

LET'S PLAY:

providing outdoor playgrounds
for families in the
CITY OF CANADA BAY
2008



City of Canada Bay Council

Community Advisory Group

This strategy was prepared in 2007 with the valued assistance of the Community Advisory Group. The CAG was formed with the role of:

- providing advice and direction for the review of the Strategy;
- assisting in the communication of the review and ultimate outcome;
- incorporating the principles of sustainability into the provision and development of playgrounds within the City;
- encouraging broad ownership of the Strategy; and
- being actively involved in the formation of strategies in response to issues raised.

The Group contributed invaluable information, experience, perspectives and hours to make a difference to our local Community. Membership of the Group was:

- Anne Clarke Community Representative : Drummoyne, Chiswick, Russell Lea, Abbotsford
- Carol Kendall Community Representative: North Strathfield, Concord West, Liberty Grove, Rhodes, Strathfield
- Dr Robert Phillips Community Representative: Canada Bay, Concord, Cabarita, Breakfast Point, Mortlake
- Justine Perkins Touched by Olivia Foundation
- Margaret Cavanagh/ Kate Fraser Kid safe NSW
- Natalie Haddad Community Representative: Five dock, Wareemba, Rodd Point
- Noelene McKeon Community Representative: Canada Bay, Concord, Cabarita, Breakfast Point, Mortlake
- Wendy Shepherd Macquarie University
- Angelo Tsirekas Mayor, City of Canada Bay
- Marian O'Connell Councillor, City of Canada Bay
- Mark Bunch Director Technical Services & Operations
- Lisa Miscamble Director Community Development

The process

This strategy was undertaken in 3 phases

May - July 2007 Consultation and Research

- Establishment of the Community Advisory Group
- Broad consultation through adult and child focused surveys
- 18 park based consultations over a 6 week period
- review of playground provision in other local government areas
- review of relevant studies and research
- GIS analysis – density and topographical
- Review of 2006 Census data

August - September Review

- Collation and analysis of feedback
- Review of strategy and future recommendations for the provision of playgrounds based on catchments areas, population density and target user groups, access and other attractors (such as sporting fields/ proximity to community nodes)

October - November Draft reported to Council for public exhibition

- Public exhibition of the revised Strategy
- Endorsed plan

December 2007

Copies of this strategy are available via Council's website or by contacting Council's Customer Services Centre on 9911 6555.

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Introduction

Let's Play...

This Strategy has been based on the desired outcomes that:

- Playgrounds are within safe reach of everyone in the community.
- Playgrounds are a meeting place for families with children.
- Playgrounds encourage children to be active and stimulate the imagination.
- Playgrounds make the most of their natural surroundings.
- Playgrounds meet as many activity needs as they are able.

Let's Play has been developed to provide a strategic direction for the future provision and management of playgrounds and environments within the City of Canada Bay. The strategy was developed over the past 6 months with the active involvement of the community, particularly the Community Advisory Group.

Let's Play is an innovative strategy that will assist Council to increase the potential of its playgrounds and broaden play opportunities over the next 10 years. The Strategy balances the need to provide and maintain the physical asset, with that of the families and children who use these places. The Strategy recognises the importance of playgrounds in promoting community wellbeing.

Let's Play will ensure that the future provision of playgrounds respond to and remain relevant to the children and families of our area. *Let's Play* highlights the importance of effective partnerships between Council, our local community members and other key stakeholders in the delivery and ongoing management of playgrounds.

Summary of the current situation and desired future situations and strategies to achieve this

Current playground situation

1. Playgrounds perceived as Council owned and Council responsibility
2. Playgrounds provision minimal
3. Playground design often detracts from the scenic qualities of the environment
4. Playground design often inhibits rather than promotes interaction between child/child; child/parent and parent/parent
5. Playground design often makes little provision for exercise by parents and seniors
6. Playgrounds perceived as being peripheral to development of Canada Bay
7. Limited access by children and adults with disabilities
8. Maintenance not meeting expectations by community
9. Playgrounds individually designed without overall regional plan
10. No research data on use and effectiveness of playgrounds
11. Communication – consumer initiated and Council reactive

A: Onion Ring Model Of Support for Playgrounds

- Friends of the Park help design, monitor and enhance playgrounds
- Businesses, charities, service clubs and government grants enhance the playgrounds
- Tertiary institutions and hospitals do research and development
- (Refer to Outcomes 3 & 4)

B: Integration And Articulation Of Planning And Construction

- Optimal Playground designed. Council funds essentials. Other sources used to fund “desirables”.
- (Refer to Outcome 1)

C: Categories Of Playgrounds

- Playgrounds at any one level (neighborhood, district, iconic) have same characteristics (e.g., comparable number of pieces of equipment) but differ in character to reflect the place in which they are located. Design selected from several templates or specifically for environment.
- (Refer to Outcome 1)

D: Universal Design

- Promoting good access & reducing barriers as far as possible. Provide opportunities for interactive play, within or across-generations
- (Refer to Outcome 1)

E: Regular Maintenance

- Councils Park team trained and provided with standard components to fix equipment at inspection time
- (Refer to Outcome 2)

F: Cyclical Renewal Of Playgrounds

- Playgrounds will be on a 10-15 year renewal cycle
- (Refer to Outcome 2)

G: Many Modes Of Communication

- Letter drops, new signage, enhanced web-based information
- Bulletin boards, meetings
- (Refer to Outcome 2)

future playground situation

1. Playgrounds perceived as being owned by both community and council with shared responsibility
2. Playground provision is optimal
3. Playground design complements the environment
4. Playground design promotes interaction between children, parents and other families in the playground
5. Playground design includes provision for exercise by parents and seniors
6. Playgrounds are a contributing element in the development of community wellbeing in Canada Bay
7. Design includes universal design principles to provide for children and adults with disabilities
8. Regular maintenance schedule
9. Categories of playgrounds with those at the same level sharing the same elements but being differentiated by their character.
10. Knowledge of use and effectiveness of playgrounds
11. Easy and positive communication between Council & community as partners

Strategies

Role of Playgrounds in Promoting a Sustainable Community



What are playgrounds?

Playgrounds are more than equipment and physical spaces. They are centres of community activity, places for people to meet and socialise with others, places to be alone and reflect and places to learn.

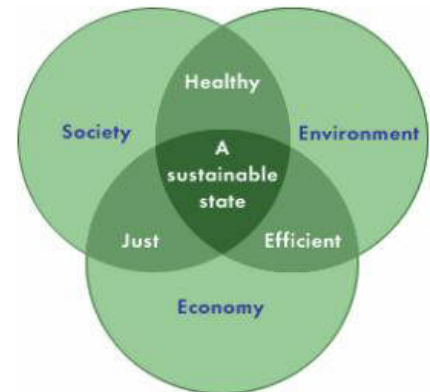
Our playgrounds also hold great memories for our local community. Many families who have had children grow up in the area are now seeing their grandchildren return to the playgrounds where their own children played. They reflect the identity of our community.

Promoting a Sustainable Community

Our vision

To create a City that is innovative, dynamic and sustainable through active partnership with the community and the environment.

The City of Canada Bay Council seeks as a core outcome to provide a sustainable City. Sustainability can be defined as *'meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs'* (Brundtland-1987). We seek to create a healthy, efficient and just society, a place our grandchildren will want to live in or visit.



A sustainable community seeks a better quality of life for everyone. It provides adequate work, health and recreational opportunities, protects and enhances the environment and manages local resources to improve economic prosperity.

The provision of playgrounds is one way in which our Council promotes a sustainable city, balancing the social, environment and economic elements of community life.

Let's Play recognises the important role and function of playgrounds in promoting social sustainability and community wellbeing.

In implementing this strategy, Council will engage with the local community and other key stakeholders and apply the following building blocks of community wellbeing:

- Social Justice: achievement of equal access to resources, information, opportunities, participation, choices and outcomes.
- Social Capital: fostering community connectedness, encouraging the creation of social networks and building relationships that are characterised by trust and reciprocity, and lead to mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Democratic Governance: demonstrating in the actions of Council a focus and responsiveness to the interests and progress of the local community
- Active Citizenship: engaging with people in our community, encouraging a sense of ownership, improving community spirit, building local capacity to bring together the wealth of resource available within the community and providing local solutions to local issues.

“I am very happy that children will grow up in Canada Bay feeling valued members of the community. Play parks teach them ‘sharing’ fundamentals which will last a lifetime and help them become more tolerant and respectful of others in this beautiful area. These seeds will grow and all will benefit.”

Our Parks and Playgrounds - A community perspective

Playgrounds and parks have an important role in the lives of the people within our community.

The City of Canada Bay local government area (LGA) is renowned and valued for its open spaces and parks. It is unique for an inner city area to have such a high level of open space (which includes parks, reserves, playgrounds, golf courses), and a characteristic that the Council and community is keen to retain.

The City of Canada Bay LGA covers an area of 1,982 hectares, 6km west of the Sydney CBD. Open space comprises about 15% of this area, with 220ha managed by Council. The land is owned by Council and the State Government (Crown land). The Crown Land Act provides objectives and principles for management of this land, which includes 'encouraging public use and enjoyment and multiple use'.

The LGA also features extensive foreshore frontage along the Parramatta River, with a broad network of foreshore parks.

The level of open space and amenity provided in the Canada Bay Local Government Area (LGA) of 15% is well in excess of the open space provided in the adjoining local government areas of Leichhardt (8.3%), Strathfield (8.8%) and Ashfield (5.7%).

As community needs evolve and expectations change it is important to continually review the way in which playgrounds are provided. Over the last 5 years our community has continued to evolve, reflecting the changes in demographics and lifestyles.

Let's Play recognises that playgrounds are not only physical assets that need to be maintained but are also valuable spaces and places through which the community builds social networks.

Playgrounds and parks provide:

- Opportunities for people to gather for birthdays, family celebrations, and mothers groups;
- A place for the staging of community events organised by Council (Wellness Week), Family Fun Days organised by community groups or informal community gatherings (the welcome and farewell to daylight saving organised at a neighbourhood park each year);
- Spaces and places for families to interact and spend time with friends and extended family; and
- Venues through which people form connections within the area and opportunities for a healthy active lifestyle.

Let's Play acknowledges the vital role that playgrounds have in the life of our community in creating a sense of belonging and pride in the local area. This aspect is capitalised upon in *Let's Play*.

“*One of the reasons we live in Concord is the number of parks and play spaces our family can enjoy on a daily basis*”

The smaller parks like Kendall Reserve serve an important part of the community. With the developments within the area there is an immediate need for some basic swings and slippery dip.”

A child's perspective

Playgrounds and parks that are effectively designed are inviting and enrich the lives of children. They encourage play at all levels. They are places to think, reflect, run, explore and take 'safe risks'. They are places for exercise where children can meet friends and have fun with family members.

Children learn about themselves through play. They also learn about others. They discover aspects about their world. They develop socially, physically and cognitively and emotionally.

Carefully designed and safe playgrounds enable children to learn to manage risks in a controlled environment, assisting children to develop skills they will need to successfully navigate the world beyond the playground.

Playgrounds encourage children to meet and interact with other children. Playgrounds enable children to play together and learn from one another or play on their own without being alone.

Playgrounds provide a valuable means to encourage physical activity, assisting children to stay healthy and avoid obesity.

Involving children in the design of playgrounds: The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights the need to involve children in the key decisions affecting their lives, including decisions about the built environment. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that sets out universally accepted rights of children. This includes the 'right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the children and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts'.

Playgrounds are places where children have fun. They are relaxing places. There should be an air of happiness and joy about playgrounds. The sounds of playgrounds are often squeals of delight and excitement.

Prince Edward Park, alongside the water, has a pirate-type ship which incorporates a horizontal ramp, a slide and a climbing ladder. Emma and her grandfather (me) have been playing there from before she could walk. Now she is 5 and going to big school but we still go there to play.

When she was little we used to play peek-a-boo through the portholes. As she grew this was combined with, "Where will we go to day?" We always went to the same place, Queensland, because that is where Emma went (by plane) to visit her other grandparents. Prams were wheeled out onto the ramp and teddy bears were introduced to the slide. Dolls journeyed off on the boat. Sometimes she would just go and sit in the cabin with a doll and talk to it. Sometimes a pram full of bears would have a picnic in the lower level..

A month ago Emma visited the James Craig, an historic sailing ship on which her Grandmother acts as a guide. She visited the kitchen below decks, climbed the stairs and had a go at "steering" the stationary ship. Last week, on Monday, Emma reported in "sick" for school. She proved to be not too sick to go to the Pirate Ship. When we arrived there she said, "You steer the ship. When you want something ring the (imaginary) bell and I will bring it up from down here". After a while we changed roles, Emma got sick of that game and raced off to something else.

On the Wednesday, as usual, we picked up Emma from her school at Oatley. I am obliged to park at a distance from the School and walk across a reserve which has in it a play space. The playspace consists of two swings and a single piece of equipment with slide, climber and pipes. When we escort Emma back to the car we cross this area. She always asks to have a swing and we oblige. We always ask her if she wants to climb on the equipment as well. She never does. Last Wednesday I asked her, "Why not?" She said, "Because it's boring". Wendy Shepherd commented, "Once she has mastered it there is no longer a challenge".

