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GLEN EIRA PLANNING FOR PLAY A GUIDE TO CREATING QUALITY PLAYGROUNDS IN GLEN EIRA

Adopted by Council September 2021



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PURPOSE OF THE PLANNING FOR PLAY GUIDELINES

Planning for Play (the *Guidelines*) is a guide to creating quality playgrounds in Glen Eira and will provide direction for the future planning, management, investment and maintenance of playgrounds and supporting infrastructure throughout the municipality.

The *Guidelines* consolidate key local, state and national policy and planning recommendations, including safety standards, relating to playgrounds and the role of play in our community. It links the provision of playgrounds to the principles identified in Council's *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* and provides a snapshot of existing playgrounds, current uses, the value of play and future design considerations.

The objectives of the *Guidelines*:

- Identify the value and benefits of play and playgrounds for the user and broader community.
- Review the existing provision and quality of playgrounds and identify 'gaps' in play opportunities across the municipality — including distribution, playground type and the play opportunities they provide.
- Provide strategic direction for the planning, development, management and investment in playgrounds in Glen Eira.
- Ensure future playground upgrades and developments:
 - consider multiple types of play — physical, cognitive, social, emotional and sensory;
 - reflect best practice design principles and processes, including accessibility and diversity of play where possible;
 - provide high quality play elements and supporting infrastructure in line with the playground classification; and
 - consider the whole of park design, including integration of active recreation and social engagement opportunities.
- Highlight the importance of consulting with the community to ensure playgrounds reflect the needs of local users.
- Provide a list of considerations to inform priorities for upgrades of existing and development of new playgrounds.
- Detail management, maintenance and renewal requirements to ensure user safety and longevity of the Glen Eira playground network.

Council's role in creating quality playgrounds is to:

- be a primary planner, facilitator and operator of play opportunities in Glen Eira;
- provide best practise processes and standards for the delivery of high quality playgrounds and supporting infrastructure;
- influence the provision of play opportunities to ensure equitable distribution and diversity of facilities where possible;
- engage with the community to understand their needs and vision for quality play opportunities that are exciting, engaging and sustainable; and
- advocate for and promote the social, health and wellbeing outcomes that Council is seeking through the provision of playgrounds.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The *Guidelines* reflect both community needs, as determined by community consultation undertaken in 2021, and Council priorities. The following Council plans and strategies provide important context, background and direction for these *Guidelines*:

OPEN SPACE STRATEGY REFRESH 2020

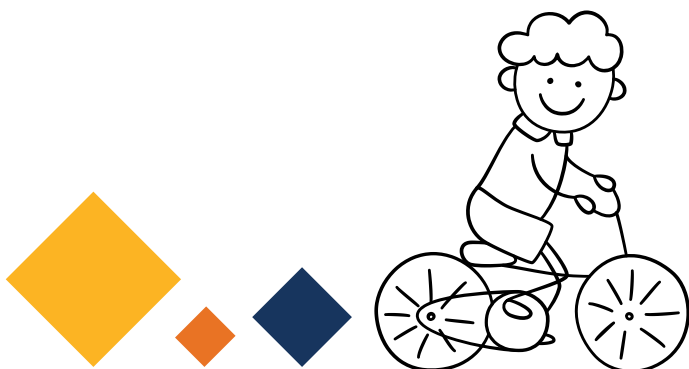
The *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* has guided the future planning, provision, design and management of public open space in Glen Eira since its original inception in 2014. The *Strategy* has the following principles and objectives in relation to Council's provision of open space in Glen Eira:

- **Equitable** — located within easy walking distance of the Glen Eira community.
- **Accessible** — designed to be accessible for people of all ages, abilities, health, gender and cultural backgrounds.
- **Adaptable** — ability for additions and changes to be made over time to adapt to changing recreational, social and environmental conditions.
- **Networked** — a system of spaces that in combination meet the recreational, environmental and social needs of Glen Eira.
- **Diverse** — provide diversity of character and size of open space to maximise accessibility for the community and contribute to sustainability.
- **Sustainable** — maximise opportunities to mitigate climate change, employ sustainable design and management practices and, where feasible meet improved ecological outcomes.

The *Strategy* recommends that new or revised landscape Masterplans be prepared for a number of Council parks/reserves, with a particular emphasis on creating opportunities for unstructured and informal recreation pursuits, and to improve the use and accessibility of parks/reserves by people of all ages and abilities. The *Strategy* also provides specific direction for (i) unstructured recreational infrastructure; and (ii) play areas, as detailed below.

Guidelines for upgrade of existing and provision of new play areas:

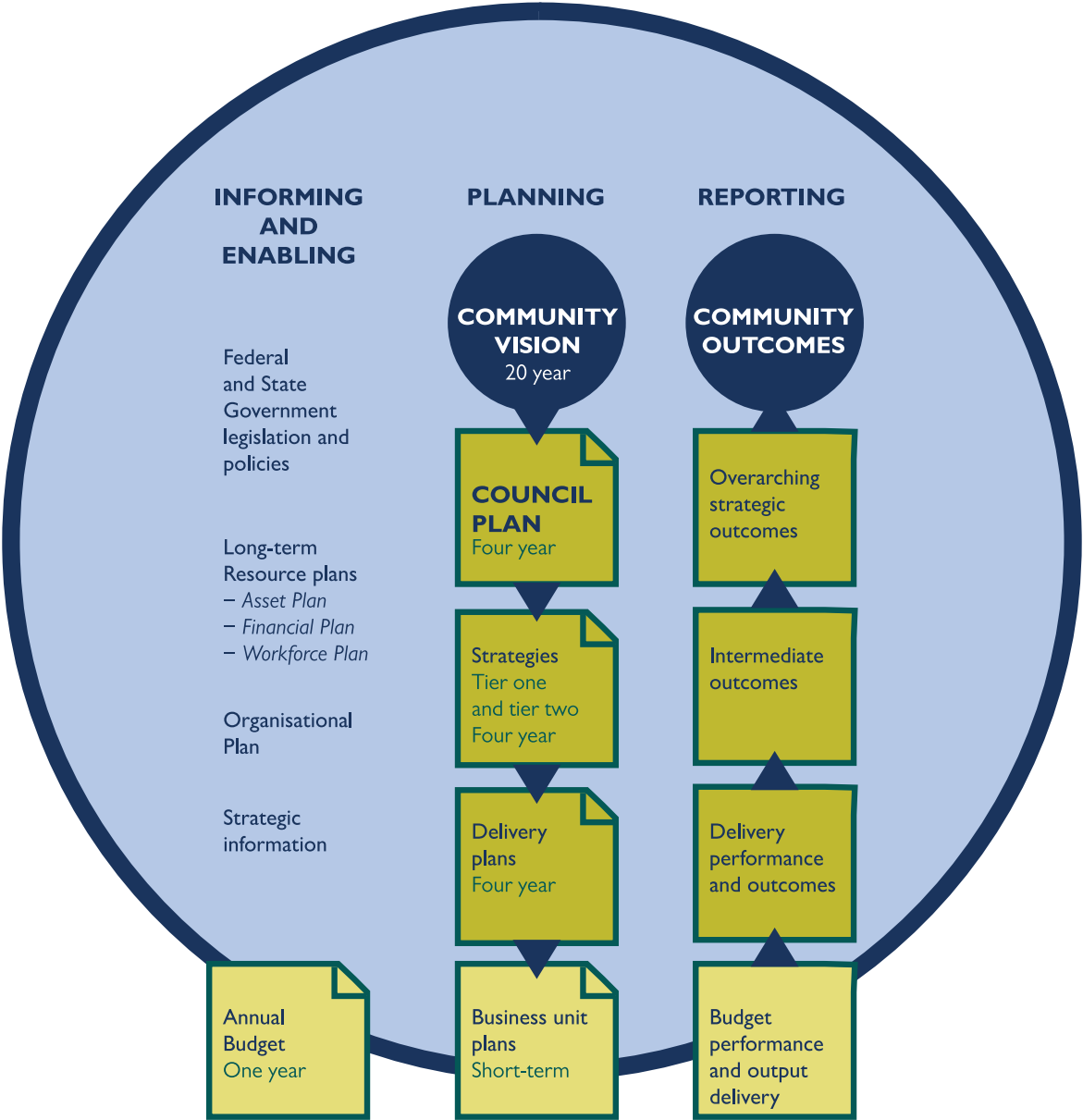
- Play areas to provide diverse activities and equipment to meet different age groups and skill development including physical, social and cognitive play, scaled to meet intended size and use level.
- Natural play settings in open space are to be considered in future open space design, allowing for informal and unstructured play to be accessible for most children in open space.
- Integrate all-ability/universal access to the municipal playgrounds and at least to some areas of neighbourhood playgrounds.



INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING

The *Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework* describes how strategic planning and reporting is developed and managed by Council to ensure it contributes to the goals and aspirations of the Glen Eira community.

The *Framework* outlines how Council plans for the future across multiple functions, levels and locations to contribute to those aspirations. It also shows how the obligations from our regulators and relationships with our partners impact and contribute to the community’s desired outcomes. From a reporting perspective, the *Framework* ensures there are mechanisms in place to monitor progress towards achieving those outcomes and report transparently to the community.



Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

GLEN EIRA 2040 COMMUNITY VISION

The *Glen Eira 2040 Community Vision* is an aspirational description of what our residents want for the future of Glen Eira. The community vision captures what community members most value about their community and sets out the future vision and aspirations for the community to 2040. The *Community Vision* will be used to guide strategic planning and decision making for the future of Glen Eira and is driven by six principles:

- We work together
- Planning for community resilience
- Inclusive and healthy community
- Maximise and diversify our green and natural spaces
- We are proactive in meeting challenges and innovate using evidence-based methods
- Promote and develop art and celebrate culture in our community

GLEN EIRA COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY PLAN

The *Glen Eira Council and Community Plan* (the *Plan*) aims to ensure that the City of Glen Eira remains amongst the most liveable, accessible, healthy and safest municipalities in the state. Glen Eira is a popular place to live and the *Plan* provides strategic direction on how to enhance quality of life and amenity — not only for current residents, but also for our resident population of the future. The themes encapsulated in the *Plan* broadly reflect the planning trends, challenges and community aspirations across Melbourne.

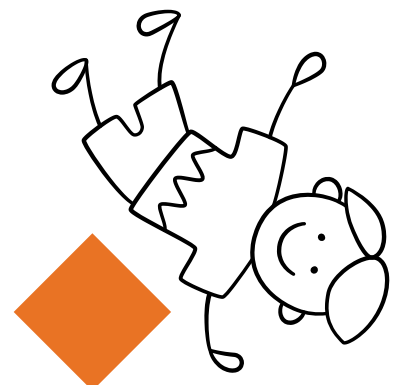
GET ACTIVE — THE FUTURE OF SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION

The *GET Active Report* evaluates the provision of sport and active recreation facilities within Glen Eira and provides a framework for decision making and future planning, management and investment of facilities based on current data and trends. While it doesn't address playgrounds specifically, many of the principles for the provision of sport and recreation facilities are intimately connected to play, as play is essentially the introduction children have to sport and recreation in early life.

The *GET Active* principles are centred around accessibility, inclusion and diversity; sustainability from financial, environmental and adaptability perspectives; and a sense of place and community ownership.

OTHER RELATED PLANS

The *Guidelines* also consider other related plans including the *Disability Action Plan*, *Community Wellbeing Plan*, *Local Economy and Placemaking Action Plan 2020–2025*, *Community Engagement Strategy*, *Biodiversity in Glen Eira*, *Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–2025*, and local park Masterplans.



PLAY PRINCIPLES

Council is committed to developing play spaces that are fun, engaging, accessible, meet the needs of the community and enhance the open space in which they are located.

Table one below identifies Glen Eira's Play Principles that reflect best practice in the provision of community play spaces and will be taken into consideration when planning for new or upgrading existing play spaces within Glen Eira. The principles will guide future decision making and investment in play spaces, with an integrated and flexible approach, and most importantly align with and complement Council's *Open Space Strategy* and *GET Active Report*.

