropriately trained, resourced and equipped to undertake identified roles in play space management in accordance with the relevant Australian Standards for playgrounds and risk management.
- Play space works conducted or authorised by volunteers should be peer reviewed by an accredited professional authorised by Council.
- Council should authorise one major inspection per year of Council owned/ managed play spaces managed by volunteers, in addition to a major inspection prior to opening after the construction of any new facility.

Actions: Supporting partners, staff and committees of management involved in play spaces

- Continue to work with partners such as service clubs, and volunteer committees to plan, design and manage play spaces that are both realistic and aligned to proposed or endorsed Council strategies. Ensure that committees, volunteer groups etc. who wish to design and construct play spaces, work closely with a play designer to develop the concept, and that construction is certified as compliant before use and personnel are trained in play value, management, with monitoring and repair works undertaken by Council.
- Work with committees and prepare an MOU for the provision and maintenance of play spaces managed by Committees of Management.

Funding for development works

Funding play space works

The common sources of funds for play space developments include:

- Open space contributions levied on subdivisions by Council
- Federal and State government grant programs (for access, recreation, tree planting works)
- Philanthropic trusts, foundations and other benefactors (such as Touched by Olivia, Banks, Local supermarkets etc. other Charitable organisations)
- Corporate entities sponsorship and naming rights (for example large corporations with a local presence) e.g. SPC KidsTown
- Associated facilities such as cafes that provide a source of income
- Fundraising through crowd funding, fundraising days and events etc.

There are substantial funds available from nongovernment sources for development projects, especially those targeting children and people with a disability. To access these funds some considerable work will be required to actively seek out and pursue suitable grants.

As maintenance funds are less likely to be available from other sources, other than over-all sponsorship and income generating activities on site- such as entry by donation or café for example, Council should focus on seeking capital for the development of the play spaces and use Council budgeted works and asset management funds for maintenance.

Some aspects of play space development and management may be able to be provided by service groups, schools, community groups and residents ie planting and mulch replenishment.

Policy Guidelines: Funding

Council shall seek funds from a number of sources to enhance the quality of play spaces throughout the City.

5. Locality specific recommendations

Morwell

Morwell North West

1. Provide more choice and enhance the quality of the existing provision in this precinct.

Helen St Reserve

2. Provide additional challenging items of equipment that can accommodate a group of children (e.g. a large swivel birds nest swing).
3. Provide additional / improved seating around the play space.
4. Add more trees for shade and interest, and provide additional landscape elements for play.

Northern Reserve

5. Add a path to a new accessible social focal point with seating and shade.
6. Add a new double swing (senior) and consider adding a “space net” type of climber.
7. Redesign the edges of this space and add trees and planting, possibly a cubby relating to one of the existing cubby spaces, and add logs and stepping-stones to create a landscape for play. These will extend the play on the equipment and give it more value.
8. Consider adding an informal bike trail at this reserve.

Morwell Central North

Savage St Reserve

9. Upgrade seating and shade.
10. Consider creating a low mound separating the play space from the street.
11. Add some log seats and on the cubby side- create some ground level interest with log tree stumps, flat rocks or similar to connect to the play in the cubby.
12. Add some additional logs for climbing.

Well St Reserve

13. Consider undertaking minor earthworks to bench out a small zone in the immediate vicinity of the play space. This will allow for a low curved rock retaining/seating wall on the up-slope side and could provide a good seating place for parents.
14. Plant trees behind and around the play space.
15. Consider adding a path into the space for wheelchairs, prams and strollers.
16. Add some ground level interest aimed at young children to encourage exploration and creative play; such as sand, low vegetation, stepping stones, etc.
17. Consider planting in the pre-school as well, which appears to lack landscape value for play.

Morwell Central

Barry St Reserve

18. Redevelop the Barry Street Reserve as a neighbourhood park with social accessible seating, play for a range of ages, planting, shade and amenity because of its proximity to the school.
19. Upgrade the whole park with planting, path, furniture, seating and especially good-sized trees.
20. Design a new play space that is completely different from all of the other local play spaces - preferably use timber or nets to impart character, and utilise the landscape to complement the equipment and extract better value from it.
21. Provide at least two double swing frames and preferably include some other interesting equipment that moves, spins or rocks and accommodates a group of children at once.

Tulloch St Reserve

22. Relocate the play equipment to more central position in the park.
23. Provide additional plantings for interest and shade.

McMillan St Reserve

24. Realign some sections of the fence so that the street frontage is fenced and house fences form the remainder of the enclosure. This will reduce the caged-in feeling of the space.
25. Plant some trees, create an attractive accessible seating space with a path within the fence, and design the immediate surroundings to encourage children to explore outside the equipment.
26. Provide a good sand play area when fenced – by excavating out a natural looking swale to contain the sand and add some rocks, logs bridges and plantings.

Morwell Central East

27. Upgrade Ronald Reserve and Burnside/Budge St play spaces to better quality play settings
28. Consider Ronald Reserve as the most suitable space to become a low-key district attraction on this side of the township.

Ronald Reserve

29. Seek the most suitable location for a better play space in Ronald Reserve.
30. Improve this site if the most suitable, by some earthworks/mounding to separate the play space from the road, to provide enclosure, terrain and play interest.
31. Add some more interesting activities for all ages, all abilities, and groups (e.g. a large carousel and a bird's nest swing) and provide planting and shade trees.
32. Consider adding a net climbing structure.
33. Ensure there is an accessible path to a central, amenable seating zone.

Burnside/Budge St Play Space

34. Redesign this site, as it is located near the creek.
35. Provide an accessible setting with some timber structures, using climbing logs and natural materials/elements to encourage exploration and imaginative/role play.
36. Improve planting and seating (as a minimum) at the other two sites.

Morwell East

37. Seek to address the quality of spaces in this precinct that are quite bare flat uninteresting open spaces that are not conducive to attracting families to play outside.
38. Upgrade Nindoo Drive into a more sociable accessible space, as it is more central.

Nindoo Dr Reserve

39. Reconsider redesigning this whole space.
40. Consult residents and prepare a plan to revegetate the creek line. Plant along the fence lines and plan some attractive spaces with trees, lawn to play on, and a play space aimed at a range of ages.
41. Create an amenable central seating space that would encourage social interaction between residents.

Angela Ct Reserve

42. Provide shade and additional landscape elements to enhance amenity and open-ended play. Construct a path, and a seating area in tree shade.

Morwell South West

This residential precinct is relatively isolated in the municipality, confined by the railway line to the west, the highway to the north and Maryvale Crescent to the east. There is therefore a high level of dependence on the only play space here, at Driffield St Reserve.

Driffield St Reserve

43. Plant a backdrop of trees and design an area for open-ended play by older children including climbing logs and rocks.
44. Introduce a bike track.

Morwell South Central

Berg St Reserve

Because of the proximity of Elgin St/Town Common Reserve, it is not necessary to extend this play space too much. However the experiences should be enhanced here so the two sites complement one another.

45. Add a low take-off deck at each end of the horizontal ladder to make it more usable, and link these decks into a ground level obstacle/balancing course (using rocks and logs) winding through the play space.
46. Consider adding a hedge like row of trees along the street line to provide a sense of enclosure while allowing a view in.

Town Commons Reserve, Elgin St

47. Make this space more inclusive, especially by extending a rubber path into the play space enclosure to at least allow all children to participate in the social play if not the swinging and other activities.

Morwell South East

Immigration Park

48. Provide low planting along the fence lines -incorporated into the play space design.
49. Consider adding a space net climber, as no play spaces in Morwell include one of these.

Moe / Newborough

Moe North West

Mervyn St Reserve

This park is the only one serving its immediate catchment, and therefore children have a high level of dependence upon it, for play and social interaction.

50. Design a social area with accessible seating with shade, to encourage social interaction. Provide an accessible path to it.
51. Provide natural/loose/open ended play elements such as planting, logs, boulders, sand etc to complement the existing equipment.
52. Provide backdrop planting along the side and rear fence lines and plant a row of large umbrella shaped trees along the street line (allowing views in).

Moe North Central

No actions identified.

Moe Central

The three play spaces in this precinct are very similar. Each offers a basic package of equipment-based activities aimed at a generally junior target age group. The western end of the precinct is not served by a play space.

53. Identify a site for a new play space west of Truscott Ave.

Marshall Ave Reserve

54. Improve the park design so that the park also provides an interesting and beautiful setting with or without play equipment.

Ted Summerton Reserve

55. Upgrade **this reserve** to provide a higher quality play space (district) Ensure this space is entirely different in appearance and function from others in the precinct. Consider including a feature item such as a large space net.
56. Redesign the play spaces using the good shelter and path as a focal point. Remove the equipment and re-use as spare parts if required. Provide at least two double swing frames (one junior/toddler and one senior).
57. Provide for a more interesting suite of activities for juniors and older children supported by a quality landscape for play, and a range of elements should cater for users with disabilities.

Stoddart Reserve

58. Create a more interesting environment around the equipment.
59. Connect a path into the play area and create a new landscape focal point such as a sand stream with low flat boulders as an edge.
60. Plant to create a complex backdrop.

Moe Central Apex / Lions Park

This whole park is the destination park for play in Moe, between the Apex and Lions Parks, and offering a wide range of play items.

61. Consult users of both areas to determine how well each space meets their needs and prepare a play precinct master plan that integrates the two areas so that able-bodied and less able children can play alongside one another across the whole park.
62. Avoid the use of stock standard equipment in this park that has been used in virtually all over Moe/Newborough. In particular the small, steel-deck climbing units with a slide.
63. Provide more emphasis on social connections, seating and picnicking, and create a path system in some areas (without spoiling the natural character of others).
64. Consider relocating and joining some items so that together they create more complexity between them, to extend play and provide better value from the equipment.
65. Introduce more adventurous areas with sand, logs and rocks to provide better value from landscape elements.
66. Introduce planting within the Accessible Playground to add more shade and natural interest.
67. Avoid the use of stock standard equipment in this park that has been used in virtually all

over Moe/Newborough. In particular the small, steel-deck climbing units with a slide.

Moe South

The play spaces within in this area are relatively spread out, so residents are fairly dependent on the park closest to them.

68. Seek to introduce elements with more landscape / natural interest in this precinct, for children to: explore, ride bikes, climb trees, build cubbies etc.

Randall Cres Reserve

69. Plant some very large trees around the play space. Add a large birds nest swing.

John St Reserve

Any new design work should complement the Elizabeth St Primary School play space and not duplicate it.

70. Plant some very large trees around this play space.

Scorpio Dr Reserve

71. Add some additional landscape elements such as a bumpy dirt bike path, large boulders etc.

Phillip St Reserve

72. Add major tree planting, climbing logs, and a one moving play equipment item to suit groups of older children (e.g. carousel).

Moe South Central

Scott Avenue Reserve

73. Consider adding a moving item of play equipment that caters for a wider group /older of children.
74. Consider enlarging the hardcourt to a half or a full size court.
75. Additional shade tree planting would help define the space and provide visual amenity, including the provision of backdrop planting along fence lines

Stoddart St Reserve

76. Redesign this space to create more social interaction for parents and children from the school as well as the local community.
77. Provide a path, well placed seating under shade, and landscape elements to enhance visual amenity and a much higher level of sensory interest.
78. Consider fencing the street frontage of this park.

Moe South East

TB Drew Park

79. Provide a seamless path entry from the street linking to an amenable seating/social space.
80. Add a choice of seating or elements to perch on that could include logs in a semi-circle.
81. Provide shade and natural play experiences, including planting, large boulders, and a nature trail etc. that adds complexity and extends the play value of the equipment.
82. Introduce one more interesting/challenging/moving item of equipment such as a medium size space net, some in-ground playground trampolines or a large swivel birds nest swing.

