

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 23 July 2019  
**Location:** Council Chambers, Level 1A, 1 Pope Street, Ryde  
**Time:** 7.00pm

**ATTACHMENTS FOR COUNCIL MEETING**

**Item**

- 8 CHILDREN'S PLAY PLAN - 2019 Update - To Place on Public Exhibition**  
Attachment 1 Play Plan 2019 for Council adoption (21 June 2019)




Children's  
**PLAY**  
**Plan**

5 Year Review  
and Update

City of Ryde  
May 2019

**AECOM**

 City of Ryde  
Lifestyle and opportunity at your doorstep

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## Quality Information

Children's Play Plan - 5 Year Review and Update

Date 08 April 2019

Revision	Revision Date	Details	Authorised
A	08.04.19	Draft for Client Review	Jo Blackmore
B	11.04.19	Draft for PCG Consideration	Anna Robinson
C	15.04.19	Draft for Client Review	Jo Blackmore
D	30.05.19	Final	Jo Blackmore

Prepared for CITY OF RYDE

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# Table of contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>51</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>53</b>	4.4.4	Suburb collector recommendations
1.1.1	Scope of the Play Plan	14	4.1.1	Priorities	53	4.4.4.1	Denistone East and West
1.1.2	Play and the City of Ryde	15	<b>4.2</b>	<b>Strategic Framework</b>	<b>54</b>	4.4.4.2	Eastwood
1.1.3	The value of play	16	4.2.1	Strategic framework recommendations	54	4.4.4.3	Gladesville / Tennyson Point
1.1.4	Existing park hierarchy	18	4.2.1.1	Safe play for all	55	4.4.4.4	Macquarie Park
1.1.5	Playground hierarchy	19	4.2.1.2	Convenient everyday play	56	4.4.4.5	Marsfield
<b>2.</b>	<b>Vision and Objectives</b>	<b>21</b>	4.2.1.3	Exciting and challenging destination play	57	4.4.4.6	Melrose Park / Meadowbank
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Vision</b>	<b>22</b>	4.2.1.4	Play valued as a child's right	58	4.4.4.7	North Ryde
<b>2.2</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>23</b>	4.2.1.5	Sustainable play for the future	59	4.4.4.8	Putney
<b>3.</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>25</b>	4.2.2	Playground level distribution	64	4.4.4.9	Ryde / Field of Mars
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>27</b>	4.2.2.1	Playground hierarchy	64	4.4.4.10	Ryde / Santa Rosa
3.1.1	Project process	27	4.2.2.2	Playground distribution recommendations	65	4.4.4.11	Ryde South
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Strategic Analysis</b>	<b>28</b>	4.2.2.3	Playground distribution and public transport	67	4.4.4.12	West Ryde
3.2.1	Investigations	28	4.2.2.4	Play provision for Young People	68	4.4.4.13	Top Ryde
3.2.1.1	Population profile and distribution	28	<b>4.3</b>	<b>Design Framework</b>	<b>69</b>	4.4.5	Summary of action priorities
3.2.1.2	Play and design theory	28	4.3.1	Playground diversity	69	<b>5.</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
3.2.1.3	Community consultation	28	4.3.2	Playground types and levels	69	<b>5.1</b>	<b>Delivering the Play Plan</b>
3.2.1.4	On-site playground audits	29	4.3.3	Playground design principles	70	5.1.1	Strategic Planning
3.2.1.5	Budget data	29	4.3.4	Gender play experience guidelines	70	5.1.2	Design and construct
3.2.2	Analysis findings	30	4.3.5	Age groups	71	5.1.3	Budget and funding
3.2.2.1	Population profile and distribution	30	4.3.6	Playground Design Frameworks	72	5.1.4	Coupling of playground closures with upgrades
3.2.2.2	Play and design theory	36	4.3.6.1	Regional Playground Design Framework	72	<b>5.2</b>	<b>Monitoring the Play Plan</b>
3.2.2.3	Community consultation	37	4.3.6.2	District playground Design Framework	76	<b>6.</b>	<b>Appendices</b>
3.2.2.4	On-site playground audits	40	4.3.6.3	Neighbourhood playground Design Framework	80	<b>6.1</b>	<b>Abbreviations and Definitions</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>41</b>	4.3.6.4	Local playground Design Framework	84	<b>6.2</b>	<b>Supporting Information</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Strategy Streams</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>Playground Matrix</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>Community Consultation</b>
			4.4.1	Suburb collectors	88		
			4.4.2	Action	90		
			4.4.3	Playground priority	90		
			4.4.3.1	Priority decision making	90		
			4.4.3.2	Priority implementation	91		

