



Places for Play - Play Space Strategy

VOLUME 1: PLAY STRATEGY

DECEMBER 2023

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ABOUT THE PLACES FOR PLAY SPACE STRATEGY

This document is Volume 1.
Play Space Strategy

Other volumes include:

- Volume 2. Demand Analysis, -including analysis of demographic data, Council plans, and the Community and Stakeholder engagement process, and
- Volume 3. Play Space Assessments, comprising the play space assessments for each site in the Shire, by locality.

A separate report - Splash Park Feasibility- was also prepared in conjunction with this Strategy.

This Volume

This volume contains:

- a summary of quality and distribution issues in the Shire,
- strategic recommendations for planning, design and management of play spaces, ;
- principles and service standards,
- Recommendations by reserve, and
- design guidelines for play spaces.

Authors

The **Places for Play - Play Space Strategy** has been prepared for Central Goldfields Shire Council by:

- Jeavons Landscape Architects and
- @leisure Planners.

Acknowledgements

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- Carmel Pethick - Coordinator Recreation and Sport
- David Leathem - Manager Community Partnerships
- The project steering committee
- Residents who completed the survey.

The Dja Dja Wurrung People live in the area now known as Central Goldfields Shire Council. Council pays respect to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

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by Sport and Recreation Victoria.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

To meet the changing needs of the community, both now and into the future, the Central Goldfields Shire has commissioned this Places for Play- Play Space Strategy.

The overall goal of the project is to ensure that play spaces and parks will be enjoyed by families, carers, children and young people of all cultures, identities, and abilities.

The Shire has 22 Play spaces., distributed over eight localities. Maryborough, Carisbrook, and Dunolly are the main population centres.

Strategy Objective

1. Establish a clear vision and principles for play provision across Central Goldfields Shire.
2. Provide an overarching framework and strategic direction to guide the forward planning, delivery, and management of play spaces the Shire for the next ten years.
3. Inform Council's capital budget allocations and asset management processes.
4. Provide guidance on best practice design, in order to maximise value to the community from the Shire's investment in play.

Approach

This report is a very comprehensive document that aims to cover every aspect of play provision in the Goldfields Shire. The sections outlined below were undertaken meet the Shire's objectives for this project.

Background Research and Demographics

The first steps involved reviewing relevant in-house Council documents, strategies and Council plans. An up-to-date park inventory with site addresses was also completed.

The authors reviewed the 2021 Census data and investigated the implications for the Shire, in terms of play space demand. Data for Goldfields (refer Volume 2) reveals an ageing community (except for 0–5-year-olds), a high level of social disadvantage, and relatively high levels of disability and ill health. Free outdoor facilities that stimulate healthy activity assume more importance when viewed in this context.

Community Engagement

326 survey responses were received from the community engagement process. This is the largest response to such a survey received by the Shire, demonstrating the importance placed on play spaces by residents. Volume 2 summarises the responses which provided valuable insight into usage patterns and preferences.

Site assessments

The authors inspected every play space and provided detailed recommendations for each. Volume 3 contains these detailed assessments. They reveal a diverse offering across the Shire, with some high-quality sites and many that need improvements.

Review of play space distribution

The study reviewed access to play spaces within walking distance from homes in urban areas, especially in Maryborough, and revealed large areas where residents do not have access to a play space within a conservative 500m from home. A key recommendation was to add at least one new play space, possibly at Jack Pascoe Reserve, in addition to improvements in the quality of many other local spaces.

In rural localities it was concluded that investment in one higher quality play space per locality is the preferred way to service rural communities.

Planning strategy- tools

The Strategy section introduces tools to address these wide-ranging issues. It includes sections on planning and design processes, management, asset planning, and core principles for play space provision.

It also includes an important tool for classifying play spaces which in turn facilitates the setting of standards for how council should approach planning, designing and managing the different levels in the catchment hierarchy.

Classification

The study recommends classifying each play space into either **Local** (also often referred to as neighbourhood) **District** or **Regional**, depending upon the distances people travel to visit them.

Service Standards

These are management tools that guide Council on all aspect of providing facilities at each level in the classification. For example- where BBQ's should be provided; which sites require higher levels of access for people with disabilities, and where car parking is required. These Standards help manage community expectations.

Actions and Site recommendations

A set of Shire-wide action is followed by site-by-site recommendations and priorities.

General design guidelines

The Appendix to Volume 1 contains guidelines for 10 design characteristics that deliver better play value to the community.

Findings

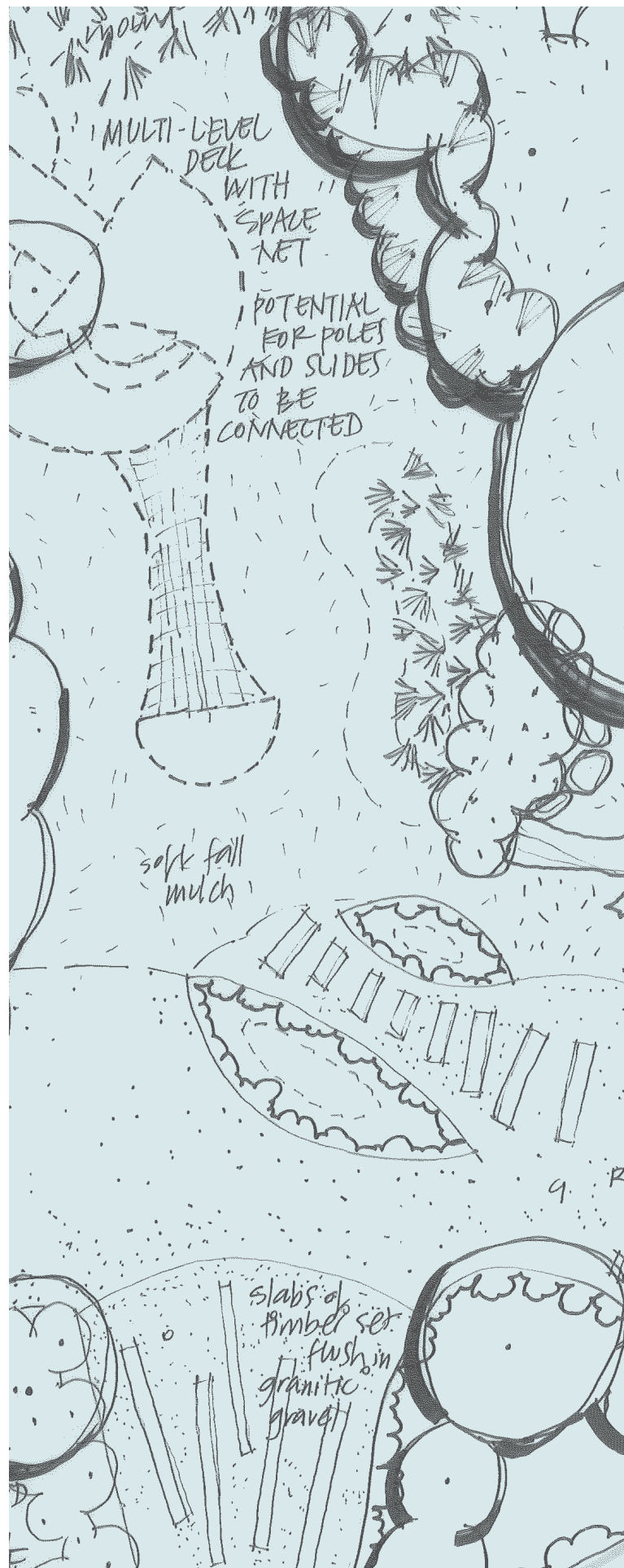
Following this research, it is recommended that Council embed the actions contained in this report in its asset management planning to ensure Council can adequately provide for this resource that is clearly valued by the community.

It has been recommended that Council adopts a multi-disciplinary approach internally to decision making and management of playspaces, with input from all relevant council departments.

There needs to be a change in the way Council approaches the design of both parks and play spaces. More emphasis needs to be placed upon natural elements especially trees and planting, as well as amenities and equipment that can be used by a broader range of ages and abilities.

The Strategy recommends major improvements to access and inclusion for people living with disability, particularly the provision of paths and accessible social amenities (furniture, shelters etc.)

This document recognises that play, inclusion, social interaction, diversity, and the natural environment are important to all people.



Introduction



INTRODUCTION

THIS PLACES FOR PLAY SPACE STRATEGY

This Play Space Strategy is a Shire-wide approach to play provision for the diverse communities of the Central Goldfields Shire (CGS).

This strategy will help to ensure that the Shire's play spaces continue to meet the changing needs of the community both now and into the future, and are enjoyed by families, carers, children and young people of all cultures, identities and abilities.

The strategy takes into account the input provided by members of the community and key stakeholders, as well as the community goals, changing demographics and available resources within the Shire.

Through the provision of a strategic planning framework and implementation plan, this report aims to assist the Shire to deliver benefits to the community via quality outdoor play and recreation opportunities.

Splash park/water play area

At the same time as the Play Space Strategy, the Shire has also commissioned a feasibility study for a potential Splash Park/Water Play Area.

Vision

Plan for the provision and maintenance of an equitable, inclusive, diverse, safe and engaging mix of play opportunities across this regional municipality.

"Council's Community Vision Statement:

In 2031 we are an inspiring thriving and prosperous community of choice.

We have taken bold steps towards growing our economy and our communities full of optimism and opportunities. We are kind, connected and inclusive and we nurture creativity leadership and innovation.

We value and invest in our young people and our health and well-being is high we live sustainably cherish and protect our environment and heritage and we have access to outstanding jobs education health community services infrastructure and affordable housing."

Philosophy and Values

This document is underpinned by the importance of play, inclusion, social interaction, diversity, and the natural environment to all people.

Play has a significant role in in child development and learning.

Play spaces can contribute to children's physical development and to their curiosity, creativity, cognitive, and sensory experiences.

Play spaces can help children build social and interpersonal skills, confidence and mastery.

A play space is more than just play equipment. The equipment may be of less importance than an amenable place to visit, meet friends, neighbours and others and interact socially in a place designed for that purpose.

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy and values cont.

Play spaces must be safe, welcoming, and inclusive of all community members.

Playspaces should contain trees and natural elements. Contact with nature is beneficial to all humans. Natural elements provide visual appeal, character, amenity value and play value.

Parks designed well for play are an investment in the community.

Objectives

This document is underpinned by the importance of play. The objectives of this strategy are to:

1. Establish a clear vision and principles for play provision across Central Goldfields Shire.
2. Provide an overarching framework and strategic direction to guide the forward planning, delivery, and management of play spaces the Shire for the next ten years.
3. Inform Council's capital budget allocations and asset management processes.
4. Provide guidance on best practice design, in order to maximise value to the community from the Shire's investment in play.

The strategy aims to achieve these objectives by providing:

- a clear set of planning and design principles,
- a planning framework and hierarchy for playspaces,
- service standards,
- Shire-wide actions and an implementation plan, and
- a set of design guidelines for play spaces.

Project Scope - What is a play space?

For the purposes of this Strategy, play spaces are outdoor areas within parks (owned or managed by Council) whose primary function is for play. This strategy also encompasses play spaces found in parks that have other primary functions, such as sport.

The terms 'Play space' and 'Playground' have been used interchangeably.

Both terms mean outdoor space and facilities provided by the Shire, for the purpose of children's play, that require the duty of care and management regimes as required under the following Australian Standards.

- AS 4685.0:2017 – Playground equipment and surfacing – development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation
- AS 4685.1-6 – 2021 (6 parts) – Playground equipment – General safety requirements and test methods + Additional specific requirements for swings; slides; runways; carousels; rocking equipment
- AS 4685.11:2012 – Playground equipment – Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial networks
- AS 4422:2016 – Playground surfacing – Specifications, requirements and test methods.

Play spaces are typically located in reserves with or including vegetation and amenities such as paths, shade and shelters, BBQ's and furniture. Reserves may include other types of facilities such as hard courts, skate and BMX tracks and fitness equipment. Typically, all of these are considered when discussing the range of opportunities available within the park.

This strategy focuses on Council- owned or managed spaces, but other relevant play spaces (especially schools) have been taken into account as a complement to public facilities.

This strategy does not include Council owned early childhood centres or indoor play settings.

INTRODUCTION

Methodology

Jeavons and @leisure planners carried out the following tasks for this project.

- Initiated the project, meeting key stakeholders, orientation.
- Reviewed Council, State government and other policies and legislation.
- Prepared an up-to-date inventory of each park for play.
- Reviewed safety audit information.
- Visited and reported on every play space in the Shire.
- Analysed demographic data for the Shire.
- Reviewed the overall distribution of play spaces across the whole municipality.
- Prepared maps showing the distribution of play spaces across the Shire, and identified gaps in play space distribution in Maryborough.
- In conjunction with council officers, prepared an on-line community engagement survey that was conducted across the municipality (received back 326 responses, which is the largest response to such a survey received by the Shire).
- Conducted informal phone interviews with key stakeholders.
- Analysed the community engagement data.
- Prepared a report on every play space in the Shire, with some preliminary sketch plans (Volume 3).
- Prepared a play space Strategy (this Volume1).
- Summarised the demographic data and the community engagement process and outcomes (Volume 2).
- Considered the outcomes of the Splash Park feasibility report and its implications for this Strategy document.



Background Research & Overview

This section presents a high-level overview of the documents and data reviewed during this process. It summarises:

- relevant Council plans and policies,
- legislation,
- demand data sourced from the 2021 Census, and
- key points from the community engagement process.

This section then discusses and analyses the distribution of play spaces in CGSC, with maps identifying location and gaps in distribution.

COUNCIL POLICIES & PLANS

The following table outlines the top tier plans informing this Strategy, and the focus areas of each:

	Policy Title	Relevant contents
	Council Plan 2021-2025	<p>There are two key objectives (objectives 1 and 3) that are relevant to play:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our community's well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially connected, creative, inclusive, healthy safe, all ages, friendly communities. • Everyone is valued and belongs and has every chance to grow prosper and thrive. • The culture of our first nations people is visible, and reconciliation is something we all participate in. 3. Place and Spaces- sustainable living and green spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commitment to climate action and less waste • protection and preservation of heritage • Engaging places in spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.
	Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2020-29	<p>This Plan is the main driver of the Play space Strategy. Goal: Active places and spaces.</p> <p>Key priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well planned, fit for purpose facilities and spaces, • Improve facilities at major multi use locations, • Renew and replace multi-use and shared use facilities, • Consolidate, re-purpose and rationalise low use facilities places and spaces.
	Every Child Every Chance Strategic Outcomes Framework	<p>There are two top level indicators relevant to the provision and improvement of play spaces in Central Goldfields:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Goldfields children thrive in their physical, emotional, social, cognitive and communication early developmental domains, • Central Goldfields is a child and family friendly municipality.
	Municipal Health and Well-being Plan 2021-25	<p>Priorities directly related to this strategy include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for social change • Build supporting environments • Prioritise education and employment • Foster social inclusion and diversity • Connect services with people. • These will have a positive impact on health. • A community free from violence • A socially and emotionally well community • A community with access to healthy food and drinks • A community that prioritises active living, and • A community tackling climate change and responding to public health emergencies.

THE RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020-2029

The preparation of a Play Space Strategy was one of the major recommendations that came out of the ROSP 2020-2029.

The Plan identified that around 21% of residents used play spaces and a number of issues were highlighted through the development of the Plan.

Key issues related to Play identified in the Open Space Plan

Key issues raised by the community included the following:

PLAY

- Playgrounds are not fenced,
- Equipment is poor quality / condition and often not compliant,
- Lack of nature play and sensory play elements,
- Lack of provision for multi-ages,
- Lack of access and inclusion in play spaces.

POOLS

Outdoor pools

- Ageing; not enough shade.

Maryborough Outdoor Swimming Pool

- Heritage listing impacts on upgrades and costs,
- No fun elements (e.g. diving boards, water play),
- Limited operating hours,

MSLC –

- Needs upgrades to group fitness and amenities,
- More family and accessible change rooms and changing places; warm water program pool; more water play; pool deck (non-slip).

Outdoor pools

- More shade; amenities upgrades (Dunolly and Maryborough); fun elements (e.g. replace 20m pool with splash pad and water play at Maryborough).

Note - Background information only. This strategy does not extend to recommendations for pool infrastructure.

GENERAL

Need for:

Sustainability - managing climate change impacts; access to water; heat. Shade- at outdoor pools, along streets, playgrounds, mature trees.

Multi-use and joint use facilities, sharing of facilities; partnerships with schools for use of ovals, play spaces, stadiums, etc.

The relevant strategic directions are provided in the table following.

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FROM RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020-2029

Priority - lifelong physical activity participation - 'More people, more active, more often'

Increase participation by young people

- Investigate program initiatives, with local health services, to assist young people with obesity to increase their physical activity.
- Develop a program, with young people, of non-traditional, non-structured informal sport and active recreation activities.
- Facilitate specific events and programs for young people at:
 - new skate and scooter park.
 - proposed splash park/water play.
- Develop leadership opportunities for young people

Priority - Maximising useage of facilities and space

Implement a play space improvement program

- Undertake a play space inventory review and utilise Capital Works Assessment Matrix to determine need for facility improvements.
- Utilise results to develop a Play Space Strategy and include priority projects (renewal and new) in Council's Capital Works Budget; seek funding according to prioritisation using Capital Works Assessment Matrix.