Bayley St Reserve

83. Retain as a low-key site with predominantly natural elements.
84. Add a large branched log on the up-slope side of the mulch for climbing, balancing and seating.
85. Add landing decks or at least a step each end of the horizontal ladder, then connect to a stepping/balancing route made of logs, rocks or similar.
86. Consider working with local children and add an informal dirt bike circuit around the triangular end of the reserve.

Wirrana Dr Reserve

87. Retain as a small-scale local play space.
88. Consider a long term re-design based on the age cohort around the park and a range of age groups. Options might include a play garden with vegetation, paths, sand and logs/rocks, and or a more physically active space for older children. Existing equipment could be worked into either option.

Newborough North East

Montane Bvd Reserve

This park is the only one serving its immediate catchment and therefore children have a high level of dependence upon it for play and social interaction. This park is very poor quality and provides no amenity, no trees, or seating. The play equipment is fenced into an unattractive cage and there is no possibility of children exploring a natural environment nor developing their own independent play. The play activities in the cage are limited to the junior age group who would most enjoy imaginative play in a natural setting.

89. Remove the fence around the play space.
90. Complete a planting design for the park, including: shade tree planting and backdrop planting along the side and rear fence lines.
91. Provide a shaded, accessible seating area to encourage social interaction.
92. Provide natural/loose/open ended play elements such as planting, logs, boulders, sand etc. to complement the existing equipment.
93. Add at least one item of moving equipment for group play for all ages (such as a carousel, birds nest swing or similar, and a mini trampoline).
94. Include a group of landscape elements such as large rocks or similar that provide for open-ended play.

Newborough Central West

The play spaces within this group are relatively isolated from one another so residents are fairly dependent on the one closest to them.

Jeeralang Ave Reserve

95. Provide additional tree planting, shade and amenity.
96. Consider adding a second swing frame, resulting on one double toddler/junior frame and one more exciting senior double swing.

Ollerton Reserve / Merton Crt

97. Remove this equipment (with the possible exception of the swing) and re-use elsewhere if desired
98. Create a small accessible setting that builds on a forest theme, with some logs arranged for climbing, possible use of nets, more interesting swings and encourage cubby building and creative play.

Botanic Gardens Play Space

99. Assess the function and purpose of this play space through greater consultation with the Moe community.
100. Relocate the exercise equipment to a more suitable park.
101. Consider replacing this design that has a character more in keeping with a botanic garden, with planting and natural elements as the main feature, if there is demand for a play space here.

Newborough Central East

John Field Reserve

- 102. Improve the amenity and accessibility of this space (as the local destination play space).
- 103. Relocate the play space to a more prominent position in the open space.
- 104. Provide more planting and grouped seats.
- 105. Add a special attraction such as a simple bike play area.

Stearman St Reserve

- 106. Add play experiences with additional landscape elements.
- 107. Enhance amenity through tree shade and planting
- 108. Make an accessible social space that would attract social interaction.

Hallston St Reserve and Boolarra Ave Reserve

These reserves share the same catchment. They are too similar to one another and neither is interesting enough on its own.

- 109. Consider removing the equipment at Boolarra Ave Reserve (except the swing) and redesign the space including vegetation designed for play, sand, terrain, logs, and provide timber cubbies at the ground level adjacent to the sand.

Newborough South

The play spaces within this precinct all have a similar theme (slide, basic climbing, a swing and two spring toys).

- 110. Treat these three sites as a group. Each should be developed differently to provide more choice in styles settings and activities between the sites, with emphasis on Hearn Park as the main focus of investment locally.

Hearn Park Playground

- 111. Invest in this play space as a local focus for social interaction.
- 112. Consider removing the current equipment and relocate some items if required elsewhere.
- 113. Provide equipment that enables groups to use the space together, rather than single use items.
- 114. Design a small but integrated new play space that incorporates a path and play elements (some accessible) with a range of different activity types - for example a spinning carousel, better swings for a range of ages, and more interesting climbing. Place these items to ensure that some value can be obtained from nearby landscape or planting.

Smallburn Ave Reserve

- 115. Create an attractive park through either: removing the equipment altogether (now or at the end of its useful life), plant more trees, screen the fence line, or planting, add more furniture, add a double swing, and add some features such as very large boulders and climbing logs.

Harvey St Reserve / Cross Street

This is a slightly more prominent reserve. It should complement the larger Hearn Park.

- 116. Consider adding bollards or even a low fence around the triangular end of the park to create a sense of enclosure (and safety) and to prevent parking on the grass.
- 117. Provide more planting to screen the fence line at the wide end of the park, and enhance landscape amenity, and create a small social focal point with better group seating, tree planting for shade, and a path.
- 118. Add a landscape feature for play such as a swale filled with sand, log bridges and a cubby, for example.

Newborough South East

Monash Reserve

- 119. Establish a new play space (in line with the recommendations of the Moe Outdoor Recreation Plan) that includes some kind of visual containment such as a low hedge or similar.
- 120. Consider connecting into the cypress row to create some imaginative play pockets under the trees

Traralgon

Traralgon North

Rod Dunbar Park

- 121. Consider moving this play equipment a little closer to the houses and away from the road if there is suitable space.
- 122. Consider repositioning the fence (if it necessary) it so that it encloses a larger area, with lawn and other play opportunities inside it.
- 123. Plant the fence line with flowering shrubs of the same height as the fence to make it more attractive.
- 124. Provide tree and shrub planting, shade, and an obstacle course of log balance beams, stepping rocks or similar.
- 125. Consider to providing a trail through interesting planting.

Rangeview Park

- 126. Provide this play space with an emphasis on accessible, social space with furniture to create a community meeting place, to take advantage of the central location near the school.
- 127. Provide built and tree shade to enhance the existing equipment.
- 128. Add some more natural play elements (rocks logs and terrain) for children of all ages.
- 129. Provide at least one more double swing frame or a bird's nest swing, and or a carousel.

Downs Reserve/Cross's Road

- 130. Provide path access from Grubb Ave into this space.
- 131. Design a wheelchair accessible activity (such as a cubby with interactive panels, music, etc.) and add this to one of the existing rubber areas.
- 132. Add a shaded, social focal point with seats etc. and link these to a path that integrates all the spaces and activities.
- 133. Enclose the whole space with a circle of large shade trees planted as close as practicable to the equipment to provide some spatial enclosure, shade and amenity.

Stockdale Reserve

- 134. Carry out a safety audit on the play equipment as soon as possible.
- 135. Implement the landscape plans for the park here with large trees, social spaces, and some ground level details that would provide for play, bike riding, exploration and nature play.

Traralgon West

Freeman Park West (Willaroo Court)

There is a rubber surface and a path that is probably intended to provide wheelchair access to an under deck cubby.

- 136. Develop a trail system with signage, along the creek to encourage walking and cycling to enhance the value of this linear parkland as a major asset, and as a connected system.
- 137. Improve the whole park; defining spaces with more tree planting. Consider providing a community garden, a bike play area or other low-key activities with a natural setting, for example.
- 138. Investigate extending the rubber surface path to the cubby (or whether the posts block the entry), and provide accessible activities under the deck, if not currently provided.
- 139. Provide an attractive central seating area with shade and a path.

Freeman Park East

140. Improve the park, to provide different experiences from Freeman Park West and locate any equipment where it is visible from Brolga Blvd.

Jack Harrison Park

141. Provide an accessible social/seating space and connect this and the play space to the main path

142. Plant a strong circle of trees around the play equipment and add additional planting across the reserve to improve the amenity of the whole park.

143. Provide some natural elements for play here such as a sand/stream with planting, rocks and logs

Blanck Park

144. Prepare a low key design for the whole reserve that better delineates individual spaces and gives them more character- for example planting a hedge might around the play space within one section of the reserve.

145. Provide a focal point for seating.

146. Add at least one piece of equipment that provides movement, challenge and activities for a group of children, such as a carousel.

147. Consider removing the slide and replacing it with a timber structure resembling a tree house that could also have a slide.

Traralgon North Central**Bradman Reserve**

This is an important large space and serves as a district park for this precinct. This park has been earmarked in the Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan for further development.

148. Enhance spatial qualities and landscape amenity.

149. Provide a centrally located, accessible shelter, BBQ and seating area. Plan a path system linking these to some of the play elements. Add other accessible spaces and activities and an accessible toilets.

150. Consider creating mounding around the play space (on a few sides) to contain the space, provide a windbreak and create clambering hills (some flat rock steps/climbers could be added into the mounds).

151. Provide other natural elements for play such as a swale containing sand; log bridges to complement the flat open space and equipment.

Maskrey Reserve

The Reserve is earmarked for an upgrade of seating and a picnic area. It is suitable to be upgraded into a more focal park that caters for social interaction and play for a range of ages, in relation to its role as a tennis/sports reserve.

- 152. Remove the existing equipment and re-use elsewhere if required.
- 153. Redesign the play space and create an accessible focal point for social interaction with shade and amenity. Design the play space different in style, materials, setting and types of play from all others locally.
- 154. Plant a strong circle of shade trees around the whole play space, and integrate planting and natural elements into the design.
- 155. Preserve good sightlines from the tennis courts into the play space.

Grant St Park and Gilwell Park

These parks are very close to one another. The poorly designed street layout here justifies the retention of both sites as parks; otherwise residents would not have access to any park within hundreds and hundreds of metres.

- 156. It Retain Gilwell Park Play space and provide additional elements to diversify the play opportunities.
- 157. Remove the play equipment at Grant St and upgrade the park with a new design to include big trees, furniture, a path system and nature play (not necessarily play equipment).
- 158. Consider replacing this play space with a new, more prominent play space at Agnes Brereton Reserve, which this is a more prominent location, caters for netball competitions, and is more accessible to the whole northeast corner of this small precinct.

New play spaces

There is a relatively large area un-serviced by play spaces between: Douglas Pde and Cross's Rd, and Between Grubb Ave and Gilmour St. This area has a large amount of open space but this is mostly, unfortunately, poorly located behind houses in a number of landlocked reserves that should not be developed as play spaces.

- 159. Create a new play space at Agnes Brereton Reserve, in the southwest corner of the playing field and close to the netball court (as recommended in the Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan).
- 160. Consider planting these reserves with magnificent trees.
- 161. Consider developing a new landscape and play space at the reserve with a street frontage to Inverness. Alternatively consider locating a higher-level play space in the Traralgon Sporting Complex /Apex Park and education precinct, located carefully for maximum prominence where families might gather after school., for example amongst the trees on the Johnson St frontage (recommended in the Traralgon Outdoor Recreation Plan).
- 162. Do not duplicate the style of steel equipment used in other local reserves in any such new development

Traralgon North East

Explorer Park

- 163. Thin the existing shrubs or limb-up trees, to provide views through into the play space. Plant some very large trees around it to provide some spatial containment.
- 164. Add some low level planting for play with narrow pathways and small spaces to explore. Ensure vegetation is placed where it doesn't block views from main sightlines.
- 165. Consider adding a rocky creek bed/swale for play, as a major landscape feature with planting; log bridges, rocky edges and a loose surface.
- 166. Add a footpath at the front of the park.

Bond Park

- 167. Remove the slide and redesign the space. Utilise some alternatives to items of play equipment in the local area. Consider providing a more complex structure made of timber (the slide could be reused); or cable climbers, rotating or bouncing items such as a playground trampoline, to provide a design that provides for a range of ages, amenity, and play opportunities not available locally.
- 168. Add logs, rocks, and incidental landscape elements to encourage children to expand play away from the equipment.

The Strand Reserve

- 169. Reconfigure this play space adding accessible rubber paths to provide access to the cubbies and other play activities.
- 170. Consider enlarging the fenced area and including sand, shrub planting and some irrigated lawn within the fence as a counter point to the equipment.

Medew Reserve

- 171. Consult with local residents and establish how this park is used and then undertake landscape improvements.
- 172. Consider adding a carousel.
- 173. Ensure that the play space always remains clearly visible from Pepperdine Ct.

