



# City of Ballarat

## Play Space Planning Framework



Review June 2014



## Executive Summary

This play space planning framework was initially prepared in 2010 in response to the principles and directions of the City of Ballarat's Council Plan, Health and Well Being Plan, Open Space Strategy and Recreation Strategy. It provided a planning framework from which play spaces were to be improved and developed over 5-10 years.

A review of this document has been undertaken in 2014 to bring the document into line with current council policy and priorities, and therefore minor updates and amendments have been made to the original document.

Play is an activity that people of all ages enjoy and Council's role is to provide a good quality and well distributed range of opportunities throughout the urban and rural areas of the municipality. This includes the provision of play spaces in parks, youth activity spaces in both urban spaces and parkland, and areas that promote natural play and playful activity in green open spaces.

The communities of the City of Ballarat will be consulted as each priority of this framework is implemented, to ensure that outcomes are responsive to community needs and aspirations. This document also guides the establishment of new play spaces that will be handed over to Council by developers as new subdivisions are completed.

This Play Space Planning Framework has been prepared in the context of play opportunities being:

*Inviting and welcoming;*

*Integrated and complementary;*

*Diverse;*

*Accessible;*

*Healthy and active;*

*Provided for everyone;*

*Safe;*

*Well distributed throughout communities; and*

*Compliant with the relevant standards.*

Council has allocated significant funds to ensure the implementation of quality play experiences for residents of all ages and this commitment is indicated throughout the document. .



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*\*Note:*

- *The section ‘Council Framework & Community Need’ can be found in Appendix 1 to this document*
- *The section ‘Municipal Overview & Precinct Reports’ can be found in Appendix 2 to this document*

## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope

Play is important for people of all ages and one of the core responsibilities for local government is to provide opportunities for play throughout the public open space system.

This play space strategy has been prepared in consideration of people of all ages including:

- young children learning to interact with their environment,
- active children who love to climb, jump, swing and laugh,
- children with special needs who require facilities that allow them to experience the joy of play with dignity,
- young people who seek social spaces and risk taking activities,
- adults who take their children to the park to play,
- carers who have responsibility for one or more children and are seeking quality developmental activities for them,
- friends and families meeting in the park to play and socialise,
- older adults who take grandchildren to the park,
- groups gathering in the park to attend informal events like BBQ's and picnics, and
- other adults who enjoy activity in open space and the pleasure that it brings.

This strategy provides guidance for the provision of integrated play opportunities for people of all ages, interests and abilities throughout the municipality. It is based on ten geographic precincts that comprise the City of Ballarat and form the basis for planning and development of play spaces for all ages. Additionally, the strategy is not intended to cover all forms of physical activity (like sport and organised competition), but focuses on the informal playful and casual activities.

There have been many articles written and much public discussion about the benefits of play. These benefits can be best explored through key themes as summarised below.

### 1.2 The Value of Play and Play Spaces

Physical Benefits	Involving physical movement, including such elements as running, jumping, leaping, sliding, climbing, throwing, hanging, swinging and rocking. Benefits include an increase in spatial awareness, teamwork, cooperation, energy levels, strength, balance, body awareness, fitness and general health and wellbeing.
Cognitive Benefits	Involving thinking and reasoning processes, including abstract thinking, logic and perception. Benefits include stimulating of imagination, self-confidence, problem solving and concentration.
Social Benefits	Involving experiences shared with another person or group of people. Benefits include developing communication, leadership, interaction, cooperation and compromise skills, and understanding principles of sharing, belongingness and socially acceptable behaviours.



Emotive Benefits	Involving emotional responses to the experience of play and fun. Benefits include feeling good, happiness, relaxation, respite from the day-to-day pressures of life and understanding the value of 'escape'.
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### 1.3 Council's Role

The City of Ballarat understands its role in the planning and management of play spaces to:

- Be a primary planner, 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 play spaces
- Provide the policy framework, principles, guidelines, and provision ratios and standards to be utilized in the planning and delivery of play spaces
- 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 Definitions and Acronyms

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

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.
Play Space	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
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.
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'
Natural Play Space	An environment for play specifically design using 'natural' materials.
Green Space	Open areas in existing parks that offer grass and space for playful activity.
Skating	An activity involving a board on wheels that engages the participant in exciting and risky manoeuvres generally on ramps and street skate elements.



Standards	Refers to <i>AS 4685 (Parts 1-11): 2014</i> which are the current standards dealing with the design, manufacturing, installation and maintenance of playground equipment and <i>AS/NZS 4422: 1996</i> which is the standard that deals with playground undersurfacing. These documents are considered 'best practice' guidelines.
Aquatic Play Space	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.
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
Fitness	A state of good quality health. Fitness equipment is defined as the range of individual apparatus that provides for exercise and improvement of fitness.
Informal Sport	Casual participation in active recreation at one's own leisure. Does not involve competition or committing to specific times and venues.
Public Realm	All areas that accessed freely by members of the public and are typically owned / managed by government and its agencies.
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.
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.
Youth Activity Space	A public area where young people are welcome and encouraged to gather, meet friends, socialise and play.
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.
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.
Regional Level	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.
District Level	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.

Neighbourhood Level

Good quality and basic level of provision catering for short duration visits by local residents who will often walk to the nearby play space within 500m of home.

Local Level

Small space that offers informal recreation space for play and relaxation, catering for short stays generally within 500m walking distance from homes.

#### ACRONYMS

PSPF

Play Space Planning Framework

CoB

City of Ballarat

CoM

Committee of Management

## 2. Vision and Principles

This section develops the vision and principles that underpin the provision of play spaces for people of all ages and abilities throughout the City of Ballarat.