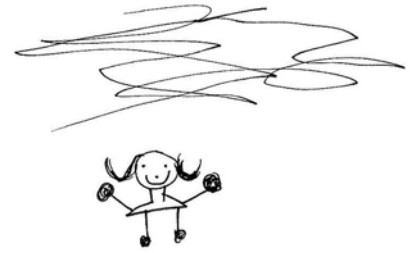
If we see the equipment in Prince Edward Park just as a slide, a ramp and a ladder we are seeing it through adult eyes.

At this age a doll can become a traveling companion and a boat can become a plane and a pirate ship at Prince Edward Park can become the James Craig. Reality is not, "out there". Emma is creating her own reality. Gradually, much of what is, "out there" will come into correspondence

with her construction of reality. Hopefully, the imaginative elements, evident in the above, will continue to blossom in other areas.

Parents (and grandparents) can also find joy and happiness, and perhaps more in a playground. They can share in the wonder, the excitement, the moment. They may gain glimpses of their own childhood, they may again see the world through the eyes of a child. Children not only love to play. They also play to share in love. To play with a child is not to ignore, not to reject, not to be 'too busy' for that child. It is to respond to the invitation, 'Let's Play'.

to grandpa Beckin's you I Love
you with me . you play.



Within the Local Government Context

The City of Canada Bay, through the Local Government Act Charter, is the custodian of the community's physical and social assets. Council is required to 'promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children and to have regards to the long term and cumulative effects of its decisions'. (Local Government Act).

Council provides a range of services, programs and facilities for local children and their families including child care, sporting facilities, library services, community events and celebrations.

The provision of playgrounds is done within Council's overall planning framework. There are a number of other strategic documents that have informed the Playground Strategy.

City of Canada Bay Plans and Strategies

Council's key planning documents and key outcomes and objectives relating to playgrounds are set out below:

Corporate Strategy – 10 year outcomes

The Corporate Strategy sets out the planning direction for the City over the next 10 years. This Strategy will undergo a major review in 2008. Relevant objectives include:

- Customer service: recognition by the community of the Council's achievement in providing an outstanding response to its reasonable needs and requests
- Governance and financial sustainability: transparency and accountability in Council's decision – making and responsibility in the management and allocation of resources
- Culture & Wellbeing: establishment by our community of a lifestyle of pride and activity through the achievement, contribution and diversity
- Economic development: promotion of local business and encouragement of opportunity resulting in the economic health of the community
- Natural & built environment: protection and enhancement of the environment and delivery of preferred planning goals
- Infrastructure: provision of physical infrastructure standards compatible with community growth and expectations

Recreation Strategic Plan

The Recreation Strategic Plan provides a strategic direction for the future provision and management of recreational facilities in the City.

Generic Plan of Management

The Generic Plan of Management provides the basis for the long-term management of the City's parks, reserves and community land and meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993. The Act requires that Council prepare plans of management for all community land to ensure effective planning and management.

Accessibility Action Plan 2004

The Accessibility Action Plan sets out improvements to children's playground facilities to ensure general accessibility and safety. The aim of this strategy is to improve access for all people to Council parklands and buildings.

Draft Cultural Plan & Public Art Strategy 2007

This Plan sets out the strategic direction and outcomes for art and cultural development for the City, including the provision of art in public spaces and the involvement of the community in cultural development initiatives.

Crime Prevention Plan 2007

This Plan sets out strategies to promote a safe community, in particular, through careful design of public spaces.

Snapshot of our Parks, Playgrounds and Community



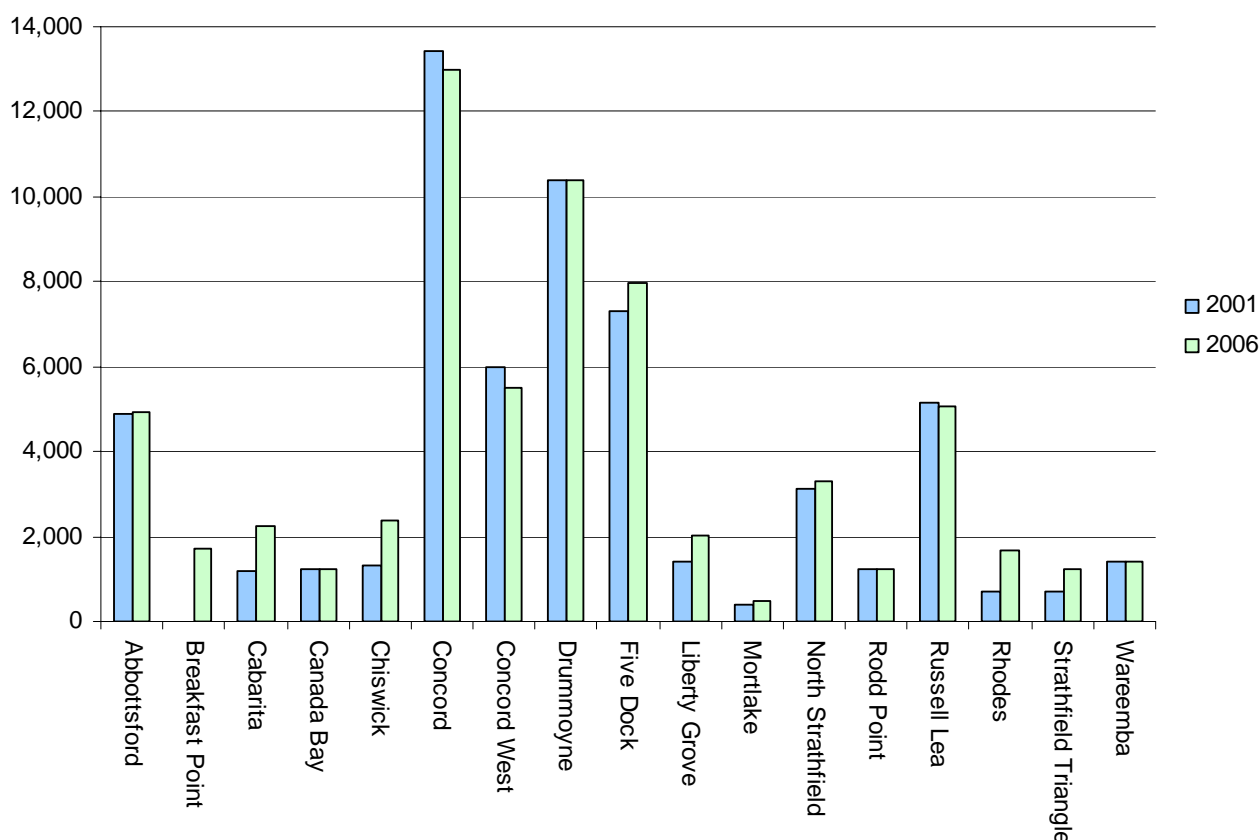
Our Community

The City of Canada Bay is an established middle-ring area, with a mix of residential, industrial, commercial and retail areas.

Our population is steadily growing, largely due to urban consolidation and the redevelopment of industrial sites into medium density residential areas. It is estimated that the population will increase by about 1,000 people per year, subject to the rate of development, culminating in a population of about 86,000 people in 2020.

The most recent figures from the NSW Department of Planning stated that our LGA will experience the largest influx of population in the inner west of Sydney. The recent Census was conducted on 8 August 2006. The City of Canada Bay's population at that time was 65,742. This represented an increase of 6,270 persons from 2001 or a 9.5% increase in the population over the 5 year period. The main growth areas were Breakfast Point, Cabarita, Chiswick, Liberty Grove and Rhodes.

City of Canada Bay Suburbs Age 2001-2006



As the population grows and the number of children in different areas and age groups change it will be important to re assess the number, type and location of playgrounds to ensure that the provision remains relevant to the change in demographics.

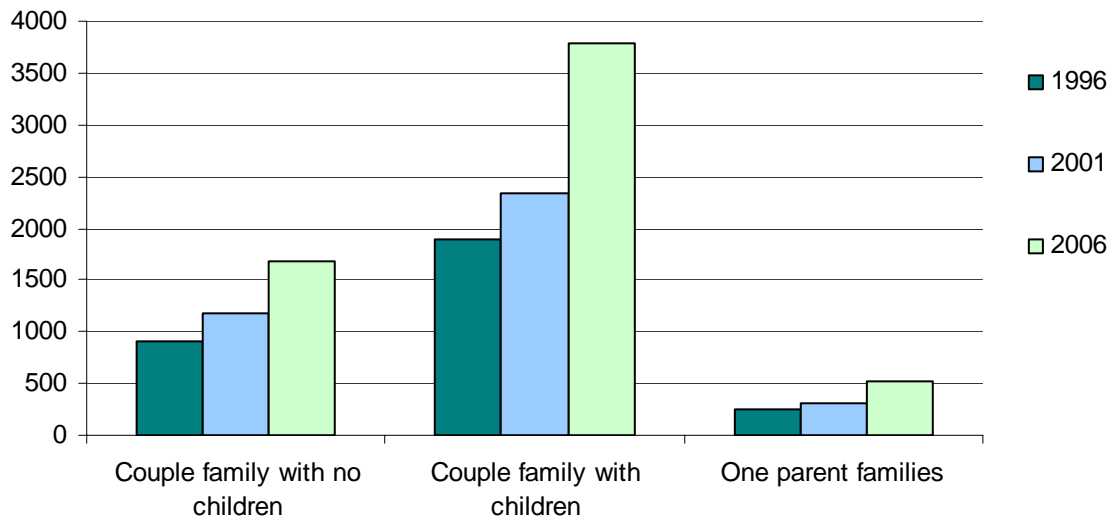
“Given that most backyards in the suburbs are not large enough to accommodate play spaces of their own, the functionality and practical use of parks is crucial”

Following is an overview of characteristics that influence the way in which playgrounds are provided.

Family Composition

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in the proportion of families where there are couples with one or more children.

Canada Bay LGA Family Composition by Numbers - 1996-2001-2006



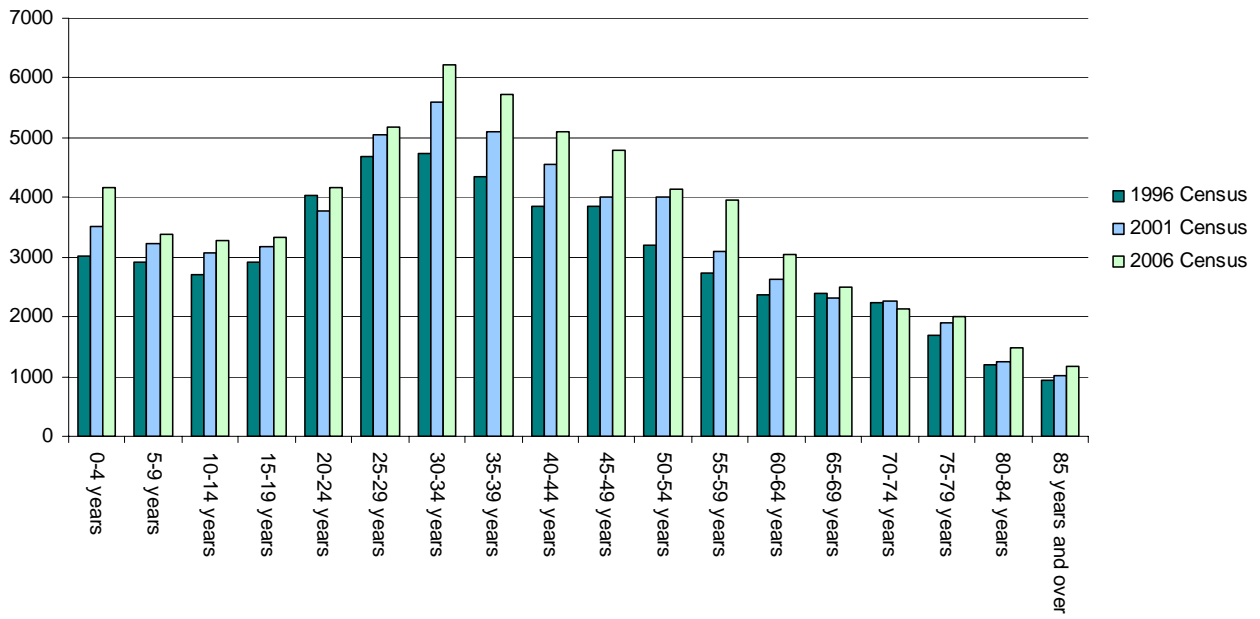
Age structure

Recent trends in the local age structure has included:

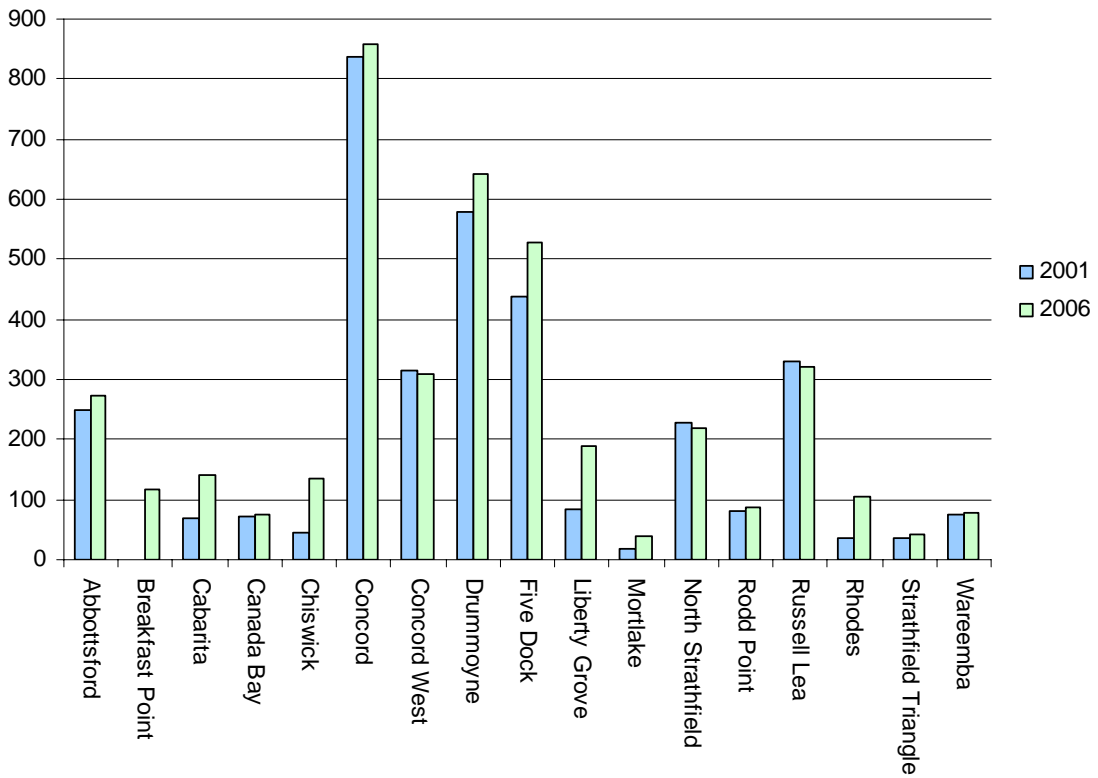
- A significant increase in the proportion of children under the age of 14 years, particularly in the numbers of children under 4 years of age;
- **18.4%** increase in the numbers of children under 4 years of age for the City;
- **10.3%** increase in the proportion of children under the age of 14 years;
- Cabarita, Chiswick and Five Dock have experienced growth in the proportion of children; and
- Concord, Drummoyne and Five Dock have the highest number of children under 14 years of age

The highest number of 0 – 4 year olds (858) live in Concord and the least (38) live in Mortlake. The greatest number of 5 – 9 year olds (784) live in Concord whilst the least (14) live in Mortlake.

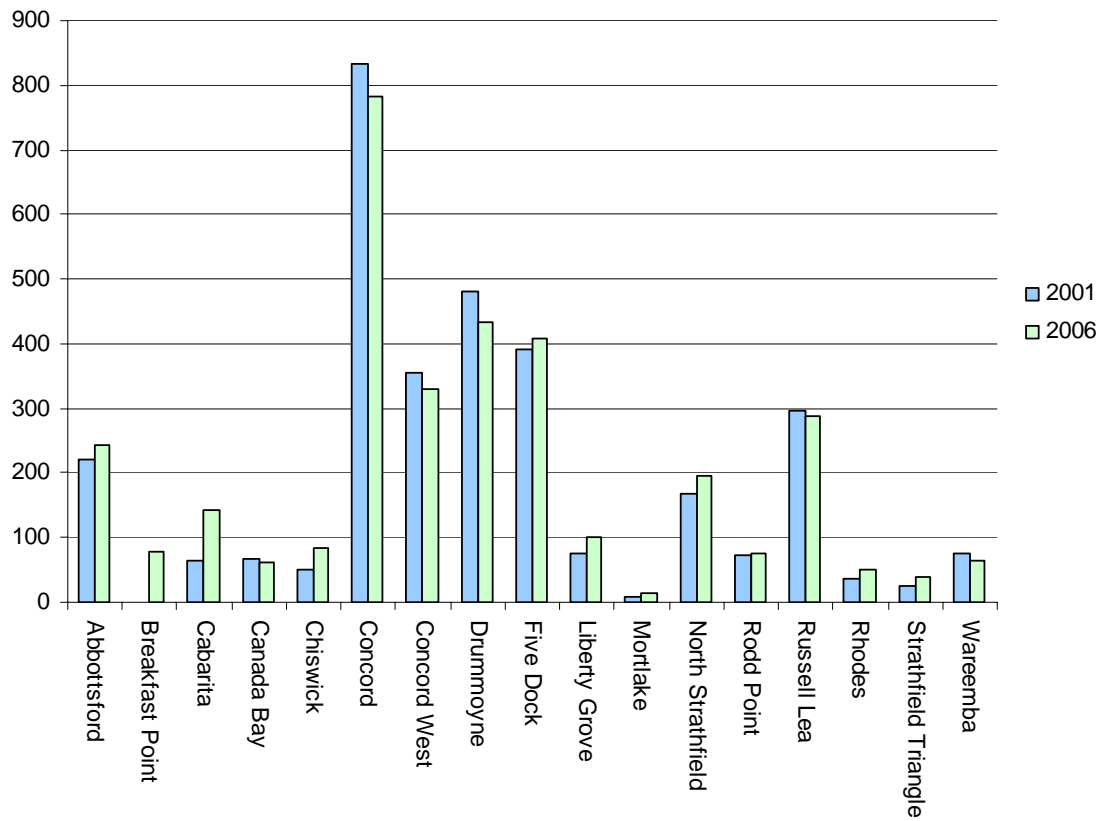
Canada Bay LGA Age 1996-2001-2006



City of Canada Bay Suburbs 0-4 years olds 2001 - 2006

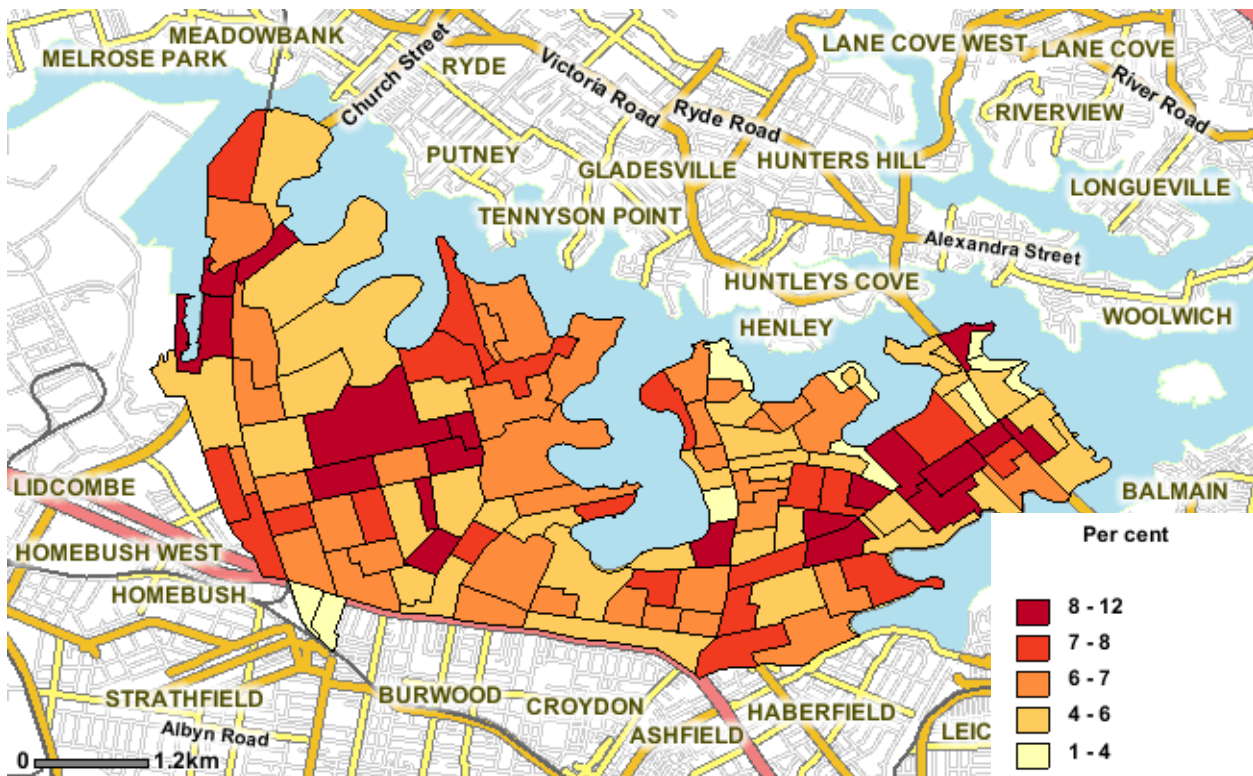


City of Canada Bay Suburbs 5-9 year olds 2001 - 2006

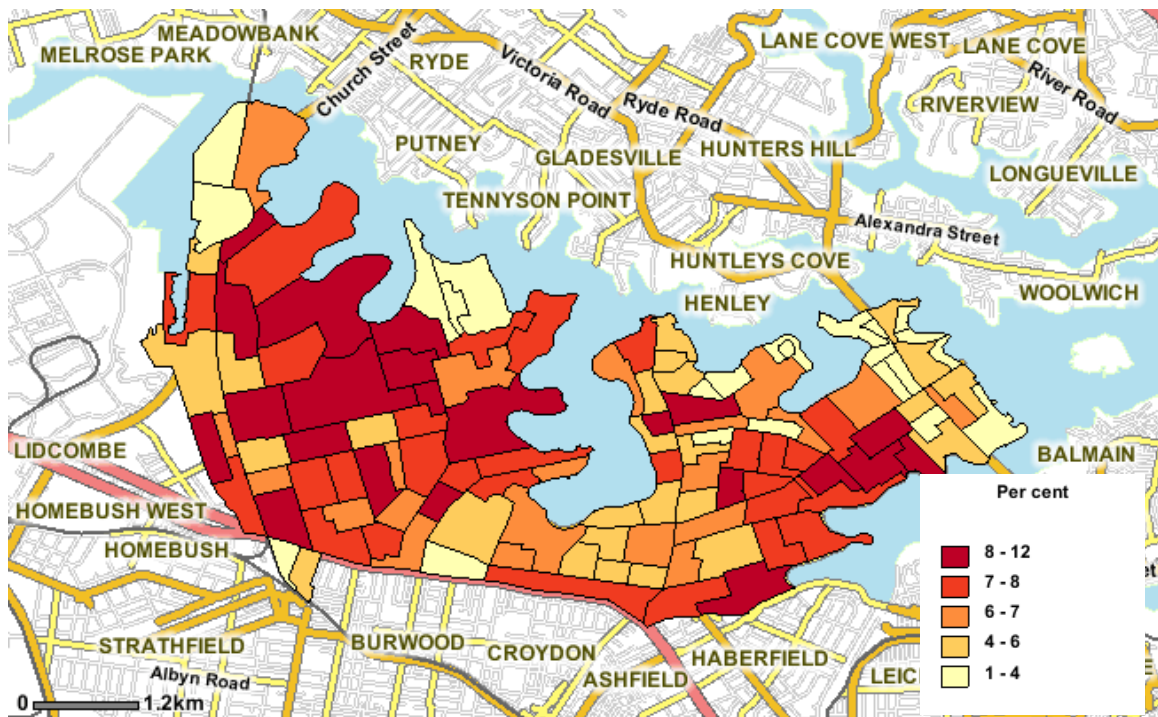


The following two maps indicate where there are higher proportions of the total population of children 0 – 4 years and 5 – 9 years of age.

