

PLAYSPACE STRATEGY 2017

Policy and Planning Framework



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Ballarat will be known for its well-designed, fun, creative, innovative, high quality and diverse play spaces that contribute to the development needs of the Ballarat community and its visitors.

The Play Space Strategy reviews the current provision for play throughout the City of Ballarat's 132 facilities (including playspaces, youth spaces, skate facilities, BMX and fitness stations) in terms of quality, quantity, location and suitability. It also establishes a long term plan for the future provision of play spaces over a 15 year period.

PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The purpose of the City of Ballarat Playspace Strategy 2016 is to provide principles for planning, strategic policy and guidance for the planning, design and management of all playspaces within the City of Ballarat for the next 10–15 years. These principles are based on community feedback, municipal analysis and research into current industry 'best practice'.

Key findings from the 2016 community engagement process

- The majority of families using playspaces, use them more than once a week or fortnightly
- The majority of families travel outside of their local neighbourhood to visit playspaces, sometimes as far away as 10kms
- Top most important experiences for 0–12+ year olds were; swings, slides, climbing structures, flying foxes, hard court areas, bike tracks (BMX or other) and skate facilities
- Top items that would encourage families to use Ballarat playspaces more included; better complementary facilities, more shade and shelter, more variety and diversity, barriers/fencing and more for older children across a local area

Key findings from the 2016 site assessments

- Siting of playspaces is on the whole very good.
- Age range & diversity of play experience needs to be improved across many local areas, by giving consideration of what is provided elsewhere in the local area
- Natural shade needs to be considered when renewing or installing new playgrounds, that is the planting of trees or better use of existing shade
- Universal access has been improved in recent years with so many playspaces now at ground level.
- The majority of sites still however need improved pathway access to playspaces, seating and other facilities making it easier for all of the community to participate
- A more integrated approach to playspace planning and development at all classification levels would result in a higher quality of facility



Key directions

- Review with a view to improve Council's processes for playspace and capital project delivery
- Increase current scope for renewal or capital development to include (at all classification levels) integrated amenity such as landscaping, paths, seating and shelter/shade
- Diversify play activity at individual playspaces, with better strategic consideration of provision elsewhere in local areas. This should also include strategic locations for risky or challenging play, nature play and water play activity
- Increase annual budgets for playspace renewal and capital development in-line with the above recommendation
- Improve community engagement and communication methods regarding renewal and capital development projects (i.e. Playground Testers) in-line with project classification level and context
- Continue to support and provide advice to property developers regarding the establishment of new playspaces in developing suburbs
- Improve promotion of playspaces generally within the local community, using a variety of tools to provide information about accessibility, age suitability, context and features of individual playspaces



DEFINITION & GLOSSARY OF TERMS

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:

ACCESSIBILITY

Ease of access for users of a space that involves how they enter and move through a space – pathways, walkable access without significant barriers, etc.

ADVENTURE PLAY

Play that involves opportunities for more challenging and risky play. Aimed at more senior ages, it often consists of climbing structures, ropes courses and other agility type activity.

AQUATIC PLAY

An environment for water play specifically designed on a 'splash pad', usually with activities such as water slides, canons and jets. This type of play is designed to either stand alone or complement existing play spaces and swimming pools.

BIKE SKILLS, PATHWAYS & TRAILS

The incorporation of paths and trails that families can use to either access or complement play equipment teach young children valuable bike skills and can challenge and build confidence in older children.

BMX

A bicycle activity involving a purpose built cycle that has the ability to perform tricks and stunts on either concrete skate parks or dirt tracks and mounds.

CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

A Child Friendly City is a recognised global initiative (with participant cities) that puts children at the front and centre of local government policy, planning and implementation, in particular consultation and decision making.

DISTRICT LEVEL PLAYSPACE

Extensive play provision that attracts people from up to approximately 2km distance. May involve a reasonable length of stay and also acts as a neighbourhood level of provision as well for people who live closer.

FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Fitness equipment is defined as the range of individual apparatus that provides for exercise and improvement of fitness.

FIXED EQUIPMENT

Made up of fixed structures and equipment elements (such as swings and slides) within an impact absorbing undersurfacing zone.

INFORMAL SPORTS

Casual participation in active recreation at one's own leisure. Does not involve competition or committing to specific times and venues.

NATURE PLAY

Play that involves interaction with the natural environments that are not 'designed' for play, including bushland, soils and sand, trees and plants, etc. Sometimes referred to as 'wild places'.

NATURE PLAYSPACE

An environment for play specifically designed using 'natural' materials in place or complementary to standard play equipment.

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL PLAYSPACE

Good quality and basic level of provision catering for short duration visits by local residents who will often walk to the nearby play space close to residential homes.

PARKOUR

An activity using the practitioner's body and their surrounding environment to propel themselves while trying to maintain as much momentum as possible. This may include swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling etc.

PLAY

A spontaneous, freely chosen and enjoyable activity allowing the individual, either alone or while socialising with others, to interact with and explore the environment around them.

PLAYABLE SPACE/PLACE

Incidental opportunities for play either by intentional design or imaginative appropriation. Not usually found in traditional playspaces, these can be our neighbourhood streets, leftover spaces, creek corridors or bushland.

PLAYGROUND

Commonly seen as a 'traditional' play space.

A constructed and designed area consisting of structures and elements, usually protected by impact-absorbing material as a defined ground treatment, for the primary purpose of child and family play.

PLAYSPACE

An environment that facilitates playful activity by incorporating the surrounding landscape environment and amenity beyond the Playground for play. i.e. a grassed oval or stand of trees.

REGIONAL LEVEL PLAYSPACE

Significant level of play provision that attracts people from all across the City of Ballarat and usually involves a long stay of up to a few hours.

RISK BENEFIT

Rich and challenging play environments that allow children and young people to test and explore their abilities, which are managed to avoid the likelihood of serious harm.

SKATING

An activity involving a skateboard that engages the participant in exciting and risky manoeuvres generally on ramps and street skate elements.

STANDARDS

Refers to AS 4685 (Parts 1-6 and 11): 2014 which are the current standards dealing with the design, manufacturing, installation and maintenance of playground equipment and AS/NZS 4422: 1996 which is the standard that deals with playground undersurfacing. These documents are considered 'best practice' guidelines.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Ease of access for all users of a space that caters for their needs. Might involve special surfaces and pathways and/or the type of equipment and sensory and other features that provide play opportunities for a diverse range of abilities.

YOUTH ACTIVITY SPACE

Public areas where young people are welcome and encouraged to gather, meet friends, socialise and play.

ACRONYMS:

PSS

Playspace Strategy

BOSS

Ballarat Open Space Strategy (2007)

COB

City of Ballarat

1 INTRODUCTION



1.1 WHAT IS PLAY AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Play is experienced through doing and being.

Play is participation and exploration, the opportunity to test boundaries and learn new skills, thus developing confidence in our own abilities and judgements. Play can be about interaction with others, learning to communicate, negotiate and compromise.

Play can be physical, social, cognitive (learning new information), imaginative, and creative – sometimes all at once. Play has no set timeframes and can be over in the blink of an eye or alternatively continue on for months. Play can be spontaneous, fluid or highly organised and complex.

Play is the way that children learn about the world and their role in it. To the adult eye play may seem frivolous, disorganised, inane or even meaningless. The value of rich play opportunities, particularly in early childhood to the acquisition of skills, knowledge and self-awareness is immeasurable.

Children and young people's lives are more constrained and structured than ever, with much more adult supervision than ever before. Restricted independent mobility around local neighbourhoods leave children and young people with very little free time to explore and just 'be'.

Council recognises that a local playspace therefore has an increasingly important role to play in providing quality opportunities for play and a sense of freedom within easy access of home.

1.2 WHY PLAYSPACES RATHER THAN PLAYGROUNDS?

A 'playspace' refers to the whole environment for play, not just the play equipment and softfall zone. This may include mounds, open grassed areas, sand, water, seats and picnic tables, paths, logs, rocks, plants and trees etc. all of which combine together to form rich and varied 'open-ended' opportunities for play.

Playspaces can include active open spaces such outdoor fitness equipment to promote physical activity and fitness in adults. These fitness stations may be at various intervals along a path trail or circuit or in one concentrated location. Playspaces can also provide play, socialising and recreation opportunities for our youth.

The term playspace has more contemporary use, than playground and is therefore the term that we have adopted for the purposes of this strategy.

1.3 THE ROLE OF COUNCIL IN PLAY

Council understands its role in the planning and management of playspaces within the City of Ballarat to:

- Be the primary partner, provider, operator, advocate and facilitator in the delivery of play opportunities
- Provide principles and guidance on the social and health outcomes that council is seeking in the provision of playspaces
- Develop the policy framework, principles, guidelines and standards to be utilized in the planning and delivery of playspaces
- Influence the provision of quality play opportunities that are equitable in their distribution and diversity
- Engage with the community to understand their needs and aspirations and work with them to create vibrant, engaging and sustainable play spaces
- Promote the benefits of play and the municipal play facilities available

1.4 BALLARAT – THE 10 MINUTE CITY

‘Making local neighbourhood centres better connected, safer and easier to access can increase the number of residents preferring to walk or cycle to their neighbourhood centre or destination. Holistic planning of new suburbs ensures provision for parks, schools, infrastructure and services as communities develop.’

*The Ballarat Strategy Today, Tomorrow, Together
– Our Vision for 2040*

‘Ballarat Imagine’, a community engagement and visioning project undertaken by Council in 2013/14 identified the key concept of the ‘10 minute city’ as a guide to decision making and planning. The ‘10 minute city’ ties liveability and accessibility together in the Ballarat context, providing a guiding principle for the type of city that Ballarat should be into the future in the face of population growth, changing demographics and development.

In Ballarat you can currently access most areas from the centre of town (in non-peak times) in 10 minutes. This level of accessibility, ease of movement and lack of congestion is highly valued by the local community and as such the aim of the ‘10 minute city’ principle is to protect what makes Ballarat such a great place to live!

As key policy directions of the ‘10 minute city’ centre around community health, wellbeing and liveability this guiding principle will also underpin planning for play and playspaces as core local community hubs that can be accessed on foot, by bike and car. This is to ensure that local accessibility to playspaces are maintained as Ballarat grows and changes.

