



Executive Director's Message

Barb Champion

April 2021

After a difficult 2020, this year has got off to a hectic start and the playground industry is as busy as ever across the country.

Our state branches and networks are continuing to meet and plan activities for this year, and a great day was spent in the Yarra Ranges in Victoria learning about their development of two Splash Parks. Many thanks to the Yarra Ranges Council for their hosting of what was the first get-together of our Victorian Branch members post the lockdown.



Victorian Branch Committee L-R Mark Chatman, Mark Gladman, Justin Staggard, Barb Champion, Sulochi Walisinghe, Chris Clerici, Cathrine Bennett

I also attended the planning session of the recently formed Play Australia NSW Branch which was a really wonderful occasion, both personally and professionally. I thought I was in heaven catching a plane from Melbourne to Sydney, and spending the day in person with some of our most deeply committed play advocates.



Kim Becherand our NSW Branch Secretary in action!



NSW Branch Committee - Seated L-R Ric McConaghy, Philippa Dunstan, Kim Becherand (Secretary), Claire Edwards (Chair). Standing L-R Robyn Monro Miller, Dr Sue Elliot, Barb Champion, Dr Helen Little

The March **2 Day Play Space Development Training Program** in Melbourne returned and the April and June programs are filling up fast. This is our 2 day 'must-attend' training session for industry, to support the quality design, development and management of play spaces in Australia.

We began our **Online Learning Program** this year and the feedback from members has been extremely encouraging. The second series will be advertised shortly, beginning with **Nature Play: What it is, and what it isn't!** Watch your inbox for booking details.

Work continues on **Playground Finder**. This will be a fantastic asset which will facilitate community access to play spaces nationally, with a brand new app becoming available in 2021. We have a great team working on this project and we look forward to its further development.

Industry insurance cover has been the most distressing issue currently. One play equipment company having NEVER had a claim of any kind made against it in 45 years, has had their insurance increased from \$3,000 to \$27,000. I will continue to work on this issue and am talking with other industry organizations and the Federal Government about what can be set up to support our members and consequently the community's access to playgrounds in the future.



Renaee Churches

After many years, our website manager, Renaee Churches has decided to change her personal direction requiring her to leave working for Play Australia. On behalf of the Board, staff and the membership I wish to thank Renaee for her very significant commitment to the development of Play Australia, and in particular, for her very strong support given to me in having to deal with the day-to-day technical requirements essential these days in the operation of the organisation. Many thanks, Renaee, we are deeply indebted to you!!

We have engaged Hitesh Sharma to take up the website development role. Hitesh will bring to the organisation significant skill and experience and we look forward to him joining the team.



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And finally, I wish to welcome Bill Pegus of Hercules Playground Auditing as a new member of the Board. Bill lives and works in Tasmania and will bring to the Board experience in both business and government, as well as his work over recent years in the playground industry. Welcome Bill, and we especially look forward to establishing a Play Australia Branch in Tasmania this year.

Keep up the good work everyone!

Banks Champion.



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