0 – 4 years



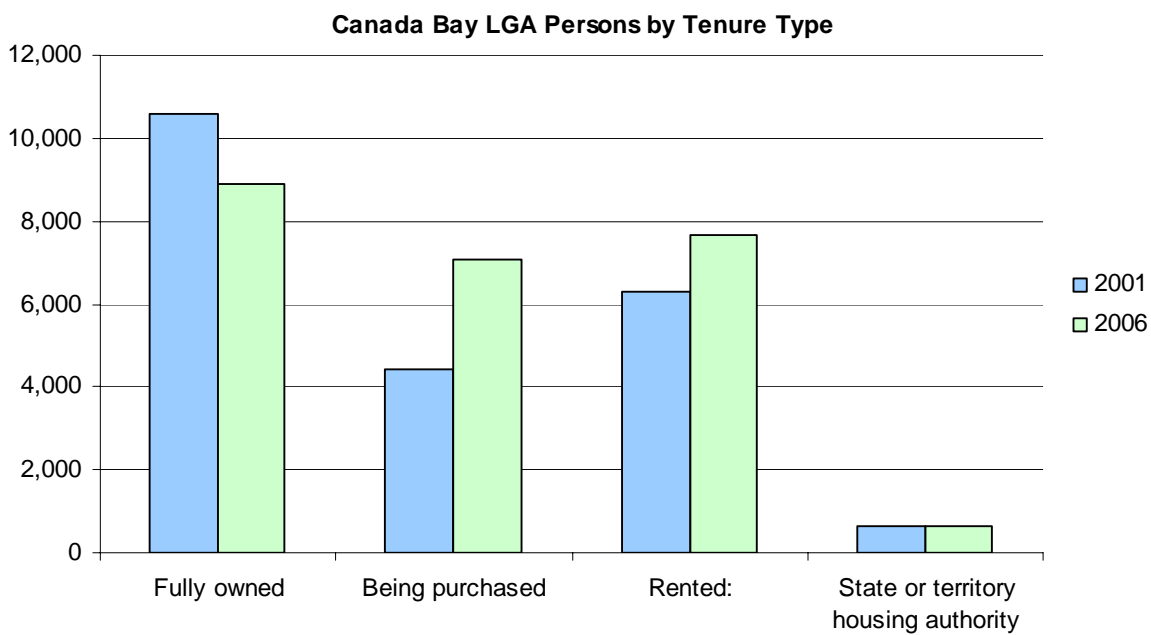
5 - 9 years



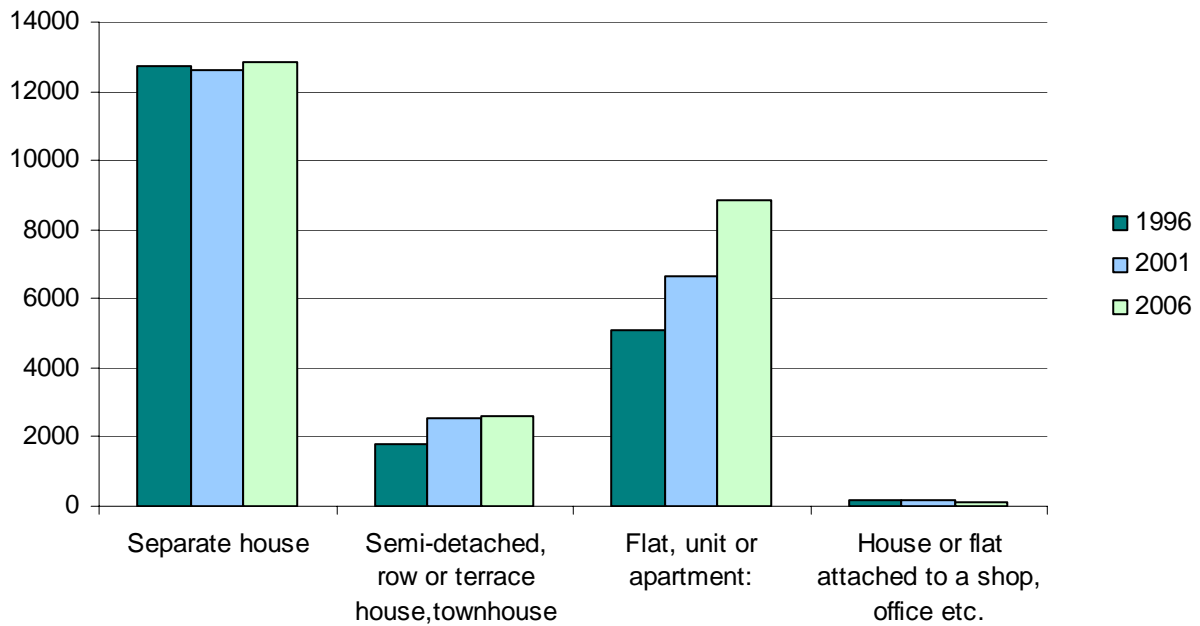
Dwelling structure numbers

The State Government’s Metropolitan Strategy is designed to meet forecast demand for housing in Sydney. As part of this Strategy, Canada Bay is required to accommodate an additional 10,000 dwellings by 2031. To date 1,925 new dwellings have been delivered in the Breakfast Point, Rhodes and Strathfield Triangle areas.

The type of dwelling is likely to be unit or apartment style living. This trend is reflected in the composition of the dwelling structure numbers.



Canada Bay LGA Dwelling Structure Numbers 1996-2001-2006



Implications

The types of dwellings are important determinants in the role and function that the area plays in the housing market and the way in which the local community lives. Traditionally the greater concentration of semi-detached houses, flats and apartments attracted more young adults and smaller households.

However, in recent developments in the City of Canada Bay, this does not appear to be the case. There are growing numbers of families with children who are living in smaller dwelling stock or on free-standing homes on small residential lots. This has implications for the value placed upon and use of open space, including playgrounds.

What the Community Said - Themes from Consultations



Community Feedback

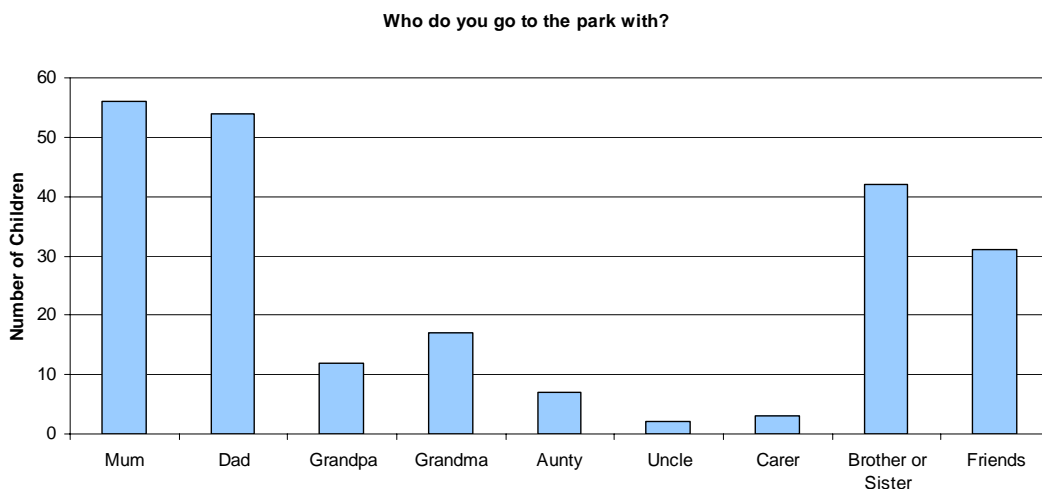
Community feedback was sought in relation to the future directions of our playgrounds. This feedback was provided through child focused surveys, adult surveys and comments provided via email and letters.

A Child's Perspective

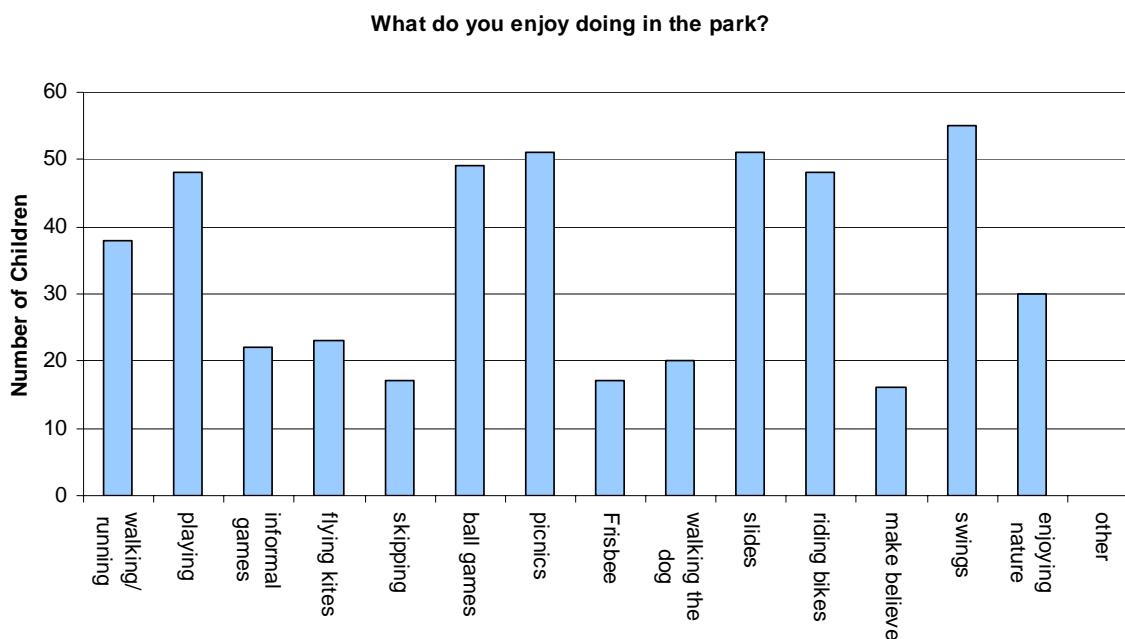
Children's surveys were distributed through services that families with young children use, including through Council's library services, during July 2007 school holidays.

Approximately 90 surveys were returned from children from 2 to 12 years of age. Children were asked which parks they visited, who they visited with and what they enjoyed most while they were there. Some of the younger respondents had adult intervention to assist in completion of the surveys while most children 4 years and over provided valuable insights into what they enjoy without assistance.

Who do you go to the park with?



What do you enjoy doing while you are there?



What would be in your ideal playground?

Children were asked to draw their ideal playground. Some children chose to also add text.

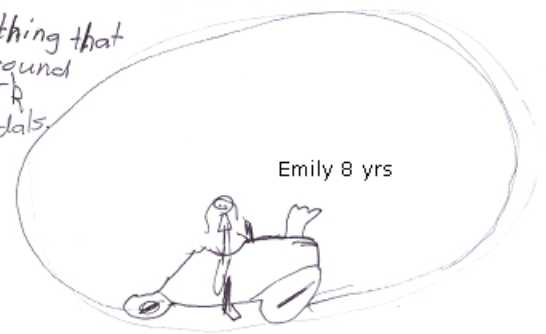
Generally younger children favoured swings, climbing opportunities, slides and bike tracks.

Older children, 8 years and over focused on ball games, bike tracks, netball hoops / half courts and places to sit and talk to friends.

Most pictures featured or mentioned interacting with others, whether they were friends, parents or extended family.



Bike thing that goes around the park with pedals.



An Adult's Perspective

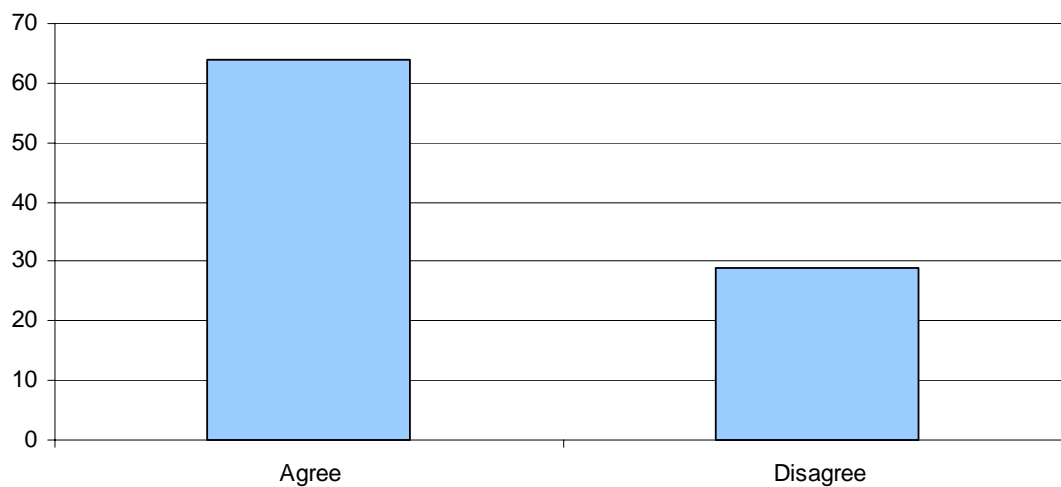
Community comment was sought through surveys, written responses and a program of park based consultations. Surveys, letters and petitions were received during the consultation phase.

Following is a summary of this feedback received.

Review the design and number of playgrounds to determine whether existing facilities should be retained or replaced at the end of operable life

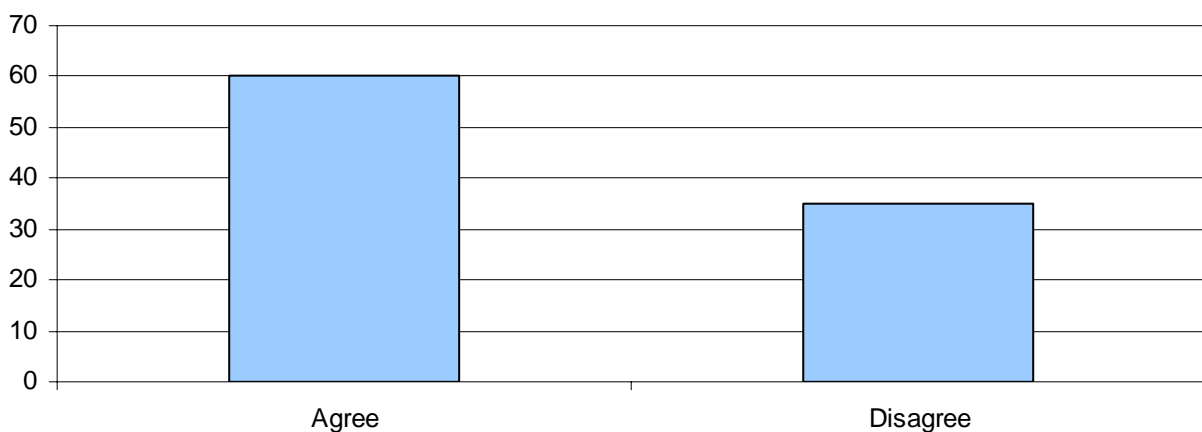
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement in relation to specific statements. This method was used as a means of testing the philosophical approach taken in relation to the earlier Play Space Strategy adopted in March 2007.

Council will review the design and number of play spaces in order to determine whether existing facilities would be retained/ replaced as they reach the end of their operable life.