Improvements to lakes, reserves and playing Fields

- Continue to improve Phillips Gardens, Maryborough and its internal path network to cater for residents and visitors of all abilities.
- Seek funding to implement priority works in Gordon Gardens, Dunolly masterplan.
- Complete nature-based play space at Goldfields Reservoir.

Priority - Planning and feasibility for development

Plan and develop free water play options

- Undertake a feasibility study for a "free access" splash park/water play area in Maryborough.
- Seek funding to implement.

Continue planning to make the Princes Park Complex, the premier sport, recreation and open space facility

- Develop a comprehensive master plan for the entire complex to include consideration of feasibility for:
 - Expansion of Adventure Playground.
 - Inclusion of more adult play equipment.
 - Age friendly and older adult's' physical activity components.
 - Potential splash park/water play.
 - Linking paths including Burn Street multi-use path.
- Seek funding for detailed design and plans consistent with project priority identified using Capital Works Assessment Matrix.
- Implement projects when funded.

LEGISLATION AND STATE GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Legislation and State government policies drive the need to provide play opportunities that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive. These are outlined below.



Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (which Australia is a signatory to), identifies the fundamental right of children to play and recreation and participate fully in cultural life.



The Child Safe Standards were introduced in [Victorian Child Safety and Wellbeing Act 2005](#) and are mandatory for all organisations that provide services or facilities for children in Victoria. Compliance with the Standards is regulated by the Commission for Children and Young People



The Victoria's Equal Opportunity Act 2010, aims to eliminate discrimination based on parental status, employment and industrial activity, marital status, physical features, political belief or activity, religious belief or activity, pregnancy and breastfeeding etc.



The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 requires local governments to develop a municipal public health and wellbeing plan every four years to outline how they will protect, improve, and promote public health and wellbeing.



The Public Health and Well-being Regulations 2019 implement the Act as well as provide guidance on public aquatic facilities to protect vulnerable groups such as young children, the elderly and people with low immunity from microorganisms (pathogens) that are passed on through contaminated pool water, contaminated surfaces or person-to-person contact. a swimming pool, spa pool or interactive water feature used by members of the public, whether free of charge or on payment of a fee must comply with the Water quality guidelines for public aquatic facilities – managing public health risks (the Water Quality Guidelines): **See Appendix 1.**



Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020 requires public entities to identify and eliminate causes of gender inequality in the development and delivery of policy, programs and services. The Act requires Councils to undertake gender impact assessments on these activities.



The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities sets out 20 rights that promote and protect freedom, respect, equality, and dignity. The Charter requires public entities and people delivering services on their behalf abide by the human rights in the Charter

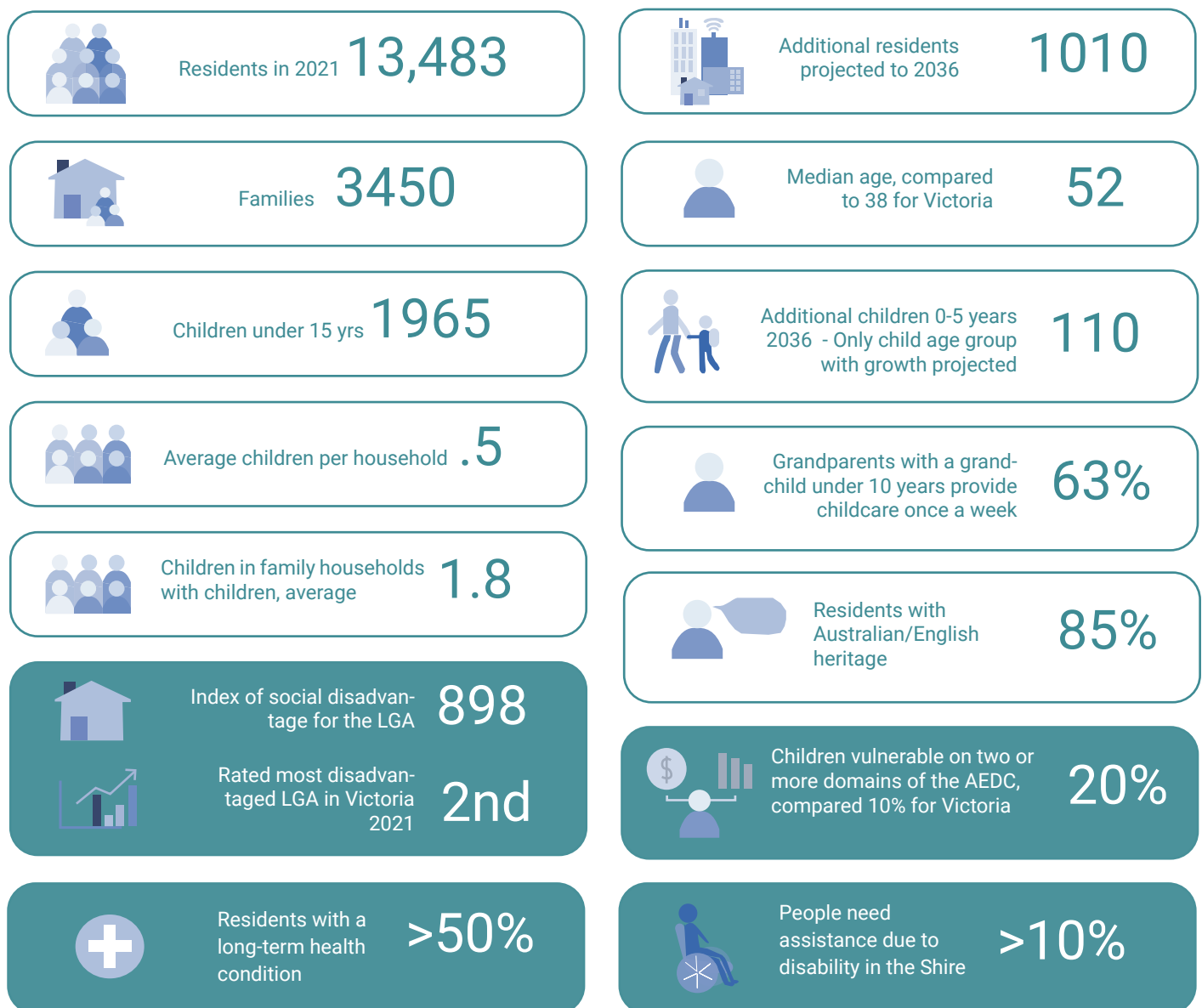
DEMAND SNAPSHOT

The section below is a brief summary of Demand information collected for this project. This is analysed in more detail in Volume 2.

Demographic influences, and implications for play

Demographic influences such as age, gender, cultural background, social disadvantage and disability are likely to influence a child's access to play opportunities, and development potential.

The diagram below shows key relevant characteristics of the Central Goldfields population.



DEMAND SNAPSHOT

Summary

2021 Census Data

The 2021 census revealed that the total population of Central Goldfields Shire was 13,483, including 3540 families. The proportion of children in all age groups is lower in Central Goldfields than in Victoria as a whole.

Over 10 % of people need assistance due to disability in the Shire, compared to 5.9% for Victoria. This figure is higher for Maryborough (11.2%).

More than 50% have a long-term health condition, compared to Victoria as whole (39%).

Forecasts

The population is likely to grow by 1000 residents to 2036 and the population is aging.

The only age group of children predicted to grow is the 0-4 age group, with 110 children. All the other groups up to 19 years show a potential overall decline, with 340 fewer children.

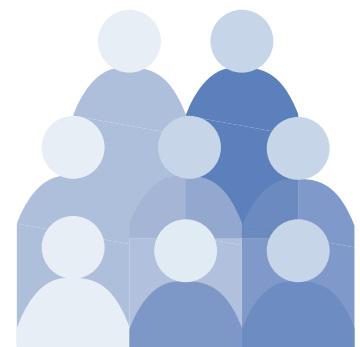
Other indicators

The index of social disadvantage show Central Goldfields is ranked second in Victoria for disadvantage. The Australian Early Development Census also shows that children in Central Goldfields are "most vulnerable" (on the scale of most to least vulnerable).

More Detail

Note that more information on the Shire's demographic profile is included in Volume 2.

The age structure and population profile of each locality is also described in Volume 3, in conjunction with the assessments of play spaces.



DEMAND SNAPSHOT

Play spaces are highly valued by the population.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PLAY SPACES

Children are becoming more dependent on a parent or caregiver taking them out to play, rather than moving around their neighbourhood independently. Many reasons underlie this trend, including parental fears, safety concerns due to traffic, and a lack of safe paths and bike routes.

With increased housing density in towns, children in urban areas do not always have back yards and have fewer opportunities to play outdoors at home with small yards or balconies.

At present most children or families with a disability are excluded from using play spaces in Central Goldfields due to their design.

The quality and play value of play spaces can contribute significantly to the development potential of children.

In terms of the social context of Central Goldfields Shire:

1. High quality play spaces are most important in the areas of highest disadvantage.
2. Play spaces need to be made safe, welcoming, and inclusive of people of all ages and abilities.
3. Play spaces provide an important location for family and community gatherings.
4. Families need affordable places to socialise and play close to home.
5. Children may have fewer opportunities if their caregivers are unable to assist them to play, or transport them to play spaces.
6. Many grandparents and older caregivers look after children. Play spaces need to be appealing and accessible to older adults.

In terms of the design of parks and play spaces, the health and age profile of the Shire highlights the increasing importance of:

- providing inclusive, multi-purpose opportunities for all age groups within any one space,
- designing in opportunities for older adults themselves, as well as opportunities for them to interact with children, and
- conscious provision for physical, social and environmental activities in play spaces and parks.

The distribution and demographic profile of the Shire makes the provision of play challenging and affects Council's ability to keep facilities well maintained.



DEMAND SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - A SNAPSHOT

Process

The engagement process involved the following:

- A community survey was conducted and received over 300 responses.
- A 'your-say' page was established to provide information and for residents to contribute their ideas and information about play in Central Goldfields.
- A poster was used to draw people to online opportunities and to promote the survey.
- A reference group provided advice and direction to the project as well as feedback at key stages.
- Telephone interviews were conducted with key stakeholders.
- Other social media outlets and commentary about Play and splash parks in Central Goldfields were reviewed.
- Opportunities to view the draft documentation and provide further feedback was provided at the conclusion of this project.

Results of the community survey

Over 326 residents completed a survey:

- 68% of respondents live in Maryborough
- 11% live in Carisbrook

22% live outside these two towns.

KEY FINDINGS

- 48% of respondents have a child aged 0-4, and 47% have a child aged 5-9.
- 22% have a family member with a disability.
- 56% use a play space at least once a week.
- Only 11% live within 500m of the main play space they use.
- 64% travel to the play space by car.
- Over 70% travel more than 1km to use a play space.
- As distance from the play space increases, the likelihood of using a car to get there also increases.

WATER PLAY

- 97% would use a water play facility.
- Over 50% of those who would use a water play facility would travel more than 10km.
- 86% prefer the paved spray pad style rather than natural.
- 92% think a water play area is a higher priority than other park types
- 83% of respondents that use the Maryborough Leisure Centre, go once a week or more.

PREFERRED MAIN PLAY SPACE USED

- Station Domain Playground in Maryborough is the most used play space, and more people travel over 1 km to use this space than for other parks.
- Princes Park East and the Maryborough Caravan Park (possibly wrongly identified) were the next most well used.

The key reasons people use their preferred main play space include:

- The facilities (playground equipment as well as other items such as BBQ's),
- Location, and
- Safety (predominantly fencing).
- Almost half of the respondents who use Station Domain as their main play space mentioned that safety was a particularly important feature.
- The facilities at Station Domain Play Space, including the shade/shelter were also a key reason for using that playground.

DEMAND SNAPSHOT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - A SNAPSHOT

IMPROVEMENTS TO MAIN PLAY SPACE

Overall, when asked what improvement people would like to see in their preferred main play space, their responses included:

- 50% asked for more play equipment.
- 16% were non-specific about the items, with some suggesting generic "items for younger kids" or "older kids".
- The most common additional play item mentioned was water play (27%).
- No other specific item was mentioned more than 2% of the time.
- Water play was mentioned in relation to the 3 most used playgrounds: Station Domain, Princes Park East and the Maryborough Caravan Park
- 8% of respondents suggested Shade/Shelter was required.

IMPROVEMENTS

When asked about improvements to their closest play space:

- 70% asked for more play equipment, with 29% non-specific about the items.
- The most common additional play item mentioned was water play (25%).
- Other specific items mentioned include swings and a hard court.
- Another 13% of respondents called for updates to the play equipment.
- 21% of respondents suggested shade/shelter.
- 15% asked for fencing.
- 13 didn't specify what improvements they wanted, and 13 others said, "no change".

Lack of shade/shelter, fencing, seating and tables were all more commonly referred to in relation to the closest play space, compared to the main play space, suggesting that these items were reasons people didn't use their closest play space and instead went elsewhere.

Volume 2 Describes demand and survey results in detail.

DEMAND SNAPSHOT

TRENDS AND INFLUENCES ON PUBLIC SPACES



Planning 20 minute neighbourhoods

Distribution is important. Distance or lack of walkability mean some communities may be dependent on just one play space to meet every day play needs



An aging population and more grandparents caring for children

Spaces need to be more accessible and include older people. But child development is the focus.



Increased urbanisation, smaller households and smaller house blocks

Without private yards, families require public spaces to provide replacement play opportunities including trees and natural places, close to home.



LGA Asset management requirements

There needs to be a greater focus on service and provision standards to drive equity, ensure parks are fit-for-purpose as well as for asset management and budgeting.



More reliance on public space and adults taking children to places to play

Spaces need to be an affordable, attractive, option for social gatherings for the whole family – and offer physical and environmental activities for all.



Society values play and well-being more

There is more focus on making urban areas child friendly, designing parks for play and residential subdivision to deliver greater play value than simply installing play equipment.



More wheeled devices

Increased need to cater to bikes, wheeled toys and mobility devices in parks mean path networks more important in play spaces.



Responsive to heritage

Goldfields have play spaces in some significant places due to the gold rush. Places to play need to be respond to these and Indigenous heritage.



Inclusive not separate spaces

All play spaces can be made inclusive of people with a disability and all genders, with good design. Separate “all abilities” spaces are not required, rather codesign and more attention to fine grain play experiences, careful selection of items and their placement and relationships between elements.

DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING PLAY SPACES

This section deals with the issue of distribution of play spaces across the whole municipality, as well as in more detail within the larger urban area of Maryborough. It:

- includes location maps,
- discusses the concept of walkability within residential catchments and basic principles for play space distribution, and
- identifies gaps in play space distribution in Maryborough.

Location of play spaces in Central Goldfields Shire

The Central Goldfields Shire has 22 play spaces distributed over eight localities. The three localities that are the main population centres are:

- Maryborough with eleven play spaces,
- Carisbrook with four play spaces, and
- Dunolly, with two play spaces.

The following localities have one play space each:

- Bealiba
- Bowenvale/Timor
- Majorca
- Daisy Hill
- Talbot

The following maps show the distribution of play spaces across the Shire.

Map 1. Location of existing play spaces across Central Goldfields Shire

Map 2. Play spaces in Maryborough and Carisbrook.

Schools

Bealiba, Timor, Talbot, Maryborough, Carisbrook, and Dunolly also have schools which provide play opportunities during school hours. These do not form part of this project but are mentioned for reference where appropriate.