The ‘10 minute city’ seeks to support complete liveable neighbourhoods within a compact city, based around:

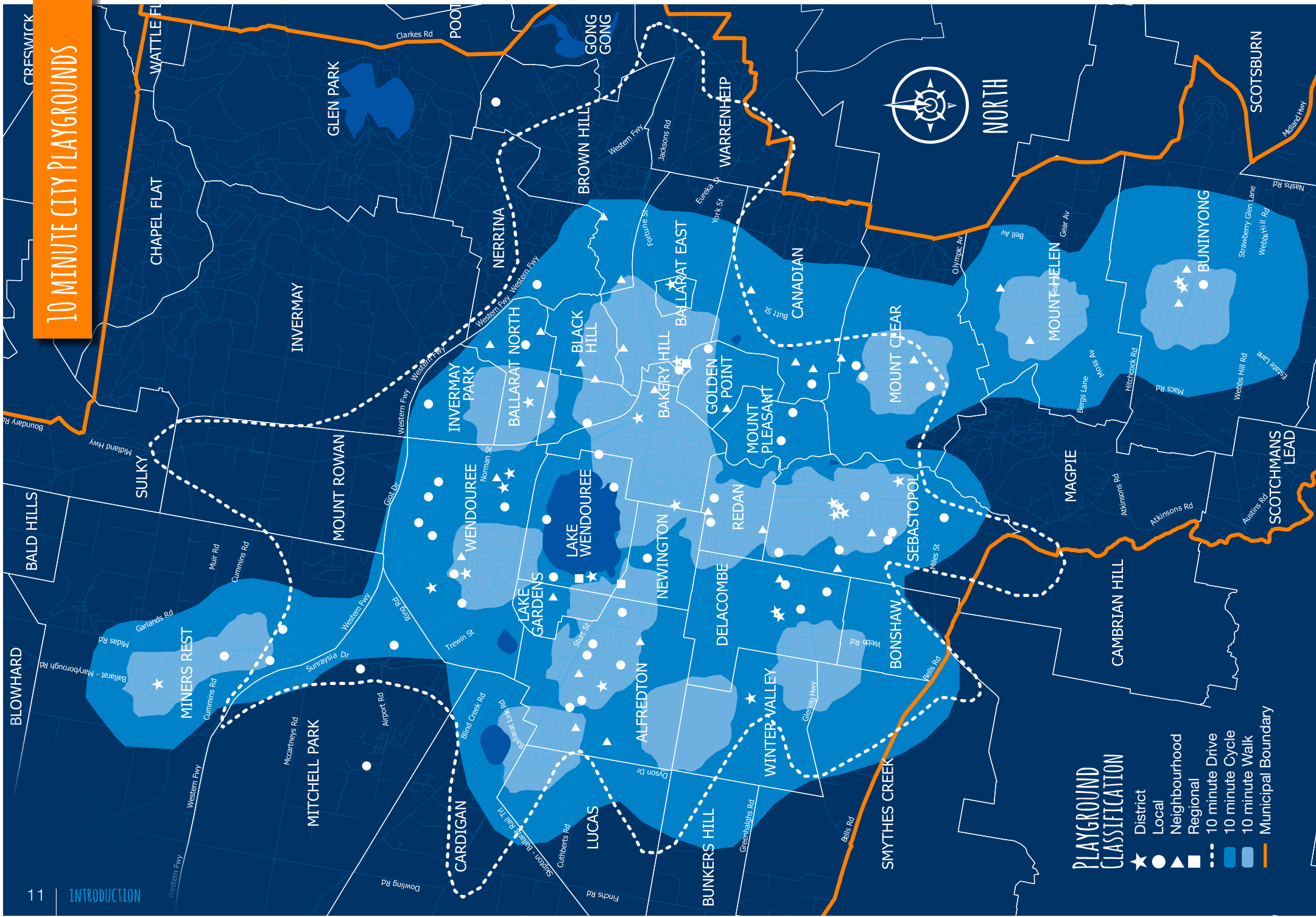
- Compact city form
- Complete local neighbourhoods
- Land uses and precincts supporting jobs, productivity and efficiency
- High quality local connections

Initiative 2.7 of the Ballarat Strategy identifies the need to be responsive to the family and personal impacts of land use decisions, particularly on children. As an officially recognised ‘Child Friendly City’, Council believes in a city where what we do and the spaces we provide consider the needs of children and encourage children’s participation in decision-making forums around planning in Ballarat. Access and inclusion, greater equity and liveability means that the ‘10 minute city’ should also be the ‘Child Friendly City’.

Playspace planning therefore needs to reflect the 10 minute access from local activity areas identified in The Ballarat Strategy, as outlined on the following page.



10 MINUTE CITY PLAYGROUNDS



PLAYGROUND CLASSIFICATION

- ★ District
- Local
- ▲ Neighbourhood
- Regional
- - - 10 minute Drive
- 10 minute Cycle
- 10 minute Walk
- Municipal Boundary

.....
Play is the way that
children learn about the
world and their role in it.
.....



2 THE BALLARAT COMMUNITY

2.1 WHO ARE WE?

The City of Ballarat sits approximately 110kms west of Melbourne. The third largest town in Victoria, Ballarat dominates the city surrounded to the north, west and south by rural areas and small townships. With total area of 739km² the City of Ballarat has an approximate population of 104,300, which is expected to increase to approximately 127,300 in the next 10 years.

The majority of the population are based in township areas, in particular Ballarat, Sebastopol and Wendouree, though data shows that much of the population between 0-17 are living on the outer suburbs and outlying townships such as Miners Rest, Lucas and Delacombe.

As a regional centre Ballarat contains a variety of land uses, encompassing established residential areas, new residential developments, significant retail, health and educational institutions and manufacturing industries.


2.2 HOW IS OUR COMMUNITY CHANGING?

The City of Ballarat's population is growing at a greater rate than the state average. It is also important to note that in more recent years two significant trends have emerged. Firstly the attraction of young families to Ballarat from metropolitan Melbourne seeking affordable housing and the second a slow down in the rate of youth 'out-migration' meaning the Ballarat is beginning to gain more young people than it loses.

The largest projected increase in age groups in the City of Ballarat between 2011 and 2026 is in the 5-9 years, which is expected to increase by 2,333 and account for 6.7% of the total population. The largest projected age group by 2026 is to be 15-19 years, with over 8,700 projected people. These age groups are significant for the planning of playspaces and youth facilities in Ballarat. The following table outlines this projected growth in the 0-19 age groups between 2011 and 2026:

The largest projected age group by 2026 is to be 15–19 years, with over 8,700 projected people.





Age Group	2011 No.	% of Pop	2026 No.	% of Pop	Change
0 to 4	6,428	6.8%	7,985	6.4%	1,557
5 to 9	5,925	6.2%	8,258	6.7%	2,333
10 to 14	5,960	6.3%	8,127	6.6%	2,167
15 to 19	7,109	7.5%	8,788	7.1%	1,679

Table data courtesy of id the population experts, May 2015

Residential development is a major driver of population growth in a local area with opportunities for households to relocate (and expand) or new households to form. These developments can take the form of new houses on greenfield sites, infill housing in existing areas and conversion of industrial lands into residential lands.



2.3 WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY THINK ABOUT PLAY AND PLAYSPACES?

Consultation with the Ballarat community was undertaken in May/June 2016 in the following ways:

- Online surveys
- Onsite interviews
- Social Media

The key findings from this consultation are as follows:

- The majority of families using playspaces use them more than once a week or fortnightly
- The majority of families travel outside of their local neighbourhood to visit playspaces, as far as 10kms
- The majority of families are satisfied or non-committal about playspaces in Ballarat
- The top 3 most important play experiences for 0-6 year olds were swings, slides and climbing structures
- The top 3 most important play experiences for 6-12 year olds were climbing structures, flying foxes and ropes courses (balancing and climbing)
- The top 3 most important play experiences for 12 years + were hard court areas (for informal sports and games), BMX bike tracks and skate facilities
- The top 5 items that would encourage families to use Ballarat playspaces more are; better complementary facilities, more shade and shelter, more variety and diversity, fencing or barriers and more for older children across a local area

It is important to note that this information was gathered specifically from adults, who may be parents, carers or community members. In some cases this may have been in consultation with children.

Suburbs where onsite interviews were conducted are also more highly represented in the responses than other areas.

2.4 WHAT DO CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITY THINK ABOUT PLAY AND PLAYSPACES?

Family and Children's Services at Council completed consultation with children in 2015 to help inform Council as to the progress of Ballarat as a Child Friendly City.

The consultation questions were developed with a focus towards 'neighbourhood' and 'liveability'. These questions were asked of children from 5 to 13 years across 15 primary schools and 4 early childhood services in Ballarat. Ideas and views from younger children were collected via a facilitator.

The following is a summary of responses from this consultation relevant to this strategy:

- Most 5-10 years get around their neighbourhood by car
- The 11 years + age group walk and cycle more than younger children, but still get around their local neighbourhood by car more than any other way
- The Park was the place most visited by children in their local neighbourhood (73% overall)
- Parks were visited more by younger children than older children
- The Playspace was 4th most important (61% overall) in results after the park, friend's houses and school.
- The Pool or Waterpark (Aquatic Playspace) was 5th most important (41% overall) for children
- Skate parks and BMX featured in the responses, but lower in the rankings (with 21% overall for both).

2.5 DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADULT AND CHILDREN'S THINKING IN PLAY

It is important when planning for children to recognise that children and adults think quite differently about what is important when planning spaces and places for play. The following table is not an either/or response, rather it illustrates some important examples where differences in thinking is evident:

Play Features Children & Young People Often Say Are Important	Play Features Adults Often Say Are Important:
Found objects or treasures	Large, prominent play equipment
Big slides	Safe structures to eliminate injury
Monkey Bars and climbing frames	A variety of equipment (looks like there is a lot to do!)
Room to run around and play chasey	Fencing (for ease of supervision)
Loose parts and messy materials (such as sand and dirt)	A clean, neat playground
Logs or beams or stepping stones to balance on	Rubber surfacing as its cleaner than mulch and easier to walk on
Tunnels, cubbies and places to play without being disturbed	Open surveillance across space
Trees to climb	Shade structures
Moving or spinning equipment	Comfortable seating under trees or shade structures
Swings (as they don't have them at school)	





.....
‘Ballarat City Council is committed to ensuring that all young people in our community achieve the “promise” of a healthy and happy life that in turn has a role in the shaping the development of the community in which they live.’
.....