Christian Rise

- 174. Provide additional planting including large shady trees, a good path system, and some seating in sociable positions such as near the courts.

'The Rise'

This site will need to provide for any new suburban residential development north of Marshalls Road.

- 175. Provide an interesting landscape with enhanced amenity, accessibility, social interaction, and play opportunities for a range of ages.

Traralgon Central West

Lloyd Park, Wood Park and Burge Park

176. Consider the improvement of all three parks together, and make small improvements that create different play experiences from site to site.

177. Improve the landscape on all three sites and especially with tree planting.

Hubert Osborne Park

Because of the street layout and the lack of other suitable parks for play, this site has to provide play opportunities for the whole area east of Lafayette St.

178. Undertake a minor redesign of the play space, adding a path to a central seating area, and accessible play activities.

179. Consider adding a hardcourt, a junior sand play space with planting, rocks and logs.

180. Provide planting for shade.

Brookes St Reserve

181. Add a path, carefully located through the park, linking to the play space and to seats.

182. Plant to screen fence lines, to enhance the amenity of this space, and provide feature planting for play such as a wildflower swathe, a picking garden, rocky stepping stones or a planted maze.

183. Consider adding a large carousel and or a big bird's nest swing and make these accessible.

Kay St Reserve

184. Provide a low key children's agility /obstacle course linking into and through the adult equipment, and adding balancing logs, stepping stones, Burmese bridges, etc. to provide more interest for the whole family.

Traralgon Central

Newman Park

185. Provide a new layer of planting, furniture and even some changes in level between the existing rubber zones and concrete paths, to tie the spaces all together and to provide shade, natural elements, and better play and amenity value.

186. Observe and consult families living with disability, to investigate options for improvement of this space

Traralgon South West

There are only two play spaces in this precinct and they are relatively isolated from one another, so their communities are highly dependent upon each space locally.

McNulty Drive Reserve

187. Design a new layer of tree planting and other vegetation to enhance the amenity of this

whole park

- 188. Re-position the horizontal ladder and link it via decks, stepping-stones, stepping logs etc. to a balancing /obstacle course amongst planting.
- 189. Consider removing the slide and replacing with a structure that includes a slide and provides a wheel chair accessible cubby underneath a higher deck.
- 190. Check the height of the chin up bars and consider lowering one down, so children can use them.

Carrington Park

- 191. Plant vegetation around the fence lines to screen adjacent properties.
- 192. Create a new layout for the park as a whole. Include a path, large trees for amenity and additional play activities, such as big climbing logs or other natural elements to complement the existing equipment.

Other

- 193. Consider developing the open space between Bank St and Oak Avenue into an attractive park with magnificent trees and planting, seating and paths, if not a play space.

Traralgon South Central

Judd Park

194. Plant the site and add some landscape interest.

Hugh Court Park

195. Improve the whole park with tree planting, screening to fence lines and natural elements for play. Remove the slide and replace with an alternative structure that connects better into the landscape.

Duncan Cameron Reserve

196. Upgrade this space as a social /meeting and play space with a path, seating and possibly a shade structure or shelter.

197. Add challenging pieces of moving equipment for groups of older children, ie rocking, spinning or multi directional items.

198. Enhance the area close to trees with some logs for play.

Queens Parade Park

199. Redesign the play space for a range of ages (differently from other local spaces) using landscape elements and low-key equipment.

200. Provide a strong planting palette to screen the boundaries, and create an attractive green presence.

Traralgon South East

Crisp Park

201. Remove this play equipment and replace with a more complex design, possibly of timber, and a redesign of the park that creates an interesting landscape using climbing logs, large rocks and planting.

Bonnie Vista Reserve

202. Create an interesting landscape with large trees and other elements around the whole park, to supplement the play equipment.

Hourigan Park

203. Consider constructing a shared trail along the reserve from the Recreation Reserve / Showgrounds down to join up the trail along Liddiard St in the south.

204. Plant trees around the play space and add a seating area.

Think Big Reserve

205. Remove the equipment and prepare a master plan for the whole park as a district social and play space, different from all other local play spaces especially Macey Park.

206. Introduce planting, a quality playful landscape elements, paths, shade, an accessible seating and play space for a range of age groups.

Macey Park

- 207. Add more exciting equipment in this space that moves, spins or rocks and accommodates a group of children at once.
- 208. Introduce trees and some terrain- e.g. a big swale with sand for play, or a bumpy bike play area.

Layton Reserve

- 209. Add a path and some accessible activities to utilise the rubber surface.
- 210. Plant additional large trees to provide additional strong visual interest.

Milligan Park

- 211. Provide a strong landscape here for play and amenity.

Coleman Park

- 212. Create a strong landscape here for play and amenity.

Priestly Park

A play space is considered necessary in this southern corner of the precinct east of Liddiard Road, but this site is not the preferred location.

- 213. Relocate play equipment from this site, to Kevin Lythgo Reserve and plant with good quality trees.

Kevin Lythgo Reserve

This site is in a more prominent space than Priestly Park and the preferred site for a play space as it is close to a primary school.

- 214. Design a new play space to accommodate children with disabilities pre-school aged and older children here. Provide an accessible social space that encourages social interaction after school.

Traralgon East

Robert Farmer Park

- 215. Consult residents about their needs and prepare a master plan for the whole reserve extending the opportunities for both older and younger children.
- 216. Enhance the planting across the whole park, adding landscape complexity for play and amenity.
- 217. Add a social heart to the space. Enhance the accessibility of the whole reserve and play space.

Southdown Way Reserve

- 218. Plant large trees and provide a landscape treatment that invites children's hands on participation, such as sand, rocks and logs and complements the Robert Farmer Reserve

Traralgon South

Ray Symonds Playground

219. Park not identified in information provided by Council and hence not inspected according to Play DMC master inventory.

Churchill

New civic space play space

220. Develop a new custom-designed regional play space close to the library, unique within Churchill.

221. Provide a higher level of detail in the design of this space, and present a more manicured and natural appearance, accessible to people with disabilities with quality seating areas.

222. Consider a small water play feature in this space.

Andrews Park West

This park serves the catchment of a primary school.

223. Retained play equipment and undertake a major refurbishment adding paths, shade, and tree planting and enhancing amenity and accessibility.

224. Add a carousel and other equipment appealing to older primary school children, such as a large net or flexible climber.

White Pde Reserve

225. Remove this play space and improve Walker Parade and Watsons Park to compensate.

226. Create a beautiful reserve with large trees, planted fence-lines and an attractive path circuit.

Watsons Park

The co-location of the school and the pre-school on this site create an important dynamic for the park and play space, and the play space could provide a valuable meeting place for parents and children. This play space also needs to compensate for the removal of White Park play space.

227. Prepare a master plan for the park as a focal park for the residential areas on the west side of the main Boolarra /Churchill Road, different from any other park in Churchill.

228. Undertake a full park upgrade with a resited play space and create an appealing space with a new accessible path system.

229. Include: timber structures, possibly with a natural character (using forked tree logs and nets for example), an accessible sand play area and ground level cubby.

230. Provide trees with interesting forms planted specifically for play, such as in circles or double lines, and a purpose designed space with rocks and logs etc. to encourage nature exploration for younger age groups.

Walker Pde Reserve

This play space remains as a small local park.

- 231. Upgrade planting and the amenity of the space and include a ring of large trees around the equipment area, to celebrate it.
- 232. Consider adding a new feature item or two of play equipment that provides exciting movement, accessibility and group activity.
- 233. Provide a path, and make one of the seats on the swing accessible, providing back support and an accessible surface.

Mathison Park

- 234. Develop this park as a special experience unique to this setting and with common play equipment available in most towns and parks such as the freestanding slide and single spring toys.

English Reserve

This is an appealing reserve and should be retained but the play space is not necessary, as it is so close to Walkley Reserve.

- 235. If retained, redesign a special play space that relies on landscape elements and planting.

Reservoir Park

- 236. Retain this site as a local play space, and improve the immediate surroundings.
- 237. Retain the swing add replace existing equipment with equipment for climbing and agility different from other local reserves. Relocate most of the equipment to other larger sites such as Walkley St Reserve.
- 238. Complement equipment with large trees and add a few landscape elements such as rocks and logs if required. Consider adding wildflowers in a swathe across the site to create seasonal colour.

Walkley Park

- 239. Develop this reserve as the main play space for this precinct with highest concentration of equipment.
- 240. Prepare a master plan for this park, investigating the best location for the play space, and associated paths, shade trees and links to the pre-school and the nearby school. Create more amenity value, accessibility and the sense of a more detailed focal point around the play space.

Churchill Skate Park Reserve

- 241. Provide shade, seating and enhance the accessibility of the skate facility and wheelchair access to the ramps themselves.
- 242. Connect paths into the park near the library.

Glendonald Park

This park is an important park for the whole eastern side of the town.

- 243. Prepare a master plan to provide large trees, shrubs to screen fence lines, and enhance the ground level interest.
- 244. Create under deck cubbies that are wheelchair accessible via a rubber path.
Add at least one double swing frame for older children, dedicate one smaller double frame to younger children/toddlers, and add a large multi-directional swing, or one that both rocks and swings. Carefully both so that toddlers cannot inadvertently run into the swing path.

Glendonald Park East

- 245. Remove this swing and consolidate into the rest of the play space.
- 246. Link this side of the reserve with a fully accessible path to the main play space and add a sign if required.
- 247. Upgrade the amenity of the street frontage.

Yallourn North

Marshall St Reserve

- 248. Upgrade the park as well as the play space when this equipment comes up for renewal, to provide the space with more identity.
- 249. Provide more separation from the road, and define an attractive shape that is less linear using shrubs or a hedge or other low feature.
- 250. Consider using the understorey of the vegetation for play, and creating a cubby or log climber to invite exploration of the nature zone.
- 251. Add seats and a short path that could double up as a hard surfaced play element for wheeled toys.

Low Rd Reserve

- 252. Remove some of the older spring rockers. One new group rocker is adequate. Replace the rocker/s with a carousel or senior net/cable-climbing complex that is inexpensive and doesn't take up too much room.
- 253. Re-organise the remaining space and add a large tree right for shade and amenity.
- 254. Plant fence lines with flowering shrubs.

Anderson Ave Reserve

- 255. Upgrade the park as a whole to improve amenity, play and visual interest.
- 256. Plant fence lines with flowering shrubs.
- 257. Design a seamless path system and lead to a central seating space with a beautiful tree as a focal point.
- 258. Create a landscaped setting for play and complement existing structures with some rocks and logs and planting with narrow paths between them for children to explore.

259. Replace the spring rocker with an alternative form of movement/bouncing that provides for group interaction (as there are many rockers locally).

Rossmore Ave Reserve

260. Redesign this park utilising the slope for play and visual interest
261. Plant the fence lines with flowering shrubs
262. Create a path to the high side of the slope and create a central seating area with trees placed to provide shade but not block the view.
263. Cut into the slope and create a bridge across to the upper deck of a new cubby deck with climbing and a slide. Link this to paths so as to make the equipment wheelchair accessible from both above and below.
264. Retain the cut with a rock clamber with low flat rocks leading down to the mulch, interplant between the rocks with tussocky plants.
265. Use landscape elements such as more rocks and logs to create balancing and links.
266. Remove the freestanding slide.

Lions Park

This is the premium play space and further investment in accessible play and something for older children is warranted.

267. Add a wheelchair accessible (possibly rubber) path to a new very large (6 m high) swivel swing is there is adequate space.
268. Provide a custom designed wheelchair accessible cubby, connected to a path.
269. Plant effective shade trees as close as possible to the play space, and remove the shade structures over time.