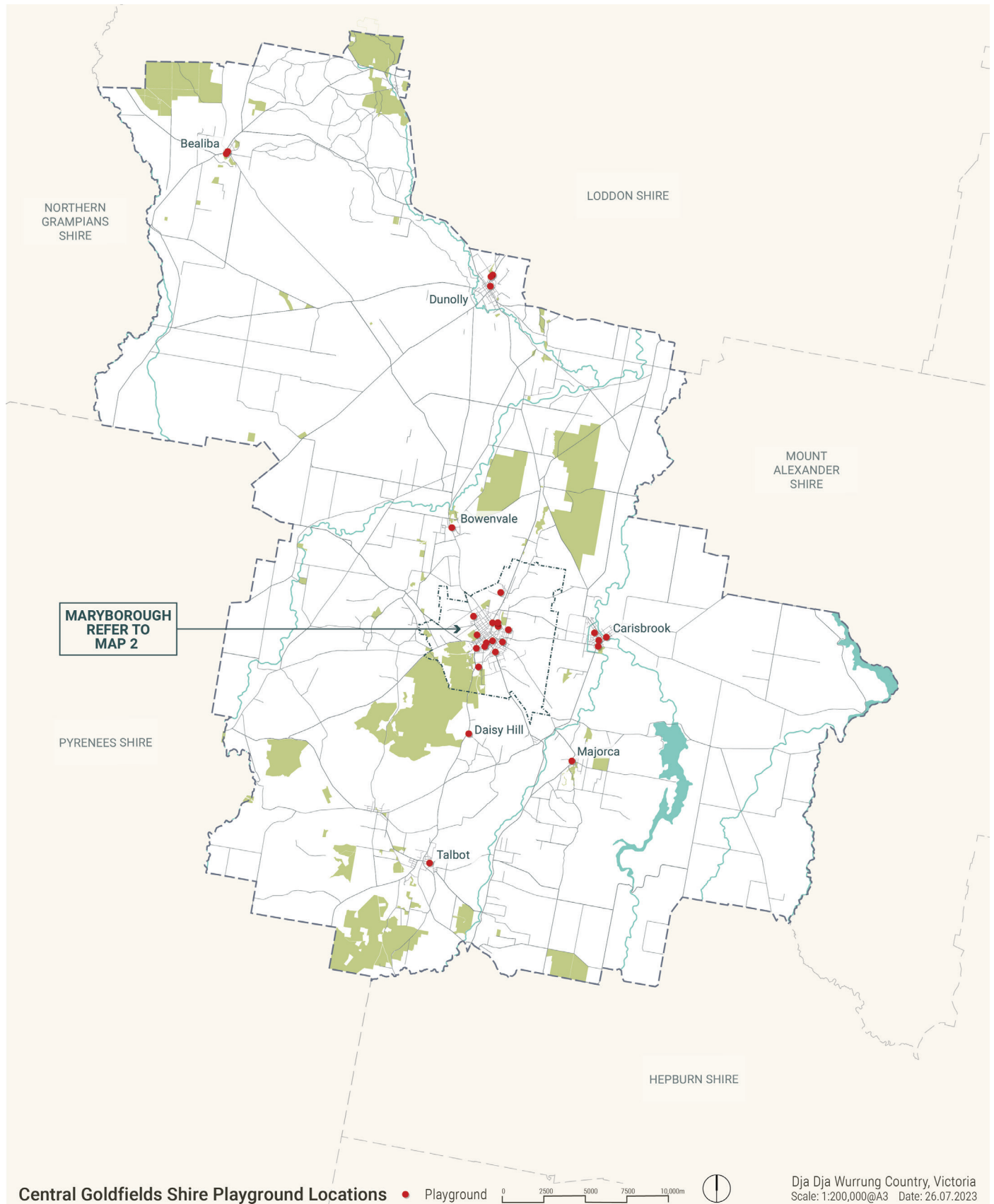
Recreation Reserves

- There are a number of towns which also have play spaces at recreational reserves. These need to be considered as complimentary to town 'play spaces' as they serve an additional purpose by offering amenities that encourage mothers to participate in sport and/or volunteer at the adjoining recreation reserve.
- Access to play spaces at recreation reserves aligns with Council's Fair Access Policy and should be encouraged.

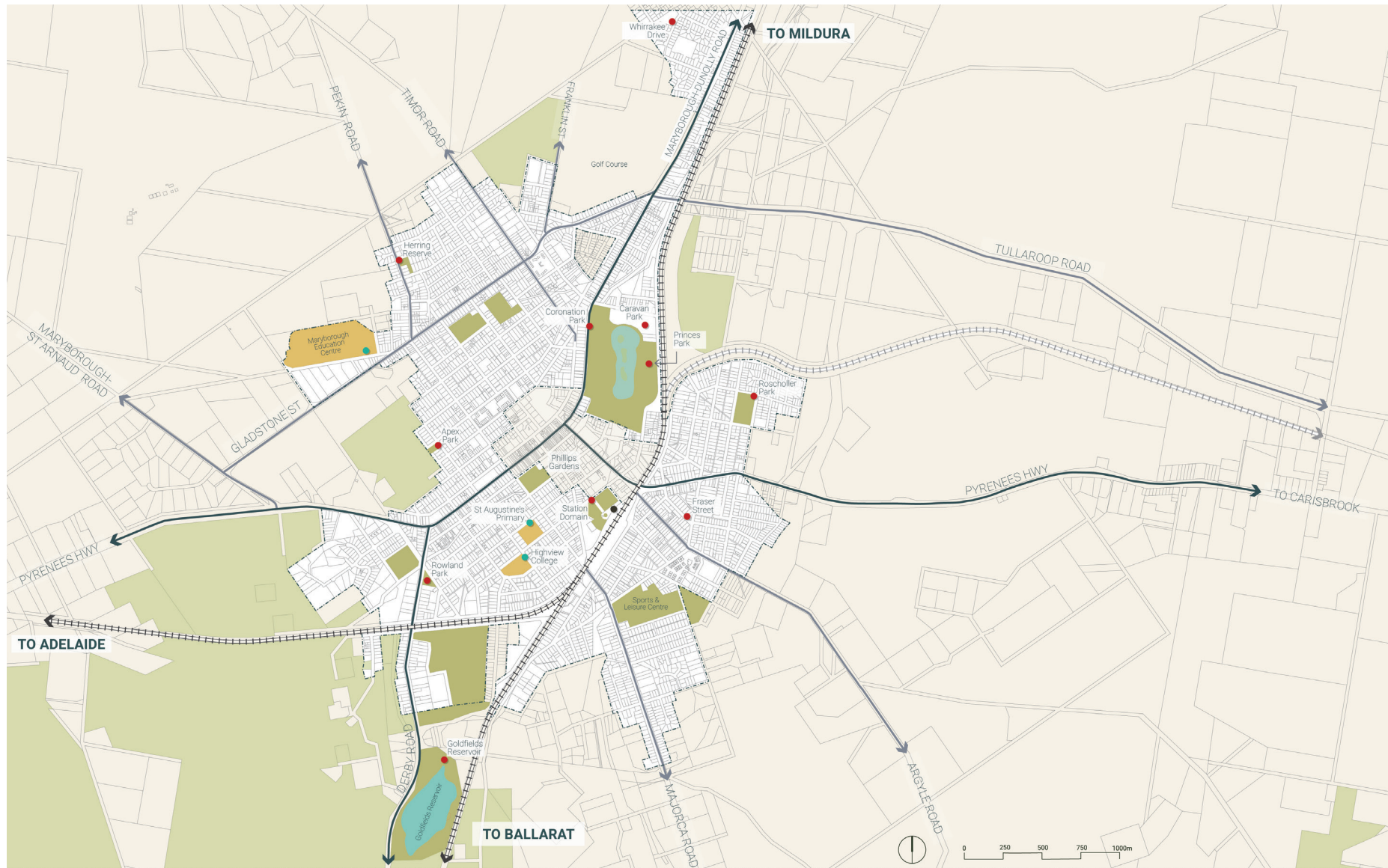


DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING PLAY SPACES

Map. 1 Location of existing play spaces across Central Goldfields Shire



Map 2. Play spaces in Maryborough and Carisbrook



Maryborough Playgrounds
Preliminary Distribution Map
Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Victoria

LEGEND

- Residential Boundary
- Existing Playgrounds
- School/Education Playground

- Public Parks & Recreation Reserves
- State Reserves
- Water Body

- Railway Station
- Railway Line
- Old Railway Line
- Highway
- Road



Date: 06.07.2023 Scale: 1:20,000@A3



DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING PLAY SPACES

Residential catchments and gaps in walkability

The residential area around each play space is described in this Strategy as its 'catchment', or 'walkable catchment'. Ideally residents can walk or from home to at least one play space.

Some residential areas are limited by boundaries or barriers that can limit the free movement of children and families around the neighbourhood, preventing them from reaching parks and play spaces. Such barriers include:

- busy roads,
- railway lines,
- canals or water bodies, or
- other barriers to movement, especially to children and people with mobility restrictions.
- Sometimes the street layout also makes it more difficult to walk or ride easily to a play space from home.

Urban Centres

In line with Victorian Government Policy on 20-minute neighbourhoods, residents (in the larger town centres) should be able to walk or ride to at least one park within their immediate residential area.

Maryborough

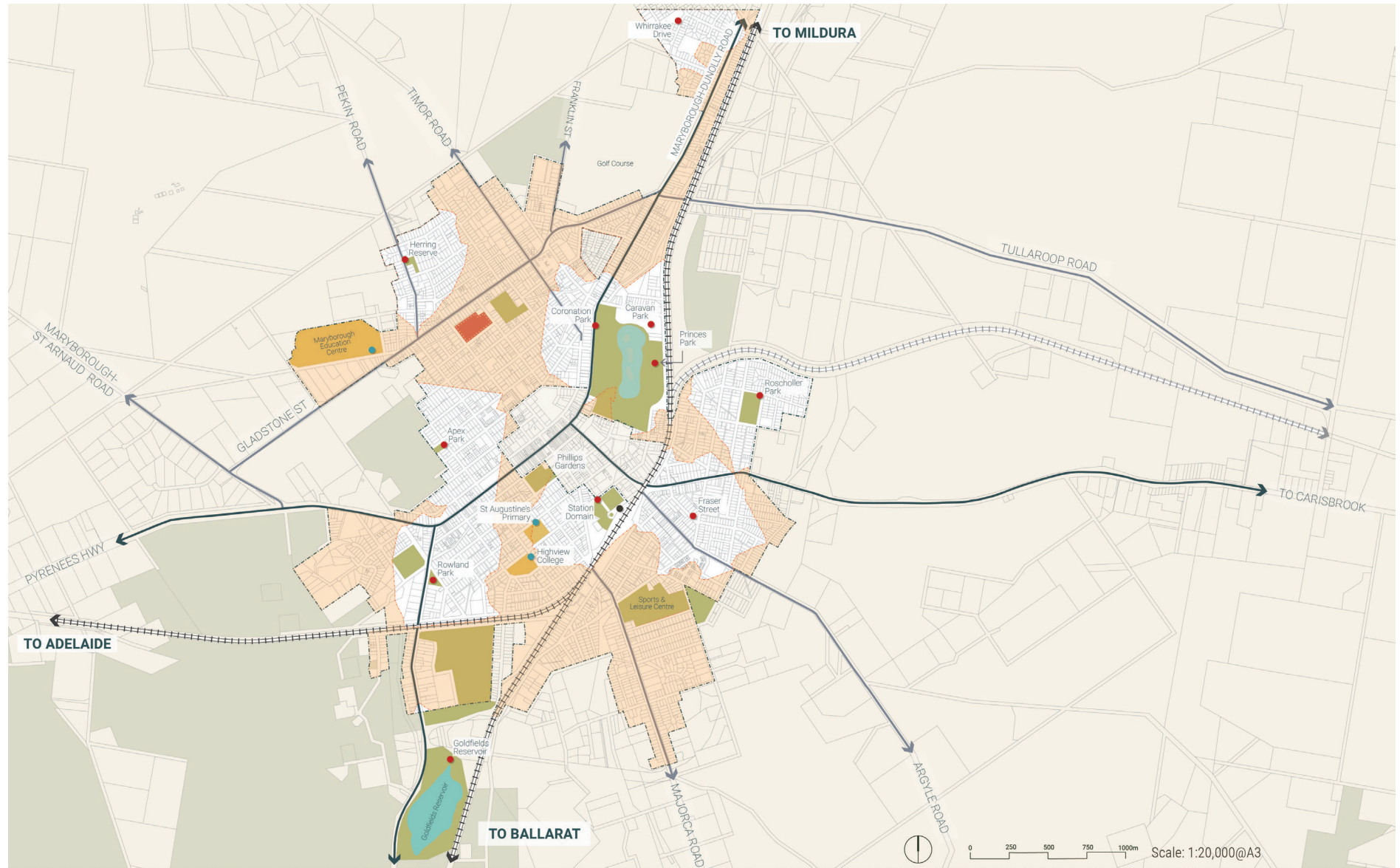
As Maryborough is the largest town in the Shire, with 11 play spaces, the distribution of play spaces in relation to residential areas has been analysed in some detail. Such towns ideally provide a number of playspaces, reasonably equitably distributed across the urban residential areas.

Residential areas more than approximately 500m from a play space have been mapped for Maryborough and these are described as Gaps in Walkability. Map 3 shows that some residential areas lack easy access to a play space within approximately 500m from home.

Refer to Map 3.



Map 3. Gaps in Walkability to Play Spaces - Maryborough



Maryborough Playgrounds

Gaps in Walkability
Dja Dja Wurrung Country, Victoria

LEGEND

- Residential areas more than 500m from a playground
- Existing Playgrounds

- School/Education Playground
- Public Parks & Recreation Reserves
- State Reserves
- Water Body

- Railway Station
- Railway Line
- Old Railway Line
- Highway
- Road

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS
SHIRE COUNCIL
Date: 24.08.2023

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

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PLANNERS

DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING PLAY SPACES

Addressing the gaps in play space distribution in Maryborough

There are three areas of Maryborough lacking access to a play space, as shown in Map 4 following.

Map 4 below identifies three parks that currently do not have play spaces and which are located in areas that do not have easy access to a playground. These are:

- A. Jack Pascoe Reserve/ Maryborough Sport and Leisure Centre Reserve (Cnr Majorca and Gillies Sts.)
- B. California Gully Recreation Reserve on Gladstone Lane (or the adjacent Howson Reserve Memorial Park)
- C. Ron Sinclair Reserve (Frost Ave, Crimea St, Clarke St and Sebastopol Rd).

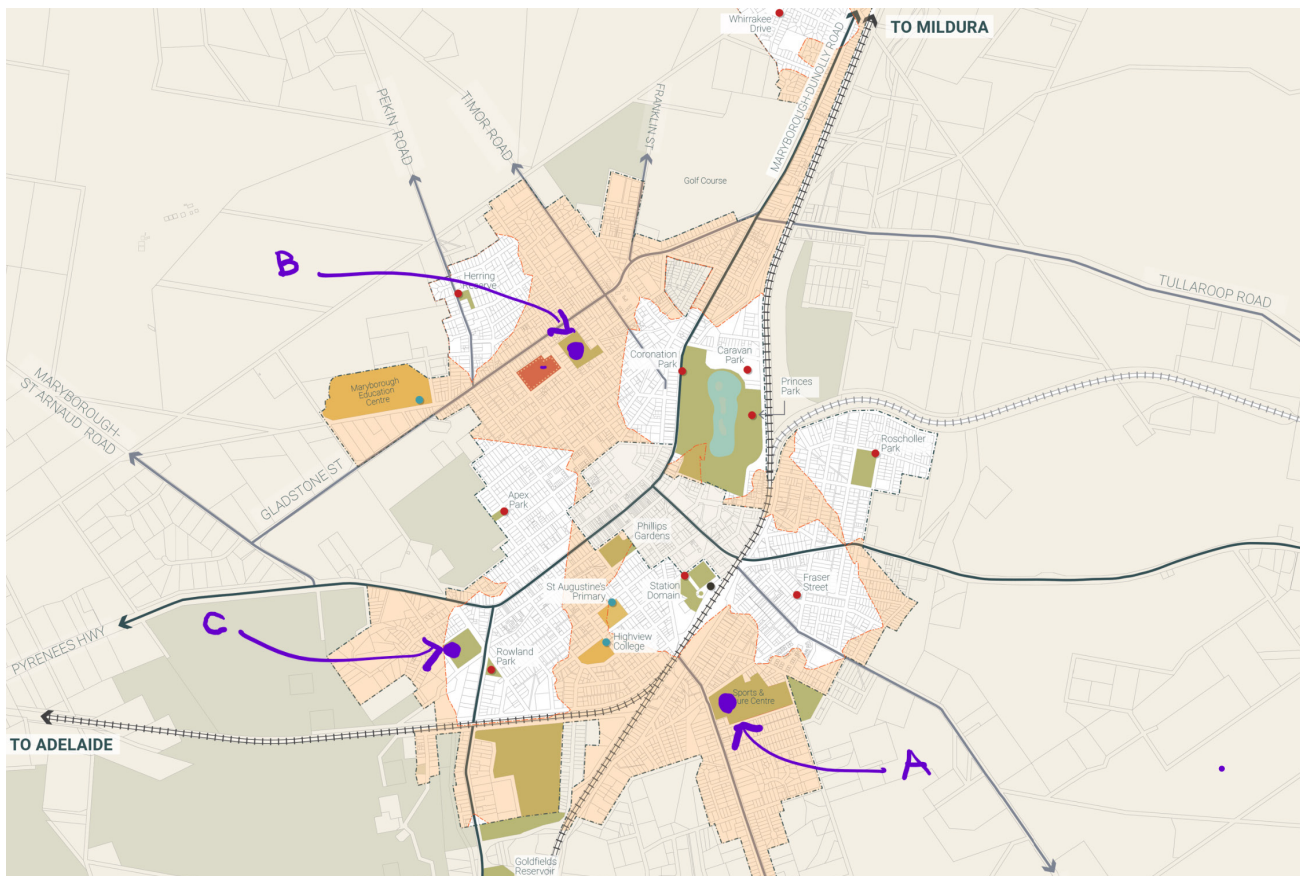
Of these, Jack Pascoe Reserve /Maryborough Sport and Leisure Centre is considered to be a priority for re-development as a new District/ Regional Park and play space.

The other two reserves are owned or managed by Council and not available for this purpose.

