



*Let's make  
it happen*

# City of Swan

## **PLAY SPACE STRATEGY**

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# Glossary

**Play Opportunities:** A play facility comprises a number of opportunities for children to experience and interact with their surroundings and others. Play opportunities can take the form of manufactured equipment, naturally occurring opportunities within the landscape, or opportunities for interaction with others. For example a swing and log on which one can balance, could both offer equally valuable play opportunities.

**Play Space:** “Play space” is a term that recognises that an entire site is a play facility. It takes into account the surrounding landscaping and supporting amenity. A play space comprises a number of play opportunities.

**Precinct:** A precinct refers to a local area defined within a boundary. The boundary would usually prevent easy access to adjoining precincts. For example, a precinct may be bounded by major roads, fences, or natural barriers such as a river.

**Non Equipment Play Opportunities:** Play opportunities do not necessarily have to take the form of traditional play equipment. Trees, logs, rocks or land forms may offer equally interesting and valuable play experiences.

## Executive Summary

It is via play that children attain vital life skills. Therefore, one of the key cornerstones of childhood development is the opportunity for individuals to experience a diverse range of play opportunities. Play spaces located within public open space and reserves are vital resources and it is important that serious consideration is given to develop these spaces into environments which support learning.

The design of play spaces has a direct impact on the quality of the user's experience and the degree to which the facility is utilised. In order to achieve maximum usage and quality, play spaces need to provide for a variety of different play experiences and each facility within a precinct needs to offer different experiences to those nearby.

The City of Swan has approximately 150 play spaces, with an estimated asset value of \$6.4 million. As urban development occurs, additional play spaces will be constructed to meet the needs of the new communities.

The City of Swan Play Space Strategy is a strategic approach which assists with the responsible management of the asset. The Strategy ensures community needs are met through the provision of suitably located, quality play spaces.

The Strategy provides direction for:

- Universal access in play spaces.
- Placement of play spaces in the context of a hierarchical approach.
- Design of quality play spaces.
- Process for review and replacement of play facilities.

## Introduction

### What is a Play Space?

Traditionally, children's play areas have been referred to as playgrounds. The City of Swan has chosen to adopt the term 'play spaces' as it recognises that an entire park or reserve offers play opportunities above and beyond a designated play area and that the landscaping and supporting amenity add benefit to the experience of the user.

A play space can incorporate an entire open space site or a small area within a site. As children get older, they will choose to access more of the site and as such, more play opportunities could be provided. Play opportunities do not necessarily have to take the form of traditional play equipment. Trees, logs, rocks or land forms may offer equally interesting and valuable play experiences.

### Why is play important?

Play is an integral component of childhood development and learning. There are numerous benefits which a child attains through play. These include:

- Development of social, intellectual, physical and emotional skills.
- Motor sensory stimulation, which enhances the natural learning process.
- Development of imagination and creativity skills.
- Development of problem solving, communication, negotiation and listening skills.

Through play, children learn about themselves, other people, roles, society and their environment. In addition, play also inspires children to awaken their imagination and develop their creative aptitude.

## How does this strategy relate to 'Quality of Life'?

The City of Swan is committed to promoting a high quality of life within our community. The City's Quality of Life strategy, 'Foundations of the Future' identifies the design of communities and the quality of public infrastructure as being integral components in achieving liveable, cohesive communities.

This Play Space Strategy contributes toward the attainment of Quality of Life and assists in providing the best opportunity for children to grow into well adjusted, contributing community members.

