

Playground and Exercise Equipment Development and Maintenance Policy

Policy Reference Number	5977979
Responsible Department	Infrastructure, Planning & Sustainability Services
Related Policies	Accessibility; Recreation, Sports and Cultural Facilities; Council Facility Hire
Related Plans	Open Space Strategy; Community Land Management Plan; Playground & Exercise Equipment Plan
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Last Reviewed by Council	5 December 2023

1. Purpose

To guide the installation of new playgrounds and exercise equipment, and the maintenance of existing playgrounds and exercise equipment on Campbelltown City Council's parks and reserves, aiming to provide play and exercise opportunities that are:

- appropriately located,
- safe and compliant, while encouraging children to challenge themselves and take calculated risks,
- equitably distributed,
- appealing and accessible to a range of ages and abilities
- nature play

2. Introduction

Play in public spaces is important as it is accessible to the whole Community and can create meeting places whilst providing opportunities for children to take calculated risks, be active and interact with different Community members. Council providing exercise equipment in addition to play opportunities enables all ages to be considered and provided for.

3. Power to Make the Policy

The Local Government Act 1999 and Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) provide the legislative framework for this Policy.

4. Strategic Plan Link

This Policy has the following link to Council's Strategic Plan 2024:

- Planning for our Future (Goal 4)

5. Principles

- Playgrounds and exercise equipment will be designed and maintained to achieve or exceed Australian Standards.
- All residents should be able to walk to a park or reserve containing playground and / or exercise equipment (within approximately 500 metres from their residence).
- Playgrounds will seek to provide safe, accessible, challenging, enjoyable and interesting spaces for residents of all ages and abilities relax, gather socially and be active.
- Playgrounds will seek to provide a range of activities that encourage social, cognitive and physical play opportunities
- Playgrounds will incorporate landscape and natural play elements as well as traditional play equipment where appropriate

6. Definitions

Any reference to 'playgrounds' includes, but is not limited to all play equipment, exercise equipment, nature play spaces, soft fall areas, grounds, shade structures, associated garden beds, logs, boulders, perimeter fencing, water play features and any other associated features that encourage play (e.g. sculptures or community art).

7. Policy

7.1 Existing playgrounds

Existing playgrounds will be inspected at least quarterly to ensure they achieve or exceed Australian Standards. In doing so:

- A 'Playground Inspection Checklist' that meets Australian standards will be used to guide the assessment of existing playgrounds and faults identified will be corrected, or the playground taken out of service until repairs are made
- Playgrounds identified as requiring upgrading or replacement will be placed on a list of playgrounds requiring upgrades, and presented to Council for consideration during the budgetary process based on based on the Asset Management Plan and Playground and Exercise Equipment Pan

7.2 New playgrounds

- New playgrounds will be established on Council reserves where it has been identified that there is a gap in provision of facilities within walking distance (eg approximately 500 metres) of surrounding dwellings or in the new urban development or urban consolidation that is increasing the demand for play
- Priority will be given to areas where there is an identified potential increase in the number of children under 15 years of age or as identified in the Open Space Strategy.
- New playgrounds will be constructed in accordance with the current Australian standards and developed in accordance with the Principles contained in this Policy. A risk assessment will be undertaken before the

construction of any new playground to identify and control (where reasonably practical) any potential hazards.

- Where possible new playgrounds will be located in an area that maximises the use of natural shade. In areas where there is no or minimal natural shade, or landscaping can't be provided to create natural shade, a shade structure may be considered as part of the development of a new playground.

7.3 Playground Consolidation or removal

- Council may remove an existing playground where there is an oversupply or an opportunity to better locate (or consolidate) the playground to maximise the utilisation of the playground
- Prior to removal or consolidating of playground, Council will undertake community consultation.

7.4 Accessible Playgrounds

- **Accessibility and Inclusion**

Where possible, redevelopment of playgrounds on parks classified in Council's [Open Space Strategy](#) as 'Regional' and 'District' will include access for people of all abilities.

Space around playgrounds and exercise equipment installed in such parks will contain accessible under-surfacing and elements such as decks and ramps that allow children of all abilities to be immersed within a playspace as opposed to playing on the fringe, and connected to an accessible route leading into the playground.

Suitable spaces will be provided to allow carers to play with children.

Plantings around playgrounds will wherever possible:

- Minimise the use of plants that cause allergic reactions
- Incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles
- Enable access and use by vision-impaired or hearing-impaired users through plantings of distinctly scented or textured coloured flowers and shrubs

- **Physical access**

The design of new playgrounds and upgrades will seek to provide access to the playground by bicycles, pedestrians and small-wheeled vehicles including wheelchairs, gophers and prams.

