



# Member news

*promoting the value of play*

Winter 2018 :: Issue 03



## Executive Director's message

Play Australia is working hard to further develop our national profile.

Our Play Today material is now complete and available to download from our website. Members are encouraged to access this material for use in your own networks across the country [www.playaustralia.org.au/play-today](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/play-today). We also have hard copies available to members on request.

Our Play Recognition program is now underway, and members are encouraged to get your applications in. We are keen to showcase your work, which concurrently will serve as excellent advocacy for play to the general public. For further information visit [www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition)

Our 2 Day Training Program continues to gain significant interest and participation in Victoria. Our challenge is to establish sufficient links across the country so that we can deliver this program elsewhere. Knowledge and understanding of Playground Standards are essential in the development of quality playspaces and thus our commitment to provide the opportunity for training across Australia. Play Australia provides the only quality comprehensive training and we want to run this program in WA, NSW and SA for our members.

We plan on developing a weekly E-News as a key part of our play advocacy campaign and members can expect to receive a weekly email in future bringing to your attention the latest in play news from around the country.

**Barbara Champion**



## Play Australia Training in 2018

Dates for the 2 Day (Levels 1 & 2) *Playground Management, Maintenance and Design* program for the remainder of 2018 are as follows:

### November Program BOOKINGS OPEN NOW

**Cost**

\$650.00 + GST = \$715.00 Total (Members)

\$750.00 + GST = \$825.00 Total (Non-Members)

**Time**

9am–4pm each day

**Date**

Wednesday 14th and Thursday 15th

**Venue**

Conference Room,  
Westerfolds Park  
Templestowe



For more information, or to book online, visit [www.playaustralia.org.au](http://www.playaustralia.org.au)



## Reminder to all Members

So we can keep our database up to date for information and event invites could you please let us know **the names and email addresses of any new staff colleagues** in your organisation.  
[@reanae@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:reanae@playaustralia.org.au)

## Good Advice

Play Australia Members in Victoria met recently to discuss two significant playground standard related issues: the testing of unitary surfacing in playgrounds and the development of a new Australian standard on fitness equipment.

### Testing of unitary surfacing in playgrounds

Do you know how you are going to implement Clause 8.5.6 of Part 0 concerning the testing every 3 years of all unitary surfacing in your playgrounds?

Concerns have been raised that this requirement with respect to unitary surfacing (typically 'wet-pour' rubber or impact absorbing tiles) is potentially costly and unmanageable for many play space owners and managers. This is largely because there are only currently 2 or 3 testing devices in Victoria. Following this session, a similar discussion will be held in Brisbane on September 11th.

During the discussion members agreed that there are a number of ways to manage unitary surfacing

- Cost of testing devices not out of the question for metro councils
- A plan re: testing of unitary surfacing is required to add to the maintenance schedule
- Another meeting will be held in 8 week's time for councils to share their plans
- Suppliers of unitary undersurfacing will be specifically invited to participate in the next meeting

### Development of new Australian standard on fitness equipment

Standards Australia will shortly commence the development of an Australian Standard on fitness equipment with a committee to oversee the process. This process will discuss and focus on key issues needed to be addressed by this standard. Play Australia will be represented on this committee by Barb Champion. If members wish to provide input to this process please contact [barb@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:barb@playaustralia.org.au)

Members should also be aware of the resource recently published by SRV, which will serve as an excellent guide for organisations wishing to plan for the installation of fitness equipment. Play Australia would like to acknowledge the hard work undertaken by PLA Vic Tas in the development of this fantastic resource.

[www http://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/community-sport-resources/guidelines-planning-installing-and-activating](http://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/community-sport-resources/guidelines-planning-installing-and-activating)



## Around the States

As Play Australia continues to grow nationally we are constantly energised by the commitment and enthusiasm to play from around the country:

### South Australia

In early June we held a successful networking event at Livvi's Place in Marion, it included an insightful tour by the City of Marion and Bec Ho, of the Touched by Olivia Foundation and also National Board Member. We visited the soon to be finished playspace to discuss the design and construction progress, as well as the importance of inclusive play.

