

Implementation

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5.1 Delivering the Play Plan

5.1.1 City of Ryde Commitment

The City is committed to ensuring that there are sufficient and suitable spaces and facilities for children and carers of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, to play freely and provide opportunities for the community to engage socially to strengthen community bonds.

In July 2018, Mayor Laxale issued a Mayoral Minute and associated resolutions to improve the inclusiveness and quality of playgrounds within the City. The following resolutions will drive implementation of the Play Plan Update in ensuring community expectations are met:

- Modifications be made to existing playgrounds to incorporate some inclusive play elements into existing regional and district level playgrounds
- All future regional playgrounds be all inclusive and that district playgrounds have inclusive elements (including through major upgrades to existing playgrounds)

5.1.2 Consultation

Consultation with the community is critical in understanding their expectations, priorities and needs. Consultation, particularly through the design process, provides the community with a sense of ownership over the playground and can be a community-building experience for all involved.

Given the diversity of the community within the City, and the priority given in the Play Plan Update to inclusive play and ensuring the needs of high density communities are being met, it is recommended the City build on the strong engagement process already in place and ensure ongoing strategic, precinct and playground-specific consultation with the following key groups:

- Multicultural Advisory Committee (CALD representatives)
- Youth Advisory Group and Committee
- Disability Advisory Group
- Children, carers and teachers through schools and pre-schools, and community action groups including Ryde District Mums
- Neighbours of playgrounds being addressed in the Play Plan Update

5.1.3 Strategic Planning

The Play Plan will require amendments to master plans, plans of management, service level agreements, development control plans and will influence Section 7.11 Requirements and Voluntary Planning Agreements with developers within the City.

The Play Plan forms an important part of the community's vision for the City as outlined in the Ryde Community Strategic Plan 2028 and should be upheld and referred to in any future planning documents where relevant.

The Play Plan is intrinsically linked to several other strategic planning documents prepared by the City. Alignment of goals and actions across these strategies is critical in delivering efficient, sustainable and resilient community assets. The below list underscores key alignments with the:

- Ryde Community Strategic Plan 2028
- IOSP (noting it requires updating)
- Sports and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026
- Youth Strategy 2018-2022
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Greater Sydney Commission North District Plan

The Play Plan should continue to be updated at least every five years and on completion of any additional plans or strategies including but not limited to:

- Development Control Plans
- Plans of Management
- Service Level Agreements
- Playground Asset Management Plan
- Future park and open space plans
- Precinct Master Plans
- Community Engagement Plans where they relate to play

In particular, any update to the IOSP should address the broader issue of open space provision in high density areas, to maximise opportunity for play within those spaces.

The Play Plan Update provides a review of current playground distribution in line with available population and density projections at 2019. As these projections are constantly being influenced by shifting City and State priorities and community-driven demographic changes, it is of critical importance to review the distribution, capacity and quality of the City's playgrounds in relation to:

- Changes in population density and distribution
- Changes in housing density

- Changes in community demographic profile
- Expectations of inclusive play opportunities.

Key to the effective delivery of the Play Plan Update is addressing the reduced capacity of those playgrounds nearing the end of their functional life by ensuring nearby playgrounds are being appropriately renewed or replaced. This will ensure there is no gap in the distribution of playgrounds in these areas once end of life cycle actions need to be taken.

In delivering the Play Plan Update, the City's departments will communicate and work together to ensure that the objectives and recommendations are being applied consistently. In order to achieve this, a specific playground maintenance team or training of the existing maintenance team should be coordinated to ensure the consistent and appropriate maintenance standards of the playgrounds.

5.1.4 Design and construct

The delivery process involves the upgrades (major or minor), potential removal (at end of economic life) or installation of new playgrounds. The delivery of each playground should involve community consultation to ensure that each local community is invested in the design and creation of their local playground.

