ITEM 2 PLAY WOLLONGONG STRATEGY 2014-2024

Over the past 12 months, Council has been working with the children and stakeholders to develop a strategy to guide the future planning, development and management of children’s play spaces across our city. This process resulted in a draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024, informed by a suite of supporting documents including a Background Research Report, Children’s Demographic Profile, Community Engagement (Phase 1) Report and Current Situation Report.

The draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 was placed on public exhibition from 24 March – 30 April 2014. This report provides a summary of the feedback received from the community and the updated Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 for consideration by Council.

RECOMMENDATION

1 Council adopt the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024, including the:
   - Play Wollongong Background Research Report;
   - Play Wollongong Children’s Demographic Profile Report;
   - Play Wollongong Engagement Report (Phase 1 – November 2013); and

2 Council endorse incorporating the proposed key principles and strategies contained within the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-24, as a key deliverable within the Draft Annual Plan 2014-15.


ATTACHMENTS

1 Public Exhibition Engagement Report
2 Community Feedback Response
4 Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 (amended version)

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Peter Coyte, Manager Property and Recreation
Authorised by: Greg Doyle, Director Corporate and Community Services – Creative, Engaged and Innovative City
BACKGROUND

Following the adoption of the Wollongong 2022 Community Strategic Plan, Council’s Annual Plan 2012-13 identified the key deliverable of ‘Review the Playground Policy and develop a Playground Framework for implementation’.

Subsequently, Council’s Playground Provision, Development and Management Policy was scheduled for review in July 2013 as part of Council’s 2012-15 rolling review of the policy register.

The existing policy was adopted by Council in July 2008 and helped to implement the strategic directions of Council’s Strategic Framework for Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities, Planning People Places (2006).

The policy identified a play space hierarchy, prioritised play space development focused on the establishment of key recreation destinations, reinforced a commitment to safety and committed to the development of a ‘playground planning framework’ to guide the future planning, development and management of the city’s play spaces.

The adoption of this policy in 2008 was considered to be a significant shift for Council in its approach towards facilitating children’s play opportunities. Historically, the distribution of Wollongong’s play spaces with designated play equipment was primarily based on Council Wards. It was recognised that this approach did not consider Council’s broader strategic direction, local need, social equity or financial sustainability.

Since 2008, Council has continued to renew play spaces based on asset condition and has also embraced engaging children and families in the planning and delivery of play spaces, including those located at the Wollongong Botanic Garden, Brighton Lawn (Wollongong Harbour), Towradgi Park, Thirroul Beach Reserve and Bruce Park (Warrawong). The outcomes associated with these engagement activities and a targeted Phase 1 Engagement process involving a stakeholder workshop and focus groups with primary school children, helped to inform the development of a draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024.

Play Wollongong 2014-2024 is a ten year strategy focusing on play opportunities for 0-12 year olds across the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA). Play Wollongong consists of a Strategy and four supporting documents including a Background Research Report, Children’s Demographic Profile, Community Engagement Report (Phase 1), and Current Situation Report (January 2014).

The Play Wollongong Strategy focuses specifically on 0-12 year olds, however, in the future it is envisaged that we will consider developing strategies around play opportunities for other age groups such as young people and older persons.
This strategy sees Council’s approach to play based on six key principles that will be implemented through a number of detailed strategies. The key principles are based on:

- Quality
- Access
- Social Equity
- Meaningful Engagement
- Inclusive Play
- Nature Play
- Safety

A set of indicators are also presented within the strategy to allow Council to measure the strategy’s success throughout its implementation. These include seeking an increase in the following:

- Community satisfaction with play spaces
- Community awareness, knowledge and reference to play spaces
- Partnerships between Council and other organisations that result in facilitating play opportunities in public open space
- Opportunities for children and families to have their say in the renewal of a play space
- Level of satisfaction (%) with accessibility and appearance of play spaces
- Percentage of community who utilise play spaces on a weekly basis
- Percentage of residents who cycle or walk to play spaces
- Play opportunities in areas experiencing high levels of social disadvantage

Further, an indicator based on seeking a decrease in the number of play spaces in condition rating >3 (on a scale of 1-5) is proposed within the strategy.

The draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 and supporting documents were placed on public exhibition as part of Phase 2 Engagement, between 24 March and 30 April 2014.

The community feedback received through the exhibition of the draft strategy has been reviewed (attachment 2) and was generally supportive. Accordingly, minor amendments have been made to the strategy. These amendments are based on the addition of words as detailed below in bold font:

- Key Strategy 2.1 - ‘Locate play spaces where they can be easily accessed by walking and cycling.’

- Key Strategy 2.2 – ‘Where appropriate, provide supporting infrastructure such as cycle/pathways, crossings, parking, bicycle racks and signage to increase accessibility.’
Key Strategy 6.2 – ‘Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing, smoke-free signage and amenities when designing play spaces.’

Other amendments are limited to the design of the document, including numbering the key strategies and removing references to the document being a draft version for public exhibition.

The resulting Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 considers current and future need, best practice research, social equity and sustainable resource allocations and is based on community engagement outcomes.

PROPOSAL

This report recommends Council note the feedback provided by the community and adopt the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 and endorse incorporating the proposed key principles and strategies contained within the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-24, as a key deliverable within the Draft Annual Plan 2014/15–2017/18.

The following key principles and proposed strategies form the basis of Recommendation 2 contained within this report.

Principle 1 - Quality play opportunities are equitably distributed across the city, including large regional play spaces and smaller local play spaces.

Strategies

1.1 Pursue additional play space opportunities where there is an under-supply, in areas where there are lots of children and/or where the community experiences disadvantage.

1.2 Explore partnerships with other organisations where there are limited open spaces to create play options at locations, such as shopping and community centres.

1.3 Allocate financial resources fairly, based on planning area need, not just play space condition.

1.4 Balance expenditure between large, medium and small play spaces.

1.5 In consultation with the community, remove or relocate play spaces where there is an over-supply or existing spaces are underused.

1.6 Undertake needs based assessments, site assessments and consult with the community before developing new play spaces.

1.7 Implement a play space hierarchy and use standard features across the city’s play spaces.
Principle 2 - Play Spaces are easily accessed by walking and encourage healthy living and independent access by children.