Glengarry

Apex Park

270. Make the space more accessible including access to amenities/drink fountain and the picnic shelter.
271. Provide a path system through the space. This will also assist in better organising the space.
272. Consider adding some large flat boulders to the sand pit edge and some tussock or other planting close by.
273. Add one more challenging moving piece of equipment for older children - such as a carousel or birds-nest swing.

Hazelwood

Hazelwood Pondage Reserve

- 274. Redesign the space with wheelchair accessible structures when the equipment comes up for renewal.
- 275. Develop with a natural character, with a tree house structure, net bridge and other customised elements.
- 276. Add an adventurous sand play area that will absorb children for a long period of time, alternatively create a creek setting that links to the lake.

Tyers

Tyers Recreation Reserve

The equipment in this space is relatively old, but it offers a good level of complexity.

- 277. Provide an additional adventurous moving item for older children.
- 278. Introduce an accessible play activity.
- 279. Add natural play elements to extend the play and invite exploration, using boulders logs and planting and add natural shade from trees.

Toongabbie

Toongabbie Town Common

- 280. Add a rubber path linking the footpath to the underdeck areas and making some wheelchair accessible cubby spaces underneath.
- 281. Replace (or complement) the single spring toy with a more interesting rocker with multiple seats.
- 282. Assess the adequacy and accessibility of seats in the space.
- 283. Plant a non -invasive vine along the fence line to improve the appearance of this edge and additional planting.

Yinnar

Alfred Dr Reserve

- 284. Prepare a master plan for the whole park to improve the amenity of this reserve and: create a greater sense of adventure and a welcoming outdoors environment. Provide seating and a path, vegetation and natural elements for play as well as very big trees to enclose the space.
- 285. Consider adding a low-key dirt bumpy bike track here and engage local children in its design.

- 286. Remove the freestanding slide eventually, and some of the spring rockers. Replace these with two 'spica' type spinning poles.
- 287. Provide open-ended play with strong landscape features such as a rocky swale with sand or gravel; log bridges and a low cubby deck.

CWA Park/Yinnar Skate Park

- 288. Involve local young people to develop the amenity of the site, add other social elements and encourage people to watch from an accessible, amenable seating area.
- 289. Provide a valuable resource for play for people in wheelchairs to use, providing a seamless path connecting the concrete ramps etc. to the footpath.

Charles Bond Park

- 290. Plant a half circle of magnificent trees curving around the south west corner of the park to contain the space.
- 291. Add some sculptural or natural play features under the trees (stepping logs; a low deck around a tree; low carved animal sculptures etc.) to extend the play. Link these to the existing climber to extend the play.
- 292. Add some low planting for play around the climber to provide some play materials for use in the cubby

Yinnar Centenary Park

- 293. Refurbish this space as the destination play space for Yinnar.
- 294. Prepare a master plan for the whole park to ensure that the whole space is designed to maximise the play and social opportunities of the park.
- 295. Consider removing the climbing unit and replacing it with a more interesting and complex structure of durable timber. This could be customised, offering ground level play offering wheelchair accessible cubby spaces, climbing, and sliding for more than one age group.
- 296. Add more detailed planting as a feature in this park.
- 297. Consider adding a path and a play element such as a deck or cubby on the higher level of the raised grassed podium in the park and add a net bridge to link across to the new cubby structure.
- 298. Retain the carousel and a double junior swing. Add a senior double swing, preferably one offering more challenge.

Boolarra

Boolarra Railway Park

The equipment here is ageing and is the same as the other play spaces in town.

299. Remove the 'skale' swing and upgrade the play space to include: a nature zone such as a dry creek bed, cubby, and plantings, a large birds nest swing, carousel and if funds and space allow, a large climbing net.

300. Provide a rubber wheelable surface to access the birds nest swing and cubby and other items.

Limonite Rd Playground

301. Retain the equipment and focus on enhancing the landscape for play.

302. Utilise planting, rocks and logs to create a more complex play environment.

303. Plant some beautiful large exotic trees in a circle around the equipment to complement others nearby, and add wildflowers in a swathe across the site to create seasonal colour.

Flynn

Flynn Recreation Reserve

304. Enhanced the character of the site and use landscape elements to encourage further exploration of the environment.

305. Provide some stepping stone paths leading into some under-tree spaces, and some large logs to clamber on.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Inventory of Council-owned play spaces

Table 12: List of Council-owned play spaces, by locality and catchment hierarchy

Reserve name	Address	Locality	Hierarchy
Limonite Rd Playground	Limonite-Boolarra Rd	BOOLARRA	Local
DEPI Reserve - Railway Res	Duke St	BOOLARRA	Local
White Pde Reserve	34-36 Fraser Crescent	CHURCHILL	Local
Churchill Skate Park Reserve	5 Philip Parade	CHURCHILL	Local
Andrews Park West	Maple Crescent	CHURCHILL	Local
Watsons Park	Watson Park Preschool, 22A Heesom Crescent	CHURCHILL	Local
English Reserve	Manning Drive	CHURCHILL	Local
Reservoir Park	Cutler Crescent	CHURCHILL	Local
Walkley Park	Williams Avenue	CHURCHILL	Local
Walker Pde Reserve	McDonald Way	CHURCHILL	Local
Glendonald Park	Amaroo Drive	CHURCHILL	Local
Glendonald Park East	Churinga Drive	CHURCHILL	Local
Flynn Recreation Reserve	Grahams Road	FLYNN	Local
Apex Park	Main St	GLENGARRY	District
Mathison Park	Mackeys Road	HAZELWOOD NORTH	District
Hazelwood Pondage Reserve	Yinnar Road	HAZELWOOD	District
Ferguson St Reserve	Ferguson Street	MOE	Local
Hennessey St Reserve	Hennessey Street	MOE	Local
Moe Skate Park Reserve	George Street	MOE	Local
Apex Park (Central)	Waterloo Rd	MOE	Regional
Apex Park (East)	Waterloo Rd	MOE	Regional
Lions Park	Waterloo Rd	MOE	Regional
Mervyn St Reserve	Mervyn Street	MOE	Local
Marshall Ave Reserve	Marshall Avenue	MOE	Local
Ted Summerton Reserve	37-39 Vale Street	MOE	Local
Scott Avenue Reserve	Scott Avenue	MOE	Local
Phillip St Reserve	Phillip Street	MOE	Local
John St Reserve	John Street	MOE	Local
Randall Cres Reserve	Randall Crescent	MOE	Local
Elizabeth St PS	Elizabeth St	MOE	Local
Scorpio Dr Reserve	Scorpio Drive	MOE	Local
Stoddart St Reserve	10-14 Stoddart Street	MOE	Local
HG Stoddard Memorial Park	Vale Street	MOE	Local
TB Drew Park	Cemetery Road	MOE	Local
Bayley St Reserve	Bayley Street	MOE	Local
Wirrana Dr Reserve	Wirrana Drive	MOE	Local
Botanic Gardens	Narracan Drive	MOE	District
Town Common Playground	Elgin Street	MORWELL	Regional

Reserve name	Address	Locality	Hierarchy
Helen St Reserve	Helen Street	MORWELL	Local
Northern Reserve	Holmes Road	MORWELL	Local
Barry St Reserve	Barry Street	MORWELL	Local
Tulloch St Reserve	17-21 Tulloch Street	MORWELL	Local
McMillan St Reserve	10-14 McMillan Street	MORWELL	Local
Ronald Reserve	Vary Street	MORWELL	Local
Savige St Reserve	39-47 Savige Street	MORWELL	Local
Well St Reserve	Elizabeth Wilmot Preschool, 23-29 Well Street	MORWELL	Local
Waterhole Crk Nth West	Beattie Crescent	MORWELL	Local
Burnside Drv Reserve	The Boulevard	MORWELL	Local
Waterhole Crk Sth East	The Boulevard	MORWELL	Local
Angela Ct Reserve	Angela Court	MORWELL	Local
Nindoo Dr Reserve	Nindoo Drive	MORWELL	Local
Immigration Park	Princess Way	MORWELL	District
Fairway St Reserve	Fairfield Square	MORWELL	Local
Driffield Rd Reserve	Driffield Road	MORWELL	Local
Berg St Reserve	Berg Street	MORWELL	Local
Waratah Drive Reserve	Btwn 43 & 45 Waratah Dr	MORWELL	Local
Smallburn Ave Reserve	16 Smallburn Avenue	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Montane Bvd Reserve	Montane Boulevard	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Merton Crt Reserve (Ollerton Ave Bushland Reserve)	Merton Court	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Jeeralang Ave Reserve	Banksia Street	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Stearman St Reserve	2-8 Stearman Street	NEWBOROUGH	Local
John Field Reserve	1A Southwell Avenue	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Harvey St Reserve (Cross St Reserve)	Cross Street	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Balfour St Reserve (Hearn Park Playground)	Balfour Street	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Monash Reserve	Monash Road	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Hallston St Reserve	16-18 Hallston Street	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Boolarra Ave Sth Reserve	50-52 Boolarra Avenue	NEWBOROUGH	Local
Toongabbie Town Common	Victoria St	TOONGABBIE	Local
Coleman Park	27 Murphy Crescent	TRARALGON	Local
Carrington Park	Jarrah Court	TRARALGON	Local
Judd Park	Ray Street	TRARALGON	Local
Hugh Ct Park	5 Hugh Court	TRARALGON	Local
Duncan Cameron Park	2-12 Francis Street	TRARALGON	Local
Queens Parade Park	Queens Parade	TRARALGON	Local
Crisp Park	Dowling Street	TRARALGON	Local
Hourigan Park	Hunter Road	TRARALGON	Local
Bonnie Vista Reserve	Bayley Drive	TRARALGON	Local
Priestly Park	McDonald Court	TRARALGON	Local
Milligan Park	Murphy Crescent	TRARALGON	Local
Macey Park	Lyndon Crescent	TRARALGON	Local

Reserve name	Address	Locality	Hierarchy
Lloyd Park	Sunderland Circuit	TRARALGON	Local
Wood Park	Coster Circle	TRARALGON	Local
Burge Park	7-8 Hicks Court	TRARALGON	Local
Hubert Osborne Park	Seymour Street	TRARALGON	Local
Kay Street Reserve	Kay Street	TRARALGON	Local
Blanck Park	Pollock Avenue	TRARALGON	Local
Freeman Park West	Willaroo Court	TRARALGON	Local
Jack Harrison Park	Quail Court	TRARALGON	Local
Rod Dunbar Park	Grey Street	TRARALGON	Local
Rangeview Park	Birregun Court	TRARALGON	Local
Downs Reserve	Cross's Road	TRARALGON	Local
Bradman Bvd Reserve	Bradman Boulevard	TRARALGON	Local
Maskrey Reserve	Barker Crescent	TRARALGON	Local
Gilwell Park	Gilwell Avenue	TRARALGON	Local
Grant Park	Grant Court	TRARALGON	Local
Harold Preston Park	Davidson Street	TRARALGON	Local
Explorers Park	Franklin Street	TRARALGON	District
The Strand Reserve	Hammersmith Circuit	TRARALGON	Local
Bond Park	Firmin Street	TRARALGON	Local
Medew Reserve	Strathcole Drive	TRARALGON	Local
Newman Park	Peterkin Street	TRARALGON	Regional
Think Big Reserve	Liddiard Rd	TRARALGON	Local
Dyer Park	Brookes St, & Denison St	TRARALGON	Local
Layton Park	Btwn Maguire Ct, & Robert's St	TRARALGON	Local
Stockdale Park	Hill View Rd	TRARALGON	Local
Robert Farmer Park	Ellavale Drive	TRARALGON EAST	Local
Southdown Way Reserve	Ellavale Drive	TRARALGON EAST	Local
Ray Symonds Playground	3-7 Keith Morgan Drive	TRARALGON SOUTH	Local
Front of Tyers Recreation Reserve	Tyers Rd	TYERS	District
Marshall St Reserve	Marshall Street	YALLOURN NORTH	Local
Low Rd Reserve	Low Road	YALLOURN NORTH	Local
Anderson Ave Reserve	Anderson Avenue	YALLOURN NORTH	Local
Rossmore Ave Reserve	21 Rossmore Avenue	YALLOURN NORTH	Local
Lions Park	Reserve Street	YALLOURN NORTH	Local
Alfred Dr Reserve	Alfred Drive	YINNAR	Local
CWA Park	Main St	YINNAR	District
Charles Bond Park	Wicks Street	YINNAR	Local
Yinnar Bicentennial Park	Main Street	YINNAR	District