## Figures

Figure 1.	Summary of the Children’s Play Plan development process.	11	Figure 27.	Contemporary challenging equipment	63
Figure 2.	Context of the Play Plan in the City’s Strategic Plan	17	Figure 28.	Playground hierarchy	64
Figure 3.	Existing park and playground hierarchy	18	Figure 29.	Existing playground levels with their respective walking catchment for each playground level.	65
Figure 4.	Existing park hierarchy definitions (as defined by IOSP) applied to playgrounds	19	Figure 30.	Recommended playground levels with their respective walking catchment for each playground level.	66
Figure 5.	Objectives supporting the Play Plan Vision	23	Figure 31.	Recommended playground levels and analysis	67
Figure 6.	Summary of the Implementation Plan development process.	26	Figure 34.	Proposed Neighbourhood playground distribution (600m walkability catchment)	68
Figure 7.	Framework from the Everyone Can Play Guideline, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2019.	31	Figure 32.	Proposed Regional playground distribution (2km walkability catchment)	68
Figure 8.	Design Principles from the Everyone Can Play Guideline, NSW Department of Planning and Environment, 2019.	31	Figure 35.	Proposed Local playground distribution (400m walkability catchment)	68
Figure 9.	Location of existing playgrounds with 400m walkability catchments	32	Figure 33.	Proposed District playground distribution (1km walkability catchment)	68
Figure 10.	Existing Regional playground distribution (2km walkability catchment)	33	Figure 36.	Proposed Local playground distribution (200m walkability catchment)	68
Figure 12.	Existing Neighbourhood playground distribution (600m walkability catchment)	33	Figure 37.	Recommended playground levels with access to public transport	69
Figure 11.	Existing District playground distribution (1km walkability catchment)	33	Figure 38.	Distribution of existing Inclusive Playgrounds (Regional and District only)	70
Figure 13.	Existing Local playground distribution (200m in high density areas & 400m in low density areas walkability catchment)	33	Figure 39.	Distribution of proposed Inclusive Playgrounds (Regional, District and selected Neighbourhood playgrounds)	71
Figure 14.	Open space opportunity mapping	34	Figure 40.	Proposed playgrounds for young people	72
Figure 15.	Demographic opportunity mapping	35	Figure 41.	Indicative functional layout - regional playground (Not to scale)	79
Figure 16.	Community consultation at Eastwood Public School	37	Figure 42.	Indicative functional layout - district playground (Not to scale)	83
Figure 17.	Interaction with nature and education on environmental process.	62	Figure 43.	Indicative functional layout - neighbourhood playground (Not to scale)	87
Figure 20.	Understanding children’s priorities and needs through consultation.	62	Figure 44.	Indicative functional layout - local playground (Not to scale)	91
Figure 18.	Play in a natural setting, using natural materials, promoting social play.	62	Figure 45.	Playgrounds throughout the suburb collectors and Wards of the City	95
Figure 21.	A safe and well supported playground in a natural setting promoting inter-generation interaction and a diverse play experience.	62	Figure 46.	Implementation - action priority of playgrounds	117
Figure 19.	Parental/carer seating and adjacent active / social play opportunities.	62	Figure 47.	Playgrounds with no changes recommended	118
Figure 22.	Close to home play provision	63	Figure 49.	Distribution of playgrounds with a medium priority recommended action	118
Figure 25.	Good access to playground, with informal seating, incorporating existing vegetation	63	Figure 48.	Distribution of playgrounds with a high priority recommended action	118
Figure 23.	Inclusive playground elements featuring active and passive surveillance opportunities	63	Figure 50.	Distribution of playgrounds with a low priority recommended action	118
Figure 26.	Exciting and unique feature play provision worked into natural landform.	63	Figure 52.	Community Consultation Session in Anderson Park, May 2012 Photo: AECOM	155
Figure 24.	Challenging and unique playground incorporating art and environmental education (through ephemeral creekline)	63			



## Figures

Table 1. Existing playground summary	10	Table 34. Responses on the Saturday workshop interactive panel question boards	165
Table 2. Recommended playground summary	10	Table 35. Responses on the Wednesday workshop interactive panel question boards	167
Table 3. Key findings: Safety	41	Table 36. Survey questions and results	172
Table 4. Key findings: Accessibility	42		
Table 5. Key findings: Sustainability	44		
Table 6. Key findings: Play Value	46		
Table 7. Recommendations: safe play for all	55		
Table 8. Recommendations: convenient everyday play (neighbourhood and local)	56		
Table 9. Recommendations: exciting & challenging destination play (district and regional)	57		
Table 10. Recommendations: play is valued as a child's right	58		
Table 11. Recommendations: sustainable play for the future	59		
Table 12. Design Framework for Regional Playgrounds	74		
Table 13. Design Framework for District Playgrounds	78		
Table 14. Design Framework for Neighbourhood Playgrounds	82		
Table 15. Design Framework for Local Playgrounds	86		
Table 16. Action name descriptions	90		
Table 17. Recommendations for playgrounds in Denistone East and West	94		
Table 18. Recommendations for playgrounds in Eastwood	97		
Table 19. Recommendations for playgrounds in Gladesville Tennyson Point	101		
Table 20. Recommendations for playgrounds in Macquarie Park	102		
Table 21. Recommendations for playgrounds in Marsfield	106		
Table 22. Recommendations for playgrounds in Melrose Park / Meadowbank	110		
Table 23. Recommendations for playgrounds in North Ryde	113		
Table 24. Recommendations for playgrounds in Putney	117		
Table 25. Recommendations for playgrounds in Ryde Field of Mars	120		
Table 26. Recommendations for playgrounds in Ryde - Santa Rosa	123		
Table 27. Recommendations for playgrounds in Ryde South	126		
Table 28. Recommendations for playgrounds in West Ryde	129		
Table 29. Recommendations for playgrounds in Top Ryde	131		
Table 30. Summary of recommended actions and action priorities per ward.	135		
Table 31. Coupling of playground upgrades and closures	141		
Table 32. Playground design criteria	150		
Table 33. Audit criteria details	155		