Playground delivery process

- Identify values and benefits (social benefits of playgrounds to the community)
- Allow a realistic budget
- Engage a landscape architect/play design specialist
- Undertake community consultation
- Refine design brief in response to community engagement
- Design response to brief and site
- Design to Australian Standards/BCA requirements/Civil Liberties Act
- Construct
- Celebrate with the community
- Maintain playground asset

Collaborative delivery solutions

A strategy should be developed and facilitated by the City to promote collaboration between Council, State Government departments and private developers and organisations to deliver an equitable network of playgrounds, particularly where there is a current deficiency in open space provision. Collaboration should seek to address play opportunities in the following scenarios:

- Schools and education precincts (via the NSW Open Schools program or changes to the location and function of existing education campuses). It should be noted that engagement with these institutions may lead to adjustments to the Play Plan Update recommendations, should alternative opportunities or locations for playgrounds be proposed
- Developers (providing publicly accessible and welcoming playgrounds, particularly in high density communities)
- Private recreation providers such as Play Buses, temporary obstacle course providers etc.

The above are critically important where there is currently no Council owned and managed land available for additional play opportunities.

5.1.5 Budget and funding

Playgrounds are environments of enormous social value to the community. It is essential that the City allocates appropriate budgets for their design, construction and long term maintenance. Given their importance, 'good' design is critical and requires the expertise of a landscape architect or play design specialist to ensure the provision of safe, accessible, sustainable and high quality playgrounds for all residents. In particular, appropriate budgets should be allowed for engaging play design specialists in the planning and design of new destination playgrounds.

The City should aim to review cost budgets annually in line with the City's financial programming.

Recommended budgets should be maintained or increased during the 10 year implementation period to ensure the agreed level of best practice is met and consistency of play provision is achieved.

There are many opportunities for alternative funding arrangements to aid the City in achieving the desired level of provision and best practice design.

These funding opportunities include the following:

- “Design, operate and manage contract”. Play equipment manufactures and suppliers may consider leasing arrangements as an alternative to traditional procurement processes. The responsibility for installation, maintenance, and eventual removal is of the supplier/manufacturer rather than the City.
- Co-funding with child-focused organisations to deliver unique and specialised play provision, (Yamble reserve All Inclusive playground is a successful example of the City’s partnership with the Touched By Olivia Foundation).
- Cooperation between the City and the NSW Department of Education for providing appropriate play provision in schools (hard and soft play infrastructure) which could be publicly accessible (at agreed times). This option could also be explored in relation to All Inclusive play provision currently provided in government or privately run special schools.
- Partnership with land developers to promote the inclusion of publicly accessible playgrounds in new development.
- Application for various streams of State Government funding such as the Open Spaces and Greener Sydney program, and ongoing funding opportunities

through the implementation of the Everyone Can Play Guideline (either funding for replacement or major renewal of single playgrounds, or potentially for network-wide inclusive element upgrades to regional and district playgrounds such as boundary enclosure fencing).

5.2 Monitoring the Play Plan

As Enrique Penalosa, Mayor of Bogata said: “If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for everyone”. A sustainable community can be measured by the inclusion of children and young people in that community.

Monitoring the implementation of the recommendations advocated in this Play Plan is important in understanding whether key objectives and strategies are being met successfully.

Regular review of the Implementation Plan should be conducted. An annual review and amendments may be relevant for certain implementation strategies, with a broader review and update undertaken every five years.

It is further recommended that a major review is undertaken every 10 to 20 years to reconsider the overall Play Plan in addressing new and emerging technological, cultural and environmental considerations.

The ability to adapt the Play Plan to potential paradigm shifts in the community's priorities, expectations and needs, when required, ensures flexibility and responsiveness to community feedback and an evolving community profile, maintaining community confidence in the City's strategic direction.

These reviews will be required due to:

- Population increase beyond current projections
- Changes to the location of housing density increase
- Changes in community demographic profile (therefore shifting priorities, expectations and needs).
- Changing Council or community circumstances
- Changing Council or community priorities
- Changing play industry technology or thought leadership.

Of particular note, and directly related to the alignment with the Everyone Can Play Guideline, is the forecast escalation of the “baby boomer” population and the increasing role this group are playing in the everyday care of their grandchildren. This highlights the need to provide inclusive playgrounds close to their homes which are suitable not only for children, but just as importantly, for the varied needs of carers.

Appropriate key performance indicators (KPIs) may be developed to better assess the ongoing success of the Plan. These should align with the Strategy Streams and Design Framework recommendations which form the basis of the current costing projections.

As with all strategic plans, ongoing engagement and consultation with the community will ensure the success of the strategy and is key to understanding constant changes within the community. Providing the community with a sense of ownership and contribution to the direction of their community assets leads to a strong and resilient community.