Our SA AGM was held on Tuesday 24th July, preceded by a tour of the newly upgraded Marshmallow Park Playspace and surrounding Peltzer Park / Pityarilla Hub in Adelaide.

In October we will be visiting Christie Downs Primary School's new integrated nature playspace for mainstream and primary school children with a disability. More details to be announced soon.



*Bec Ho addresses the networking meeting at Livvi's Place, Marion*

[www playaustralia.org.au/south-australia](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/south-australia) @ [@play.sa@playaustralia.org.au](https://twitter.com/play.sa)

### Western Australia

Nature Play WA hosted a get together meeting for reps from Play Australia WA & Early Childhood Australia to continue discussions about developing a WA Play Strategy on Thursday 9th August.

With the help of funding from the WA Government, Pia's Place in Whiteman Park, Perth (a very special inclusive nature play space) will soon be built. This project is close to the hearts of Play Australia, particularly our WA members. Initiated by Amy & Tony Rudd, who lost their two-day-old daughter Pia to SIDS and designed by Wendy Seymour, who passed away in 2016. Together, Amy and Wendy worked tirelessly over many years to bring all their knowledge and passion into the design. We're looking forward to being able to celebrate this space finally coming to life.

[www playaustralia.org.au/western-australia](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/western-australia) @ [@play.wa@playaustralia.org.au](https://twitter.com/play.wa)

### Queensland

Play Australia will host discussions on Playground Standards in Brisbane on September 11th when we hope to engage with potential members.

### Victoria

Play Australia supported the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects in presenting an AILA Fresh CPD session on 'Risk & Play' in mid-May. Nearly 40 landscape architects were in attendance to listen to presentations by a number of Play Australia members, a very successful and informative evening. All attendees received a copy of 'Getting the Balance Right' and we will be continuing conversations with AILA around future professional development training.

Our June Local Government Network Meeting was hosted by the City of Hume. The session discussed both the testing of unitary surfacing in playspaces, with discussion led by Rob Hamilton on his recently authored discussion paper and the new Australia Standard on fitness equipment.

[www](http://www) Our August 2 day training program is now fully booked. The next 2 day training program session will be on November 14th and 15th. Places filling fast so to book visit [www.playaustralia.org.au](http://www.playaustralia.org.au)

# Reframing approaches to risky-play

**Children are far more capable than we give them credit for. In actual fact there are many parents, carers and educators these days who are concerned about their children being too timid and want them to become more comfortable and confident with trying new experiences. Many times fear of peer or family judgement hold them back.**

*Setting unnecessary limits on a child's play or pushing them too far are both problematic. Our role as caregivers should be to give children the freedom to explore and play as they choose while supporting them in managing the real dangers that pose a serious and realistic threat to their safety.<sup>1</sup>*

Public discussion on play generally concurs with research evidence that most children need more opportunities for risky-play. In much of the public discussion though, adults are seen as the source of the problem with terms such as 'helicopter parents' or risk-averse educators. There is less interest in examining what underlies protective behaviours of adults or discussion of ways they may change their approach to outdoor risky-play. On the one hand, they are encouraged to stand back and allow children to engage in risky-play, yet they are also seen as having a duty of care to protect young children who may not anticipate or fully understand the consequences of risk. Dismissing educators and parents as overprotective fails to appreciate this dilemma.

## What is risk-reframing?

An intervention known as 'risk-reframing' offers a way to overcome this dilemma. The purpose of risk-reframing is to support adults in making rational decisions about children's risk-taking. During risk-reframing, adults generally think about the benefits of children managing situations that may have ambiguous outcomes. Adults are also provided with strategies to help identify when to let children manage their own risky-play and when to intervene. This approach also supports adults in repositioning children as active and capable of managing their own decisions, including benefitting from any poor decisions that are made. Importantly, risk-reframing interventions are generally offered to groups rather than to individuals. This is an important element as it supports the development of a collective understanding of the importance of risky-play and a collective responsibility for injuries or other adverse outcomes. This means, for example, an educator, parent or other carer with responsibility for supervising children

won't ban tree climbing, knowing that they won't be considered negligent if there is a fall or other injuries.