Strategies

2.1 Locate play spaces where they can be easily accessed by walking and cycling.

2.2 Where appropriate, provide supporting infrastructure such as pathways, crossings, parking, bicycle racks and signage to increase accessibility.

2.3 Promote play spaces and work in partnership with Healthy Cities Illawarra to maintain the Play Illawarra website.

2.4 Work with developers to ensure play spaces in new release areas are well located and designed, and offer a high level of play value.

2.5 Retain play spaces in areas where there are high numbers of resident children and physical barriers to accessing alternate play spaces.

2.6 Work in collaboration with the community on the location of play spaces within open space.

2.7 Consider community champions to drive projects which activate play spaces.

Principle 3 - Meaningful engagement is undertaken with the community including children, in relation to play space planning, provision and management.

Strategies

3.1 Roll out a program of planning area-based engagement when considering the renewal, enhancement or removal of play spaces.

3.2 Consult with children and the community on the future use of a space where existing play equipment needs to be removed.

3.3 Ensure children’s consultation is informed by best practice.

3.4 Work with the local community and engage children and young people when planning or renewing play spaces in areas with a history of anti-social behaviour.

3.5 Involve children and the broader community in the design of public art features and in accordance with Council’s Public Art Policy.

Principle 4 - Play spaces are well designed, inclusive of all ages and abilities and encourage participation in play.

Strategies

4.1 Provide regional and district level play spaces which have a high number of accessible features and cater to a broad range of ages.

4.2 Provide neighbourhood and local play spaces with equipment that’s flexible and suits a broad age range.
4.3 Where possible, select play space elements that support inclusive play.

4.4 Consider the needs of all children and their carers in the design of play spaces including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

4.5 Consider informal natural play spaces or low cost/high value equipment such as swing sets where an existing play space is not deemed suitable for renewal.

4.6 Promote awareness of existing play spaces and features for children with disabilities.

**Principle 5 - Informal play spaces and the provision of natural play elements is given priority, recognising the benefits of connecting with nature.**

**Strategies**

5.1 Create informal play spaces within local parks using natural elements due to their high play value and the efficient use of budget.

5.2 Increase the diversity of play opportunities by including informal play in the design of public and other spaces across the city.

5.3 Include public art and infrastructure that offers play value in public spaces.

5.4 Include landscaped features in the design of regional and district level play spaces.

**Principle 6 - Play spaces will provide children with an appropriate level of risk and challenge while complying with relevant safety standards.**

**Strategies**

6.1 Implement a maintenance schedule to ensure that play spaces are well maintained and available for community use.

6.2 Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing, smoke free signage and amenities when designing play spaces.

6.3 Look for opportunities to educate the community on the importance of play, natural play, and children taking safe risks.

6.4 Remove play equipment which is unsafe, regardless of whether there’s sufficient budget to renew it.

In adopting the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024, it is proposed that Council revoke the existing Playground Provision Development and Management Council Policy (2008).

**CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

This project was a collaborative effort across a range of Council teams and divisions including Community, Cultural and Economic Development, Environmental Strategy and Planning, and Infrastructure, Strategy and Planning.
Extensive community engagement was also undertaken throughout the development of the draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024, beginning with various children’s engagement activities as part of the planning and delivery of play space renewals.

Targeted engagement activities involving a stakeholder workshop with professionals in children’s development, as well as three children’s focus groups with local primary schools, were undertaken as part of ‘Phase 1 Engagement’ to help inform the development of the draft strategy.

The broader community and stakeholders were also involved as part of ‘Phase 2 Engagement’ through the public exhibition of the draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 and supporting documents. The public exhibition period occurred over a five week period between 24 March – 30 April 2014, to maximise the opportunity to provide Council with feedback on the draft strategy. The public exhibition of the draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 was promoted to the community by the following mechanisms:

- Media release
- The Advertiser (five advertisements)
- WCC libraries
- WCC customer service
- Social media
- WCC website including Bang the Table online engagement
- Presentation to the Active Transport Reference Group
- Email notification to key stakeholders including the neighbourhood forums, children’s services agencies/professionals and those identified on Council’s children and families contact list which included schools, preschools, child care centres and children and family service organisations.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

Wollongong 2022

This report relates to the commitments of Council as contained within the Strategic Management Plans:

Wollongong 2022 Community Goal and Objective – This report contributes to the Wollongong 2022 Objective ‘4.1 Residents are able to have their say through increased engagement opportunities and take an active role in decisions that affect our city’ under the Community Goal ‘We are a connected and engaged community’.

This report also contributes to the Wollongong 2022 Objective ‘5.1.2 Child-friendly and age friendly principles are in design, planning and service delivery within the city’ under the Community Goal ‘We are a healthy community in a liveable city’.
It specifically addresses the Annual Plan 2013-14 Key Deliverable ‘Develop a Playground Strategy with the community’ which forms part of the Five Year Action ‘4.1.3.3 Council’s Policies and Plans that relate to Community Land and Recreation are developed through a variety of engagement streams’ contained within the Delivery Program 2012-17.

The strategies outlined in the Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 will inform Council’s Annual Plans to ensure that the needs of children are considered in Council decision-making, planning and resourcing processes as per the below diagram.

Planning People Places


FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

During the review of the existing policy and in developing the draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024, it was evident that Council faced a significant shortfall in capital required to renew all of its existing 155 designated play spaces across the city. These designated play spaces have a total replacement value of around $12.5 million and have a useful life of between 10 and 15 years. The depreciation expense over the total life of these assets is around $1 million per year. Based on the required play space removals, renewals and upgrades over the next 4 year period, it is estimated that an average annual budget total of $1 million is required to effectively implement the required actions for our existing designated play spaces.
Over the past four year period, Council has allocated an average annual budget of $535,000 towards play spaces.

Under the preferred scenario model currently presented in the Draft Annual Plan 2014/15, the proposed Capital Budget 2014-2015 recommends an increase in the annual budget allocation towards play spaces over the next four years, to address this funding shortfall, representing a significant increase from previous years.

The proposed increase will enable Council to address the play space renewals that are required due to failing condition and unmet community need. This budget increase is aligned to Council’s financial sustainability approach towards directing an additional $21 million per annum towards asset renewal and/or works to extend the useful life of assets.