Play Principles		Strategic alignment	
		Open Space Strategy	GET Active Report
	Play for fun Provide engaging play spaces that include a variety of exciting elements and encourage interaction and socialisation		
	Play for development Play spaces that allow for holistic personal development and include elements of challenge and risk	Play Space Guideline Play areas to provide diverse activities and equipment to allow skill development including physical, social and cognitive play	
	Play-ce making Play spaces that reflect what the community wants and the uniqueness of the park in which it is situated	Play Space Guideline Natural play settings in open space are to be considered in future open space design	Get Active Principle: Place making; Strengthening home base
	Play for all Play spaces that cater for a variety of ages and abilities and are integrated with other recreational facilities and supporting infrastructure (eg. drink fountains, park furniture, toilets, barbecues and active recreation facilities)	Open Space Principle Diverse Play Space Guideline Play areas to provide diverse activities and equipment to meet different age groups and skill level	Get Active Principle: Beyond Sport
	Equal play Accessible play spaces that provide opportunities for everybody to participate in a meaningful way and be in the centre of the action, regardless of gender, age, background or ability	Open Space Principles: Equitable; Accessible Play Space Guideline Integrate all-ability/universal access to the major playgrounds and at least to some areas of medium playgrounds	Get Active Principle: Sport for everybody



	<p>Play safe</p> <p>Ensure play spaces adhere to Australian Standards and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and connectivity between parks is considered</p>	<p>Open Space Principle:</p> <p>Networked</p>	<p>Get Active Principle:</p> <p>Safety and security</p>
	<p>Play for Life</p> <p>Plan for play spaces in a strategic and sustainable way considering financial investment, future upgrades and environmental factors</p>	<p>Open Space Principles:</p> <p>Adaptable; Sustainable</p>	<p>Get Active Principles:</p> <p>Sustainable; Financially responsible; Future planning</p>

Table one: Glen Eira Play Principles



Park Crescent Playspace, Caulfield Park

DISCOVERING PLAY

PLAY BY DEFINITION

Play is a multifaceted concept that cannot be easily defined. Sport and Recreation Victoria's *Good Play Space Guide* (2007) describes play as a vehicle for self-expression and social interaction that is active, spontaneous, free, self-generating, purposeful, voluntary, fun, exploratory and intrinsically motivated.

The following characteristics capture the essence of play in the context of these *Guidelines*:

- Play is self-chosen and self-directed
- Play is activity in which means are more valued than ends
- Play has no structure or rules
- Play is imaginative, non-literal, mentally removed in some way from “real” or “serious” life
- Play involves an active, alert, but non-stressed frame of mind

(Peter Gray Ph.D. Research Professor)

Where there are children, there is play. It is a universal impulse, as old as humanity. Physical play, verbal play, friendship play, solitary play — it is the exercise of body and imagination, marked by humour, challenge, invention and exploration. As essential to childhood as food and drink.

Dr. June Factor
<https://pandemicplayproject.com>

THE VALUE OF PLAY

Play is a life-long pursuit that engages people in different ways across the lifespan. As children, play is the first way we experience physical activity: it's where we learn to move, discover how our bodies work and interpret the world.

Every child has the right 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.

Article 31, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

All children need to play. All children have the right to play. When children play they are not just filling in time, they are learning to interpret their world. Play facilitates the learning of life skills, and for this reason, the provision of quality outdoor play spaces is vitally important in local communities.

The Good Play Space Guide, Sport and Recreation Victoria

Play is vital for physical literacy and the building block for lifelong motivation and participation in physical activity. Specifically, play is the foundation for an individual's physical literacy. The Sport Australia Position Statement on Physical Literacy defines physical literacy to be: 'About building the skills, knowledge and behaviours to lead active lives. It is the holistic learning that gives children and young people: physical skills and fitness; the attitudes and emotions that motivate you to be active; the social skills to be active with others; and the knowledge and understanding of how, why and when you move.

Play has many benefits for children and is important for every aspect of their early development.

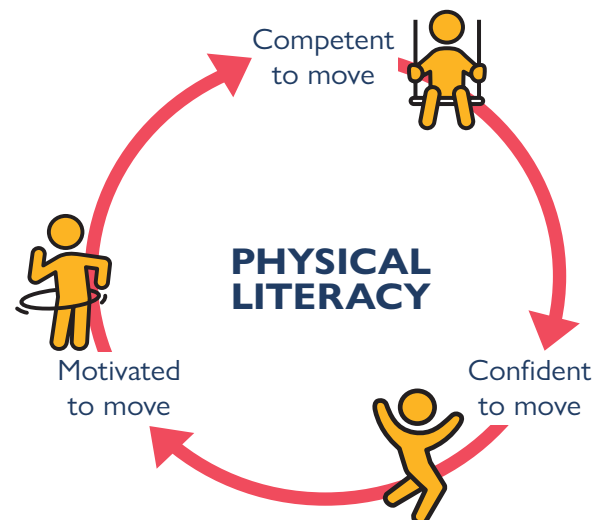


Figure one: physical literacy outcomes from the Canadian Institute of Child Health

The benefits of play and play spaces for children include:

- Helping children develop **important life skills** including problem solving, creativity, resilience and independence.
- Allowing children to **explore** nature and be **inquisitive** about how things work.
- Teaching children how to **interact** and **socialise** with other children and interpret their worlds.
- Enabling children to discover their **senses** and how their **bodies move**.
- A child's first experience of **physical activity** that helps develop important **motor skills**.

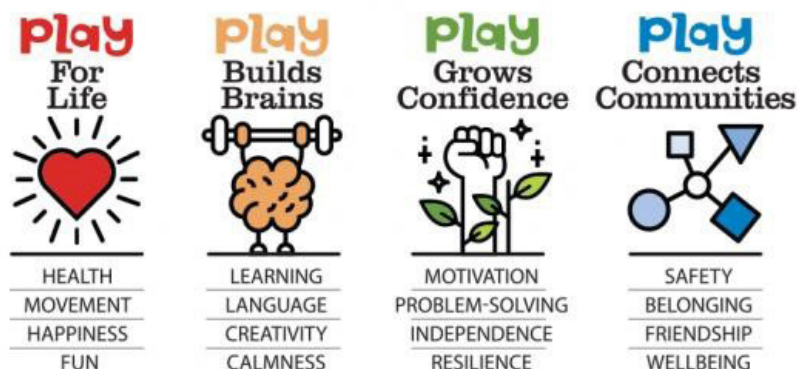


Figure two: benefits of play, Image from Play Australia



Play 'aids learning, problem solving and healthy living'
 Play is 'a positive for both physical and mental health'
 Play is 'learning new skills through experimenting without guidance'

We like 'meeting new friends from the same area'
 Play spaces can also guide 'stimulation and respect for the local environment'
 Play to 'gain social, physical and communication skills, take risks, develop imagination and we get exercise you can't get from everyday spaces'

Quotes from community engagement in Glen Eira, 2021

Play and play spaces provide benefits not only to the active user, which is predominantly children, but also to their families and the broader community.

The benefits of play spaces for the community include:

- A space and opportunity for **social interaction** within families, between families and with the local community.
- Larger playgrounds in particular, provide a **meeting point** and destination for gatherings, which can enhance community connectedness and wellbeing.
- Enhancing **liveability** and **neighbourhood character**.
- Encouraging **physical activity**, which has many mental and physical health benefits.

PLAY ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Children of different ages and abilities have different play and playground requirements. Additionally, it’s not just children who interact with playgrounds and influence a child’s play experience. It is important to consider how all people interact with play and playgrounds and what their requirements are to do this in a meaningful and successful way. These requirements across the lifespan allow Council to provide appropriate and well-utilised playgrounds for the community.

Play across the lifespan				
				
1–3 years	4–7 years	8–12 years	13–18 years	Adults
Physical activity level: Play	Physical activity level: Play; Active play	Physical activity level: Play; Active recreation; Sport	Physical activity level: Active Recreation; Structured physical activity; Sport	Physical activity level: Active recreation; Structured physical activity; Sport
Playground requirements: Opportunities for rolling, crawling, walking, stepping, low-level climbing, sensory manipulation and wheeling toys around.	Playground requirements: Opportunities for walking, running, balancing, agility, swinging, sliding, spinning, climbing, social play, construction and imaginative and dramatic play.	Playground requirements: More complex physical challenges, fine motor activities, games and activities involving groups, and integrated active recreation facilities.	Playground requirements: Largescale playground equipment with risky play elements, and sport and active recreation facilities in close proximity to the playground.	Playground requirements: Diverse playgrounds across the municipality; accessible pathways; seating for supervisions, shade and integrated active recreation facilities.

Figure three: predominant forms of play and physical activity at different life stages

TYPES OF PLAY

There are several types of play, all of which are important for different aspects of an individual's development. Play can be categorised into five types that address different developmental needs: physical, cognitive, social, emotional and sensory. Effective play spaces integrate opportunities for multiple types of play. The table below details the types of play and the play opportunities that address each need.






Type of play	Description	Play space requirements
Physical 	Opportunities for physical movement and both gross and fine motor skills including: balancing, jumping, hanging, climbing, sliding, rocking, swinging. The physical challenge required increases with age and mobility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional play equipment, such as swings and rope climbing. A range of difficulty to ensure appropriate physical challenge for different ages and to allow progression.
Cognitive 	Exploration and imaginative play — manipulating objects to construct or create, categorise and problem solve. Most important for younger children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Puzzles or mazes and natural play elements such as sand, rocks and logs. Focus on elements that can be manipulated and are non-prescriptive to encourage use of imagination.
Social 	Communication, teamwork and interactive play with other children. Often involves role play, rules and creative activity. Important for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play elements that encourage shared use and interaction, such as cubbies and basket swings, and activities that require more than one person such as pulley systems and structures on different levels.
Emotional 	Opportunity for appropriate risk-taking self-direction and self-regulation. Important for all ages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play elements that are less prescriptive and allow for calculated risk taking, such as rope courses and balance beams. Elements should challenge and provide a sense of achievement when mastered.
Sensory 	Opportunity for sensory stimulation, including sight, sound, touch and smell. Most important for young children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural play elements such as sand, rocks, logs and gardens that allow for touch and smell. Play equipment that can be manipulated or create sounds or music. Focus on unique textures and a variety of patterns and colours.

Table two: Types of play and the play opportunities that relate to each developmental need



FACILITATING PLAY

A **Playground** is an area specifically designed for children to play in, which typically includes play equipment and other structures that facilitate different types of play.

In a local government context, playgrounds are typically classified into a three-tier hierarchy; **Local**, **Neighbourhood** and **Municipal**. This hierarchy acts as a planning framework for the provision and distribution of playgrounds within a local government area (LGA).



Local playground

Size: small scale

Catchment area: within 400 metre walking distance

Purpose: cater for the needs of local residents

Visits: short duration, frequent

Target age: typically pre-school aged children

Supporting infrastructure: caters for short stays such as seating



Neighbourhood playground

Size: medium scale

Catchment area: 1-2 km

Purpose: provide a variety of play structures, surfaces and spaces

Visits: medium duration, semi-regularly

Target age: mixed age groups

Supporting infrastructure: may provide picnic tables and drink fountains, and be located alongside sportsgrounds



Municipal playground

Size: large scale

Catchment area: 2 km+

Purpose: destination space, with unique play experiences and other facilities

Visits: long duration, setting for social gatherings, occasional

Target age: all age groups

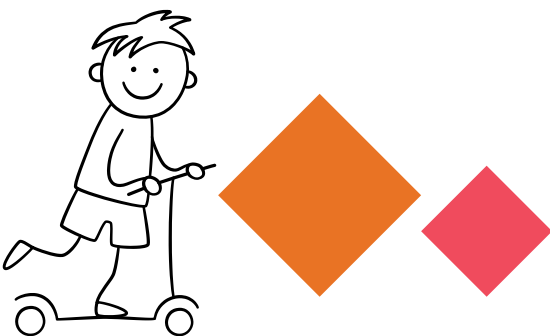
Supporting infrastructure: caters for longer stays such as barbecues, picnic shelters and toilets

Figure four: Glen Eira playground classification hierarchy

EXPLORING PLAY IN GLEN EIRA

Glen Eira currently has 47 playgrounds located throughout the municipality. This includes eight municipal playgrounds, 16 neighbourhood playgrounds and 23 local playgrounds. Most residents live within 500 metres of a playground, which is Council's desired service level and consistent with the desired service level for metropolitan Councils.