## Approaches to risk-reframing with parents and educators

There are currently two types of delivery for risk-reframing: 1/ face-to-face group workshops and 2/ a digital tool. Both types of delivery have the same theoretical underpinning and researchers involved continue to collaborate on development of the tools. There is a current Canadian research trial of a digital tool <https://trialsjournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13063-018-2552-4> to see if it is as effective as face-to-face workshops or reading a document to improve understanding of outdoor play.

In Australia face-to-face risk-reframing workshops have been developed by the Sydney Playground Project <https://www.sydneyparkgroundproject.com> These workshops typically involve a two-hour session or multiple sessions, with six to twenty participants in both special and mainstream schools. The workshop starts by participants identifying their goals for their own children or children in their care and reflecting on memorable events in their own childhoods. Information and strategies help support participants in making their own decisions and the workshops involve both educators and parents in the same sessions. Educators are often concerned about reactions of parents if a child is injured or even dirty. Likewise, parents sometimes fear that others will see their behaviour as negligent if they allow their children to take risks. By working together there is a collective understanding of the importance and implications of risk-taking.

## Can an online tool make a bigger difference?

Face-to-face risk-reframing workshops work well if the school/centre can access a facilitator and everyone can find a common time and place to meet. The OutsidePlay digital tool <https://outsideplay.ca/> makes it possible for greater flexibility in delivery of risk-reframing.

The Brussoni Lab at UBC in Vancouver, Canada in partnership with the British Columbia Children's Hospital – Strategy & Innovation Office has developed this online tool for parents who are keen on trying to strike the right balance for their children. The OutsidePlay digital tool helps parents to manage their fears around this and develop a clear plan so that their children can have more opportunities to experience risk in their play. Often this just involves 'getting out of the way' of children's play.

The OutsidePlay digital tool identified 6 categories of 'risky play', which are as follows:

- 1 Play at heights (i.e. climbing trees)
- 2 Play at high speeds (i.e. running or skating)
- 3 Play using tools (i.e. using hammers or saws)
- 4 Play near elements (i.e. near water or with fire)
- 5 Play with a chance of getting lost (i.e. roaming the neighbourhood or hide and seek)
- 6 Rough and Tumble Play (i.e. play wrestling)

The OutsidePlay digital tool then guides parents through 3 stages of reflection; the first a reflection on the person's own childhood and what they want for their own children, the second deals with responses to situations and the third sets up a personalised action plan that identifies goals for themselves and their children.

It combines the general approach of the face-to-face workshops, principles of health-behaviour change and social cognitive theory. The tool is professionally presented and engaging. It is designed to keep the parent actively engaged and there are no restrictions on how it can be used. For example, a centre/school could use the risk-reframing tool to stimulate discussion about risky-play or stimulate ideas about changes to outdoor play.

Although the digital risk-reframing tool is still under investigation it is possible to use the tool with parents or other carers. Anyone interested can use the link to share with parents and this could provide a very useful stimulus for discussion of risky-play.

## Authors:

**Dr Shirley Wyver** is a senior lecturer in child development at Macquarie University, NSW. She has a PhD in developmental psychology and her research focused on children's outdoor play and learning. She is the chief investigator in a multi-disciplinary team known as the 'Sydney Playground Project' which investigates a range of physical and social outcomes for young children, following outdoor play interventions.

**Elizabeth Cummins** is a practicing landscape architect and author. A qualified early years educator, her practice focuses on design for play. She is a co-author of 'Getting the Balance Right'. Play Australia's guide to Risk Management and writes, presents and trains on the use of risk-benefit assessment as a tool for play provision.

