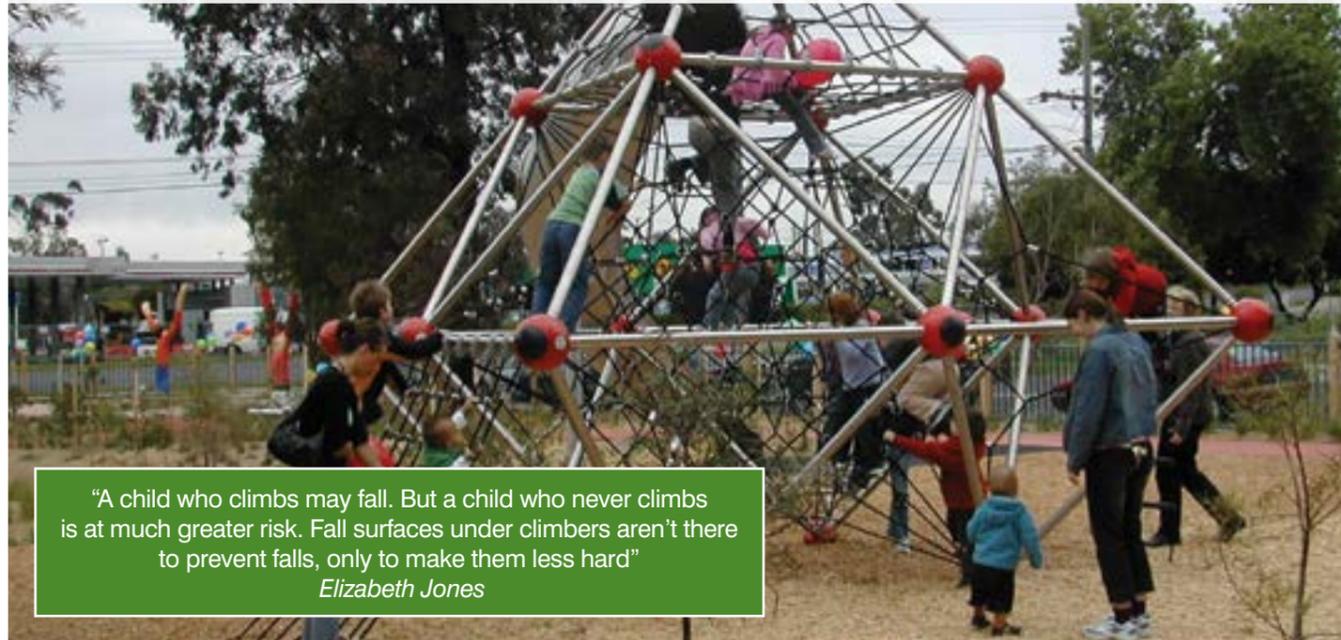


A NEW play standard

Here is an update on what we can expect from the newly published Play Equipment Standard AS4685-2014. Mary Jeavons was the Play Australia member's representative on the Standards Committee and provides the following information.



"A child who climbs may fall. But a child who never climbs is at much greater risk. Fall surfaces under climbers aren't there to prevent falls, only to make them less hard"
Elizabeth Jones

The new Playgrounds Standard AS4685-2014 (parts 1-6 and 11) released in May 2014 contain some major changes for Australia, especially Part 1.

Based on the European Standard, the new Standard allows a little more flexibility in some aspects of play equipment design and layout. Guardrails and barriers have slightly different (lower) height requirements. Maximum fall heights (free height of fall) can now be up to 1800mm for fixed equipment in supervised early childhood services (SECS), and in public play spaces fall heights can now be up to 3000mm under some circumstances.

Two new ideas have been introduced - the concept of 'easy accessible decks' and 'steep' forms of access. The latter (such as steep climbing nets, rock climbs etc) are now limited in height (to 2000mm) if they are attached to easily accessible decks.

Judgement

Overall the new Standard will require designers and providers to exercise more judgement regarding the design of

play elements, particularly the heights of barriers and the forms of access.