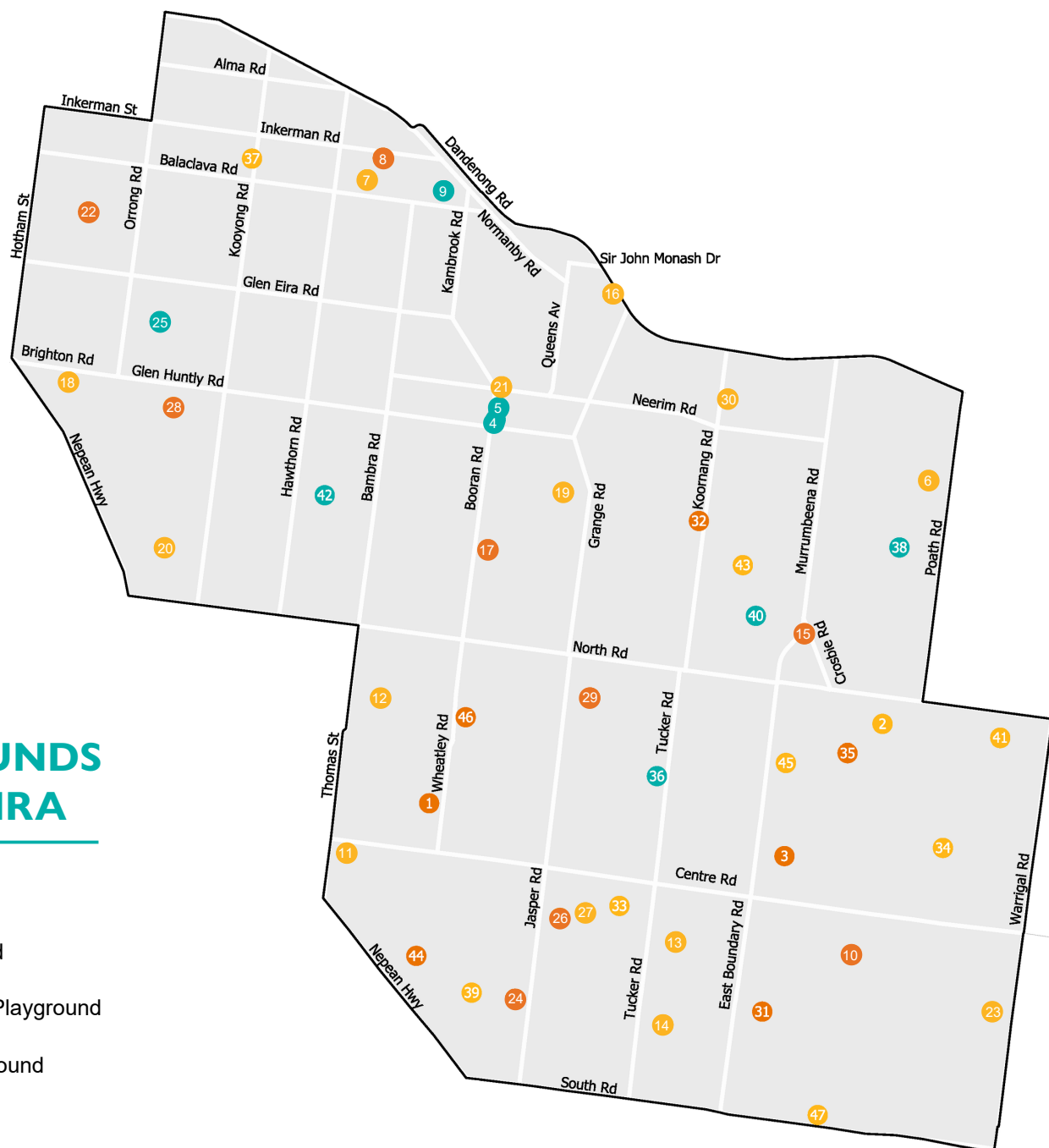
While there is a relatively good distribution of playgrounds in Glen Eira, there are some gap areas, where provision of open space is low and consequently there are less public playgrounds. The *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* identifies some high priority areas that do not have the desired access to any types of open space. This includes municipal open space within 1-2km, neighbourhood open space within 500 metres and easy walking distance to local or small local open space. These high priority gap areas include parts of Caulfield North, Bentleigh East and Elsternwick.



PLAYGROUNDS IN GLEN EIRA

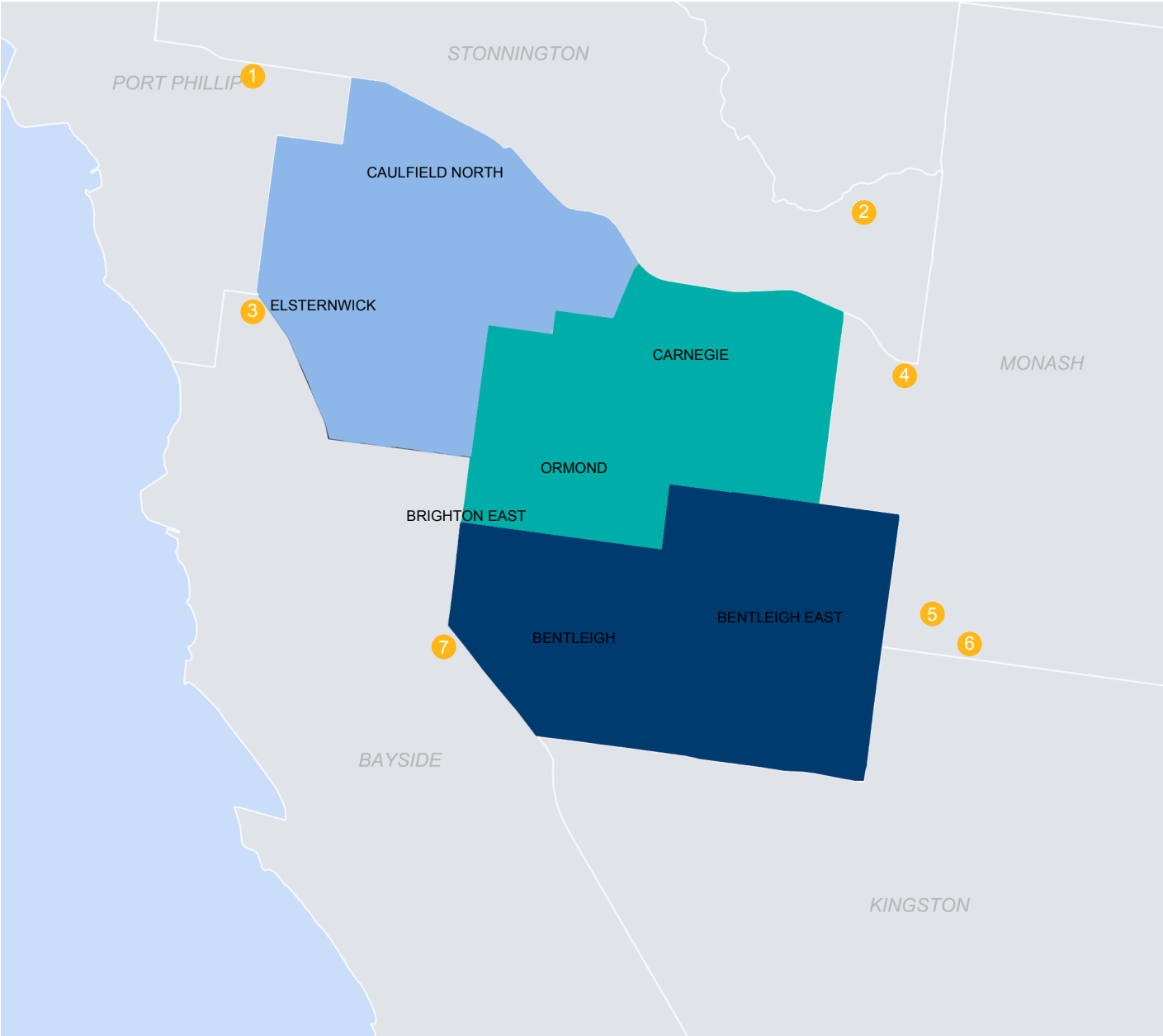
Playground Types

- Local Playground
- Neighbourhood Playground
- Municipal Playground



- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Allnutt Park | 10 Centenary Park | 19 Garden Avenue Park | 28 Hopetoun Gardens | 37 Memorial Park | 46 Wattle Grove Reserve |
| 2 Annie and Arthur Abrahams Reserve | 11 Clapperton Street Park | 20 Gardenvale Park | 29 Joyce Park | 38 Murrumbena Park | 47 Wingate/Brady Roads Park |
| 3 Bailey Reserve | 12 Clee Street Park | 21 Glen Huntly Park | 30 Jersey Parade Reserve | 39 North Avenue Park | |
| 4 Booran Reserve | 13 Colin Street Park | 22 Greenmeadows Gardens | 31 King George VI Memorial Reserve | 40 Packer Park | |
| 5 Booran Reserve (Waterplay) | 14 Dega Avenue Park | 23 Haigh/Kershaw Street Park | 32 Koornang Park | 41 Pell Street Reserve | |
| 6 Boyd Park/Outer Circle Railway Linear Park | 15 Duncan Mackinnon Reserve | 24 Halley Park | 33 Leckie Street Reserve | 42 Princes Park | |
| 7 Caulfield Park (Sensory space) | 16 East Caulfield Reserve | 25 Harleston Park | 34 Mackie Road Reserve | 43 Rosanna Street Reserve | |
| 8 Caulfield Park (Aviary Gardens) | 17 EE Gunn Reserve | 26 Hodgson Reserve | 35 Marlborough Street Reserve | 44 Victory Park | |
| 9 Caulfield Park (Park Crescent) | 18 Elsternwick Plaza | 27 Hodgson Reserve (Snakes and Ladders) | 36 McKinnon Reserve | 45 Virginia Park | |

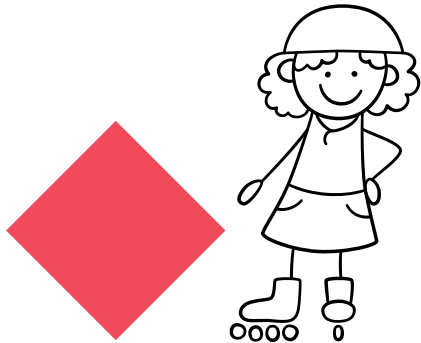
Additionally, there are play spaces close to Glen Eira’s municipal boundary which service Glen Eira residents. Examples of municipal and regional play spaces near to Glen Eira include:



- 1 Alma Park
St Kilda East
- 2 Phoenix Park
Malvern East
- 3 Elsternwick Park
Elsternwick

- 4 Warrawee Park
Oakleigh
- 5 Davies Reserve
Oakleigh South
- 6 Talbot Park
Oakleigh South

- 7 Dendy Park
Brighton East



THE HISTORY OF PLAY IN GLEN EIRA

Over the past 20 years, Council has implemented a strategic framework for the upgrade and maintenance of playgrounds in Glen Eira. This has seen the replacement of outdated playgrounds to provide those that are more engaging and relevant to the changes in Australian Standards. Twenty years ago, play spaces were small play zones that included a slide, a set of swings, and some hanging and climbing equipment. The focus of play was centralised on the physical development of users. Whilst these play elements certainly remain relevant and vitally important in play today, the look and feel of playgrounds has changed dramatically. Playgrounds now facilitate different types of play experiences and engage children at different ages and developmental stages. More recently there has also been a number of custom designed playgrounds developed, offering more unique and diverse play features.

The integration of additional infrastructure such as active recreation facilities, outdoor fitness equipment and social seating areas is also occurring and is in response to an increase in population, higher density living and community demand for opportunities to participate in non-organised, informal recreation. These types of facilities are captured in Glen Eira's *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020, Get Active — The Future of Sport and Active Recreation Report* and the *Active Recreation Action Plan*.

HOW GLEN EIRA PLAYS TODAY

Play spaces now, where practicable, provide for play through various mediums and focus on the various elements of personal development as outlined in Table two. Input from the community into playground development has led to Council identifying and accommodating the following needs and priorities to address each of the individual types of development through play:

Physical

- Retain some traditional equipment but provide variety that allows users to swing, slide, climb, hang, run/chase, balance, etc.
- Natural play elements are preferred and can provide similar play options to constructed play equipment.
- Greater enjoyment is achieved for younger children when the play space allows for their supervisors to join in on the fun.

Equipment in our parks to address physical play include bouldering walls, integrated play spaces to include active recreation facilities, tall climbing towers, etc.



Glen Eira play spaces allow you to 'get exercise you can't get from everyday spaces such as climbing, balancing and navigating new spaces'.

Quotes from community engagement in Glen Eira, 2021

Cognitive

- The inclusion of equipment and pieces for imagination play are important features of any play space.
- Equipment that encourages imagination play or remembering and problem-solving activities, provides better opportunities for those who are less physically active or able.

Equipment in our parks to provide cognitive play opportunities include cubby and tree houses, pathway loops that include petrol pumps and shop fronts, interactive play panels, tall climbing structures, sensory gardens and artistic play pieces.

Social

- Playgrounds provide so many opportunities for social interactions with people of all ages, abilities and interests.
- Social opportunities are important to the context of 'play' as they allow interaction, communication/ language and cooperation.

