



04 JUL, 2021

## Boost for finder app to encourage more outdoor play time

Sunday Canberra Times, Canberra



**BUSH CAPITAL** App will point to 500 playgrounds

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Jasper Lindell

WANT to find the perfect spot outdoors so the kids can run around and play? Soon,

there'll be an app for that.

A playground finder app will be over-



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hauled to include the more than 500 playgrounds in the ACT, in an effort to encourage higher rates of physical activity among the territory's young people.

Play Australia's Playground Finder app will receive \$12,450 from the ACT government's \$35,000 nature play grant program to upgrade its app.

The app will include photographs and community feedback to help people find the perfect playground.

Play Australia executive director Barbara Champion said the app would be designed to promote greater access to Canberra's public play spaces.

"The fact is that Australia is down the bottom of the world in terms of kids' physical development, really. So all of the data that we know about shows that unless kids seriously increase their physical activity - and, from our point of view, we say that kids need to be playing outside every day - then obviously the health of the nation is going to suffer," Ms Champion said.

Ms Champion said Play Australia knew the way children played outdoors had changed significantly in recent decades.

"The importance of the Playground Finder app is because we recognise that for a whole range of reasons why kids don't play outside like my generation did. And we also know that parents have a very different set of expectations, I suppose, of their role as parents, supervisory responsibility," she said.

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people who have kids to access information about where the open space is and how they can easily access it and so forth. That's, in a sense, the purpose of the app, to enable people who live in the ACT to be able to access public play spaces."

Nearly three-quarters of children nationally aged between 5 and 12 did not complete 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day, the Australian Bureau of Statistics' most recent data shows.

The 2011-14 ACT general health survey found less than half of ACT parents could accurately say how much physical activity was

recommended for children each day.

The national physical activity guidelines recommend 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily.

The Minister for Sport and Childhood Development, Yvette Berry, said the recipients built on the success of last year's funding round.

"As a result of a 2020 grant the Walga Nature Preschool at Southern Cross Early Learning Centre created a permanent learning space amongst the trees so the children can spend the entire day learning and exploring outdoors," Ms Berry said.

"The nature play grants program supports Canberrans to use our great outdoor areas to get fit, play go on adventures and socialise."

Other projects receiving funding as part of the grants include a non-competitive orienteering course at Mulligans Flat Sanctuary.

The Capital Woodland and Wetlands Conservation Association will receive \$4155 to establish the course.

Grants will also go to early learning and childcare centres to support outdoor play programs.



Tom Stefanic, 8, and friends play outside in Farrer. **Picture: Dion Georgopoulos**