### 2.1 Vision

The Vision statement from Council's Open Space Strategy (2008) sets the scene for what Council and the community intend to achieve in the provision of play spaces. The

City of Ballarat's open space will:

*Provide a sustainable network of accessible open space which supports the recreational, environmental, and social and health needs of the community and connects Ballarat to its past, present and future.*

*Further to this Vision: Opportunities for play will be provided within the open space system through the provision of quality network facilities, environments and spaces that welcome people and encourage them to gather, socialise and play.*

### 2.2 Principles

*Play opportunities in the City of Ballarat will be:*

- *inviting and welcoming;*
- *integrated and complementary;*
- *diverse;*
- *accessible;*
- *healthy and active;*
- *provided for everyone;*
- *safe;*
- *well distributed throughout communities; and*
- *Comply with the relevant standards.*

### **3. Current Issues in Outdoor Play**

Play is an essential part of the growth and development of children and is a critical element of their physical, social, cognitive and emotional development. *Children represent the future of our society and planning for quality play environments is therefore seen as an investment in the future* (Playground and Recreation Association of Victoria, Play Area Development Policy for Local Government 2004).

Article 31 of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises, respects and promotes:

- 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,
- 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 activity.

This article outlines the fundamental rights of all children and young people. In contemporary Australia we face many more complex issues related to quality and access to play and the sections below outline these in further detail. It is important to note that all of these issues are linked culturally and by implication and are presented here as important background context to the current 'state of play' in our country and the challenges we face providing for play.

#### **3.1 Limited Access to Outdoor Spaces**

Smaller or non-existent backyards and the disappearance of natural urban landscapes have combined to significantly reduce children's access to outdoor play. In their place are more structured and standardized equipment-based play spaces, that are sometimes limiting in their play value and their capacity for manipulation, such as would be found with loose materials or parts in a more natural environment.

#### **3.2 Less Time to Play**

Significant drops in the frequency of daily outdoor play have resulted in concern in recent years of the disappearance of the 'free-range childhood', where children actively and playfully roamed outdoors. This is attributed to a complex range of factors including; working parents, smaller family sizes, school pressures, cultural diversity, more anxiety about traffic and 'stranger danger'. Most importantly it has led to the increasing scheduling of children's lives into organized activity.

#### **3.3 Nature Deficit**

Links with nature are fundamental to children's understanding of the world. All children should experience a direct, intimate and tacit knowledge of nature. Over recent years there has been increasing advocacy for natural play spaces and nature play in wild places, due to the disconnection from nature many children living in towns or city areas experience. In landscapes such as these children can explore, create meaning, develop sense of place, connect to the natural world and feel empowered to live healthy, sustainable lives.

#### **3.4 Risk Aversion**

Over more recent decades attention to risk has been focused the somewhat narrow lens of safety standards for play equipment, regulatory frameworks to monitor safety, and concerns about

children's safety in the wider community where they once freely roamed. Current generations of children are popularly described as deprived of opportunities for beneficial risk taking by 'bubble-wrapping' and 'helicopter parenting'.

Risk is essential to fully realizing the benefits of active play. Play providers need to understand this and develop policy and practice that supports children and young people's need for 'risky play', while still maintaining play spaces free from serious injury or harm.

### **3.5 Health and Wellbeing Issues**

Beyond nature deficit, concerns have been raised both locally and internationally about the negative impacts of the lack of outdoor play and activity on children and young people's health and wellbeing. Many cite access to quality outdoor play as vital for physical and mental health, perhaps even as critical as adequate sleep and nutrition. It seems evident that increasingly sedentary leisure behavior (in particular screen-based activity) correlates with a lack of physical activity and obesity.

Sedentary behavior or 'still time' may be defined as doing physically inactive tasks that do not require much energy, such as watching television. Despite the common perception that sitting down and being inactive 'does no harm', there is increasing evidence that certain activities, and in particular lengths of inactive time, are in fact *harmful to physical and psychological health* (Department of Health and Ageing 2012). Sedentary behavior is not the same as the absence of physical activity. Sedentary behavior *is the purposeful engagement in activities that involve minimal movement and low energy expenditure* (Reilly et al. 2008). For example a child can meet the activity guidelines for physical activity, but *he or she can still be sedentary for most of the time during the day* (De Craemer 2012).

In Australia large periods of sedentary behavior are mostly due to the amount of time children and young people spend in screen based activities both in and out of school (such as TV, computer games, social media etc.). Children and young people who spend lengthy periods of time being inactive, even during allocated play times (such as recess at school) are *more likely to have poorer physical, social and intellectual development* (Department of Health and Ageing 2012). Research has shown that children who watch TV for more than two hours each day are more likely to have an unhealthy diet, less likely to eat fruit and less likely to participate in physical activity.

Experts described almost two decades ago how *children's access to outdoor play has evaporated like water in sunshine* (Elliot 2011) and the situation is even more serious now. More recently it has been stated that *the cure for a lifestyle of maladies of contemporary childhood seems glaringly obvious and simple: outdoor play in nature*.

### **3.6 Young People in Public Space**

Local and academic research indicates that parks and open space play a vital role in the physical, social and emotional health and wellbeing of children and particularly young people. Given the increasing incidence of obesity and sedentary lifestyles in young people, this is an important consideration in the planning of play spaces that cater for a diverse range of interests and ages.

Public spaces can include areas like streets, malls and squares, parks, bushland, watercourses, shopping centres and public buildings. Tensions can exist when groups of young people gather in public space in ways that adults in the community see as 'anti- social', unsafe or annoying. (Dr Phil Crane, Queensland University of Technology)

It is important in providing 'youth friendly' places and spaces for young people, that consultation and engagement is genuine and collaborative. Young people need to be involved as an integral

part of the design, decision making and sometimes even the development of spaces. This is likely to increase ownership and commitment to using spaces that are created for everyone, with young people as a key focus.

### **3.7 Positive Ageing and Play**

Positive ageing strategies and plans have identified the need to keep older adults active and engaged in community life for as long as possible. It is acknowledged that as people get older they may have more time on their hands that can be spent socialising with others and staying active. If some consideration is given to providing elements for adults in play spaces and parks in relatively simple ways, these objectives may be more easily achieved.



## 4. Key Directions and Planning Framework

In achieving the principles for play space planning, the following key directions and planning framework will be used by Council as policy positions and for guidance in the provision, development and renewal of play spaces.

