



Member news

promoting the value of play

Winter 2019 :: Issue 06



Executive Director's message

As winter approaches we at Play Australia are excited to announce a major initiative in growing the commitment to outdoor play across Australia.

We have been funded by Sport Australia to develop and deliver the 1000 Play Streets project which aims to promote and enable Local Government to empower communities nationally to take back their streets, resulting in more children and families outside playing with neighbours. Play Australia has been funded to deliver this program across Australia in partnership with CoDesign, Nature Play Solutions, and LGAs. I am delighted to announce that Kieran Brophy will join me on staff and he will manage the roll out of this project in collaboration with our partners and members. This is an exciting opportunity for Play Australia to grow our membership outside Victoria and to extend the influence and capacity of the organisation to successfully advocate nationally in the interests of play. I welcome Kieran to the team and look forward to him meeting our membership across Australia.

A 1 Day Conference is being planned to be held in September in Brisbane to be titled Designing for Play in Queensland. Details will follow shortly, and we look forward to this event acting as the kicking off of the Play Australia Queensland Branch.

You will soon receive your first E-News which we hope to provide fortnightly so as to keep you updated with current events and to continue to raise the profile of the organisation.

Places in our 2 Day Training Program this year have been quickly snapped up, our March program was fully booked, and the July, August and November programs are filling up fast. Please see the website for further information.

Congratulations to all of our members who are making such a fantastic contribution to the quality of play in this country.

Barbara Champion



Play Australia Training in 2019

Please register on line and contact Barb at barb@playaustralia.org.au for further information.

MELBOURNE

August Wed 28th / Thurs 29th
Bookings open now

November Wed 13th / Thurs 23rd
Bookings open now

All programs will be held at Westerfolds Park, Templestowe.

ADELAIDE

September Wed 11th
Bookings open now online

This One Day program will be held at the City of Unley. Invites have been circulated to the SA database.

BRISBANE

September Wed 25th
Bookings available soon online

This One Day program will be held at the Toombul Shire Hall. Invites will be sent out shortly.

 For more information, or to book online, visit www.playaustralia.org.au



Photo: Matthew Deutscher



Let's bring back street play

Growing up as a child of the 80s in the Melbourne suburbs, it wasn't unusual to find my brother, sister and I running around out the front of our home with the neighbouring kids. Whether it be throwing plums at each other, riding bikes or playing ball games – the local streets were a place to have fun.

When we think about enabling more communities to play, particularly those with shrinking backyards, the streets seems like a logical place in terms of access... just step outside and you're there. However street play is not necessarily the obvious choice for many, in fact, evidence suggests that it's declining with '73% of adults saying they played on the street when they were young compared to only 24% of their kids' (Planet Ark, 2011).

This is why Play Australia, supported by Sport Australia, is excited to deliver the '1000 Play Streets project' in partnership with CoDesign (Melbourne and Brisbane), Nature Play Solutions (Perth), Centre of Sport & Social Impact at La Trobe University and a number of local councils across Victoria, Queensland and Western Australia.

The '1000 Play Streets project' aims to create a national movement to bring back street play, as well as developing new resources to benefit local councils and community groups across Australia, available in July 2020.

Our approach will build on some amazing groundwork, including CoDesign's community-led Play Streets resource and insights from University of South Australia regarding the Campbelltown City Council and OPAL street play project in Hectorville, SA. With a view to better understand the social drivers that motivate parents to allow street play and the systems and process to activate regular street play in our communities.

We intend to support local councils and community groups to not only engage local residents, but to also effectively navigate the red tape (i.e. permits, traffic management, insurances) so there's less barriers for communities to get involved. And it is a community focus that we care about. We want to see more communities connecting in our streets regularly through play, to strengthen the

social fabric in our neighbourhoods.

Over the next 12 months Play Australia alongside our partners are proud to support Play Streets in VIC, QLD and WA with a plan to help activate 1000 Play Streets nationally over the next 5 years.