If Council chooses not to support the proposed budget allocation towards play facilities as identified in the Draft Capital Budget 2014/15–2017/18, the play facilities renewal program will require adjusting to align to the budget allocation. This option will result in the life expectancy of existing play facilities being extended beyond key scheduled renewal timeframes and lead to asset failure and play facility closures.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive research and community engagement process has been undertaken over the last 12 months to inform the development of Play Wollongong 2014-2024. This strategy now provides Council with a strategic approach towards the delivery of play spaces across the Wollongong LGA, helping to ensure play spaces for children aged 0-12 years, meet current and future community need.

The adoption of Play Wollongong will assist Council in planning for and managing play spaces more effectively through an approach that is transparent and better understood by the community. It will inform Council’s annual plans and budget allocations, and provide a useful and organisation-wide reference point for consistent planning and management of play opportunities across our city.
ENGAGEMENT REPORT

Draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 & Supporting Documents
May 2014
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- Methodology ......................................................................................................................... 3
- Results ..................................................................................................................................... 4
- Appendix A .............................................................................................................................. 6
- Appendix A (cont’d) ................................................................................................................. 7
- Appendix B .............................................................................................................................. 8
Methodology

The draft Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024 and supporting documents (as shown below) were placed on public exhibition from 24 March – 30 April 2014.

The draft Strategy document was produced in hard copy format and copies were available at Council’s Customer Service area and all Council libraries (7 locations). At each of these locations, one hard copy of the supporting documents was kept onsite for public reference.

In addition, double-sided replied paid postcards (see design as Attachment B) were available at these locations. The postcard provided a quick way for people to have their say by ticking a box and providing some short comments if they wished to do so. The postcard also outlined how further information could be obtained (e.g. Council’s website, mail, phone number).

The draft Play Wollongong Strategy and supporting documents were promoted and available for viewing on Council’s engagement website facilitated by the Bang the Table program. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet (see Attachment A) and quick poll questionnaire (based on the postcard question) was also featured on the project’s engagement page.

The draft Play Wollongong Strategy was promoted through print media via an advertisement within the Council pages of The Advertiser on 26 March, 2 April, 9 April, 16 April and 23 April 2014. The exhibition was also promoted through Council’s social media including Council’s Facebook page and Twitter account.

Further, the draft Play Wollongong Strategy was tabled as an item at Council’s Active Transport Reference Group meeting on 1 April 2014 and hard copies of the draft Strategy document and one hard copy of the compiled supporting documents, provided to the Reference Group.

Additionally, the various Neighbourhood Forums were notified of the draft Play Wollongong Strategy public exhibition via email. Participants of the Stakeholder Workshop (conducted as part of the Phase 1 Engagement) were also provided with a letter inviting feedback, a hard copy of the draft
Strategy document and a post card. Copies of the draft Strategy document and postcard were made available at the Illawarra Interagency and Parenting Interagency. Emailed copies were also distributed via the Community Development Worker – Children and Families contact list which included schools, preschools, child care centres and children and family service organisations.

Council officers also presented the draft Strategy document to children at Hayes Park Public School, Woonona East Public School and Farmborough Road Public School who participated in Phase 1 of the engagement. Children were provided with a draft Strategy document and a postcard.

Results

A total of 11 submissions were received, of which, 6 were open submissions and 5 were entered via the Council’s online engagement portal, Bang the Table.

A submission from Neighbourhood Forum 5/6, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District and a submission from a representative from Healthy Cities Illawarra are included in the total submissions received.

It is noted that no postcards were returned to Council as part of the public exhibition period and feedback opportunities.

Bang the Table Results

N=5 people provided submissions, with one of the submissions being a joint submission from a parent and their 4 year old son. The major themes from these submissions were:

- N=3 submissions were specifically concerned with providing for playground facilities for smaller children and/or inclusive facilities for children with different abilities.

- N=3 submissions discussed the need for alternative, novelty and various play equipment. One of these submissions suggested that this could be achieved by keeping undeveloped locations, such as blocks of land without play equipment.

- N=1 submission was concerned with ensuring that the Principles and Strategies identified in the Play Strategy be linked to other actions and strategies that would increase usage and promotion of play for children more generally. This submission noted the limitations of the ‘build it and they will come’ assumption, and suggested that engaging complementing programs and actions to increase the likelihood of children and young people using play spaces.

Open Submission Results

N=5 people and N=1 Neighbourhood Forum provided open submissions on the draft Play Wollongong Strategy. The major themes of these submissions focused on the following:
• N=1 was concerned with the conditions of Helensburgh and Unanderra skate parks, and the lack of seating and amenities at Fairy Meadow skate park.

• N=1 spoke about the importance of the Otford playground to the Otford community, specifically that it can be accessed by walking.

• N=1 mentioned the need to increase fences around parks.

• N=2 focused on the need to ensure strategies cross-reference each other, for example the Bicycle Plan looks at play spaces as a trip generator. This submission suggested reference to cycling in the Play Wollongong Strategy would help to increase both bike riding participation and use of play spaces.

• N=1 had questions around budgets, and prioritising play space maintenance in the context of Council’s current budget shortfalls.
Appendix A

Draft Play Wollongong Strategy
24 March – 30 April 2014

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the draft Play Wollongong strategy?
The draft Play Wollongong strategy is a framework that will guide how Council will plan, deliver and manage play spaces for children aged 0-12 years, across the Wollongong local government area over the next 10 years.

Why do we need a draft Play Wollongong strategy?
Council is committed to addressing the Wollongong 2022 Community Goal ‘We are a healthy community in a liveable city’. Many of our existing play spaces are well located and offer valuable play experiences, but others are in poor condition, are poorly located and/or offer limited play opportunities. We need a strategic approach that ensures we provide quality play spaces for children that meet the ongoing needs and expectations of our community.

How was the draft Play Wollongong strategy developed?
The draft strategy has been developed with lots of help and feedback from our community over the past two years. This includes the input provided through the development of the Community Strategic Plan, Wollongong 2022, the 2012 Community Survey, Council’s Securing Our Future Project and recent engagement activities undertaken with primary school children and professionals in children’s development. We’d like to thank everyone who has provided input so far, especially the local children.

What is the difference between a playground and a play space?
We recognise that play can occur at any place, at any time and does not require the formal designation of a site or the type of equipment historically placed in public parks and referred to as ‘playgrounds’. Play spaces are places where children are able to engage in play activities.

www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au
Appendix A (cont’d)

How many play spaces are in the Wollongong local government area? We currently have 156 play spaces stretching from Helensburgh to Windang. These range from local level play spaces to regional key recreation destination play spaces.