### 4.1 *Strategic Directions*

The following strategic directions apply for all play spaces across Ballarat that are provided for any age group and should be used in all decision making for play space provision and implementation of the Play Space Planning Framework.

This Play Space Planning Framework considers that people of all ages seek opportunities for playful activity. It is important that the opportunities provided for play present family friendly environments that cater for a range of activities and interests.

It is also essential that this framework considers the needs of people of different abilities, through the provision of spaces that cater for universal access and inclusion. There is a diverse range of needs covered under this definition (e.g. physical disability, limited mobility, visual impairment, sensory difficulties, intellectual disability, etc.). Therefore, it is important that the solutions across the city are complementary so that the full range of needs are catered for in numerous play spaces.

This framework does not support segregated spaces to provide for specific demands or needs; it has been developed to support integrated and complementary play spaces. The benefits of this approach are that play spaces are more family friendly and people using spaces are exposed to social opportunities with others they might otherwise not meet.

However, to develop an achievable strategy that focuses on the key user groups for play spaces, this strategy makes the assumption that:

- the target market for play spaces is children aged 0-11 years, and
- the target market for youth activity spaces (including skate and BMX facilities) is young people aged 11-25 years

Other age groups are not excluded and as discussed throughout this document, needs of all age, genders, abilities and interests are considered. By providing well for the target markets and considering the needs of adults in play environments, children in BMX parks and so on, it is intended that all other groups in the community will be well catered for.

In summary, the approach being used in the development of Ballarat's Play Space Planning Framework ensures a network of complementary play spaces that are targeted for the primary age groups but offer an integrated approach for all.

#### 4.1.1 **Hierarchy of Play Space Provision**

Play spaces will be planned and developed on a precinct basis to ensure that all residents in Ballarat have access to the full range of play experiences within their community. These precincts have been defined by the Open Space Strategy 2008 and are a valuable tool for determining equitable provision of play spaces.

The following definitions outline the different hierarchies of play space as they relate to both the Development Standards (see 4.2.6) and the hierarchy of open space as outlined in the Open Space Strategy 2008:



Hierarchy:	Definition:
Regional	<p>This is a large and diverse, custom designed play space, with a high-level of accessible design to and within the play space. This play space co-exists with a diverse range of other facilities and amenity, including other smaller play spaces and youth facilities in the broader park and caters for a catchment within and outside of the City of Ballarat.</p> <p><i>*Note that Regional Open Space can host additional play spaces developed to District or Neighbourhood level.</i></p>
District	<p>This is a larger, off-the-shelf or custom designed play space with a medium-level of accessible design to and within the play space. This play space co-exists with a range of other facilities and amenity, sometimes including other smaller play spaces and youth facilities in the broader park and caters for a local catchment of 2km from residences.</p> <p><i>*Note that District Open Space can host additional play spaces developed to Neighbourhood level.</i></p>
Neighbourhood	<p>A small to medium sized play space (off-the-shelf equipment) with a low to medium level of accessible design to and within the play space. This play space has adjacent facilities and a low to medium level of amenity and caters to a local catchment of 500m from residences.</p>
Local	<p>A small play space (off-the-shelf equipment) with a low level of accessible design to and within the play space. This play space may have a low level of amenity and cater to a local catchment of 500m from residences</p>

#### 4.1.2 Access

- Play spaces will be distributed throughout the municipality so that residents have good access to a range of opportunities:
  - In urban areas, it is desirable that children will have access to play spaces within 500m of their homes.
  - In rural areas, play spaces for children will be located close to other services that are accessed regularly by children and their families.
  - In all areas, distribution of play spaces for all ages will consider good access by walking, cycling, public transport or vehicle.
- Accessibility within play spaces will be provided in a complementary way across the play space network with regard to:
  - Physical access into a play space.
  - Good access through the space and between the main activities.

- Diverse opportunities that are interesting and stimulating.
- Colour, texture and sensory experiences.
- Level and grade changes.
- Consideration of the needs of parents and carers.
- Play spaces will be provided to encourage access for people of diverse interests, abilities and skills.

#### **4.1.3 Municipal Diversity**

While it is not possible for every play space to be fully accessible and cater for all ages and abilities there should be a diversity and equitable spread of play opportunities across the municipality and between different precincts and neighbourhoods, in particular local or neighbourhood play spaces within walking distance of home. This can be provided in 2 ways:

- Through an established hierarchy of play spaces in which development matches the size, scale and facilities of its open space and length of stay. For further details refer 5.2.6 Development Standards: Play Spaces for Children and 5.3.3 Development Standards: Play Spaces for Young People
- By examining the mix of play equipment and setting at each site within a precinct and neighbourhood and ensuring that each play space is different in terms of equipment, organization, setting, amenity and challenge, so that a community has a choice of play space within their local neighbourhood.

#### **4.1.4 Sustainable Development and Asset Management**

- Play spaces in regional and district open spaces will be planned through the development of master plans for the reserves.
- Where necessary, play spaces will be rationalised to increase the quality of play experiences, avoid duplication of provision and maximise complementary play spaces.
- Provision of play spaces will have regard to ongoing maintenance requirements.
- A play space renewal program will ensure that play space assets are replaced and rejuvenated as part of a regular program.

## 4.2 Play Spaces for Children

“Playing outdoors gives children a healthy balance of leisure time and recreational options. Knowing their community and making new friends gives them a sense of place and belonging. Active, sensory, hands-on experiences enhance cognitive, physical and social development. Children who have positive environmental experiences during their formative years want to communicate, investigate, learn, make sense of and care about their world. This helps school readiness. Plus playing outdoors makes them healthier.”

(How About Out – Families, Nature and Play, Elizabeth Alexander and Narelle Debenham, 2010)

The following key directions are relevant to play spaces that are provided with children as the primary target group in mind. They also acknowledge and promote responsible supervision of children and the need for play spaces to cater for parents and carers who are playing with and responsible for children.