City of Ballarat Youth Development Framework 2016–19
.....

.....
‘Yesterday’s child is today’s adult and tomorrow’s older person.’
.....

City of Ballarat Positive Ageing Framework 2015–18
.....

2.6 SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

These spaces are defined by this strategy as Youth Activity Spaces encompassing; skate parks, BMX tracks and cycling trails, hard courts (for informal sports such as basketball/netball), Parkour equipment and seating/gathering areas. In some location these are or could be complemented by more challenging play experiences (such as climbing/ropes and flying foxes).

Young people tend to use spaces they feel comfortable in (not always in open space), however it is limited to assume that this is only be represented by skate and BMX facilities, especially when being ‘inclusive’ is a high priority. Spaces developed need to consider the needs of young females as much as young males and young people of all abilities.

The development of engaging and valuable spaces for young people requires that young people be actively involved in the planning process and decision making around these spaces.

2.7 INCLUDING ADULTS AND OLDER PERSONS IN PLAY

Opportunities for inclusion and participation in play by adults and older people is important to consider when designing and planning playspaces.

By providing paths, seating and ease of access and mobility to and within playspaces for adult carers of various ages bringing children or grandchildren to play, to active ageing activities such as fitness stations and circuit paths, that complement play and formal sports in open space can contribute to supporting people of all ages to come together and connect.

Details around intergenerational design are discussed in greater detail in Section 3.6.

2.8 WHAT THIS ALL MEANS IN TERMS OF PLAYSPACE PLANNING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In summary this means that when we're planning future playspaces in Ballarat we will always consider the following:

- The growing needs of new areas and households in our community
- The changing needs of existing areas and households in our community
- The importance of play to and for children and young people as valued members of our community
- The ideas and opinions of all members our community, in particular children and young people
- Differences between adults, young people and children's thinking about play and playspaces
- Developing playspaces that are inclusive of all members of our community

2.9 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN FUTURE PLAYSPACE PLANNING

The involvement of the community in future planning for play is critical to its success. Parents, grandparents, children and young people should all be given the opportunity to participate in the planning process in a variety of ways.

2.8.1 Our community engagement process

The table on the right provides a guide for Council in the variety of methods that will be employed to engage with communities in the planning and development of playspaces.

2.8.2 Promoting playspaces

Playspaces will be promoted to all residents and communities through a range of media and information, including council's website, social media and other publications such as 'My Ballarat'. Map Information regarding the location of City of Ballarat play spaces is also available in the back of council's 'Early Years Guide', which is available to residents on council's website and through Council's 'Family and Children's Services' unit.

Current year's projects as well as draft concepts for the following years projects will be available for comment on the City of Ballarat website.

Consultation Method:	Regional	District	N'hood	Who?
Referencing:				
Refer 'Engaging Children in Decision Making' document on CoB Website	•	•	•	Council
Refer Child Friendly Ballarat Committee	•	•		Council
Informing:				
Signs on site/letter box drop	•	•	•	Community
Media/My Ballarat	•	•	•	Community
Website/Social Media	•	•		Community
Consulting:				
Listening Posts Onsite	•	•		Families
Surveys	•	•	•	Community
Interviews	•		•	Community
Involving:				
Playground Testers/Detectives	•	•	•	Children/ Young People
Focus Groups	•			Community
Workshops	•			Community
Collaborate:				
Project Reference Group	•			Community
Empower:				
Council	•			Community
Youth Council	•	•	•	Young People



3 THE VALUE OF PLAY

3.1 TYPES OF PLAY

Play tends to fall into four main types all of which may cross-over with each other and within the experience available at any one playspace:

Physical Play

Physical Play involves the practice, development and mastery of physical skills. This type of play is most obviously recognisable to adults and includes two distinct types; gross-motor and fine motor. Examples of gross-motor activity in play will include; running, jumping, swinging, sliding, climbing, hanging, balancing, throwing, kicking, catching and hopping etc. It involves larger muscle movement control and perceptive judgment, as adults these skills are essential for operating in the physical world.

Examples of fine-motor activity in play will include; manipulative tasks such as operating play panels or toys, collecting and organizing loose materials, writing and drawing, painting, threading, block or model building etc. It involves the much finer muscle control in our hands (usually known as dexterity) and perceptive judgment (usually known as hand-eye coordination), as adults these skills are essential for our working and domestic lives.

Cognitive Play

Cognitive Play involves the practice, development and mastery of cognitive (or thinking) skills. The rudiments of this type of play cross over into all aspects of academic or intellectual life.

For example play involving the collection, sorting and ordering or classifying of objects form the basis of skills in mathematics, experience and questioning of the growth or state of the natural world form the basis of skills in science, construction of models or structures in play form the basis of skills and knowledge in technology. As children this type of play helps us learn to question and to test, as adults these skills are imperative to a world where knowledge and continuous critique of our understanding of things are paramount.

Creative and Imaginative Play

This type of play is really one aspect of cognitive play, but develops or masters 'lateral thinking' as well as some fine and gross motor skills.

Play activities such as pretend games help children 'play out' adult roles or fantasy play expanding their thinking about social connections in the world. Other creative play activities such as drawing, painting, model construction, music and dance also practice and develop 'abstract' thinking, beyond the physical world. As adults, this kind of play experience in childhood helps us to be 'innovative' (or think outside the box) and also teaches us to 'problem solve', a highly important skill for effective autonomy in the world as adults.

Social Play

Social Play involves the practice, development and mastery of skills that enable us to interact successfully with others. In some way it crosses over into all of the three previous types of play, but certain play experiences requiring co-operation, negotiation, sharing, participation and leadership practice these skills more than others.

Imaginative role play (such as playing 'house' or 'school') is one type of play experience where all of the aforementioned skills might be practiced in one situation quite overtly. An activity however such as 'sliding' on a play slide might also involve incidental negotiation and participation. As adults mastery of these skills are among the most important for successful relations in our domestic and working lives.





PLAYSPACES

DIFFERENT PLAY TYPES & ACTIVITIES

Physical Play

Running, jumping, kicking, climbing, swinging, sliding, balancing, catching, throwing, hanging, manipulative activities.

Cognitive Play

Exploring, ordering, classifying, observing, assimilating new knowledge, making connections, understanding.

Imaginative/Creative Play

Dancing, singing, playacting, constructing, painting, drawing, building, cooking, appropriating.

Social Play

Chatting, sharing, negotiating, leading, participating, instructing or demonstrating, cooperating, collaborating

3.2 PLAY FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Playspaces that provide for different age groups enable suitable play opportunities and experiences for the whole community. It is understood that many families come to playspaces with children or young people of different ages.

This range of experience may be provided for at one location (within a larger playspace) or across various smaller locally accessible playspaces in one area. The importance aspect is balance in provision, where opportunities lacking in one location are available at an alternative location. It is not possible, nor practical to provide everything everywhere.

Play experiences that vary in challenge and type allow for children to move gradually to new more difficult activities and keep things more engaging.

There are five main age groups referred to in this strategy:

- Toddler (0-3 years)
- Pre-School (3-5 years)
- Junior (5-8 years)
- Senior (9-13 years)
- Youth (14 years +)

For further detail on these age groups and play refer to the Appendices Section of this strategy.

Play experiences that vary in challenge and type allow for children to move gradually to new more difficult activities and keep things more engaging





Play is an opportunity to challenge, learn and grow and with this comes varying degrees of beneficial risk.

3.3 GRADUATED CHALLENGE

Graduated challenge refers to the wide range of physical experiences across a playspace setting that allows for continuous development through 'challenge' as a child ages and develops. Playspaces that are 'too-easy' or 'too-difficult' present issues of neglect or misuse of play equipment, possibly causing harm.

Australian Standards AS: 4685 (2014) dictates parameters around 'accessible' and 'not easily accessible' equipment to establish appropriate age and skill use. An example of this might be the difference between a low platform and slide and a complex climbing wall. The first is easily accessible to a toddler because it is intended for use by that age-group, the climbing wall has grips not easily grasped and spacings wider than physically capable by a toddler, as it is intended for use by an older child.

Council playspaces aim to provide varying degrees of graduated challenge in the range of activities provided in any one setting. Sometimes due to the limited scale in smaller (Neighbourhood) playspaces this may not be possible and good strategic planning across a local area is needed to provide for a different, but complementary range of play experiences at other playspaces within an accessible distance.

3.4 RISK BENEFIT IN PLAY

Play is an opportunity to challenge, learn and grow and with this comes varying degrees of beneficial risk. Playspaces whilst designed and managed by council to provide a suitable duty of care towards children and young people, also need to be engaging to encourage children to challenge themselves and develop the confidence and resilience needed to tackle new activities. Even playspaces that are compliant with standards and regulations are not 'risk free' and the best preparation that can be offered to children is to teach them to have good judgement on their own capabilities.

Risk Benefit Assessment is a process used by those managing playspaces to assess the inherent play value of any playspace against potential risks and hazards that may form part of that environment. The result should be a balanced approach to providing for play that includes maintaining valuable activities that may pose some risk, whilst at the same time teaching children the skills needed to manage themselves effectively in these environments.

This process also allows for any identified hazards to be modified or removed. In all cases known risks in playspaces should be monitored over time.



3.5 ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Good, accessible and inclusive design benefits all members of the community, those with or without a disability, pregnant and nursing parents or parents with prams and older adults. Accessible design may be as simple as the width of a path or the location and height of a drinking fountain, to specialised play activities.

It is important to note that wheelchair access is not the only type of disability and that children will not be the only ones with a disability accessing a playspace, in many cases it may also be their carers who have the disability. It is also important to note that it is not possible or practical to make every part of every playspace fully accessible either.

.....
Accessible design may be as simple as the width of a path or the location and height of a drinking fountain, to specialised play activities.
.....



3.6 CREATING VALUABLE PLAYSPACES FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Council recognises that different community dynamics can produce additional benefits for wellbeing when different age groups come together to recreate and play.