We have an exciting road ahead and we welcome your input, so if you have something (anything big or small) to contribute to this national movement we'd love to hear from you. Please email Kieran@playaustralia.org.au. Let's bring back street play!

I smile as I write this, as these days this 80s child is a parent of three (all under four years old) and I'm not immune to parental worry, particularly when it comes to road safety. However I'm pleased to say that my three year old and I are riding our scooters on the street out the front of our house more often and we love it. I guess the next step is to invite the neighbours to join us ...or maybe organise a Play Street.

***Kieran Brophy** is Assistant Director at Play Australia and has promoted physical activity and healthy eating for children for the last 15 years across the health and sport sectors, having worked at VicHealth, Sport Australia and the Victorian Department of Health. When at home he spends most of his time playing with his three children and is a self-proclaimed expert in 'hide and seek'.*



Continuing our tradition of bringing you expert discussion on different topics around play. This issue we talk about older children and play with Ben and Mike from Ludicology in the UK. Ludicology means 'the study of playfulness' and Ben and Mike provide advice, research and training services for all those concerned with children's play.

Play tends to be something we associate with younger children rather than older, why do you think that is?

Play has been subject to intense study over many decades as has child development. The theories developed as a result can be critiqued but it's the reductionist way the theories have been disseminated and the preferential treatment applied to particular aspects of those theories that is responsible for the way we come to understand the role of play in human life. What this preferential and reductionist treatment has done has encultured an understanding of play as either something frivolous, done by infants because they need a way to burn off steam or regenerate energy, this notion trivializes and infantilises play and those who take part in it. On the other hand, lies the view that play is a tool for practice and preparation of skills useful for adulthood, often accompanied with the caveat, 'so long as it's well planned and productive' (by us adults). Equally the received wisdom suggests that play may serve to assist learning until such a point as the child no longer needs experience to support that which is being learned.

Play has been so closely associated with development and learning that we could be forgiven for thinking it is of any other use at all beyond that. We are now starting to get a much better understanding of the value of play but again we seem to think that value desists after about three years, when in reality all the same value being gained by a child in the first 1000 days of life is being gained for human beings that have opportunities to play through their early and late youth and most likely right throughout the life course.

What is useful to consider when understanding how older children play?

Adolescence is a period of significant change where the brain-body system is undergoing re-configuration in order to make best use of 'the huge sprawling brain we develop when we're children' (Bainbridge 2009). If growth and development in early childhood is about



Older Children Play Too

generating as many experiences as possible to support experience dependent gene expression, thereby actualizing our brain-body potential, then adolescence is about consolidation, re-configuration and optimization of that strong foundation to ensure a best fit for the child's more current and future context.

The teenage years are somewhat like the early years (two to four), anyone who has had or worked with children of that age recognizes how frustrated children can become and recognize that is because they are grappling with significant change, some new experiences, some emotions they haven't yet developed the capacity to regulate, some frustration with their inability to self-determine their actions etc.

Through middle childhood, let's say five to eleven/twelve, children are more in control of their capabilities and their context and capabilities are often reasonably well aligned. This period of life can often be much calmer waters for carers and children alike. Adolescence might best be characterized by the huge changes in self identity and sexual identity, self-image, independence and self-reliance, peer attachments, serious socio-emotional challenges and changes as well as puberty and physical growth. So, with the teenage years we see the return of those turbulent waters of the early years as adolescents once again are faced with experiencing significant changes in context, demands, expectations, as well as biological/chemical and socio-emotional changes that they still have to develop the ability to regulate.

This puts the brain-body system under serious stress, so adolescents might be more tired as a result, have mood swings, try out things that are new and unfamiliar or retreat to the familiar, form new and unusual friendships, have important friendships that may only last a short while, try out new styles (music, fashion, interests), seem extremely capable, competent and confident in themselves one day and not the next. Not surprising given all that they have to try out, resolve and master in a few short years.

Can you tell us about some of the common play behaviours of older children?

Play is intrinsically motivated and has behavioural features different to more normative forms of behavior. Children pretend in their play and create situations where they can experience uncertainty. Playing is also highly variable, often unpredictable and involves flexible responses and behaviours. In

playing the process is more important than the product (Gordon and Esbjorn-Hargens, 2007 and Lester and Russell, 2010).