Appendix 2. Demographic Characteristics

Table 13: Latrobe City population projections, population density and SEIFA index data

Area	Population 2014	Population 2036	% Change	Hectares (ha)	Pop Density (Ppha) 2014	Pop Density (Ppha) in 2036	2011 SEIFA index
Traralgon - Traralgon east	27298	36546	33.88	9108	3.00	4.01	974.9
Morwell	14342	16123	12.42	4483	3.20	3.60	844.6
Moe - Moe South	9692	12157	25.43	3082	3.14	3.94	850.5
Newborough	7203	8436	17.12	1947	3.70	4.33	915.5
Churchill	5016	5643	12.50	2118	2.37	2.66	910.0
Rural North	3114	3429	10.12	20664	0.15	0.17	982.0
Rural North East	2162	2837	31.22	14369	0.15	0.20	1003.5
Rural South East	3664	4008	9.39	39056	0.09	0.10	1049.9
Rural South West	3215	3678	14.40	47785	0.07	0.08	990.3
Latrobe City	75706	92857	22.65	142612	0.53	0.65	929.0

Table 14: Latrobe City Municipality age breakdown (5 year increments) in 2011 and estimates for 2021 and 2036

	2011		2021		2036		Change	
Age yrs.	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	2011 -2021	2011 -2036
0 to 4	4871	6.6	5544	6.8	5911	6.4	673	1040
5 to 9	4531	6.2	5696	7	6179	6.7	1165	1648
10 to 14	4754	6.5	5292	6.5	6074	6.5	538	1320
15 to 19	5329	7.2	4740	5.8	5673	6.1	-589	344
20 to 24	5247	7.1	4760	5.9	5467	5.9	-487	220
25 to 29	4802	6.5	5002	6.2	5361	5.8	200	559
30 to 34	4215	5.7	5317	6.5	5714	6.2	1102	1499
35 to 39	4369	5.9	5437	6.7	6121	6.6	1068	1752
40 to 44	4748	6.5	5012	6.2	6241	6.7	264	1493
45 to 49	5135	7	4910	6	6030	6.5	-225	895
50 to 54	5164	7	4960	6.1	5760	6.2	-204	596
55 to 59	4798	6.5	5078	6.2	5314	5.7	280	516
60 to 64	4429	6	4968	6.1	5146	5.5	539	717
65 to 69	3385	4.6	4532	5.6	4927	5.3	1147	1542
70 to 74	2709	3.7	3953	4.9	4631	5	1244	1922
75 to 79	2081	2.8	2811	3.5	3904	4.2	730	1823
80 to 84	1657	2.3	1902	2.3	2757	3	245	1100
85 +	1372	1.9	1332	1.6	1646	1.8	-40	274
Totals	73596	100	81246	100	92856	100	7650	19260

Table 15: Demographic characteristics of children by town

Locality	Populati on	Projected	Children under yrs.		Children 4- yrs.		Children 8-12 yrs.		Children 13- 15yrs		Income per househ'd	PW a disa bility	Couple with children	SEIFA 2011
	2011	2030	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Ave per week	No.	%	Score
Boolarra	1174		52	4.4	43	3.6	61	5.2	55	4.7	\$1,026	53	56%	
Churchill	4943	5643	258	5.2	254	5.1	287	5.8	211	4.2	\$905	323	50%	
Moe	8753	12,157	413	4.7	400	4.5	523	5.9	321	3.6	\$674	673	45%	934
Moe Sth	565	^inclusive	31	5.4	41	7.2	38	6.7	33	5.8	\$1,636	^inclusive	^inclusive	
Hazelwood	279	Not known	8	2.8	16	5.7	24	8.6	5	1.7	\$900	7	55%	
Hazelwood North	1475	Not known	58	3.9	60	4	114	7.7	88	5.9	\$1,668	Not known	67%	
Hazelwood South	322	Not known	22	6.8	22	6.8	32	9.9	12	3.7	\$1,554	14	72%	
Morwell	14005	16,122	740	5.2	661	4.7	829	5.9	522	3.7	\$732	1,159	45%	881
Newborough	6933	8,439	328	4.7	336	4.8	428	6.1	288	4.1	\$883	585	53%	956
Traralgon	23837	36,545	1404	5.9	1264	5.3	1596	6.7	911	3.8	\$1,125	1316	55%	944
Traralgon East	1864	Not known	104	5.5	111	5.9	151	8	108	5.8	\$1,963	38	70%	988
Traralgon South	469	Not known	24	5.1	42	8.9	58	12.3	32	6.8	\$1,943	9	73%	1076
Yallourn North	1493	Not known	74	4.9	63	4.2	81	5.4	65	4.3	\$886	80	52 %	944
Yinnar	811	Not known	31	3.8	50	6.1	56	6.9	41	5	\$1,110	33	58%	
Yinnar South	668	Not known	28	4.1	23	3.4	49	7.3	37	5.5	\$1,472	23	65%	
Toongabbie	500	Not known												
Tyers	900	Not known												
Jeeralang (incl. Junction & North)	589*	Not known												
Callignee	495*	Not known												
Glengarry	677*	Not known												
TOTAL				Av. 4.82%		Av. 5.64%		Av. 7.22%		Av. 4.57%				

Note: Data sourced from mbkconsulting.com.au/mbk1_007.htm "Population Forecasts Gippsland"

*Data sourced from 2006 census not available for 2011.

Table 16: Early childhood vulnerability

Latrobe community*	Number of children under 5 years	Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable (%)							SEIFA Score ^
		Physical health and wellbeing †	Social competence	Emotional maturity	Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	Communication skills and general knowledge	Vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC	Vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDC	
Latrobe community	941	2.0	1.3	2.0	1.0	11.3	6.0	6.1	N/A
Churchill	70	11.9	10.2	10.2	15.3	13.6	33.9	16.9	934.01
Churchill surrounds	34	3	6.1	9.1	3	3	9.1	6.1	1027.28
Glengarry/Tyers/Toongabbie	47	11.4	11.4	2.3	4.5	4.5	18.2	6.8	1024.88
Hazelwood North (2009)	24	4.5	4.5	4.5	0	9.1	9.1	4.5	1083.58
Moe/Hernes Oak and surrounds	163	17.5	13.6	18.2	14.9	17.5	33.8	21.4	882.37
Morwell	174	11.6	17.4	18.1	14.2	15.5	29.7	21.3	881.47
Newborough and surrounds (2009)	85	8.6	7.4	7.4	14.8	9.9	24.7	14.8	956.36
Traralgon South and surrounds *	17	6.3	0	0	0	6.3	6.3	6.3	1076.8
Traralgon/Traralgon East (2009)	304	10.8	9.7	9.3	8.2	6.8	23.3	12.9	988.54
Yallourn North (2009)	23	33.3	14.3	23.8	14.3	28.6	38.1	38.1	944.05

Appendix 3: Notes from benchmarking with other LGAs

Definitions used for local, district and regional play spaces

Wellington Shire Council

- Neighbourhood - within 400m walking distance for locals.
- District - medium scale - for the local community with a variety of play structures, surfaces and spaces.
- Regional - variety of play opportunities - 20-minute drive for locals - regional catchment.

South Gippsland Shire Council

South Gippsland don't use definitions – they refer to 'larger' and 'smaller' spaces.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Baw Baw uses neighbourhood, local, municipal and regional play spaces. Council have recently undertaken a range of documents (Parks and Gardens Strategy, PSPs, Open Space Strategy, Open Design for New Subdivision) that have a range of catchment definitions. They are in the process of standardising an approach to this. Our definitions still require some work to align all our documents.

From the Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012:

- Neighbourhood - small scale based on a 500m-catchment radius meeting the needs of immediate community.
- Local – mid-sized and based on a catchment radius of 1000m meeting the needs of local community.
- Municipal - addresses greater needs of the municipality through provision of higher order play opportunities.
- Regional - provides support facilities and play experiences not provided at other levels, and that which attracts or targets attendance from the whole municipality and external visitors.

Further detail on play space definitions is provided in the Strategy.

Kingston City Council

No comments provided.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

- Neighbourhood - serves just the immediate neighbourhood.
- Local - generally serves a whole precinct.
- District - serves a group of precincts.
- Regional - serves a much larger catchment.
- Town Park - serves an urban civic environment.

Ballarat City Council

- Local - within 400-500m, junior playground, set up for younger kids. Smaller slides have swings.
- Neighbourhood - a little bigger than local, more aimed at 8-10 year olds.
- District - aimed at both junior and senior play. They would anticipate that people might travel 5-10 km to get there, and hang around longer.

- Regional - people would stay for half a day, there would be a BBQ on site, toilets, and a place to buy food.

Bendigo City Council

- Local - comes down to level of play opportunities within 400m.
- District - a higher level of play opportunities within 2km.
- Regional - a significant level of play opportunities and infrastructure (Council does not have a catchment for this).

From *Bendigo Play Space Strategy 2008*:

- Local play spaces are those located within walking distance of most homes in the urban areas of the municipality. These play spaces do not generally offer a broad range of opportunities due to their smaller size, however, they do offer an opportunity for local people to travel by foot or bicycle to the site and to interact with their local community. Across a precinct, however, there should be a broad range of play opportunities available in local play spaces.
- District play spaces offer a wider range of play opportunities and are generally located within a 15 minute bicycle ride or short car trip from most homes within the Bendigo urban boundary and in several other towns, e.g. Heathcote and Elmore. These sites are able to be accessed independently by older children.
- Regional play spaces are the largest of all and offer a wide variety of play opportunities and associated amenities. People tend to spend multiple hours at these sites and may even come from towns outside the municipality to enjoy the facilities and opportunities available. Committees of Management that look after play spaces

Wellington Shire Council

Yes. Kinders are stand-alone. A couple of recreation reserves have playgrounds (we don't promote playgrounds on rec reserves). We do inspect some non-council maintained playgrounds but only pass the results to the Committee of Management.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Some Recreation Reserve Committees of Management and Kinders look after play spaces. In both cases Council drop in the play space, and it is left to them to undertake maintenance. Council still does audit the spaces. There have been examples where the maintenance is not done well, however they are not actively seeking to bring these play spaces back into Council management.

Baw Baw Shire Council

There are a couple of Committees of Management that look after play spaces, but as this has not worked well, Council are trying to take development and maintenance responsibilities back in-house. Council has installed the spaces, and nothing else has been done by Committees of Management. These few spaces are being put back on Council's routine maintenance schedule - Council are getting their act together in this area.

Kingston City Council

No, all development and maintenance of play spaces is undertaken by Council.

Ballarat City Council

Committees of Management do not look after any play spaces. Council does the maintenance for all play spaces on recreation reserves. There are about ten play spaces that Kinders supply and undertake the maintenance for.

Bendigo City Council

Their Play Space Strategy only involved Council owned and managed play spaces, so they generally have nothing to do with play spaces provided by other sources. An exception is Roslyn Park. This is a district-level play space, and only publicly accessible outside of school hours.

Catchment or distance threshold standards***Wellington Shire Council***

We take a different approach because standard distances are an issue in low density populations - rural towns and towns with absentee rates. We have taken a one size does not fit all approach.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Not aware of any catchment standards Council have.