Quality of Life Goal	Strategic Objective	Links to Play Space Strategy
Individuals, families and groups participate in and contribute to community life and wellbeing, share a sense of belonging and connection, respect diversity and enjoy equal opportunity.	People have frequent and worthwhile interaction with others in their locality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Spaces serve as a location at which community members with similar interests and at similar stages of life may meet, interact and develop social networks.</li> </ul>
	The community has equitable access to services and facilities that meet their diverse needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities have a range of play opportunities which are equitably located and easily accessible.</li> </ul>
	Barriers to income inequalities are overcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play spaces are located within public open space and reserves and are thus free for the use of all community members.</li> <li>Play spaces are located within pedestrian access of most urban residences.</li> </ul>
A community in which all members engage in, contribute to, and celebrate the cultural life of the community.	Places are valued and enjoyed for their aesthetics, vitality, atmosphere and physical assets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is intended that designers of new play spaces embrace the community's unique sense of place and this is incorporated within play space design</li> </ul>
	Cultural assets are used to gain social, economic and environmental benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children of all cultures enjoy and participate in play. Play spaces provide a location at which children and their families may interact with different community members from different cultures.</li> </ul>
A diversity of places for living that are valued as attractive, safe, comfortable and convenient, that support participation in community life and contribute to ecological sustainability	Residential communities are planned to be adaptable to accommodate diverse and changing needs over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As each play facility reaches the end of its life cycle, a thorough analysis is undertaken to ensure future facilities continue to meet changing community needs.</li> </ul>
	Residential communities have access to a range of commercial, recreational and social facilities in appropriate locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities have a range of play opportunities which are equitably located and easily accessible.</li> <li>In instances where more than one play space exists within a precinct, differing opportunities shall be offered at each.</li> </ul>
	Public spaces incorporate elements and features that encourage regular use by the community and encourage community interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Play Spaces serve as a location at which community members with similar interests and at similar stages of life may meet, interact and develop social networks.</li> </ul>

## Play Space Provision within the City of Swan

The City of Swan Play Space Strategy is a strategic approach which:

- Provides direction for City of Swan staff and external designers in the provision of quality play spaces.
- Ensures the placement of play spaces in locations which most appropriately meet the needs of the community.
- Provides direction for the allocation of resources in the construction and maintenance of play spaces.

The City of Swan has approximately 150 play spaces with an estimated asset value of approximately \$6.4 million. As urban development occurs, additional play facilities will be constructed to meet the needs of the new communities.

In order to ensure that play spaces continue to be located appropriately and designed to meet the needs of the local community, a program for replacement has been developed.

Once a play space nears the end of its lifecycle, an analysis is undertaken to determine the most appropriate course of action for the City. This analysis will confirm whether a need exists for play opportunities in the precinct and the nature and most appropriate location of a replacement facility.

In some circumstances, analysis may determine that it is not appropriate to proceed with a replacement facility, in which case the aged play equipment would be removed and the space returned to a parkland setting. Refer Appendix 1 for Play Space Replacement Process.

Analysis of play spaces is based upon the following criteria:

### Distribution

The City of Swan aims to ensure each urban residence has access to a play space within 500 metres. In rural areas play spaces will be located within significant community hubs or popular meeting points.

Each facility within a precinct should offer varying play opportunities and cater for differing ages.

### Accessibility

It is important that each play space is accessible to the local community. Where an access barrier such as a major road, water course or land form exists within the 500m radius, the play space may need to be relocated to a site that is more accessible to the wider community, or alternatively additional facilities may be required to meet the needs of the community.

As children grow older, they become more independent and are capable of travelling slightly further to reach places of interest. Play spaces designed for older children may be located in a neighbouring precinct. In these instances safe pedestrian routes should be in existence or, if necessary, developed to aid movement between precincts.

### Safety

The site itself needs to be safe and have good casual surveillance. Safe access to the site also needs to be ensured. This can either be achieved through an effective footpath / dual use path system or open space corridors.

Additionally, where potential hazards exist, such as permanent water bodies or busy roads, play spaces should be sited to minimise risk, with due regard to the safety of users.

### Function

The intended function or purpose of open space assists in classifying the space within the City's Hierarchy of Open Space. (See below) This classification assists in determining the most appropriate type of play space. For example, on an active sporting reserve many people gather regularly for extended periods of time. It is therefore most appropriate to provide a range of play opportunities which cater for a variety of ages.

### Demand

Areas with a high number of children will tend to have a higher need for play spaces. Demographics are an indicator of demand for play spaces, however, they need to be used in conjunction with other analysis tools. For example, an ageing community with very few resident children will still need play spaces to accommodate for visiting grand children.

Areas with a higher degree of disadvantage will also tend to have a higher demand for locally accessible play spaces. As play spaces are free, they provide the opportunity for family outings for low income families. Additionally, disadvantaged families tend to have lower levels of car ownership and thus will require facilities within walking distance of their residence.