A simple definition of an intergenerational space is one that provides genuine and relevant opportunities for people of all ages to participate in the same location. Intergenerational design of parks and playspaces does not imply that all ages will be using the same space at the same time.

Effective intergenerational design considers the different needs of age groups to interact and ergonomically considered elements that allow for different uses. Critical to making it work are the dimensions, orientation and location of elements.

For example a wide set of steps may:

- Form a seat with support for an older person
- Be a small amphitheatre for a group of young adults
- Provide a fitness training area for a person
- Be the location for a counting game for a child

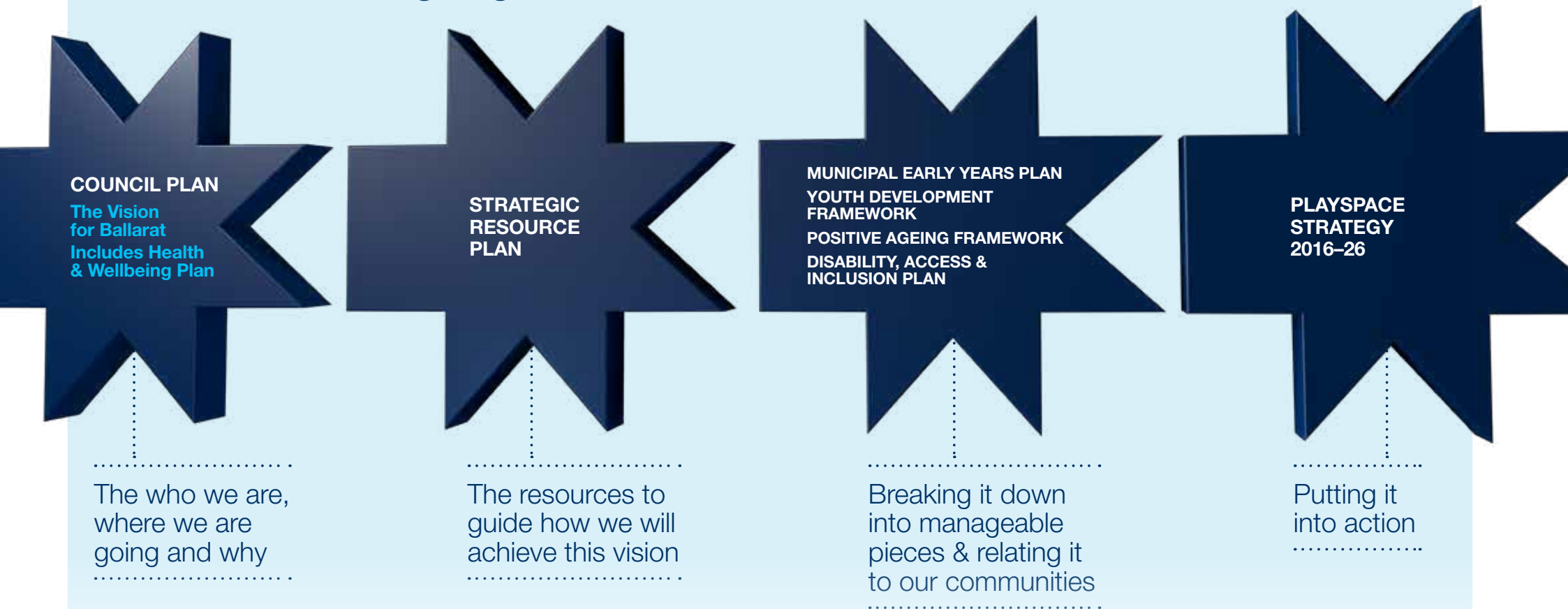


4 PLANNING FOR PLAY

4.1 COUNCIL PLANNING

The following table provides an overview of the City of Ballarat Playspace Strategy 2016 and its relationship to other key Council planning documents and processes.

Ongoing Consultation with our Communities



4.2 OTHER GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Outside of Council's Planning there are also a number of guiding documents that are often referred to when planning for play:

Our Partners in Health (2015-18)

In 2013, the City of Ballarat resolved to integrate the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan with the Council Plan to ensure that all units of Council were reporting against health and wellbeing outcomes.

To counter the risk of having significant community engagement within the Council Plan process, the City of Ballarat initiated a partnership with seven leading health-promoting organisations in Ballarat. This document formalises that partnership and clearly outlines a collaborative plan to tackle four key health priorities individually identified as critical for improving health outcomes for the people of Ballarat.

Key opportunities relevant to this strategy are:

- Working collaboratively to support physical activity initiatives around play
- Improving communication and engagement amongst partner organisations relevant to play; and
- Supporting the production of relevant locally focussed information for the community

A submission was received by the City of Ballarat by 'Our Partners in Health' as part of the development of this strategy.

Article 31: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified in 1989 and Australia is a signatory to this convention. There article most of relevance to this strategy is Article 31.

Article 31:

Recognises the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

Respects the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and encourages the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities.

Australian Standards

Standards are a set of agreed guidelines that support 'best practice' for Council in regards to design, planning, installation, construction and maintenance of play equipment and undersurfacing. A process representing the interests of a wide group of community representatives and stakeholders produces these standards. These include children and young people.

Current Australian Standards relevant to playspaces include; AS: 4685 – 2014 (Parts 1-6 and 11), AS/NZ: 4422 – 1996 and AS/NZ: 4486.1 – 1997

Standards for playspaces aim not to make them 'risk-free' rather they are designed to reduce the likelihood and severity of injuries.





5 OUR VISION FOR PLAY & PLAYSPACES

5.1 VISION

The following statement encompasses the vision for play in the City of Ballarat:

.....

“Our playspaces will be engaging, inspiring and fun places for the enjoyment of the whole Ballarat Community and its visitors.”

.....

5.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following dot points outline the guiding principles by which the vision above will be achieved:

Principles	What does this mean?
Offer a diversity of experience across a local area	That our playspaces will each be different from another in some way
	That our playspaces will provide a range of different experiences, levels of challenge and interest across a local area for ease of access
	That our larger playspaces will provide greater diversity as families will tend to travel further and stay longer
	That our playspaces will complement other recreational activities in the local area
Be inclusive, adaptable and accessible	That all our playspaces will be designed to provide some inclusion to people of all ages and abilities
	The focus of play in our playspaces will mostly be for children and young people, however suitable opportunities will be provided at strategic locations to assist other members of the community to participate in play
	That our designed spaces can be used in different ways by different ages and abilities
	That our larger playspaces and strategically located playspaces will provide a higher degree of accessible play and amenity and will be advertised as such
Be inviting and welcoming	That our playspaces will be well-maintained, clean and attractive
	That our playspaces will be comfortable and safe
Be connected to the community and connect the community	That our playspaces are planned to be within an easy distance of home
	That our playspaces are designed to be well connected to the local neighbourhood by paths and trails
	That our playspaces become valuable community meeting places
	That we will consult with the community on the development of their local playspace
Be reflective of its local setting	That our playspaces are located and designed to complement their location's context and environment
	That where appropriate our playspaces interpret local history or culture



Our playspaces will be designed to provide some inclusion to people of all ages and abilities

6 PLAY IN BALLARAT – KEY ISSUES & OBJECTIVES

6.1 GENERAL

Part of the process for developing this strategy was to ask the community what their thoughts were on the current state of play in the City of Ballarat. This was also supported by site assessments that looked at the quality of play and the playspace environment. The top five issues that were raised are as follows:

Top 5 issues

- 1 Not enough for very young or older children/young people to do
- 2 Not enough diversity of activity in playspaces and across playspaces
- 3 Playspaces on the whole don't make use of their environment for play
- 4 Many playspaces have poor or no accessibility
- 5 It is difficult to find out information about playspaces in the City of Ballarat

6.2 BETTER PLANNING FOR DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Planning future playspaces for different ages is a fine balancing act, as everything cannot be provided at every site. Good strategic planning involves ensuring that a 'local area' has a range of opportunities for different ages so that if something is not provided at one playspace, it can be accessed nearby at another.

Most neighbourhood playspaces are focussed on pre-school and junior primary ages for two reasons. This is because it is assumed that older children are more independently mobile than younger ones and often the size of open space is limited and more suitable for a range of junior activities, rather than single recreational activities such as BMX, skating and ball sports.

This doesn't however mean that older children and young people should miss out, rather that a strategic range of activities

should be provided across a local area in larger regional, district or neighbourhood (where space allows) and suitable bike trails and path connections established.

Younger children (under 3 years) are a different matter. Fixed equipment is sometimes not suitable for this age group who need a more sensory and spatial environment including; steps and slopes, and benefit from the textures of surfaces, loose materials and low planting when crawling or learning to walk. Integrating playspaces better with their surrounding landscape environment will start to improve opportunities for this age group and their carers, though consideration of ergonomics (suitable heights, distances and surfaces etc.) and skill level is important to providing for appropriate play.

6.3 GREATER DIVERSITY ACROSS OUR PLAYSPACES

Diversity refers not only the age suitability as discussed above, but also to range, variety and flexibility of play activities provided. Core activities (i.e. swings, slides, climbing and balance) should be provided but don't always need to be the same from playspace to playspace.

Again neighbourhood playspaces may be restricted by its open space area, however the inclusion of loose and flexible materials for play, landscaping and natural elements can embellish smaller play structures or fixed equipment.

The best approach is to again plan strategically within a local area. Assess what is provided at other nearby playspaces and think about how this one can be different from others in the local area. When including drawcard 'activities' such as flying foxes or specialised swings, make sure that the next nearest playspace doesn't also have one. These activities may also be better located at larger playspaces when there is more open space.

With larger district and regional playspaces think about the volume of use and what is provided. More equipment may be needed to cater for more children and reduce wear and tear.

Art or music elements are also a fun and unique point of difference that can be included in a playspace.

6.4 BETTER INTEGRATION OF LANDSCAPE & PLAY EQUIPMENT

Section 1.2 talks about the importance of the ‘whole’ space for play, so that play isn’t just limited to the play equipment zone. Critical to the success of this is the integration of both open space and play environment.

This begins with suitable siting of play equipment and elements with an understanding of topography, pathway access, proximity to the road and other features such as ponds or creeks. Then consideration should be given to visual surveillance, shade and shelter and integration with other uses or amenity. A good example of this would be siting the playspace to maximise use of existing established trees.