Addressing many of these gaps in distribution may not be feasible in the foreseeable future and generally it will be preferred that the Shire places a priority on improving the quality of existing play spaces.

However, the provision of an additional play space at Jack Pascoe Reserve is considered a strategic opportunity to address a distribution gap.

Map 4. Preliminary Recommendations for Future Play Space Developments



DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING PLAY SPACES

Rural localities

Rural localities should have one centrally located play space.

It is realistic for Central Goldfields Shire to provide one high quality play space, centrally located in each rural locality.

In rural localities it is not feasible to offer play spaces within walking distance of homes.

Typically, children in these more rural localities may have access a wider range of outdoor environments for play than children living in towns.

Play spaces are still important social areas, enabling interaction with other children and families.

Dunolly, Timor, Talbot, and Bealiba have school grounds which offer hard courts and play equipment. Unfortunately, not all schools encourage use by the community after hours, and public access would need to be negotiated on a school-by-school basis.

In the next chapter (the Play Space Strategy), the Core Principles and the Classification Hierarchy sets out this information on affecting play space distribution in more detail.



GAPS IN PLAY SPACE QUALITY

Play Space Assessments

As part of this project the consultants undertook on site inspection and assessment of all public play spaces in the Shire.

VOLUME 3. Play Space Assessments Includes reports on the quality of each Council managed play space in the Shire, with recommendations for improvements.

This assessment process, along with the results of the consultation process and other Shire information highlighted a number of issues concerning gaps in the quality of play spaces. A very brief summary of these is included below.

DESIGN FOR DIVERSITY & NATURE

There is a need for better park design – attention to the design of the whole park rather than just the play equipment; more trees, vegetation, amenity, and plant species selection that provides play materials and visual interest.

There is a general lack of diversity and play value in play spaces

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

There are no accessible, inclusive play opportunities in the Shire.

There is an overall need for accessible, inclusive parks and play spaces with paths, furniture and amenities and play elements that are usable by families and people with a disability.

DESIGN FOR SPECIFIC AGE GROUPS

There are few options catering for older children, with limited challenge, and few hard courts

Options for younger children are also limited, with few items designed for role play/pretend play.

EQUIPMENT

More swings are required overall, with more choice in styles and seat types.

FURNITURE

Few sites have tables as well as seats. Tables are important to support a range of activities, to include older adults and people with disability, and allow use of parks for family gatherings away from home.

GAPS IN PLAY SPACE QUALITY

PATHS

Few spaces have paths. Paths are crucial in access and inclusion and benefit a variety of groups, and extend play

AGEING INFRA- STRUCTURE

The Shire's play infrastructure is ageing and in need of updating. The existing amenities are not consistent between parks.

FENCES

Fencing is in high demand, but how play spaces are fenced requires more thoughtful design

Issues regarding quality in play space design have also been addressed in more detail in the following sections on Strategy and the Design Guidelines in this Volume 1.

Strategic Framework

This whole Section constitutes the Play Space Strategy for Central Goldfields Shire Council.

It contains policy recommendations to address a wide range of issues and processes that affect play space provision in the Shire.

Part 5 includes recommendations for Planning and Design Processes

Part 6 includes recommendations for Management, budgeting and maintenance processes within Council that affect play spaces

Part 7 identifies:

- Core principles,
- The catchment hierarchy/classification for play spaces
- Policy and Service Standards relating to the classification of play spaces.

Part 8 describes the detailed Key Goals and Action Plan.

These Shire-wide actions encompass both management processes and approaches to design of play spaces.

Part 9 is the Implementation Plan. This contains:

- a high level summary of what has been recommended for each reserve (as per the recommendations from Volume 3), followed by
- the more detailed tasks including indicative budgets, timelines and priorities.

PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESSES

This section introduces a series of recommendations to address planning, design and procurement processes within Council that impact on play.

Create a Play Advisory Group

The nature of existing facilities suggests that play projects would be best overseen by a multidisciplinary team within Council, using designers experienced in early childhood development, universal design and horticulture, and drawing on experience from those who manage parks and play spaces.

A CGSC play advisory group should be created. This advisory team should comprise members from recreation planning, playground maintenance, capital improvements and, early childhood/family services staff as a minimum, and be complemented by staff trained in universal design.

This team's responsibility could include:

- Overseeing the implementation and continual monitoring of this play strategy,
- Overseeing budgeting for parks as a whole, across Council, and including all design elements within parks,
- Preparing/ approving design briefs for whole-of-park master plans and all play space designs,
- Ensuring all decisions are made strategically and together with all team members,
- Conducting community engagement or co-design within the overarching strategic parameters established by this strategy, and
- Procuring a specialist designer with demonstrated experience in universal design, child development and horticulture, for all play spaces,

Consider the nearby play spaces in a locality

The design of any one space must complement any adjacent space or other play space in the locality. Before site design commences, a strategic assessment of the space and its relationship with others is required. Any new design must also be consistent with this Play Spaces Strategy, namely:

- The service standards
- Locality assessments and site-specific directions, and
- Design guidelines.

This assessment of context needs to occur before community engagement or co-design processes commence and will provide a strategic backdrop to the local knowledge and site-specific preferences of current residents.

Prepare a Design Brief

Common issues about design and quality are best addressed by a clear brief.

The brief should require designers to address core components of this play spaces strategy:

- Core service levels,
- Design guidelines, and
- Specific directions from Volume 3 Play Assessment for the locality or the specific site.

The design brief should address the following as a minimum:

- A path network,
- Access into, around the play space and onto any equipment,
- Social and support and physical activities,
- Diverse play opportunities,
- Landscape elements and amenity, trees and vegetation for play value.

PLANNING AND DESIGN PROCESSES

Prepare a master plan for the whole park should be prepared before designing a play space

A master plan outlines the future directions for a site.

A master plan for the whole park should be prepared before designing a play space.

The amenity and functionality of a whole park usually outweighs the importance of the play equipment within the park

The task should be seen as bigger than simply installing play equipment

Take a strategic approach to upgrades

Ad hoc additions are not the optimal way to maximise play value, inclusion and functionality in parks
When funding becomes available for specific new components such as:

- Paths
- Play equipment
- Fencing
- Drinking fountains
- Fitness equipment
- Skate facilities
- Shade, or
- Furniture
- these separate elements should only be introduced in keeping with a master plan or design that has planned for them. They should not be randomly placed around a park.

Ask the experts

All park upgrades, including play opportunities, need design and planning expertise

In many Councils, the design of play spaces or small parks is treated as a single, isolated, small-budget project and procured from an external design firm or a play equipment supplier.

The design brief is frequently determined by community consultation, and this is frequently limited to questions about the colour of equipment and a limited choice of products.

This process does not produce the best outcomes for the community.

Even in small parks and play space projects, the input of professionals with expertise and experience in design for play and child development, access and inclusion, and horticulture, is essential.



MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

The Shire maintains play equipment and surfaces on a regular basis.

During these site inspections, many equipment items were noted as aging but have been kept in good condition.

Budget Sources

There are currently two sources of funding that relate to this Strategy:

- Ongoing maintenance costs, and
- Capital improvements.

Ongoing maintenance

As part of its asset management planning, Council should seek to fund its play spaces in a manner that meets the needs of the community and ensures quality is maintained.

With limited resources, maintaining a network of playspaces can be complicated and funding needs to stretch across multiple locations and a wide range of infrastructure. As part of its asset management, Council's funding needs to consider activities including inspections, repairs, maintenance, urgent safety issues in addition to removal and replacement of equipment.

Capital Improvements

Council also invests in its play spaces through the capital works program.

This is determined as part of a coordinated approach to asset management, with the capital budget broken into three categories:

- Asset renewals (replacing like for like)
- Asset upgrades (upgrading an existing asset to meet community needs or current standards)
- New works (creating a new asset when none currently exists)

The Capital Works program forms part of the annual budget and all play space improvements recommended in this strategy need to be considered as part of Council's overall budget.

Where possible, Council's forward planning should seek to align play space improvements with path upgrades, signage works and tree planting within the same reserve to encourage a coordinated approach to site improvements.

Council's capital works funding is often complimented by grant funding received from programs funded by external agencies, including the State and Federal Governments.

In particular, securing external funding is critical to delivering play space upgrades and new works. By adopting a strategic approach to play space improvements Council will be in the best possible pace to secure funding that compliments its own contribution towards the capital works program.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Playspace information and promotion

Council should provide more information about each play space and its features:

- on Council's website and
- on-site signage.

Currently information about existing play spaces is lacking.

In order to plan their trip, residents and visitors need information about the availability of fences, accessible equipment, picnic facilities, age groups catered for, shelters and toilets.

Many families depend upon these facilities, for an outing to even be a possibility. This information should be available on Council's Website.

The parks themselves need signs. These should be of a clear, graphically unified design.

Life expectancy and play space replacement plan

As a general guide, play equipment frequently has a life expectancy of around 15 years, (but this depends on the item and materials).

The older the equipment the less likely it will meet current Playground Standards which are reviewed every 5 years. There are multiple spaces in the Shire where the equipment is more than 20 years old.

The Implementation Plan in this report summarises the recommendations for each play space and includes a very high-level budget cost estimate.

The details explaining the recommendations for each site are found in Volume 3- Play Assessments.

When equipment needs to be removed

When an item of equipment needs to be removed, remove all parts of the structure including old footings, brackets, and other elements. Leaving old remnants in place, especially at ground level and partially hidden in mulch, can be a hazard.

Collect additional data during maintenance inspections

Regular maintenance inspections allow council to collect other data useful for planning and management.

Council should consider including additional information in the brief for the annual safety audit checklist, which they can use to monitor information important for planning and asset management, such as:

- accessibility into the park and to play spaces and social spaces ,
- presence of fences, lights and tables, and
- asset life or replacement date.

In this way, the Council can monitor the performance of play spaces (from an access point of view, for example) over time.

Inspections and maintenance

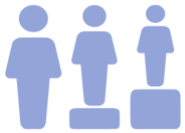
Play equipment areas and associated infrastructure must be regularly maintained in accordance with AS 4685. 0:2017- Part 0: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance, and operation.

MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Inspections required by the Australian Standards

INSPECTION TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Post Installation	Conducted prior to opening a new play space, this verifies that the play space complies with current Standards.	Post opening
Comprehensive inspections		
Routine Inspections	Regular visual inspections for wear and tear, vandalism or other damage. These can be carried out by operational staff while on site carrying out other tasks.	Whenever staff are in the park - Weekly -
Operational Inspection	Less frequent, possibly quarterly inspections for adequacy of surfaces, more serious structural defects, wear on moving parts, corrosion, fraying, missing components, loose bolts etc.	Quarterly
Comprehensive Annual Inspection	These checks cover all of the above, as well as overall conformance of equipment and surfaces with current standards.	Annual
Impact testing for unitary (rubber or synthetic) surfacing	Unitary surfaces need to be impact tested at least every three years for impact attenuation.	Every three years

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY PROVISION



Equitable provision and distribution across the Shire

The distribution of play opportunities needs to be realistic in terms of resources, considering the difficulty of equating rural localities with larger town centres.

Maryborough and Carisbrook

Play opportunities within Maryborough and Carisbrook should be located so that all residents ideally have a play space within walking distance from home.

The walking distances may be defined as ideally within 500m from home, but there will be instances where this is not achievable.

This walkability goal aligns with Victorian State Government policy on '20-minute neighbourhoods'. These are all about 'living locally' and enabling people to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute return walk from home.

Rural localities

In rural localities such as Bealiba, Dunolly, Daisy Hill, Bowenvale/Timor Majorca and Talbot, aim to offer one central play space located close to other community hub/focal points (such as a hall, community centre, or sports club) or in the main street of the town.



Diversity of opportunity and setting types

Play spaces need to offer a diverse choice of opportunities for outdoor play, social interaction, recreation and engagement with nature.

Play Spaces should provide a balance of elements including paths, vegetation and landscape features, social infrastructure, physical challenges, and where possible community art.

Diverse landscape settings should range from open grassy and sunny spaces to 'wilder', more natural/forested areas, from garden and ornamental settings to more paved/ urban areas.

This principle needs to be considered at two levels:

- the macro level, i.e., the choice of settings and opportunities from park to park, across the municipality, as well as
- at the micro level. For example, even in an open site, which relies mainly on play equipment to provide the main activities, pockets of vegetation will provide additional, close-up interest and play opportunities.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY PROVISION



Play spaces need to meet the diverse needs of all ages, abilities, and genders

All spaces should provide some opportunities that are usable by preschool, school aged children, teens and older adults. Some sites may focus more on one age group than another, considering other spaces nearby, and the particular local context.

In areas experiencing population growth and increased housing density, the design of parks for play needs to consider that residents will have fewer opportunities for outdoor play at home. The landscape settings of parks need to accommodate a wider range of needs, such as gardening and sand and nature play.

Service standards are provided to ensure the quality of spaces is equitable across all spaces. These are described in a later section.



Play spaces need to be accessible to people with disabilities

All play spaces need to provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in play and social activities. Parks and play spaces need to be designed using Universal Design Principles.

The higher the level in the catchment hierarchy, (see the following section) the more accessible and inclusive the space needs to be.

Access to social areas such as seating areas, shelters, and toilets via paths is a high priority.



Paths are a fundamental requirement in parks

All parks need identifiable, accessible paths of travel enabling people with disabilities to:

- Enter the park from adjacent footpaths or car parks
- Move around within the park
- Use all amenities
- Access any designated play space, hardcourt, skate, or bike area
- Access a choice of play opportunities.



Priority Parks need more attention

Some parks are considered to be a higher social priority than others. These include parks and play spaces in residential areas where:

- There are fewer parks and play spaces
- There is a lack of other opportunities for children to play outdoors
- There are higher levels of social disadvantage, and
- Where only one park serves a larger catchment and residents depend upon that one park

The design of those parks and play spaces that do exist requires more careful attention to the principles contained in this report.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY PROVISION



Play Value - play is more than play equipment

Play encompasses a diverse range of activities and behaviours that vary significantly across age groups and individuals, and these are by no means limited to play equipment.

By broadening the approach to play provision, CGS will derive better value from parks and open space than from a focus solely on play equipment, which offers many benefits but has inherent limitations.

In particular, there are benefits from designing settings that carefully consider the connections and relationships between all elements within a space, extending the play from equipment and structures out into a more complex landscape.

Every park play space must be designed to accommodate and foster a range of types of play, such as:

- physical activity, movement, and challenge
- imaginative/pretend/role play, and
- sensory/creative/imaginative play
- play opportunities including play equipment should be designed and selected to:
 - facilitate a range of specific activities or development opportunities and maximise the play value to all users,
 - accommodate group play and social interaction, as well as quiet nooks for individual respite and contemplation,
 - maximise the opportunities for children with disabilities to access and use play spaces, and to play alongside others, and
 - be connected by paths to social areas, ball courts, other equipment, and the street.
 - Paths provided in parks and play spaces should be designed to accommodate wheeled toys, walking, or cycling.



The whole park is for play

As introduced above, when planning for play, the entire park needs to be considered for the opportunities it could present to users. These opportunities include:

- Trees, planting, and natural areas
- Path systems
- Hard surfaces
- Open areas of lawn
- Loose materials, and
- Terrain.

These opportunities need to be planned to include people with a disability and all age groups, and how everyone can enjoy these elements.

By considering these diverse elements as part of the conscious design for play, the Shire will be able to deliver more value from the investment in both parks and play.

CORE PRINCIPLES FOR PLAY PROVISION



Environmental integrity, amenity planting, and access to nature are important play space features

In all spaces, the design should include trees and other landscape elements.

Parks and play spaces can enhance and encourage children's contact and interaction with nature and can provide loose materials that can be used in play.

Plant materials, especially flowering plants, those with interesting textures, bark or fruit and scents significantly enhance the visual and environmental amenity and play value of parks.

Trees have many purposes in parks, including shade, significant cooling, wind breaks, habitat, screening, and play opportunities. They need to be carefully selected in order to fulfill these purposes, and a range of species may be required for in any one park for different situations.

Trees always need to be able to survive the local conditions and to contribute to the local ecosystem.

More information on design elements in parks for play is included in the Appendix 3 to this Volume.

PLAY SPACE CLASSIFICATION AND SERVICE STANDARDS

INTRODUCING PLAY SPACE CLASSIFICATIONS

Parks and play spaces have been classified into a hierarchy, based on their catchment.

The catchment hierarchy of a space is determined by its sphere of influence, and how far people are likely to travel to it.

Local play spaces for example, principally serve residents in the immediate neighbourhood and within walking distance.

District and regional parks and play spaces, on the other hand, will attract people who may drive from further afield. Because they may stay for longer visits, they will need support facilities like toilets, shelter etc.

These hierarchies can be applied to the play space facilities themselves, as well as the parks in which they sit. This allows consistency in provision across the Shire and is a tool to manage investment and maintenance.

The catchment hierarchy is used to guide investment decisions (service standards), by specifying the standard of development appropriate for each level in the park hierarchy.


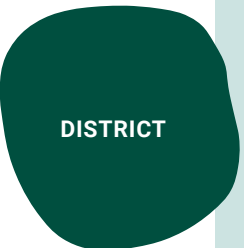

These 'Service Standards' are also explained in this section.

