



Member news

promoting the value of play

Summer Edition 2015 • Issue 6



A message from the Executive Director, Barbara Champion

At the end of 2014 Play Australia celebrated 100 years, and what an achievement this has been. Thanks to the very generous support of some of our industry members, (A-Play as our Gold sponsor, Omnitech, Play Matta and Lappset as Silver sponsors) many members came together and enjoyed a wonderful party at the Farm Café, Collingwood Children's Farm, to celebrate this amazing achievement.

2015 has begun our second century, and priority will be to grow the membership network nationally, increase resources to enable greater advocacy and support for play, and to advance the argument that all children deserve quality play opportunities, regardless of their place of residence, social status, and personal circumstances.

Training Program

Plans for the Play Australia Training and Professional Development 2015 program are now in place for training in South Australia, NSW and Victoria. See our website for current details, and contact Ellen Regos at ellen@playaustralia.org.au if you wish to know more.

Have a look at our refreshed website

The team at Play Australia has worked over the holiday period to refresh our website to make it more accessible and user friendly. Have a look,

and let us know if you think it does its job. Our website needs to work well so that our members nationwide can find it useful, informative and fun to use. Visit playaustralia.org.au

The Risk Management Guide is nearly here

In 2014 members were advised that the Guide was being developed, and the great news is that it is almost ready for publication. We plan to provide one copy free of charge to every member organisation on a CD, with hard copies available for purchase.

We are very excited about this project as we believe it will provide assistance to all members of the play community to be able to determine appropriate levels of challenging play balanced against actual risks. Details of the recently released Australian Standard AS4685-14 (see below) will be included. I will keep you posted on details as they become available.

Standards

Standards Australia has recently published AS 4685.11:2014, Playground equipment - Additional specific safety requirements and test methods for spatial networks (EN 1176-11:2008, MOD). This document specifically relates to spatial networks and is only essential reading for manufacturers of spatial nets and risk assessors.



Cutting the 100th birthday cake (L-R): Mary Jeavons, Robyn Monro Miller, May Hughes, Jane Tindale, Cathy Kiss

'The Promoting the Value of Play Awards' – for Play Australia members

During 2015 the Play Australia Board will be developing a new recognition awards program. These play awards aim to specifically recognise our members within their field of work for innovation, creativity, best practice and successful projects.

There will also be one special "Distinguished Service Award" (see page 7 for our 2014 winner).

The Board believes it is important to acknowledge and congratulate our Play Australia members for outstanding achievement and excellence.

The Promoting the Value of Play Awards will celebrate people, programs and projects that enhance the outdoor play experience for children, families and communities. As an organisation we wish to commend and endorse Play Australia members who are creating play experiences that support the natural environment, encourage children back to nature and supporting children's physical, social and mental health.

Nominations will be encouraged to include people, programs and projects from different contexts, environments

and business endeavours with high and low budgets.

An intention of the awards is to promote a broader understanding of the importance and value of play within the wider community and the play sector itself.

We will be advising more details soon and look forward to sharing this new initiative with you in 2015.

This edition of Member News is proudly sponsored by Bark King

play AUSTRALIA training

2015

Upcoming Play Australia training and professional development



Play Australia has launched its national training program for 2015. To download the full training calendar, visit playaustralia.com.au

New for 2015 are onsite and tailored training for members. Feedback from last years survey indicated a need for training both nationally and rurally. This offering will allow members greater access to specialist training. Please give me a call to discuss options to meet your training needs.

First off the mark in January was onsite training in Moe for Latrobe City Council. Play Australia organised keynote speaker Kerry Rogers, Early Childhood Consultant. Mary Jeavons (Jeavons Landscape Architects) also presented at a conference in Geelong.

Play Australia is coming to South Australia in March. This will be the first time that training has been offered outside Victoria.

In April, Play Australia will be presenting in Frankston to Community Kinders Plus educators on the benefits of outdoor play for children.

Play Australia is committed to tailoring our training to meet the needs of our members.

I look forward to meeting you at a training session in 2015.

Kind Regards,

Ellen

Ellen Regos

Training Development Coordinator

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Mary Jeavons from Jeavons Landscape Architects.

Outdoor play in the early years
South Australia • 3, 4 March 2015

**Playspace development:
design, management, maintenance**
Victoria • 15,16 April 2015

Outdoor play in the early years
Victoria • 24 and 27 April 2015

**Playspace development:
design, management, maintenance**
South Australia • 5, 6 May 2015

Check our website (under training) for the next Local Government Play Network dates.