Thoughtful consideration of the use the surrounding landscape can bring to a playspace for play should also be made. Inclusion of hills and slopes, existing trees and shrubs and grassed open areas can add value to play, as can access to loose materials such as seed pods, branches, leaves, rocks and stones.

Fencing playspaces, whilst with the best of intentions, may inadvertently restrict access to the surrounding landscape and opportunities it might bring to children’s play. It is suggested that when a playspace needs to be fenced that the entire open space area is fenced where practical, rather than just the play equipment zone. This is discussed in more detail in Section 9.1.7.

6.5 IMPROVING OUR ACCESS & INCLUSION

Access and inclusion for all community members should be provided at any playspace. This is good universal design practice, enabling not only children and carers with a disability the opportunity to participate, but also providing ease of access to older carers and carers with prams.

It is understood and discussed in 6.2 and 6.3 of this section that whilst a level of access will be provided at all playspaces,

only larger playspaces with a higher degree of accessible activity and facilities for longer visitation will provide a high degree of access as well.

This is discussed in more detail in Section 8.2.

6.6 PROMOTING OUR PLAYSACES

Information about playspace facilities across the municipality should be provided in a variety of formats. Council already has an Early Years Guide Map that was produced as part of the Early Years Guide that shows the location of playspaces across Ballarat. In addition to this more flexible, interactive and comprehensive online methods should also be employed, regarding the current facilities at each playspace site, the level of access and any specialised features such as fencing etc.

As playspaces are upgraded council will engage with local communities to inform, seek feedback and then celebrate the openings of new playspace projects. This is discussed in more detail in Section 2.7.

7.3 WHY HAVE DIFFERENT CLASSIFICATIONS (LEVELS) OF PLAYSPACE PROVISION?

There are different levels of playspace because council needs to plan equitably across local areas to ensure that a range and balance of activities and settings are provided across the municipality.

The City of Ballarat has 3 playspace classifications:

1. Neighbourhood
2. District
3. Regional.

They are discussed in greater detail across the following three pages (Fact Sheets 1–3) and in Section 8.

PLAYSPACE STRATEGY 2017

Fact Sheets

The next 5 pages of the Playspace Strategy contain information that can be extracted from the document and used as Fact Sheets.

Neighbourhood Playspace Classification

7.4 PLAYSPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

7.4.1 Neighbourhood

Purpose:

- Services immediate local area
- Can be walked to easily from home
- Suitable for younger children/families

Context:

- Usually smaller site/some open space

General Development:

- Smaller playspace for pre-school and junior ages mostly, some features for toddlers also preferable
- Standard equipment, but depending on setting could have custom elements or nature play
- Basic level of amenity
- Should have some access 'to' the playspace
- Should be integrated with some landscaping, in particular trees for natural shade

Play Opportunities:

- Focussed on pre-school & junior ages mostly
- A moderate level of physical play – with a range across balance, upper body, swinging, sliding and climbing
- Places to gather, view out and participate
- Props and loose materials where possible for imaginative play
- Some space to run around





District Playspace Classification

7.4.2 District

Purpose:

- Services wider district or township
- Can still be walked to, but may be further away and accessible by car or public transport
- Longer visitation

Context:

- Usually larger, more significant open space (such as sporting facilities)

General Development:

- Medium sized playspace for pre-school to senior ages
- Mostly standard equipment, but depending on setting could also have custom elements or nature play
- Nature play opportunities to be integrated
- Medium – high level of amenity
- Should have a main route of access 'to' the playspace and some accessible play activities 'within' the playspace
- Should have some landscaping, in particular trees for natural shelter.

Play Opportunities:

- A variety of experiences for a range of ages, including 14 years+
- A high level of physical play opportunities – with variety across balance, upper body, swinging, sliding, climbing and some graduated challenge built in
- Possible music and art elements integrated
- Places to gather, view out and participate
- Props and loose materials for imaginative play
- Space to run around

Regional Playspace Classification

7.4.3 Regional

Purpose:

- Services region and beyond
- Planned visitation/ come by car or public transport from further away
- Longer visitation, possibly all day

Context:

- Larger, more prominent, destination open space

General Development:

- Large and diverse play structures and elements for all ages
- Mostly custom structures and elements, with some standard equipment and well integrated nature play opportunities
- Integrated music and art elements
- High level of amenity (including toilets)
- Must have multiple routes of access 'to' and accessible play activities 'within' the playspace
- Should have integrated landscaping, both natural & possibly built shelter

Play Opportunities:

- Providing for all age groups, including 14+ years
- A high level of physical play opportunities – with risky play/graduated challenge built in
- Elements that encourage creative, social and imaginative play as well (i.e. sand and water)
- Places to gather, view out and participate
- Props and loose materials for imaginative play
- Space to run around



PLAYSPACES DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

8.1 WHY HAVE DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS?

Development standards establish benchmarks for development of each classification of playspace across the City of Ballarat. The purpose of these standards are to strategically plan for suitable development for individual sites and equitable development for local communities.

8.2 DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS BASED ON CLASSIFICATION

The following development standards for City of Ballarat playspaces are listed below based on hierarchy:

Development standards for City of Ballarat playspaces

Type of Features	N'hood	District	Regional
PLAYSPACE FOCUS			
Features for younger children	■	■	■
Features for older children	▲	■	■
Features for young people	●	▲	●
PLAY FEATURES			
Play equipment; swings	■	■	■
Play equipment; slide/s	■	■	■
Play equipment; climbing frames/upper body	■	■	■
Play equipment; rocking equipment	■	■	■
Play equipment; balance activities	■	■	■
Level change	▲	▲	■
Opportunities for imaginative play	■	■	■
Manipulative activities	●	▲	■
Sand play	▲	▲	■
Water Play/Aquatic Play	●	▲	■
Natural Play Elements; rocks, logs etc.	▲	▲	■
Natural Play Elements; trees, shrubs, groundcovers etc.	▲	■	■
Art Elements	●	▲	■
Musical Elements	●	▲	■

- Included at this hierarchy level
- Excluded at this hierarchy level
- ▲ May or may not be included depending on site context and local need



Development standards for City of Ballarat playspaces

Type of Features	N'hood	District	Regional
OTHER ELEMENTS			
Hard surfaces for scooters, bikes and basketball/netball	●	▲	■
Open grassed spaces for running and ball games	■	■	■
Bushland features for exploring	●	▲	▲
Trails/paths for bicycles to/between playspaces	●	▲	●
Skate Facilities	●	▲	▲
BMX	●	▲	▲
Hit Up Walls	●	▲	▲
Parkour	●	▲	▲
Other youth facilities; table tennis, performance spaces	▲	▲	▲
SITE AMENITIES & FEATURES			
Shade trees	■	■	■
Shelter structures	●	▲	■
Seating	■	■	■
Picnic Tables & Seats	▲	■	■
Drinking Fountains	●	▲	■
Barbecues	●	▲	■
Toilets	●	▲	■
Bins	■	■	■
Bike racks	▲	▲	■
Fitness Equipment	●	▲	▲
Wi Fi Access	●	▲	▲
INCLUSIVE FEATURES			
Designated (disabled) car parking	●	▲	■
Wide sealed pathway access to playspace from street (at max 1:14 grade)	▲	■	■
Consolidated path access to playspace from street (at max 1:14 grade)	■	▲	▲
Secondary pathways between facilities	●	▲	■
In ground, concrete edging	▲	■	■
Rubber surfacing to provide access to specific play activities	▲	▲	■
Accessible furniture (i.e. tables, drinking fountains) with accessible paths to them	●	▲	■
Fencing	▲	▲	■
Inclusive play equipment or activities	●	▲	■

- Included at this hierarchy level
- Excluded at this hierarchy level
- ▲ May or may not be included depending on site context and local need

PLAYSPACE STRATEGY 2017

Fact Sheet 04





8.3 CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR PLAYSPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN

One key recommendation of this strategy is the preparation of development plans prior to renewal, upgrade or new capital development. The purpose of this is to design for the entire playspace including paths, seating and shade, rather than just the play equipment zone. This allows for the integrated consideration of all of these elements together and results in a more inclusive, better quality of open space outcome on site.

Ideally concept development plans should include the playspace area and equipment or other play elements, paths (sealed and informal), tree and landscaping, seating and other furniture including drinking fountains, bins, BBQs and signage where appropriate. This will enable Council to accurately estimate the costs of a project and make changes accordingly to meet budgets. It will also give Council more detailed information for community engagement. It will also form clear instructions for suppliers or contractors.