The preferred catchment hierarchy for play spaces in the Central Goldfields Shire has the following three levels.

- Regional
- District, and
- Local

These catchments are defined in the table below

Proposed catchment hierarchy classifications for play spaces in Goldfields Shire

Catchment Hierarchy	Definition	Mode of travel and facilities
 REGIONAL	<p>Servicing the whole municipality, as well as from further afield.</p> <p>The sphere of influence of a regional space is likely to be larger than the neighbouring residential areas, due the significance of the space, its scale, and the quality of features or facilities.</p>	<p>You would expect people to travel by car from other locations, including outside the municipality.</p> <p>Facilities that support a longer length of stay and larger number of users are therefore needed.</p>
 DISTRICT	<p>Servicing a wider area than the suburb in which it is located.</p> <p>This classification also can apply to play spaces in rural localities, with only one central space that services outlying communities.</p>	<p>Users are likely to travel by car from other localities to use these spaces.</p> <p>These parks also need to provide facilities for a longer length of stay, especially in rural localities.</p> <p>They may often be co-located with sports or other community facilities.</p>
 LOCAL	<p>Servicing the immediate residential area within walking distance.</p> <p>Also known as neighbourhood parks. This classification applies to play spaces which are typically small, but on which many families depend.</p>	<p>Users are expected to walk or cycle to the park from home and would stay a relatively short time.</p> <p>In urban townships multiple spaces will be required. These need to be equitably distributed across the locality.</p>

PLAY SPACE CLASSIFICATION AND SERVICE STANDARDS

INTRODUCING THE SERVICE STANDARDS

Standards for Provision and Service have been provided here for play spaces for each level in the catchment hierarchy.

Seven separate, detailed tables have been included overleaf. These tables summarise policy recommendations for the following elements in play spaces, showing the different expectations for the three different levels in the catchment hierarchy.

ELEMENTS

1. Overall provision /distribution of play spaces

This table shows:

- The recommended sizes for parks
- How play spaces should be distributed within residential areas
- Location of play spaces within a local catchment to ensure equitable access
- Where play spaces should be located in relation to the local street network, for both prominence and surveillance
- How play spaces should be located in the context of different densities of housing, where applicable.

2. Physical access requirements of play spaces

This table shows:

- Access to the park itself from further afield
- Access into the park
- Physical access to facilities, park features and activities
- Paths and trails for specific purposes.

3. Social and support facilities in play spaces

This table shows:

- A basic range of the facilities central to play spaces that encourage social interaction
- These also support members of a family who may not be able to participate in physical activities.

4. Inclusive features of play spaces

This table adds recommendations for park and play space design that make a play space visit easier, more fun and more comfortable for people living with a range of disabilities, and of any age or gender.

- These are different from the physical access requirements described above.
- Although many of these are listed in the social support facilities and other groups, they are described here in more detail order to emphasise their importance.

5. Environmental/natural elements in play spaces

This table shows:

- Natural elements that support the purpose of play,
- They also enhance environmental education, visual amenity and character, shade, environmental diversity, and habitat.

6. Physical activities in play spaces

This table provides a guide to ensure that each level in the hierarchy consciously provides a choice of physical activity types.

7. A summary of key features in play spaces

This table shows:

- Target age groups and broad categories/different types of play, to ensure that play spaces provide diverse opportunities.

SERVICE STANDARD 1 - PROVISION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Size and space for a range of activities Parks should large enough to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide for a range of activities suited to people of all ages and abilities. • Locate these so activities (such as children's play, active equipment areas, ball game areas, dog off leash areas, quiet seating etc.) do not conflict with one another. • Provide winter sun as well as summer shade • Solar access for users and vegetation. • Include deep soil and enough space for trees and vegetation. • One large public space within a catchment is preferred over multiple, scattered smaller spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum size for new parks for play: 1ha. unencumbered land. • See range of activities principle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per local • The minimum park size for new parks for play: 1ha. • Unencumbered land; larger where required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum park size for new parks for play: 1ha. Unencumbered land. May be larger sites where required. • May have a wider range of activities than local sites with more extensive provision for different ages, and include larger and more complex, unique or expensive features such as water.
Distribution / Housing Density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks for play should serve all residential areas and be accessible without having to cross a major road, water way or railway. • Prioritise provision in areas with a low SEIFA index, high proportion of children, people with a disability and higher-density areas with limited open space options. 	In Maryborough <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide parks for play within approximately 500m distance from residences, and without having to cross a major barrier, arterial road, water way or railway. • Where housing is medium density, estates must also include outdoor ground floor and their own communal spaces for play and social interaction, and particular consideration given to design and quality due to dependence. • Parks must be served by foot or shared paths. • Play spaces in areas of high dependence must be designed to maximise the opportunities for play, access, social interaction, and environmental considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One per municipality • No minimum distance threshold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum park size for new parks for play: 1ha. Unencumbered land. May be larger sites where required. • May have a wider range of activities than local sites with more extensive provision for different ages, and include larger and more complex, unique or expensive features such as water.

SERVICE STANDARD 1 CONT. PROVISION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Location within Catchment / Co-location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks for play should be centrally located within the catchment defined by roads and other barriers to access. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be co-located with/ abutting encumbered land, a sports park, or adjacent to a waterway corridor. Locate in prominent locations on local streets or larger roads. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-located near community facilities/ hall/ shops etc. Co-located with sporting or other recreation facilities, foreshore etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be co-located with a major bushland, with unique, iconic landscape setting. Can be located on collector/arterial roads, and public transport and off-road trail routes.
Location in street network for prominence and surveillance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parks for play should be prominent and at least two (ideally three) sides of the park bounded by streets rather than private property. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good views into the site Overlooked by fronts of houses. Separated from homes by a road or a "paper road" or "postie lane". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per local Located on larger roads for prominence, and on public transport and off-road trail routes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites with high visibility preferred. Clear signage if through residential streets. Not with narrow entries or "battle axe" blocks. May be located in conjunction with other attractions.
Other site selection / provision issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is only one park for play in a catchment, it must offer a wide choice of opportunities for social, physical, and environmental activities and to suit multiple age groups. See Dependence principle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a catchment has more than one play area, ensure diversity in landscape setting type, range of activities, and target user groups can vary between sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If multiple parks for play in one catchment, sites should have different landscape setting types. Select one site per catchment that is suitable /economical to be fully fenced, to help meet inclusion criteria See inclusion principle. Some car parking and picnic facilities commensurate with longer duration stay. May include full hard courts and some bike or skate facility, or interactive water play infrastructure. May include gym equipment where there is a perimeter exercise path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will need car parking and facilities commensurate with longer duration stay. Higher level of access and inclusion expected, in social facilities, play experiences, access to nature etc. May include interactive water play structure, and or bike or skate facility. May include gym equipment where there is a perimeter exercise path.

SERVICE STANDARD 2 - PHYSICAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Car Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide car parking immediately adjacent to parks for play for district and regional spaces. Provide an accessible car space immediately adjacent, on an accessible path of travel for district and regional spaces. 	x	✓	✓
Bicycle Parking / Rails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle parking/ rails at the entry to the park 	x	✓	✓
Site served by a path or shared trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect parks for play to a shared trail network. Locate parks for play where streets have an accessible path network 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- x Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 2 CONT. PHYSICAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Accessible and identifiable entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible path of travel into the park to a play space from a footpath and road. • Provide easily identifiable points of access into the park and to play space. 	✓	✓	✓
Accessible internal network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an accessible path that links shade, seats, tables, BBQ water and social facilities. • Provide a clear path definition to the path edge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where these elements are provided 	✓	✓
Site served by a path or shared trail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths should provide access to social and support facilities: any shelters, toilets, tables and seats, drinking fountains, a choice of play activities, physical activities such as hard courts, and nature/ environmental elements, with wayfinding elements. • Any easily accessible play equipment i.e., ground level panels, underdeck cubbies, basket swing, accessible carousel etc. to be served by a path. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 2 CONT. PHYSICAL ACCESS REQUIREMENTS IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Park perimeter path- for exercise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A perimeter path (offering an independent circuit) preferably of consolidated gravel should provide for jogging and walking children on bicycles, and wheeled toys around larger parks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Every park over 1ha 	✓	✓
Accessible gates/entries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fences, gates, entries, and placement of bollards, or chicanes (if provided) should be suitable for people to access with mobility devices. Where there are gates, design latches so people using wheelchairs can enter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anywhere parks or play spaces have fences or walls 	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 3 - SOCIAL / SUPPORT FACILITIES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Park Name Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On all parks for play Provide a consistent graphic design across the whole municipality 	✓	✓	✓
Central social area with tables and seats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position a social area centrally, to enable people of all ages and abilities to take part in social activities and to view/supervise play on play equipment, hard courts and skate and nature. Provide multiple (depending upon the size of play space) accessible tables and seats in a choice of sun and shade. Position some seats in groups, at right angles or facing, with backs and arm rests. 	✓	✓	✓
Security Lighting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an accessible drinking tap easily reached from a mobility device and located on a path. 	✗	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 3 - SOCIAL / SUPPORT FACILITIES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Built Shade / Shelter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide security lighting at each major park entry to and in social hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓
BBQ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a BBQ is provided locate this with a shelter, picnic tables and seating, accessible for people of all ages and abilities, allowing or adequate manoeuvring space (unimpeded by shelter supports) 	✗	✓	✓
Toilets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets are to be wheelchair accessible, gender-neutral, and family friendly 	✗	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 3 - SOCIAL / SUPPORT FACILITIES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Focal age groups served <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide infrastructure suited to all ages. Where there are multiple sites within one catchment, each site can focus on different key age groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> focus on children / teens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all ages
Drinking Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an accessible drinking tap easily reached from a mobility device and located on a path. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓
Dog-off leash area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide designated areas for dog exercise and socialization away from play equipment, to minimise conflicts. 	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected and appropriate sites only 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected and appropriate sites only

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 4 - INCLUSIVE ELEMENTS FOR PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Fencing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selectively fence some parks for play across the Shire. • Where a fence is required, design this carefully and ideally fence the whole perimeter of (smaller) parks. • On larger sites, place fences carefully to include a wide selection of opportunities including play options, lawn, trees, shade, seating, a table, etc). • Do not cage in small areas that only include play equipment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only where necessary for safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fence on site per locality / catchment 	✓
Central social hub with tables, shelter, and seats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a central, accessible, social area. • Shelters, tables and seating should be provided at the heart of the space and have adequate space around for manoeuvring. • Seats and tables should be served by a path. Pavement under seats should extend to provide space for a person with a mobility aid to sit next to other users or enable a person to transfer onto the seat. • Design of shop counters/ interactive items and siting should allow for front on use from a wheelchair, and in a position next to companions. • Provide rails and supports for resting and support. • Some seats should have arms and backs. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 4 CONT. INCLUSIVE ELEMENTS FOR PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Path system and access points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paths are crucial for orientation, and to enable participation in play and social opportunities for users with wheelchairs etc. • Provide an accessible path of travel around the play space connecting social, physical, and environmental elements. • Provide access to some elevated areas, especially in District and Regional parks. • Provide accessible products for all picnic tables, drinking fountains, under deck spaces, shop counters, sand tables and interactive panels. 	✓	✓	✓
Swinging /rotating/ bouncing and/or rocking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a selection of accessible swinging or rotating items such as a bird's nest swing, / hammock or swing seat swing with back support. • Include a rotating item such as a spinner/ accessible carousel. • These items require a path access. 	• Desirable	✓	✓
Access to nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species selection and positioning should enable all users to interact with vegetation and loose materials including elements accessible from wheelchairs or mobility devices. 	• Desirable	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 4 CONT. INCLUSIVE ELEMENTS FOR PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Quiet/ Respite area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide spaces suitable for quiet activities away from boisterous play. • These should provide some degree of seclusion/ separation from busy active zones where people of all ages and abilities may observe without conflicts due to noise or activity. 	• Desirable	✓	✓
Social/ co-operative play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for social interaction for people of different ages and abilities by grouping similar activities together, (e.g., different types of swings) to encourage inclusive group play activities. • Provide role play/pretend play features for children of all abilities. • Provide interactive items so they can be reached front on from a chair or mobility device. • Provide cubbies, shop counters, steering wheels, play vehicles, etc. and items that encourage social interaction, intergenerational play and can be used by more than one person sitting or standing. • Provide interactive play panels/games/ pulleys, which can be accessed from a wheelchair. 	• Desirable	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 5 - NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Canopy trees for shade and cooling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide canopy trees for shade and cooling. Position carefully to: • Project shade onto play and social/activity areas • Define circuit paths. • Position trees that drop leaves/ fruit / limbs so as not to overhang hard courts, skate facilities or paths to minimise risk of falls and cleaning costs. 	✓	✓	✓
Specimen trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide specimen trees for landscape character, visual appeal, and to enhance spatial interest and complexity. • Provide individually and in groups. • Use trees to emphasise park entries. • Select for bark, fruit, leaf, and habits that provide play material or encourage play. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 5 CONT. NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Irrigated/ managed turf <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a suitable open area for games, kick to kick, and group picnics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable – open area may be hard surface if lawn not sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable on selected sites 	✓
Hardy flowering plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide hardy flowering plants for visual amenity, sensory qualities, habitat, play materials Choose plant materials for their flowers, leaves pods etc that are interesting to children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓
Sensory planting/ tall grasses or shrubs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sensory planting for spatial delineation, supply of sensory qualities, habitat and define small spaces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 5 CONT. NATURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Screen planting along boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select boundary planting for habitat, screening, and wind breaks. 	✓	✓	✓
Rocks and logs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide rocks and logs and other natural elements for play, perching, habitat, and character. Allow exposure to non-manufactured items, which may change over time, for decision making and open-ended play. 	✓	✓	✓
Loose, natural materials for play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide loose, natural materials for play, e.g., sand, digging patch, loose-leaf litter, twigs, pods and building materials etc., edible plants Position vegetation to define small spaces, provide some lightly screened 'secret spaces' (supervisable). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 6 - FACILITIES TO ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Park -perimeter path circuit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a shared perimeter circuit suitable for jogging and walking, children's bicycles, and wheeled toys around parks of 1 ha or greater, separate from any footpath. Avoid the need for these to cross vehicle access ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desirable 	✓	✓
Choice of movement types on play equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for spinning, swinging, rocking, sliding, bouncing, balancing, hanging, jumping, wheeling, traversing, running, chasing, stepping. Ensure some inclusive and social/group options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure variety between sites in the same catchment 	✓	✓
Opportunities to climb <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure different heights and degrees of challenge are available for children of different age groups, to climb. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 6 CONT. FACILITIES TO ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PARKS FOR PLAY

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Practice nets/ goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where parks can provide large areas for kick to kick, consider selective provision of nets and goals where conflicts with other users or neighbours can be managed. 	✗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected sites
Open grassed area for running/ball games etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide an unobstructed flat mown open area desirably 40m in length, away from other activity spaces and houses so as not to discourage kick to kick, or a game of cricket, or football etc. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 7 – A SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES FOR PLAY SPACES

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
A flat, open area, suitable for social games <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for activities such as running, cricket and kick to kick, touch, football, kites etc. 	✓	✓	✓
A central social space, physical, and environmental elements designed specifically to facilitate play for target age groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for children from pre-school to early secondary school ages, of all abilities 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide purpose-built options for teenagers, adults, and older adults of all abilities 	• Desirable	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for adult and child interaction 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 7 CONT. A SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES FOR PLAY SPACES

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Opportunities for diverse types of movement and physical activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Select items or design for a range of specific activities including. Swinging/ spinning /rocking/ sliding/ agility, bouncing and wheeling etc. 	✓	✓	✓
Opportunities for climbing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a range of climbing and balancing opportunities, suited for different skill levels, on purpose-built play equipment, trees, logs, rocks etc. 	✓	✓	✓
Nature play; natural elements and loose materials for creative/ sensory play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide trees, shrubs and ground covers selected for a range of amenity, climate, habitat and play related benefits. Position vegetation to define small spaces, provide some lightly screened 'secret spaces' (supervisable). Choose plant materials for their flowers, leaves pods etc that are interesting to children. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

SERVICE STANDARD 7 CONT. A SUMMARY OF KEY FEATURES FOR PLAY SPACES

CORE REQUIREMENTS	CATCHMENT REQUIREMENTS		
	LOCAL	DISTRICT	REGIONAL
Interactive items engaging fine motor skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide interactive Play panels/games/ pulleys, which can be accessed from a wheelchair. 	✓	✓	✓
Features to encourage social/co-operative/pretend play <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide cubbies, shop counters, steering wheels, play vehicles, etc. and items that encourage social interaction, intergenerational play and can be used by more than one person sitting or standing. 	✓	✓	✓
Different intensities of social /group activity, ranging from busy and active, to quiet/solitary restful/respice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include small spaces as well as large/ busy/open areas. Provide areas buffered from noisy and boisterous play but with viewing onto activity. 	✓	✓	✓

Explanation of codes

- ✓ Required in all parks of this classification
- ✗ Not required in parks of this classification

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

Goals

Core goals for the next 10 years are:

- To achieve overall improvement in the budgeting and resourcing for play space provision
- To achieve significant improvement in the quality and diversity of play spaces in Central Goldfields Shire

Action Plan

In order to achieve the overall goals, numerous Actions are recommended. These are listed in detail overleaf but include the following key points:

Key Actions

- Co-ordinate a multidisciplinary approach to high quality play space provision and design,
- Develop a strategic, well resourced, 10- year play space improvement program,
- Implement master planning for groups of play spaces at the same time, to achieve cost effective improvements
- Renew whole play spaces rather than like-for-like replacements of individual items,
- Implement site specific opportunities to enhance the play value of local parks,
- Enhance the accessibility of play spaces, to be safe, welcoming and inclusive of all members of the community
- Enhance the landscape amenity, play value, and climate responsiveness of local parks through tree planting and vegetation, and
- Provide a select number of fenced play sites that are well designed and promoted

Each of these actions, and their accompanying tasks, is explained in more detail in the tables overleaf.