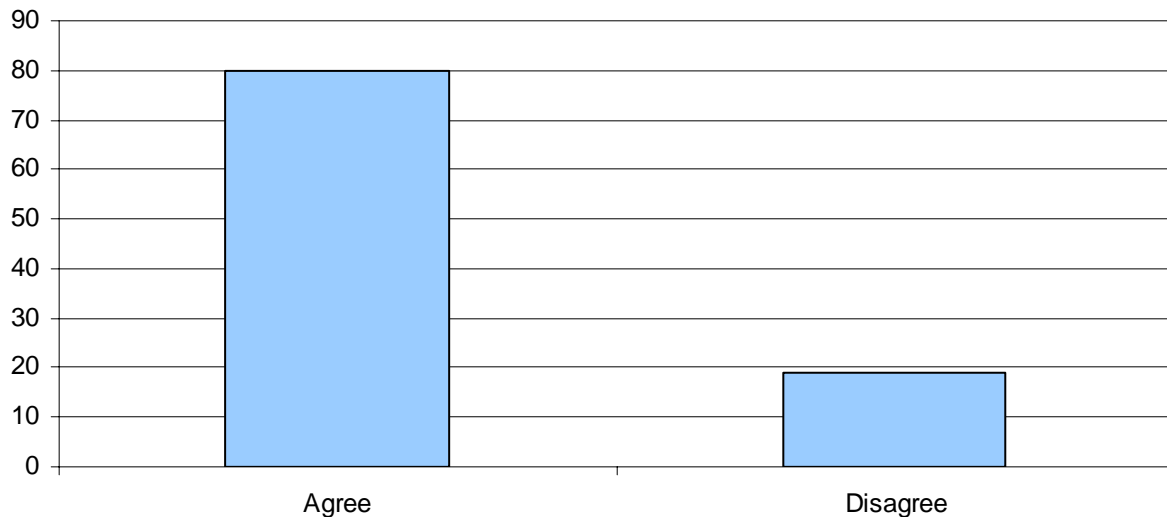
Create a hierarchy of quality regional playgrounds

Council will create a hierarchy of high quality regional play spaces which will assist in the prioritisation of funding for future maintenance and replacement of equipment.



Develop a rating system to provide information for users regarding the level of facilities provided at the playgrounds

Council will develop a rating system for play spaces to provide information to users in regard to the level of facilities provided at the play space

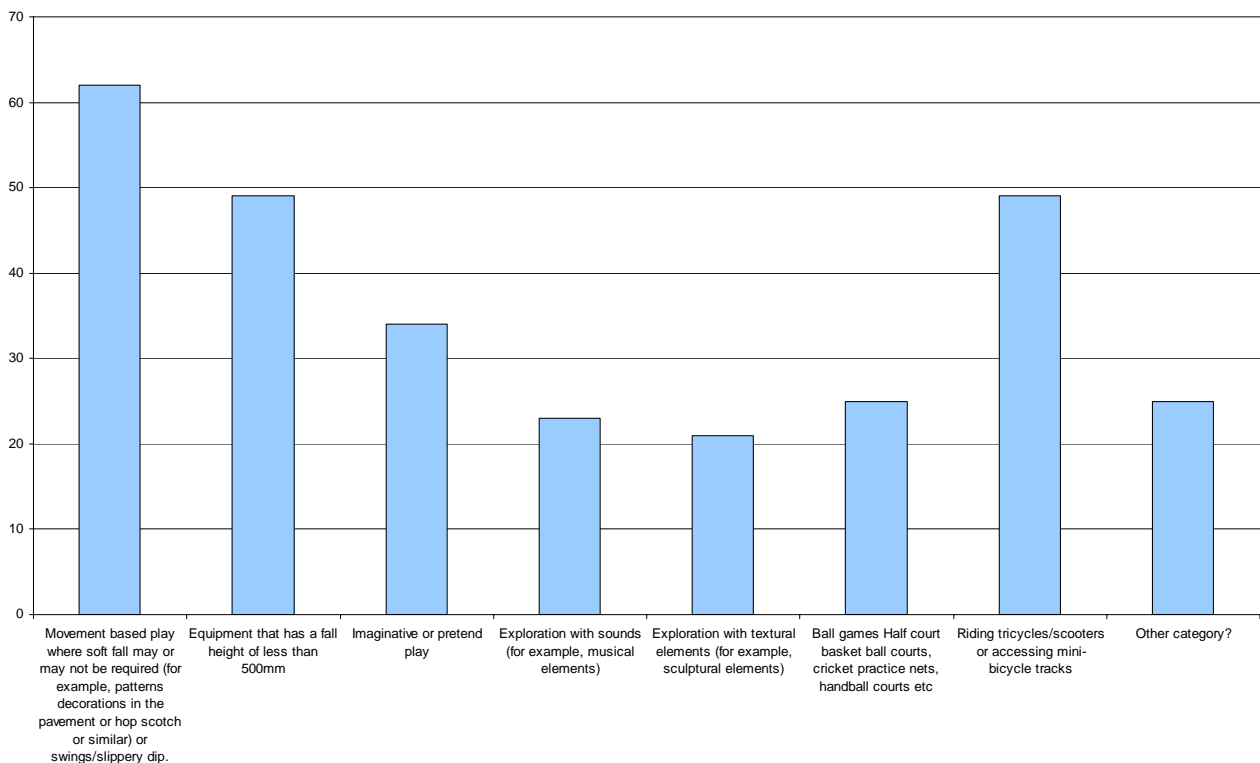


There was strong support for promotion of the individual attributes of each playground.

“Certainly a system outlining the facilities and features would be of benefit.”

What aspects do your children enjoy the most?

What general types of experiences do your children enjoy the most?



The response rate for movement based activities was the highest, followed closely by riding bicycles/ scooters and equipment that has a fall height less than 500mm. The high level of respondents indicating a fall height less than 500mm could be attributed to the fact that 80% of respondents to the survey had children 5 years of age or younger.

“They have the choice of being able to go to a different environment to play in. Movement play activities are encouraged by the change as it prevents boredom.”

Comments provided by the local community highlighted the following:

Equipment

- There was strong support for the retention of traditional play equipment, such as swings and slides in play grounds. However there was also support for the provision of other experiences such as ball games, areas for bikes, as well as explorative and imaginative play.

“Examples of great parks...provides diverse play for many ages as well as creating areas for imaginative play. They also have the basics such as swings and slide - a must for all parks - not negotiable!”

Value of playgrounds

- Importance placed on local playgrounds and parks as a place for socialising with other families;
- High value placed on the natural assets of the area and in particular the parks and playgrounds;
- Satisfaction with a base level of equipment in local parks, described as slides and swings with need to improve the level of maintenance and the response time for repairs to be made; and
- There was support for the retention of traditional equipment as opposed to relying on the natural features of a play environment in the initial consultation, however in the final exhibition period there was some recognition of the role that natural play environments play.
- The need to encourage activity through play, games and interaction with other children and / or adult carers was also highlighted.

“I am a mother of a 10 year old boy and feel his needs and those of his friends would be best met by providing more natural play equipment. He and his friends love getting out into nature, digging in the sand on the shore, climbing trees, hiding in ‘forests’. Play equipment which compliments the natural environment and adds to children’s feelings of challenge and even a sense of a bit of danger would be very welcome.

I feel, as do many other parents, that we’ve gone too far in trying to protect our kids from every possible danger and that most playgrounds these days are bland and unchallenging and the kids tire of them rapidly. Any chance of a flying fox?!”

Maintenance and Compliance with current Australian Standards

- Concerns over the state of repair (such as the equipment in Henry Lawson playground) and/or age of equipment in parks;
- Concerns over delays between the reporting of damage and the repairs being conducted; and
- Concerns regarding the level of compliance with the relevant Australian Standards.

Access

- General support for different categories/hierarchy of playgrounds within the LGA, that meet local needs (ie within easy walking distance) as well as longer stay playgrounds
- Strong support for accessible playgrounds, even though only a small proportion of respondents indicated that their children had a disability, it was recognised that good access benefits the whole community

“Will there be signage at the playgrounds to show six star rating (the rating is a brilliant idea)”

Communication

- Requests for information about playgrounds, in terms of what they provide but also what is suitable for each stage of children’s development The process also highlighted the need to provide mechanisms through which accurate information might be provided to the local community and also ways in which the community can become involved in shaping the future of the City;
- Need for improved information about how to report damage and when to expect that the repairs would be completed; and
- Need to improve communication to the local community so that there is an increased awareness of the reasons for recommendations / actions.

“Would love to know what ages play spaces are designed for just like you get with toys. Sometimes scared my little girl is up a climbing frame that is aimed at a 10 year old not a 2 year old. Also would like to know that there is a playground for her all ages not just now etc.”

Implementation and Communication



Implementation of *Let's Play*

Let's Play takes a proactive approach to communication, funding and resourcing of playgrounds in direct response to the needs of our community and the wants and aspirations people have expressed for the area.

The successful implementation of *Let's Play* requires a partnership between the Council and community. The timeframes within *Let's Play* are seen to be indicative and realistic, in terms of the financial and human resources available.

Some elements of *Let's Play* will be implemented in the short term, particularly those relating to improving the maintenance of the playgrounds.

The redevelopment and enhancement of the playgrounds will be implemented over a 10 year period.

The implementation plan is to be viewed as a guide only. Other opportunities might arise that might require shifts in priorities. If a grant application were successful or a partnership was established with a business or a service club was interested in a specific project then there might be a shift in priorities.

Funding & Resources

In providing for our parks and playgrounds Council will have regard to financial sustainability

The recent report by Percy Allen into the financial sustainability of councils stresses the importance of looking for innovative means of delivering facilities and services to the local community.

This has been further highlighted by the NSW Department of Local Government's recent paper on 'Strategic Collaboration'. This paper states: '*Local Government faces increasingly demanding and complex community expectations with limited resources and competing demands. It is critical that councils find new ways to plan and deliver services so that local government is sustainable and able to flourish. Strategic collaborations and partnerships are ways that councils can respond to these challenges.*' (A guidance paper – collaborative partnerships between Councils, Dept Local Government August 2007).

Whilst the guidance paper promotes strategic collaboration between councils, the principles might be applied also to partnerships between councils and other organisations including, service clubs, charities, commercial entities or community based organisations.

Let's Play sets out a base line of work that is achievable within Council's existing financial resources, taking into account general revenue (for example, rates and federal financial assistance grant), sustainability levy and developer contributions. Council will continue to provide the base requirements for each category of playground.

There are two aspects to the funding of playgrounds:

- Operational costs: allocations are made each year in the operating budget to meet costs associated with maintenance; and
- Capital costs: allocations are made for the replacement and/or upgrade of playgrounds. Funds for capital upgrades are derived from a range of sources, including general revenue, developer contributions, and grants. In the future the renewal of playgrounds will be incorporated into Council's Asset Management Plan, which is currently being developed. This Plan sets aside funded depreciation of the assets so that when the equipment has reached the end of its useful life, funds are available for its replacement.

Council will also seek additional funding and support for the implementation of the defined outcomes through grants, bequests, sponsorship, fundraising and partnerships. This includes application through the State and Federal funding schemes Council will seek the support of both local members to achieve positive outcomes for the local community.

Working in partnership

Utilising partnerships in the design and development of playgrounds is, in principle, the same approach that has been evident in the partnership approach between sporting clubs, Council and State Government in the development of sporting facilities. Council is committed to:

- continue to provide an annual allocation towards the maintenance of the playgrounds;
- identify efficient and effective means of delivering the maintenance program through an approach of continuous improvement and benchmarking; and
- implement a capital improvement program to further enhance existing and/or renew playgrounds.

Communication and Consultation

Communication

A range of strategies will be used to promote playgrounds through the use of community events and programs, such as the Active Kids Program.

Reports on the progress of the implementation of *Let's Play* will be provided in the quarterly management plan updates. Council's Annual Report will provide an opportunity to report the achievements for each year.

Initiatives and projects relating to the playgrounds will also be promoted on the Council's website as well as through regular updates in the Bayside Brief.

Consultation

Council will undertake to work with the local community in the planning and design of all new playgrounds, full upgrades or relocations. The active involvement of children in the design process will also take place, particularly in relation to iconic and district level playgrounds.

Iconic playgrounds

Due to their greater individuality, budget and broader catchments, iconic playgrounds will have the most comprehensive community consultation process. As a minimum, community consultation for iconic playgrounds shall include:

- Initial call for ideas and suggestions, in the form of a mail out to residents within 750m radius of the proposed facility, a sign in the playground area and newspaper copy (advertisement, Council column and / or media release);
- Display of concept plans at appropriate locations (including a sign in the reserve) with the option of a follow up on site display / workshop to discuss concept proposals with the community (advertised via process outlined in point 1); and
- Follow up letter box drop outlining the proposed design to residents immediately abutting the reserve.

District

District playgrounds will have an immediate community consultation process. As a minimum, community consultation for district playgrounds shall include:

- Call for ideas, design, siting suggestions from residents. This should be in the form of a mail out to residents within a 750m radius of the proposed facility and a sign in the playground. Using local media (advertisement, Council column and / or media release) would be optional, depending on the circumstances;
- Display of concept proposal on a sign within the playground; and
- Follow up letter box drop outlining the proposed design to residents immediately abutting the reserve.

Neighbourhood

Neighbourhood playgrounds will have a basic community consultation process, most importantly targeted at identifying community preferences for their playgrounds, consistent with the definitions of the various categories of playgrounds.

As a minimum, community consultation for neighbourhood playgrounds shall include:

- Call for ideas, design and siting suggestions from residents. This will be in the form of a mail out to residents in the immediate vicinity of the playground, within approximately 200m radius of the proposed facility and a sign in the playground with a sketch of the proposed playground facility.