<sup>1</sup> Brussoni, Mariana 'Why kids need risk, fear and excitement in play', The Conversation, August 2nd 2017

# After-Hours Use of School Grounds for Play Provision

**State Schools in Queensland are currently being lobbied to open their gates to provide play facilities after hours to local families. This is a matter of individual responsibility (and law), but may just be the antidote to lack of play provision in rapidly developing areas in our larger cities (where provision is yet to be developed or current provision is inadequate for the growing population).**

Our own Executive Director, Barbara Champion is quoted in the Brisbane Courier Mail on the 2nd July 2018 as saying that *"It is complex, but I'm interested (in what) people are saying. Just because it is complicated does not mean we should not keep working on it. It makes huge sense that facilities should be shared."*<sup>1</sup>

Presently State Schools are governed by Queensland Law which states that *'Schools, including state schools, are not public spaces and entry to them is therefore by consent or invitation – implied or explicit. It is an offence to be on state school premises without lawful authority or reasonable excuse.'*<sup>2</sup> This is punishable by fines, some exceeding \$2,000.

The NSW Government launched a trial campaign over the Christmas School Holidays last year and awarded grants of \$15,000 to 42 schools across the state as part of their 'Share Our Space Program'. Such was the success of the campaign that it was then expanded during the Easter 2018 holidays to included 80 more schools (with further funding). The grants enabled schools to maintain and in some cases upgrade existing facilities including play equipment, sports courts and ovals, and also provide additional security. The grounds were open between 8am and 6pm daily meaning security overnight is not so much of an issue.

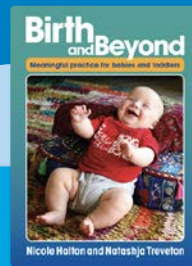
NSW Minister for Education, Rob Stokes responsible for the program is quoted as saying *"We have looked at all of the various issues in opening up these playing spaces, but we took the decision that despite whatever risks may emerge, ultimately the public paid for these facilities"*<sup>3</sup>

Giving children and their families greater public access and opportunities for play to get them outdoors for healthy activity has got to be a conversation worth having. Who knows, maybe greater community ownership of these facilities through public use, may even reduce rather than increase vandalism.

**@ Join this conversation and let us know what you think?  
newsletter@playaustralia.org.au**

- 1 Brisbane Courier Mail July 2nd 2018 'Lobbying for a little more playtime fun' by Domanii Cameron and Michelle Collins
- 2 Queensland Law Handbook Online 2016
- 3 ABC News Online 15th December 2017 'NSW Schools to open playgrounds for public use over the summer holidays'

## Publication Review



### Birth and Beyond; Meaningful Practice for Babies & Toddlers

**Authors – Nicole Halton and Natasha Treverton (Inspired EC 2018)**

Designed to support early years professionals to gain a deeper insight into the specific needs and priorities of this particular age-group and transfer this knowledge into practice.

Birth and Beyond focuses on developing connections between babies and educators. This is presented as a balance of theory, knowledge, examples and explanations, highlighting ways to respect and uphold babies' rights.

Written by Nicole Halton and Natasha Treverton, highly regarded Australian educators and authors, this publication is an essential resource for early years educators working with babies and toddlers.

**www** For more information or to purchase visit [www.inspiredec.com.au/product/birth-and-beyond-meaningful-practice-for-babies-and-toddlers/](http://www.inspiredec.com.au/product/birth-and-beyond-meaningful-practice-for-babies-and-toddlers/)

## Nature is a powerful teacher

Interested in nature and children's learning?

**The International Association of Nature Pedagogy** is a professional organisation designed to promote and support all forms of nature-based education, activity and research around the world.

**Find out more or become a member**

**www** [www.naturepedagogy.com](http://www.naturepedagogy.com)

**t** @NaturePedagogy

**f** NaturePedagogy



# The Magic of Loose Parts

By Kerry Logan

**The term loose parts' was coined by American architect, Simon Nicholson in the 1970s. Nicholson believed that creative talent was not the sole domain of the gifted few. Rather, that we all possess creative possibilities and that providing children with variable filled environments helps them to express and build on these possibilities.**

In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.

'Loose parts' play provision has moved in and out of fashion over the decades. However, it is definitely back in fashion and increasingly being introduced in early childhood and school settings; as well as local parks and family-focused cafes and pubs – for one-off community events or occasionally available all year.

Understanding loose parts play theory leads to the realisation that outdoor play is about much more than climbing, running around and letting off steam. The diversity of play experiences available to children is expanded where there is STUFF for children to play WITH – not just fixed structures to play on.