These overall actions need to be read alongside the specific actions and recommendations that have been discussed for individual sites, in the Play Space Assessment in Volume 3.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

IN-HOUSE PLANNING AND RESOURCING

1.

Co-ordinate a multi-disciplinary approach to high quality play spaces

- Establish an internal multi-disciplinary team responsible for championing play, implementing this strategy and overseeing play provision across the Shire including park planning, funding, designing, delivering, asset management, park maintenance and engagement and communication with users and the community.

Include in this group, the following teams to coordinate all aspects of play:

- Recreation planning
- Strategic planning
- Parks and open space
- Horticulture
- Access and Inclusion
- Family services /Early years
- Youth
- Asset management
- Park maintenance
- Engineering
- Communications
- This multi-disciplinary team should be utilised on all new play space projects, with input from selected members of this group used to inform play space upgrades as required.

2.

Develop a strategic 10-year play space improvement program

- Develop a 10-year play space improvement and resourcing program as part of Council's integrated asset planning.
- Use the priority system as outlined in the Recommendations by Reserve table.
- Draw on recommendations in this Strategy to inform future funding applications that support delivery of Council's capital works program.
- Develop a clear communication plan, both internally and with the community about the recommended practice around play.
- Consider providing a training program about play for the staff group responsible for play provision. This should cover the importance of play, and the basics of play space design and provision for different ages and abilities.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

IN-HOUSE PLANNING AND RESOURCING

3.**Continue to develop strategic partnerships**

- Build on strategic partnerships with other government departments and organisations that can contribute to funding, better quality and cost-effective service delivery of play opportunities.
- Actively seek out joint funding and opportunities for joint use agreements, programs and use of land for play.
- Talk to local schools regarding agreements to access school grounds.

4.**Promote play space information on council's web site**

- provide detailed information about each play space in a directory and web site including details that are typically sought by families planning trips to play spaces, such as availability of fences, shelters, toilets, nature and accessibility of equipment, picnic facilities, shade etc.

5.**Consider a New Play Space for Maryborough**

- Review the Distribution recommendations in this report and subject to funding being available, consider new developments for one proposed new play space in Maryborough.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC RENEWALS AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS

6.

Cost effective master planning and improvements of groups of play spaces

- Consider preparing plans for site upgrades in 'batches' as part of Councils asset planning.
- This involves identifying multiple sites of the highest priority for upgrade over the next two years, and the following 4 or 5 sites that will be upgraded in the following two years for the purposes of budgeting. This 'batch approach provides ample time for plans to be prepared, for internal officers to be aligned, for the community to be engaged, and funds to be approved. By commissioning designs in batches, the Shire will receive better value from the design process.
- Ensure design briefs for play spaces include the Service Standards, and Design Guidelines from this Strategy.
- Develop Concept Plans for each park to be upgraded prior to carrying out any work.

7.

Plan whole site renewals rather than like-for-like replacements of items

- As part of Council's overall approach to asset management, take the opportunity to improve the whole park and adding elements other than just play equipment. This may include planting and other landscape elements, paths, furniture, signs, fences, etc.
- Use of standard suites of furniture and fencing products, as described elsewhere in this action list, enables easy replacements, and interchangeability.
- Implement the Service Standards as per this report, according to the level in the catchment hierarchy

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

STRATEGIC RENEWALS AND SITE IMPROVEMENTS

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

8.

Plan the provision and upgrades of Toilets

- Toilets should only be provided in District and Regional level parks.
- Improve signs and accessibility to toilets.
- Improve access to toilets as part of the redesign process for new and upgraded play spaces
- Review existing toilets to ensure they are safe, family friendly and meet current standards for disability access.
- Select a family friendly, all gender accessible modular toilet product and use this for all future replacements.
- Continue to resource a Shire-wide cleaning, maintenance and repair schedule for toilets.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

9.

Include a path system as a standard element in all play spaces

- Create a Shire-wide, coherent approach to paths within all parks, and specifically including play spaces. A path system needs to become a standard element in site planning and budgeting, as an inexpensive element in play spaces, which delivers high value to the community.
- Prepare a suite of standard details for paths of various types, across the Shire, to ensure that paths are wide enough, properly graded, durable, maintainable, and placed carefully in every park upgrade.
- Utilise paths in parks and playspaces for a variety of types and purposes, such as for:
 - Access, inclusion and physical connection between elements
 - Wheeled play of all kinds, and hard surfaces for other activities
 - Physical exercise
 - For exploration, and for creating self-contained zones and physical separation of activity areas within a park.
- Position paths carefully and purposefully, to minimise both the cost and the visual intrusion into the space. They must:
 - provide either a continuous loop or terminate in logical locations with turnaround points
 - be designed for convenient, safe, dignified and equitable access for people of all ages and abilities, and specifically wheelchair users
 - link the entry to a park with either a footpath or car park or both
 - lead to gates (where sites are fenced) and external access points
 - continue within a fenced area to amenities such as accessible furniture and play elements
 - be designed to facilitate participation in social interaction and play activities.

10.

Review the standard furniture suite for parks and play spaces

- Place one or more tables /picnic setting within each play space.
- Place one picnic setting centrally where it allows easy supervision of the play space and also encourages social interaction between different users. This must be wheelchair accessible with path access. Ideally also provide multiple tables in larger spaces.
- Include different seating options- including bench seats, single seats with back and arm rests, curved seats, all within the one design family.
- Position seats and table to access summer shade and winter sun.
- Seek to develop a suite of BBQs, Drink fountains, shelters, shade, and bins that suit the requirements of functionality, durability, wheelchair accessibility, value for money and visual appeal, and apply these to all new installations in the future.
- Continue to replace the older style furniture with its maroon-coloured cast iron frame and 'heritage' design. Preferably replace with an accessible timber table and seats, with path access.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

11.

Review the standard furniture suite for parks and play spaces

- Some slight modifications could be made to this standard suite, in consultation with the supplier, to make these more accessible.
- Determine whether the colour of steelwork on the seats and tables can be changed, ideally to dark grey (as per recommendations on fences in this section); seek heritage advice if required.
- Add less accessible furniture options if desired only once these basic requirements above are met.
- Install BBQs in district parks and ensure there is a regular cleaning and maintenance program.
- Ensure drink fountains are of an accessible design, located in an accessible position on a path and with drainage overflow managed.
- If shade sails are used, plant trees on the east and west sides of the sails to provide projected shade in summer mornings and afternoons. Sails can otherwise be ineffective at these times of day.
- Utilise shelters as a durable way of providing shade and all-weather protection. Consider a simple contemporary modular system which provides a good value option for parks and include roof drainage.

12.

Improve park signage across the Shire

- Consolidate all the existing signs that are placed in parks to avoid clutter.
- When developing new park signs ensure they:
 - Provide a consistent Shire and site identity
 - Identify entry points
 - Provide orientation, directions and information regarding amenities and activity prompts etc.
 - Provide historic information, and
 - Set rules, expectations and control behaviour.
- New signs should be:
 - Consistent with Council branding and with heritage requirements
 - Contemporary and attractive
 - Graphically consistent across all parks and play spaces
 - Legible to people with a vision impairment and other disabilities
 - Concise, clear and unambiguous.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

13.

Provide a select number of fenced play sites that are well designed and promoted

- Provide a selection of fenced play spaces distributed across the Shire for reasonably equitable access.
- Progressively upgrade these fences according to the Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.
- Accommodate easy access by people with disabilities into a fenced site and connect paths with gates.
- Select some contemporary fencing products and materials that lift the appearance of parks, meet heritage requirements, and fulfil the function/purpose of the fence, at reasonable cost.
- Review the colour scheme of its steel park 'heritage' fences and whether black or dark grey could replace the current maroon colour, in order to reduce the visual prominence and fading.
- Discontinue the use of cables, wires and chains in fencing, immediately, and replace these due to the serious hazard they present for people with a vision impairment.
- Progressively phase out treated pine barriers and bollards and replace with a more attractive and functional design, with gaps / gates for wheelchair access where required.
- Consolidate fence types into a limited number and adopt the selected suite as a standard product to use across the Shire to aid in maintenance and replacement of parts as well a consistent appearance.
- Promote the play sites with fences to residents as many will depend on these.
- Check fences and gates when equipment is checked as these are easily damaged and may restrict access or cause injury.

14.

Include more swings in play spaces

- Offer more swinging opportunities in play spaces, as they are high in value and relatively low cost.
- Provide, where possible, a minimum of two double swing frames in all local parks, and more in District and Regional parks. One should be junior, and one should be senior or a birds-nest design.
- Provide two seats usable by toddlers in junior frames, and two in senior frames. At least one seat should have a lightweight full back support with a seatbelt style harness and an accessible surface.
- Provide a wide variety of other seat types including the rope 'Viking' type swing and the 'you and me' / 'joey' seat types, and swivel swings where more swings can be added within one site, or where there are other parks close by in the same catchment.
- Carefully position swings to avoid children and passers-by being struck while passing; especially avoid placing swings between social spaces and other play elements, where children are highly likely to cross.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

15.

Select a variety of equipment styles

- Introduce variety in styles where one type of equipment is used repeatedly, within any one park, and across parks in the locality. For example, choose a variety of swings as above. For slides include tube slides, spiral slides, wave/bumpy slides, double slides, banister slides, mound slides, in many different materials and offering varying degrees of challenge.

16.

Focus more on pretend play / role play in play spaces

- Introduce more pretend play items in play spaces. (The cubby in Domain Reserve, fire trucks in Coronation Reserve and Market Reserve in Carisbrook are the only ones available).
- Introduce different options for pretend play, ranging from highly natural vegetated nooks with a tree stump, to formal cubbies, vehicles, boats etc.
- Install these so they can be accessed from a wheelchair – even if this is to only one section of a structure. (such as a trailer, attached to the fire engine).
- Place these items with other items that stimulate pretend play – especially near cubbies, shop counters, vegetation, nooks, logs, rocks, sand etc. to obtain the best value and enable children to connect these in their play.

17.

Introduce more low-key landscape / natural elements for play

- Enable children's games to connect play on equipment with the landscape around the equipment.
- Provide options for balancing along edges, stepping stones, narrow paths, small sculptures, rocks and boulders, logs, tree stumps, leaves, flowers and pods, groups of trees, tree 'tunnels' loose sand and dirt, pebbles and water for play.
- Deliberately place these elements in relation to suitable equipment to provide additional low-cost play value.
- Consider access and inclusion in their placement.

18.

Enhance landscape amenity, play value, climate responsiveness of local parks through tree planting and vegetation

- Plant more trees in parks and play spaces, for shade, amenity and environmental appreciation.
- Demonstrate a commitment to trees and their importance to the community.
- Encourage, resource and support expertise in horticulture and tree selection and management within the parks team to deliver high quality play environments and climate responsive parks.

GOALS AND ACTION PLAN

UPGRADE KEY DESIGN FEATURES

19.

Enhance landscape amenity, play value, climate responsiveness of local parks through tree planting and vegetation

- Prepare a list of tree species for parks and play spaces that will thrive in different conditions across the Shire that are ideal for various purposes, such as, Specimen trees, Shade trees, Trees offering play value, Habitat trees, and Windbreak trees.
- Plan site upgrades well in advance, to enable areas within a park to be identified for tree planting earlier than other works, thereby allowing them to establish early.
- Ensure that in every site plan, trees and other vegetation are included as a major element of the design and that adequate space is allocated to enable them to thrive.
- Include more shrubs and ground covers in parks for play.
- Address the absence of shrubs, ground covers and flowering plants in most parks in Central Goldfields Shire.
- Acknowledge that vegetation other than trees, can make a significant contribution to user experiences in parks as well as attract and support wildlife.
- Recognise the opportunities such planting presents and prepare plant lists from which to select suitable species for inclusion in parks for play.

20.

Maximise the value from hard courts

- Where possible provide courts as full-sized courts to maximise the number of users and activities, and to minimise conflicts and hazards associated with their placement.
- If both netball and basketball are provided on the same court, it should be a full court.
- Ensure there is sufficient surrounding runoff space and that balls are contained when a hard court is provided.
- Link the hard court to a sealed path system, which allows them to be used for wheel toys and skates.
- Place hard courts away from loose surfaces and over hanging trees, as debris and stones on courts causes accidents.

**For the specific
recommendations
for each site, refer to
Volume 3 Play Space
Assessments**

RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESERVE

OUTLINE

The section identifies all the play spaces in the Shire and includes a very high-level summary table of what was recommended in Volume 3 for each play space.

The Recommendations by Reserve table then lists:

- the action that is required for each site
- the indicative cost of works required, broken down by budget type - (operations or capital)

Cost estimates

The cost estimates provided in the action plan are indicative estimates and are not based on actual costed designs. The figures are based on the cost of recent projects observed in a range of parks for play developed around 2023 in Melbourne and other regional centres.

As each tranche of projects commences the planning process, these indicative costs will need to be updated and refined.

Interpreting the Recommendations

The recommendations overleaf are categorised into four actions-types in accordance with Council's asset management principles and budget planning processes.

Each has been divided between operational tasks and capital works and all subsequent recommendations are subject to funding being available via Council's budget process.

The descriptions of indicative works are explained in more detail for each site in the Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.

FUNDING SOURCE	ACTION TYPE	DEFINITION
OPERATING BUDGET	Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual maintenance and upkeep • Small tasks such as planting, surfaces, paths, minor repositioning of elements, improvements for access. No major new items. Includes high frequency tasks like replenishing soft fall surfaces.
	Renewal	Replacement of an existing play space on a like-for-like basis. Existing items may remain but new items added to replace equipment that has reached the end of its useful life.
CAPITAL BUDGET	Upgrade	An existing play space where the facility no longer meets the needs of the community or need to be upgraded to comply with current standards. May be in response to a park master plan and works may be delivered in stages. Some items can be retained or repositioned.
	New works	A new project; no existing play space on this site.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESERVE

Note: The recommendations contained in this table are for consideration as part of Council's integrated asset planning.

Delivery of these projects is subject to funding being available in future Council budgets.

The scope of works outlined in this strategy is indicative only and will be finalised at the time of delivery having regards to the outcomes of consultation required by Council's Community Engagement Policy.

No.	Site / Play Space	Address	Locality	Hierarchy	Action	Managed by	Indicative Cost
1	Cyril and Myra Martin Reserve	25 Whirrakee Drive	Maryborough	Local	Upgrade	CGSC	\$100k
7	PROPOSED: Maryborough Leisure Centre / John Pascoe Reserve-	40 Gillies Street	Maryborough	Regional	New works	CGSC	\$1.2 mil
9	Apex Park Playground/Bristol Hill	77 Kars Street	Maryborough	Local	Upgrade	CGSC	\$500k
6	Fraser St Playground / Gillies St	25 Fraser Street	Maryborough	Local	Upgrade	CGSC	\$400k
1A	Coronation Park Play-ground/ Lyons Wayside Park	48 Park Road	Maryborough	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$400k
12	Bowenvale Recreation Reserve	530 Timor Road/ Cousin Jack Rd	Bowenvale	Local	Renewal 2024/25	CGSC	

For the specific recommendations for each site, refer to Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESERVE

Note: The recommendations contained in this table are for consideration as part of Council's integrated asset planning.

Delivery of these projects is subject to funding being available in future Council budgets.

The scope of works outlined in this strategy is indicative only and will be finalised at the time of delivery having regards to the outcomes of consultation required by Council's Community Engagement Policy.

No.	Site / Play Space	Address	Locality	Hierarchy	Action	Managed by	Indicative Budget
13	Dunolly Public Rec. Res. Gordon Gardens	Bull Street and 27 Market St	Dunolly	District	Upgrade	CGSC	\$750k
19	Majorca Hall/ Play-ground	332 Talbot Rd	Majorca	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$100k
4	Roscholler Park East Maryborough N'hood Centre	(Cnr Spring Street and (12) Primrose St)	Maryborough	Local	Renewal	CGSC	\$100k
2	Princes Park East Playground	Lake Rd / 97 Burns St	Maryborough	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$500k
14	Orme Snowden Park	14 Davies St	Bealiba	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$100k
8	Rowland Park / Napier St Play-ground	15 Derby Rd (Cnr Clarke / Napier St)	Maryborough	Local	Renewal	CGSC	\$200k
10	Herring Reserve / Pekin Rd Play-ground	42 Pekin Rd (Cnr Douglass St)	Maryborough	Local	Renewal	CGSC	\$100k

For the specific recommendations for each site, refer to Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESERVE

Note: The recommendations contained in this table are for consideration as part of Council's integrated asset planning.