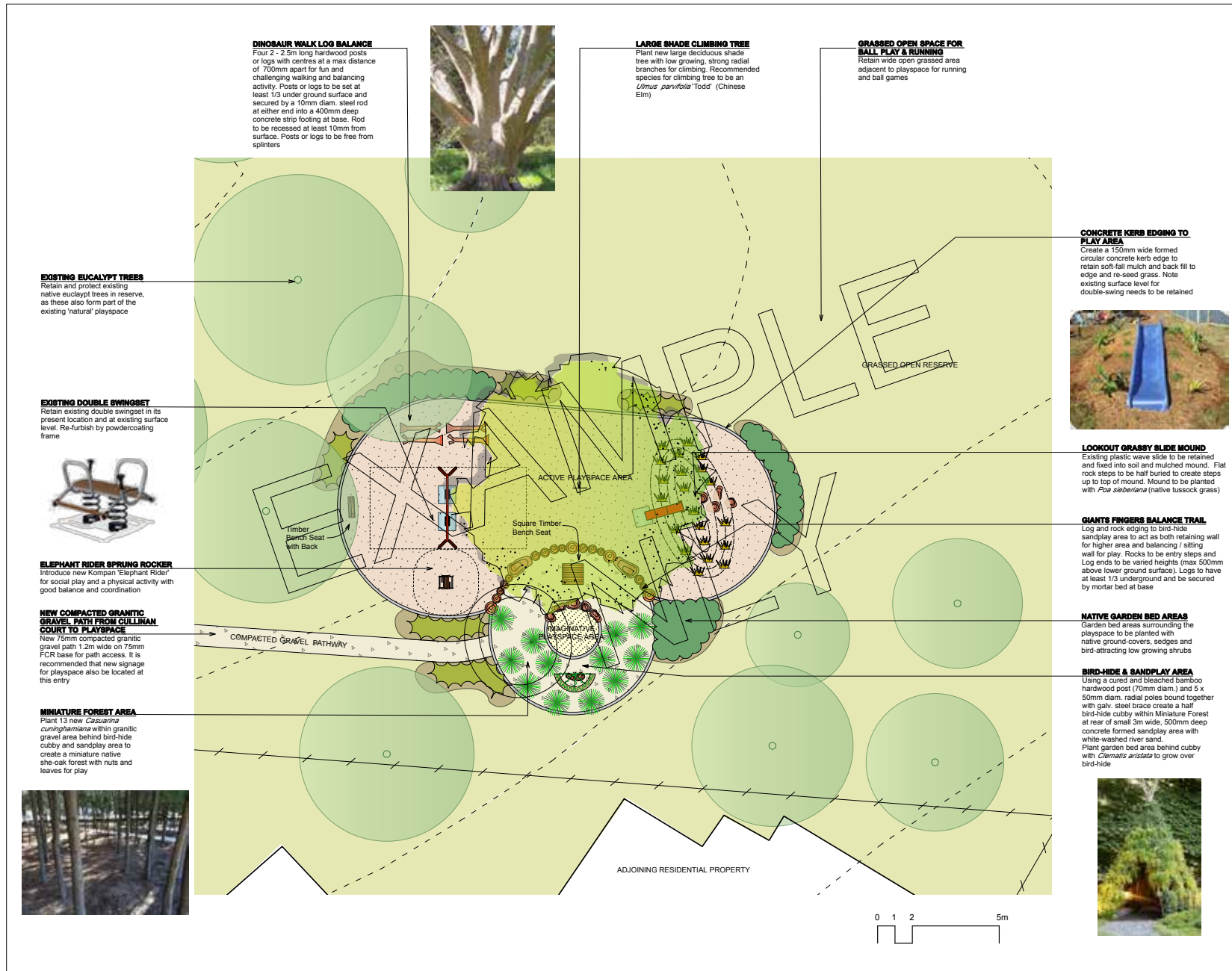
.....

Concept development plans should be prepared a financial year ahead of execution to allow suitable timing for tendering, consultation and implementation.

.....

With larger, more complex playspaces and open space master planning and a full process of design and preparation of technical details and specifications for construction may also be required.

EXAMPLE OF CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PLAN



DINOSAUR WALK LOG BALANCE

Four 2 - 2.5m long hardwood posts or logs with centres at a max distance of 700mm apart for fun and challenging walking and balancing activity. Posts or logs to be set at least 1/3 under ground surface and secured by a 10mm diam. steel rod at either end into a 400mm deep concrete strip footing at base. Rod to be recessed at least 10mm from surface. Posts or logs to be free from splinters



LARGE SHADE CLIMBING TREE

Plant new large deciduous shade tree with low growing, strong radial branches for climbing. Recommended species for climbing tree to be an *Ulmus parvifolia* 'Todd' (Chinese Elm)

GRASSED OPEN SPACE FOR BALL PLAY & RUNNING

Retain wide open grassed area adjacent to playspace for running and ball games

CONCRETE KERB EDGING TO PLAY AREA

Create a 150mm wide formed circular concrete kerb edge to retain soft-fall mulch and back fill to edge and re-seed grass. Note existing surface level for double-swing needs to be retained



LOOKOUT GRASSY SLIDE MOUND

Existing plastic wave slide to be retained and fixed into soil and mulched mound. Flat rock steps to be half buried to create steps up to top of mound. Mound to be planted with *Poa sieberiana* (native tussock grass)

GIANTS FINGERS BALANCE TRAIL

Log and rock edging to bird-hide sandplay area to act as both retaining wall for higher area and balancing / sitting wall for play. Rocks to be entry steps and Log ends to be varied heights (max 500mm above lower ground surface). Logs to have at least 1/3 underground and be secured by mortar bed at base

NATIVE GARDEN BED AREAS

Garden bed areas surrounding the playspace to be planted with native ground-covers, sedges and bird-attracting low growing shrubs

BIRD-HIDE & SANDPLAY AREA

Using a cured and bleached bamboo hardwood post (70mm diam.) and 5 x 50mm diam. radial poles bound together with galv. steel brace create a half bird-hide cubby within Miniature Forest at rear of small 3m wide, 500mm deep concrete formed sandplay area with white-washed river sand. Plant garden bed area behind cubby with *Clematis aristata* to grow over bird-hide



Issue:	Amendment:	Date:
A		
B		
C		
D		

General Notes:

1. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with other building contract documents and specifications issued. Contractors must verify all dimensions on site before commencing any work.
2. All materials, finishes, manufactured items, and equipment shall be installed in full accordance with the supplier's or manufacturer's written recommendations or these documents, whichever is more stringent.

Legend:

	Fine White River Washed Sandfill Sand
	Granic Gravel Paving
	Grass
	Concrete Kerb Edge to Softfall
	Garden Bed
	Impact Absorbing Rubber Pads
	Impact Absorbing Softfall Mulch

North:	Drawing No: 00-CDP-01
	Sheet 1 of 1

Drawing Title:
EXAMPLE LANDSCAPE CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT PLAN - PLAYSACE

Scale: 1:100 @ A1

Address:
EXAMPLE DRIVE,
BALLARAT, VICTORIA

Client: BALLARAT CITY COUNCIL	Date: DECEMBER 2015
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CITY OF BALLARAT

City of Ballarat
 PO Box 655,
 Ballarat Victoria 3350

T: 03 5320 5528
 F: 03 5333 4061
 E: ballcity@ballarat.vic.gov.au
 W: www.ballarat.vic.gov.au

8.4 PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PLAYSPACE PLANNING AND DESIGN

Design and placement need to be considered when building new or upgrading/renewing existing playspaces. The following issues should be considered before commencing any project:

Risk Benefit Assessment

- Have the playspaces risks been identified and considered as good risks (with play value) or bad risks (potential hazards)?
- What steps have been put in place to monitor any risks retained or included for play value?

Good Location, Layout & Access

- Is the playspace set back from the road or nearby water body (such as lake, pond, river or beach)?
- If there are two combination units (for junior and senior) are they within supervising distance of each other?
- Is there a path leading to the playspace from the main entrance or path? Is that path a minimum 1.2m wide (Neighbourhood) and 1.5m wide (District and Regional) in compliance with Australian Standards for Mobility & Access AS:1428?
- Is the playspace above-ground, in-ground or partially in-ground?

Universal Design & Inclusion

- Are there some (Neighbourhood Playspaces) to a lot (Regional Playspaces) of equitable use facilities and play equipment provided?
- Is the Playspace designed with flexible and intuitive use in mind?
- Is information provided on signs at the playspace perceptible by all (this includes sign height and text size and colour)?
- Are there tolerances for error when using any accessible play equipment or features?
- Is there a combination of activity with low physical effort and some providing a greater degree of physical challenge?
- Do all accessible activities have suitable space for approach and use and are they set at an appropriate height for the most common users?

Diversity of Experience

- Does this playspace provide a range of different play experience to the other local playspaces?
- Does it meet the recommended Development Standards for its classification?
- Does it provide a unique site character or setting, different to other local playspaces?
- Does it reflect the local context in its character (i.e. bushland, urban)?

Age-Appropriate Design

- Who is this particular playspace for?
- What age group are the users mostly going to be?
- How will that change over the next 10 years?
- Do the combination and complexity reflect the age-groups using the playspace?
- Is the layout mindful of possible conflicts and synergies that may occur between different age-groups?
- Are age-groups not catered for in this playspace, catered for in adjacent local playspaces? Is there a gap in provision?

Providing Challenge and Interest

- Does this playspace provide a range of activities across different types of play?
- Does this playspace use its landscape context for play or is it restricted to just play equipment?
- If the playspace has a combination unit structure, does it make maximum use of both upper and under deck areas?
- Does the playspace provide for graduated challenge between age-groups?

Minimizing Conflict Between Activities

- Are there potential conflicts between activities (i.e. swings or slide exits onto thoroughfares)?

Shade/Shelter

- Is natural shade provided for on the north or west facing aspect of play equipment, sandplay, picnic tables and seats?
- Where BBQs and picnic facilities are provided is there adequate shelter?

Compliance with Australian Standards

- Does the playground need to be audited or the design signed-off in compliance with Australian Standards for Play Equipment AS: 4685; Parts 1-11 (2014) and Australian/New Zealand Standards for Playground Undersurfacing AS/NZS: 4422 (1996)
- Has the finished playspace been inspected and signed off by the playground supplier in compliance with the above standards?

.....
Do the combination
and complexity
reflect the age-
groups using
the playspace?
.....



8.5 CHECKLIST FOR DEVELOPERS

The following checklist applies to the development of new and/or upgrade of existing playspaces by developers:

Checklist

- The minimum size for parks / open space will be met, according to the Ballarat Open Space Strategy (BOSS)
- Playspaces to match level of classification as defined; Regional, District and Neighbourhood
- Council's Recreation Team to be contacted prior to development to agree on level of classification and location of playspace on site
- Location of playspace to be in highly visible open space, near street entrance, with setback to consider proximity of traffic on the street to children playing. Playspace needs to be central to the population it serves
- Houses, shops or other community facilities are to front on to the playspace to maximise community ownership and surveillance. No more than two sides of one residential property is to border the open space
- Playspace Development Standards in this document to be applied to the design of the playspace
- Ensure that pedestrian / shared pathway access to the playspace is provided. Access from street frontages and connecting into existing footpaths is important
- Ensure that universal design principles have been considered and accessible paths of travel to and through the playspace are created
- Contact Council to check preferred suppliers of playground equipment, soffall material and edging profile etc. Playspace is to provide diversity of opportunity as outlined in development standards
- Give consideration to the park setting that the playspace is located in and the need to create complementary, engaging and attractive open space parkland. Opportunities for a range of activity including more active, boisterous play, spaces for retreat, games and the opportunity to explore and utilise loose materials needs to be considered
- Develop a plan to plant trees for shade for the playspace, using appropriate tree species. Contact Council for advice on suitable tree species. Maximising the opportunities for shade and shelter to the north is important
- All playspace equipment must comply with Australian Standards for Play Equipment and Undersurfacing
- Seating (preferably bench seating with a back) is to be provided within a close distance of the playspace. Multiple seats and/or picnic tables should be located and arranged with maximum shade in mind and the opportunity for social interaction
- With larger, higher classification playspaces (District and above) playspaces need to provide creative and diverse play value, catering for different age groups across all types of play activity; physical, social, imaginative and cognitive
- With larger, higher classification playspaces (District and above) there may be a requirement for specialised activities for youth such as skate, BMX, Parkour, Multiuse courts etc. Consult with Council's Recreation Team on local requirements or Older Adults such as fitness equipment
- All playspace equipment must comply with Australian Standards for Play Equipment and Undersurfacing

ONCE COMPLETE:

- An independent risk auditor must audit Playspace both during the design stage and post installation or construction. In the case of smaller, standard playspace supply the manufacturer usually handles this process internally. All playspaces should however be audited post installation or a certificate of compliance (post installation) be supplied by the manufacturer. This should include the depth and quality of tested impact absorbing soffall mulch or other suitable undersurfacing within the equipment fall zone
- Evidence of this audit or the certificate of compliance must be provided in writing to Council at the playspace handover. Please contact Council for recommended auditors.