Playgrounds generally facilitate an environment for users to interact and be social. Specific equipment to encourage this behaviour that has been recently installed include five-way swings, interactive play panels, talking tubes and integrating play spaces with active recreation facilities such as basketball rings.

Emotional

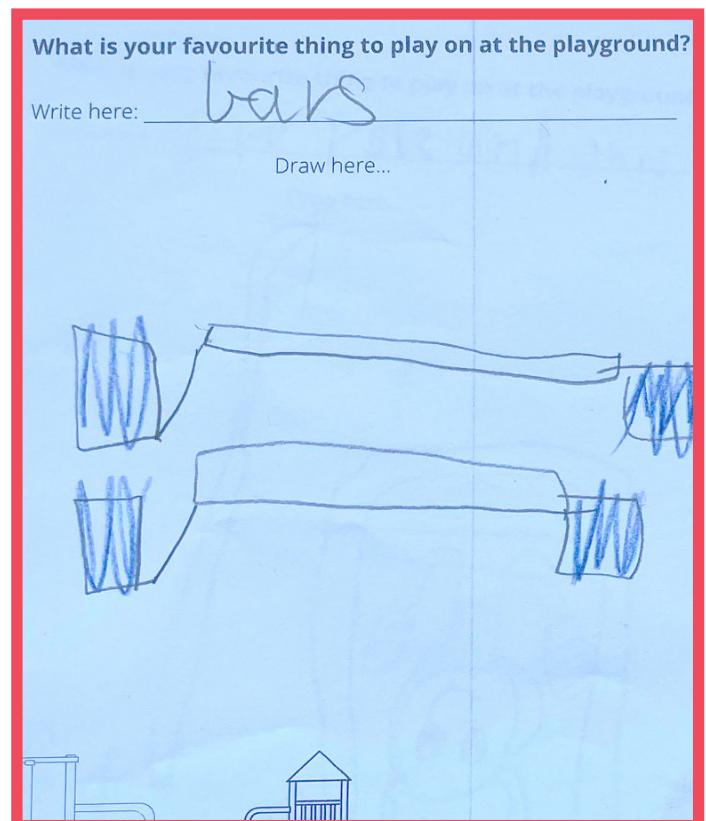
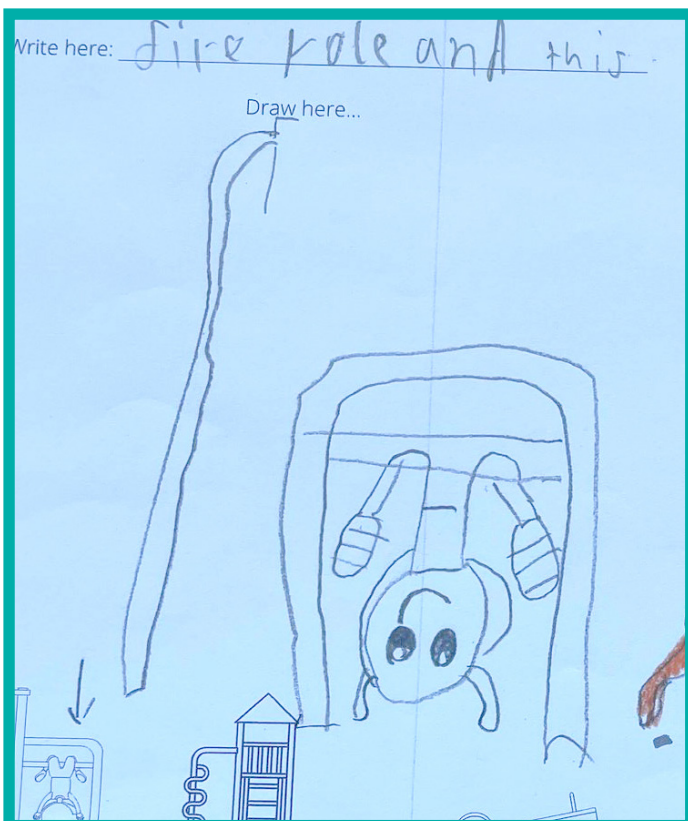
- Playgrounds allow users to express emotion through play — this can include laughter associated with happiness or tears and sadness from a bump or graze.
- Emotional play typically stems from social play, so allowing users to interact with others allows them to manage their expressions, control their behaviour and develop and maintain relationships.

Sensory

- Diverse playgrounds have a positive impact on all the senses.
- Inclusive playgrounds require sensory play spaces as not all children want to or are able to climb, swing and slide.

Glen Eira playgrounds aim to provide for sensory play, recognising the seven senses of sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste, vestibular and proprioception. We provide playgrounds with varying textures, musical instruments or noise makers, spinners and flying foxes, trampolines and monkey bars.

We recently asked school children what their favourite things were to play on at the playground:



What is your favourite thing to play on at the playground?

Write here: rock climbing

Draw here...



What is your favourite thing to play on at the playground?

Write here: slide and monkey bars.

Draw here...



What is your favourite thing to play on at the playground?

Write here: Monkey bars

Draw here...



What is your favourite thing to play on at the playground?

Write here: swing

Draw here...



TRENDS INFLUENCING PLAY IN GLEN EIRA

Increasing population with limited opportunities for new open space

Glen Eira's population is increasing. From 2011 to 2016, the population increased by 8.6 per cent from 137,152 to 149,012; and it is projected to increase by an additional 34,000 people between 2018 and 2036 to 186,000 people.¹ This includes an increase of 3,540 in the 0-17-year-old population. With finite open space and limited opportunity to purchase new land for open space, Council will need to cater for this increased population and associated demand by providing greater play opportunities within the existing open space and playground network.

Playgrounds within Glen Eira are located within broader open space, therefore the gaps in open space provision can also be applied to playgrounds. The *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* provides recommendations to improve the provision of facilities including play opportunities within existing open space.

High density living

With an increase in high density living and a decrease in the existence or size of backyard space, children have limited access to outdoor play opportunities at home, increasing the need for local parks to replicate backyards and provide children with the space and facilities to play. This is a significant consideration for Glen Eira, with the most recent census indicating that medium and higher density housing accounted for 50 per cent of housing, which was much higher than the Victorian average of 27 per cent.

Childhood obesity

Nearly one in four Australian children aged 5–14 are classified as overweight or obese, with 17 per cent considered overweight and 7.7 per cent falling into the obese category (ABS, 2019). This is a marked increase from previous generations and a trend that has many negative health and economic implications for the community and government.

Safety and the need for connectivity

Parents are more reluctant to allow their children to walk or ride long distances unaccompanied to access play spaces due to concerns about safety and potential legal obligations. It is therefore vital that Council provides parks and play spaces that are close to home, are safe spaces for children and ensure connectivity within the open space network. This includes ensuring the planning and design of play spaces considers Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and accessibility factors, such as the requirement to cross major roads or train lines to access the play space.



“Where I can see my child without them feeling like I’m constantly watching them or calling out where they are”

“If the right play space is implemented, it can bring the community together”

Quotes from community engagement in Glen Eira, 2021

¹ Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (profile.id.com.au)

PLAY SPACE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS (THE ‘WHAT’ AND ‘WHY’)

THEME ONE: WHOLE OF PARK DESIGN

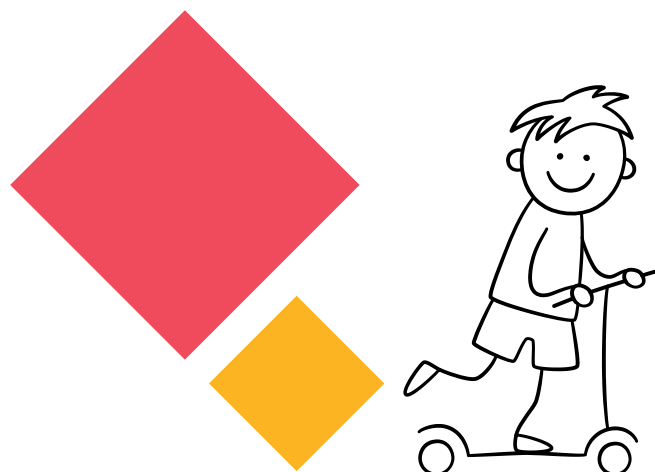
Playgrounds are one of many features in public open space and it is important that they integrate into the broader nature and character of the park or reserve. Similarly, Council also recognises that play can occur anywhere within an open space area and that playgrounds are only one type of play opportunity available in parks.

Incorporating the playground into the broader park area and linking to other recreational opportunities such as multipurpose courts, skate elements, outdoor fitness equipment and grassed areas allows for seamless transition into other play opportunities, including nature play and active recreation. This is important for children as they transition through various stages of play and into active recreation as they get older; and for adults who take multiple children of different ages, needs and preferences to the park, and to also be active themselves.

Key considerations/issues:

The design of the playground itself, as well as the supporting infrastructure contained in the broader park, considers the following elements:

- *Park Masterplans* — plans that have been developed from community engagement to inform the future needs and priorities of a park in its entirety, including any proposed playgrounds or upgrades.
- *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* — the defined hierarchy of the open space itself, and what features are required to support this level of open space.
- *Playground Hierarchy* — playgrounds have been classified within a hierarchy of local, neighbourhood and municipal playgrounds (as outlined in Figure four). This hierarchy is aligned with the hierarchy of open space and the hierarchy of each playground is classified in *Appendix one*. The playground design features and supporting infrastructure that accompanies the different levels of hierarchy is further detailed in *Appendix two*.
- Community Engagement — at a minimum, playgrounds classified as neighbourhood or municipal playgrounds will undergo a phase of community engagement to ensure that proposed play elements and opportunities meet the needs of the current and future users.



What you told us about whole of park design

“

Playgrounds should have different equipment for each age group and ability

Playgrounds should have supporting features such as seating, parking and toilets



Playgrounds should feature nature play and use sustainable materials

Playgrounds should be designed with unique play equipment

”

Glen Eira Policy Position: whole of park design

- a) Council is committed to providing high quality playgrounds that complement the broader use of the open space in which it sits.
- b) Council is committed to undertaking community engagement for all upgrades to playgrounds classified as neighbourhood and municipal.



THEME TWO: PHYSICAL PLAYGROUND ELEMENTS AND FEATURES

Key considerations/issues:

There are numerous options of physical elements and features that Council must consider for inclusion in a new play space. These decisions are influenced by the value an element can provide in terms of:

- ability to cater for different ages and abilities;
- diversity of play experiences, such as nature play, water play and sensory play;
- number and type of developmental needs the element can facilitate (ie. physical, cognitive, social, sensory, emotional);
- the playground classification, specific to what the associated expectations are and proximity to other play spaces;
- existing playground provision and the priority list to inform future upgrades as detailed in *Appendix three*;
- community wants and needs as expressed through community engagement;
- relevant data and trends; and
- Council constraints, including location, environment, budget and other.

Off the shelf and custom designed play elements

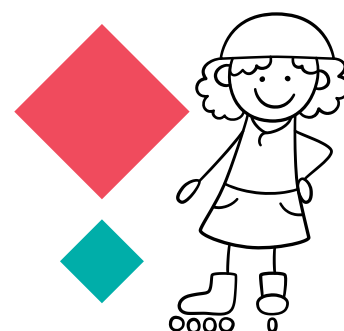
Off the shelf playground equipment is typically more generic and prescriptive and provides less diverse play and developmental opportunities for children. Custom designed elements can be tailored to suit the park in which the playground is situated and provide unique and diverse play experiences. However, custom elements present a large cost to Council in both initial installation and ongoing maintenance and management. Therefore, Council aims to provide a mix of both off the shelf and custom-made play equipment.

Typically, smaller local playgrounds that service less people for shorter periods of time will contain simpler, off the shelf play equipment. Whereas, for larger playgrounds (municipal and some neighbourhood playgrounds), with higher visitation and time spent per visit, increased spend on custom designed equipment can be justified.



Major play areas are to provide diverse play opportunities including some custom designed elements to reflect the natural, urban landscape, the cultural heritage and social character of the area. Similarly, they can be off the shelf items designed to complement the landscape setting that encourages other types of play including social and cognitive play.

Glen Eira Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020



Nature play

Nature play is the opportunity to engage in unstructured play activities in outdoor settings where natural elements feature, such as logs, rocks and water, as opposed to conventional manufactured play equipment.

As natural environments are constantly changing, nature play allows children to experience variations of texture, colour, sound, smell and temperature and interact with natural elements in different ways each time they play. Participation in nature play can enhance children's cognitive flexibility and creativity, boost self-esteem and improve resilience.

Glen Eira currently offers opportunities for nature play in several parks and reserves including Packer Park, Carnegie; Harleston Park, Elsternwick; McKinnon Reserve, McKinnon (photo bottom left); Caulfield Park, Caulfield; and Murrumbeena Park, Murrumbeena (photo bottom right).