### 4.2.1 Provision

Across the network of play spaces, integrated opportunities and experiences will cater for a range of ages, from very young children / toddlers through to older adults who take their grandchildren to the park to play

Play spaces cater for a range of developmental needs of children including physical, creative, social and cognitive play

A higher level of ‘inclusive play’ opportunities will be provided at Regional Level

### 4.2.2 Age Appropriate Play & Challenge

One of the challenges for council is providing enough diversity of play experience to cater for the age range of children and young people who use play spaces.

#### **Toddler (Under 3 Years)**

- Developing skills in balance, mobility, physical control and strength, agility, toilet training and learning to interact and communicate with adults and others
- Generally interested in sleep, food, colour, movement, textures, noise, stimulating the senses (taste in particular), repetitive tasks, simple action/response games with adults
- Activities include rolling, crawling, walking (toddling), stepping, low-level climbing, wheeling toys around, repetitive activities, sensory manipulation (ie sandplay), solitary or parallel play. Interaction with adults essential to activities.

#### **Pre-School (3-5 Years)**

- Developing skills in fine motor control (ie. holding a pen), gross-motor control (ie. balancing on a log) and hand-eye co-ordination (ie. catching a ball), self-help skills (such as putting on own clothes, toileting), as well as social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, following routine, listening and participating in a group.
- Generally interested in stories, music, dance, cooking, physical activity, talking, doing things for themselves, helping adults, make-believe, creating, building and manipulation of found objects or loose materials
- Activities include walking, running, balancing, agility, swinging, sliding, spinning, climbing, hiding and seeking, digging, social play with friends, construction, imaginative and dramatic play. Interaction with adults is generally welcomed.

### **Junior (5-8 Years)**

- Developing skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science, group interaction and working independent of an adult, working collaboratively with friends, completing formal tasks within a timeframe, learning about the world.
- Generally interested in stories, music dance, more complex physical activity, sports, playing with friends, growing independence from adults, cycling or skating, computers, games and TV
- Activities include most of the above, plus fine motor activities such manipulation of computers and hand-held games, writing, drawing and reading, more complex physical challenge, more complex games and activities involving groups, formal sports activities and much more complex construction ability. Interaction with adults not so imperative.

### **Senior (9-14 Years)**

- Developing more complex skills in academic areas, learning skills of presenting and public advocacy, strategy and skill for sports and games, more complex knowledge about the world including current affairs, politics etc.
- Generally interested in hanging-out with friends, music, TV, computers (in particular email or games), games involving strategy, communicating on mobile phones (texting friends or social media), formal sport, further independence from adults, cycling and skating
- Activities include some of the above with a much greater degree of challenge in physical activities (higher, longer and faster), more strategic games, more formal sports, membership of clubs, opportunities to socialise and hang-out with peers. Usually autonomous in play and often mobile in local neighbourhood.

#### **4.2.3 Play Value & Complexity**

Play opportunities in local, neighbourhood and district play spaces across the city will provide universal access for children of a wide range of abilities.

Children with disabilities will have some play spaces that cater for their specific needs that they can select to visit and use.

Regional play spaces will provide a higher level of accessibility and for graduated challenge for a range of age groups. This provision is possible because of the larger play spaces and greater number of elements and features that can be developed to cater for children of all abilities.

Defining the play value of play spaces will be an important consideration in design and provision to ensure that children are stimulated in interesting play environments.

Complementary built and natural play environments that interact with the environment and landscape will enhance the quality of play space network that is provided throughout the city.

Informal gatherings and events in play spaces will be encouraged.

***The following table provides examples of the diversity of play value that can be considered in the design and provision of play spaces:***

Physical Play	Swinging, Running, Hanging, Climbing, Sliding, Jumping, Balancing, Crawling, Bouncing, Spinning, Rocking, Skipping.
Cognitive/Creative Play	Exploration, Observation, Use of Language, Music, Looking, Listening, Individual play, Role play, Imaginative play.
Environment	Textures, Sand, Landscape, Pathways, 'Secret Places', Deciduous Trees, Moveable Objects, Water, Earth.
Social Play	Communication, Co-operative play, Conversation, Group play.

#### **4.2.4 The Benefits of Natural Environments and Loose Materials**

A good quality play space utilises its landscape context for play, recognising that only limited play value will be derived from play equipment alone. Naturally found or established materials and elements such as trees, shrubs, ground-covers, grassed mounds, open grassed areas, rocks, logs and waterways provide and create a diverse range of open-ended opportunities for play. Natural elements are not necessarily 'prescriptive.' in their role in play (ie. a log on the ground could be for balancing, sitting and socialising and become a bus or rocket ship for imaginative play, providing a great deal more play benefit than a play panel on a piece of equipment will provide).

It is important to note that many living natural materials also have the benefit of seasonal change and the sensory delight derived through texture, colour, smell, and sound greatly enriches the quality of play experience.

Loose materials such as sand, soft-fall mulch and pea-gravel provide considerable benefit to children's play. These loose materials comprise what is often termed the 'currency' of play. Play equipment, structures or elements form the stage for the theatre known as 'play' – the loose materials are the 'props' that give meaning for the participants to play.

For example a shop front counter in a play structure has limited use in a public play space if the undersurfacing is entirely rubberized and as such children will tend to pass it by and focus only on the physical opportunities for play which they may offer limited challenge and interest over time. The same play element in a setting of soft-fall mulch however, with the addition of shrubs or trees providing leaves or gumnuts can be transformed into a very engaging experience. A flexible experience in a regularly visited play space, where the participants can add their own changes and therefore provide sustainable interest over a much longer timeframe.

#### **4.2.5 The Benefit of Risk in Play**

It is important that the types of play opportunities available in a play space are not curtailed by an over-emphasis on the provision of a 'safe' play space and standard play equipment. It is vital to provide a good balance between the potential risk of injury during play with the benefits that can be derived from challenging play opportunities.

The value of good risk in play is that it enables children and young people to make independent judgements, develop confidence and curiosity. It promotes greater physical activity which leads to better health and well-being and it encourages innovation and creativity.