# Executive Summary



8

The City of Ryde (the City) commissioned a Children's Play Implementation Plan (Play Plan) in 2012 to guide their approach to the provision of play over the next 10 years with some high priority recommendations commencing that year. The need for this study had been identified as a high priority in the Integrated Open Space Plan 2012 (IOSP) for improving the community's recreation needs.

This 5 Year Review and Update (Play Plan Update) was recommended in the 2012 Play Plan to ensure the priorities of the City and community are reviewed at appropriate intervals into the future to ensure recommendations adapt as the needs of the community change. This Play Plan Update focuses on two particular changes in community needs and expectations; the release of the Everyone Can Play (ECP) Guideline by the NSW Government, and the need to address the rapid increase in high density living in the City.

The aim of the Play Plan is to ensure the provision of safe, accessible and sustainable high quality playgrounds that equitably improve distribution and play value for all Ryde residents. The recommendations of the Play Plan will assist the City with future budget planning and programming for playground improvements, replacements and maintenance all guided by a strategic approach.

The City recognises the "value" of play to the health, wellbeing and development of children, young people and their carers. They understand that playgrounds are places for play and social interaction as reflected in their Play Vision which advocates "supporting and nurturing child friendly communities through play". The City is committed to ensuring that there are sufficient and suitable spaces and facilities for children to play freely and opportunities for the community to engage socially.

The Play Plan defines two types of playgrounds: everyday and destination. An everyday playground typically caters for a younger age group (0 – 12 yrs), is small, easily accessible and within walking distance of local residents. Destination playgrounds cater to all ages and abilities, are larger, more diverse and complex and supported by infrastructure such as car parking and toilets. These playgrounds draw residents from the broader City catchment and beyond, often by car or public transport.

Currently, there are 97 playgrounds within 89 parks scattered across Ryde comprising 23 destination playgrounds and 74 everyday playgrounds. For safety reasons, in 2012, the City closed 11 playgrounds either entirely or partially as the existing play equipment was deemed non-compliant with Australian Standards by an independent report (PlayFix).

## Project process

The 2012 Play Plan involved a strategic analysis of demographic profile and distribution, play theory, the development of the Design Framework, multiple consultation sessions with children and adults, an audit of all existing play facilities with the City and a review of the City's annual playground capital works and maintenance budgets.

The key findings of these investigations led to the development of five strategy streams which are high level directions that set the framework for recommendations.

The strategy streams are:

- Safe play for all
- Convenient everyday play
- Exciting and challenging destination play
- Play is valued as a child's right
- Sustainable play for the future

As part of the Play Plan Update, all relevant demographic and distribution information was re-analysed, particularly in relation to the location of increased population density. The Design Framework was amended to ensure alignment with the ECP Guideline. All regional and district playgrounds were then evaluated against the Everyone Can Play Guideline to determine compliance and recommendations were developed to improve distribution to both everyday play and inclusive destination play across the City.

## Recommendations

The recommendations address both the distribution and design of playgrounds, providing a holistic approach to play provision for the City. The priorities for the playground recommendations have been influenced by the consideration of:

- **Safety** (condition of playground and equipment)
- **Distribution** (walkability and equitable spread)
- **Inclusive** (for all ages, abilities and cultures)
- **Site suitability** (site opportunities and constraints)
- **Cost efficiencies** (reuse, rationalising, improving maintainability)

These priorities have guided the broad to specific recommended actions and are captured under the following three titles:

- **Strategic Framework** (distribution and recommended playground level)
- **Design Framework** (guide for the design and components of future playgrounds -
- **Playground Matrix** (specific recommendations for each playground)

### Strategic Framework

The Strategic Framework offers overall recommendations for play provision, taking the five strategy streams into consideration. General recommendations include;

providing for inclusive play, interaction with the natural environment, and the incorporation of unique play opportunities in the design of destination playgrounds.

Recommendations on developing sustainable playgrounds include; providing opportunities for social interaction and community building, creatively incorporating environmental education into playgrounds; and ways to deliver playgrounds in high density areas in collaboration with other public and private organisations to ensure community needs are being met where current availability of open space is low.