For example:

- In some circumstances, such as very busy play spaces (schools and major destination playgrounds) there would be justification for designers/providers to increase the height of barriers to prevent children pushing each other off high openings.
- The Standard is very open in their recommendations regarding the design of access (ramps, steps, stairs and rung ladders). Designers should therefore take extra care to ensure that the particular design of access on any item of equipment is suitable for a range of users, and for the context. Ideally there should be a good choice of access, ranging from easy stairs to challenging climbers. Access to elevated areas and slides should be considered from an ergonomic perspective. This will ensure usability for less able children, and for adult access.

- Similarly, the new Standard allows impact areas to be slightly reduced, but in some situations designers may be wise to allow extra space for circulation and movement in very busy areas.

The new Standard represents the minimum protection that is required. The approach to play requires more than just safety standards. As always, play space design and provision requires a thoughtful approach and the new Standard is one of a raft of considerations that need to be taken into account for any project. More and more urban children now depend upon designed spaces for all of their play experiences, so thoughtful play provision is now more important than ever.

See more comment from Dr David Eager at: <http://www.ipwea.org/assetmanagement/blogs/ipwea-australia/2014/03/10/new-internationally-aligned-playground-equipment-standard>

Decline in play = decline in mental health

Play Australia invited Emma Lawrence, an Occupational Therapist working with Nature Play Solutions, to talk to us about the concerning decline of children's mental health and it's correlation to play opportunities.



Emma as a youngster who couldn't wait to play!

Over the last 15 years I have worked as an occupational therapist in a variety of settings, from hospitals to community and with clients ranging from primary school age, to the elderly, and currently also work part-time as a lecturer at Curtin University.

Throughout these varied settings, including my role as a mum, it has been evident to me that appropriate consideration of the key occupational therapy concepts are important in giving clarity to the process being undertaken, and improves the outcomes.

I feel strongly that one of the most important and valued occupations in a child's development is that of play.

I work with the Nature Play Solutions team in considering not only the physical environment, but the social, institutional and cultural environment of a service to ensure the best outcomes for the new playground.

Play is known to have an enormous impact on the development of many critical non-physical skills such as social skills, problem solving and emotional regulation.

Feedback that we repeatedly hear from schools when we do follow-up visits, is that the play can become vastly different when you reconsider the play landscape. Teachers reported changes in student behaviour and skills related to these non-physical areas: 'there are less disputes now, and the disputes that do occur are better managed by the children themselves', 'it is now such a joy to come out to playground duty, there is a sense of calm and purpose to the play', 'all the children seem to be engaged in play, rather than some playing sport and others left as 'outsiders', everyone belongs more now'.



<http://tedxnavesink.com/project/peter-gray/>

Here is a link to a very interesting TEDx talk by Peter Gray that I encourage you to watch. It focuses on the decline in play opportunities, and the simultaneous rise in mental illness in children, and discusses the links between these.

Play too often seems to be undervalued, especially in relation to the opportunities for developing non-physical skills.

Although in many ways, these skills, such as social skills, problem solving and emotional regulation could be viewed as equally or more important than many physical skills.

Thanks Emma! We will watch TEDx with great interest.



WHAT'S COMING UP



Early Years Outdoor Play Seminars

Our very popular outdoor play seminars for the early years on two separate days.

Dates: **Fri 5 September 2014**
Fri 12 September 2014
Time: **8.45am – 3.30pm**

Location: Conference Room, Westerfolds Park, Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe 3106
Register online at www.playaustralia.org.au



Two Day Training Program Series

It is recognized today that children are spending more time indoors than ever before, and that we must adopt strategies to encourage children and families to be outdoors in the natural environment.

Dates: **Wed 10 & Thur 11 September 2014**
Wed 19 & Thur 20 November 2014
Time: **9.00am – 4.00pm**

Location: Conference Room, Westerfolds Park, Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe 3106
Register online at www.playaustralia.org.au

For more information on our training programs contact Barb Champion barb@playaustralia.org.au

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Winter Edition 2014

Issue 4

Message from the Executive Director, Barbara Champion



IPA International Conference 2014

I attended this inspiring and engaging conference in Istanbul, with delegates from all over the world, including 25 other Australians, who also made their way to Turkey.