## The Benefits of Loose Parts

Loose parts invite children to engage in all sorts of creative play – on their own, in small groups, large groups, with children of similar ages, and in multi-age groups. Their play involves experimenting, imagining, inventing games, problem solving, failing, persevering, taking risks, sharing, looking out for younger children, as well as talking and singing, smiling and laughing.

Loose parts provide children with opportunities for hands-on learning: language and communication, science and maths principles, design and technology.

Although many believe the more significant outcome is flexible thinking – being able to see alternative uses for something; coming up with new ways of playing with the same materials or

changing the game or play idea to accommodate new loose parts or new children's ideas. The more flexibility in the environment, the more opportunities for children to develop creative adaptability.

Our children's future will be vastly different to our present – so it surely makes sense that flexibility and adaptability will be key assets.

## What type of materials can be used for loose parts play?

As well as considering the natural materials that can be 'built into' play environments, think about what you currently throw out – are there materials that could be re-directed from the recycling system or landfill?

Materials that children can manipulate and use in a variety of ways work best. Include items that children can easily move individually as well as some large/heavy items that require children to work together to move; materials that offer interesting sensory experiences; and that any hazards can be easily seen and managed by a child. Always be open to new materials that offer novelty and variety.

The logistics of gathering initial quantities of materials can be a challenge, but if you look within your community – parents, local businesses, local councils – you could be surprised by what you'll find and that you'll have an ongoing supply.

## Designing for Loose Parts Play

Open-ended flexible spaces work best. Loose parts allow children to 'dress up' these spaces – to make them their own; to change them, renovate and reinvent them time and again. When designing play environments, consider what fixed features might assist children to build homes, shops, hospitals, space stations, etc. with their loose parts.

## Barriers to implementing Loose Parts Play

Apart from the initial challenge to find sufficient materials to suit the size of your setting, the typical barriers to overcome include storage and perceived supervision difficulties.

Storage and packing away, can be a challenge. However, with some 'out of the box' thinking, most settings overcome these challenges. Schools can allocate resources to create a play support role or even invite parents to manage the day to day logistics of unpacking, packing away and replenishing.

Some settings use shipping containers for lockable, weatherproof storage. Some use smaller storage tubs, spread around the play area. Others use wheelie bins that can be wheeled in and out of sheds, classrooms or verandas. In some settings, loose parts are always out and available. Less weatherproof items will need dry storage. More robust items can remain out in the elements.

Negative perceptions of supervision difficulties are generally not realised. Teachers consistently report that playtimes become more relaxed and enjoyable. There might well be a few teething problems if there's insufficient quantity and variety. However, once things settle down, teachers enjoy seeing the variety and increasing complexity and sophistication of the children's play – and realise the opportunities for learning the materials present.

## Loose parts in public playspaces

Where there is access to sand, water, sticks, leaves, etc. in public playspaces, children will often quickly realise the play potential of these elements. In recent decades maintenance teams might not have supported this type of play and removed any loose elements from playspaces. However, increasingly, local councils are becoming much more sensitive to and supportive of children's creative play experiences – some are even proactively supplying loose parts for play in their public playspaces.

*Kerry Logan is an Outdoor Play Consultant for Nature Play Solutions in Perth, WA. She is also a Leadership Council Member of the International School Grounds Alliance and a National Board Member of Play Australia.*



# 2018 Play Recognition Program

Congratulations to our first recipients of the Play Recognition Program: Lindy De Wijn, Peter Semple and Cormac McCarthy. Three unique and diverse play projects that engage with children and communities and promote play.



### **Cochrane Stories, VIC Member – Lindy De Wijn**

A low-budget arts project in collaboration with City of Darebin's annual playspace renewal program, Cochrane Stories focused on integrating community stories into the playspace at TA Cochrane Reserve, Preston.

The aim of the project was to support local artists to connect community and place through local stories and inspire artwork to be integrated into the reserve. Lindy worked with senior students from Preston South Primary School to research the reserve's history and collect local stories. Students designed a survey for letterbox drop, designed posters and a large textile banner which were located on site.