### Design Framework

The Design Framework has been developed to guide the future provision of playgrounds. To align with the tiered park hierarchy established in the IOSP, the playgrounds have been further categorised into a series of levels which sit beneath the playground types previously described:

- Destination Playgrounds
  - Regional (level 1)
  - District (level 2)
- Everyday Playgrounds
  - Neighbourhood (level 3)
  - Local (level 4)

The Design Framework defines a set of design principles for each playground type / level. It provides a benchmark to assess existing playgrounds and a guide for the design of future playgrounds. All playground levels have been amended to align with the ECP Guideline and ensure all new playgrounds are as inclusively designed as possible.

### Playground Matrix

The Playground Matrix provides specific recommendations for each playground against one of the following actions:

- Playgrounds to be retained until the end of their current economic life, then removed.
- Playgrounds to be replaced
- Playgrounds that require major adjustments
- Playgrounds that require minor adjustments (including alignment with the ECP Guideline)
- No changes required

The rationale for the above actions has been made considering the walkability catchment, the distribution in relation to the population profile, the appropriate and even distribution of playground levels across the City, and the opportunities and constraints of each playground site. Where multiple playgrounds were closely located, the playground that offered a preferred location, better surveillance opportunities, access, existing features, and facilities has been prioritised for replacement or adjustment.

A key task of the Play Plan was to achieve an equitable distribution of playground levels across the City, that would meet the needs of everyday and destination play for all residents. The aim of the Play Plan Update is to ensure opportunities for inclusive play were considered and an equitable distribution achieved across the City.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the existing and recommended distribution of playgrounds, respectively.

## Implementation

Five phases of implementation have been considered in the delivery strategy to realise the Play Plan and recommend playground actions. These are:

- City of Ryde commitment
- Consultation
- Strategic planning
- Design and construct
- Budget and funding

The implementation strategies put forward key actions such as reviewing and amending the City's strategic planning documents; involving the community in the detailed design of site specific playgrounds; and the investigation of alternative funding arrangements to improve cost efficiencies of asset management.

The monitoring of the implementation plan is considered beneficial, and ways in which to assess the success of the Play Plan are outlined, promoting appropriate review

and revision, flexibility to complement developing best practice thinking and an evolving community.

Table 1. Existing 2019 playground summary

Playground type	Quantity	Playground level	Quantity
Destination	23	Regional	5
		District	18
Everyday	74	Neighbourhood	30
		Local	44
TOTAL	97		97

Table 2. Recommended playground summary

Playground type	Quantity	Playground level	Quantity
Destination (Inclusive)	23	Regional	5
		District	18
Everyday	76	Neighbourhood	31
		Local	45
TOTAL	99		99

**Notes for Tables 1 and 2:**

- Blenheim Park contains 3 separate playgrounds however is considered as a single Destination/ Regional Playground
- Three brand new Everyday Playgrounds are proposed in areas where there is a gap in distribution. These are; Helene Park (Local), Ivanhoe Park (Neighbourhood) and Kings Park (Neighbourhood)