A common feature of research with older children is often the mundane and everyday ways in which they make use of their environments. This 'other stuff' older children do when left to their own devices might be summarised as 'hanging out with friends', 'having banter' and/or 'messaging about' and (whilst they may not like to call it play) it shares many of the characteristics commonly associated with playing (Kraftl, 2008).

Rough and tumble becomes very popular again in the early teenage years, both between same sex partners and groups and mixed sex partners. Again it is a great way to form and test the trust and strength of new and developing relationships, goes some way to establishing group hierarchy (without anyone coming to real harm) and in the case of 'push and poke', rough and tumble creates a 'safe frame' through which to try out affiliative overtures with a potential mate (Pellegrini et al, 2015).

Equally important are impromptu games, one we have in the UK is "tell your mum I saved your life" (usually performed between friends) which involves pretending to push someone off a wall the friends are walking along (the point is that the person never actually falls). The act creates a situation of uncertainty (without the consequences of someone actually falling) and what results is a sense of pleasure for the mischief-maker and the relieved 'victim'. Playing and the pleasure associated with it is central to children forming strong attachments to other people and the places where they play.

Older children will also seek out new opportunities for risk taking in their play, a renewed interest in climbing trees, jumping from cliffs in to water, free running, camping out over-night etc; these opportunities enable children to express strong emotions within the relatively safe context of playing, supporting the expression and refinement of both emotion regulation and stress response systems, which are essential to maintaining good mental health and a sense of well-being (Goleman, 1995).

Lastly, how do you think we can better support older children to play?

We recently carried out some research involving younger and older children (those in primary and high school) in exploring their satisfaction with their opportunities for play (or 'hang out' as the older ones preferred to call it). One of

the differences we identified was that for those children who are of an age where they are still disposed to playing in such a way that makes use of any environment through exploratory and pretend narratives, access to other children may be all that is required for a good enough experience of play. In contrast as children get older, become more self-aware and less disposed to playing in pretend ways the object opportunities offered by the environment may matter more. That means we need to pay greater attention to the design of spaces for teenagers, the range of behaviours those places support and involve these older children in identifying the types of things they would like to be able to do in the public realm.

We also need to recognise that the ways in which older children play will depend on how they experience and feel about the places where they spend their time and the people they come into contact with in those spaces. When it comes to the playful behavior of older children, adults should avoid jumping to conclusion based on negative stereotypes and assumptions about what is developmentally appropriate.

As Peter Kraftl (2008) suggests it is the treatment of and attitudes towards older children by adults "which matters, fundamentally, to their self-esteem" and older children are likely to withdraw from public spaces if they feel threatened or unwelcome, leading to a sense of disconnection from society (Hopkins, 2011).

Ludicology exists to promote a better understanding of children's play and the ways in which adults can support it. Ben Tawil and Mike Barclay (based in the UK) formed Ludicology to advise on the design of spaces and neighbourhoods for play, developing play centered policies and procedures, involving children in research to inform play interventions and delivering training to adults. Their work has featured in play sector publications, academic journals and edited books.

www.ludicology.com
<https://www.facebook.com/ludicology/>

For references in this article visit
www.playaustralia.com.au/member-news-online

IPA News

IPA Conference 2020
– Jaipur India



Join International Play Association Members from around the world for the 21st Triennial World Conference to be held in Jaipur India.

DATES: 4 – 7 November 2020

THEME: Play and Resilience

PLACE: Diggi Palace, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India

REGISTRATION OPENS: January 2020

CALL FOR PAPERS: opens July 2019

The IPA Conference Website will be launched in July 2019.

www For more information and to sign up for notifications regarding the conference and the submission of papers for presentation visit: www.ipaworld.org



Press Play

Play Australia's New Podcasting Adventure

In 2017 Play Australia was successful in securing a Warrawong Funding Grant to produce a pilot series of short educational audio podcasts on play for the professional development of Early Years Educators.