## **Hierarchy of Open Space**

In order to plan for an equitable distribution of open space which continues to meet the needs of the City of Swan community, a four tier hierarchical classification system has been developed. Public Open Space sites have been classified by their intended purpose and size. This system of classification will aid in the provision of Public Open Space (POS) within the City and enable a standardised approach to the provision of supporting amenity city wide. As the function of each level of the hierarchy varies, so too will the needs of users and the level of supporting amenity required. This includes play opportunities. Refer Appendix 2 Hierarchy of Open Space: Detailed Explanation.

### **Local and Neighbourhood POS**

The lower two tiers of the POS hierarchy are usually visited by local residents who stay for short durations. Visitors usually walk or cycle to local and neighbourhood spaces. These spaces are popular with carers of children under 12 years.

Within each precinct there will ideally be a series of local and neighbourhood open spaces. Each site should focus on a specific age category. Together, these spaces will offer a suite of play opportunities tailored toward the toddler, junior and intermediate age categories.

### **District and Large District POS**

The top two levels of POS attract visitors from further afield and in addition to casual recreation, also provide for junior and senior organised sports. It is expected that most people will drive to district spaces and will stay for extended periods of time.



It is envisaged that district spaces will provide play opportunities for a wide age range (junior to teenager) and ensure that some appropriate, accessible play opportunities are provided for children with disabilities.

### **Special Character Settings**

Some open space sites have a unique or special feature which attracts visitors from across the local authority or even further afield. These may be either a landscape or historic feature.

The key priorities for these sites are to ensure the characteristics of the place are retained and play opportunities are maximised within the space. 'Traditional' manufactured play equipment may not be necessary.

### **POS smaller than 3000m<sup>2</sup>**

It is not the intention of the City of Swan to provide open spaces smaller than 3000m<sup>2</sup>. However, these spaces do exist and are largely remnant from old planning initiatives. The level of amenity provided in these facilities should be limited to non equipment play opportunities.

## **Universal Access**

Each type of disability has its own implications and design considerations for play spaces. In many instances, barriers to inclusion can be reduced through a more thoughtful approach to detail. At a district and large district level, additional expenditure is warranted to ensure children or carers already disadvantaged by their disability are not further disadvantaged by a lack of accessible play opportunities.

At local and neighbourhood levels, the intent is to ensure play spaces are accessible for people with a range of disabilities and, where appropriate, contain experiences designed for their use. This will require the installation of barrier free paths, with appropriate gradients, into and around the park, linking play opportunities and supporting amenity. Additionally, all supporting amenity such as seating and tables should be free of barriers for people with disabilities.

It is intended that play facilities within district and large district open space are accessible for people with a full range of abilities, including those with any type of disability. It is important to note that play opportunities should be designed to be integrated for all users, rather than segregating opportunities for people with disabilities. Refer Appendix 3 for specific suggestions for improvements to both park and play space design, relating to different types of disability.

## **Consultation**

Community consultation is a valuable contribution to the play space design process. Consultation provides an insight into community needs and potential usage of the play space. It is recommended that designers take all available opportunities to consult with residents prior to commencing design works and where possible, involve the potential users in design decisions.

Consultation should:

- Occur prior to plans being commenced.
- Involve local residents and existing and proposed user groups of the site.
- Inform of any strategic or compliance issues which will affect the final outcome, for example the site's classification in the Hierarchy of Public Open Space.

- Ensure a balanced community view is achieved as opposed to the personal preferences of a vocal minority.
- Avoid raising expectations beyond a deliverable level.
- Avoid a 'shopping list' type exercise where people are asked to choose from a limited selection or a catalogue.

### **Local / Neighbourhood play space**

For a local play space, consultation should be conducted with residents within the local catchment area and known regular users of the site. The local catchment consists of a 500m radius of the play space. Where an access barrier such as a major road, water course or land form exists within the 500m radius, consultation would normally occur with residents only within the barrier.

Consultation should consist of written information indicating that a new play space is intended and outlining any constraints that may exist with the project. Interested parties should be invited to provide comments and participate in the design process.

### **District Play Space**

For a district play space, consultation should be conducted with residents within the local catchment area. The local catchment consists of a 500m radius of the play space. Where an access barrier such as a major road, water course or land form exists within the 500m radius, consultation would normally occur with residents only within the barrier.