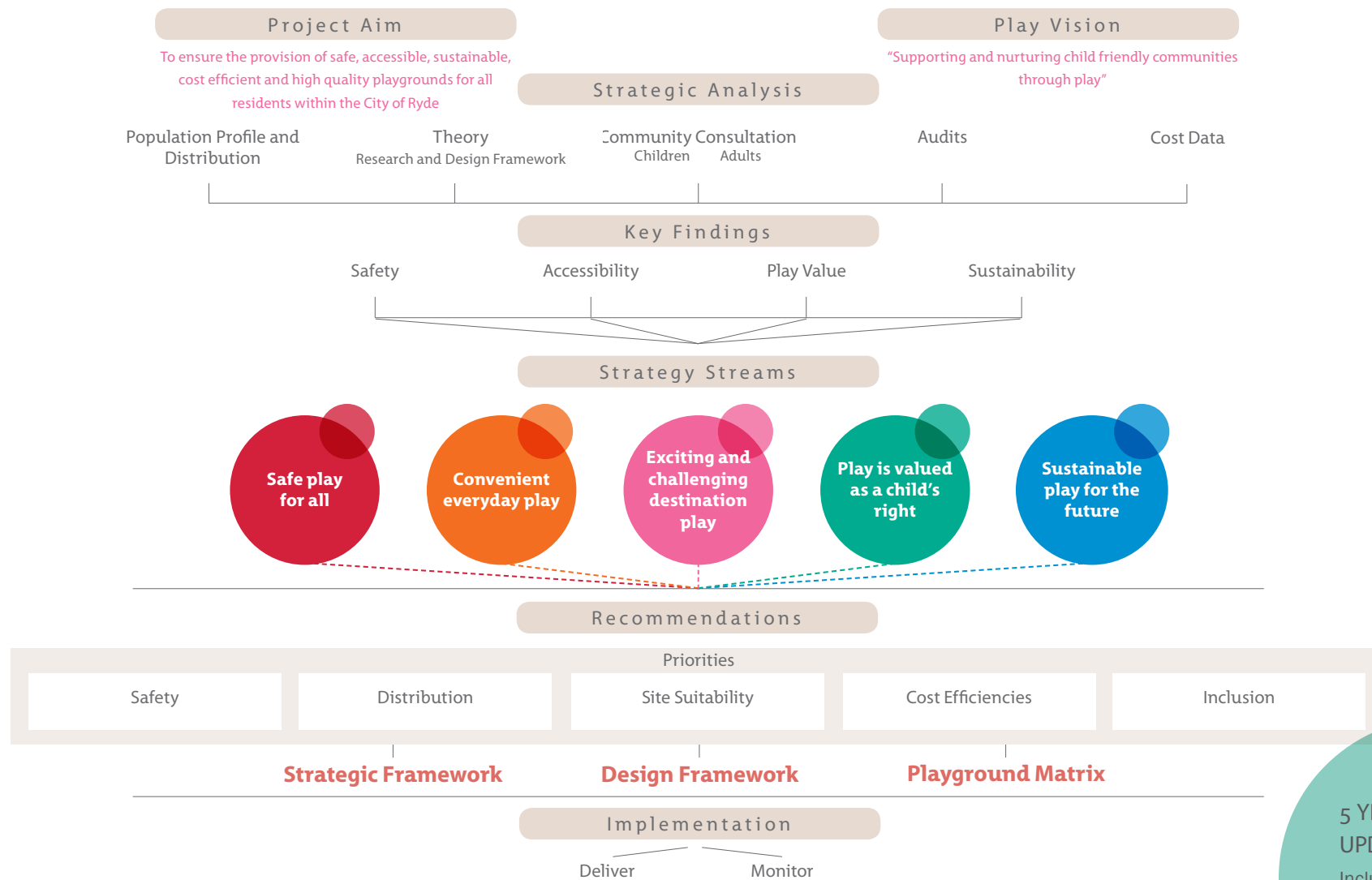


Figure 1. Summary of the Children's Play Plan development process.

**5 YEAR REVIEW AND UPDATE**  
Inclusion has been added to the priorities to align with the Everyone Can Play guideline.



**Introduction**

**1**

# 1.1 Introduction

Play is critical to the successful development of children. It is an important activity promoting community interaction across all age groups, cultures and abilities.



The City of Ryde (the City) commissioned a Children's Play Implementation Plan (Play Plan) to establish a playground vision, framework and 10 year prioritised capital works program. The need for this study was highlighted as a high priority in the Integrated Open Space Plan (IOSP - Clouston Associates and OneEighty Sport and Leisure Solutions, 2012) for improving the community's recreation needs.

The Play Plan assesses all the City owned and maintained playgrounds and makes the following recommendations based on distribution and design for the City's review and consideration:

- Playgrounds earmarked for removal at the end of their economic life
- New playgrounds (expansion)
- Playground replacement
- Major refurbishments
- Minor adjustments

The Play Plan aims to ensure the provision of safe, accessible and sustainable, high quality playgrounds that improve play value in line with international trends, research and the needs of children, young people and their carers. The recommendations of the Play Plan will assist the City with future budget planning and

programming for playground improvements, replacements and maintenance, while remaining sensitive to population growth and the potential changes to the needs of the community.

The aim of the Play Plan as stated in the IOSP is to develop a Play Plan that meets the needs of all ages, backgrounds and abilities and which results in a roll out of contemporary play facilities. The Play Plan will guide the future development and improvement of all playgrounds within the City.

Although playgrounds should be designed for all ages, it is important to understand that play experience and value varies greatly depending on the age group involved. In developing a successful Play Plan, it is critical to understand the needs and wants of the four key age groups, namely:

- Early child: 0-5 (Infant: 0-1 /toddler: 1-3/ preschool: 3-5)
- Middle child: 5-12 (primary school)
- Young people: 12-17 (high school)

## 1.1.1 Scope of the Play Plan

The Play Plan (including the 2019 Play Plan Update) includes:

- A full audit of all existing play facilities in the City's public spaces (2012)
- A review of all regional and district level playgrounds against the ECP Guideline
- A review of PlayFix audits to determine required safety actions
- A hierarchy of playgrounds assessed against specific criteria
- Actions recommended to progressively retrofit play facilities in line with the proposed park hierarchy, setting types, proximity to high density living, and compliance with the ECP Guideline
- A framework, inventory and notional design for each level of the playground hierarchy that address all age ranges, abilities and cultural backgrounds (aligning directly with key principles of the ECP Guideline)
- Priorities for each playground to inform future funding required to implement the Play Plan

- An indication of annual capital and maintenance budgets required to implement the Play Plan and maintain playgrounds to required standards in a sustainable manner
- Community consultation of adults and children to inform the priorities and values of the Play Plan (2012).

This Play Plan offers recommendations for diverse playgrounds, activities, and programs which aim to deliver inclusive, varied, innovative and cost effective play opportunities. It puts forward many different play provisions for children, young people and their carers. The Play Plan is sensitive to the changing demographic of the Ryde area, the projected population growth, and the pressures of modern family life.