From there the students worked with local artists Debi Qadri and Nick Hackett to create clay and mosaic works that translated those stories. Incidental text pieces and a chalkboard were also inserted into different locations around the reserve.

The project took an entire school year to complete, with students being instrumental in the execution of the entire project.

[www.playaustralia.org.au/  
cochrane-stories](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/cochrane-stories)



### **Morialta Nature & Cultural Playspace, SA Member – Peter Semple, PSLA**

A benchmark project for South Australia, Peter collaborated with Climbing Tree to create a playspace only 20 minutes from the Adelaide CBD that enhanced visitor numbers by creating playful, educational experiences in Conservation Park.

At Morialta Playspace the terrain, the trees, the creek and the wildlife have dictated the location, size and style of play elements included, seamlessly integrating the natural environment and play

The playspace was designed and built around 5 different play nodes;

- Ngungana Wardli (Kookaburra Hollow)
- Ilya Wardli (Red Bellied Black Snake)
- Yulta Karta (Frog Island)
- Wirtlu Wardli (Eagles Perch)
- Kanyapurtu (Full of Rocks)

These play nodes each challenge and engage children in different ways and tell local indigenous stories about the landscape using locally sourced materials.

This team effort between the Department of Environment, Water & Natural Resources (Client), PSLA (Landscape Architect), Climbing Trees (Landscape Contractor), Allan Sumner (Artist) and Paul Grover (Playground Auditor) has produced a playspace that celebrates both the cultural and environmental sense of place.

[www.playaustralia.org.au/  
Morialta-Nature-Cultural-Playspace](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/Morialta-Nature-Cultural-Playspace)



### **Wyreena Community Arts Centre Playspace, VIC Member – Cormac McCarthy and City of Maroondah**

The imaginative, all-abilities playspace at the Wyreena Community Arts Centre in Croydon provides a unique space that children and families can enjoy. Built amongst heritage-listed oaks the overall aim was to create a fully accessible site with a curved ramp leading from the new path network to a large circular deck containing multiple sensory elements.

A consultant in community engagement worked alongside the project artist to actively involve residents (the centre runs programs for people with a disability) user groups, local schools and visitors.

Access and inclusion was of upmost importance to this project, reflected in the integrated play experiences for all abilities and sensory elements throughout the space, including timber sculptures, whimsical animals and 'magic' telescopes.

The success and popularity of this playspace has been incredible since its opening, with very positive feedback from families and increased duration of visitor stay.

[www.playaustralia.org.au/  
Wyreena-Community-Arts-  
Centre-Playspace](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/Wyreena-Community-Arts-Centre-Playspace)

## **Want to enter a project?**

Nominations are now open for Play Australia members to submit projects that represent excellence in promoting the value of play.

[www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition) For further information and the application process please visit **visit [www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition](http://www.playaustralia.org.au/recognition)**



# Welcome to Mud World in Queensland

Did you like making mud pies as a child? Well Nature Play Queensland have come up with a 'get down and dirty' initiative that might be right up your alley.

The inaugural 'Mud World' Festival was held on a grassy field at Limestone Park, Ipswich on the 21st and 22nd of April this year. 133 cubic metres (13 dump trucks) of screened EPA approved topsoil created 5 different 'mud realms' and for 2 hours or more nearly 2000 children from 2 years upwards free-ranged making mud-pies, jumping, swimming and diving in mud, using the mud-slides, throwing mudballs and of course most fun of all...covering Mums and Dads in mud!

Nature Play Queensland Program Manager, Hyahno Moser said "Mud is one of those sensory polarizing play resources. Both children and adults are repelled and attracted to it at the same time. As a play resource it is both disgusting and wonderful. Mud World creates unique environment where this experience is amplified by the tons of mud as well as the thousands of other children, all enjoying it. It really is a HUGE MUD PIT OF JOY!"

The next Mudworld will be held at Underwood Park, Priestdale Queensland on September 29th and 30th 2018.