We have 10 regional level play spaces, 16 district, 44 neighbourhood and 85 local level play spaces.

What about play spaces for older children/young people? The draft strategy focuses specifically on 0 to 12 year olds, however we recognise that people of all ages engage in play and we envisage that in the future we’ll consider developing strategies around play opportunities for other age groups such as young people and older persons.

What is the next step for the draft Play Wollongong strategy? The draft strategy is on public exhibition until 30th April 2014. We will then review the feedback received during the exhibition period and amend the draft strategy as required. It is anticipated that the community feedback and any proposed changes to the draft strategy will be outlined in a report back to Council in late May – early June. Council will then decide whether to adopt Play Wollongong.

How can I have my say on the draft Play Wollongong strategy? We’re now encouraging everyone to help us make Wollongong a better place to play by giving feedback on this draft strategy. To have your say, visit our website, email engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au or call us on (02) 4227 7060.
Appendix B

OUR PLACE, OUR VOICE, OUR FUTURE

We’ve developed a draft Play Wollongong Strategy for Children 0-12 years with help and feedback from our community, especially local children.

We’re now encouraging everyone to help us make Wollongong a better place to play by giving feedback on this draft Strategy.

Play Wollongong will help us make sure our city’s play spaces meet the needs of our community, are safe and enjoyable, and enhance our quality of life.

We’d like to thank everyone who has provided input so far.

WANT A QUICK WAY TO HAVE YOUR SAY?
I like the proposed draft Play Wollongong strategy:

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Unsure

Any suggestions?

WANT TO SAY MORE?
Go online at: haveyour.say.wollongong.com.au
Write to: Community Engagement
Locked Bag 8821 Wollongong DC 2500
Call us on: 4227 7050
Email: engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

TO:
Wollongong City Council
Community Engagement
Reply Paid 65332
WOLLONGONG DC
NSW 2500
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<th>Summary of Comments</th>
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<td>PL01</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Outlined the importance of the play space located near Otford Community Garden for families of Otford. The play space is accessible by walking and there are no other play spaces in the area.</td>
<td>Noted. Council will undertake engagement activities with the Otford community as part of the implementation of the Play Strategy.</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL02</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Support for the Principles of the draft Play Wollongong Strategy. Questions regarding how Council will manage the budget shortfalls, whether maintenance will suffer or be deliberately reduced at less favoured locations.</td>
<td>Council’s Draft Annual Plan &amp; Draft Capital Budget for 2014/15 proposes a significant increase to the budget allocation for play spaces. The proposed increase will enable Council to address the play space renewals that are required due to failing condition and unmet community need. Current play spaces will continue to be maintained to a standard suitable for public use and in accordance with Australian safety standards.</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL03</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>The Bicycle Plan has play spaces listed as a trip generator however the draft Play Strategy only considers walking and cars as ways of accessing playgrounds. Travelling to and from playgrounds should be seen as part of the play experience and an opportunity to encourage active transport at an early age. Having our play spaces connected to our cycling network also provides the opportunity to create tours of play spaces or play</td>
<td>Noted. Changes made to two Strategies under Principle 2, to reflect the importance of cycling as a means of accessing play spaces and adding to the play experience. Changes made to two Strategies identified under Principle 2, as follows: - Locate play spaces where they can be easily accessed by walking and cycling.</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
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<td>PL04</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Our parks need more fences, particularly when located near busy roads to protect children and also prevent dogs from entering.</td>
<td>Noted – reflected in the following Strategy under Principle 6: 'Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing and amenities when designing play spaces.'</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL05</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Expressed dissatisfaction with park maintenance at Helensburgh and Unanderra skate facilities. Lack of toilets and seating within close proximity to Fairy Meadow skate facility. Suggestion to look at examples of children’s programs that are undertaken by Moreton Bay Regional Council.</td>
<td>Noted – reflected in the following Strategies under Principle 6: 'Implement a maintenance schedule to ensure that play spaces are well maintained and available for public use' and 'Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing and amenities when designing play spaces.'</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL06</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>There needs to be fenced in play spaces for smaller children to protect them from roadways. There is a brilliant example in port Macquarie where the play space is aimed at younger children and fencing allows parents to relax and enjoy their time at the park without fear of their children running off.</td>
<td>Noted – reflected in the following Strategy under Principle 6: 'Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing and amenities when designing play spaces.'</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL07</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Indicated particular support for draft key Principle 2. Access to local play spaces is important, particularly for grandparents,</td>
<td>Noted – reflected in the draft Play Wollongong Strategy supporting</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
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- Where appropriate, provide supporting infrastructure such as cycle/pathways, crossings, parking, bicycle racks and signage to increase accessibility.
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<tr>
<td>PL08</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>carers and stay at home parents caring for children, as they are often the only source of external stimulation/activity that is easily accessible, free of charge, and easy to manage. Some of the larger play spaces can be intimidating for younger children and it is essential for children to see local play spaces as an extension of their home area. Swings and slides are essentials in play spaces, but also children love variety and novelty such as stepping stones, sculptures and musical instruments. Luke’s Place play space, Corrimal, is a good financing model for Council to consider, as well as the concept of organised community funded playgroups using these spaces. Child’s (4 year old) feedback also provided on the Luke’s Place play space. Particularly likes the carousel and water fountain and would like to go super-fast on the slides.</td>
<td>documents which informed the development of the 6 Key Principles.</td>
<td>Changes made to number each of the Strategies listed under each Key Principle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>play, such as parental perceptions of traffic and stranger danger. Decreasing levels of independent activity and the significant increase in sedentary behaviours in children can be due to the impact of screen based entertainment. Addressing these issues is highly relevant to supporting all children’s rights to access high quality play opportunities.</td>
<td>create play options, promotion of play spaces through the Play Illawarra website, considering community champions to drive projects that activate play spaces and seeking opportunities to educate the community on the importance of play, natural play and children taking safe risks.</td>
<td>No changes to document required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL09</td>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>Children’s play spaces can be upgraded over time and undeveloped land within the city should be retained for breathing spaces for all residents and/or community gardens.</td>
<td>Noted – reflected under Principle 5.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Natural play spaces that are reflective of the environment are important. Also consider it important that play spaces are inclusive of children of all abilities. The draft Strategy has considered all of the important factors in the priority areas and would like to see it become a reality. Would like to see more seating, shade and no-smoking signage/education in play spaces.</td>
<td>Noted – reflected under Principles 4 and 5. Changes made to Strategy under Principle 6 to include smoke-free environment signage when designing and delivering our play spaces.</td>
<td>Change made to Strategy identified under Principle 6, as follows: Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing, smoke-free signage and amenities when designing play spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL11</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Key to health and wellbeing of children is creating and improving access to supportive environments for health of which play has a vital role. Endorse the key six principles of the draft Strategy. Recommend focus on consultation, facilitating creative play particularly for vulnerable communities,</td>
<td>Noted – reflected and reinforced within all Principles.</td>
<td>Change made to Strategy identified under Principle 6, as follows: Consider shade, fencing, smoke-free signage and amenities when designing play spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission Number</td>
<td>Did the Submission Support the Documents</td>
<td>Summary of Comments</td>
<td>Reply</td>
<td>Impact on Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|                   |                                          | partnerships, provision of amenity and supporting infrastructure such as comfortable seats, shade, trees, signage, bicycle storage and non-slip surfacing. |       | park furniture, safety surfacing, **smoke-free signage** and amenities when designing play spaces. Change also made to Strategy identified under Principle 2, as follows:  
- Where appropriate, provide supporting infrastructure such as **cycle/pathways**, crossings, parking, **bicycle racks** and signage to increase accessibility. |
This policy responds to action 3.2.2 of Planning People Places (Suter, 2006), which states:

As part of Council’s ongoing review and upgrade of playgrounds, improve the quality and diversity of playgrounds. This includes:

- Allocating a hierarchy level to all playgrounds.
- Establishing some additional higher-level playgrounds linked to key recreation destinations (strategically located in high profile settings across Wollongong and incorporating unique equipment and features).
- Including playgrounds with toddlers sections, possibly with fencing.
- Including playgrounds for older children.
- Fencing some key playgrounds where the focus is on small children and roads or other safety hazards such as water bodies are nearby.
- Making a number of key playgrounds accessible to children with a disability.
- Addressing issues with existing playgrounds such as damaged equipment, softfall quality, lack of shade, injury risks.
- Reviewing playgrounds in general to determine whether all playgrounds are required, whilst maintaining an appropriate spread of playgrounds.

This policy has been developed to guide the provision, upgrade and review of playgrounds across the City of Wollongong and to:

- strategically plan for, develop and manage playgrounds and play spaces consistent with the Child Friendly Cities principles and in accordance with action 3.2.2 of Planning People Places;
- provide and develop playgrounds within a hierarchy framework, including higher level regional and district playgrounds as a key focus, as well as neighbourhood and local playgrounds;
- ensure the appropriate allocation of resources and strategically review playgrounds that are in poor condition, are poorly located or are not required by the community;
- ensure Council’s Asset Management responsibilities are clearly defined;
- ensure the needs of children and young people are considered and incorporated in the design of the designated playground, park or recreational space;
cater for a range of age groups and abilities through diverse, challenging and fun play opportunities, with an underlying commitment to safety in accordance with Australian Standards;

contribute to establishing highly valued recreation destinations at key locations through the provision of high quality and innovative regional and district playgrounds and play spaces;

reduce Council’s exposure to public liability claims.

POLICY STATEMENT

The provision, development and management of playgrounds and play spaces will be in accordance with a use hierarchy of parks and open spaces with the standard of playgrounds provided to be matched to the use hierarchy of the park or open space.
1 The provision, development and management of playgrounds within the City of Wollongong will be
guided by a use hierarchy of parks and open spaces as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open Space/Park Use Hierarchy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional open space and related facilities will have the potential to draw people from across and beyond Wollongong City due to their location, size, uniqueness, quality or focus of the activity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Citywide**                  |
| Citywide open space and related facilities will attract people from across Wollongong City due to location, size, uniqueness, quality or activity. Whilst the open space or facility could attract people from the wider region, the main intention is to service Wollongong City. |

| **District**                  |
| District open space and related facilities will generally draw people from a section of Wollongong City e.g. the northern, southern or central part of Wollongong City. This could be due to size, uniqueness, quality or activity focus. |

| **Neighbourhood**            |
| Neighbourhood open space and related facilities will generally service people across a planning area, i.e. a cluster of suburbs connected by similar characteristics and physical barriers. |

| **Local**                    |
| Local open space and related facilities will primarily cater for a local community and generally not attract people from a wider catchment. A local area could include a few streets, a suburb or two to three suburbs, depending on the type of open space. |

2 Four levels will be adopted as a guide for provision, development and management of play equipment aligned with the use hierarchy above and will include:

- Regional playgrounds (also Citywide);
- District playgrounds;
- Neighbourhood playgrounds; and
- Local playgrounds.

3 Any safety issues with playgrounds will be addressed on an ongoing basis, ensuring all playgrounds are safe and appealing as a minimum and comply with the Australian Standards.

4 Regional playgrounds located in significant high-profile recreation parks will be developed and upgraded as the first ‘development priority’.

5 District playgrounds in high-profile recreation parks will be developed and upgraded as the second ‘development priority’.

6 Neighbourhood playgrounds will be developed and upgraded as the third ‘development priority’.

7 Local playgrounds will be developed and upgraded as the last ‘development priority’, with the exception of playgrounds that have safety issues.

8 Neighbourhood and local playgrounds that are poorly located, close to another playground or are no longer required by the community will be reviewed in consultation with the community for possible
removal. This will enable resources to be targeted towards playgrounds that are of higher value to the community.

9 A Playground Planning Framework will be developed and reviewed on a three-yearly basis. The Playground Framework will identify a listing of priority works for the provision and enhancement of playgrounds in line with the principles above. Priorities will be identified for the LGA as a whole as well as three planning districts: North, Central and South districts.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions are as follows:

Regional Playground

- High-quality, large, unique and innovative playgrounds that attract families from across and beyond the City of Wollongong, i.e. an attraction for visitors as well as residents;

District Playground

- High-quality and distinctive playgrounds that draw people from across a district, i.e. catering for the southern, central or northern areas in the City;

Neighbourhood Playground

- A good-quality playground that has a number of pieces of equipment and some unique features to provide a focus for neighbourhoods. A ‘neighbourhood’ is generally a whole suburb.