Key Outcomes and Strategies



Outcome 1: Well planned playgrounds that are within the reach of everyone in the community

- 1.1 Accessibility - There is a playground within walking distance of everyone in the community
- 1.2 Designing for inclusion
- 1.3 Promotion of playgrounds
- 1.4 Relevant and responsive playgrounds

Outcome 2: Challenging, inviting and well maintained playgrounds for children and families

- 2.1 Parks are a corner stone of our culture and provide inviting and welcoming places that are safe and responsive to the needs of our community
- 2.2 Implement systems to ensure that playgrounds are appropriately maintained and repairs made in a timely and cost effective manner

Outcome 3: Sustainable playgrounds through good design, appropriate funding and partnerships

- 3.1 Implement a funding and resourcing approach that promotes effective and efficient delivery of playgrounds
- 3.2 Seek additional resources and funding opportunities – grants, sponsorship and philanthropy
- 3.3 Partnerships

Outcome 4: Meeting places that provide a variety of opportunities promoting community connections and interactions

- 4.1 Supporting social networks through encouraging community use of playgrounds
- 4.2 Developing strong sense of community ownership
- 4.3 Using playgrounds as a means to providing community information
- 4.4 Child centred playgrounds
- 4.5 A leading innovator in the design and use of playgrounds

Principles

The following principles will be applied in the implementation of *Let's Play*:

Playgrounds are a focal point in, and for, the development of the community. They provide a valuable vehicle through which to promote social sustainability and community wellbeing.:

- Encouraging active citizenship;
- Promoting democratic governance;
- Promoting social justice principles; and
- Fostering of social capital.

Outcome 1: Well planned playgrounds that are within the reach of everyone in the community

The level of accessibility is critical in the provision of playgrounds. Accessibility is in the form of the:

- Ease of accessing the facility, in terms of proximity; and
- Level of ease for all members of the community to access well-designed playgrounds. This includes the application of universal design principles.

1.1 Accessibility - There is a playground within walking distance of everyone in the community

This strategy proposes that all members of the community should be able to walk to a playground in 10 -15 minutes. This means that the optimal provision of a playground within 750m.

In assessing this distance, barriers such as major roads, are taken into account. Where there are barriers an additional playground within the 750m distance may be required.

This approach has been supported by the Benchmark – Park User Satisfaction Survey Program 2006, which found that 51% of users walk to the park and the average time taken to travel to the park is 12 minutes. As such the 750m maximum distance to a playground has been applied as a key principle in providing equitable access.

There is also a focus on promoting the connectivity between playgrounds and other community nodes, through the City's pathways and bike paths.

It is not possible to offer all features in all playgrounds. The categories introduced by Let's Play are aimed at delivering an appropriate distribution of a variety of playgrounds across the LGA. This also recognises the changes in the ways children and their families use playgrounds during the phases of childhood.

Therefore to meet the broad spectrum of needs and to reflect the variety of ways in which families use playgrounds three (3) categories are:

- **Neighbourhood:** a destination for the local community to meet and form social connections, that is within a 10 minute walking distance and caters for highly localized catchments generally catering for short stays. Families will walk to these to spend an hour then return home or continue on a trip to the shops or to other destination.
- **District:** a destination for the local and broader community to gather either in informal or formal groups (such as playgroups, active kids programs). Meets local need and draws families from across the area.
- **Iconic:** a destination with a stay of over 2 hours, in larger areas and associated with a range of activities. These are often sited in areas of great natural beauty and are designed to compliment their environment. In other instances they are situated near sporting fields and provide a convenient area for complementary activities. Caters for large groups, provide a greater variety of experiences for a wider age group and offer more facilities amenable to a longer stay.

1.2 Designing for inclusion

A key outcome of this strategy is, over time, to ensure that playgrounds meet as far as is possible, the accessibility criteria.

This will be achieved through continued implementation of the actions identified in Council's Accessibility Plan (2004) as well as by incorporating into the design of new playgrounds and parks the principles of universal design.

A star rating system will be used to identify the accessible features and to provide information about the level of accessibility achieved. This will be displayed on Council's website as well as in other publications relevant to families with children. Iconic playgrounds will be the focus for initial works in this area.

One star will be allocated for each feature, with stars allocated on the following basis:

1. Provision of compliant accessible parking bays;
2. Pathways from parking and/or transport, to equipment, furniture, toilets that are no greater than 1:14 gradient;
3. Accessible soft fall: solid rubber to allow people in wheelchairs, crutches etc to easily move across the space;
4. Accessible play equipment: for example decks of sufficient size and height to allow easy transfer from a wheelchair, equipment that allows variable usage patterns, equipment that can be used by children whilst they are in a pram / wheelchair/on crutches or if they have a visual impairment;
5. Provision of accessible toilets; and
6. Furniture: BBQ's, tables and chairs, drinking fountains.

1.3 Promotion of playgrounds

An important aspect of improving accessibility is the provision of information about what is available in the LGA. To this end information will be provided which will identify the appropriateness of different playgrounds for different age groups. The information will also include the type of activities that are catered for in each playground. A range of promotional avenues and materials will be used.

1.4 Relevant and responsive playgrounds

As the needs of communities evolve it is important to review the provision of facilities and programs that are provided for the community. It is important to recognize that playground equipment has a life span of approximately 10–15 years and the current design approaches to playground provision focuses on building upon the uniqueness of specific sites, landscape features and the community's needs and aspirations.

Planning for playgrounds needs to be undertaken in the overall planning for communities, through the social planning process, including planning for other community facilities.

Community surveys will be conducted every two years to assess community satisfaction with the level of amenity and play experiences provided. The information from these surveys will be used in the continual review of the implementation of *Let's Play*.

Further Council will:

- Explore opportunities to undertake audits of usage patterns in partnership with relevant tertiary institutions. These audits provide a source of data to inform future decisions;
- Set criteria for the provision of neighbourhood parks in the redevelopment of areas to ensure land is suitable;
- Aim to complete an overall master plan for iconic parks that takes into account longer term planning with opportunities for staged development / enhancement as funding becomes available; and
- Apply standards to guide the review of existing playgrounds.

Specific Strategies

Action	Leader and Partners	Timeframe
Promote connectivity between nodes that families use and playgrounds/parks through the Pedestrian and Mobility Plan (PAMPS).	Technical Services & Operations	Short Term
<p>Develop and enhance the type of information available about playgrounds that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements about the type of play equipment appropriate for each age or stage of children's development (emphasising the advantages of low level equipment for young children); • Information about amenities provided in and/or surrounding the playground; • Star rating indicating level of accessibility ; • Special features and points of interest about the playground/park; • Special events (e.g. family fun days)/or regular events (e.g. mothers group meetings); • Linkages with bike paths; and • Iconic signage indicating the nature of activities provided 	Recreation	Short Term
<p>Promote availability of playgrounds through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's website and other new technology • Expansion of the playground directory • Bayside Brief • Local print media 	Recreation	Short Term
Introduce new signage across the playgrounds, as part of Council's overall signage strategy, to provide information about how to report issues as well as promoting activities in the playground or local area.	Recreation	Short Term
Investigate the opportunity to offer Level 2 inspections to local schools and other venues with playgrounds, on a fee for service basis.	Technical Services & Operations	Medium Term

Outcome 2: Challenging, inviting and well maintained playgrounds for children and families

General approach

2.1 Parks are a cornerstone of our culture and provide inviting and welcoming places that are safe and responsive to the needs of our community

The design and development of playgrounds will be used as a means of engaging with the local community, particularly children. This will be particularly relevant in the iconic playgrounds which will be designed to reflect the special characteristics of the area.

The essential components of a playground will be determined by whether it is a neighbourhood, district or iconic playground. The design of the playgrounds will take into account the principles set out below:

Complying with relevant Australian/New Zealand Playground Safety Standards. There are a range of standards that apply to playgrounds that cover aspects such as development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation. The standards cover playground equipment as well as the surfacing, ie soft fall. Council staff are now trained to conduct inspections and implement appropriate maintenance programs.

“I really appreciate the soft fall for the safety of my toddler and think it is really important that at least one park in the area has this as the little ones eat bark.”

Providing shade: In the provision of shade there are a number of considerations and methods. Where possible, the design and siting of playgrounds will be undertaken with a view to locating facilities near the shade of trees. On occasion new trees will also be planted. Council will only consider the installation of shade structures over playgrounds in exceptional circumstances, on a site by site basis and then only at larger district or iconic playgrounds. Where shade structures are deemed necessary, consideration will be given to integrating them with other park shelters and picnic facilities. As an overall approach to dealing with the hazards of solar radiation, Council endorses the Sun-Smart guidelines of the NSW Cancer Council and recognises that carers should not solely rely on Council to provide shade and shelter from the sun. It is expected that carers will also implement sun-smart practices such as:

- ensuring children (and carers) are wearing adequate protective clothing and hats;
- ensuring sunscreen is applied and re applied; and
- timing visits to playgrounds, where possible, to avoid the hottest part of the day.

Each location will be assessed on its merits for the type and degree of solar protection required. Initially this may mean that shade cloth may be used. However, trees are a long term cost-effective and environmentally-friendly alternative.

Focussing on the environment. Incorporate ecological sustainable principles in the design and use of materials and landscaping, for example, use of recycled materials as well as use of elements such as solar, wind and water to enhance play possibilities.

Designing with maintenance in mind. In the design phase there will be a focus on selecting equipment with standard components/elements to ensure availability. There will also be a review of plans to determine whether they are in accordance with the relevant standards prior to construction.

Providing fencing. A key feature in a number of our playgrounds is the proximity to water. Whilst water is an attraction it also presents a potential risk that needs to be managed either by securing the hazard (ie the river or canal) or by securing the play area from the hazard (i.e. fencing the play area as a discrete entity within the park). The works program sets out the playgrounds to be fenced. The priority of fencing is based on the level of hazard present, for example a drop into water hazard is rated higher than a walk into water hazard, as a child can not easily remove itself from a 'drop into' situation. The proximity to a busy road will also be taken into account when considering fencing.

Promoting community safety. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and Safer by Design Guidelines will be applied when considering the location and design of playgrounds. CPTED principles are based on the premise that the physical environment can be changed or managed to reduce the incidence and fear of crime, including due consideration to passive surveillance.

Planning for play. Offer challenges for children with graded risks and opportunities for children to retreat. Wide sides to a slippery dip permit children to change their mind after climbing the ladder/steps ensuring there is enough room to turn around, even if there are other children on the equipment.

Promoting the use of open-ended rather than closed play opportunities by providing more than fixed equipment and predictable use. There needs to be spaces within the natural setting and the landscape to generate imagination, creativity and problem solving. The Children's Garden in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Garden provides an example of this type of design.

Providing a balance of activities and uses through provision of individual and communal spaces within playgrounds. This can be achieved through the arrangement of tables and chairs for solitude and reflection, as well as multiple arrangements for social occasions, mother's groups, morning teas and functions. Spaces will be provided in iconic parks and playgrounds for educational sessions to observe and find out about such features as Middens and mangrove swamps. The design will also consider spaces for community events such as musical performances, movies, dancing, skateboarding, roller blading and chess boards

Providing for all ages/ stages and genders in the provision of a variety of play environments across the LGA.

Providing of community gardens – Opportunities will be identified in conjunction with local communities, for the development of community gardens. These gardens represent opportunities to generate food/herbs for eating and also for the development of social capital. Children's gardens engage children and families in gardening to enhance knowledge of growth, seasons and sustainability.

Promoting intergenerational play and activity through the selection of equipment and design of spaces that encourage child/adult interaction and involvement.

Reflecting the place and people. The special characteristics of the place through landscape elements including planting, topographical variations and views to add a new dimension or challenge to the play area and enhance the amenity of playgrounds. Inclusion of public art can enhance the aesthetic quality of the space and can include sculpture, painting, installation art and spaces for performance. Public art can:

- Interpret, define and enhance the character and cultural identity of the area;
- Acknowledge and celebrate the cultural heritage and traditions (particularly local heritage);
- Encourage a sense of pride and ownership of art and public spaces;
- Provide positive practical interaction between people and public spaces;
- Challenge perceptions and prejudices;
- Reflect contemporary ideas and approaches to public art;
- Promote a sense of well-being by enhancing enjoyment of public spaces; and
- Tell stories of our heritage and place.

Promoting a universal design approach to accessibility. Universal design is defined as 'the design of products, services and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design' (Centre for Universal Design, 1997). Universal design is sometimes described as inclusive design, design for all, Trans generational design and barrier free design. The 7 Principles of Universal design are:

- Equitable use (design it fair);
- Flexibility in use (design it adjustable);
- Simple and intuitive use (design it elegant);
- Perceptible information (design it obvious);
- Tolerance of error (design it safe);
- Low physical effort (design it easy); and
- Side and space for approach and use (design it reasonable)

These principles offer designers guidance to better integrate features at the outset so that the design of the environment meets the needs of as many users as possible.

2.2 Implement systems to ensure that playgrounds are appropriately maintained and repairs made in a timely and cost-effective manner

In the provision of playgrounds, Council will work in partnership with the community to promote children's right to play in a safe environment and simultaneously protects Council from possible liability.

Initial design

Play equipment in local playgrounds will be selected on the basis of:

- Durability;
- Resistance to vandalism;
- Available locally and/or prompt supply of replacement component parts;
- Ease of replacement - modular components; and
- Effective design to maximise soft fall provided.

Ongoing maintenance and management

Playgrounds will be maintained in accordance with AS/NZS 4486.1.