In addition, consultation should be conducted with all registered user groups of the site, for example, local sporting groups using adjoining playing fields or local community groups using halls, pavilions and community centres.

## **Play Space Design Principles**

The following principles underpin design of play spaces within the City of Swan and as such their consideration is required prior to any design works commencing. These principles underpin the City of Swan Play Space Design Guidelines, refer Appendix 4. Approval to commence construction works will not be granted if designs are non compliant.

### **Choice of site**

Play spaces should not be considered as individual, stand alone projects. Within a precinct, each play space should offer different experiences and cater for a different age category, refer Appendix 5. It is therefore essential to determine the following, prior to any design decisions being made.

- How does the site relate to the other open space within the precinct?
- What are the key functions of the site, for example if the primary function is conservation, play opportunities may not be appropriate, however if the primary function is active play or a training space for junior sport, then intermediate or senior play opportunities may be more appropriate.
- Are there any factors which may contribute to one age category using the site more than others, for example is the site en route to a secondary school.

### **Location within the site**

The entire site needs to be considered in terms of play opportunities and be designed with play in mind.

- Which age group is being catered for?
- What elements within the site can be retained to enhance the play opportunities such as interesting land fall, trees, other vegetation or rocks?

- In terms of safety and play value, what are the most appropriate locations for play opportunities?
- Can play value be offered through non equipment play opportunities?

### **Landscape Design within play spaces**

The term landscape elements is used to refer to aspects of the natural environment such as vegetation, grassed areas, logs, rocks, water, sand, landform and spaces, as well as built elements in the landscape such as low walls, paving and other surfaces. One of the key benefits of landscape elements is that they are 'open ended', in that the individual seeking a play opportunity is able to determine how they are used.

A close relationship between play equipment and the landscape setting can enhance and stimulate the play experience. For example, leaves, sticks and flowers may be utilised and manipulated in imaginary play and trees and shrubs may be incorporated in hiding games etc.

- Landscape elements should be complementary to the primary function of the site.
- Planting can be used to define spaces, provide play materials, attract fauna, improve visual aesthetics of a site and contribute to sensory experiences.
- Vegetation adjoining the play space should be hardy enough to withstand children 'borrowing' flowers, leaves etc for play.
- Landform such as mounds and undulations are valued by children.

### **Age Appropriateness**

Children's physical capabilities, interests and play behaviour change with age. The greatest value will be derived from play opportunities which recognise appropriate skill levels and developmental milestones. Below is a brief outline of the play preferences and some design implications which relate to each age category.

#### **Toddler (under 3 years)**

- This group enjoy the sensory experiences of play in sand, mud, water and dirt and the manipulation of loose elements from the surroundings such as leaves.
- They experiment intensely within their physical ability and receive great benefit from exposure to a variety of stimuli.
- They also enjoy small scale, physical activities such as stepping, climbing, running, swinging, rolling, spinning, rocking, pushing, pulling, moving under and over and activities with cause-and-effect experiences.
- The scale of opportunities needs to be of appropriate size and height, eg toddlers will require smaller diameter hand grips than older children.
- The use of ride-on and small wheeled toys along paths is popular.
- Children of this age group will only engage in activities that they can see, therefore activities need to be located in clear sight lines.
- Under three's may not be able to perceive the implications of their behaviour, therefore hazards need to be predicted and provided for. For example, a child may climb too high, get scared, therefore requiring the carer to retrieve them.
- Easy adult access needs to be provided for all elements.

#### **Junior (3 to 5 years)**

- This category are becoming agile climbers and are developing good balance and coordination.
- Their language skills are developing, therefore enabling more social interaction. Play spaces which allow for group activities such as cubbies, boats and trains are therefore popular.
- Imaginative play and pretending are popular and as such so are components which facilitate role play , including cubbies, boats and fire engines.

- They will enjoy a range of physical challenges such as swinging, rocking, climbing, balancing and spinning.
- They enjoy being able to manipulate elements within their environment such as sand, water, leaves etc. Places in which to play with these loose materials should be located away from the main traffic areas, so that the activities are not disturbed by more active play.
- Open grassed areas for active play such as ball play, running and rolling are valuable.