Delivery of these projects is subject to funding being available in future Council budgets.

The scope of works outlined in this strategy is indicative only and will be finalised at the time of delivery having regards to the outcomes of consultation required by Council's Community Engagement Policy.

No.	Site / Play Space	Address	Locality	Hierarchy	Action	Managed by	Indicative Budget
20	Talbot Pioneers Reserve	36 Scandina- via Cres.	Talbot	District	Upgrade	CGSC	\$500k
17	Bucknall Reserve Playground/ Bland Reserve	MaCallum Street/ 50 Green St	Carisbrook	Local	Consult re future of play space	CGSC	TBC
16	Carisbrook Park/ Market Reserve Playground	24 Powlett St. (Green/ Burch/ Urquhart Sts)	Carisbrook	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$75k
21	Daisy Hill Commu- nity Centre Play- ground	11 Dehnerts Rd	Daisy Hill	District	Renewal	CGSC	\$75k
11	Station Domain Playground	48 Burns Street, (Cnr Nolan, Station Sts)	Maryborough	Local	Renewal	CGSC	\$50k

For the specific recommendations for each site, refer to Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS BY RESERVE

Note: The recommendations contained in this table are for consideration as part of Council's integrated asset planning.

Delivery of these projects is subject to funding being available in future Council budgets.

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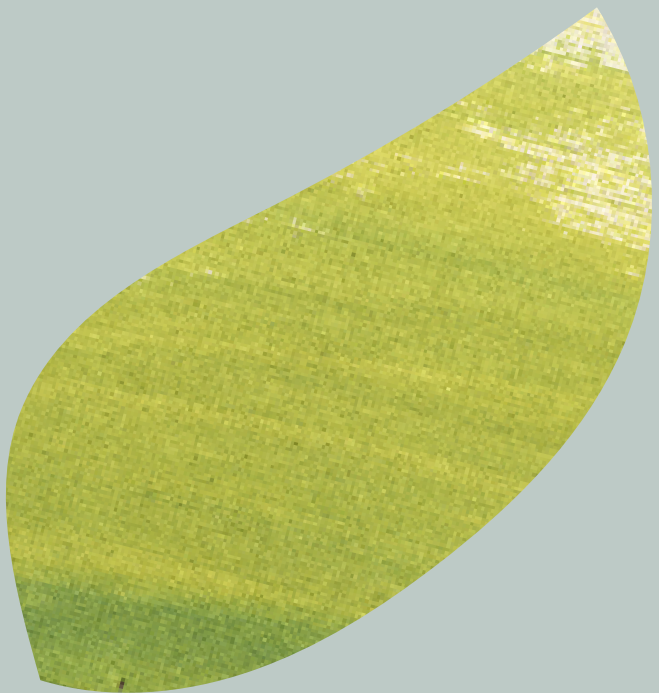
No.	Site/Play Space	Address	Locality	Hierarchy	Action	Managed by CGSC?	Indicative Budget
22	Goldfields Reservoir Playground	89 Derby Rd, (off Ballarat Rd.)	Maryborough	District	Renewal	Uncertain	\$50k
15	Carisbrook Recreation Reserve	6 Hare St	Carisbrook	Local	Upgrade	CGSC	\$350k
3	Maryborough Caravan Park Playground	7 Holyrood St	Maryborough	Local	Renewal	CGSC	\$50k

For the specific recommendations for each site, refer to Volume 3 Play Space Assessments.

Design Guidelines and Best Practice in Play Spaces

This section:

- introduces the importance of play, and the benefits of play spaces to children and to the community,
- provides Guidelines of 10 key design characteristics and key features that provide added value for play, even where standard play equipment is used.



THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY & THE BENEFITS OF PLAY SPACES

Play is essential for developing social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills necessary for children to grow into happy, healthy and resilient adults.

Play is also vital for children's sensory integration and development. Sensory health is foundational to learning and is vital for human well being.

Apart from the five well-known external senses:

- touch,
- taste,
- smell,
- hearing, and
- vision
- children need to develop their internal senses:
- body awareness (proprioception),
- movement systems (vestibular senses) and
- internal monitoring of the entire body- (interoceptive senses).

Play spaces are exceptionally well placed to provide all of these benefits.

Activities such as swinging, rocking, spinning, bouncing, sliding, jumping, hanging upside down, balancing; plus activities that use the large muscle groups for climbing, digging, pushing and pulling, all contribute to the development of the internal senses.

Play spaces can also be designed to enhance the external sensory experiences through textures (in plant materials, sand and dirt, building materials, surfaces and art works); through smell and taste (plant materials); through colour shape and form) and through sound, both natural and man-made.

The following guidelines are a brief summary of these and other aspects of play space design.

Many children, especially in urban areas, have limited space at home to play and are increasingly dependent on public designated spaces for their play needs

Council provides play spaces because they offer multiple benefits; to the individual, to families and to the broader community.



DESIGN GUIDELINES & BEST PRACTICE IN PLAY SPACES

Ten design characteristics for delivering better play spaces

The following pages provide an overview of 10 key design characteristics that play spaces need to address.

The design guide describes some key features that provide added value for play, even where standard play equipment is used.

1. PLAY VALUE
2. SOCIAL INCLUSION
3. NATURE, ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY
4. OPEN ENDED PLAY
5. DESIGN FOR IMAGINATIVE /CREATIVE PLAY
6. CLIMBING AND RISK TAKING
7. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
8. FLEXIBILITY AND ADAPTABILITY
9. A LANDMARK OR SIGNATURE FEATURE
10. INTER-RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ELEMENTS

These guidelines should form part of any future design brief for play space upgrades or replacements.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

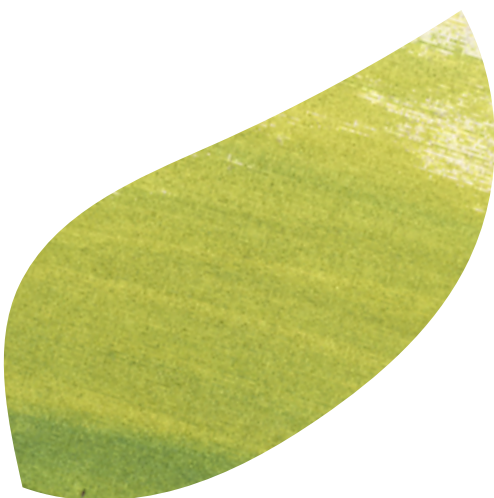
GUIDELINE 1. PLAY VALUE

Because a park and play space represents a long-term capital investment for Council and is an important resource for the community and for the environment, it is vital that all planning, design and management processes deliver the best possible value over a long time.

Value is not only represented in the assets and their monetary value (even though these are considerable). It is also the benefit to children (and society) from all the developmental opportunities that quality play experiences deliver.

The community benefits from having ecologically stable, healthy environments in parks, from the opportunities to meet one another in highly amenable outdoor settings, and from opportunities to build social relationships.

There are many and varied ways of achieving these goals on the ground. Because it is unlikely that any one small park will achieve all of the points described overleaf, it is emphasised that the system of parks across a precinct or whole municipality has to be considered, and each park design needs to consider and complement what is provided nearby.



Although play value itself is subjective and difficult to quantify, the highest play value is obtained where:

- a park or play space provides all user/s with some basic opportunities for immediate play, in the forms of social /physical /imaginative/cognitive/creative play,
- where there are also opportunities for children to explore further and adapt some elements in the space for their own purposes,
- where children can combine any of the types of play activities (social /physical /imaginative/cognitive/creative play) in different ways to suit themselves over time, for repeat visits. This relates to the placement of items such as equipment, planting etc to one another.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 2. ACCESS & SOCIAL INCLUSION

Successful spaces welcome residents and visitors of all ages and abilities to meet and interact in a space that is accessible, appealing and welcoming.

How this is done will depend upon the nature of the park and the budget. It may for example include:

- physical accessibility and good wayfinding to include people with low vision and people using mobility device,
- accessible picnic tables positioned centrally,
- well-located seats connected by a path and shaded by a tree,
- one or more picnic shelters with furniture and barbecues,
- selective fencing of sites to address hazards and minimise danger to neurodiverse children who may abscond (see later in this section), and
- a choice of opportunities to include people of all gender identities, people of all cultures and age groups.

Key features:

- Furniture must be of an accessible design and located so that people with mobility aids/wheelchairs can be part of the social space.
- Seating needs to be positioned to provide a choice of both sun and shade.
- Seating to be located where adults can interact with each other and with playing children.
- Seating and furniture to be located on a seamless accessible path system.
- The space should include opportunities for older people, and should facilitate intergenerational interaction.

Consider the following elements:

- Seamless path system
- Accessible seating
- Shelter or shade protection from wind
- Location and configuration of seating that encourages visitors to interact with each other and supervise children
- 'Doughnut' idea – a central location for the social space surrounded by the play activities
- Selective fencing of sites.



Seamless path system to accessible play space

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 2 CONT. FENCING



Facilities accessible by all users



Special site features encourage social interaction



Fencing may be required around parks for play or play spaces to:

- Separate users from a hazard, such as a road, railway, or water body; especially if the space is very small.
- Assist families with a member who has a disability. (i.e., neuro diverse people who may be constantly distracted or experience sensory overloads); assist parents with limited mobility, or who have multiple young children.
- Restrict vehicle access
- Provide a clear boundary to a public space
- Contribute a streetscape, local identity or historic character
- Meet regulatory requirements for early childhood centres, or ponds (these have their own requirements).

Note that:

Fences are only as good as their gate, and failed locks and gates are expensive to maintain.

Fencing can create inadvertent barriers for people using mobility devices, double prams and those that cannot unlatch gates on their own.

It is desirable to use the Council website to promote fenced play spaces as many families depend on these.

Positioning of fences

Fences should not be used to 'cage in' play equipment, as it will restrict play from spilling out into the surrounding park. It is preferable to fence whole or substantial parts of parks. Where this is not feasible, fences need to be positioned carefully to suit the setting, to avoid visual intrusion, and to include seats/tables trees, and open grassed areas for other play within the fenced area.

The positioning of fences and gates needs to accommodate easy access by people with disabilities, so the connections of paths with gates and then the facility within the fence has to be a primary consideration.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 2 CONT. FENCING

Design of fencing

It is reasonable that there a range of fence types will be required, and these have widely varying cost implications.

1800mm high fences in District or Regional play spaces can support the visits of families with children with a range of disabilities and/or larger numbers of children. These may also need to be of a heritage design in some places.

Select some contemporary products and materials that lift the appearance of parks, meet any heritage requirements, and fulfil the function/purpose of the fence, at reasonable cost.

Fences can be made less visually intrusive through choosing a colour such as slate grey or black alternatively a fence/ barrier can be designed to incorporate artistic elements to make a feature of the fence.

Where latches may be problematic consider box gates to slow down children exiting the site.

Fences comprising simple cables, wires and chains can cause serious hazards for people who may not be able to see them.

Treated pine barriers and bollards should be progressively phased out and replaced with a more attractive and functional design, with gaps /gates for wheelchair access where required.

Fences with horizontal wires or rails should also be discontinued as rails are easily climbed, and wires/cables are easily damaged.

Fences and gates need to be checked when equipment is checked as these are easily damaged and may restrict accessor cause injury.

'Soft' barriers

Depending upon the site, it may sometimes be appropriate to provide more low key barriers comprising hedges or other planting along part of the perimeter.

These can slow down an absconding child, but some families will need more complete barriers to meet their needs.



Station Domain Playground in Maryborough has successfully enclosed the whole play space within the fence line and included planting, play equipment, paths and social amenities.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 3. NATURE PLAY, ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND AMENITY

Why nature?

There are numerous reasons why nature is important to children.

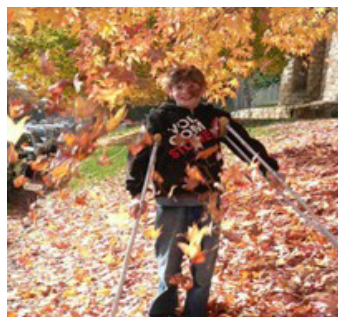
The future of the planet

An important over-arching reason is that future generations need to be familiar with, curious and passionate about natural systems in order to protect the environment.

As more than 50% of the world's population now lives in cities, this will become increasingly challenging to provide meaningful connections with nature for the world's population.

The community still values this connection but needs to protect it for the future.

Parks are part of an ecological system and have an impact on habitat, ground water, air quality and other environmental factors.

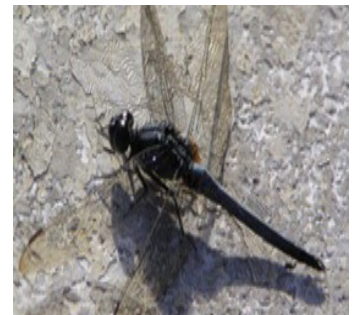
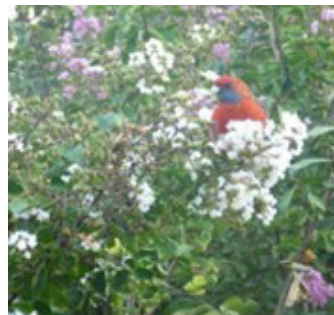


Ever changing intrigue

Natural environments and materials change constantly, as they grow, change with seasons, develop with age, and attract interesting live creatures such as birds, mammals, reptiles and small invertebrates. Children find intrigue in observing the minutiae of nature close-up as well as enjoying the grandeur of large trees and natural systems such as creeks, forests and wetlands.

Variety

Because natural and living things are not manufactured, they offer far more variety and complexity than most purpose-built play structures. These require a child to think about how they will handle the challenge of climbing a tree, for example, and allow children to develop their judgement and skills as they do so.



Loose materials for nature play

The quality described as "Open ended-ness" is discussed further in Item 4 in this section. Natural materials are ultimately open-ended as children are free to gather and use them in their imaginative games in whichever way, they see fit.

Flowers, leaves, gumnuts, sand, soil, pebbles, twigs, branches and logs are just some of the natural materials that children frequently use in their imaginative and creative play. These materials are frequently used alongside and inside more traditional play structures and enhance the play there.

This demonstrates the importance of placing natural elements close to other settings for play. See following images.



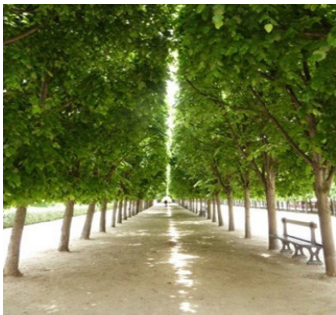
DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 3. NATURE PLAY, ENVIRONMENTAL INTEGRITY AND AMENITY

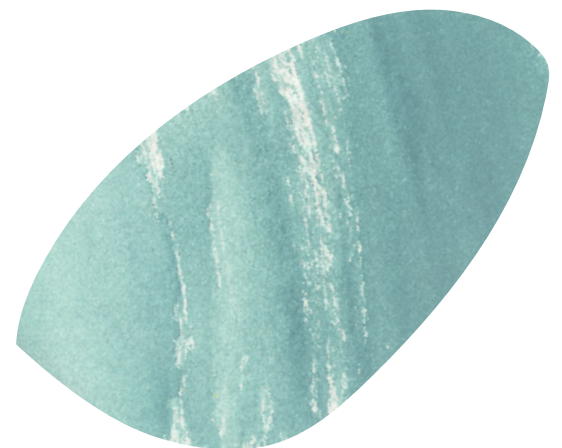


Special Interest

Natural elements sometimes define some very beautiful and appealing spaces which children as well as adults enjoy.



Other Natural Elements



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 4. OPEN ENDED PLAY AND IMAGINATIVE CREATIVE PLAY

Typically, most parks provide for play via a designated play space that is likely to include some play equipment within a bordered area of mulch. The same park sometimes also offer less defined, natural, or vegetated spaces, areas of grass, a hard surfaced path or court, and other man-made or natural elements.

One of the purposes of this strategy report is to encourage the blurring of the boundary between these distinct zones, as the less defined (open-ended) areas often offer children experiences that they value, when they are ready to explore further, and that are not found in the mulched equipment zones.

Providing opportunities to explore and discover beyond the border of the mulch may require a staged process in a small park:

Step one requires the availability (or creation) of interesting bush, planting, creeks, terrain or other elements in the park that interest children (and also may simultaneously provide valuable habitat, bio-diversity etc.). See also the previous Item.

Step two is to create a relationship between this resource and the play space (Item 10 below explains the importance of this).

Step three may require the inclusion of an 'invitation' to explore further-- for example by providing an inviting bridge or pathway out of the designated play space, some stepping stones or some sculptured forms or



The edges of a space can bring additional interest to the play.