Recently completed and soon to be available publically, the four podcasts cover the following subject matter:

Podcast 1. Why Outdoor Play Matters?

Podcast 2. How to Provide Outdoor Play in Early Years Services

Podcast 3. The Benefits of Risk in Outdoor Play

Podcast 4. Creating Engaging Playspaces

Play Australia is excited to be broadening its advocacy and education avenues and hopes that further podcasts on other aspects of play will be produced into the future.

www For more information or to access these podcasts please visit www.playaustralia.org.au/podcast

Protecting children from hot play equipment.

There are increasing reports of injuries being caused by burning from hot surfaces from around the country.

While manufacturers have thought about this issue for a very long time (i.e. the materials, orientation and location of slides is quite different from 20 years ago), the facts however are that we live in a hot climate. We have therefore seen on social media some awful images of children who have been burnt on hot play equipment, generally having been lifted onto the equipment by an adult carer, and so this is of significant concern.

At this stage our best suggestion is to do some promotion around the importance of adults taking appropriate care of children, particularly young ones whilst outside.

Culturally we understand that beach sand is hot in summer, and so we teach kids to cover their feet (as we do with hard paving etc.) So the public message is that kids need to be taught from the earliest of ages by their carers, that the summer environment in Australia can be extremely hot and how to behave when interacting with the environment.

Local Government is not responsible for the supervision of children in parks and playgrounds and fortunately our Playground Standard makes this very clear, sadly however it continues to be a problem. The reference to supervision is in AS4685-2014 Play Equipment and Surfacing Part 1 Scope Section 1.

Council's should however always endeavour to be considerate of the orientation and placement of play equipment such as slides so as to avoid maximum overhead sun in summer and provide either adequate natural shade (i.e. canopy trees in optimum locations for afternoon shade) or built structures.

What do you think? Share your thoughts with us at newsletter@playaustralia.com.au



What do you do with your Playground when its time is up?

By Melanie Kinsey

Everyone looks forward to the installation of a new playground. But what do you do with the old playground? This question is faced by councils, schools, childcare centres, fast food franchises and many other places all over Australia.

In the past, most of the redundant equipment has gone to the tip or maybe to a recycling centre, as it was seen as just too difficult to repurpose the equipment for use elsewhere. Occupational health and safety standards, risk assessments and playground safety standards presented a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to those who wished for an alternative life for their outdated play equipment.

In Australia our play equipment generally has a life between 15 and 20 years. Fashions and fads come and go and play equipment is no different in that it is subject to 'the latest trend'. In many cases the play equipment that is being removed is in pretty good condition, but it is now classified as boring or past its 'use-by' date. However in many countries, playgrounds are unknown and financially out of reach of the average school or municipal council.

The international service organisation Rotary discovered all this when giving aid to an orphanage in Sri Lanka. The orphanage had a list of things they would like donated, starting with computers and ending with 'a playground'. The Rotary Club of Flemington (Victoria) made contact with the City of Greater Geelong. To cut a long story short, they were able to help with the disassembly of a combination unit and then organise for it to be shipped to the orphanage in Sri Lanka where it was reassembled and is very much appreciated by the children of the orphanage today. Paul Cotter was the key person responsible at the COGG for enabling this to happen, and huge thanks are due to Paul for his efforts and leadership to date.

This happened due to much behind-the-scenes work by the Rotary volunteers and with the assistance and advice of Play Australia. They have now helped to

repurpose several playgrounds from a variety of locations and have refined their system in the process. Peter Cribb of the Flemington Rotary who is the driving force behind the RORP (Rotary Overseas Recycled Playgrounds) project, felt the process could be improved, he contacted fellow Rotarian Rod Greer and said "do you know anyone who can help us?" They researched the market and now use Filemaker Pro to capture all the necessary data and allow sharing. Rod explained "reassembling a playground is a cross between Ikea and Lego. The lynchpins are getting the data together and putting coding on the actual pieces which allows the end user to follow the codes."