Baw Baw Shire Council

- Neighbourhood - 500m.
- Local - 1000m.
- Municipal - none.
- Regional - none.

Kingston City Council

No comments provided.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

- Neighbourhood - 400-500m.
- Local - none.
- Municipal - none.
- Regional - none.

Ballarat City Council

- Local - 400-500m.
- Neighbourhood - <5km.
- District - 5-10km.
- Regional - no distance, but people would travel from out of town to get to these facilities.

Bendigo City Council

- Local - 400m.
- District - 2km.
- Regional - unsure.

Maintenance regimes

Wellington Shire Council

Not all are treated the same. Capital replacement is similarly equally scaled, although often move around because of differing site conditions.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Council audits all play spaces. More time is spent maintaining larger play spaces that require more regular upkeep and more money spent. Baw Baw Shire Council

Council has maintenance regimes for play spaces. These are daily to monthly depending on play space hierarchy.

Council's *Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012* does not provide detail on this issue.

Kingston City Council

The frequency for maintenance increases from Local to District to Regional playgrounds.

Ballarat City Council

Council tends to be reactive to maintenance everywhere regardless of level, and tends to base maintenance action on calls received from the public.

Bendigo City Council

Council does have maintenance regimes for play spaces.

Council's *Bendigo Play Space Strategy 2008* provides some detail on the maintenance of play spaces.

Cost of maintenance

Wellington Shire Council

No comments provided.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Unable to provide details for the cost of maintenance.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Not sure that these costs are defined, or that she is able to give us any information in regard to this.

From Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012:

- Neighbourhood - \$10-20,000.
- Local - \$20-50,000.
- Municipal - \$50-100,000.
- Regional - \$100,000+.

Kingston City Council

Approximately \$300,000.

Ballarat City Council

Can't break down by catchment, but there would be a total spend of about \$150-\$200,000 that covers remuneration for two staff members, and for materials.

Bendigo City Council

Bendigo's budget for this year is \$1.2m (three complete play space renewals, and six new play spaces costing between \$50,000 - \$395,000). Maintenance costs total \$100-120,000 for all play spaces. This includes parts and maintenance etc., but does not capture man-hours. They would estimate 'A' level sites (local) would capture over half of this budget, but they haven't broken this down further. Soft fall is taken out of another budget - generally \$20-30,000 per year (but this year is more like \$40,000). Council could do a lot better in dealing with issues of costing.

A further breakdown of costs is provided in the *Bendigo Play Space Strategy 2008*.

Training of staff***Wellington Shire Council***

Occasional training for all parks staff. A few have undertaken the assessors course.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Training of staff is undertaken. The staff member responsible for managing play space maintenance has completed a Level 2 course, and this is updated yearly. Other play space maintenance staff members have completed Level 1 training courses.

Baw Baw Shire Council

There is no training of staff in the play space development side of things. It is typical of rural Councils for the maintenance crew to simply look in brochures and choose like for like play spaces replacements (in terms of costs and type of facility).

There has been no strategic thinking in the past, with just the standard two swings and slide facility installed.

Council has started to acquire some in-house urban design expertise, with new designs and thinking resulting from this. Council receives more external funding now. Open space planning has been a significant gap for Council in the past, and processes have been quite adhoc.

Kingston City Council

Yes, training related to any changes or updates to the standards or the industry in general.

Ballarat City Council

Yes, they do train their small crew, including going to the Play Australia courses. Council's asset people have undertaken training on auditing play spaces. Council's Facility Maintenance Planner has done a range of courses related to play spaces.

Bendigo City Council

One member of staff now has accreditation to audit play spaces. They have used Paul Grover in the past.

Staff have been to Play Australia courses, and attended courses relating to Youth Standards in the past.

Training of volunteers / reserve committees

Wellington Shire Council

Unsure if any training of volunteers / Committees of Management is undertaken.

South Gippsland Shire Council

No training of volunteers / reserve committees is undertaken.

Baw Baw Shire Council

There is no training on external sources. They feel Council should have all responsibilities related to play spaces, therefore training should only be done in-house.

Kingston City Council

No.

Ballarat City Council

No training of volunteers / reserve committees is undertaken. Council look after their own play spaces - it is easier to maintain standards that way.

Bendigo City Council

No training of volunteers / reserve committees is undertaken.

Frequencies of inspections

Wellington Shire Council

Same for all, externally twice a year, May and November (so works can be completed before Christmas). Staff are also supposed to do a cursory inspection whenever they are on site.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Smaller spaces - fortnightly. Larger spaces - twice weekly.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Council has maintenance regimes for play spaces. A visual audit is undertaken when doing maintenance and monthly structural inspections. These are daily to monthly depending on play space hierarchy.

There is an annual independent inspection undertaken.

Kingston City Council

All playgrounds are audited monthly.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

Neighbourhood - regular inspections and maintenance usually once every 6 weeks. Reactive response to safety concerns within 24 hours, and to graffiti, vandalism and other damage within 48 hours.

Local - weekly inspections and maintenance usually once every 6 weeks. Reactive response to safety concerns within 24 hours, and to graffiti, vandalism and other damage within 48 hours.

District - regular inspections and maintenance, but frequency of visits determined by usage levels. May vary seasonally with usage patterns. Specialist spaces such as skate parks or courts also require frequent inspections.

Regional - very frequent management inspections, minimum weekly, possibly daily in busy times. Higher degree of wear and tear will be expected than for other sites. Reactive response within 24 hours to safety concerns, vandalism, graffiti etc.

Ballarat City Council

- Local - twice a year.
- Neighbourhood - twice a year.
- District - monthly.
- Regional - monthly.
- There is a once yearly condition audit of all play spaces.

Bendigo City Council

- Local - for 'A' level plays spaces 1-7 days.
- District - for 'B' level play spaces 7-14 days.
- Regional - for 'C' level play spaces up to 28 days.

Methods of programming capital works

Wellington Shire Council

An ongoing cyclic replacement program based on a 12 year replacement / upgrade.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Council have a capital works calendar they stick to. Asset renewal, and the information they receive on usage dictates priority spend.

Baw Baw Shire Council

They are going through this programming process right now. It is the least mature area of Council at present. Audits have been done, and now being put into asset renewal plans. Condition reports have been done, and now they know what play spaces need to be replaced.

Kingston City Council

Yes, part of capital works renewal budget for playgrounds.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

Council have a *Capital Works Playground Renewal Programme* that considers:

- An assessment of existing playgrounds based on maintenance reports in order to determine an approximate end of asset natural life date.

- Predicted Capital Works Playground Renewal Budgets until 2016/2017.
- Proposed playground classification upgrades as recommended in the report.

Ballarat City Council

Programming of capital works is based on their Play Space Planning Framework / Strategy, and yearly condition audits. Council also has a policy that ensures treated Pine on play spaces gets replaced. No distinction is made between local and regional play spaces.

Bendigo City Council

Programming of capital works is based on renewal compliance, in-house knowledge about what our worst spaces are, and outside information. Programming is also influenced by usage and political factors.

Core service levels***Wellington Shire Council***

No comment provided.

South Gippsland Shire Council

In smaller towns basic facilities are provided. In larger towns 'feature' play spaces are provided.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Core services exist, but not all play spaces meet that service level.

From the Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012

Neighbourhood:

- Within 300m, up to 0.5ha, included walking links and drainage reserves.
- Playground >\$10,000 (meets Australian standards).
- Community consultation optional.
- Path linkages between activities and amenities.
- Shade – natural first preference.
- Accessible to all – paths, surfaces.
- Active and creative play elements – pumps, sound tubes, etc.
- Community art optional.
- Seating.
- Lighting of path link if significant.

Local:

- Within 1000m. 1km. may have a range of non-competitive areas.
- Playground >\$20,000 (Meets Aust. Standards).
- Community consultation optional.
- Path linkages between activities and amenities.
- Shade – natural first preference.
- Accessible to all – paths, surfaces.
- Active and creative play elements – pumps, sound tubes, etc.
- Community art optional.
- Seating.
- Lighting of path link if significant.

- Drinking water tap.

Municipal:

- Within 2km, 3ha, may have combination of active and passive space.
- Playground >\$50,000 (Meets Aust. standards).
- Community consultation in design.
- Site specific theme e.g. Natural environment, historic, cultural, etc.
- Path linkages between activities and amenities.
- Shade – natural first preference.
- Accessible to all – paths, surfaces, toilets, car parking, play elements.
- Active and creative play elements – pumps, sound tubes, etc.
- Public art in design.
- Toilets, BBQ's, Seating, Car parking, Lighting, Drinking water tap, Landscaping.

Regional –

- Regional attractor, services population >30,000, highly accessible, tourist area/focus.
- Playground >\$100,000 (Meets Aust. standards).
- Community consultation in design.
- Site-specific theme e.g. Natural environment, historic, cultural, etc.
- Path linkages between activities and amenities.
- Shade – natural first preference.
- Accessible to all – paths, surfaces, toilets, car parking, play elements.
- Active and creative play elements – pumps, sound tubes, etc.
- Public art in design.
- Toilets, BBQ's, Seating, Car parking, Lighting, Drinking water tap, Significant landscaping.

Kingston City Council

Yes, this is integrated into the maintenance program according to classification of the play space.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

Neighbourhood:

- Most important unit or building block of the open space and playground system. Serves homes generally within walking distance. Connection to other parks via off road trails and linkage parklands important.
- 400-500m from home, based on approximately 10 minute walk. Unlikely to attract visitors who do not live in the immediate surrounds.
- Primary purpose is for social/ family recreation. Important for children old enough to walk or cycle to playgrounds independently. Help make up for a lack of private space. Important meeting places.
- Visits are likely to be of short duration.
- Level of development will vary from site to site and depending upon the degree of dependence upon this play space locally. The more dependence, the higher the quality /amenity required.
- Seating and tree shade is important. A basic seamless, wheelchair accessible path system usually required. Drinking water may be provided where feasible. BBQ's, built shade, car parking and toilets are not expected.
- The whole local precinct needs to be considered as a package in which no single park /playground necessarily caters for everyone, but within the precinct toddler, junior and

older age groups will find activities that suit them. Parks with a higher level of dependence need to cater for more age groups.

- Within every local precinct, a child or adult with a disability must be able to access a choice of play /social opportunities. Parks with a high level of dependence require higher levels of accessibility. A basic but seamless path system providing physical access into the park, to social areas, and to some play activities is expected in most parks.
- Minimum park size 1ha for a park bounded by streets.
- Children need a range of neighbourhood play opportunities. Combinations of built play structures, open spaces, trails, hard and soft surfaces, vegetation and free choice 'loose' landscapes and materials provide the best value. Consider any and all of these as play provision, as long as there is a good local choice.
- Neighbourhood play spaces should be viewed as part of a "package" within each precinct, between them providing a diverse range of play settings, activities, materials, and products differing from others within the same catchment.
- Regular inspections and maintenance. Frequency of visits usually once every 6 weeks. Reactive response to safety concerns within 24 hours, and to graffiti, vandalism and other damage within 48 hours. Materials must be durable in local conditions.
- Mail-out draft concept plan to residents, erect sign in the park showing concept plan, advise local Councillors, advise local village committee, post information on Council's website, media, amend/modify design as required.