There were many highlights, which included two important resolutions undertaken by the delegates. One being a commitment to Article 31 "The child's right to play", encouraging all of us who work in the play sector to hold our governments to account and fulfill their obligations as signatories.

Officer and we offer our congratulations to them both. It is great to have Australia so highly represented.

The second, to support "Play in Crisis" and promote the rights of the child where they are living in crisis situations, the causes of which are out of their families' control. Visit www.ipa.org to view the full resolutions.

The conference provides an opportunity to meet exceptionally talented and interesting people from so many different corners of the world. It does your heart good to gather like this and know that we are all there for the same reason, children's play!

These two resolutions, when upheld, can have a significant impact on the development and wellbeing of children around the world. I was very proud to place the name of Play Australia alongside our global colleagues attending the IPA International Conference, to do what we can to make these happen.

I look forward to sharing more of the insights and learnings from this most valuable conference with you on our website and through e-news bulletins over the coming months.

Barbara Champion,
Executive Director,

Five new IPA branches were announced in Russia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Nepal and Turkey. Also 69 new members joined IPA during the conference.



Great friendships are formed at the IPA International Conference. From left to right Hitoshi Shimamura from Japan, Scott McKenzie from New Zealand, Barb Champion from Australia and Andrew Shoolbread from Scotland

The 20th IPA Triennial World Conference will be held in Calgary, Canada.

Also announced was the election of Robyn Monro Miller to IPA Vice President and Kathy Wong to Development

Disadvantaged children could pay the price of a budget disaster in Victoria

In May we were very disturbed to learn that the Federal Office of Department of Social Services advised funding to all Adventure Playgrounds would be terminated on 30 June 2014 as a direct Government response to the budget.

outdoor play experience encourages positive behaviours and participation in the community.

This was clearly an extremely disappointing outcome after 40 years of bipartisan support for Adventure Playgrounds. But more importantly it was an extremely disappointing outcome for the children that Adventure Playground programs support.

It is hard to understand why the most disadvantaged, marginalised and at risk children are made to suffer at the hands of

those who make these budget decisions. Thankfully, as we were going to print, we are hopeful that the local councils where the playgrounds are located have come to the assistance of these most valuable programs supporting children, families and communities in need.



"If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."
Marian Wright Edelman

These playgrounds located in Fitzroy, South Melbourne, St Kilda, Prahran and Kensington, engage with children from disadvantaged families. The type of

Who are you?
A Play Australia Member Profile

Introducing Mary Jeavons
Director of Jeavons Landscape Architects

Mary is a life member of Play Australia and member since approximately 1987. The Jeavons team comprises 10 staff with qualifications in a wide range of fields. Our work covers a very broad range of projects ranging from parks and play spaces to skate parks and bmx (with 'sister' firm @Leisure), design of school grounds and early childhood centres, community spaces and specialist precincts such as library courtyards, zoos, coastal foreshores and cycle trail networks.

Is there a Jeavons highlight you can tell us about demonstrating innovation for children's outdoor play experiences?

Many projects have provided innovative opportunities for us to express a philosophy that advocates for children, for play, for access and for inclusion:

- The Growing Wild Project at Melbourne Zoo – an immersive natural environment for children up to 8 years. Jeavons lead the specialist consultant team.
- Our staff enjoy collaborating with staff and students at Special Schools, such as the recent CEFPI-Award winning project at Glenallen School.
- Providing sustainable, quality natural settings for play on rooftops in urban early childhood centres is a challenging area and we are constantly exploring innovative ideas to improve children's experiences in these difficult settings, especially in long day care.

How does Play Australia support you as a member?

Our Jeavons Landscape Architects staff enjoy opportunities provided by Play Australia to connect with other members, exchange ideas and visit projects in the many forums and seminars offered during the year. We place a lot of emphasis on professional development for our staff and this is one major benefit to our business.

www.jeavons.net.au

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