The delivery of this Play Plan is the responsibility of the Open Space Service Unit within the City.

### 1.1.2 Play and the City of Ryde

The City supports the provision of play for the community in its IOSP. A Statement of Commitment for the future of the City's open spaces was prepared that envisages a future that meets the community's needs for access to open space, recreation opportunity, social integration and connection with nature:

*'We have ample, accessible open space to meet our needs, shared and enjoyed by us all, founded on a healthy natural environment, conserving our rich history, culture and local character and managed sustainably now and for future generations.'*

This Play Plan was originally guided by the following planning documents;

- City of Ryde 2021 Community Strategic Plan. 'Lifestyle and opportunity @ your doorstep'
- City of Ryde Integrated Open Space Plan 2012

#### City of Ryde 2028 Community Strategic Plan

The 2021 Community Strategic Plan was replaced by the 2028 Community Strategic Plan in March 2018. The Community Strategic Plan defines an overall vision, seven key outcomes and captures priorities to ensure the community's aspirations are met over the next 10 years. The Strategy aligns with broader goals and objectives set by the Greater Sydney Commission's Greater Sydney Region Plan and more specifically the draft North District Plan. The Strategy presents a broad range of implementable actions by which the City can monitor success in addressing social and community needs.

The Play Plan contributes to achieving the key objectives under each of the seven key outcomes of:

- Our vibrant and liveable city
- Our active and healthy city
- Our natural and sustainable city
- Our smart and innovative city
- Our connected and accessible city
- Our diverse and inclusive city
- Our open and progressive city

#### City of Ryde Integrated Open Space Plan 2012

Objectives outlined in the City of Ryde Integrated Open Space Plan (IOSP) relating to play include:

- To create spaces that actively encourage social engagement and integration
- Create a clear hierarchy of play facilities from local to regional scale with a greater variety of play experiences that also offer opportunity for exploration and discovery
- To create spaces that actively encourage social engagement and integration



### Play Types:

- Inclusive Play: play areas designed for all children and young people (and their carers) to use, regardless of their age, ability, gender or cultural background
- Dynamic Play: Involves active movement of the entire body (usually on equipment) e.g. balance/climb/rock/slide/swing/spin
- Nature Play: play with natural elements, e.g. planting and rocks
- Informal/Imaginative Play: Without the use of play equipment
- Sensory Play: play that appeals to the five senses
- Water Play: small taps and rills, or larger dedicated splash pads with interactive jets of water
- Sand Play: play with sand as feature, not safety surface
- Technology Play: involving digital devices
- Kick About: open grassed area that is relatively flat, providing an opportunity to run around and kick a ball
- Bike Path: durable circuit path either wholly within the park/extended to bike paths

### 1.1.3 The value of play

Play is essential for the development of children. The intent of this section is to highlight the importance of 'valuing play' and the need to invest in the wellbeing of children and communities.

"All children and young people need to play, and the impulse to play is innate. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities." Play Wales, 2005

The City recognises that play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. Children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons. Play can be undertaken by a group, or by a child on their own. It can be structured activities in designated spaces or in-between activities in the in-between places.

Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying, creative, and freely chosen by the child.

As children grow, they are more likely to describe these informal recreational activities in ways other than

'playing'. Older children's rights to their own recreational and cultural lives is as important as younger children's rights to play. This Play Plan applies equally to all ages of children and young people. It also asserts that quality play provision is, by definition, inclusive.

The essence of play is that it arises from children's innate need to express themselves, to explore, learn about and make sense of their world. At play, children have a certain freedom and autonomy from adult direction. This freedom to choose, to explore, to associate, to create, to move around, to challenge themselves and others is an important part of their lives and is vital to their development.

This Play Plan is underpinned by some key understandings:

- Play is an essential part of every child's life vital to his or her development. It is the way that children explore for themselves the world around them; the way that they naturally develop understanding and practise skills
- Play is essential for healthy physical and emotional growth, for intellectual and educational development, and for acquiring social and behavioural skills

- Play may or may not involve equipment or have an end product. Children play on their own and with others. Their play may be boisterous and energetic or quiet and contemplative, light-hearted or very serious
- Children’s own culture is created and lived through their play
- Play is not just focused on young children. Young people and the young at heart also benefit from playspaces. So inclusive design needs to consider more than the needs of young children and ensure people of all ages have places to be active and have fun.

**Ryde Community Strategic Plan 2028**

Figure 2 illustrates the context of the Play Plan within the City’s greater strategic planning framework. The success of the Play Plan is influenced by the parallel plans and guidelines (e.g. Public Art Plan, refer Figure 2), recommended in the IOSP.