Local:

- Serve the whole playground precinct. They are typically larger and more prominent than the neighbourhood play space, with a distribution similar to local primary schools
- Frequently located near a node such as a shopping centre, school or community centre. Intended as an essentially local facility, serving users who live relatively close by. Travel would be by foot or bike and possibly by car.
- Primary purpose is for social/family recreation. The role as a social meeting place near other community facilities is frequently important.
- Visits are likely to be of short duration, often connected to another visit i.e. to shops, kinder etc.
- Level of development will vary from site to site and depending upon the degree of dependence upon this play space locally. The more dependence, the higher the quality and amenity required.
- Effective tree shade is important over a choice of seating and play areas. A seamless, wheelchair accessible path system is required. Drinking water ideally provided. BBQ's, built shade, car parking and toilets are not expected.
- Local play spaces need to provide for a range of age groups. General range can sometimes be tilted towards one age group (such as near a kindergarten vs. a secondary school) but the design should not rule out play by the non-target age group. In parks with high levels of dependence - cater for more age groups.
- A seamless accessible path system from street, car park or footpath into the park, to all social spaces and into the 'heart' of the play area is expected. Parks with a high level of dependence require higher levels of accessibility to a choice of play opportunities.
- Minimum park size recommended not less than 1 ha for a park bounded by streets. Preferably larger and more complex than neighbourhood level parks. Play spaces within any reserve can vary greatly in size.
- Designs must provide good value for play with open- ended elements for imaginative and social play, and loose materials from the environment to complement built playground structures, physical activities; bike play and hard and softfall play areas.

- Local parks and play spaces need to complement all other play spaces within the same catchment.
- Weekly inspections and maintenance. Frequency of visits usually once every 6 weeks. Reactive response to safety concerns within 24 hours, and to graffiti, vandalism and other damage within 48 hours. Materials must be durable in local conditions.
- As per Neighbourhood classification.

District:

- Destination playgrounds, drawing people from further afield than their immediate residential areas, but generally less significant than Regional parks and playgrounds. Town Parks are usually associated with Civic precincts such as libraries, municipal offices and civic squares.
- Typically serves a cluster of playground precincts. Attract visitors from across precinct boundaries, by car, bike or on foot, (especially if the reserve is connected via off road trails to other residential areas).
- Primary purpose is social/family recreation but the park may have other significance, such as providing sports facilities, a civic precinct, a beach, or a natural environment etc. providing an external draw-card.
- Visits are likely to be of long enough duration for toilets to be required.
- Design of the whole site requires more attention to detail in resolution of details such as accessibility, site levels, materials, edging, surfacing, paths, garden beds, shade, seating than expected for Local Parks.
- Effective tree shade is important over a choice of seating and play areas. A seamless, wheelchair accessible path system is required. Drinking water ideally provided. BBQ's, built shade, car parking and toilets are not expected.
- Play areas need to cater for all age groups.
- A seamless accessible path system from street, car park or footpath into the park, to all social spaces and into the 'heart' of the activity area and to a good range of play activities is required. Some effort to provide access to height and to natural areas is expected.
- District parks vary according to the other purposes such as sports facilities. Play spaces within District reserves vary in size depending upon the usage patterns and the nature of adjacent facilities, but they need to be large enough to accommodate a good range of activities and amenities.
- The package of attractions is an important feature. Play spaces need to provide a good range of physical, creative and imaginative play settings for children of all ages and their families. Some custom design of elements will be expected to create a distinctive space.
- Play spaces need to complement others of the same classification across the municipality, but it is especially important that adjacent District and Local parks within the same catchments differ from one another.
- Regular inspections and maintenance, but frequency of visits determined by usage levels. May vary seasonally with usage patterns. Specialist spaces such as skate parks or courts also require frequent inspections. Materials must be durable in local conditions.
- Identify major stakeholders, circulate Playground Questionnaire, mail-out draft landscape concept plan to residents within catchment, erect sign in the park showing concept plan, advise local Councillors, advise local Village Committee, post information on Council's website, media, public meeting if required, amend/modify design as required.

Regional:

- Destination places that attract visitors from across a region. Typically larger parcels of open space, on a site with landscape, cultural, sporting or environmental attractions with wider significance. Vary because of unique qualities.
- Depend upon a unique setting. Typically only one or two per municipality or even a group of municipalities. Attracts visitors from across the municipality and further afield.
- Typically offer the largest range of activities and amenities, in a custom-designed setting. Function as a destination or focal point for social /family / recreation, possibly with other specialist role/s.
- Visits will be expected to be of at least some hours' duration and a range of amenities will be required to provide for these longer visits.
- High quality facilities, unique and designed specifically for this space. Sufficient interest to attract visitors for longer duration stay.
- Sufficient amenities to accommodate large numbers and groups. Car parking, a seamless hierarchy of paths, accessible toilets, built shade, BBQ's, drinking water, a choice of seats and probably more than one shelter will be required.
- Play areas need to cater for all age groups.
- Seamless accessibility to the site, to the site, from car parking, into the park, and to all facilities is required. Picnic facilities and toilets must be fully accessible. Most play activities should be accessible to children and adults with disabilities. Seamless access to more challenging activities, and to a choice of settings including natural areas is expected.
- Size of the play space itself will vary, but is unlikely to be smaller than 7000m² plus peripheral facilities such as parking and toilets.
- Play spaces need to be unique, reflecting the character or theme of the site. The package' of attractions is an important feature. Play spaces need to provide a good range of physical, creative and imaginative play settings for all children and their families.
- Should be unique. Regional Play spaces and their parks should differ from one another, wherever they are located. Materials and style typically reflect the character of the setting.
- Very frequent management inspections, minimum weekly, possibly daily in busy times. Higher degree of wear and tear will be expected than for other sites. Reactive response within 24 hours to safety concerns, vandalism, graffiti etc. Choose durable materials.
- Identify major stakeholders, establish a steering committee of special interest groups if applicable, circulate Playground Questionnaire, mail-out draft landscape concept plan to residents within the catchment, erect sign in the park showing concept plan, advise local Councillors, advise local Village Committee, post information on Council's website, media, public meeting if required, amend/modify design as required.

Ballarat City Council

The Play Space Framework has Development Standards for Play Spaces for local, neighbourhood, district and regional. The core services levels they provide in local level play spaces might be linked with local level open space. Capital improvements might be based on the audits undertaken the previous year.

Bendigo City Council

Council has a Core Service Agreement. This determines how often they visit sites, what they do in their work, and assets information.

Also see *Section 7.0 Play Space Design Matrix* for core service level information on local, district and regional play spaces.

Current trends for play spaces

Wellington Shire Council

We focus on creating high quality relevant play spaces for each community. There is largely a focus on a high level of naturalistic elements (but we have for >15 years).

South Gippsland Shire Council

- More natural environments and better landscaping.
- People expecting more from a play space.
- Increased use of play spaces.
- People calling Council with safety concerns. E.g. fencing spaces (which is not supported by Council).

Baw Baw Shire Council

- Design is the number one trend - a well-designed play space has not been an option for Council in the past.
- There is a greater expectation in the community that they will be consulted.
- People are interested in diversity, not just the standard two swing and slide combo.
- People expect that open space will link up as a network.
- People expect shade cloth and fences, though Council disagree with these. Council want to go more natural - fencing is the last resort. More rubber, less soft fall.

Kingston City Council

- Nature based play.
- Diversity of experience.

Ballarat City Council

- The use of natural play spaces. Mums are keen for more natural products.
- People like the bird basket facilities.
- Engagement people got a sense that rationalisation of facilities was not as good an outcome as retaining and improving existing facilities.
- People get attached to their local play space. New facilities will result in activation.
- Council now use Facebook to promote new and refurbished play space. This results in higher use.

Bendigo City Council

- Customising play spaces rather than just going to the product supplier for their models.
- More emphasis on play space theming.
- Integrating play spaces into the local environment.

Current challenges for play spaces

Wellington Shire Council

None. Council is very supportive.

South Gippsland Shire Council

- Council has a lot of smaller parks with low usage - it is a pain to have to replace equipment on these open spaces.
- It is challenging dealing with public enquiries about fixing / replacing equipment. They do not field so many enquiries about the actual design of play spaces.
- Financially they do ok with finding the money to do play space works.

Baw Baw Shire Council

- As a rural area, they know the value in investing in play spaces for giving kids something to do. Traditionally Council has not been willing to invest in this.
- Council have found it challenging strategically locating play spaces in such a large geographical area.
- The challenge from the operations team has been in the maintenance of more highly designed spaces (e.g. maintaining highly textured play space features).

Kingston City Council

- Value for money.
- Rate caps (unclear until process provided by State Govt.).
- Community expectation growing and funds not matching.

Ballarat City Council

- Having a low budget to undertake play space projects.
- Public expect full accessibility on all play spaces (at very high cost to Council).
- Council is spending far more than 10 years ago due to their policy of adding concrete edging and drainage to play spaces.
- There is a challenge in lifting standards in general.

Bendigo City Council

- Costs - several years ago they had a very small budget - it is much larger now. Council have trouble establishing what is an appropriate budget for an entry-level local play space.
- Community engagement - it has been a challenge having the time to do this, however they have found that taking two years to do a design and build is better than rushing it through.
- Cross-organisational thinking - having both recreation and operational staff on the same page for what they need for local, district and regional play spaces.
- Distribution - they need to look at the distribution of district play spaces vs. local play spaces more. Perhaps this will result in less (but better) facilities.
- Developers – they have delivered both poor quality and over-manicured play spaces. Council could not at the time point to suitable play space examples for them to use. Council need to establish a standardised approach.

Locations / addresses for regional play spaces

Wellington Shire Council

- Sale Botanic Gardens
- Macalister Park (Maffra)
- Apex Park (Heyfield)
- Memorial Park (Yarram)
- Apex Park (Stratford).

South Gippsland Shire Council

- McIndoe Park (Leongatha)
- Coleman Park (Korumburra)
- Station Rd (Foster)
- Sagasser Park (Toora).

Baw Baw Shire Council

They have regional play spaces, but not in the way Melbourne might classify a regional space. A \$250,000 play space will be classified as a regional play space at Baw Baw. They are judged in how elaborate they are, art features, levels of connectivity, lots of textures. Recent documents have shown that we have fallen far short of regional standard and our Open Space Strategy says we do not have this standard of space. Our highest level of playground is Burke St Park (Warragul). In the near future Warragul and Drouin Civic Park playgrounds will be redeveloped and be the most impressive in our area.

From the Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012

There are three sites throughout the Shire that have been selected as regional sites. Burke St Park (Warragul) requires a major upgrade to meet this standard and Market St Park requires local support in order to proceed. It is envisaged that Burke St is prioritised in 2008/09 and Market St Park be completed within the 5 year budget if support is gained.

Kingston City Council

No comments provided.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

Braeside Park (Parks Victoria) - there may be others, but they are not noted in the Strategy.

Ballarat City Council

- Lake Wendouree – constructed in 1998
- A regional AAA play space will be built at Victoria Park at the end of the year.

Bendigo City Council

- Hargreaves mall "Fun Loong" play space
- Lake Weeroona Play Space (Mary Jeavons designed, but now close to the end of its life)
- Strathdale Park will be upgraded to one (district level play space at present but located in a regional park)
- Kangaroo Flat - was meant to have one but currently it is district level
- Eagle Hawk Park will soon be at regional level.

- Botanic Gardens (as part of major redevelopment the play space will in the next few years be regional).

Approaches to accessibility

Wellington Shire Council

Depends on the individual sites.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Council follow AAA guidelines. This includes ensuring that integrated paths are provided.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Council basically try to make all play spaces as accessible as possible - integrated pathways that enable people to move around, and basing accessibility both on where people would use the space and on past data.

From Play Baw Baw Strategy 2008-2012:

Baw Baw Shire is committed to the provision of services to the members of the community regardless of race, religion, language, culture or other attributes or circumstances, all residents must be guaranteed equal opportunity and equal access to services.

This should be achieved by the provision of:

- Pathways to the playground that met Australian Access Standard.
- Location of car parking in relation to playgrounds.
- Disabled parking in relation to playgrounds.
- Accessible path access around and through the site.
- Heights and positioning of sensory elements and planting in relation to access pathways.
- Wet pour rubber below and leading to equipment such as swings and low slides to facilitate easy access to the equipment.
- Auditory and tactile elements to ensure experiences for children with impaired vision.
- Ensure Australian Standards are met.