.....

The purpose of the City of Ballarat Playspace Strategy 2017 is to provide principles for planning, strategic policy and guidance for the planning, design and management of all playspaces within the City of Ballarat for the next 10–15 years.

.....

9 PLAYSACE POLICY

9.1 DESIGN & AMENITY

9.1.1 Site setting & playspace location

A critical aspect of successful planning with playspaces is the location of the playspace on site. Sites may vary in size and context, in some cases with larger Regional and District playspaces there may be more than one playspaces or a combination of playspace and other recreational facilities (skate park, Parkour etc.) on one site.

When designing, upgrading or renewing playspaces Council will give careful consideration to this aspect, in particular the opportunity to set playspaces back away from an accessible road or water body, so that additional fencing or barriers are not necessarily required.

9.1.2 Integration with landscape

Council understands that settling a playspace into a site is important to ensure that the space is fully utilised for play. Mounds, stands of trees and shrubs, open grassed areas, slopes, hills and mounds, creek corridors etc. all have potential for play, extending and supporting opportunities provided by fixed equipment.

9.1.3 Natural elements and loose materials for play

A good quality playspace utilises its landscape context for play, recognising that only limited play value will be derived from play equipment alone. Council considers naturally found or established materials and elements such as trees, shrubs, ground-covers, grassed mounds, open grassed area, rocks, logs and waterways as opportunities to provide a diverse range of open-ended activities for play.

Natural elements are not necessarily 'prescriptive' in their role for play (i.e. a log on the ground could be for balancing, sitting and socialising, then become a bus or rocket ship for imaginative play, providing much more value than a single play panel on a structure.

It is important to note that plants and trees also have the added benefit of seasonal change and sensory delight derived through texture, colour, smell and sound, greatly enriching the quality of play experienced.

Loose materials such as sand, dirt, soft-fall mulch and pea-gravel provide much needed 'currency' for children's play. All having the added benefit of being open-ended for different kinds of use.

For example a shop-front counter in a play structure (and there are many different kinds of these) has very limited use in a playspace if the undersurfacing is entirely rubberized and as such children will tend to pass it by and focus on the physical activities offered instead. The same play element in a setting of soft-fall mulch with the addition of shrubs or trees providing leaves or gumnuts can be transformed into a very engaging experience. In a regularly visited playspace this is highly valuable as participants can add their own ideas and interests, thereby sustaining the play experience over a longer timeframe.





Playground under-surfacing

Council's preferred under-surfacing is tested, impact-absorbing, soft-fall mulch as it is a natural material, relatively cost-effective with good impact attenuation.

Soft-fall mulch should always be laid to a minimum depth of 250mm to allow for settling over time to maintain a minimum depth of 200mm to comply with Australian and New Zealand Standards for Playground Undersurfacing AS/NZS 4422 (1996).

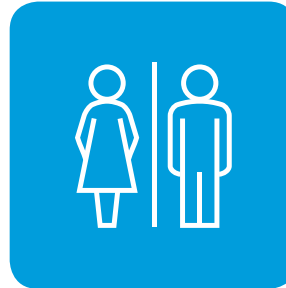
Rubber under-surfacing and other alternative surfaces may occasionally also be strategically used (as paths or zones where universal access is required). This should be undertaken in combination with soft-fall mulch.



9.1.5 Shade & shelter

The establishment of long-term natural shade, in particular by the strategic planting of open-canopied trees to the northern side of a play structure and any seating or picnic tables is considered by Council to be the best form of long term, sustainable shade provision.

With larger District and Regional playspaces it is acknowledged that the community may spend longer periods of time at the facility, therefore a picnic shelter over barbecues, tables or seating or shade structures over equipment might also be provided in addition to natural shade.



9.1.6 Public toilets

Public toilets are only located in some larger parks and reserves where additional picnic and barbecue facilities are also provided as Council anticipates that families will stay for longer periods.

Existing toilet facilities adjacent to play spaces are to meet accessible and child friendly toilet specifications where possible.



9.1.7 Fencing & barriers

In situations when site constraints impede an appropriate distance being created between playspace and busy road or water body, Council will consider part fencing, barriers or landscape buffers.

Playspaces with a high-level of inclusive play activity offered (i.e. Victoria Park, Newington and Pennyweight Park, Ballarat East) as the carers of children with special needs using these find that fencing assists children to play freely within an enclosed space without the concern of them wandering away easily.

It is important when playspaces are fully fenced that fencing does not only surround the play equipment and soft-fall zone, but includes the adjacent landscape environment and seating, drinking fountains etc. This will ensure that adult carers are able to be with children in their charge at all times.



9.1.8 Seating and picnic tables

At a minimum at least one bench seat with back will be provided by Council at each play space. This seat is to be located with easy access and in view of toddler or junior equipment, swings or sand play areas, to allow carers with younger children or babies the opportunity to supervise their children easily.

Where possible seating should be arranged to facilitate social interaction and an accessible picnic table should also be provided with a sealed accessible path (at least 1200mm wide) to it. In some specific circumstances there may be the opportunity to incidental activities for adults/carers such as 'swing seats'.



9.1.9 Signage

Signage will be provided by Council where appropriate as integrated park signage or specific playspace signage.

Signage will identify the location of the play space and communicate important information including any age focus for play elements, use of specialised equipment (such as Parkour), encouraging supervision of children, closest other facilities and relevant universal symbols.



9.1.10 Art & themes in playspaces

Council values the opportunity for art and themes in public playspaces because of their significance to bringing meaning to a local context and community. Any art or theme should be well considered as an integral part of the overall design of a playspace, so that it adds integrated value to the play experience as a whole, rather than acting as an 'add-on'.

Art that is considered suitable by Council for playspaces includes:

- Musical elements & features
- Specific treatment of play equipment or furniture to use within the playspace
- Small individual sculptural elements (i.e. carved animals)
- Murals or paving treatment
- Interactive panels or objects for manipulation

It is important that artworks created for playspaces are well made, durable, highly finished and fit for purpose, particularly where natural materials such as timber or stone are used.



9.2 MANAGEMENT

9.2.1 Dogs

Dogs must be on a lead at all times within 50 metres of any children's playground equipment or any public area where dogs are required by signs to be on a lead. Dogs must also be on a lead at all times when in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, within 50m of the high water mark of Lake Wendouree, Eureka Stockade Reserve and Lake Esmond Reserve

Council requests that dogs' faeces are collected in any park or public reserve and disposed of responsibly.

9.2.2 Lighting

As playspaces are for day use, Council does not consider it appropriate to light them specifically after daylight hours.

9.2.3 Smoking and alcohol consumption

As of 1st April 2014 smoking is not permitted at or within 10 metres of a playspace or skatepark in an outdoor public place. Council planning for play spaces will also acknowledge designated alcohol free spaces throughout the city and will promote responsible behaviour

Victorian Government Tobacco Act 1987 (Amendment 2013).

9.3 MAINTENANCE

9.3.1 Inspections and audits

Inspections of all City of Ballarat play spaces occur regularly to inspect for damage, test softfall and schedule any necessary repairs or works, by the team responsible for the maintenance of all City of Ballarat play spaces. These inspections occur monthly in Regional play spaces, Quarterly in District play spaces and twice yearly in neighbourhood and local play spaces.

Council also conducts an independent yearly condition and compliance audit of all City of Ballarat play spaces.

9.3.2 Maintenance and repairs

The team responsible for the maintenance of all City of Ballarat play spaces makes routine visits to repair minor damage, clean away rubbish and graffiti. This occurs daily in regional play spaces and monthly in all district, neighbourhood and local play spaces or as routine inspections dictate. Any works related to trees, planting and landscaping is the responsibility of the City Services 'Parks and Gardens' team and rubbish collection in parks occurs on a weekly basis.

Bins for general waste are provided in many public parks with playspaces. In particular parks where picnic facilities and barbecues are located it is anticipated that the community will use these facilities more frequently and for longer periods of time. These bins are collected regularly.

All reports for maintenance and repairs for play spaces that are received by phone, online or face-to-face through Council's Customer Service Centres are lodged on council's management system 'e-services'. Once a request is logged it is sent to the appropriate area of council for investigation and action. These requests all have to be sign-off as completed by council staff and are carried out as soon as is practicable.

To report any damage or repairs needed to your local playspace please contact Customer Service at Ballarat City Council on (03) 5320-5500 or visit the Phoenix Centre at 25 Armstrong Street South, Ballarat (Monday – Friday 8.15am – 5.00pm) or lodge an e-service request online at <https://eservices.ballarat.vic.gov.au>

9.3.3 Renewal

It is generally anticipated that the standard lifecycle of a playspace is 10-15 years. Council therefore undertakes an annual program of playspace renewal within this period.

Renewal can mean replacement of existing parts or equipment, or complete replacement or upgrade of playspace. This is determined by routine inspections, annual audits and changing community need.



10 PLAYSPACE STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Implementation of this strategy; both policy and recommendations will require a commitment of both financial and staff resources over the next 10-15 years. It is therefore important that appropriate annual budget allocations are made in both areas of capital / renewal and operational budgets to maintain the progress towards a higher standard of playspace across the municipality.