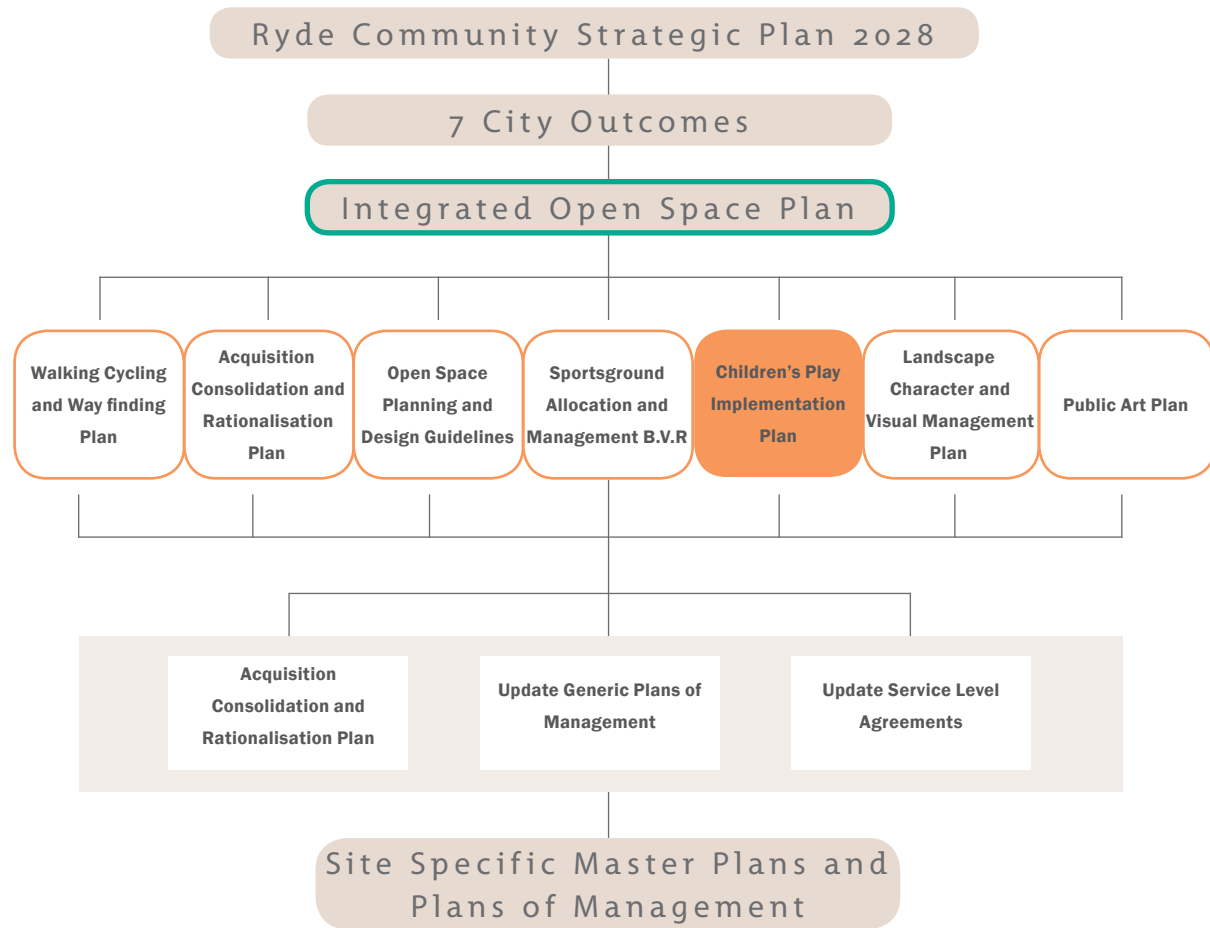


Figure 2. Context of the Play Plan in the City’s Strategic Plan

### 1.1.4 Existing park hierarchy

The IOISP categorises parks using a traditional model hierarchy of regional, district, neighbourhood and local parks within a range of measurable factors (refer Figure 3 for map of existing classification of parks).

For the purpose of this study, playground hierarchy is informed by the open space hierarchy it sits within which include:

- Regional Parks
- District Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Local Parks