Undertaking a risk benefit assessment of play opportunities can provide responsible authorities with the foundation for making rational choices in provision, maintenance and ongoing management of play spaces. Assessments of risks and benefits need to be discussed and agreed on what play opportunities and risk are acceptable.

#### 4.2.6 Development Standards: Play Spaces for Children

The following table provides guidance for the upgrading of existing play spaces and development of new play spaces as emerging communities are planned.

Component	Regional	District	Neighbourhood	Local
Theme / attractor	Y	Y	Might have	X
Play equipment for different ages	□	Y	Focus on 2 – 7 yrs	Unlikely – focus on natural play / green space
Open areas for informal play	Y	Y	Y	Y
Natural Play - topography and planting	Y	Y	Might have	Might have
Basketball Goals, Nets/Goals, Hitting Walls	Might have	Might have	Unlikely but might have	X
Accessible Equipment	Y	Might have	Might have	Unlikely
Pathways	Y	Y	Y	Might have
Fencing / barrier	If required for safety	If required for safety	X	X
Disability/Wheel Access	Y	Where landform allows	Might have	Might have □
Shade – natural	Y	Y	Y	Y
Shade / Shelter – structured	Must have shelter	Might have shelter	X	X
Seating (with backs and arm rests)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Picnic tables	Y	Y	Might have	Might have
Public toilets: Family Friendly	Y	Y	X	X
BBQ's	Y □	Might Have	X	X
Access to water	Y	Y	X	X
Bins: Waste / Recycling	Y Both	Y Both	Might have Waste bin only	X
Lighting	Might have	Might have	X	X
Signage	Y	Y	Y	Might have
Car parking	Y	X	X	X
Bicycle Racks	Yes	Might have	X	X
Public Art	Yes	Might have	X	X
Maintenance frequency	Daily As triggered by inspection	Monthly As triggered by inspection	Monthly As triggered by inspection	Monthly As triggered by inspection
Inspections	Monthly & annual	5 times per year	3 times per year	3 times per year
Access for maintenance vehicles	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### 4.3 Play Spaces for Young People

“For children and young people, parks and open space are not just the stereotypical place to play, but also provide a place to socialise, be physically active, explore, have fun, ‘hang out’, be in contact with nature, escape from indoors, or just be free from the encumbrances of an increasingly adult world”

(Action for Young Australians Report, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2009)

Play spaces for young people are defined in this strategy as Youth Activity Spaces. These spaces for young people have been identified as a high priority in Council’s Youth Strategy and in other research and strategies. Young people tend to use spaces they feel comfortable in and a popular approach by local government is often to provide a skate park and/or BMX mounds, in the belief that such facilities will meet the needs of young people. However, facilities for young people are much more than skate and BMX facilities, especially when the needs of young females are considered as well as young males (who tend to dominate participation trends in skate and BMX activities).

According to consultation conducted within Ballarat and through broader research, young people also enjoy activities like:

- Meeting friends in an informal setting;
- Risk taking play and informal ball games;
- Music and live performance;
- Parks and treed settings; and
- Places where lots of people gather like shopping centres

One of the most important considerations in providing spaces for young people, which is very well documented, is that young people themselves need to be engaged in the planning process and empowered in decision making about the types of spaces that are developed. This planning framework recommends that play spaces for young people are developed only following significant consultation.

The following key directions will guide the development of play spaces for young people. Specific statements are made about skate and BMX facilities because Council regularly has numerous requests for increased provision of these types of facilities.

#### 4.3.1 Provision

Play spaces for young people will be provided at regional and district levels and will be defined as follows:

##### **Regional Youth Activity Space:**

Central spaces that are well connected to transport and pedestrian/cycling routes and attract young people from across the city.

Two complementary Youth Activity Spaces will be provided in central Ballarat:

- in Len T Fraser Reserve as an play space in a park setting, and
- another in an urban setting within the CBD to be determined.

##### **District Youth Activity Space:**

Diverse and multi-use spaces that cater for local and/or specific needs of young people.

Complementary Youth Activity Spaces will be developed in each of the other precincts (other than Central Ballarat and Inner North East that has the Regional Youth Activity Spaces).



### 4.3.2 Age Appropriate Activity

#### **Senior (9-14 Years)**

- Developing more complex skills in academic areas, learning skills of presenting and public advocacy, strategy and skill for sports and games, more complex knowledge about the world including current affairs, politics etc.
- Generally interested in hanging-out with friends, music, TV, computers (in particular email or games), games involving strategy, communicating on mobile phones (texting friends or social media), formal sport, further independence from adults, cycling and skating
- Activities include some of the above with a much greater degree of challenge in physical activities (higher, longer and faster), more strategic games, more formal sports, membership of clubs, opportunities to socialise and hang-out with peers. Usually autonomous in play and often mobile in local neighbourhood.

#### **Young People (15-18 years)**

- Developing skills in developing mutual relationships, leadership, financial independence, self-motivation, driving a car, managing study and social commitments
- Generally interested in the members of the opposite sex, hanging out with friends, going out socially, music, TV and movies, computers (in particular email or games), communicating on mobile phones, appearance and fashion, illicit or aberrant activities.
- Activities include most of the above, with less of a focus on clubs and more of a focus on working part-time, being at events or volunteering time or skills. Usually completely mobile beyond local neighbourhood.

### 5.3.3 Developing Youth Activity Spaces

Youth Activity Spaces will be developed in collaboration with young people by determining a budget and working with young people to determine the design and priorities for these spaces.

#### **Skate Parks:**

Skate parks will be provided at one location on a regional level (Len T Fraser Reserve)

Skate elements can be incorporated into district youth activity spaces if there is consensus among the young people involved in design that this is a priority.

Ballarat's regional skate park can be booked for events such as tournaments and celebrations – Council will develop a formal process for the management of the range of events that can be held.

Mobile Skate facilities would be advantageous in promoting skate participation in a number of precincts across the municipality.

#### **BMX Facilities:**

Providing for BMX riding on concrete elements will be incorporated in the provision of skate parks – on both regional and district levels.