Other events around and about

PLA Vic/Tas Conference

29, 30 April 2015, Ballarat

Visit www.parksleisure.com.au/regions/vic-tas/2015-victas-state-conference

Working Forum on Design and Nature: Designing Inspiring and Effective Spaces for Children

March 11-14, 2015, Rotorua, New Zealand

Visit www.worldforumfoundation.org/get-involved/design2015/

Putting a SPARC in your Park!

Given my passion for creating new recreation and public spaces that are youth inclusive, it was with great excitement that we had the opportunity to explore this at a more strategic level with the City of Monash's Intergenerational Active Spaces Strategy (draft).

Young people are valuable participants of public space that are often disregarded, ignored or actively excluded in the planning and use of our cities parks and public domain. Therefore this strategic plan was a great opportunity to develop a new approach to the planning of recreation spaces across its Municipality that considered the needs of all the community.

Working closely with Carly Goodrich from Monash the "Putting a SPARC in your park" project has been a fantastic catalyst for a range of new projects that are being implemented over the coming years. A SPARC is underpinned by five key evidence-based principles; Socially inclusive, Playful, Active, Relevant and Connected spaces that everyone, young and old, can enjoy and participate in.

These five principles were chosen as they captured both Council's core vision and values for their community and we felt they best met the key requirements for an intergenerational space to be successful.

A key focus of the strategy was acknowledging that different people use different types of public space and at different times of the day. Young people for example are much more likely to use urban spaces and transport modes, whilst families are attracted to larger regional destination parks. Older people also use urban spaces and need facilities and services but generally during the middle of the day.

Therefore an assessment was undertaken of sites across the municipality and a range of both urban and park SPARC's were chosen. This enables Council to adapt and shape different spaces to best meet the needs of users most likely to frequent these spaces.

Rather than create facilities and try and attract specific age groups to use a space (youth spaces or installation of age specific fitness or play equipment) that may not contextually be relevant to them, we simply chose spaces already attractive to certain age groups and then looked at how we could make these spaces more active, relevant and fun for them. Essentially rather than define the model of recreation provision and try and fit that model into physical spaces, we simply assessed the spaces and then adapted the model to best meet everyone's needs.

A main component of the strategy was engagement and we had an intergenerational conversation with the community and we found a mix of workshops and online forums enabled us to get a diverse conversation going. Everyone was able to not only present their requirements but also hear about the issues, wants and needs of others in the community and with that came greater understanding and acceptance of others.

Valley Reserve in Mt Waverley is the first SPARC to be built over the coming months. The reserve has an incredible bushland setting and is much loved by the local community. Working closely with Council and community, we have been able to create a playful active adventure all age play/fitness space to complement the existing passive nature of this bush reserve.

Aaron Wallis, Director of Playce Pty Ltd



Celebrating 100

Where it all began 1914–2014

Guild of Play 1913-1923

Playgrounds Association of Victoria 1923–1933

Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria 1933–2013
Play Australia 2013

The Guild of Play was formed in Melbourne in a very challenging time. It was post the gold rush and Melbourne's population boomed, and at the time was the biggest city in Australia. Around Federation the boom went bust and huge job losses ensued and raging poverty emerged.

So in a dramatically changing social environment the Guild of Play became the ambassadors for the children who were pouring into the dangerous and often unhealthy streets of inner city Melbourne.

Such notaries as the Prime Minister Alfred Deakin at the time were important figures in the initiation of this significant organisation. Prime Minister Deakin was intent on a social reform agenda and the women surrounding him, such as the dynamic Madeline Murray were going to "save these poor children". Their aim was to provide moral order, improve their physical health and bring these young children out of poverty.

And so began the Play Australia we now know today.

The people involved with the organisation have always been the backbone of our success. The Board has always remained steadfast and able to recruit talented and professional members with relevant expertise and knowledge that has maintained this extraordinary community serving organisation for a century.

Throughout all the name changes and staff changes it is truly remarkable that the core philosophy of the organisation has remained steadfast, and that is to truly uphold our aim of promoting the value of play.

The more things change, the more they stay the same – Proverb

This quote is also true about play! Over the century our society and environments have changed dramatically, through world wars, depressions and recessions, industrialisation, globalisation and our social saturation with information technologies. Yet what remains constant is that children still play wherever they are regardless of the era in which they are born.



Photos courtesy of the Shirley Fitzgibbon, Dr Dorothy Howard, Mrs Michele Dore collections, Melbourne Museum.

How children play is not so much defined by the decade in which they live/d, but by their social class and gender. Children will play differently in the city as opposed to a country lifestyle. The socio-economic environment in which they are born will certainly affect access to particular play resources. Yet no matter how rich or poor the family background, children have still created their own play activities to suit their interest and amusement.

What is the future of PLAY?

~Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

"That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life. That member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity."

Without intervention and a significant change in our technology and media saturated social lifestyle our children are heading into an unhealthy future. We have the research, we have the knowledge, we know the problem and we have an answer. Now we need the will to change.

The doom and gloom is easily read and distributed, but now is our time to take this information and create action. Our children deserve it.

So onward and upward Play Australia, to advocate and promote the extraordinary value of play. Help us to spread the word to families, educators, governments, manufacturers, designers, health and welfare services... in fact anyone concerned about the health of the next generation!



years of **play**

The 100th Birthday Party

In November 2014 Play Australia members celebrated this fabulous event in Melbourne at the Farm Café, Collingwood Children's Farm in Abbotsford. There were lots of stories, lots of fun and now it's time to start work on the next 100 years of *promoting the value of play*



Members joined in to enjoy the evening

- 1 The Board 2013-2014
- 2 May Hughes (nee Smith) a Play leader in the early 1950's
- 3 Fred Haig, Rebecca Biehl, Jason Hutchinson, Vicki Whyte
- 4 Robyn Monro Miller (IPA Vice President) raises a glass to celebrate
- 5 Cathy Northam, Anne McLeish, Mary Chapman, Robyn Monro Miller
- 6 Angelo Kougioumtzis, Bec Ho, Dean Joel
- 7 Sue Godfrey and Sulochi Walisinghe

Thank you to our very generous sponsors who made the event a success



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Silver Sponsors



Play Deprivation...

A Leading Indicator for Mass Murder
by Stuart Brown, 2014

The National Institute for Play in the US.

The recent Santa Barbara mass killings and the associated "manifesto" as well as the surrounding grief and anguish evoke the intense urgency to prevent future repeat episodes. Writing in the OP-Ed NYT 5-28-2014, Richard Friedman cogently presents the difficulties in predicting which mentally ill person will become violent.

Though a fellow psychiatrist, my background and years of review of the individual histories of not only homicidal males, but also highly productive individuals leads me to the following opinion that does not question the wisdom of Dr Friedman, but may add an additional preventive strategy.

All of the mass murderers, from Whitman at UT (not ostensibly mentally ill) through Newtown to the present horrors in Isla Vista and the UCSB campus seem to have one common theme among other factors, which at first glance may seem irrelevant.

That theme is major play deprivation, and the additional experiences of powerlessness, humiliation (imagined or real) practice with weaponry, and a deep sense of vengeance, again, imagined or real. The signs of potential violent, potentially antisocial and depressive outpourings were evident from preschool onward, and were manifested in the absence or aberrance of normal give and take play behaviours.



In none of those I have personally studied, was authentic play remediation professionally provided.

A close look at the biology and neuroscience of play reveals it to be a fundamental survival aspect of all social mammals, with measurable negative consequences in controlled laboratory settings that limit or deter animal play behaviour. The linkages from the objective findings in animal play deprivation to the clinical findings in humans are, as yet unproven. However, the subcortical physiology and anatomy is similar, and the inability of play deprived animals to deter aggression, or to socialize comfortably with fellow pack members is demonstrable.

The remediation of these socialization deficits in the animals by inclusion of play in developmentally appropriate forms reveals the effectiveness of play as a means of achieving more social normalcy and non-violent alternatives in the playful social mammal domains.

So the point is that by identifying aberrant or absent play capabilities EARLY, and in pre-school or elementary school settings remediating these deficits, even if the child has some "hard" signs of future mental illness may well prevent what will later become a brooding, hardened personal private pact to kill and to die.



News from the IPA

Message from Theresa Casey, President

I am delighted to say that, following our communications towards the end of 2014, the IPA Declaration on the Importance of Play is now formally adopted. We will produce the Declaration as a PDF to download and it will be available from the IPA website in due course. Our great thanks to our colleagues in IPA EWN for all their work and to the Council members who commented on drafts.

The Declaration on the Importance of Play is based upon the substantial evidence that has arisen in the last twenty years, showing how fundamental and vital play is to children and society.

The UN General Comment on Article 31 (2013) was a welcome reminder of the right of children to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts. However IPA's focus is on children's right to play and so this declaration was prepared.

The Declaration highlights the growing evidence of the effects of lack of time and space for play and the serious and life-long effects on children's bodies and minds. We wish to alert the wider community to this evidence and call for action to address this deprivation before the affects cause lifelong damage to more children.



The inaugural Joan Matheson Distinguished Service Award

As part of the new *Promoting the Value of Play Awards*, we have introduced a special distinguished service award. And here's why.....

There are many people who over time have helped to shape our organisation into what it is today. Play Australia has many extraordinary people who have done just that. Yet, there is one woman who stands out in this crowd – Joan Matheson.