#### Intermediate (5 to 7 years)

- This group is becoming very coordinated and seeks more physical challenge. These children enjoy testing themselves physically.
- Imagination and role play is still popular amongst the 5 to 7's.
- This age group will develop complex play incorporating more than one opportunity within the space, therefore careful consideration needs to be given to arrangement and placement of opportunities.
- They enjoy taking part in construction and manipulation activities such as sand play.
- They will venture into the park and interact with the wider environment much more than younger children, therefore opportunities within the wider area will be of value. This could be as simple as interesting planting, opportunities for balancing, places to hide and trees to climb.
- Open grassed areas are valuable active play areas.

#### Senior (8 to 12 Years)

- This age group is becoming more independent and may be beginning to attend play spaces without adult supervision. Safe routes to the space, facilitate this age group attending with friends.
- Physical motion such as spinning, swinging, rocking, climbing and gliding is popular.
- Play also will take the form of small groups socialising, for example, two friends swinging and talking together.
- Chasing and challenging and more boisterous games are popular.
- Open areas for active play are valuable.
- Hard surfaces for ball games etc are popular.
- Skating and bike riding are also popular. Facilities for these activities need to allow for a wide skill range. As beginners become more proficient, they will move onto more challenging components.
- The upper end of this age group will also enjoy watching others participate. Vantage points such as a low wall, mound or grouped seating situated around hard courts, BMX or skate facilities will facilitate this.

#### Teenager / young adult

- This age group value their privacy and strive for independence. Provision of safe spaces to 'hang out' and socialise recognises their needs and helps to make them feel important and valued.
- Parks located en route to secondary schools will become popular meeting places and should include quiet places from which to observe others or sit quietly and talk.
- Location of teenager / young adult spaces should incorporate other focal points of social activity, for example a shop or a public transport connection point.
- Spaces for ball games are valued.
- BMX and skate facilities with advanced skill demands will be popular.

- Equipment which provides rapid movement such as spinning, rocking, and that which is physically challenging will appeal to this age group.
- They will also be encouraged to partake in activities which have a perceived risk, for example, climbing very high.

### **Suite of ideas for non equipment play opportunities**

Play opportunities do not necessarily have to take the form of traditional play equipment. Trees, logs, rocks or land forms may offer equally interesting and valuable play experiences. This list is by no means extensive; however it does provide direction for the types of non-equipment play opportunities that are commonly in use.

- Bike paths with varying textures and levels.
- Walls.
- Stepping stones, rocks, logs.
- Defining small spaces through the use of planting, furniture, rocks, changes in levels.
- Undulating ground, mounds.
- Trees, mini forests, shrubs and vegetation.
- Hard surfaces, rebound walls.
- Sand and water.
- Sound wall, amphitheatre, human sun dial.
- Sculpture.

### **Supporting Amenity**

The success of any play space is as dependant on the supporting amenity as the play opportunities offered within it.

#### **Shade**

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world and as such shade needs to be integral to any play space design. Ideally play spaces should be designed so as to maximise existing shade opportunities. Additional planting of trees should occur as early as possible so they may become sufficiently established prior to the facility being utilised.

The most critical time of day for effective shade to be provided is between the hours of 10.00am and 2.00pm, however depending on the context of the site, shade also needs to be provided:

- From the east, for morning use.
- From the west for afternoon use.

Shade should be provided for adjoining seating, to ensure the comfort and safety of carers.

#### **Seating**

Well placed seating and tables make supervision easier and more comfortable for carers. Seating should be positioned with a clear view of play opportunities. Positioning of seating to encourage social interaction helps to increase the value of the visit for adults.

Informal seating opportunities may also occur within the landscape design. Low walls, logs and rocks can offer multiple functions within a play space.

Provision of some seating with back and arm rests will be of benefit to older adults visiting the site.

## Fencing

Ideally play opportunities should be located in spaces which are free from hazards and as such do not require fencing. However, if hazards are present, a barrier fence between the play space and hazard may be required.

Small fenced compounds within a park are undesirable. It is preferable to seek more appropriate sites.

The City has made a commitment to fence play spaces which are attached to community buildings. This is to ensure the needs of groups who hire such facilities are met. In this instance, a magnetically triggered self latching gate should be installed. This will enable the facility to remain secure whilst a user group is occupying the area, however still permit community access to the play space for the extensive amount of time that the facility is not being occupied by user groups.