Providing for dirt BMX riding will be incorporated into district level jumps parks or Youth Activity Spaces.

Sporting/competition BMX facilities may be provided in a sporting precinct to cater for the municipality, e.g. Marty Busch Reserve, subject to demand and support from sporting club/s.

#### **Casual Sport Facilities:**

Providing basketball rings, sports goals and hitting walls will be considered in the provision of all youth activity spaces. Provision of these facilities can also be considered in the planning of regional, district and neighbourhood play spaces where there is a demonstrated need and the park setting is suitable for such features.



### 4.3.3 Parkour Courses

Parkour is *isobstacle course training* where participants aim to get from A to B in the most efficient way possible. Developed in France during the late 1980's, it became popular with young people in the 1990's and 2000's through film and television documentaries and is today one of the fastest growing forms of exercise.

Parkour is about seeing one's environment in a new way and imagining the potential for moment around it. Non-competitive in nature, it can be practised alone or with others using the participant's body and their surroundings to propel themselves while trying to maintain as much momentum as possible. Everyday outdoor elements such as walls, paths, steps, bollards, tables, benches and play equipment can all form part of a Parkour course expanding beyond the conventional use of these objects to provide important opportunities for physical activity and play. These opportunities should be considered in the design of all outdoor youth spaces and play spaces.

A Parkour course can involve such activity as running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling, quadedepedal movement (on all fours) and appeals to young people as a more risky, less conventional activity. Research shows that the health benefits of Parkour are numerous, most importantly it's capacity to combine mental abilities and physical skills as the participant has to literally 'think on his feet'. Other benefits include increased judgement and developing skills in strength, flexibility and balance, as well as a good cardiovascular workout.

### 4.3.4 Development Standards; Play Spaces for Young People

The following table is designed to provide a guide for design and development of play spaces for young people. There are some elements that will be different for the regional and district spaces and these are shown in separate columns, but generally the list can be applied to both levels of the hierarchy. The differences between regional and district spaces will be the extent of development that can be provided for the different budget levels.

Regional Youth Activity Space	District Youth Activity Space
Event Space	Informal Performance Space
Regional Skate Park (budget up to \$400,000) Catering for beginner/advanced levels	District Skate Park Elements Catering for beginner/social levels
BMX provision in Skate Park	Dirt BMX jumps
Interactive screens / IT features*	Notice Boards / Signs / Information
Lighting*	Some security lighting, if relevant

Basketball Backboards, Hitting Walls, Netball Goals, Goal Posts / Soccer Goals, Cricket Nets
Multi-use hard court
Open spaces for playing, running, ball games, etc.
Picnic tables, shelter, BBQ, Water supply and Drinking Fountain
Tables with game boards / activities embedded in the surface
Public Toilets
Bike Racks / Dog tie-up Areas
Art installations, Graffiti / Aerosol Art
Outdoor meeting spaces for groups
Landscape: Trees, Low level shrubs, grasses, Rock / Timber features, etc
Separate activity spaces within an overall integrated space
Maze
Flying Fox / Giant Slide / Climbing Nets / Hammocks
Mounds / Steps / Changes in level and slope of a public space
Fitness Equipment / Climbing Wall / Bouldering Area
Pathways
Accessible by public transport and walking/cycling pathway connections
Location that is high profile and maximises passive surveillance, maybe near shops

\* only for the public space Regional Youth Activity Space (not the parkland space)

## 4.4 Play Spaces for the Whole Community

“Positive Ageing is about developing age-friendly communities which create opportunities for older people to live active and fulfilling lives now and into the future. It seeks and values the opinions and contributions of all residents regardless of age. An age-friendly community encourages participation in a wide range of life opportunities and removes or minimises barriers to participation, be they physical, social or economic. It supports the rights of individuals to make choices about the way they live and provides quality services to support those who need them.”

(City of Ballarat comment about Positive Ageing Strategy 2008-2013)

Providing play opportunities for the whole community is a priority of Council. It is important that through the provision of play spaces for children and young people on regional, district, neighbourhood and local levels, consideration is given to integrating elements that cater for all of the community. In particular, complementary play spaces should be both family friendly and age friendly.

The following key directions are to be considered in conjunction with the statements provided for play spaces for children and young people, so that the outcomes for the community are integrated and welcoming play spaces for people of all ages.

### 4.4.1 Developing Family Friendly Play Environments

Regional and district play spaces and the supporting infrastructure will be provided to cater for needs of children and their families.

Neighbourhood and local play spaces will be provided to support family ‘walks to the park’ and short stays, through the provision of relevant infrastructure.

### 4.4.2 Developing Age Friendly Play Environments

Regional and district play spaces will be designed with the needs of adults in mind. This includes adults as carers of children who will play with children in the play space and adults who are seeking play opportunities independently of children.

Neighbourhood and local play spaces will provide infrastructure (e.g. seating) to support visitation by people of all ages.



Examples of Play Opportunities for Adults (can be ‘grown-up’ equipment or fitness equipment)

## 5. Design Guidelines

### 5.1 *Designing for Play*

Design and placement are complex issues when designing new or upgrading existing play spaces. The following issues need to be considered prior to commencing any design work:

#### **Good Location, Layout & Access**

- Is the play space set back from the road?
- Are junior and senior structures within supervising distance of one another?
- Is there a sealed path leading to the play space from the main entrance or main path?
- Is that path accessible by Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Australian Standards for Mobility and Access AS 1428 standards (minimum 1.5m wide)?
- Complete an audit of facilities and infrastructure to detail items such as play spaces, public toilet facilities, seating arrangements (different sized seating, disability access to picnic tables), car parking spaces (suitable for pram and disabled access), lighting and provision of shade
- Where appropriate, make this information available for public use, for example, inclusion of play space features and inclusions on Council website and publications.

#### **Diversity of experience**

- Does this play space provide a different range of play experiences to its adjacent local play spaces?
- Does it meet the desired development guidelines for its category of park?
- Does it provide a unique site character or setting, different to its adjacent local play spaces?
- Does it reflect the local community context?