Joan is fondly remembered as a woman with a great sense of authority, determination, and would never take no for an answer! She was inspiring, and a great networker.

As we celebrated our 100th Birthday in 2014 the Board of Play Australia wanted to develop a 'special' award to commemorate the event and to recognise our history makers by awarding the new ambassadors of play who are taking us into the future

It was decided to honour Joan's outstanding contribution to both PRAV, now Play Australia, and her outstanding contribution towards the promotion of play in Australia, and establish The Joan Matheson Distinguished Service Award.

This prestigious award will be given to a person in recognition of their significant contribution made to the development, promotion and advocacy of play in Australia.

Joan Matheson

Joan was born in 1917 and died in 2008

Joan undertook a National Fitness Course, before there were any Recreation courses operating.

In 1944 she became the Director of PRAV until 1983 when she moved onto the Committee of Management.

Performed the role of the Secretariat of the IPA in 1961 when it began.

Joan trained Play Leaders for services in Carlton in Curtain Square, the Ivy Brookes Centre, the Carlton Gardens and in South Melbourne.



Play Leaders, centre is Joan Matheson

Congratulations Mary Jeavons

We are extremely pleased to announce that the 2014 winner of the Inaugural Joan Matheson Distinguished Service Award is the one and only Mary Jeavons.

Mary's career in the play sector has spanned over 25 years, specialising in the planning and design of children's spaces of all kinds.

As the Director of Mary Jeavons Landscape Architects (MJLA), Mary and her firm have developed a core of expertise in the design and documentation of outdoor play areas in early childhood and early intervention centres, schools and special school grounds, public parks and gardens, therapeutic environments and the design of play and recreation spaces which are accessible to children and adults with disabilities.

Mary is the Play Australia representative on the Australian Standards committee CS-05 for playgrounds, and has an extensive and thorough understanding of the practical implications of safety standards for the design of children's spaces. She is particularly interested in the relationships between space and behaviour, the importance of quality outdoor play settings, and the application of child development and education principles to landscape design, especially in early childhood settings.

What a deserving recipient! Mary has served the organisation in so many ways over so many years and has never lost her belief in the necessity of an organisation that at its core promotes a child's right to play.

Mary is definitely a great ambassador for children's play.



(L-R) Barbara Champion, Mary Jeavons, Cathy Kiss

Mary Jeavons

Director of Jeavons Landscape Architecture

B. App Sci (Ecology/Geography)

Canberra College of Advanced Education

M.Landscape Architecture,

University of Melbourne

Registered Landscape Architect, Fellow, AILA

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Welcome to the play industry MarketPlace!

As part of our commitment to develop initiatives supporting quality play opportunities, Play Australia has developed a play focused MarketPlace.

Here you will find a service provider who shares our commitment to accessible and safe outdoor play opportunities for the community and children in particular.

Advertisers are Play Australia members and as such abide by our philosophy to promote the value and importance of children's play activities.

If you would like to advertise in MarketPlace go to PlayAustralia.org.au/marketplace



promoting the value of play

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Please pass this newsletter on to a colleague or a friend who is interested in play!

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

Member Profile



Bark King Australian and Family owned since 1975

Introducing Robert, Jeff and Stuart Johnston, proud Directors of Bark King® an Australian and family owned business, established in 1975 and now into their 40th year of trading. The sustainability of bark and mulches is paramount at Bark King with the entire product range a by-product of other processes. By using the sustainable raw materials this allows Bark King to ensure they have the environment as number one priority.

How does your work improve the play experience for children and why is this important to you?

Being able to manufacture quality playground mulch is very important to Bark King and great care is taken to ensure consistency in their product that is fully tested and accredited to meet the AS/NZS 4422 and is up to date with the new Playground equipment and surfacing AS4685 regulations. Bark Kings Soft Play® soft cushioning mulch is designed specifically for playgrounds and safeguards both children and adults from injuries by way of its impact absorption qualities.

Can you tell us about a playground/ playspace project you have worked on that is a highlight for you?

Bark King work closely with Educational Institutions and Council representatives to assist in keeping their playgrounds to a safe standard for the enjoyment of all users. Bark King have great delight working with Community Projects where new playground/playscapes are erected within their neighbourhoods, the Rye Foreshore really comes to mind. It is delightful to see people working together for the benefits of their children and seeing the rewards of their hard work.

Why did you become members of Play Australia?

Bark King find it important to stay in touch of development within the playground industry and have found Play Australia a valuable source of information through their website and seminars held throughout the year. It is always beneficial being able to speak one to one with a Play Australia representative to discuss any concerns or clarification that may be required.

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