Local Playground

- A safe and appealing playground that could be small and only cater for one age group (generally the 5-9 years age group). A local playground may only cater for part of a suburb.

Development Priority

- ‘Development priority’ refers to substantial upgrade, replacement or removal of playgrounds as opposed to general maintenance.

REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBLE DIVISION</th>
<th>Property and Recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DATE ADOPTED ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL</td>
<td>23 July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE OF PREVIOUS ADOPTION(S)</td>
<td>21 December 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE FOR REVIEW</td>
<td>August 2012</td>
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</table>
PLAY WOLLONGONG STRATEGY

This Play Wollongong Strategy has been developed with lots of help and feedback from our community. We’d like to thank everyone who has provided input, especially our local children.

A snapshot of how this document has been informed...

Community Survey 2012
- 754 completed questionnaires

Wollongong 2022 Community Strategic Plan
- 5 stages and over 2,500 responses

Play Wollongong Engagement
- Phase 1
  - 3 children’s workshops
  - Stakeholder workshop
- Phase 2
  - Public Exhibition of Draft Play Wollongong Strategy

Securing Our Future, Financial Sustainability Review
- 4 stages, over 5,300 submissions and 18,500 web hits

Play Wollongong Strategy 2014-2024

Play Wollongong Strategy Supporting Documents
- Background Research Report
- Children’s Demographic Profile Report
- Community Engagement Report (Phase 1 November 2013)
- Current Situation Report (January 2014)
OUR 10 YEAR VISION FOR PLAY

“Wollongong offers a range of high quality play spaces that are distributed equitably across the city, are well maintained and meet the needs of the community. Wollongong’s play spaces are safe, enjoyable, challenging and serve as important community spaces that foster social connectedness and wellbeing.”

WHY IS PLAY IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN?

People of all ages and abilities engage in play. Play helps to enhance mental, physical and emotional wellbeing and is a good use of leisure time.

Play happens at our parks, natural areas, beaches, public swimming pools, playgrounds, outdoor exercise stations, skate facilities, youth precincts, public art installations, ball courts, civic centres, bicycle tracks and many other locations.

Wollongong City Council is in a unique position to enable, enhance and promote play opportunities by providing a broad range of quality facilities, infrastructure and programs.

Play Wollongong has been developed as a first step to guide the future direction of play across the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA). This strategy focuses specifically on 0 to 12 year olds, however in the future it’s envisaged that we’ll consider developing strategies around play opportunities for other age groups such as young people and older persons.

“Everything getting dirty”

(Stakeholder Workshop)

Wollongong City Council supports the International Play Association’s (IPA) definition of ‘play’:

PLAY, along with the basic needs of nutrition, health, shelter and education, is vital to develop the potential of all children.

PLAY is communication and expression, combining thought and action; it gives satisfaction and a feeling of achievement.

PLAY is instinctive, voluntary, and spontaneous.

PLAY is a means of learning to live, not a mere passing of time.

Play is recognised as a fundamental human right in Article 31 of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), which states that the child has a right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.
“Playing (unsupervised) with friends in parks, pools etc”

[Stakeholder Workshop]

WHY DO WE NEED A PLAY STRATEGY?

Council is committed to providing quality play spaces across the city that meet the ongoing needs and expectations of our community. Many of our existing play spaces are well located and offer valuable play experiences, but others are in poor condition, are poorly located and/or offer limited play opportunities.

The cost associated with play spaces is significant. A simple local play space containing two to three play items such as a swing, climbing unit and a slide, typically costs around $60,000. A large landscape designed play space such as the Thirroul Beach Reserve Regional Play Space costs around $500,000. With this in mind, a strategic city wide approach is needed to ensure we meet the community’s needs and use available resources wisely. Play Wollongong has been developed to assist Council in delivering a strategic approach to play.

WHAT IS ‘PLAY SPACE’?

We recognise that play can occur at any place, at any time and does not require the formal designation of a site or the type of play equipment historically placed in public parks and referred to as ‘playgrounds’.

Council supports the Greater London Authority’s definition of a play space:

“A waterslide where you land into a pile of mud…”

[Children’s Consultation]

“...one where children's active play is a legitimate use of the space. Play Spaces are based on playability which in some cases is the result of fixed play equipment and in others, a feature of some parks, recreation grounds, natural areas and other types of public open space. Playability is not just a matter of the physical characteristics of a space, it can also be influenced by social and cultural characteristics.”

Greater London Authority, 2008
"I think each neighbourhood needs access to natural play spaces with some fixed equipment."
People will travel a small distance to use better facilities and equipment rather than use poor equipment and facilities that are close. It would be better to do less playgrounds well.

[Stakeholder Workshop]

Council's recreation planning describes three Planning Districts and nine Planning Areas (as at May 2014). Our existing play spaces are distributed across the Planning Districts, with 35 play spaces in District 1, 76 play spaces in District 2, and 44 play spaces in District 3.

The current distribution of play spaces largely reflects our population of children in each Planning District.

Our existing play spaces vary in condition, age and the play opportunities they offer.

With such a large supply of play spaces, our current replacement costs is estimated at $12.3 million.
Opportunities

- Our city enjoys an abundance of natural play spaces.
- Recently installed award-winning play spaces have become key recreation destinations.
- Town and Village Plans can enhance opportunities for play through civic spaces, public open space, public art etc.
- Public private partnerships may develop over time.
- New release areas provide the opportunity to get it right, from the planning stages.

Challenges

- We have a high number of existing play spaces to manage within limited resources.
- Our coastal location, and issues with vandalism in some areas, often results in high maintenance and replacement costs.
- We need to find a balance between providing risk taking and challenging play opportunities, while meeting safety standards.
- The cost of repairing, replacing and removing play equipment is increasing.
- Our community expectations are increasing.
- An annual capital budget allocation of $1M is required over the next four years of the Delivery Program, but the current average budget allocation leaves a shortfall of approximately half of this each year. This needs to be considered in the context of Council’s current focus on financial sustainability and other priorities.
- Some suburbs within the LGA are experiencing an undersupply, while others are experiencing an oversupply of play spaces.
- There is an average 10 year life expectancy of equipment.
- The balance of providing natural elements with safety and maintenance requirements.
- Play spaces that are linked to major parks are becoming increasingly popular, however not all play spaces can or should be of this level or scale due to demand to resource social equity availability.