An accessible route leading into the playground will consist of surfaces that are firm, stable and slip resistant.

Accessible routes will connect to at least one point in a transfer system for elevated play equipment where available.

Priority will be given to the inclusion of pedestrian refuges and kerb side protuberances adjacent to reserves with playgrounds that are in close proximity to arterial or sub arterial roads.

Where possible, parking bays for people with a disability will be provided close to access for all playgrounds.

Facilities within the regional and district playgrounds should be designed to be accessible to people with a disability.

7.5 Appropriate Playgrounds

- **Location**

The location, service level and replacement of new playgrounds and exercise equipment in parks and reserves will take into consideration the following factors:

- Safe access and accessibility (disability access, car parking, bicycle paths, pedestrian paths and crossings).
- Local demographics.
- Distribution of other playgrounds.
- Environmental impact including native vegetation, biodiversity, and fauna habitat.
- Proximity to natural elements and features.
- Proximity to other facilities and services.
- Proximity to natural shade or located where trees can be planted.
- Passive surveillance.
- Community engagement and feedback.
- Reserve hierarchy.

- **Supporting amenities**

Supporting amenities such as seating for carers, shade (from trees or shade structures), bins, drinking fountains and access pathways will be considered where appropriate.

- **Fencing**

Fencing playgrounds is not always necessary and should be assessed on a case by case basis, including undertaking a risk assessment. Most of Campbelltown's playgrounds have been purposely located away from dangers such as busy roads or waterways, making fencing an unnecessary cost and design feature. Best practice play space design calls for play opportunities to be integrated into the surrounding landscape/reserve/public space rather than separated or isolated through fencing or other means.

- **Shade**

Natural shade should be utilised as the first priority. Shade structures should be provided where there is no existing natural shade and/or it is not appropriate to plant trees (e.g due to proximity of built structures or safety issues). Shade should be located in high activity areas (e.g near playspaces and within the BBQ areas).

As it is not economically viable to provide artificial shade for all playspaces, shade structures should be provided where a playspace is located in:

- A higher order reserve (District or Regional)
- An area that otherwise experiences high levels of use.

- **Lighting**

Public lighting plays a role in increasing capacity for passive surveillance, reducing fear of crime and may increase the usage of playground. Lighting in playgrounds will primarily occur in higher order (District and Regional) reserves.

Public lighting may be installed in order to:

- Extend the use of public facilities and improve safety into the evening e.g. Thorndon Park Super Playground and the use of casual multi purpose courts
- Improve safety in areas where there is a demonstrated history of anti-social behaviour or vandalism
- Provide feature lighting in key play equipment such as around birds structures at Thorndon Park Super Playground, Anderson Court Maze.

Public lighting should not detrimentally impact upon adjacent residents' amenity through light overspill or glare. Consultation with residents potentially affected by installation of public lighting may be required.

Public lighting should be designed and located to have minimal impact on native fauna so that it does not impact on night time foraging. In conservation areas, lighting is not appropriate as it will disrupt local fauna and insect activities.

Lighting should be designed to avoid hindering passive surveillance through the creation of blind-spots or being too bright so that it creates blinding glare or deep shadows.

Sustainable lighting options such as LED and solar lighting should be used, where possible.

All public lighting should be installed in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.

- **Risk Benefit**

Playgrounds will aim to provide opportunities for children to undertake calculated risks while adhering to Australian Standards for Playgrounds.

This requires risk assessments on playgrounds to consider the following;

- Does the benefit to the child outweigh the risk the activity presents to the child?

- Can the child assess and identify the associated risk with the activity? (e.g. jumping from a high platform or balancing across a beam)
- Hazards that a child would not be able to identify and assess (e.g. finger entrapments in equipment and sharp objects hidden) must be eliminated.
- **Community Engagement**
A community engagement strategy, including seeking feedback or involving children and young people specifically in the engagement, should be developed and implemented before the upgrade, replacement, removal or installation of playgrounds in line with Child Friendly Campbelltown principles:
 - children and young people are authentically engaged and involved in shaping decision making
 - children and young people have a range of choices and access to play and leisure in their Community, including risky play, outdoor and nature-based play and leisure.

8. Review & Evaluation

Within twelve months of each new Council term, Council will review this policy. Following this initial review, this policy will be reviewed at least biennially by Staff with minor administrative adjustments being approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

9. Availability of the Policy

Copies of this Policy will be available at Council's principal office during ordinary business hours and at Council's website www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au.