## **Safety and Challenge**

Good design of play spaces is a valuable strategy in reducing risk. Inappropriate use often occurs in play spaces that lack interesting features. Children are excited by the idea of risk; therefore, a carefully designed perception of risk will provide the element of challenge and reduce the risk associated with inappropriate use. Other safety hazards arise from poor location and site layout. In reducing risk, designs should:

- Encourage good supervision by making the site welcoming and comfortable for adults as well as children.
- Plan with hazards in mind, for example, make access to roofs and shade structures difficult.
- Ensure that a range of choices are offered to cater for differing skill levels within each age grouping.
- Locate play opportunities with informal surveillance in mind.
- Avoid uninteresting play spaces which lead to boredom and risk seeking.

## **Standards**

The City of Swan requires compliance with the following:

AS 4685 2004	Parts 1 to 6
AS/NZS 4486:1997	Playgrounds and playground equipment part 1 Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance & Operation
AS/NZS 4422 1996	Playground Surfacing Specification, Requirements & Test Methods

## Appendix 1 - Process for Play Space Replacement

On a 7 yearly basis a review of the Play Space Replacement Program will be required. The process will be as follows:

	<b>Action to be undertaken</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
1	Full safety audit of all play facilities conducted	External Contractor
2	Internal review of safety audit	Operations - Parks Trades Officers, Landscape Architect, Facilities Planner
3	Identification of facilities reaching end of lifecycle within next 7 years	Operations - Parks Trades Officers, Landscape Architect, Facilities Planner
4	Analysis to develop notional replacement program	Facilities Planner
5	Submit figures for inclusion in 10 year capital works budget	Asset Co-ordinator Parks & Landscaping -Operations

On an annual basis the following review process will be required:

	<b>Action to be undertaken</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>
1	Prior to annual budget figures being submitted, review and confirmation of following year's replacement program	Operations - Parks Trades Officers, Landscape Architect, Facilities Planner
2	Site visits to determine any constraints that are likely to impact on budgeting	Landscape Architect/s
3	Confirm budget figure for annual budgeting process	Asset Co-ordinator Parks & Landscaping -Operations
4	Undertake community consultation	Landscape Architect/s
5	Undertake design of individual sites	Landscape Architect/s
6	Undertake tendering and contract process	Landscape Architect/s
7	Undertake replacement program for the year	Landscape Architect/s
8	Update asset register	Landscape Architect/s

## Appendix 2 - Hierarchy of Open Space: Detailed Explanation

### Introduction

In order to plan for an equitable distribution of open space which continues to meet the needs of the City of Swan community, the following hierarchical classification system has been developed. Public Open Space sites have been classified by their intended purpose and size. This system of classification is a planning tool which will aid in the provision of Public Open Space within the City and enable a standardised approach to the provision of supporting amenity City wide.

The manner in which the community uses Public Open Space is evolving as such needs are changing. For example, the number of sporting clubs are becoming fewer, however the sizes and number of teams within clubs is increasing. Clubs are therefore increasingly requesting larger sites which are able to accommodate a number of teams and games at one time.

The City of Swan Open Space Hierarchy consists of four tiers. The intent is in keeping with Liveable Neighbourhoods in that we seek to provide a range of site responsive urban open space, which is accessible to the majority of residents and favours a balance between small spaces accessed at a neighbourhood level and large spaces which are accessed by a number of neighbourhoods. The terminology and dimensions of each level in the City of Swan hierarchy does in fact vary from that identified in Liveable Neighbourhoods.

It is acknowledged that anomalies will occur, particularly in the case of existing sites on which development occurred at an earlier time under a different set of needs and trends.

### Local Public Open Space

These spaces could include a combination of bushland, open parkland and activity spaces for casual active play. They would not be used for any form of active sport, rather short term casual visits by local residents.

#### Typical Characteristics:

- Between 0.3ha and 1ha
- Predominantly casual use by people living within 400m
- The majority users will walk to the facility

The types of supporting amenity could include paths, shade, seating and children's play spaces. Any additional facilities would be viewed as an exception and considered on a site by site basis according to merit.

### Neighbourhood I Public Open Space

These spaces could include a combination of bushland, open parkland and activity spaces for casual play and sport practice facilities for children and youth. They would rarely if ever be used for formal sporting events and would not cause traffic congestion nor create noise nuisances for residents.