“Risk-taking, exciting, no supervision from adults”

[Stakeholder Workshop]
RELATIONSHIP TO KEY STRATEGIC COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

Play Wollongong aligns to Council’s Strategic Framework for Open Space, Recreation and Community Facilities, Planning People Places (2006) and addresses our Community Goal of ‘We are a healthy community in a liveable city’.

A Play Wollongong Strategy provides a plan of how we will achieve our 10 year vision through key guiding principles and a series of strategies. It will guide Council’s Five Year Delivery Program and Annual Plan and inform a program of play space renewals, removals and upgrades.

Wollongong 2022 Community Strategic Plan
COMMUNITY GOAL
'We are a healthy community in a liveable city'

Corporate Business Plan
- 5 Year Delivery Program
- Annual Operation Plan

Annual Budget

"A big light bulb so you can see and play in the dark."
(Children’s Consultation)

THE FUTURE OF PLAY IN WOLLONGONG

We’re committed to the following principles to ensure best practice and deliver high quality play spaces in a sustainable manner. These principles will influence the location, planning, design and management of play spaces to fully support the needs of children. These principles form the foundation upon which Play Wollongong’s strategies have been developed and help us to achieve our 10 year vision for play.
PRINCIPLE 1

Quality play opportunities are equitably distributed across the city, including large regional play spaces and smaller local play spaces.

To ensure that quality play spaces are equitably distributed, and meet local needs and demand we consider a range of factors:
- number of children living in each area
- forecast population figures
- measures of advantage and disadvantage
- transport options
- access to existing infrastructure and services
- local geography, and
- tourism opportunities.

Strategies:

1.1 Pursue additional play space opportunities where there is an under-supply, in areas where there are lots of children and/or where the community experiences disadvantage.

1.2 Explore partnerships with other organisations where there are limited open spaces to create play options at locations, such as shopping and community centres.

1.3 Allocate financial resources fairly, based on Planning Area need, not just play space condition.

1.4 Balance expenditure between large, medium and small play spaces.

1.5 In consultation with the community, remove or relocate play spaces where there is an over-supply or existing spaces are under-used.

1.6 Undertake needs-based assessments, site assessments and consult with the community before developing new play spaces.

1.7 Implement a play space hierarchy and use standard features across the city’s play spaces.

What the community told us....

People value quality over quantity. They suggested that the supply of play spaces across the LGA would be best focussed on a smaller numbers of higher quality play spaces rather than lots of spaces that may not meet the play needs of children and families.

They strongly supported the need to provide fair and equitable provision of play spaces across the LGA, giving particular consideration to areas experiencing disadvantage and the important role of the local community and the play spaces in these areas.

“I believe that local level parks have very limited value due to the poor quality of the equipment and facilities in these locations. They are a drain on funds and resources which could be better reinvested in the neighbourhood park and play programs.”

(Stakeholder Workshop)

“Making cubbies with boxes and cloth”

(Stakeholder Workshop)
PRINCIPLE 2

Play Spaces are easily accessed by walking and encourage healthy living and independent access by children.

Wollongong enjoys a large number of green open spaces that support high quality play experiences for children. Providing play spaces in areas that are easily accessible, open and close to other amenities such as transport, shops and services helps to ensure that these spaces are well used. Play spaces that are highly visible to the surrounding area can also help to connect the community by providing important gathering spaces for local families.

Best practice research tells us that ideally all children should have access to a play space within approximately 400 metres of their home, which is considered an easy walking distance. In many of Wollongong’s suburbs, this goal is already achieved and in some areas exceeded. Where there are overlapping catchments, keeping additional play spaces may be suitable where there are high numbers of children or physical barriers to access, such as busy roads, railway lines or topography.

In some suburbs it may not be possible or appropriate to achieve a 400 metre radius due to geographical constraints or very low numbers of resident children. In these cases, a play space should be provided in a location which provides the best access by the greatest number of local children.

Strategies:

2.1 Locate play spaces where they can be easily accessed by walking and cycling.

2.2 Where appropriate, provide supporting infrastructure such as pathways, crossings, parking, bicycle racks and signage to increase accessibility.

2.3 Promote play spaces and work in partnership with Healthy Cities Illawarra to maintain the Play Illawarra website.

2.4 Work with developers to ensure play spaces in new release areas are well located and designed, and offer a high level of play value.

2.5 Retain play spaces in areas where there are high numbers of resident children and physical barriers to accessing alternate play spaces.

2.6 Work in collaboration with the community on the location of play spaces within open space.

2.7 Consider community champions to drive projects which activate play spaces.

What the community told us....

Consultation has highlighted the importance of good connection to walking routes, pathways, amenities and parking, to increase the accessibility of a play space. Children need support to independently access play spaces in their own areas, close to home.

"Every day old ideas get teleported out and replaced with new ones."

(Children's Consultation)
Engaging with local communities is an important part of creating play spaces that children and families want to visit. Research and experience show that when communities are engaged in the planning of play spaces they are more likely to experience a sense of pride, ownership and connection to the space. This has many benefits including enhanced usage, increased safety and reduced graffiti and vandalism.

As part of Council’s commitment to create a Child Friendly City, children and the broader community have been engaged in play space design since 2008. Children have been integral to informing location, design and key features of play spaces and in some sites, have created the artworks which feature in play spaces.

**Strategies:**

3.1 Roll out a program of Planning Area-based engagement when considering the renewal, enhancement or removal of play spaces.

3.2 Consult with children and the community on the future use of a space where existing play equipment needs to be removed.

3.3 Ensure children’s consultation is informed by best practice.

3.4 Work with the local community and engage children and young people when planning or renewing play spaces in areas with a history of anti-social behaviour.

3.5 Involve children and the broader community in the design of public art features and in accordance with Council’s Public Art Policy.

*What the community told us...*

Where children are directly engaged in the development of play spaces, the space is more likely to have high play value and include activities which challenge and interest children. Children really are the experts in play.

“Feeling FREE and in CONTROL”

(Stakeholder Workshop)
Well-designed play spaces provide a range of age-appropriate experiences that can help to foster independence, support social interaction, develop learning and encourage creativity. They give children freedom to safely test their boundaries and take risks relative to their developmental stage. Play space design should allow and encourage children of different ages to be able to play together.