*Nature Play Queensland is committed to working innovatively and collaboratively to make nature play a normal part of childhood again. Nature Play QLD increases the time Queensland children spend in unstructured play outdoors and in nature. Nature Play QLD is supported by the Queensland Government.*



Want to know more? Visit [www.mudworld.com.au](http://www.mudworld.com.au) or contact [www.natureplayqueensland.org.au](http://www.natureplayqueensland.org.au)



## Advocating for Play

Providing valuable information about play and play spaces to local communities – North Sydney Council NSW & City of Marion SA.

**We talk a lot about advocating for play at Play Australia and one of the best ways this can happen is by council's advertising their fantastic facilities to their municipal communities.**

information for communities. Many councils also provide up to date information on new play space developments and upgrades.

The City of Marion in Adelaide's west has a regular 'playgrounds newsletter' that sends information to its local community on playground upgrades across the municipality. Each project has an associated URL 'quicklink' that takes the reader through to a page on council's website where a large amount of information is available on council's playspaces including the play activities and their value and associated facilities / amenity available at each location.

Again there is a strong focus on accessible features at each site and practical information around the provision of toilets, fencing, parking etc. There is also very thoughtful information about integrated artwork and nature play opportunities at each site.

Both examples highlight the value and need for providing good municipal information about age-appropriate play and facilities for children and carers with a disability.

The more residents know about what is available to them the more likely they are to more actively access different play spaces across the municipality for their families.

North Sydney Council has recently developed a 'Playground Guide' that is available on their website for their residents to access information on all their play spaces. Of particular interest is the level of detail provided around facilities at each location.

With a legend developed to highlight access and amenity (including picnic facilities, toilets and fencing) residents can easily identify from the municipal map which play spaces have what. Each page then goes into greater detail on specific features, highlights and local connections for each play space.

Many other council's have different iterations of the playground guide in the form of community portals, website information and printed guides and maps. As you would imagine a smaller number of play spaces makes it easier to provide more detailed current

[www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Recreation\\_Facilities/Playgrounds/Playgrounds\\_Guide](http://www.northsydney.nsw.gov.au/Recreation_Facilities/Playgrounds/Playgrounds_Guide)

[www.marion.sa.gov.au/things-to-do/parks-and-playgrounds](http://www.marion.sa.gov.au/things-to-do/parks-and-playgrounds)

# Members Corner

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

## Member Profile

## Mark Chatman



Introducing Mark Chatman. Mark is the Victorian Sales Manager for Kompan Australia and Play Australia's current National Board Treasurer. Mark has been a familiar friendly face to many in the play sector in Victoria for over a decade supporting the development of many exciting play projects.

### Tell us briefly about yourself

I grew up on a farm in Central West NSW and spent most of my youth outdoors. This love of the outdoors and adventure has stayed with me throughout my life so when the opportunity to join the play industry came along it was a perfect fit. I joined Kompan as their Agent in Victoria in 2007 and in 2016 moved into the role of Victorian Sales Manager when a State branch was opened.

### What prompted you to become a member of Play Australia?

Play Australia is recognised as the peak body in Australia for our industry and for this reason it is important for our company to be a member and to share industry knowledge.

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

I have been fortunate to work with many passionate Landscape Architects and Council representatives keen to deliver quality play for their communities however one project stands out for its uniqueness. In 2015 we completed a playground for the City of Greater Geelong that created a series of nets connecting to existing trees and utilized non-invasive footings around the ground connections to protect the tree roots. This was a first in Australia and a great collaboration with the COGG Design Team.

### How does Play Australia support you as a member?

I find the Local Government Network Meetings coordinated by Play Australia to be one of the most informative industry initiatives I have access to.

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

I have 2 teenage daughters and over the last 11 years working in the play industry I have seen the benefits that play has brought to their lives, health and general wellbeing. I love that through my work I can help thousands of children over current & future generations gain these same benefits. Access to quality, developmental play can be life changing for some children and it can be hard to accurately measure just how important play can be.

## Board News

### Play Australia's new Marketing and Communications Plan

The Play Australia National Board recently met in Sydney to begin the development of a Marketing and Communications Plan. Members will be kept updated as this work progresses.



### 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.

## 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](mailto:newsletter@playaustralia.org.au)



*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](http://PlayAustralia.org.au)