A major initiative in this strategy is a fundamental change to the way in which playground maintenance is conducted. In the past, before repairs were made, Council, relied on reports to be sent to Council, following a quarterly inspection by an external provider. Council will now conduct its own inspections on a monthly basis.

The previous system resulted in delays and ultimately an unacceptable system of maintenance for our playgrounds.

A new system for inspections and rectifications will now be implemented.

This involves Council staff being accredited as play equipment inspectors, implementation of a monthly inspection regime and provision of a customised trailer to carry required tools and standardised components to complete simple repairs at the time of inspection. The maintenance regime undertaken will be line with best practice and Council's overall asset management plan.

The new inspection process reduces the time taken to rectify issues, with the ability, subject to component parts being in stock, to make repairs at the time of inspection.

Further improved signage will be placed in parks with playgrounds providing a 24 hour contact line to report damage.

Comprehensive annual audits (Level 3) in relation to AS/NZ standard 4486 will also be conducted.

2.3 Vandalism and graffiti will be reduced

Playground planning and design will include measures to minimise graffiti and vandalism. This will include proactive and reactive strategies.

Specific Strategies

Action	Leader and Partners	Timeframe
Implement a monthly playground inspection program with accreditation of staff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training to become accredited playground inspectors (level 1 & 2) • Provision of an audit checklist to track maintenance issues and remedial actions • Introduce a trailer fitted with standard components so that simple and / or high risk repairs can be made at the time of inspection • Brand the trailer to be recognisable within the community. 	Technical Services & Operations	Short Term
Implement a program for playgrounds so that as a minimum equipment is upgraded/ replaced every 10 - 15 years	Technical Services & Operations	Short Term
Develop a playground design checklist to guide the development of new playgrounds, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and engagement methods to be used • Incorporate design features that are creative and stimulating and invite children's spontaneous play • Cater for each type of play- i.e. active/motor, creative/cognitive, social/dramatic and quiet/reflective play 	Parks Planner	Short Term
Implement strategies to reduce vandalism and graffiti including: <p><u>Proactive strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles in the provision of playgrounds; • Involve the local community in the design of the playgrounds and in particular, with community cultural development initiatives involving older children and younger teenagers; and • Pilot a Friends of the Park program to create stronger sense of ownership of the playgrounds. This form of strategy has beneficial in other local government areas in reducing vandalism and graffiti. <p><u>Reactive strategies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include Councils Customer Service contact details, including the after hours service, on Park signage to enable reporting of damage; • Pilot volunteer graffiti removal programs where private fences adjoining playgrounds / parks or where there is a Friends of the Park in place; • Undertake repairs and remove graffiti as soon as possible to discourage further incidents (ie a rapid removal approach); and • Investigate designating parks with playgrounds as alcohol free zones 	Parks Planner Community Services Community Services Parks Planner Technical Services & Operations Technical Services & Operations Parks Planner	Short Term

Outcome 3: Sustainable playgrounds through good design, appropriate funding and partnerships

General approach

A key outcome for the provision of playgrounds is sustainability – from an environmental, financial and social perspective.

3.1 Implement a funding and resourcing approach that promotes effective and efficient delivery of playgrounds

Council will consider, in the development of the new Asset Management Plan, the longer term funding model and sources for playgrounds.

Council will work to establish a tendering process that results in cost-effective purchasing agreements for the design and implementation of playgrounds as well as off-the-shelf capital purchases. This will be achieved in a variety of ways including entering into resource sharing arrangements with other councils, for example joint tenders, which may provide a cost effective means of procuring play equipment.

A guiding principle for the design and construction of playgrounds will be to use ecologically sustainable design principles. This will be reflected in the initial design as well as in the consideration of finishes of materials to minimize maintenance costs and encourage durability. This principle will be applied at all stages of playground construction from the design to the selection of materials.

3.2 Seek additional resources and funding opportunities – grants, sponsorship and philanthropy

Additional funding and resource opportunities will be explored and pursued. These include funding from the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, ARTSNOW and the Federal Government initiatives. Council will work with local community members and groups to access other funding opportunities, such as the Community Development Support Expenditure Scheme (CDSE), which are only available to non government, not for profit groups.

Sponsorship opportunities and packages will be developed with the aim of providing infrastructure and/ or activities within the playgrounds, subject to Council's Sponsorship Policy. The support of local organisations and businesses will be sought and special efforts will be made to attract donations, bequests and encourage local philanthropy.

Contributions made by the local community, community organisation and business investment in playgrounds will be recognized through the annual Sustainability Awards program – promoting social sustainability initiatives.

3.3 Partnerships

Partnerships with the local community, business, and government and non-government agencies are central to ensuring sustainability.

Council has a strong bush care regeneration group. There are opportunities to build stronger links between this group and the implementation of Let's Play, particularly in relation to Queen Elizabeth Park.

Council will work proactively to establish and maintain partnerships in the delivery of playgrounds in our community. Partnerships will be sought with service clubs, charities, business, developers, foundations and community organisations in a whole of community approach to the delivery of sustainable playgrounds.

Community partnerships will also be established through the Friends of the Park initiative. An objective of the Friends of the Park approach is to encourage and facilitate community driven projects (e.g. tree planting, community gardening). Successfully driven projects may involve the contribution of monetary and/or non-monetary resources and encourage greater sense of community ownership.

Specific Strategies

Action	Leader partners &	Timeframe
Participate in joint tenders or bulk purchasing, through Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC), with the aim of securing cost effective provision of play equipment	Technical Services & Operations	Short Term
Apply for funds each round through the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation for play ground upgrades, in each funding round including for shade, fencing and other amenities.	Parks Planner	Annually
Apply for funding from ArtsNSW for iconic playgrounds where there is a public art component	Cultural Development Officer	Annually
Introduce a category for social sustainability, to recognise support of playgrounds, into Council's annual sustainability awards program.	Economic Development Team	Short Term
Develop a package that can be used when seeking sponsorship, bequests and other contributions	Communications & Public Relations	Short Term
Identify opportunities for community based organisations and services clubs to establish ongoing relationships with relevant parks, as part of their ongoing development and / or maintenance	Community Services	Medium Term

Outcome 4: Meeting places that provide a variety of opportunities – promoting community connections/ interactions

General approach

4.1 Supporting social networks through encouraging community use of playgrounds

Playgrounds provide a meeting place, assist in building social networks and break down social isolation.

Careful design of playgrounds can also promote intergenerational experiences for children and older members of the community. In practice:

- Providing playgrounds with a variety of levels and experiences, for example, provision of slides that allow two people to go down together, provision of equipment specially designed for adults, raising the levels of play equipment to allow easy access by older people
- Establishing Friends of the Park with the purposes of building local social networks and also encouraging greater sense of ownership of the playgrounds
- Community gardens

“Yards and parks should be designed as meeting places for three generations, where parents and grandparents don't simply sit on benches or fiddle with their mobile phones, but move around with the children. Adults don't need to go alone to specially designed keep-fit places to exercise because they can exercise with their children. Being active together saves time and strengthens family ties.”

Kevin Harris <http://neighbourhoods.typepad.com/neighbourhoods/2005/11/intergeneration.html>



4.2 Developing a strong sense of community ownership

Research has shown that where there is a strong sense of community ownership the level of vandalism and graffiti decreases.

Council will seek local advice on matters such as playground siting, equipment mix and colours. This will provide facilities that better meet the needs of the local community as well as foster a greater sense of ownership. The type and extent of community consultation will reflect the size and type of playgrounds being installed. For example a large complex facility will require greater community consultation than a small neighbourhood facility with a limited mix of equipment.

Friends of the Park will be a program developed in relation to parks, playgrounds and community gardens. The aim of this is to encourage active involvement and contribution towards the playgrounds and parks in the area, particularly at the neighbourhood level.

4.3 Using playgrounds as a means to providing community information

Playgrounds are regularly frequented by families with children, with 80% of respondents to the review survey indicating that they visit a local park at least once a week, with approximately 50% visiting 3 times per week. Through improved signage and / or provision of notice boards within popular playgrounds this will provide an opportunity to target relevant information towards families.

Over time signage, as provided for in the Council's Civic Signage Manual (2005) will be implemented across the City. The signage can provide for the reporting of damage, promotion of what is happening in the park (i.e. upgrades, regular and/or special events) as well as acknowledgement of support provided by other organisations and agencies in the development of the playground and/or park.

4.4 Child- centred playgrounds

Playgrounds offer an avenue for the physical, social, cognitive and linguistic development of children. The design of the playground can promote such development by offering a variety of developmentally appropriate experiences. It can also open up opportunities for the exercise of the imagination, the repetition of skills, the engagement in interactions, the having of fun and the experience of joy. A playground fundamentally, is a wonderful place for the pursuit of happiness.

4.5 A leading innovator in the design and use of Playgrounds

The City of Canada Bay Council aspires to become a leading innovator in the design and use of playgrounds. It will keep a data base of innovative practices world wide and make it available to interested researchers. It will enter into collaborative research agreements with hospitals, tertiary institutions, government bodies, commercial enterprises and other agencies, in order to pursue research in areas such as the design, construction, use and effectiveness of playgrounds.

Collaboration will focus on institutions and opportunities within the region. However possibilities for participating in broader projects will be explored and assessed when they arise. Council will, through these collaborative arrangements, seek funding for trials in areas of interest, for example:

- design and use of intergenerational playgrounds;
- effects of different modes of use of playgrounds on development, flexibility and obesity;
- children's' reactions to different types of equipment and playgrounds at different ages;
- patterns of child/child, carer/child and carer/carer interaction under different modes of playground design
- effectiveness of various measures on the limitation of vandalism;
- factors determining activity/passivity in the carer's role when children are using playgrounds;
- effects of playgrounds used in therapeutic treatment when combined with other therapies for children and the elderly; and
- changes in cultural sensitivity and knowledge as a result of unstructured and structured experiences in thematic playgrounds (e.g. those which relate to aboriginal culture).

In such research and development lie the seeds for refreshment and regeneration of the emerging playground strategy for years to come. It will also confirm the standing of the work being done in the eyes of the local and international community and promote the image of the area as a centre of excellence in its provisions.

Specific Strategies

Action	Leader & partners	Timeframe
Investigate the viability of / interest in business activity in the vicinity of regional playgrounds to provide improved facilities / amenity for park visitors. This may include the provision of coffee carts or other like facilities	Economic development team	Short Term
Identify opportunities to create linkages / partnerships between local businesses and playgrounds (for example Halliday Park and Wareemba shopping precinct)	Economic development team	Medium Term
Pilot the Friends of the Park concept to encourage community connections and cohesion, this may include. The first stage will be to focus on playgrounds where there has been strong community interest during the consultation phase	Community Services <i>**TAFE Horticultural Students</i>	Short Term
Establish a program of events in local parks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness week 	Community Services & Communications and Public Relations	Medium Term
Promote and encourage community partnerships in the staging of programs and events, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnerships with Drummoyne Community Centre Families First Active Communities Grandparent Day initiatives 	Community Services	Short Term
Investigate opportunities to provide intergenerational opportunities, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot programs with health professionals for use of playgrounds for older people Pilot programs that promote inclusion of all abilities 	Community Services	
Explore opportunities for conducting school holiday and other family-based events in local playgrounds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active Communities Program School holiday programs Supported playgroups 	Community Services	
Work in partnership with local bushcare groups to improve the amenity of parks/playgrounds, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Queen Elizabeth Park 	Technical Services & Operations	
Investigate and where appropriate pursue research in the area of the design, construction, use and the effectiveness of playgrounds	Community Services <i>**KidsafeNSW</i>	

*** potential partners*

Playground Categories and Distribution



Categories

The Strategy provides for 3 categories of playground. These categories enable the affordable installation and maintenance of a diverse range of play options across the City.

In summary:

Category	Distribution Preference	Budget Range as at 2007 <i>(this will need to be adjusted by CPI each year)</i>		Recurrent maintenance costs per annum **
		Low end	High end	Approx
Neighborhood *	Caters for a highly localized catchments within a 500m - 750m or < 10 minute walk from residences	\$30,000 -	\$40,000	\$3,500
District *	Services a wider catchments for residents within the suburb and visitors from neighbouring suburbs > 10 minute walk <10 minute drive	\$65,000 -	\$80,000	\$6,000
Iconic	Has catchments that extends beyond the City of Canada Bay LGA. Services the local community, residents from the City of Canada Bay and visitors predominantly from adjacent LGAs. > 10 minute drive	\$150,000 -	\$300,000	\$51,000

* *District and regional playgrounds also act as local playgrounds*

** *Maintenance costs cost playgrounds do vary from site to site. The estimated figure included items such as playground repairs and materials, toilet cleaning, car park and site surrounds cleaning. This does **not** include mowing costs.*

By providing target ranges for distribution distances and budget amounts in each category, playground siting and design will better cater for the practical needs of each park and local community it serves. The costs are indicative only and will be refined at the design phase, when taking into account individual site characteristics.

The table below sets out in more detail the definition for each category of playground.