1. An offer is made of a playground from the owner to Rotary. Steel playgrounds are preferred over timber.
2. The playground is checked and photographed from all angles by Rotary volunteers.
3. A birds eye view of the playground in situ (from Google Maps) is taken showing the current layout.
4. A plan from this photo is created.
5. The play equipment is marked with codes. Bolts are sprayed with a lubricant.
6. When the fence goes up, Rotary moves in and disassembles the play equipment. Bolts are only cut off with an angle grinder as a last resort because replacement bolts for a typical playground costs about \$600!
7. The contractor then lifts out the uprights with machinery and carefully removes the concrete before placing it to one side.
8. Rotary loads and removes the equipment and it usually goes into storage before a container can be filled to be sent overseas.
9. Rotary feel a charge of about \$500 covers the costs of disposing the playground. This cost can be built into the contract.

Rotary have now organised 'Hub' clubs across Victoria to deal with their surrounding region. "Councils and schools are wanting to do the right thing by recycling," said Peter "and an added bonus is that some schools are making contact with the school the play equipment



is being relocated to and that fosters wonderful links." Councils need to ensure that the 'non-destructive removal of the playground in consultation with the nominated charity' is written into the contract specifications.

Before the initial donation, the City of Greater Geelong created a form indemnifying the donating council and this was reviewed by MAV Insurance. This form is now available from Play Australia. "Council will not be faced with an unbelievable document – it is simple," said Peter. However each Council will need to ensure it is reviewed by their own legal advisers to ensure it suits their own needs. He went on to say "there are always issues to be addressed but they can be worked through." Many playground manufacturers have been extremely helpful supplying plans and parts to simplify the reassembly overseas.

To date playgrounds have gone to Sri Lanka and Timor Leste. The Rotary model could conceivably be used nationally by a variety of service organisations and councils to repurpose playgrounds all over the world.

For more information please contact Peter Cribb on 0410 548 543 or email ptcribb@gmail.com

Schools need more time for play, not less

Part Two – Safety and Play in Schools

In Part 1 of this piece about Play in Schools Barb focused on the importance of play and play areas in schools, this issue we would like to explore more around perceptions of safety and practical ways schools can support play better.

Anxiety about safety in 2019

Community awareness of safety has increased dramatically over the past few years, and playgrounds and playground equipment are now under greater scrutiny. Therefore playgrounds and play equipment in schools are key priorities in the risk management responsibility of schools.

Because the victims of playground accidents in schools are young children who are often unable to detect potential hazards for themselves, and because of the varied and often unpredictable nature of play activities, playground safety demands particular attention to detail.

We are sometimes accused of taking the fun out of playgrounds by making them “too safe”. In many cases, dangers which lead to injury have little or, no bearing upon the fun or the challenge and “fun” or “challenge” cannot be used as an excuse for negligence. Even if... “we used to play on them, and never got hurt” (except the odd broken leg), values and awareness have changed and schools must accept the responsibility of providing quality play spaces and experiences for students, and therefore knowledge and implementation of relevant Australian Standards for playgrounds is a requirement of schools today. Whilst it is not possible to eradicate playground accidents, our main concern is the reduction of injuries in playgrounds which can be avoided.

Risk Benefit approach to managing risk

Play Australia supports the risk benefit approach to the management of risk in

schools. Risk/Benefit Assessment simply put, is the practice of ‘weighing up’ the benefits and hazards associated with risky play in a playground. For example, the benefits to children in using monkey bars far outweighs the risks of injury.

The fact that there are many children today who are not able physically to use a monkey bar is a much greater health concern than the possible injury caused by falling.

There is ample evidence from around the world which shows us that if children are allowed responsibility for their own play, then injury is reduced, and general performance in school life improves.

Swanson Primary School in New Zealand which removed all rules in the playground showed us that fewer children were getting hurt, children focused better in class and there was less bullying and incidents of vandalism had dropped off.

Suggested ways to support better play opportunities in schools, this section will focus on play equipment given its significance in schools.

Good Siting and Layout

Play equipment in schools needs to be located in areas of the schoolground that enable informal supervision, and provide students with a feeling of being “where the action is”.