Blurred boundaries between play equipment and natural areas encourages more interaction between the two zones

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 4. OPEN ENDED PLAY AND IMAGINATIVE CREATIVE PLAY

Design for imaginative /creative play

Some features in most play spaces will typically need to be purpose-built for particular types of play (such as swings).

However, at least some elements in the space should be adaptable for different uses, or have no particular purpose, in order to provide for children's own imaginative / creative play.

This characteristic is described as "open ended" and provides scope for children to invent games of their own. This kind of self-directed play, appropriating elements in the physical environment for a variety of purposes limited only by the child's imagination, is fundamentally important to children.

Typically, this kind of play incorporates imaginative games, usually some kind of role play or fantasy, may utilise loose materials found on site (sand, leaves, flowers etc.), and uses the physical environment as a prop (small corners, changes of level, climbing, hiding spots etc.) depending on the ages of the children. Research has shown that this kind of play rarely relates to an adult devised theme set by the play space designer (such as a boat or train or other idea) and comes from the children themselves.

This is the exact equivalent of the child finding the box more interesting rather than the present at Christmas time, precisely because the child (rather than an adult or manufacturer) can determine how to play with it. In parks this is a difficult issue to explain as well as to successfully implement. We therefore recommend a compromise, a core of purpose-built elements which do provide what adults freely recognize as provision for play, but coupled with other design features which satisfy the possibilities for open-ended play sought by children.

All of the natural elements described in Item No. 2 discussed previously contribute to this open-ended play, as do spaces that:

- are flexible, adaptable and multi-purpose (refer to Item No 7)
- those with some complexity (No 8)
- and where the relationships between spaces (No 10) benefit this type of play.

Examples of some design features that allow children some scope to interpret their play are included below.



Some features have no distinct purpose and so can serve any purpose imagined by children.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 5. CLIMBING & RISK TAKING

Climbing to develop life skills

There is no doubt that children need to be able to test, develop and extend their abilities as they grow older.

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

Children learn to manage risk by experimenting, finding out their limitations, failing and trying again.

The importance of risk taking

Risk is an inherent part of life and attempts to eliminate all forms of risk-taking behaviour are unrealistic and counter-productive, resulting in children unable to recognize or deal with serious dangers when they do arise.

Risk taking is important in developing critical thinking, decision making and judgment, and in achieving a sense of mastery and skill-development.

It is preferable that children have opportunities to learn to take graduated risk in settings where the price of failure is not life threatening or serious injury.

What kinds of challenge?

Opportunities for children to climb and extend their skills progressively in public play spaces therefore make a vitally important contribution to this skill development in our children.

This can be done with purpose-built climbing structures as well as in trees and in other incidental settings such as boulders, walls and edges. When these are provided as part of a playground, Australian Standards for playgrounds guide the design in order to reduce the risk of injury.

When climbing opportunities present themselves outside designated play areas, these should be recognised for their value, and the benefits as well as any risks need to be weighed up (if any assessment is required).

Design for challenge

Play spaces need to:

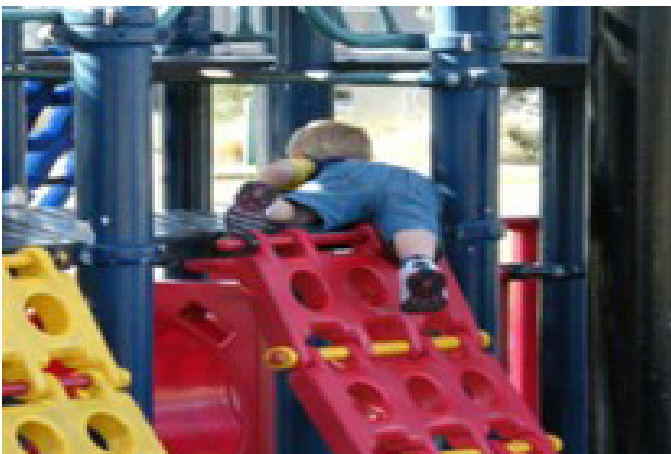
- Offer children the chance to acquire skills at their own pace
- Allow children to opt in or out by choice.
- Provide some children support in learning to climb.
- Provide some climbing opportunities that are not purpose designed (such as trees) and therefore allow children to test their skills and judgment, within the relative safety of a park.
- Provide choice of degrees of challenge or children will seek it elsewhere.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 5. CLIMBING & RISK TAKING

Consider the ergonomics of structures that are purpose built for climbing



Aim to make climbing sociable, going somewhere; connected.



Aim to also provide some climbing opportunities that are not purpose designed (such as trees) and therefore allow children to test their skills and judgment, within the relative safety of a park.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 6. VARIED FORMS OF MOVEMENTS

Movement plays a key role as children grow and develop, aiding their:

- Progression from primitive reflexes to high levels of control and fine motor skills
- Development and integration of the senses
- Balance and co-ordination
- Hand-eye co-ordination
- Perception of the body in space
- Ability to perceive distance
- Perceptions of weight, gravity and speed
- Understanding of cause and effect, as well as the ability to manage the risks discussed on the previous page.

From birth, babies work on balance and hearing and connecting these to vision, through movement and play. All the senses thus learn to work together.

In addition to the five 'external' senses, three internal ('hidden') senses play a huge role in children's development:

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

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

Play equipment is excellent at providing for these forms of movement and there is a huge variety of products from which to choose.

When selecting equipment that caters for movement, consider the over-arching principles that have already been mentioned in this document, such as:

- Diversity. Make sure that any equipment selected for one park offers a different choice or style of play from other nearby parks.
- Inclusive and accessible – make sure that within every precinct child with a disability and of different ages can find some moving equipment that suits their needs (e.g., children with a physical disability, toddlers, teenagers etc.). There are more items on the market now that offer good back support as well as wheelchair access such as carousels, rockers and mini trampolines (bouncing facilities).
- Adaptable/multi- purpose (refer overleaf.) Sociable (e.g. swinging or sliding together).



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 6. VARIED FORMS OF MOVEMENTS



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 7. FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, & MULTI-PURPOSE ACTIVITIES

Parks, play spaces and equipment that provide a diversity of flexible and adaptable activities deliver better value to the community than items which only have a narrow purpose or a narrow group who can use them. For example, consider items that can be used by:

- children either in a group, or by themselves,
- younger children, teens and adults,
- able and less able children, and
- children in a variety of ways.

This does not mean that across multiple spaces or a locality or catchment, we cannot provide items that are quite specialised. It does mean that thought should be given to who might be physically able to use any of the play items selected for a play space, and if some groups are unlikely to be able to use it, (for reasons of age, ability, physical size etc.) consider where they can find a similar experience within the precinct.

This forces some consideration of diversity as well as social inclusion between spaces and between parks. Where budgets are limited, it is preferable to select play items on the basis of whether many different people can use them, and in how many different ways.

Play elements that are open-ended, as discussed previously will by definition be adaptable and provide for a variety of ways in which children can utilise them for their own purposes.

Choose items which can be used by as many different ages, sizes and abilities of users as possible.

Programmable spaces are adaptable to the needs of the group. Photo courtesy Darebin City Council Youth Dept.



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 7. FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, & MULTI-PURPOSE ACTIVITIES

Spatial complexity



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



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 7. FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, & MULTI-PURPOSE ACTIVITIES



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

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

Long narrow spaces (such as at an airport terminal) seem to suggest running.

When you can't see all of a space it encourages you to explore, play chase or play hide and seek games.

Routes up and down, over and through, and complex levels that offer opportunities to run and climb through three-dimensional space provide benefits for play that are not available in flat spaces with a simple array of open decks and thin posts.

Where solid walls, plants, hedges, fences, or other built features define smaller spaces, children adapt these 'rooms' for imaginative/role play in smaller groups.

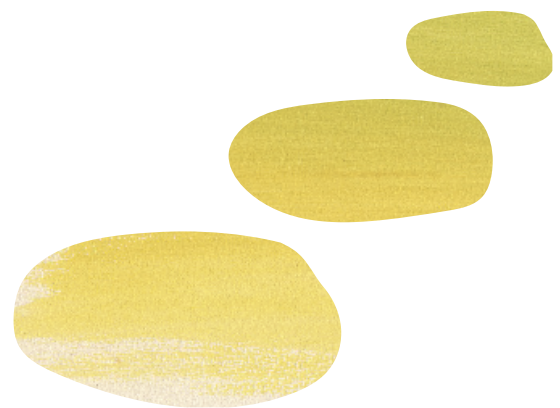
Changes in levels within a park or play space provide opportunities to look down, roll down, jump down, balance along and enjoy in any number of ways that children will devise for themselves.

Quite small, seemingly insignificant sub-spaces within a park can have value to children. The divisions that separate and define individual spaces might be quite subtle.

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

Some games require smaller spaces and simply would not occur in flat, open, exposed terrain.

This topic is closely related to the issues raised in the discussion on natural elements and loose materials (Item No 2) and open-ended design features (Item No. 4).



DESIGN GUIDELINES

GUIDELINE 8. A LANDMARK OR SIGNATURE FEATURE

Many parks are memorable to children and families because there is something special that gives a unique local identity to the park or play space. Children might give the park a local name like “egg park”, “rocket park”, or “train park”. Such “signature” items, no matter how small, are also a good landmark for parents. This is important because parks dominated by natural elements may not always ‘read’ as a play space at first, and parents may not think to take their children there.

Inherent magical qualities

Some places have features that immediately attract children to play because of some inherent qualities (affordances) that demand children’s attention. Examples may include a unique tree or iconic structure, a special landform, a hiding space, or some other special feature. Items that are special to children might not be those that are obvious to adults.

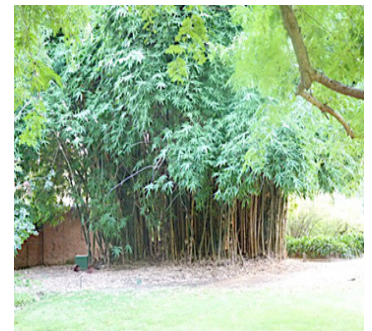
Every park should have something special that gives it a character and identity. This does not need to be very large or expensive. It may be a natural feature such as a natural outcrop of rock or a special tree. If a park has such a feature, it should be retained and protected. Children will sometimes have particular activities that they only play in that place. Some examples are shown following.

Inter relationships between elements

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

There are two broad aims as described below.

- Avoid conflicts:
- Separate busy active zones from sedentary play
- Separate noisy from quiet
- Separate vulnerable children from boisterous more risky activity areas
- Some items need to be located where vulnerable children don’t cross their path.



Maximise the benefit from locating two zones next to one another

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



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

DESIGN GUIDELINES

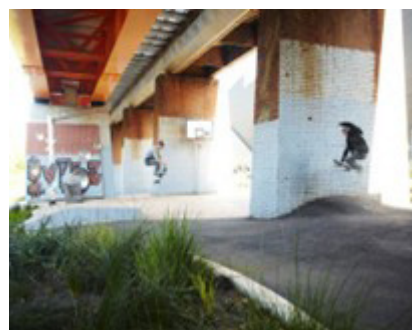
GUIDELINE 7. FLEXIBILITY, ADAPTABILITY, & MULTI-PURPOSE ACTIVITIES

Co-location of play

Combine social interaction/ observing areas with an activity area such as for older children and teens. Older children love to watch each other and to interact socially, so linking social /seating spaces with an active area such as skating areas, ball courts or an exciting feature like a flying fox work well together.



Sand play needs to be protected from busy activities



Combined social and activity areas for older children/ teens

Appendices

Appendix 1. Inventory of play spaces in Central Goldfields

Play space no. From safety audit	Site/Play space name	Alternative Park Name	Street Address	Locality	Postcode	Land ownership	Management responsibility
14	Orme Snowden Park	-	14 Davies Street (Corner of Davies St and Cochrane St)	Bealiba	3475	Crown	CGSC
12	Timor Rd Playground/ Timor Tennis Playground	Bowenvale Public Recreation Reserve (526 Timor Rd)	530 Timor Road/ Cnr Cousin Jack Road	Bowenvale	3465	Crown	CGSC
15	Carisbrook Recreation Reserve	Carisbrook Tennis Courts Playground	6 Hare Street Carisbrook	Carisbrook	3464	Crown	CGSC
17	Bucknall Reserve Playground	Bland Reserve	MaCallum Street/ 50 Green Street	Carisbrook	3464	Crown	CGSC
16	Carisbrook Park/ Carisbrook Public Recreation Reserve and Depot	Market Reserve Playground/ Carisbrook Park	24 Powlett St. Bounded by Green, Burch and Urquat Streets	Carisbrook	3464	Crown	CGSC
21	Daisy Hill Community Centre Playground		11 Dehnerts Road,	Daisy Hill	3465	Crown	CGSC
13A	Deledio Recreation Reserve		20 Elgin St	Dunolly	3472	Crown	Committee
13	Dunolly Public Recreation Reserve (Tennis Club and Skate Park)	Gordon Gardens Recreation Reserve	Bull Street and 27 Market Street	Dunolly	3465	Crown / DEECA COM	CGSC

Appendix 1 cont. Inventory of play spaces in Central Goldfields

Play space no. From safety audit	Site/Play space name	Alternative Park Name	Street Address	Locality	Post-code	Land ownership	Management responsibility
19	Majorca Reserve Playground	Majorca Hall Playground	332 Talbot Road	Majorca	3465	Crown	CGSC
4	Roscholler Park Playground	East Maryborough Neighbourhood Centre Playground	65370.021 (Cnr Spring Street and (12) Primrose Street)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
8	Rowland Park Playground	Children's Playground (Napier Street)	15 Derby (Cnr Clarke Street and Napier Street)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
1	Whirrakee Drive Playground / Whirrakee Park Playground	Quinn St Playground	25 Whirrakee Drive	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
10	Herring Reserve Playground	Pekin Road Playground	42 Pekin Road (Cnr Douglass Street and Pekin Road)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
9	Apex Park Playground	Bristol Hill	77 Kars Street, Maryborough	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
6	Fraser St Playground		25 Fraser Street	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
11	Station Domain Playground		48 BURNS STREET. (Cnr Nolan Street and Burns Street/ Cnr Burns & Station Street)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC

Appendix 1 cont. Inventory of play spaces in Central Goldfields

Play space no. From safety audit	Site/Play space name	Alternative Park Name	Street Address	Locality	Postcode	Land ownership	Management responsibility
2	Princes Park East Playground	Princes Park Lake Victoria	Lake rd. off Burns Street, 97 Burns St	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
1a	Coronation Park Playground	Lyons Wayside Park	48 Park Road (in parcel named 36 PARK ROAD MARYBOROUGH 3465)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
3	Maryborough Caravan Park Playground	Princes Park	7 Holyrood Street	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
20	Talbot Pioneers Reserve	Talbot Pioneer Park & Playground	36 Scandinavia Crescent, Talbot	Talbot	3371	Crown	CGSC
7	Maryborough Leisure Centre	John Pascoe Reserve, Maryborough/ Skate Park	40 GILLIES STREET MARYBOROUGH	Maryborough	3464	Crown	Unclear re skate park
22	Goldfields Reservoir Playground	Goldfields Reservoir Nature Playground	89 DERBY ROAD, Maryborough, (off Ballarat Rd)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	No

Appendix 1 cont. Inventory of play spaces in Central Goldfields

Play space no. From safety audit	Site/Play space name	Alternative Park Name	Street Address	Locality	Post-code	Land ownership	Management responsibility
2	Princes Park East Play-ground	Princes Park Lake Victoria	Lake rd. off Burns Street, 97 Burns St	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
1a	Coronation Park Play-ground	Lyons Wayside Park	48 Park Road (in parcel named 36 PARK ROAD MARYBOROUGH 3465)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
3	Maryborough Caravan Park Playground	Princes Park	7 Holyrood Street	Maryborough	3465	Crown	CGSC
20	Talbot Pioneers Reserve	Talbot Pioneer Park & Playground	36 Scandinavia Crescent, Talbot	Talbot	3371	Crown	CGSC
7	Maryborough Leisure Centre	John Pascoe Reserve, Maryborough/ Skate Park	40 GILLIES STREET MARYBOROUGH	Maryborough	3464	Crown	Unclear re skate park
22	Goldfields Reservoir Play-ground	Goldfields Reservoir Nature Playground	89 DERBY ROAD, Maryborough, (off Ballarat Rd)	Maryborough	3465	Crown	No

Appendix 2. List of Schools

SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

Play Equipment	Maryborough Education Centre	102-192 Balaclava Road	Maryborough	3465
Play Equipment	St. Augustine's Primary School	58-64 Burke Street	Maryborough	3465
Play Equipment	Hillview College	21 Kars St,	Maryborough	3465
Play Equipment	Dunolly Primary School	Tarnagulla Road	Dunolly	3465
Play Equipment	Carisbrook Primary School.	Camp Street, Carisbrook	Carisbrook	3464
Play Equipment	Bealiba Primary School	Grant Street, Bealiba	Bealiba	3475
Play Equipment	Timor Primary School	395 Bet Bet Creek Rd	Timor	3465