In play area designs, integrate some natural elements and materials including natural mulch and planting to provide children with easy access to natural areas close to home.

Glen Eira Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020



McKinnon Reserve



Murrumbeena Park

Imaginative play

Imaginative play includes role play and games of imagination. This can be facilitated or enhanced by 'themed' play spaces or elements which can be used as 'props' such as cubby houses and arranging three dimensional objects in a complex and open-ended way.

This type of play helps develop social and emotional skills, including language skills, and practice creativity, imagination and innovation.

Glen Eira has an aquatic themed playground at Bailey Reserve, Bentleigh East and a water themed play space at Booran Reserve, Glen Huntly, which can facilitate role play. Packer Park, Carnegie, has a frog theme and Harleston Park, Elsternwick (photo right) has playground elements such as a wizard's double tower fortress, a giant bird's nest swing and a sensory maze to stimulate the imagination.



Harleston Park — imaginative play opportunities

Water play

Water play is a fun, highly sensory play experience that allows children to explore and discover.

Water is a fundamental sensory element that is easy to manipulate. It can also be combined with other elements to create more complex play opportunities, such as floating leaves or rock dams and sand pits. Water play is open-ended, promotes physical development, can teach mathematical and scientific concepts, encourages social interaction and fosters creativity.



Booran Reserve

Glen Eira currently has water play opportunities at Booran Reserve, Glen Huntly (photo above and bottom left) and Harleston Park, Elsternwick (photo bottom right) and provides similar play opportunities at Glen Eira Sport and Aquatic Centre and the design for the Carnegie Memorial Swimming Pool.



Booran Reserve — water play



Harleston Park — water and nature play

What you told us about playground features

“

I like going up stairs and going on the slide and climbing

Features that are unique or interesting — eg. the ‘acorn’ at Harleston Park, the whole playground at Booran Reserve (including the trampolines) and the park at Packer Park

Lots of ropes, climbing features, things to bounce, slide, balance, and be silly on

Glen Eira Policy Position: physical playground elements and features

- Council is committed to providing flexible and variable play spaces, that provide appropriate challenges for multiple ages and abilities and allow for progression.
- Council will facilitate opportunities for creative, imaginative and exploratory play by incorporating nature play and diverse site-specific equipment, as well as water play where appropriate and possible.

THEME THREE: DIVERSE AND ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND DESIGN

Playground design must be diverse and adaptable to provide opportunities for all the play experiences required for holistic personal development and to cater for different ages and abilities. It is also important that playgrounds provide a variety of experiences that enable play in different ways each visit, to increase the likelihood of regular use or, at a minimum, repeat visitation.

Diversity should be considered when designing individual play spaces as well as the playground network as a whole. It is not practical to provide a full range of services and facilities at every play space. Therefore, playgrounds in close proximity should complement rather than replicate each other and the play experiences they provide.

Key considerations/issues:

Age

Depending on the target age group of the playground, elements will differ in relation to:

- physical size;
- the skill level required to interact with the element; and
- behavioural patterns, play interests and ability to engage in play with risk at that age.

However, in a public community context with limited open space that must cater for the entire community, it is not feasible to create a playground for one age group only. It is also important to note that age is only one measure of capability, as everyone has different developmental rates. Similarly, defining the age that a playground caters for should be viewed as a guide only, as it is likely for example, that a four-year-old can interact in a different but still meaningful way with a playground which is designed for older children.

The table below details the main play activities and requirement at different ages that will influence choice of playground elements.

Age range	Appropriate activities/play requirements	Adult interaction
Toddler 1–3 years	Rolling, crawling, walking, stepping, low-level climbing, wheeling objects around, repetitive activities, sensory manipulation (ie. sand or water play)	Essential to activities
Junior 4–7 years	Walking, running, balancing, agility, swinging, sliding, spinning, climbing, digging, construction, social play with friends such as hide and seek, imaginative and dramatic play	Usually welcomed
Intermediate 8–12 years	Activities include most of those for the junior age group, with more complex physical and cognitive challenges and games, often involving groups, teammates and social interaction	Not imperative
Teenagers 13+ years	Activities include some of the above with a much greater degree of challenge (ie. higher, longer, faster, more complex) and more strategic games and problem solving, with opportunities to socialise and hang out with peers	Not needed
Note: In the intermediate and teenage age groups, there is a shift away from play grounds, to other recreational facilities that allow for sport and active recreation activities. Intergenerational play also supports the active participation by adults accompanying children at playgrounds.		

Table three: Play requirements by age

Degrees of challenge

It is vital that playgrounds provide different levels of challenge (particularly physically) appropriate to the age ranges shown in Table three above and to allow progression as each individual becomes more competent and confident at a certain task. This can be achieved by including a variety of playground elements, some less challenging and others more challenging, but also by incorporating single elements that provide incremental challenge by the way the user interacts with it. This includes climbing structures, bouldering walls, balance beams of different heights and distances, and less prescriptive features that allow children to interact in different ways.

McKinnon Reserve Playground is an example that provides a climbing structure, bouldering wall, monkey bars and balance beams that allow for progressive challenge. It is also important that 'exciting features' of a playground can be accessed in a variety of ways so that users can choose the method that is appropriate for their capabilities.



Princes Park



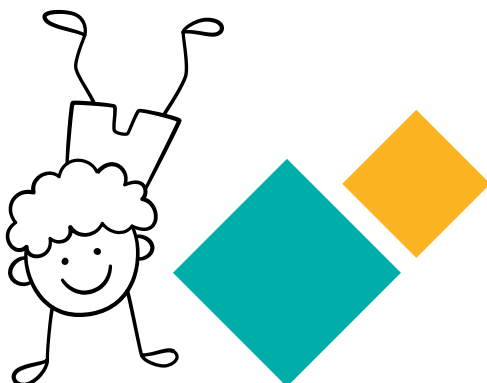
McKinnon Reserve

It is also important to recognise that not everyone will be able to achieve mastery over certain physical challenges and therefore it is vital that play spaces provide opportunities for users to master different skills (aside from physical) in their own way. This can include composing a piece on a musical panel or learning which button to press to activate different lights. The more flexible the play space and the more elements that can be used in a variety of ways, the more likely any child will be able find something to master.



All children gain satisfaction from learning to deal with challenges and from developing skills as they get older, and this is a critical part of learning

The Good Play Space Guide, Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2007



All abilities

There are specific play equipment pieces which are designed for children with varied requirements and abilities. Examples include nest swings, special needs swings and wheelchair merry-go-rounds. However, there are also many design considerations which can be incorporated in a play space that enable successful participation from children who have impairments or disabilities.

It is important:

- that children with disabilities can participate in play with other children and not have the only equipment that they can access in a separate or segregated area (successful play spaces provide accessible play that leads to social inclusion);
- to consider the multiple types of play when designing a play space, particularly sensory and cognitive play, to engage children who may be unable to use the elements designed predominantly for physical play;
- to consider opportunities for calm spaces that are within the play space and within sightline of supervisors; and
- to ensure accessibility is considered in the design of local play spaces, not just larger regional play spaces.

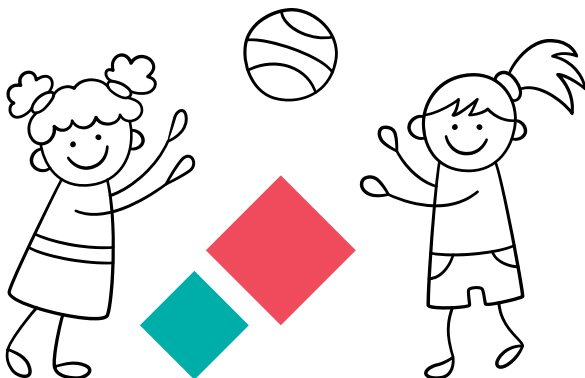


Murrumbeena Park — accessible swing



Halley Park — access ramp with handrails

Glen Eira has accessible playground elements at many of its parks including Allnut Park, Booran Reserve, Caulfield Park, Halley Park, Harleston Park, McKinnon Reserve, Murrumbeena Park, Packer Park and Princes Park. Booran Reserve is an example of a play space that has considered accessibility in many aspects of its design. It has colourful and gently sloped pathways that allow for intuitive movement and assist children who have limited vision or mobility; smaller accessible paths that weave and allow exploration through shrubs; plantings and running water; and there is also a raised sandpit with wheelchair access.



THEME FOUR: SAFETY AND RISK

The balance of safety and risk is paramount in playground design. Playgrounds need to provide an appropriate degree of challenge, without being exposed to undue danger that users are unable to overcome by learning or through experimentation. Playgrounds should provide a controlled environment where users can explore, take calculated risks and learn resilience.

Council ensures it provides playgrounds that meet Australian Safety Standards in an environment that eliminates the potential for unnecessary harm. This includes the utilisation of appropriate playground design, materials and surfaces, which allows Council to take a risk reduction approach to play spaces, as opposed to risk avoidance. Risk avoidance deals with eliminating any and all exposure to risk that poses potential harm or injury, while risk reduction deals with reducing the likelihood of possible harm or injury, whilst providing opportunities for individual development.

Key considerations/issues:

Risky play

Risky play can be defined as a thrilling or exciting activity that involves a risk of physical injury, and play that provides opportunities for challenge, testing limits and exploring boundaries. Risky play gives children the opportunity to extend themselves and learn life skills. Success and failure provide children with the motivation to try again and work out different ways of doing things.

Risky play opportunities usually contain one or more of the following characteristics: great heights, high speed, dangerous tools or objects, close proximity to dangerous elements, rough and tumble play with others, exploration without supervision and play with potential for impact.

The *Good Play Space Guide* (Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2007) notes that: 'Play spaces have many inherent physical challenges which pose risks to some users. As challenge is a crucial element in play, the elimination of risk-taking is highly undesirable'.



Booran Reserve



Booran Reserve — 10 metre high rope dome



Playground standards

The *Australian Standards for Playground Safety* (AS 4685) aim to minimise the risk of injury to playground users, while acknowledging that risk is an inherent feature of playtime and there are many acceptable risks as part of a stimulating and challenging learning environment. The standards provide designers, owners and operators of playgrounds with guidance on the development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playgrounds. Examples of some of the basic requirements included in the Standards are shown below.



Image: Adventure Plus <https://adventureplus.net.au/australian-playground-standards-basics-every-designer-know/>

Safety in the surrounds

As well as safety of the equipment and play space itself, Council is also aware of the broader safety requirements related to the reserve or park where the play space is located and how users access the park.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a method adopted to discourage crime and increase safety in public open space through the way the space is designed. The following principles are integral to CPTED in the context of parks and playgrounds:

- **Natural Surveillance**
A technique that seeks to deter crime by creating social and highly visible spaces. This can be achieved by locating playgrounds near places, spaces and paths that attract people participating in appropriate community activities, across the day and night.
- **Vulnerability**
This principle recognises that some situations and some places make people and property more vulnerable to harm than others. Council should avoid locating playgrounds in hidden or isolated places.

- **Legibility**

Parks and reserves should be designed in ways that allow people to easily know where they are and how to get to where they are going and avoid getting lost. This can come from broad structure and design of the area or other additional features such as appropriate signage.

- **Maintenance and management of the physical assets**

Public places that are well-maintained encourage respectful use. Spaces that are broken down, dirty or vandalised are less likely to encourage legitimate and positive use by most groups.

Safe access to parks is also important from a Council and community perspective. Safe access is multi-faceted and includes:

- Accessible and visible entrance/exit points to playgrounds.
- Short walking distance from home for children.
- Safe cycling or walking paths.
- No requirement to cross busy roads or trainlines.
- Connectivity between parks.
- Close proximity to public transport (for larger play spaces).

What you told us about safety and risk



Glen Eira Policy Position: safety and risk

- a) Council is committed to providing opportunities for playground users to take calculated risks that are important for their development in safe play environments.
- b) Council will adhere to the relevant Australian Standards for playgrounds and to ensure design and management minimise the risk of injury to playground users.
- c) Council will consider the broader environment where the play space is situated, apply CPTED principles and ensure safe access to parks and reserves.

THEME FIVE: SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS

Council's *Our Climate Emergency Response Strategy 2021–2025* details a commitment from Council to deliver 70 actions across six main goals related to climate action. One of the main goals is to improve the sustainability of infrastructure and buildings across the entire municipality to ensure that they are resilient to climate change impacts. A large component of achieving this goal is related to the implementation of our *Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy*, which details objectives related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing renewable energy generation, increasing recycling of waste, using recycled materials, increasing/retaining vegetation and supporting sustainable transport options. The themes that most closely relate to playgrounds are the increased recycling of waste, use of recycled materials and increase or retention of vegetation.