Internal layout of play equipment areas should aim for prevention of conflicts between moving equipment (eg. trackglides) and running children;

- play traffic (e.g. from a slide, out of a tunnel) into the path of other activities;
- quiet play (e.g. sand pits) and boisterous games (football match); and,
- active, boisterous groups (late primary ages and older) and “littlies” and pre-schoolers.

Well Designed Equipment

Equipment should be designed to avoid shear, pinch or crush points; protrusions – splinters, jagged edges and protruding

bolts, which can tear skin or snag clothes. Equipment should be built and installed in a way so that a child’s head, neck, torso, limbs or fingers cannot become trapped. Australian Standards AS4685 - 2014 provides details to assist in the provision of quality play equipment in schools.

Soft Impact Absorbing Surface Materials

Falls onto hard surfaces constitute the largest single cause of injury in playgrounds. Concrete, brick, stone, exposed concrete footings, timber, bare earth and grass are not suitable surfaces within the fall zones of equipment.

Impact absorbing surfaces such as well maintained pine mulch, or pine bark appear to be the most effective. Loose materials such as these can be retained by a border. Schools are also using a variety of synthetic materials, particularly in high use areas which need to be carefully monitored for the impact absorbing qualities.

A fall zone is required for every piece of equipment with a free height of fall above 600mm to ensure that it is not possible for the head of a child to touch any part of another piece of equipment or hard object on falling.

Pinch Points and Sharp Edges

Equipment should be checked regularly to make sure that there are no sharp edges. Moving components such as suspension bridges and track glides, should be regularly checked to make sure that there are no moving parts or mechanisms that might crush or pinch a small finger.

Things that Protrude or Tangle

Protruding bolts and other pieces of hardware or components of equipment can cause bruises and cuts if a child bumps into them. These protrusions can also act as hooks, which can catch a child’s clothing and potentially cause strangulation if a child is caught by a hooded top. Ropes should be anchored securely at both ends so that they cannot form a loop or noose.



Regular Inspections

Equipment varies in its maintenance requirements. Some items could need daily inspection in areas of heavy use. At least every six months all equipment should be inspected by a suitably qualified person and general checks should be regularly carried out as well.

Loose impact absorbing soft surface materials will of course need more regular attention.

Repairs

Repairs should occur as soon as possible after reporting. If a hazard cannot be repaired quickly it should be secured against use until repair.

Prompt repairs not only improve safety and restore play value and amenity but they may prevent further vandalism, which often occurs after initial damage "downgrades" equipment. Quick minor repairs can often prevent more costly major repairs later and therefore minimize any potential litigating circumstances.

Adequate Supervision

The degree of supervision required depends upon the age and ability of the children (and in a practical sense, the size of the school teaching staff). Young children constantly challenge their own abilities, but are often unable to recognize potential hazards. In supervising play teachers should make sure that the child uses equipment which is appropriate for his or her age/size.

Schools have school-based policies and practices on supervision of the outdoor play area, but it must be recognized that no amount of playground supervision will prevent some children from taking risks which are unforeseen by staff and therefore cannot be prevented.

One way of encouraging supervision from adults in addition to teaching staff on duty is to design play environments that appeal to people of all ages, where watching adults may sit comfortably, in shade or shelter if required.

How to better manage potential injury in schools

Injuries in school grounds are by

no means restricted to playground equipment. Tripping and falling, collisions with hard objects and with other students are common causes of injury to both students and staff. Buildings, verandah poles, changes in levels, paths, drainage pits, vents and other surfaces need to be designed and located with extreme care, avoiding blind corners and taking into account that large numbers of students (often running) use the space.