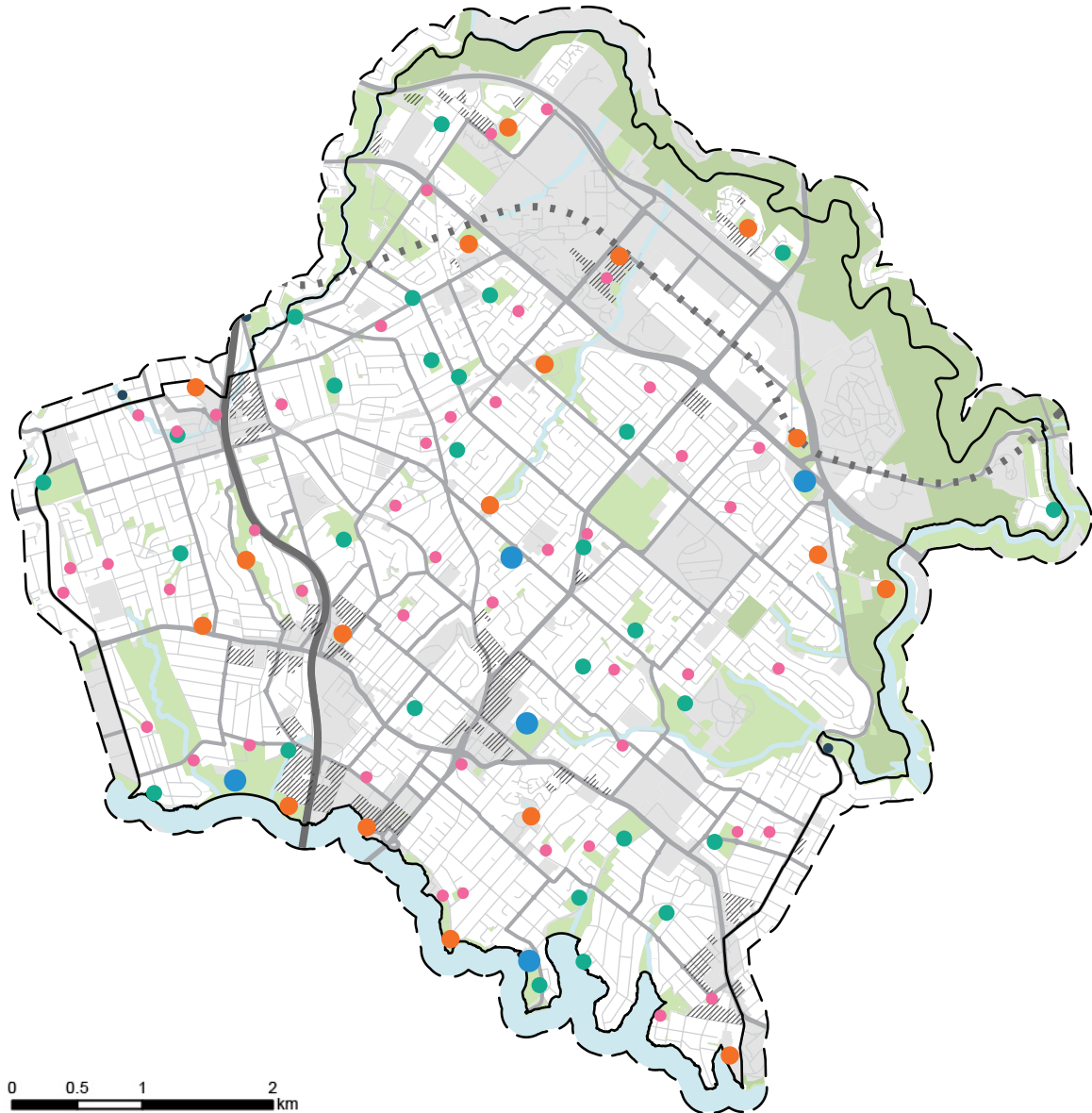
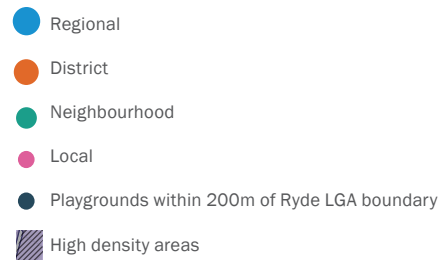


Figure 3. Existing park and playground hierarchy

## 1.1.5 Playground hierarchy

To align with the park hierarchy established in the IOSP, it has been assumed that playgrounds within parks were of a corresponding hierarchical level. Playgrounds have been categorised in the Play Plan under broad playground types as listed below:

### Destination playgrounds:

- Regional playground (level 1)
- District playground (level 2)

### Everyday playgrounds:

- Neighbourhood playground (level 3)
- Local playground (level 4)

Their differences revolve around access, primary age group focus, size, number of participants, variety of play experiences, supporting facilities, duration of stay, and often the park type within which they are located. This is further outlined in section 4.3 Design Framework.

- Destination playground
- Park size is 10ha or more
- 30-90 min. travel by car/public transport
- Significant on-site parking
- Large playgrounds (adventure/inclusive)
- Adjacent regional organised sport facilities
- Natural significance
- Single & group BBQ
- Youth spaces

- Everyday playground
- Park size is min. 0.5ha up to 1ha
- 1km actual walk/15-20 mins walk
- No on-site parking
- Bus stop close/public transport
- Play spaces
- Junior sport training facilities only
- Picnic/low key BBQ

- Destination playground
- Park size is min. 1ha - up to 2-5ha
- 5kms or 10-15 mins travel by car/public transport
- Limited on-site parking
- Playspaces for all ages
- Adjacent organised sports facilities
- Natural areas of interest
- Single & group BBQ
- Youth spaces

- Everyday playground
- Park size is min. 0.2ha up to 0.5ha
- Max 400m/10 mins walking (200m in high density areas)
- No parking
- Small adjacent kickabout space
- No organised sport
- Paths only to seats/play
- No picnic facilities

Figure 4. Existing park hierarchy definitions (as defined by IOSP) applied to playgrounds