Children don’t all access play spaces in the same way, but they are all entitled to participate in play. The equipment in a play space does not need to be accessible to every child, but access to the social experience of play is important. Good design of public play spaces makes this possible.

When planning inclusive play spaces, consideration is given to accessible play features, physical access, reach ranges, visual impairment, social interaction and sensory elements. Supporting infrastructure such as accessible parking, appropriate fencing, toilets and paths of travel help meet the needs of carers and children accessing the space.

Strategies:

4.1 Provide regional and district level play spaces which have a high number of accessible features and cater to a broad range of ages.

4.2 Provide neighbourhood and local play spaces with equipment that’s flexible and suits a broad age range.

4.3 Where possible, select play space elements that support inclusive play.

4.4 Consider the needs of all children and their carers in the design of play spaces including compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

4.5 Consider informal natural play spaces or low cost/high value equipment such as swing sets where an existing play space is not deemed suitable for renewal.

4.6 Promote awareness of existing play spaces and features for children with disabilities.

What the community told us...

Play spaces need to cater to all levels of ability and stages of development.

"Outdoors: in the bush; risky playground equipment; riding my bike EVERYWHERE”

(Stakeholder Workshop)

"Something that looks impossible to do. Something really challenging that tests your skills.”

(Children’s Consultation)
Evidence shows that exposure to nature has benefits for children and the wider community. Wollongong has a rich natural environment and variety of public open spaces. This adds enormous value to play locally. ‘Children who play regularly in natural settings are more active, are sick less often and less likely to be overweight. They are more resistant to stress, play in more imaginative, diverse and creative ways and engage in less bullying behaviour.’ (Source: Children’s Nature Network/ Kids Safe NSW).

Natural elements that feature in good play space design include wet/dry creek beds, bridges and tunnels, mounds and slopes, sand and mud pits, plants and trees.

Informal play spaces within open space, public art, shopping centres, malls, civic centres and community squares are also an important part of delivering a diverse range of play. These spaces do not necessarily include traditional, fixed play equipment and can offer cost effective alternatives without limiting the value of play in that space. Manufactured play equipment and soft fall is very costly, and providing informal play spaces helps to deliver equitable, high quality play experiences with available resources.

**Principle 5**

Informal play spaces and the provision of natural play elements is given priority, recognising the benefits of connecting with nature.

**Strategies:**

5.1 Create informal play spaces within local parks using natural elements due to their high play value and the efficient use of budget.

5.2 Increase the diversity of play opportunities by including informal play in the design of public and other spaces across the city.

5.3 Include public art and infrastructure that offers play value in public spaces.

5.4 Include landscaped features in the design of regional and district level play spaces.

**What the community told us...**

Adults tell us that their most fond memories of playing as a child involved being outdoors, getting dirty, climbing in trees and making things with natural materials for imaginative play.

"Fun; socialising; street play; mostly outdoors in parks, beaches or backyards; minimal manmade resources; great imaginative play using natural resources"

(Stakeholder Workshop)
Play spaces should encourage children to take manageable risks and test their limits. Societal and adult perceptions on appropriate levels of risk need to be balanced by the huge benefits children gain from accessing challenging play opportunities. Risk and challenge also need to be balanced with requirements of the Australian Safety Standards for Play Equipment.

Children are aware of risk, safety and danger, and have different perceptions of different activities. Some play activities (such as climbing a tree or swinging on a swing) can be viewed by children as potentially dangerous and capable of causing harm, while others view these activities as opportunities for freedom, self-expression and challenge. Providing play spaces that allow children to experiment and learn about their own abilities and comfort with risk is important.

**Strategies:**

6.1 Implement a maintenance schedule to ensure that play spaces are well maintained and available for community use.

6.2 Consider shade, fencing, park furniture, safety surfacing, smoke-free signage and amenities when designing play spaces.

6.3 Look for opportunities to educate the community on the importance of play, natural play, and children taking safe risks.

6.4 Remove play equipment which is unsafe, regardless of whether there's sufficient budget to renew it.

**What the community told us...**

Children told us the types of play spaces they dream of are things like "a waterslide where you land into a pile of mud..." and "something that looks impossible to do, something really challenging that tests your skills." Many adults tell us that their most fond memories of play involved risk and were mostly "outside, dirty, natural materials and unsafe.”

"Hiding in trees and secret places.”
(Stakeholder Workshops)

“A big blue swing with a large net that lots of people can fit on at the same time.”
(Children’s Consultation)
# Achieving Play Wollongong

The following indicators will help us track whether we're achieving our vision for play in Wollongong over the life of the strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>How it will be measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community satisfaction with play spaces</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community awareness, knowledge and reference to play spaces</td>
<td>Play Illawarra website visitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships between Council and other organisations that result in facilitating play opportunities in public open space</td>
<td>Number of partnership projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities for children and families to have their say in the renewal of a play space</td>
<td>Number of engagement activities undertaken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction (%) with accessibility and appearance of play spaces</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of community who utilise play spaces on a weekly basis</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of residents who cycle or walk to play spaces</td>
<td>Community Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play opportunities in areas experiencing high levels of social disadvantage</td>
<td>Number of play spaces compared with recognised indicator for level of socio-economic disadvantage (SEIFA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play spaces in condition rating &gt; 3 (on a scale of 1 - 5)</td>
<td>Annual play space audit report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"Outside; dirty; natural materials; unsafe."
(Stakeholder Workshop)
SOME OF OUR CURRENT PLAY SPACES

In recent years Council has focused on the development of key recreation destinations through enhancing regional play spaces at Thirroul Beach Reserve, Belmore Basin, Wollongong Botanic Garden, Towradgi Park and Stanwell Park Reserve. These play spaces are landscape designed unique play spaces that cater to a broad range of ages and typically cost between $250,000 and $600,000. These play spaces (two of which are award winning) have very high utilisation and the feedback from the community has been positive.

Bruce Park, Warrawong is an example of the importance and the success of engaging local children and families in the planning and design of a play space where play opportunities are limited and there are high numbers of resident children.

This Strategy has been developed by Wollongong City Council’s Property & Recreation Division and Community, Cultural & Economic Development Divisions with extensive community consultation.

You can view the Play Wollongong Strategy and supporting documents on our website: www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au