#### Typical characteristics

- Predominantly casual use by people living within 400m
- From 1 to 5 hectares in size, but more typically 1 to 3.5 hectares
- Designed for activities that do not require additional parking or minimal off street parking
- The majority users will walk to the facility



Types of supporting amenity could include paths, shade, play space and seating. Any additional facilities would be viewed as an exception and considered on a site by site basis according to merit.

#### District Public Open Space

These spaces must include a combination of bushland, open parkland, activity spaces for casual play and developed spaces which allow for regular sporting events, festivals or carnivals. It is expected that these sites would be co-located with other community facilities such as schools or shopping precincts. The primary function for district open space is to provide for junior sporting competitions and senior sport training, however, district sites also provide for recreational, non-sporting activities.

Typical characteristics:

- Parks and sporting grounds are likely to be 5 to 12ha in size
- Have a catchment area of 6km radius
- The majority of users will drive to the facility
- Have enhanced parking spaces and off street parking
- The more significant district facilities will have multi use capacity to accommodate multiple users (clubs)

Types of sporting amenity could include, lighting appropriate for training and competition, toilets, change rooms and shared use pavilions, car parking, BBQ and picnic facilities, play spaces, shade and paths. Any additional facilities would be viewed as an exception and considered on a site by site basis according to merit.

#### Large District Public Open Space

These are the largest provisions of space. They are the focal points for active sport for the City and are capable of intense, frequent use by large numbers of people. They will absorb the majority of adult sport. There would be very few of these in the City of Swan and the locations would be chosen with careful regard to transport, usage impacts, location of similar provisions in neighbouring local governments and environmental impacts.

Typical characteristics

- They will be 12 to 20+ hectares
- Have a catchment area of 12km radius (including facilities in other LGA's)
- Will be the centres for major competitions for sport and active competitive recreational pursuits
- They will be placed where the impact on residents is able to be minimised, especially noise, traffic and light spill
- It is expected that the majority of users of these facilities will arrive by car or via public transport
- These will be the main centres of home and away competitions for City based teams and clubs
- They will be the preferred venues for higher (state) level competitions and major sporting events

Types of sporting amenity could include, lighting appropriate for competition, toilets, change rooms and significant shared-use indoor facilities, car parking, BBQ and picnic facilities, play spaces, shade and paths. Any additional facilities would be viewed as an exception and considered on a site by site basis according to merit.

# Appendix 3 - Making Play More Accessible: The Design of Play Areas for Users with Disabilities

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Each type of disability has its own implications for play space design. Some specific suggestions for improvements to both park and play space design, relating to different types of disability, are outlined below. Although this list appears to be extensive and expensive to implement, many suggestions are simply better ways of providing what is already common place. We suggest that in the early stages of design, a more thoughtful approach to detail will result in a much more successful outcome for all children, regardless of their abilities. In some situations, particularly district and large district sites, additional expenditure is warranted as additional play opportunities will need to be provided.

## Wheelchair access

Some simple additions that would make spaces more accessible and more interesting to many disabled users include the following:

- Permanent path access into the park.
- Eliminate all stepped level changes and provide a path system with barrier-free surfaces.
- Provide turning spaces large enough for wheelchair use.
- Provide wheelchair access to at least some play settings but in particular to the focal points of the play space where every child would want to play. Include cubbies, dramatic/imaginative play areas and musical opportunities.
- Eliminate barriers such as log borders, steps or stairs to any of these sections.
- Design activities in such a way that it is possible to allow a person in a wheelchair to face the activity front-on, and to get their knees under a shelf, shop counter, or similar.
- Incorporate surfaces that make wheeled play interesting and fun.
- Include ramps allowing wheelchair access to elevated areas.
- Provide synthetic impact absorbing surfaces in key areas allowing access across mulch to play structures.
- Provide access to creative opportunities such as music and sand.
- Provide opportunities to experience texture, sound, smell and other sensory delights.
- Incorporate seats immediately adjacent for carers to assist in the play.
- Provide opportunities to leave the wheelchair, and to lie or sit in an alternative supportive position.