The importance of having a maintenance schedule

School grounds should be inspected for potential hazards such as:

- verandah poles outside doorways, in thoroughfares or in situations where students are unlikely to see them, especially while running;
- steps and changes in level which are poorly proportioned, difficult to see or lack handrails;
- fencing, gates and railings which students climb and which have structural problems, sharp protrusions, splinters or other hazards;
- trip hazards at ground level - protruding drainage pit covers, irregular paving, cracks or tree roots in thoroughfares, broken off post or other remnants of old structures;
- loose gravelly surfaces on slopes and where students run;
- slippery patches which may stay damp in winter;
- rocks which students can fall onto or throw around;
- blind corners in busy areas; taps and hoses which are positioned where students play or walk; window glass at low levels through which students could fall;
- holes, cracks or exposed irrigation fixtures in ovals;
- trees or shrubs with poisonous parts, sharp spikes or thorns or branches at eye level;
- splinters and deteriorating timbers in seats, retaining edges and other wooden constructions;
- sheds or other areas with hazardous chemicals or machinery to which

students have access; rubbish skips which students can climb into or around, or which place students at risk when trucks enter the school;

- areas within the site used for car parking when students are present; and,
- sporting equipment such as goal posts or basketball rings which have structural or other design or maintenance problems.

Schools often struggle to find the resources needed for effective maintenance of school grounds, but it is by far the most important risk management strategy when considering potential injury to children.

Barbara Champion is the Executive Director of Play Australia.

Playground Finder makes its new home with Play Australia

Playground Finder has launched on Play Australia's website and can be found on the home page. At present the site can be accessed in its previous form and playspaces can still be researched, rated or recorded by the families using them as they have been in the past.

Play Australia hopes over the coming years to develop and tailor the website to align more with other Play Australia projects and promotions.

Playground Finder a proud Australian service can also be found at <https://www.playgroundfinder.com>



Members Corner

Our place for information and profiles on Play Australia Members and Membership

Member Profile

Kerry Logan

Kerry Logan is an Outdoor Play Consultant with Nature Play Solutions in Perth working closely with educators and communities to support quality play and playspaces. A passionate advocate for children's play, Kerry is a member of the Executive Council of the International School Grounds Alliance, as well as Western Australia's representative on Play Australia's National Board.

Tell us briefly about yourself

Since my first involvement in the playground sector in 2002 I've been on a very steep learning curve about the nature of play, play spaces and providing for play. I've learned so much from experts in the fields of playwork, landscape architecture, occupational therapy, horticulture, evolutionary psychology and more – who have challenged so many of my original ideas about play. My role at Nature Play Solutions allows me to share what I've learned and see the positive impacts for children when the value of play is embraced.

What prompted you to become a member of Play Australia?

Our membership helps to articulate our commitment to play; and helps Play Australia to continue their work in advocating for children's right to play, sharing play research

and growing and supporting the network of play advocates across the country.

Is there a highlight achieved within your work that you could share regarding an innovation for children's outdoor play experiences?

Helping to develop our Messy Mud Day incursions was a wonderful opportunity to help shift perspectives about play and learning. It's been so fulfilling to see messy, unstructured play being reinstated into children's lives and embedded into practice – even offered as an everyday experience in some settings. A long way from the negative reaction from some parents and educators at the mere mention of mud!

How does Play Australia support you as a member?

The wealth of information and publications that Play Australia has



produced over the years is a fantastic resource that I regularly refer to parents, schools, children's services and local councils.

Why is it important for you to work in the play sector?

I believe that play is the optimum vehicle for children to learn about themselves and the world around them and is vital for them to develop the skills and competencies to manage life. However, in order to realise these benefits, we need to provide rich play environments and give children the freedom to explore them. Play and play space development also intersects all my other interests – health and wellbeing, community connectedness and preservation of our natural environment – so it's the perfect fit.

Got Something to Share on Play?

We'd like to make our Members News a little more interactive. As such we'd like to hear from you on themes and ideas for future editions to pass on to our editorial team. If you have something you'd like to share please email newsletter@playaustralia.org.au



Introducing Play Australia's E-News

Stay tuned as very soon Play Australia will be launching its regular E-News. This will be an email circular of current topics and news to increase our profile and membership across Australia.



promoting the value of play

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For more information on membership services, resources, news and events, or to contact Play Australia, please visit PlayAustralia.org.au