



Member Profile

Dr Erica Randle

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Can you tell us about yourself and the work you do?

I'm a Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Sport and Social Impact at La Trobe University. I have worked here for about ten years and I consult and advocate for sport, physical activity, and play. This involves evaluating programs and public policy to improve and monitor delivery; researching across all areas that support improved engagement and participation; and exploring the value of sport, physical activity, and play.

I completed my PhD on regulating commercial tourism in Victorian national parks, and have had a bit of a varied working past including working in a bank (yes that one), living and working at the Grand Canyon National Park, and 15 years working in music stores. I grew up on the

Mornington Peninsula, and although I enjoy city living and travelling, the beach and birds are consistently calling me home.

I have been collaborating with Play Australia for the last two years around the [1000 Play Street](#) movement, talking to LGAs, and collecting stories from communities about their Play Streets. Our process and implementation evaluation contributed some of the evidence used to develop the [1000 Play Street LGA Toolkit](#), and our outcome evaluation has supported the promotion and advocacy of the movement.

What we have found is that a neighbourhood needs the four C's to run a Play Street:

1. Connection

2. Capacity
3. Confidence
4. Commitment

The levels of each of these determines what type of Play Street can be held in each neighbourhood and the support required from the LGA to run it.

What I love most about my work is hearing the amazing stories, giving people a voice that may not usually have one in the world of sport and physical activity, and working with great people and great organisations. It's a privileged and joyous job!

What do you see as the most important issue/s we need to address in terms of children and play in Australia?

I think perhaps play having a valued space in Australia. Play being present in public policy conversations, funding, and strategies, and also valued by parents and the community for the benefits it brings. In terms of Play Streets, it's all about traffic management and public liability. Overcoming these barriers and empowering communities to close or slow down their quiet residential streets will be key for the growth of the movement.

Why do you think 1000 Play Streets is important to children and the community?

My childhood memories are full of swimming in the dam, riding my bike until after dark, and hanging out with friends who lived on my road. I knew everybody in my neighbourhood. I find when I talk to

people about Play Streets, they all seem to have similar memories to mine, but we all agree that children today are missing out on those types of experiences. There are many reasons for this; there are individual, community, and systemic barriers. But we also know that knowing your neighbours facilitates social connection and all of the important mental benefits that brings, as well as facilities more play, physical activity, and children's development in all domains of physical literacy. Play Streets brings all of this and are also a great source of fun.

The Play Street stories of inter-generational connections fill me with joy, so many stories of older people living alone meeting the people on their street for the first time at a Play Street and then, by the end of the gathering, having a new local based support network. In modern times where loneliness is a critical health issue this is a valuable community outcome.

Connection, development, and happiness through play, it's that simple. Being able to support communities to reclaim their streets for play has been a personal career highlight of mine, it's a brilliant initiative and I could talk about it all day!

How do you PLAY?

Mainly with the dog running around in circles – he's only small, but he is too fast for me! With my nephew climbing trees, and walking around new places looking at new things.

Click here 
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about the 1000
Play Streets
research review

