



KEY ISSUES IN DEVELOPING AN AUDIT OR INVENTORY OF PLAYGROUNDS

Some issues which should always be included in any brief for the development of an inventory or audit of playgrounds areas.

The Brief needs to require the following:

- ◆ a record of the location, type and range of equipment;
- ◆ an inspection of the equipment and areas for compliance with Australian Standards;
(Particular attention needs to be paid to the following issues; height of equipment, ground surfacing, fall heights and fall zones, installation of equipment, and entrapment)
- ◆ an evaluation of the surroundings;
- ◆ an indication of the potential for removal, relocation or installation of additional equipment, and
- ◆ the provision of a summary of the overall quality, range and play value of playgrounds across the municipality.

Most people who provide audits of playgrounds focus solely on the individual pieces of play equipment from a safety perspective. Whilst assessment for risk is very important it is strongly recommended that these further issues be given serious attention .

Some principals and guidelines which need to be considered in any development of an inventory of municipal playgrounds.

1. The rationale for providing playgrounds
 - ◆ Play in human development
 - ◆ The role of playgrounds, and
 - ◆ The aims of play areas design and management.
2. The location and distribution of playgrounds:
 - ◆ The importance of different levels of playground location, a playground “hierarchy” involving local, neighbourhood and regional parks.
3. The provision for different age groups
 - ◆ Toddler
 - ◆ Junior
 - ◆ Senior
 - ◆ Teenager

- ◆ Which play areas for which ages
 - ◆ Priority age group
 - ◆ Mixed age groups
 - ◆ Supervision
4. Access to playgrounds for users with a disability
- ◆ Implications of types of disability for design of play areas
 - ◆ Accessibility and safety standards
 - ◆ Levels of accessibility
 - ◆ Particular sites catering for disabled users
5. The concept of diversity
- ◆ Importance of a diverse range of play settings
 - ◆ Application of diversity to neighbourhoods
6. Activities for playgrounds to include 4 types of play – physical (gross motor), social (dramatic play), creative, and cognitive (intellectual).
7. Safety
- ◆ Risk and challenge
 - ◆ Danger
 - ◆ In practice
 - ◆ Safety Standards
 - ◆ Supervision
8. Amenities in playgrounds
- ◆ Seating for supervision
 - ◆ Shade
 - ◆ Fences
 - ◆ Dogs
 - ◆ Water
9. Designing without play equipment
- ◆ Landscape settings for play
 - ◆ Natural elements
10. Timelines proposed re improvements
- ◆ Urgent
 - ◆ Short term
 - ◆ Long term