Description	Category		
	Neighbourhood	District	Iconic
Catchments & Length of stay	Caters for a highly localized catchments within a 500m - 750m or < 10 minute walk from residences Short stay: Less than 30-45 minutes	Wider catchment for residents within the suburb and visitors from neighbouring suburbs > 10 minute walk, <10 minute drive Moderate stay, over 30-45 minutes.	Catchment extends beyond LGA. Serves local community, residents LGA & visitors predominantly from adjacent LGAs. > 10 minute drive Longer stay, over 2 hours.
Location	Conveniently located to residences	Located near commercial or other community nodes/ facilities (e.g. school, sporting fields)	May be larger in areas and associated with a range of activity & / or other community nodes. Possibly in areas of great natural beauty
Accessibility Rating	1/6 (pathways)	3/6 (pathways, furniture, parking)	6/6
Equipment & Design	3-5 activities, provided by one or two pieces of equipment	8-12 activities either / or provided by one to three pieces of equipment	Full range of activities & equipment Potentially co located with other facilities (eg half courts). Potentially integrate equipment & environment to promote imaginative play Designed with strong themes to reflect context & special characteristics of the place, incl. use of public art.
Age Range catered for	at least one age group, usually birth to 5 years	Two age groups usually birth to 5 years, 5-10 years	All ages
Support Infrastructure	Seating Picnic Table Synthetic Soft fall Natural Shade Rubbish Bin	Seating Picnic Table Bike Track Reasonable access to water & toilets Kerb side or formal parking Synthetic Soft fall Natural Structure Rubbish Bin Reasonable access to toilets	Seating Picnic Tables & BBQ Bike Track & bike racks Access to water & toilets Formal car parking available Synthetic Soft fall Shade Structure Security Lighting Rubbish Bins Toilets Ancillary amenities, such as coffee carts

Impact on Visitor Perception of CCBC	Medium	Medium	High (draw card into CCBC)
Cost Capital (incl. design, landscaping, equipment)	\$30,000 - \$40,000	\$65,000 - \$80,000	> \$300,000
Recurrent maintenance cost	Approx. 10% of construction costs	Approx. 10% of construction costs	Approx. 10% of construction costs
Procurement Process	Preferred Supplier or part of a bulk tender	Preferred Supplier or part of a bulk tender	Individual design/ single contract
New Build Process	Majority templated - largely off the shelf	Majority templated - largely off the shelf	Individually designed by landscape architect
Lifespan	15 years	15 years	10 years
Inspections	Maintenance (Level 2): Monthly with agreed Service Safety & compliance (Level 3): annual	Maintenance (Level 2): Monthly with agreed Service Safety & compliance (Level 3): annual	Maintenance (Level 2): Monthly with agreed Service Safety & compliance (Level 3): annual

Distribution

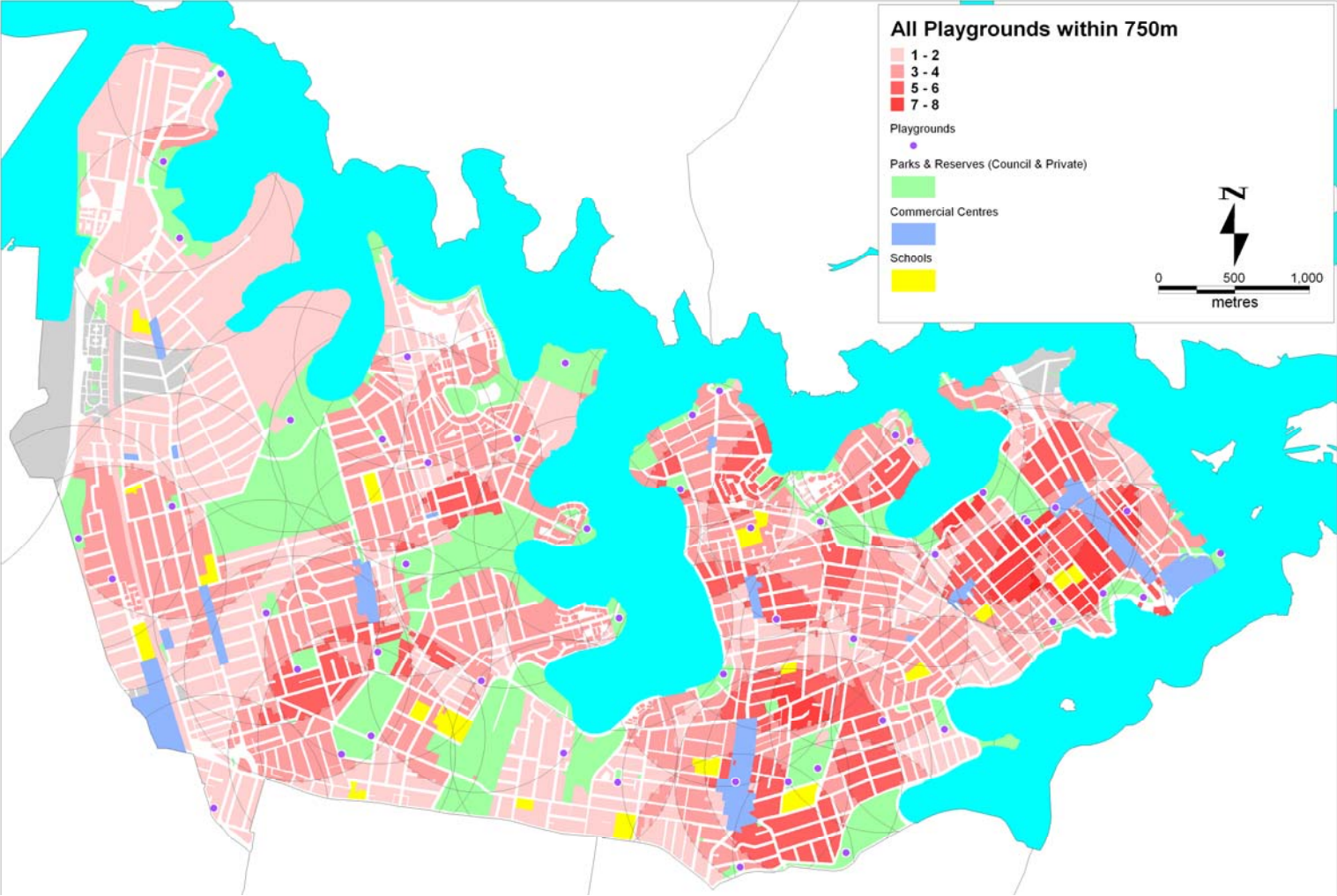
In planning the distribution of the playgrounds within the City, a key outcome was to provide access optimal provision that is to provide at least one playground within 750m of residences.

In mapping the distribution of playgrounds it is also important to note that District and Iconic playgrounds will also serve as neighbourhood playgrounds.

The following map shows the distribution of playgrounds across our City, through the shading, the number of playgrounds within 750 metres.

There will be, however, sections of the City which are better catered for than others, due to historical locations and availability of suitable land.

Distribution of all playgrounds across the City



Proposed Playground Numbers



Priorities

All the strategies and directions in *Let's Play* are important as they contribute to the quality, safety, appearance and value of playgrounds across our City. The implementation of *Let's Play* will be undertaken with the following priority listing assisting Council to plan its budget allocation and resources accordingly.

It is intended that *Let's Play* will take 10 years to implement. However during this time it will also be important to continually review as the needs of our community evolve.

Priorities in implementation have taken into account the lifecycle renewal program as well as the following assessment criteria:

- Safety and risk management with items that raise safety issues being first priority, such as damaged equipment, fencing near roads and water ways. Most of these issues will be undertaken in routine maintenance some may, however, require the entire playground being replaced and /or other capital work.
- Construct playgrounds where design funds have already been spent (in the initial stage of the strategy)
- Construct playgrounds in areas where need indicated but no playground exists
- Replace with alternate facilities, eg hard court
- Modify/upgrade playgrounds where indicated (eg from district to iconic)
- Redesign and reconstruct (renewal) the playground at the same level in line with the lifecycle needs of the playground

Action Plan for Specific Playgrounds

All playgrounds have been classified into the 3 priority upgrades:

Priority	Timing
High	Less than 3 years
Medium	3 – 6 years
Low	7 – 10 years

The following table details:

- Council's playgrounds (in alphabetical order) with the priority listing in accordance with the above criteria.
- A summary of the directions for specific playgrounds is provided below, highlighting the focus and priority of the action.

An approximate budget range has also been allocated towards each playground. The budget range has been set for each playground category, that is neighborhood, district and iconic.

The order in which the playgrounds will be upgraded year to year will be decided annually as part of budget deliberation.

Location	Category	priority - based on rolling lifecycle program					comment
		High <3 yrs 2008-11\$\$	Med 3 - 6 yrs 2011-14\$\$	Low 6 - 10 yrs 2014 - 18 \$\$	Instal'n Date *	Date for renewal (i.e. 15 yr rolling program)	
Alexandra Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1995	2010	consider replacement of sand with synthetic soft fall
Allison Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2000	2015	
Battersea Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	1999	2014	
Bay view Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1995	2010	Provision of fencing to be considered in upgrade.
Brett Park (east)	District			\$80,000	2000	2015	Over time moving to iconic Opportunity to integrate natural features (i.e. amphitheatre);
Brett Park (west)	Relocate swings	\$40,000					relocate swings from the west side to co locate with overall playground. At this time to incorporate a toddler swing
Cabarita Park	District to iconic over time	\$80,000			1986	2001	opportunity to focus on natural features; district with potential over time to be regional
Central Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1991	2006	
Chambers Park							Not to be reinstated
Chiswick Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2004	2019	
Coralie Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2006	2021	
Corby Reserve	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2005	2020	
Croker Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1988	2003	re landscape to include a natural barrier between equipment & Henley Marine Dr. & passive surveillance from Harrabrook; enhance shade, remove sand and pave area providing adult seating
Drummoyne Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1995	2010	relocate swings on Bay view side to Cometrow St, providing a toddler seat in the set;
Dunlop Reserve	Neighbourhood		\$40,000		1999	2014	Introduce swing set (incl toddler swing), soft fall, need fencing in the short term
Edwards Park	District		\$80,000		1998	2013	
Five Dock Early Childhood Ctre	Neighbourhood		\$40,000		1996	2011	
Five Dock Park	District		\$80,000				Older equipment was removed in 2007, with the view that the equipment at early childhood centre that focuses on under 8 year olds; and recently enhanced facilities provided for older children (e.g. skate park)

Fred Kelly Place	Neighbourhood		\$40,000		1999	2014	consider provision of shade; provision of chess boards
Goddard Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			N/A		
Halliday Reserve	Neighbourhood		\$40,000		1997	2012	Make greater use of natural areas; natural shade; linkages to walkway can be maximized; potential bocci venue and / or bike track / educational road safety site
Henley Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1984	1999	
Henry Lawson Park	Iconic	\$100,000			1999	2014	This project is to be moved forward based on the condition of the current equipment.
Howse Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2007	2022	
Kendal Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$ 40,000					
Kings Bay Reserve	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2001	2016	improve shade
Lord Place	Neighbourhood			\$40,000			DCP for the Strathfield Triangle provides for open space, provision of playground facilities to be considered within DCP.
Majors Bay Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$ 40,000			1995	2010	improve shade natural shade on site, esp. around equipment
Maple Close	Neighbourhood		\$ 40,000		1997	2012	
Mcllwaine Reserve	Iconic	\$ 300,000			2007	2022	Proceed with refinement of design in consultation with local community and then construction of new playground.
Montague Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			2007	2022	Proceed with refinement of design in consultation with local community and then construction of new playground..
Neild Park	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2006	2021	
Powells Creek Reserve					1993	2008	Not to be reinstated as the location is isolated
Prince Edward Park	Neighbourhood		\$40,000		1999	2014	
Queen Elizabeth Park	Iconic			\$300,000	2006	2021	opportunities to maximize the natural elements
Rhodes Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1995	2010	Investigate opportunities to improve shade in the vicinity of the playground
Roberts Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$40,000					
Rothwell Park	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			1986	2001	
Russell Park	Neighbourhood	\$ 40,000			1995	2010	

Sanders Reserve	Hard court	\$ 40,000					Provides for reinstatement of a hard court play facility for 8 years plus and also meet constraints as a result of remediation on the site.
Sibbick Reserve	Neighbourhood			\$40,000	2001	2016	needs further shade
Stanton Place							Not to be reinstated due to the small land size and impact on future road realignment
Taplin Park	District			\$80,000	2001	2016	opportunities for future design/upgrades to be considered in the development of a master plan for the Drummoyne Oval Precinct
Timbrell Park	Iconic	\$ 300,000			1999	2014	Proceed with the consultation for the upgrade of the playground in partnership with the Touched by Olivia Foundation
Tom Murphy Reserve	Hard court	\$ 40,000					Short term: older children/ young teen with half court / hoop (this is supported by the recreation strategy) ; longer term consider needs in light of the redevelopment of Mortlake
Uhrs Point Reserve	Review in 10 yrs as area further develops			\$ 40,000			reinstate in approx. 10 years when point is developed, or review in light of development progress
W. A. McInnes Reserve	Neighbourhood			\$ 40,000	2000	2015	needs further shade
Wangal	Natural play area		\$40,000				recommended as a new play area utilizing natural space (i.e. no formal equipment) but seating/ paving, natural spaces for play
Warbrick Park	District	\$80,000			1982	1997	
Waterside Walk(Rhodes Peninsula)	Neighbourhood			\$ 40,000	2005	2020	
Werrell Reserve	Neighbourhood	\$40,000			< 20 years		When the playground is upgraded the local community, including children, be engaged in this design process this process to determine the specific elements and approach in relation to traditional and naturally focused play areas.
		23 playgrounds \$1,420,000	9 playgrounds \$400,000	16 playgrounds \$860,000			

**(reflects when equipment was installed, not necessary)*

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