Key considerations/issues:

Sustainability considerations for playground construction and redevelopment include:

Recycled products

Where possible Council uses suppliers of recycled materials in the production of new play equipment and supporting infrastructure, and seeks to provide play equipment that can be recycled at end of life.

Locally sourced materials

Where possible Council uses suppliers who source their materials locally. This not only ensures maintenance and spare parts can be accessed quickly, but also decreases the CO2 emissions from transport (particularly international).

Reuse of equipment in other play spaces where appropriate

The waste hierarchy suggests looking to re-use materials before recycling. Where possible Council re-uses equipment and materials, that are not at end of life, in other play spaces or as recognition features throughout the park. In addition to this, Council has also retained and donated play equipment to local not-for-profit organisations to provide play opportunities.

Sustainable design

In addition to using recycled materials, Council's design of play spaces will include, where possible, sustainable features such as nature play, landscaping and tree canopy planting, solar panels, reduced water requirements, water recycling and low toxic finishes.

Management and maintenance practices

Sustainable management and maintenance practices will be employed to maximise the life of the equipment and increase the time before equipment needs to be replaced. This relates to the top principle in the waste hierarchy by decreasing the overall materials manufactured and therefore lowering the total amount of waste produced.



Figure five: waste hierarchy



Seek opportunities to prioritise the use of recycled materials in open space projects where appropriate

Glen Eira Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020

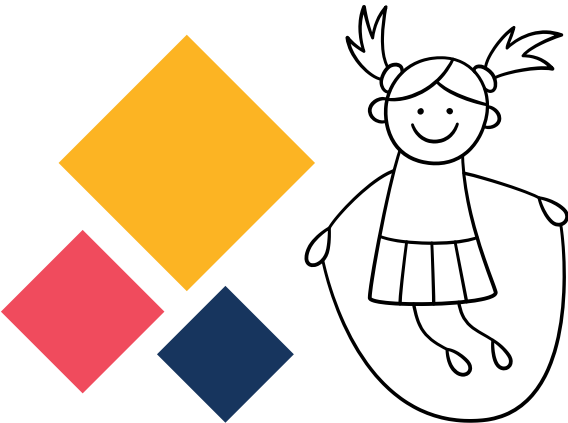


Booran Reserve — bins to promote recycling

Glen Eira Policy Position: sustainability

As per the *Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy 2021*, Council will embed environmentally sustainable design (ESD) principles in its buildings and infrastructure projects. While the incorporation of ESD requirements may incur upfront project costs, Council considers that these costs are an investment that will return financial savings and other co-benefits over the life of the asset, including:

- (a) delivering assets which are resilient to climate change impacts;
- (b) enhancing user wellbeing by connecting natural and built environments and improving indoor environments;
- (c) securing ongoing operational efficiencies through improved asset management and maintenance practices and decreased utility costs;
- (d) facilitating active transport options and reducing reliance on emissions-intensive transport; and
- (e) promoting and encouraging ESD practices in the wider community, including by stimulating local markets for low-impact construction materials and recycled products.



THEME 6: SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Playgrounds need to meet the needs of all park users, including those playing and those supervising, by providing appropriate and easily accessible park infrastructure and amenities. The supporting infrastructure provided at play spaces will be dependent on the playground hierarchy and the nominated infrastructure for that classification (as shown in *Appendix two*). It is also important that the playground and supporting park infrastructure are congruent with the nature, character and intended purpose of both the playground and the broader park.

Key considerations/issues:

Fencing

While fencing around playgrounds has some benefits, particularly peace of mind for supervising adults as children cannot easily run off, it can also unnecessarily segregate the playground from the rest of the park; be jarring with the park character; can create conflict if gates are left open; and creates accessibility issues for some users.

Where they are needed, there are several ways that Council creates appropriate physical barriers between the playground and potential safety hazards, such as roads, including partial fencing, earth mounds, thickly planted garden beds, hedges or seats/seating walls.



Fencing playgrounds should be carefully considered and where possible avoided when it can be demonstrated there is no safety requirement for it. A separation treatment may be appropriate where playgrounds are located in close proximity to a main road or shared trail and may pose a safety issues for park users.

Glen Eira Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020

Shade

Shade is an important consideration for playgrounds, due to the risk of UV radiation exposure. Shade can be provided in several ways. Natural shade provided from trees is the preferred type of shade as it provides many benefits over artificial shade provided by structures such as shade sails:

- Trees provide environmental benefits and contribute to the natural feel of the play space
- Trees can facilitate nature play and provide opportunities for 'risky play'
- Shade sails can be costly to install and maintain
- Shade sails are visually less appealing
- Neither shade sails nor trees prevent equipment getting hot during the summer



Locate play areas in locations that receive some natural shade during the middle of the day (10am–2pm) to minimise the need for shade structures. The final proximity of the play areas to trees will need to ensure ongoing health of the tree and that the play area is not in total shade but receives some sunlight during the day.

Provide additional shade trees around playgrounds where feasible. When trees are established or as part of the renewal or upgrade of a playground, investigate removal of artificial shade structures rather than upgrade/replacement of these structures.

Glen Eira Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020

Packer Park playground is an example of natural shade provided by trees incorporated as a feature of the play space.

Glen Eira has a mix of natural and artificial shade at existing play spaces. Often a combination of both natural shade, complemented by shade sails is present, such as at Bailey Reserve playground.

Paths

Paths which are continuous, smooth surfaces and connect play elements within a play space are vital for making a play space more accessible to all, particularly parents with prams, people in wheelchairs and older adults. The Good Play Space Guide (Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2007) notes that paths should provide access for all (users and supervisors) to key areas of the play space including:

- under play structures that promote social play such as ‘shop windows’;
- main or unique features of the play space where everyone wants to play; and
- play elements of differing heights and levels.

It is also important that accessible paths are built between the play space and other park features including amenities.

Park amenities

Park amenities located close to a playground is a contributing factor to a positive play experience, the length of time spent at the playground and the increased likelihood of visitors to a certain playground.

- **Public toilets**

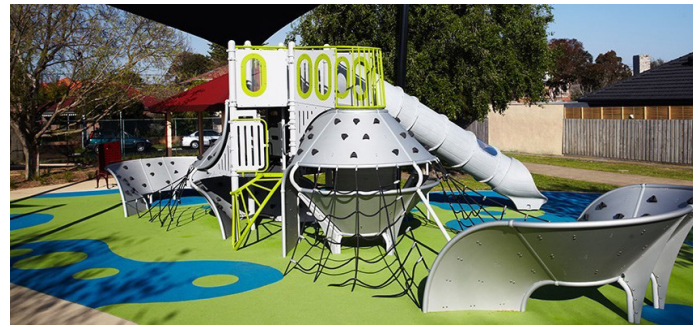
Public toilets are important for both users and supervisors if they are to visit a playground for a medium or long duration. The provision of public toilets at playgrounds is based on the classification of the open space where the playground is located. As detailed in the *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020*, public toilets are only provided at municipal and some neighbourhood playgrounds and this is dependent on whether there are other facilities within or in close proximity to the open space. Council’s *Public Toilet Strategy Review* provides further direction for the provision of public toilets in Glen Eira.

- **Picnic shelters, tables and barbecues**

Important for ‘destination’ play spaces, where users typically spend many hours. These facilities complement visits to the playground and the number and size of picnic facilities is dependent on the anticipated use and actual demand.



Packer Park playground — shaded by trees



Bailey Reserve playground — natural and artificial shade



Harleston Park — integrated paths

- **Park seating**

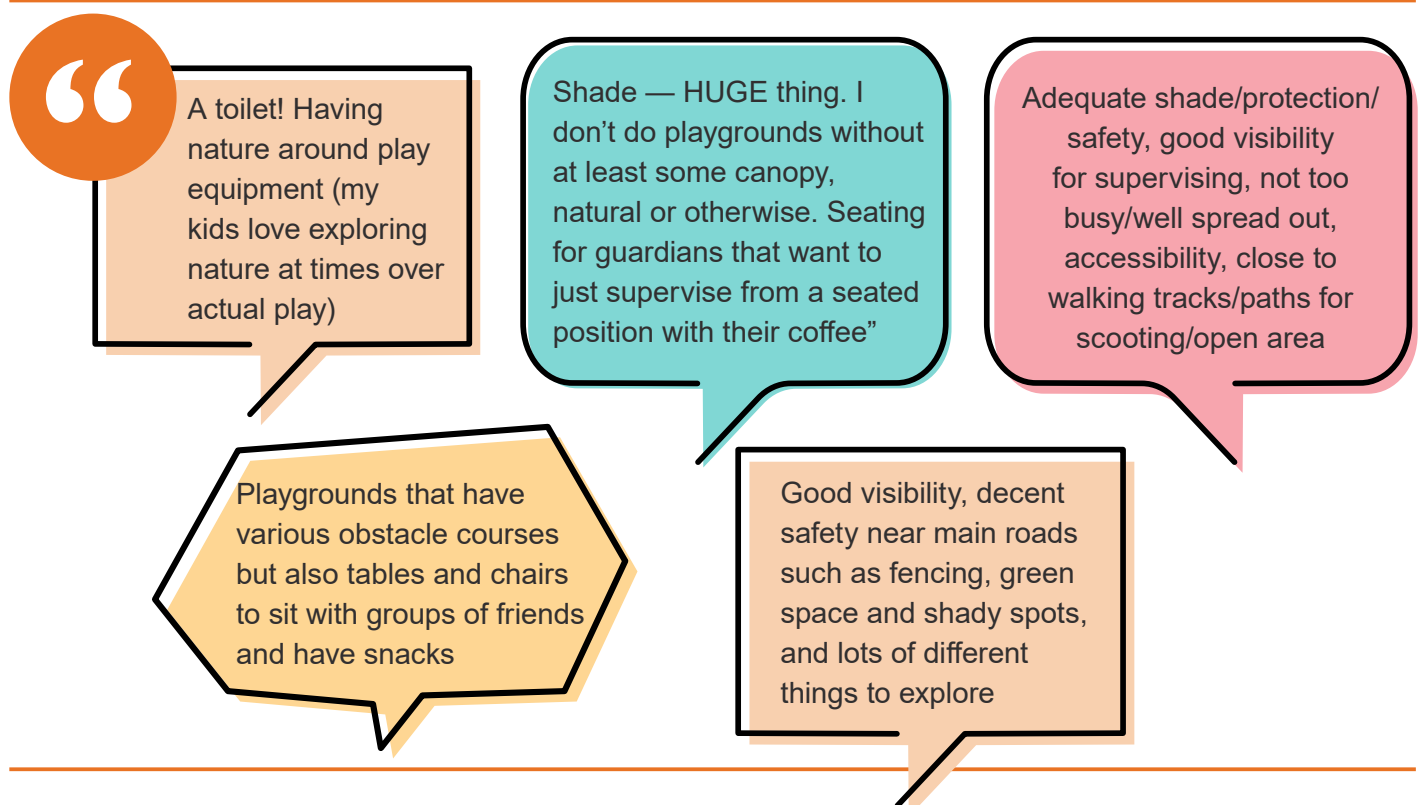
Recognised in the *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* as a frequently used facility that is generally not well provided for in open space. However, Council ensures seating is present next to playgrounds as it is vital for supervisors at the playground and an important factor in facilitating social interaction at the playground. The *Strategy* recognises that seating should:

- be positioned to face activity and paths;
- be in a variety of locations, some in shade and some in the sun;
- have a variety of types including flat bench seats, seats with back rests and some with arm rests to improve all-abilities access; and
- be integrated into open space design, particularly informal seating opportunities.

- **Drink fountains and rubbish bins**

Provided at all municipal, neighbourhood and selected local playgrounds. They are positioned so that they are both accessible for maintenance purposes and convenient for park users, eg. near entry and exit points. Bins are not provided at all local parks and playgrounds as Council encourages park users to take their rubbish with them.

What you told us about supporting infrastructure



Glen Eira Policy Position: supporting infrastructure

- Fencing:** where possible and where it can be demonstrated there is no safety requirement for it, Council will not install fencing around playgrounds, but instead seek other physical barriers.
- Shade:** Council aims to ensure playgrounds have partial shade, preferably natural shade from trees where possible.
- Amenities:** the amenities provided near playgrounds will depend on the open space where the playground is located, typically with larger, more heavily used open space having greater provision of amenities.

PLAY SPACE DESIGN PROCESS AND LIFECYCLE (THE ‘WHERE, WHAT, WHO AND HOW’)

The playground lifecycle, from design to construction and ongoing maintenance involves several sequential steps that are outlined in Figure six (below).