## Ambulant Disabled Children

- Provide coloured hand grips at changes of level within structures.
- Design hand rails along paths and to steps and stairs that will aid balance.
- Incorporate flat treads and stairs instead of, or as well as, rung ladders.
- Provide smooth surfaces without trip hazards.
- Ensure that easily negotiated choices of route within climbing structures are provided.
- Ensure that particular care is taken with design for safety so that children with balance problems and visual impairments do not inadvertently fall through openings in guard rail or cross the paths of swings.
- Provide back support with simple back support structures on seats, swings, see-saws and in sand pit areas. This is also important for carers with children.

### **Visitors with Low or no Vision**

Children with low or no vision need orientation cues such as:

- Texture codes on paths.
- Strongly-coloured cues on level changes, key parts of structures and as a warning.
- Coloured hand grips which provide a strong luminance contrast with the surroundings.
- Other sensory cues such as scented plants. A limited palette of only one species flowering at a time is preferable, to avoid sensory bombardment.
- Use of sound, texture and different spatial qualities for interest.

### **Fine Motor Disabilities**

It is important to include manipulable elements for creative play that are accessible and do not require great physical strength or fine motor skills to operate such as:

- Steering wheels.
- Musical opportunities, and
- Levers, pulleys and other gadgets.

These must be within reach for a child in a wheelchair and able to be used front-on from a wheelchair.

### **Intellectual/Cognitive Disabilities**

For children with intellectual disabilities:

- Spaces may need to be fenced off from hazards.
- Sites need to be easy to orient around.
- Seats on play components, usually provided for young children, may need to be of a larger scale so that older but developmentally delayed children can use these.
- Imaginative play items may need to be very obvious so that children know what they are for and how to use these.
- Entry and exit points may need to be graded in challenge and be obvious to users.
- Incorporate 'Retreat Spaces' where a frustrated child can have 'time out' with dignity.

## Appendix 4 - Play Space Design Guidelines

The application of these criteria will ensure the provision of a diverse range of age appropriate, quality Play Spaces whilst maintaining the most effective use of resources.

Play Spaces need to be considered as a complete package within any precinct and prior to their design, the intended function and hierarchical classification of each site must be determined. This detail will be required to accompany any landscape plans incorporating proposed Play Spaces.

For a detailed explanation of the concepts associated with the design of play spaces – refer City of Swan Play Space Strategy.

The City retains the right to assess and approve the safety, quality of play spaces and maintenance commitment involved in any proposal and to suggest modifications.

### Site choice

- The age appropriateness of play opportunities shall be relevant to the functionality and hierarchical classification of the site.
- The level/quantity of play opportunities shall be relevant to the functionality and hierarchical classification of the site.
- Play opportunities shall complement others provided within the same precinct in terms of age appropriateness and variety.

### Site design

- Play opportunities, supporting amenity and landscape elements shall be designed as a whole, to maximise the usefulness of each and obtain the best value from the relationships between them.
- Play opportunities shall be located in one general area to enable ease of supervision by carers.
- Play opportunities shall not be placed within close proximity to private fences or hazards such as busy roads or water bodies.
- Play opportunities shall allow for informal surveillance.
- Play equipment, surrounds and soft fall shall comply with Australian Standards or Best Practice – refer AS 4685 2004: parts 1 to 6, AS/NZS 4486 1997, AS/NZS 4422 1996 and any other relevant standards.
- Play areas with sand as a soft fall shall be enclosed by a concrete or limestone edge restraint – refer STD 84-2s.
- Gingen Quartz sand shall be used in play areas located in wind affected sites.
- Combinations of play opportunities shall be offered, eg hiding, balancing, climbing, moveable structures, fixed structures, spinning etc.
- It is desirable for natural landscape elements to be retained and incorporated within play opportunities.
- Access for people with disabilities shall be provided to all play spaces. Additionally, inclusive play opportunities for people with disabilities shall be provided at district and large district open space.
- The provision of non-equipment play opportunities is desirable.
- All play spaces shall have functional shade provided, with preference to artistically designed steel structures or mature trees.
- Seating shall be provided adjacent key play opportunities to enable maximum supervision of children.
- Any custom designed play equipment shall require an approved safety audit, detailed maintenance requirements, lifecycle estimates, building licence and structural certification by an accredited engineer.

## Appendix 5 - Example Play Space Precinct Plan