Kingston City Council

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

- Provide seamless path access into the park.
- Eliminate stepped level changes and raised borders wherever possible and provide a path system with barrier-free surfaces.
- Provide turning spaces large enough for wheelchair use (especially relevant within cubbies or on decks).
- Incorporate surfaces that make wheeled-play interesting and fun.
- Provide synthetic impact absorbing surfaces in key areas allowing access across mulch to play structures.
- Provide wheelchair access to at least some play settings and in particular to the social or focal points of the playground where every child would want to play. Include cubbies, and imaginative / role play areas such as vehicle play.
- Design activities and surfaces in such a way that it is possible to allow a person in a wheelchair to face the activity front-on, and to get their knees under (a shelf, shop counter, activity panel or similar).

- Incorporate seats or perches immediately adjacent, for carers to assist in the play.
- Some items such as ground level mazes, cubbies and imaginative play settings, boats and trains, and activity panels are the easiest to make accessible and these have the best potential for social inclusion. Whenever these are planned into a space, they should, as a matter of course, be designed to be accessible.
- If it is possible to include a large item that provides movement, such as a birds-nest swing, or a double rocker with back support, that many people with a disability can use (if they can be transferred) make sure this is on an accessible surface.
- Provide access to creative elements such as music and sand or interesting natural spaces.
- Eliminate barriers such as log borders, steps or stairs to any of these sections.
- Include ramps allowing wheelchair access to elevated areas where this is feasible, and ensure that there is some accessible play value once the user reaches the top.
- Provide opportunities to experience texture, sound, smell and other sensory delights.
- Provide opportunities to leave the wheelchair, and to lie or sit in an alternative supportive position.
- Courts, paths and hard surfaces such as skate parks.
- Incorporate flat treads and stairs, as well as rung ladders or more challenging features, into climbing structures.
- Provide colour - contrast handgrips at changes of level within play structures.
- Delineate edges and level changes.
- Remove trip hazards.
- Ensure that particular care is taken with design for safety, so that children with balance problems and vision impairments do not inadvertently fall through openings in guard rails or cross the paths of swings.
- Provide simple back support structures on seats, swings, and seesaws and in sand pit areas. This is also important for carers.

Ballarat City Council

Council can't afford to make all play spaces fully accessible. Current strategies include: rubber under swing sets, paths for both ambulant users and grandparents, concrete edging to avoid stepping into a space, providing steps to slides (not rope). Council have established six bird nest swings in past year - 50% of all new play spaces now have bird nests.

Bendigo City Council

Council don't have a focus on accessibility at a local level. They would consider some district play spaces to be accessible. All regional play spaces would be accessible. Council considers that accessibility is broader than just mobility, it's also about being inclusive (ie the user being in the centre of activity, even if not using it). They have been working with a couple of disability groups e.g. autism groups. Accessibility is also about providing sensory experiences, seating, drinking, and 'L' shape accessible BBQs. Council are trying to think outside the box. They have one liberty swing but consider it a dud, because it requires fencing and therefore is not inclusive. These things need to be well located.

Processes in establishing new play space sites

Wellington Shire Council

No comment provided.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Council have not had many new play spaces (only at recreation reserves). Council has a very general process of grant allocation, design of space, community engagement, and construction.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Council identify where play spaces are required, then it goes out to consultation. The level of engagement is based on the level of hierarchy; then working parties are established, on site consultation, surveys, children's expos, analysis of data analysis, and assessment of options. When all this is done well, then they tend to get less negative feedback.

The *Baw Baw Active By Design Strategy* provides guidelines for providing play spaces in new residential development.

Kingston City Council

Focus on renewal and upgrade for play spaces older than 20 years rather than new play facilities.

The *Kingston Playground Strategy 2010* provides criteria for the location of play spaces.

The Strategy states that parks for play should be located in positions that are:

- Prominent, visible from houses and easily accessible to them on foot or bike.
- Large enough to provide adequately for the functions that will be required, without conflicts from immediate residents.
- For parks less than 1ha, avoid surrounding by houses on all sides. Allow for off-road connection to other open space.
- Preferably attractive with character and amenity.

Ballarat City Council

New play spaces are established through new residential development. The project goes through the planning department, then recreation planning, then parks and gardens. Developer's designs go through various Council departments before approval.

Bendigo City Council

A brief is prepared to develop objectives, SAD (survey, analysis, design), issues and opportunities, community engagement, design response.

Local play spaces - a concept design, letters are sent out to a 400m catchment, on site listening post, meet designers to provide feedback.

District play spaces - a two stage consultation process, pre-design chatting to groups, concepts and more consultation.

Regional play spaces - (e.g. Eagle Hawk Park) surveys, and consultation with five schools. It's all about creating ownership to foster usage and reduce vandalism.

Processes for play space reviews / refurbishments

Wellington Shire Council

No comment provided.

South Gippsland Shire Council

Council follows what is on their renewal schedule. Again, the process is similar to new play spaces - community engagement, design etc.

Baw Baw Shire Council

Same as new play spaces generally.

Kingston City Council

Guided by Playground Strategy, and by capital works program.

From the Kingston Playground Strategy 2010:

- When a site is identified for repairs or major upgrading works, it is important to get best value out of the opportunity to change the playground.
- Take the opportunity to check three aspects of the existing design simultaneously: play value, access to users with disabilities and their carers, and safety, upgrade all of these where appropriate and possible.
- When assessing a playground for possible replacement, the following issues need to be taken into consideration:
 - The relative age and play value of the equipment
 - Compliance with current safety standards
 - A new master plan for the whole park, that may propose a new playground
 - The cost of continual repairs, and
 - Excessive vandalism that may have caused structural damage.

Ballarat City Council

Refurbishments are flagged through condition audits for the following year. Community engagement people do a letter drop advising of plans (providing Council contact details). A prior Council children's study talked directly to children as to what they wanted, so they use that information as part of their processes. The *Play Space Framework* plays a major role. Council always replace the digger on the play space. Kids love it. Council encourage more natural play spaces. Council does more master planning than redesigns of individual play spaces.

Bendigo City Council

Council basically apply local processes to play space refurbishments

Appendix 4. Maintenance requirements

Safety Management System

The asset management, inspections and maintenance of public play spaces is an important part of council's responsibilities and serves the overall vision for play provision

There are five critical components of a Safety Management System:-

- Systematic record keeping
- Post-installation inspection of new or refurbished play spaces
- Routine inspection and maintenance (level 1)
- Operational inspection and maintenance (level 2)
- Comprehensive inspection (level 3)
- Accident reporting procedures.

These points are discussed below.

Systematic Documentation and Record Keeping

New AS 4685 - Playground equipment and surfacing Part 0: Development, Installation, Maintenance and Operation

Standards Australia will shortly update the previous AS 4486-1997 and this document will become AS 4695 - Part 0 (in 2015). This Standard clearly outlines in detail the number and types of inspections, the accompanying maintenance tasks, and the recordkeeping practices that are required.

Key summary points as well as some more detailed extracts from this Standards document are included below. These summaries are not intended to replace the full text of the Standard, and the responsible Council officers must read the full Standard.

Record Keeping

As part of a safety management system, accurate records relating to playground procurement, installation, maintenance and repairs must be systematically stored and kept up to date.

Such records need to include:

- Records of suppliers, manufacturers, designers and installers for each site,
- Inspection and maintenance instructions,
- Operating instructions, if applicable,
- Dates of installation,
- Any certificates of inspection and testing, if applicable,
- All operator's records of inspections, maintenance, repairs and modifications,
- Incident records and subsequent actions.

These documents should be accessible when needed for maintenance, inspection, and repairs and in the event of an accident.

Post-installation Inspections

A comprehensive post-installation inspection needs to be conducted by a competent person prior to opening of any playground to the public. The report should also include the results of any risk assessments and/or risk benefit assessments that have been carried out where non-compliances have been identified.

Routine inspection and maintenance (Level 1)

This is a visual inspection intended to identify obvious hazards that can result from wear and tear, vandalism or weather conditions. It should be carried out daily, weekly or fortnightly taking into account the frequency of use and local conditions. It is not a full technical audit and the intention is that this *should be carried out by staff that are already on site carrying out maintenance tasks*.

Planning the tasks:

- List the components to be inspected and maintained for each park and play space.
- Prepare a schedule with frequency of each task.
- Carry out the inspections and maintenance tasks according to the schedule.
- Keep accurate records of all work.

Competence

The staff members doing the Level 1 works need to be experienced and competent at inspecting the play space, equipment and surfaces thoroughly, carrying out the routine maintenance tasks, and keeping records. It is not a requirement that these staff be accredited safety auditors.

Routine inspections should check and report on:

- Broken or missing parts of the equipment,
- Loose-fill impact attenuating surfacing depth at least 300 mm, and
- Damage to unitary impact attenuating surfacing.

Routine maintenance tasks should include as a minimum:

- Removal of broken glass, syringes, dog fouling and other debris or contaminants
- Raking and topping up loose-fill impact attenuating surfacing if there is insufficient material or if it is compacted
- Emptying of bins and removal of rubbish
- Cleaning tables, chairs, BBQS and other auxiliary items
- Reporting dead overhanging branches for immediate removal
- Reporting and/or removing graffiti, and
- Reporting vandalism.

Systematic, accurate records of inspections and maintenance procedures must be kept.

Operational inspections and maintenance (Level 2)

An operational inspection shall be carried out regularly, on a **monthly or quarterly basis** unless there are compelling reasons to deviate from this inspection frequency. This is not a formal safety audit and it is expected competent Council staff will carry out these tasks or approved contractors.

Planning the tasks:

- List the components to be inspected and maintained for each park and play space.
- Prepare a schedule with frequency of each task.
- Carry out the inspections and maintenance tasks according to the schedule.
- Keep accurate records of all work.
- Agree on procedures for dealing with breakdowns.

Competence

The staff members doing the Level 2 works need to be competent at inspecting the play spaces in more detail than level 1, inspecting equipment and surfaces thoroughly, carrying out the repairs and keeping records. They do not need to be a qualified auditor or engineer, but would be expected to be experienced in play space inspections and maintenance practices.

Operational inspections and maintenance tasks should include:

- All the issues listed in the Level 1 Routine Inspections described above
- Checking for excessive wear of moving or 'sealed for life' parts (including chain links)
- Inspecting all moving parts subject to wear
- Ensuring that bolts and fasteners are secure
- Checking and removal of any protrusions and sharp edges
- Checking the structural integrity and/or stability of all playground equipment including auxiliary items. Equipment that relies on a single anchor or attachment point should be carefully inspected
- Checking corrosion, particularly within structural members
- Maintenance and repair of all impact attenuating surfacing
- Checking foundations below playing surface for exposed concrete, rot, and corrosion
- Checking and tightening of fixings and fastenings
- Check wire ropes and cables for fraying
- Check cableway main cable tension and the maximum speed of the traveller
- Check impact and attenuating edges of swing seats, pommels and other moving equipment that can impact users
- Check clearances beneath carousels and ensure that the underside is clear of protrusions and sharp edges
- Lubrication of bearings and bushes
- Checking that entrance gate closers and locking mechanisms are operational
- Checking that subsidence or other movement has not created new entrapment points, and
- Other operational inspection and maintenance as appropriate.

Comprehensive inspection (Level 3)

This inspection/audit is intended to establish the overall level of safety of the equipment, foundations and playground surfaces. This inspection shall be carried out annually. The intention is to check both the design and the condition of equipment and surfaces.

Examples of factors that should be included in a checklist when conducting comprehensive inspections are included in the AS 4685 Part document, but essentially the purpose is to check the design and condition of all play elements and surfaces for compliance with current Standards.

Competence

The staff members doing the Level 3 comprehensive inspections need to be competent and experienced in inspecting the play spaces for compliance with current Australian Standards.