It will also involve a change in process for the design and delivery of playspaces at all classification levels. Council responsibility for implementing and managing tasks in the delivery of playspace renewals and capital projects is outlined in Part 2. of this strategy *Precinct Data, Recommendations and Action Plan*.

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It is important that the implementation of this strategy is monitored annually to ensure that actions are completed and changing priorities accommodated. This should be reported regularly at council meetings and to the local community via council publications and local media.

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11 REFERENCES

ENDORSED COUNCIL PLANNING DOCUMENTS:

The Ballarat Strategy 'Today, Tomorrow, Together – Our Vision for 2040', City of Ballarat 2015

Our Partners in Health (2015-18), City of Ballarat 2013

Recreation Strategy 2014, City of Ballarat August 2014

Municipal Early Years Plan (2015-18), Children's & Family Services, City of Ballarat 2015

Disability Access & Inclusion Plan (2015-17), City of Ballarat 2015

Positive Ageing Framework (2015-18), City of Ballarat 2015

Open Space Strategy (2008), City of Ballarat 2008

Playspace Planning Framework Review (2014), City of Ballarat 2014

Aquatic Strategy (2014), City of Ballarat 2014

Environment Sustainability Strategy (2012-2014), City of Ballarat 2012

OTHER REFERENCED COUNCIL DOCUMENTS (NOT ENDORSED):

byou Draft Youth Development Framework (2016-19), City of Ballarat 2016

Skate & Youth Space Facilities Framework (2015), City of Ballarat August 2015

City of Ballarat – Population and household forecasts 2011-2036, .id The Population Experts 2016

City of Ballarat Children's Consultation – Technical Report, Springtech Services February 2016

OTHER REFERENCED DOCUMENTS:

'Getting the Balance Right' – Risk Management for Play, Elizabeth Cummins and Andrew Reedy for Play Australia 2014

'I Can Play Too' - The Good Playspace Guide, Playground and Recreation Association of Victoria for Sport and Recreation Victoria 2007

'The Outdoor Playspace Naturally; For Children Birth to Five Years', Sue Elliot, 2008 Pademelon Press, Sydney Australia

Enabling Play Friendly Places, Environment Design Guide Issue 87, Jenny Donovan, August 2016

Parks for Teens: 10 features teens want to see Victoria Derr, December 2015 'Growing Up Boulder' Research Project, University of Colorado, USA

AS 4685 Parts 1-6 & 11 Playground equipment and surfacing Standards Australia 2014

AS/NZS 4422 Playground surfacing – Specifications, requirements and test methods Standards Australia, 1996

AS 1428 Design for access & mobility (Set) Standards Australia 2010

Whitehorse Playspace Strategy 2011, City of Whitehorse 2011

Mornington Peninsula Shire Playspace Strategy 2015, Shire of Mornington Peninsula 2015

Darebin Playspace Strategy (2010-2020), City of Darebin 2009

12 APPENDICES

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Some general text here about Appendices – and what pages follow? Explain what the next four pages are about. It, sumquis rempore secestio expe velestem quae evendebit, nobis quam res ipsam solor moles nis es pedignia.

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Toddler (0–3 years)

Toddler

Age-appropriate activities for Toddlers in a playspace involve the mastery of skills such as crawling, walking, stepping, rolling and balance (amongst others). They also involve a developing understanding of the world around them through observation, touch, smell, sound and taste.

Activity/Skill	Importance to Toddler	Surfacing	Sand/Water	Landscape	Equipment	Cubbies	Seats	Swings	Loose Materials	Level Change	Skate Park/BMX
Rolling	★★★★	•									
Crawling	★★★★	•									
Walking	★★★★	•		•							
Stepping	★★★★			•	•					•	
Running	★★★☆	•		•							
Climbing	★★★☆				•						
Balancing	★★★☆	•		•	•						
Hiding	★★★★			•	•						
Playing with Friends	★★☆☆		•	•		•			•		
Play Acting	★★★☆		•	•	•	•			•	•	
Ball Play	★★☆☆	•									
Games	★★☆☆			•	•						
Music	★★★☆				•				•	•	
Playing with Adults	★★★★						•	•			
Wheeled Toys	★★★★	•									





Pre-Schooler (3–5 years)

Pre-Schooler

Age appropriate activities in a playspace for Pre-schoolers include the development of further physical skills, more distinctly focused on fine and gross motor development and hand-eye coordination as found in ball sports. They also begin to take interest in friends and the social world, learning to play together, share and take turns. Creative activities such as art, music, cooking and dance become more important as well as an interest in animals and the natural world.



Activity/Skill	Importance to Pre-Schooler	Surfacing	Sand/Water	Landscape	Equipment	Cubbies	Seats	Swings	Loose Materials	Level Change	Skate Park/BMX
Rolling	★☆☆	•									
Crawling	★☆☆	•									
Walking	★★☆	•		•						•	
Stepping	★★★★			•	•					•	
Running	★★★★	•		•							
Climbing	★★★★			•	•					•	
Balancing	★★★★	•		•	•					•	
Swinging	★★☆			•	•			•			
Sliding	★★★★				•						
Hiding	★★☆			•	•						
Playing with Friends	★★★★	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Collecting	★★★★		•	•					•		
Constructing	★★★★			•		•			•		
Play Acting	★★★★		•	•	•	•			•	•	
Ball Play	★★★★	•								•	
Games	★★☆			•	•	•				•	
Music	★★☆				•				•	•	
Playing with Adults	★★☆						•	•			
Wheeled Toys	★★★★	•		•		•					

Junior (5–8 years)

Junior

Age appropriate activities in a playspace for Junior Primary Aged Children include increasingly refined activities requiring skill and offering challenge. Children of this age now begin to participate in more formalised sports and activities such as cycling, skating, football, cricket, netball and tennis, not only learning specialised skills but also teamwork and rules.



Activity/Skill	Importance to Junior	Surfacing	Sand/ Water	Landscape	Equipment	Cubbies	Seats	Swings/Flying Fox	Loose Materials	Level Change	Skate Park/BMX
Hopping	★☆☆	•									
Skipping	★★☆	•									
Jumping	★★★	•		•						•	
Spinning & Swinging	★★★				•			•			
Running	★★★	•		•							
Chasey	★★★	•		•						•	
Climbing	★★★			•	•					•	
Hanging	★★★			•	•						
Balancing	★★★	•		•	•					•	
Sliding	★★★				•					•	
Exploring	★★★			•					•		
Science	★★☆	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	
Playing with Friends	★★★	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Organised Sports	★★☆		•	•	•	•			•	•	
Ball Games	★★★	•								•	
Quiet Games	★★☆		•	•		•	•		•		
Performance	★★★				•				•	•	
Construction	★★★	•	•	•					•		
Playing Acting	★★★			•	•	•	•			•	
Cycling & Wheeled Sports	★★★	•		•						•	•





Senior

Age appropriate activities for Senior Primary Aged Children show a move towards more autonomy from adults both socially and in terms of independent skill development. Peers become more central to their lives. Children of this age group also seek more risky and challenging activities to push boundaries, such as rock climbing, flying foxes etc.



Senior (9–13 years)

Activity/Skill	Importance to Senior	Surfacing	Sand/Water	Landscape	Equipment	Cubbies	Seats	Swings/Flying Fox	Loose Materials	Level Change	Skate Park/BMX
Hopping	☆☆☆										
Skipping	☆☆☆										
Jumping	★★☆			•	•					•	
Spinning & Swinging	★★★★			•	•						
Running	★★★★	•		•						•	
Chasey	★★☆☆	•		•							
Climbing	★★★★			•	•					•	
Hanging	★★★☆☆				•						
Balancing	★★☆☆			•	•					•	
Sliding	★★★★				•						
Exploring	★★★☆☆			•							
Science	★★★☆☆										
Hanging out with Friends	★★★★				•		•	•		•	•
Organised Sports	★★★☆☆	•									
Ball Games	★★★★	•								•	
Quiet Games	★★★☆☆			•	•	•				•	
Performance	★★★★				•		•			•	
Construction	★★★★		•	•					•		
Playing Acting	★★★★										
Cycling & Wheeled Sports	★★★★	•		•						•	•
Risky Play	★★★★			•						•	•

Youth (14 years +)

Youth

Age appropriate activities for Teens and Young Adults include the opportunity to socialise or hang out with friends, play sports and most importantly be independently mobile. Environments such as skate parks, swimming pools, youth spaces and shopping centres provide cost-free activity for this age group. Technology is central to their lives and is a large determining factor in their social interactions. It is important to note that this age group still enjoys engaging with play equipment such as swings, particularly if with peers.



Activity/Skill	Importance to Youth	Surfacing	Sand/Water	Landscape	Equipment	Creative spaces	Seats/Edges	Swings/Flying Fox	Wi-Fi Access	Level Change	Skate Park/BMX
Socialising	★★★★					•	•	•	•	•	•
Water Activities	★★★★		•								
Jumping	★★★☆☆			•	•					•	
Spinning & Swinging	★★★☆☆			•	•			•			
Running	★★★☆☆	•		•							
Climbing	★★★★			•	•						
Hanging	★★★☆☆			•	•			•			
Balancing	★★☆☆☆			•	•					•	•
Sliding	★★★☆☆				•						
Hiking	★★★★			•							
Science/Nature	★★★☆☆		•	•							
Hanging out with Friends	★★★★		•		•		•	•	•	•	•
Organised Sports	★★★★	•									
Solo Games	★★★★			•			•		•	•	
Performance	★★★☆☆					•	•			•	
Creative Activities	★★★☆☆		•			•			•		
Cycling & BMX	★★★★	•		•						•	•
Skating	★★★★	•					•			•	•
Fitness Equipment	★★★☆☆				•						
Risky Play	★★★★			•						•	•
Technology	★★★★				•	•	•		•		

Information on activities for Teens and Young Adults was cross-referenced with 'Parks for Teens: 10 features teens want to see' by Victoria Derr, December 2015 as part of the 'Growing Up Boulder' research project in Colorado, USA



For more information contact:

Sport and Recreation
City of Ballarat
PO Box 655
Ballarat VIC 3353
Australia
Phone: (03) 5320 5500
www.ballarat.vic.gov.au