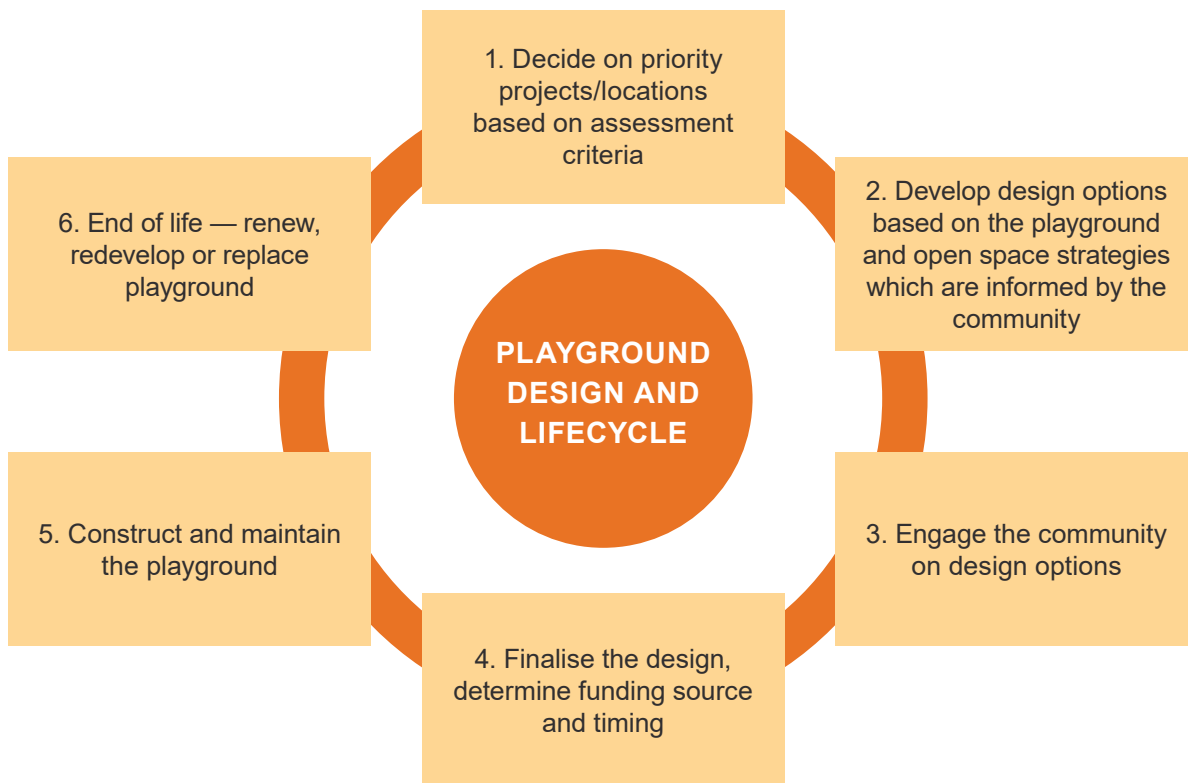


Figure six: the playground lifecycle from design to end of life



Booran Reserve during construction — 2017

STEP ONE: DECIDE ON PRIORITY PROJECTS/LOCATIONS (THE ‘WHERE’)

To determine ‘which playground is next’ for repair, renewal or replacement, Council considers many factors which form the *Playground Upgrade Priority List* (*Appendix three*). This includes:

- **Asset Management Priorities**

Every playground is routinely assessed and audited to determine maintenance and upgrade/replacement requirements, particularly for those nearing the end of their useful life. This data is collected via Council’s Asset Management System and is the main criteria for determining priority playgrounds.

- **Safety and risk management issues**

This is a high priority response item and includes rectifying damaged equipment, replacing raised edges, tripping hazards and older/timber equipment; and tree management. These items will be addressed through routine maintenance programs where appropriate.

- **Accessibility**

How accessible the playground is and whether it provides equitable access for all and integrated opportunities for children with a disability.

- **Geographic gaps in provision**

This includes geographical areas within the municipality that aren’t well serviced from a playground perspective. The *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* identifies the following methods for acquiring additional open space which provides opportunity to create new play experiences where appropriate:

- land contributions as part of a future subdivision of development of land in the City;
- conversion of land owned by Glen Eira from its existing use to open space (ie. a road closure);
- conversion of land owned by another government agency to open space; or
- the purchase of undeveloped land.

- **Gaps in provision of play elements and diversity**

This includes gaps in provision such as age groups, that aren’t well catered for, or lack of diversity in playground elements and types of play opportunities.

- **Level of use, amenity and the playground hierarchy**

Higher priority for renewal and replacement is generally given to municipal and neighbourhood playgrounds on the basis that these playgrounds should draw from a wider catchment and benefit a larger number of people in the community.

- **Available budget and funding opportunities**

Council must consider the budget for playgrounds each financial year in comparison to other competing priorities within public open space. This includes identifying which projects are more likely to attract external funding. Municipal and some neighbourhood playgrounds require extensive pre-planning and significant budgets to achieve the desired outcomes.

- **Other works scheduled at the site**

It may be cost and time efficient to upgrade a playground at the same time as other capital works occurring at the same park or reserve.

STEP TWO: DEVELOP DESIGN OPTIONS (THE ‘WHAT’)

Once the playground location has been identified, the design phase for the play space commences. Concept designs will be prepared, in alignment with the principles and guidelines set out in Glen Eira’s *Open Space Strategy Refresh 2020* and the Play Principles in these *Guidelines*.

The specific playground elements, options and considerations will be informed by the ‘Play Space Design and Management Considerations (the ‘what’)' detailed in section 6 of these *Guidelines*. This includes:

- the playground hierarchy and what the standard of provision for the level of playground being constructed or redeveloped is (including off the shelf and custom-made play elements and amenities);
- types of play (physical, cognitive, social, sensory and emotional);
- diversity of play opportunities (including nature play, water play and opportunity for integration into other active recreation facilities);
- the play space is accessible and inclusive;
- the character and nature of the park in which the playground is to be located;
- the relevant *Australian Playground Safety Standards* (which is reviewed by an external independent auditor during the design phase); and
- community needs and identified gaps areas (including target age, playground types and play opportunities).

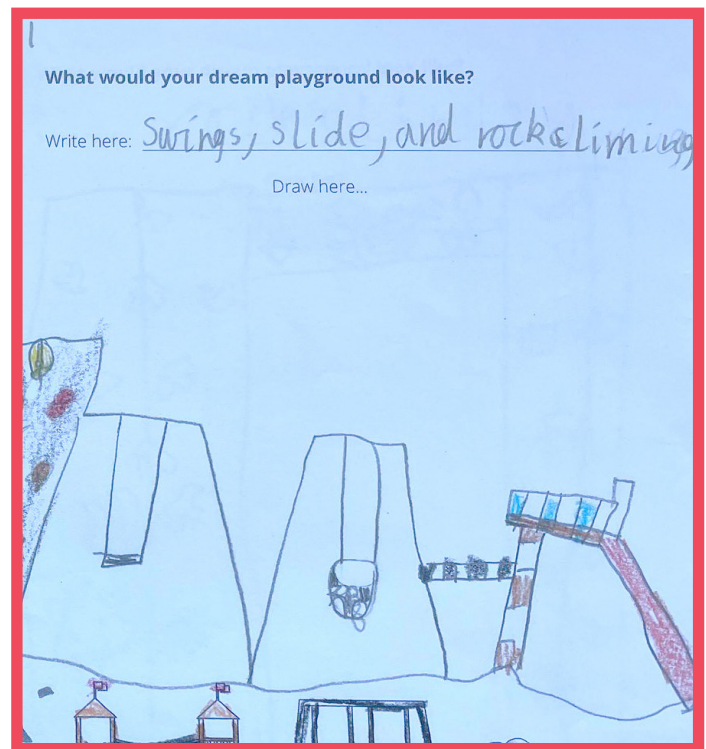
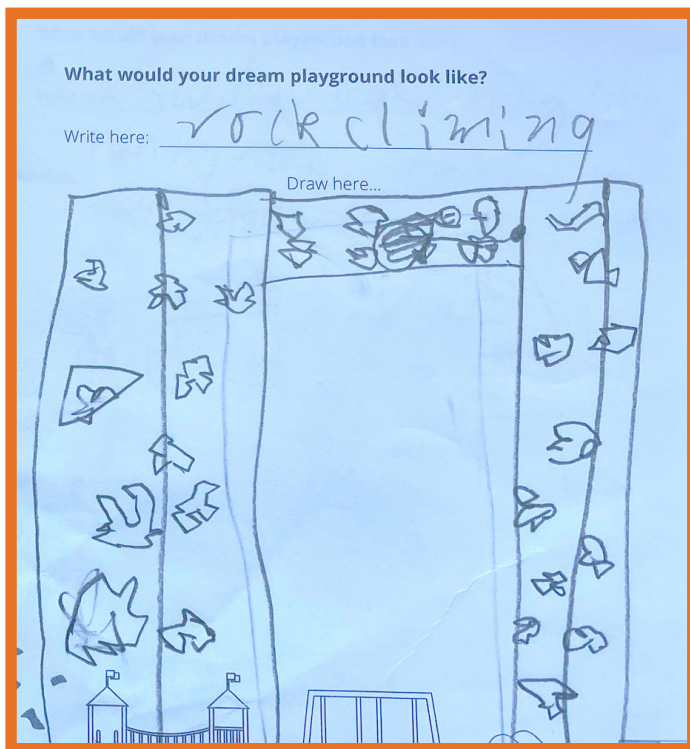
STEP THREE: ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY (THE ‘WHO’)

The process of step two will highlight the negotiables and non-negotiables for the specific playground design. It is then vital to ensure that the local residents and broader community who will be using the playground, now and into the future, have input into the flexible elements of the design and what the play space will offer to them.

The community engagement undertaken for a playground development will depend on the scope and scale of the project. Larger scale projects, particularly municipal and some neighbourhood playgrounds will involve broad community consultation as well as focusing directly on engagement with local residents. In play space design it is important to engage with both the target user and the supervisor — as they are often the decision maker in which playground to take a child to or whether they take a child to a playground at all. This was the intent of the engagement undertaken in preparation of these *Guidelines*.

In addition to engaging with the community, Council will consult with other relevant parties where appropriate, including:

- internally with other Council departments;
- relevant stakeholder groups (eg. kindergartens, play providers, schools); and
- industry experts, such as playground consultants and peak bodies such as Play Australia.



Community engagement examples

STEP FOUR: FINALISE THE DESIGN, DETERMINE FUNDING SOURCE AND TIMING (THE 'HOW')

When finalising the design, Council needs to consider several circumstantial factors, which are vital to the successful delivery of the project. This includes broader Council priorities, funding, timing and the physical location of the playground.

Council priorities

Council priorities are identified through the *Council and Community Plan* as well as the Annual Capital Works Budget. Typically, Council's Budget allows for upgrades to playgrounds to occur on an annual basis. However in recent times, impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic as well as Council's structure planning work and Climate Emergency declaration has changed the priorities for Council. Whilst the priority list contained with *Appendix three* details the priorities for playground upgrades, this is a standalone list that is compared to all other priorities across Council.

Funding sources

Council allocates capital expenditure to playground upgrades and redevelopments as part of the annual budget process. Council also regularly seeks State and Federal Government funding. The opportunities to seek funding can change from year to year depending on the funding categories available: Council's ability to meet the funding criteria; Council's ability to meet the required funding ratios; project readiness requirements; and project priorities. Often the timing of delivering a project is based on the availability of funding.

Location

The location, or proposed location, of a playground can significantly impact the final design. During this phase, great consideration is given to the soil composition and existing trees and plantings; levels of the land and drainage requirements; proximity to roads and neighbouring properties; and any opportunities for expansion or relocation within the broader park.

STEP FIVE: CONSTRUCT AND MAINTAIN (THE ‘HOW’)

The *Good Play Space Guide* (Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2007) refers to playground management with the three M’s — Market, Monitor and Maintain. These three aspects of playground management maximise usage and optimise the lifespan of the play space.

Marketing

Marketing play spaces to potential users is an important first step to managing the asset. The community need to be aware of what opportunities are available to them, through easily accessible information. Details that help users to make informed decisions about the suitability of the play space for their purposes such as a description of the space and its features, location, playground classification and nearby facilities should be included. Additional information such as how to get there, what to bring and how much assistance they may need is also important, particularly for families who are looking for spaces that meet specific needs.

Monitoring

Monitoring a play space involves observing how the space is used and talking to users about what they like and don’t like. This can help identify any items that may need to be modified, or the kinds of activities that are missing and could be added in the future.