#### **Age-Appropriate Design**

- Who is this play space for?
- What age-group are the users mostly going to be?
- How will that change over the 10-15 year life-span of the play space?
- Do the combination and complexity of activity reflect the age-group using the play space?
- Is the layout mindful of possible conflicts and synergies that may occur between age groups?
- Are age-groups not catered for in this play space, catered for in adjacent local play spaces?

#### **Providing challenge and interest**

- Does this play space provide a range of activities across the different types of play?
- Does this play space use its landscape context for play or is play restricted to the play equipment?
- Does the play equipment make maximum use of both under and upper deck areas?
- Does this play space provide well for developmentally appropriate graduated challenge?

#### **Minimizing hazards**

- Are there any potential conflicts between activities (for example swings or slide exits located in thoroughfares)?

#### **Shelter / Shade**

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

## Compliance with Australian Standards

- Does the playground need to be audited or the design signed-off in compliance with Australian Standards Playground Equipment AS 4685 (Parts 1-11) 2014 (*\*note all play spaces built and installed before May 2014 only need to be compliant with AS 4685 (Parts 1-6) 2004*), Australian Standards / NZ Standards for Playground Undersurfacing

AS/NZS 4422/96 and Australian and New Zealand Standards for Installation and Maintenance AS/NZS 4486.1 1997

- Has the finished installed playground been inspected by council and signed off by the playground supplier in accordance with the standards above?

### 5.1 Australian Standards

Australian Standards are essentially 'best practice guidelines' regarding the design, manufacture, construction, installation and maintenance of play equipment and playground undersurfacing.

In May 2014 a new playground standard was introduced. AS 4685 (Parts 1-11) 2014 replaces the old AS 4685 (Parts 1-6) 2004. The new standard applies to the manufacture, installation and maintenance of all new play equipment from May 2015, any play equipment built or installed before that date only needs to be compliant with AS 4685 (Parts 1-6) 2004. Australian and New Zealand Standard for Undersurfacing AS / NZS 4422 (1996) and Australian and New Zealand Standard for Installation and Maintenance AS / NZS 4486.1 (1997) still apply.

Australian Standards are not devised to remove injury from play spaces and make them 'risk-free', rather they are designed to reduce the likelihood and severity of injury in a play space.

### 5.2 Landscaping and Natural Elements

Landscaping and natural elements can enhance the play opportunities for a play space especially open-ended play, increase interaction between the play equipment and the surrounding green space, provide better visual amenity, act as boundaries between different play areas within a play space and the street. Landscaping and natural elements can include:

- Trees
- Garden Beds
- Grasses, shrubs and bushes
- Logs and stumps
- Rock and boulders
- Dry creek beds
- Slopes and mounds
- Open space
- Quiet areas
- Water elements
- Sculptural elements
- Artworks
- Paths
- Retaining walls

### **5.3 Public Art**

Including public art as a 'stand-alone' feature, an enhancement or a functional component of a play element in a play space can enrich children's and young people's play experience. Art adds to the creation of a sense of place and distinction within a community, it also can contribute to a theme for the play space.

Public art should be considered from the outset when designing a play space, to ensure that artworks are not just 'added on' for decoration, but are part of the whole place. Where possible, themes and site settings will be used to maximise the use and featuring of public art and artistic elements in play spaces for play.

### **5.4 Aquatic Play Spaces**

Aquatic Play Spaces have been recognized by Council to be valuable to the community. Generally this means a facility such as a 'Splash Pad' that has been introduced to provide complementary play to existing play spaces or swimming pool facilities. These facilities are built on a drained floor surface (usually concrete) or 'splash pad' and includes activities such as water slides, jets, canons and other interactive features using water. These are usually designed for children under 12, however have much broader community appeal and health and wellbeing benefits.

Requiring lower water and chemicals than a traditional swimming pool and only needing power when the facility is operating, Aquatic Play Spaces have been recognized as a more effective and safer way to provide engaging water play for the community.

The City of Ballarat is looking to develop a balance of two different models of Aquatic Play Space, the 'gated' (within user-pays recreation facilities such as municipal swimming pools) and 'non-gated' (within public open space).

### **5.6 Fencing and Boundaries**

Play spaces will be developed as an integral part open public spaces where barriers are minimised and seamless movement to and from the play space into the surrounding setting can occur.

Barriers may be considered where: an immediate safety concern exists alongside a road or similar danger, in some complementary play spaces that offer confined play for groups of young children and/or some types of disability, separation of activities is justified through a planning process.

Barriers will ideally consist of landscape elements, and if fencing is required, low level fencing panels on no more than three sides is preferred.

### **5.7 Shade and Shelter**

There are 2 types of shade and shelter; built and natural. The former includes any type of human made structure that creates shade and the latter includes trees, shrubs, vines and ground covers that block out direct UV radiation and absorb indirect UV radiation. Natural shade has the added advantage of cooling the air through transpiration, enhancing the visual setting and providing environmental benefits.

Shade and Shelter in Play Spaces is typically provided using:

- Trees and other vegetation
- Roofs on equipment
- Equipment platforms / decks
- Shelters
- Shade Sail Structures (Tension Membrane)



In Play Spaces within the City of Ballarat:

- Natural shade will be developed through the planting of appropriate tree species in and around play spaces.
- If shade is required in a built form, a shelter may be provided in regional and district parks alongside the play space to provide shaded seating / picnic facilities.
- Shade can be provided within the play elements of a play space by maximising roof coverage and undercover / under-deck spaces.
- Existing shaded play spaces can be promoted by including information in play space promotional material.

## **5.8 Site Amenities**

### **Signage:**

- Signage will be provided as integrated park signage, specific play space signage or stickers on play structures.
- Signage will identify the location of the play space and communicate important information including any age focus for play elements, encouraging supervision of children, closest other facilities and relevant universal symbols.