Maintaining

Maintaining playgrounds appropriately is important to ensure the community is provided a safe environment to play/supervise and to maximise the life of the playground. The many benefits of a well-maintained playground include:

- quality outdoor spaces for children to play, develop and thrive;
- improved physical and social opportunities for the community;
- greater return on investment for Council; and
- environmental/sustainable outcomes through increasing the time between replacement of playground elements and therefore decreasing the rate of disposal and production of new materials.

Inspections and Maintenance Programs

Depending on the usage of the playgrounds, daily or weekly inspections of playground equipment are undertaken by appropriately qualified Parks personnel. Issues relating to risk will be identified through both Parks inspections and an additional independent annual safety audit. Most of the issues identified will be rectified through routine maintenance (eg. minor maintenance or replacement of equipment that may see a part of the playground closed for a period of time). Larger, non-urgent issues will form parts of the playground repair, renewal and replacement priority criteria.

Safety and Compliance Audit

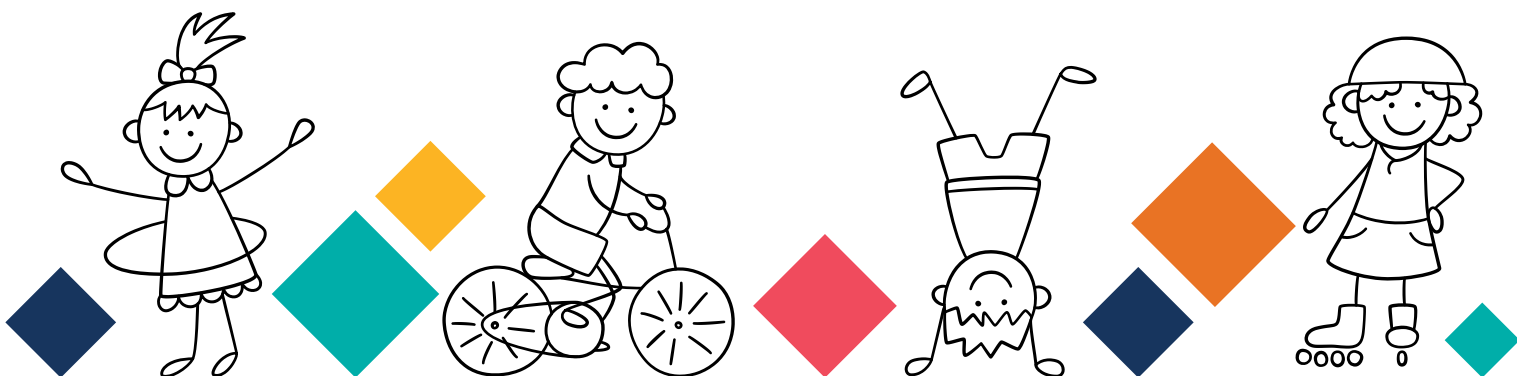
Any playground equipment designed or procured must comply with the relevant Australian Standards. New playgrounds are also audited following their construction, to ensure they are compliant with Australian Standards. They are then regularly inspected and audited annually, by an external expert playground auditor, to ensure they are safe and continue to be maintained in line with Australian Standards. Any identified issues discovered in the inspection and audit processes will be addressed, with priority given to the most urgent safety issues.

STEP SIX: END OF LIFE (WHAT NOW?)

The end-of-life options for playgrounds should consider the waste hierarchy shown in Figure five. Council aims to operate at the top (favourable end) of the hierarchy in the 'reduce' and reuse' areas. The main way Council aims to reduce the amount as waste produced is to maximise the life of playground equipment by choosing quality materials and maintaining the equipment well.

Once the equipment has reached the end of its useful life, or is being removed due to a playground upgrade, Council will investigate several 'reuse' options. This includes:

- playground donations: to not-for-profit organisations such as Rotary Clubs to repurpose;
- reusing equipment in other parks: retaining slides and other playground equipment to replace those that require maintenance; and
- repurposing equipment: in the design phase, considering existing equipment to be used as seating, barriers, artwork, etc. within the new play space.



APPENDIX ONE — LIST OF PLAYGROUNDS

	Park/Reserve	Street	Suburb	Classification	Build year
1	Allnutt Park	Wheatley Road	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	2002
2	Annie and Arthur Abrahams Reserve	Anarth Street	Bentleigh East	Local	2007
3	Bailey Reserve	East Boundary Road	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	2012
4	Booran Reserve	Booran Road	Glenhuntly	Municipal	2017
5	Booran Reserve (waterplay)	Booran Road	Glenhuntly	Municipal	2017
6	Boyd Park/Outer Circle Railway Linear Park	Wilson Street	Murrumbeena	Local	2005
7	Caulfield Park (Sensory Space)	Inkerman Road	Caulfield	Local	2009
8	Caulfield Park (Aviary Gardens)	Balaclava Road	Caulfield	Neighbourhood	2008
9	Caulfield Park	Park Crescent	Caulfield	Municipal	2005
10	Centenary Park	Bignell Road	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	2006
11	Clapperton Street Reserve	Clapperton Street	Bentleigh	Local	2016
12	Clee Street Reserve	Clee Street	McKinnon	Local	2016
13	Colin Street Park	Colin Street	Bentleigh East	Local	2015
14	Dega Avenue Park	Dega Avenue	Bentleigh East	Local	2020
15	Duncan Mackinnon Reserve	Crosbie Road	Murrumbeena	Neighbourhood	2019
16	East Caulfield Reserve	Dudley Street	Caulfield East	Local	2018
17	EE Gunn Reserve	Beatty Crescent	Ormond	Neighbourhood	2016
18	Elsternwick Plaza	Riddell Parade	Elsternwick	Local	2015
19	Garden Avenue Reserve	Garden Avenue	Glenhuntly	Local	2016
20	Gardenvale Park	Gardenia Road	Gardenvale	Local	2019
21	Glen Huntly Park	Neerim Road	Glen Huntly	Local	2004
22	Greenmeadows Gardens	Green Street	St Kilda East	Neighbourhood	2008
23	Haigh/Kershaw Street Reserve	Kershaw Street	Bentleigh East	Local	2011
24	Halley Park	Jasper Road	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	2006

25	Harleston Park	Alison Road	Elsternwick	Municipal	2019
26	Hodgson Reserve	Higgins Road	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	2006
27	Hodgson Reserve (Snakes and Ladders)	Higgins Road	Bentleigh	Local	2020
28	Hopetoun Gardens	Glenhuntly Road	Elsternwick	Neighbourhood	2008
29	Joyce Park	Jasper Road	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	2006
30	Jersey Parade Reserve	Jersey Parade	Carnegie	Local	2006
31	King George VI Memorial Reserve	East Boundary Road	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	2007
32	Koornang Park	Koornang Road	Carnegie	Neighbourhood	2004
33	Leckie Street Reserve	Leckie Street	Bentleigh	Local	2016
34	Mackie Road Reserve	Tudor Street	Bentleigh East	Local	2012
35	Marlborough Street Reserve	Marlborough Street	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	2014
36	McKinnon Reserve	Tucker Road	McKinnon	Municipal	2019
37	Memorial Park	Kooyong Road	Caulfield North	Local	2014
38	Murrumbeena Park	Kangaroo Road	Murrumbeena	Municipal	2013
39	North Avenue Park	North Avenue	Bentleigh	Local	2017
40	Packer Park	Leila Road	Carnegie	Municipal	2000
41	Pell Street Reserve	Pell Street	Bentleigh East	Local	2017
42	Princes Park	Hawthorn Road	Caulfield South	Municipal	2005
43	Rosanna Street Reserve	Rosanna Street	Carnegie	Local	2011
44	Victory Park	Patterson Road	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	2010
45	Virginia Park	East Boundary Road	Bentleigh East	Local	2013
46	Wattle Grove Reserve	Wattle Grove	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	2019
47	Wingate/Brady Streets Reserve	Brady Road	Bentleigh East	Local	2017

APPENDIX TWO — PLAYGROUND DESIGN FEATURES AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Design features	Local	Neighbourhood	Municipal
Traditional Play Features	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bespoke/Custom Play Features	No	Some	Yes
Water Play	No	No	Some
Nature Play	Some	Some	Yes
Accessible Play	Yes	Yes	Yes
Integrated Active Recreation Facilities	No	Some	Yes
Playground Theme	No	Some	Yes

Supporting infrastructure	Local	Neighbourhood	Municipal
Fencing	No	No	No
Shade (preferably natural)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public toilets	No	Some	Yes
Picnic areas (including barbecues and drink fountains)	No	Some	Yes
Picnic shelter	Some	Yes	Yes
Rubbish bins	No	Yes	Yes
Seating	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pathways	Some	Some	Yes
Lighting	No	Some — pathway and carpark only	Pathway and carpark only

APPENDIX THREE — PLAYGROUND UPGRADE PRIORITY LIST

This priority listing has been determined at the time of preparing the *Planning for Play* in September 2021. The priority listing should be read in conjunction with the priority criteria defined in section seven step one.

Proposed Priority Number 2021	Park/Reserve	Suburb	Classification	Comments
1	Princes Park	Caulfield South	Municipal	Construction to commence December 2021
2	Packer Park	Carnegie	Municipal	Design underway 2021
3	Caulfield Park (Sensory space)	Caulfield	Local	An action from the <i>Caulfield Park Masterplan</i> . Sensory space extension being undertaken in 2021/22
4	Rosanna Street Reserve	Carnegie	Local	Upgrade underway in 2021, including addition of nature play and improved social spaces
5	Boyd Park/Outer Circle Railway Linear Park	Murrumbeena	Local	An action from the <i>Outer Circle Railway Land Management Plan</i> Design underway 2021
6	Mackie Road Reserve	Bentleigh East	Local	Timing will be reliant on the development of the <i>Mackie Road Reserve Masterplan</i>
7	Koornang Park	Carnegie	Neighbourhood	An action from the <i>Lord Reserve Koornang Park Masterplan</i>
8	Glen Huntly Park	Glen Huntly	Local	Feasibility to be undertaken given close proximity to Booran Reserve
9	Centenary Park	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	Design underway in 2021 for future implementation
10	Allnutt Park	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	
11	Victory Park	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	
12	Halley Park	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	
13	Caulfield Park (Park Crescent)	Caulfield	Municipal	An action from the <i>Caulfield Park Masterplan</i>
14	Joyce Park	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	
15	Hodgson Reserve	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	

16	Jersey Parade Reserve	Carnegie	Local	
17	King George VI Memorial Reserve	Bentleigh	Neighbourhood	
18	Annie & Arthur Abrahams Reserve	Bentleigh East	Local	
19	Caulfield Park (Aviary Gardens)	Caulfield	Neighbourhood	An action from the <i>Caulfield Park Masterplan</i>
20	Greenmeadows Gardens	St Kilda East	Neighbourhood	
21	Hopetoun Gardens	Elsternwick	Neighbourhood	An action from the <i>Hopetoun Gardens Masterplan</i>
22	Haigh/Kershaw Street Reserve	Bentleigh East	Local	
23	Virginia Park	Bentleigh East	Local	
24	Marlborough St Reserve	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	Redevelopment following development of East Village
25	Bailey Reserve	Bentleigh East	Neighbourhood	
26	Murrumbeena Park	Murrumbeena	Municipal	
27	Memorial Park	Caulfield Nth	Local	
28	Elsternwick Plaza	Elsternwick	Local	
29	Colin Street Park	Bentleigh East	Local	
30	EE Gunn Reserve	Ormond	Neighbourhood	
31	Garden Avenue Reserve	Glenhuntly	Local	
32	Leckie Street Reserve	Bentleigh	Local	
33	Clapperton Street Reserve	Bentleigh	Local	
34	Clee Street Reserve	McKinnon	Local	
35	North Avenue Park	Bentleigh	Local	
36	Booran Reserve	Glenhuntly	Municipal	

37	Booran Reserve (waterplay)	Glenhuntly	Municipal	
38	Wingate/Brady Streets Reserve	Bentleigh East	Local	
39	Pell Street Reserve	Bentleigh East	Local	
40	East Caulfield Reserve	Caulfield East	Local	
41	Gardenvale Park	Gardenvale	Local	
42	Duncan Mackinnon Reserve	Murrumbeena	Neighbourhood	
43	Wattle Grove Reserve	McKinnon	Neighbourhood	
44	Harleston Park	Elsternwick	Municipal	
45	McKinnon Reserve	McKinnon	Municipal	
46	Hodgson Reserve (Snakes and Ladders)	Bentleigh	Local	
47	Dega Avenue Park	Bentleigh East	Local	



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