### **Seating and Picnic Tables:**

- At a minimum at least one bench seat with back will be provided 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 provide opportunity for social interaction
- Where possible an accessible picnic table should also be provided with a sealed accessible path (at least 1200mm wide) to it

### **Public Toilets:**

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

## **5.9 Other Issues**

### **Dogs in Play Spaces**

- 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
- Dogs faeces must be collected in any park or public reserve

### **Smoking/Alcohol**

- As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 smoking is not permitted at or within 10 metres of a playspace in an outdoor public place
- As of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 smoking is not permitted at or within 10 metres of a skate park that is an outdoor public place
- Planning for play spaces will acknowledge designated alcohol free spaces throughout the city and will promote responsible behaviour.

## 6. Universal Access, Inclusion, Participation and Challenge in Play

### 6.1 *Inclusive Communities*

Inclusive communities are those where all people are equally valued and have the same opportunities for participation. A culture of inclusion implies an environment *where all people are welcome*.

The best environments for play are the ones where all children and young people can access, be included and participate in play. This gives them the opportunity to develop their skills, interests and abilities and are supports them to reach their full potential.

Universal design means that environments, services, products are useable and accessible for people of any age and ability. It improves the quality of life for everyone. Conventional design caters for the 'average' person while universal design recognizes that people have a range of capabilities.

### 6.2 *Universal Access in a Play Space*

When defining what we mean by the term **universal access** in a play space it might be useful to outline the following points for all participants:

- Able to physically get to the play space from the street or the car
- Able to use the same entrance as everyone else
- Able to sit and play with my friends just like everyone else
- Seamless access to the main activities through the space
- Contrasting elements, surface textures and landmarks that assist with orientation
- Manageable grades at level changes
- Enough headroom to fit underneath

### 6.3 *Inclusion in a Play Space*

When defining what we mean by the term **inclusion** in a play space it might be useful to outline the following points for all participants:

- Signage and information that feels welcoming
- Not be made to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed or that anyone has to make a fuss to let me do things
- Opportunities in the play setting to be included in different ways, this may be places to sit and watch, rather than actively participate
- Spaces to be included at picnic tables, drinking fountains and toilets and in certain activities within a play space such as swings or carousels

### 6.4 *Participation in a Play Space*

When defining what we mean by the term **participation** in a play space it might be useful to outline the following points for all participants:

- Able to take part in activities alongside everyone else and do them to the best of my abilities
- Able to play as independently as possible
- Able to reach main points of interest and movable items
- Able to get my knees under counters, tables and the like
- Able to use gadgets (ie. knobs or handles etc.)
- Able to choose where I want to go and what I want to do

## **6.5 The Importance of Challenge**

Risks and challenges are important for people of all ages and abilities for them to learn new skills, test their abilities and explore. Opportunities for challenge in play help build self confidence and resilience.

Children and young people of varying ages and abilities need to be able to find the right degree of challenge in a play environment. While those with a disability may be vulnerable to hazardous situations causing injury, because of variation in cognitive, physical and perceptual skills, often they can be over-protected from useful opportunities to learn to deal with risks and challenges themselves.

All children and young people need to be able to make deliberate choices and have access to graduated challenges which motivate them to have a go. It is therefore important to make sure that play spaces provide the opportunity for graduated challenge, particularly those catering for a higher level of inclusive play.

Some challenges encountered in play spaces make a positive contribution to children and young people learning new skills. These include:

- Learning to deal with different types of movement
- Activities which require particular cognitive ability, strength, endurance, skill or size to undertake them
- Learning to deal with increasing height and sometimes steeper grades
- Learning to touch unfamiliar textures or explore an unknown or complex space
- Learning to make new friends

While managed, positive and graduated challenge is important, there are many unacceptable risks and hazards that children and young people can be exposed to. Fortunately many of these hazards are preventable. Compliance with the best practice guidelines of Australian Standards means it is less likely that children will be exposed to these kinds of danger.

## 7. Community Engagement and Promotion

### 7.1 Community Engagement

The following provides a guide for Council to consult with communities in the implementation of the play space strategy.

Consultation Method	Regional	District	Neighbourhood	Local
<b>Informing:</b>				
Signs on-site / Letter box drop	Y	Y	Y	Y
Media / Council Newsletter	Y	Y	Y	Y
Website	Y	Y		
<b>Consulting:</b>				
Walk'n'Talk Sessions Seeking comments	Y	Y	Y	Y
Surveys	Y	Y	Y	
<b>Involving:</b>				
Interviews	Y	Y		
Focus	Y			
Groups	Y			
Workshops	Y			
<b>Collaborate:</b>				
Project Reference Group	Y			
<b>Empower:</b>				
Council	Y			
Youth	Y			

### 7.2 Youth Engagement

A consultative process will be used for design and development of all play spaces for young people. This will not only empower them and respect their views as users of public space, but also the collaborative approach with young people is more likely to create successful youth activity spaces for them.

Young people who choose to be involved in the planning and design process will be provided with budget parameters and a checklist to guide the process. Council, through the Youth Council and Youth Services will support the design process to ensure effective outcomes for the young people involved and the spaces that emerge from the process.

### **7.3 Children's Engagement**

A consultative process, similar to that of young people, will be used for design and development of play spaces for children. This will not only empower them and respect their views as users of public space, but also the collaborative approach with children is more likely to create successful child friendly activity spaces for them and their families.

Children's consultations will be conducted according to the principles outlined in the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter, of which the City of Ballarat is a signatory. The City of Ballarat, through the Child Friendly Ballarat Committee, will support the consultation process to ensure the best outcomes for children and the creation of child friendly environments as Child Friendly Cities that are inclusive of the whole community.

### **7.4 Promotion of Play Spaces**

Play spaces 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 family and children's services.

## 8. Site Practicalities and Maintenance

### **8.1 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 and annually in regional play spaces, five times a year in district play spaces and three times a year in all neighbourhood and local play spaces.

Play spaces in public parks and children's services centres are also independently audited for safety and compliance issues on a 6 monthly basis.

### **8.2 Maintenance and Repairs**

The team responsible for the maintenance of all City of Ballarat play spaces make 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.

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 within a specified period of time.

**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>**