



promoting the value of play

South Australia

A message from the South Australian Chair Simon Bradley

Welcome to the Autumn Edition of the Play Australia – SA Branch (PASA) Newsletter.



The PASA Committee has completed its inaugural draft Strategic Plan for 2017-2020. This Strategic Plan will be PASA's process of defining our direction and making decisions on allocating our limited resources to pursue this Strategy. It will also extend to mechanisms for guiding the implementation of the Strategy. This draft Strategic Plan will be available for comment shortly with the intention to launch the Plan at our AGM in July 2017. We look forward to your comments.

On the 23 February 2017 PASA hosted an information session on the new Playground Standard Part 0-AS4685-2014. This free session was presented by Elizabeth Cummins (Bricolage Design), Rob Hamilton (Park and Playspace) and Barbara Champion (Play Australia, Executive Director) and provided detailed information on this new and important Playground Standard. We had over 30 people in attendance which was a combination of theory and practical examples. The session also complemented "Getting the Balance Right – Risk Management for Play", a Play Australia publication published in 2016 and is available to all members.

We have some great events scheduled for the next few months. Our next event is on 4 May and will be looking at innovative play provision by the City of Onkaparinga. We are then very excited to host 'Thinking Differently About Play' by Stuart Lester and Wendy Hamilton from the United Kingdom on 5 June 2017. Further details about these events are provided later in this Newsletter.

I am very lucky and proud to Chair such an amazing group of dedicated Committee Members. To assist you in getting to know our Committee we have included a profile on one of our new Committee members, Craig Johansen. I hope you enjoy this profile.

On 16 March 2017 fellow Committee Member Peter Semple and I attended the Nature Play SA AGM. Nature Play SA are doing a great job in promoting nature play and are reaching a huge audience (e.g. 98,500 website users; 19M people reached through media; 2,300 Instagram followers; 70 presentations to 10,000 people) and they are about to announce a substantial funding sponsor.

If you are not already, I would encourage you to become a member of Play Australia. Play Australia is the only membership organisation of its kind in Australia. It provides members a unique opportunity to access specific information in relation to playgrounds and play experiences for children, families and the community.



Is your playspace Autism friendly? Three safety tips you need to know.

When we think of inclusive play spaces, often what comes to mind is the play experience, play equipment and how we can engage children in meaningful play. The list of ideas that come to mind for children on the Autism Spectrum is endless as there are so many options that we could choose. What we often are less aware of however is keeping our children safe. Families in the ASD Community are often reluctant to venture out to playgrounds because of safety concerns. Here's why;

1. Fencing is an essential feature if we are to include families in our ASD community

Many families in the Autism Community are simply unable to visit public play spaces because their children are wanderers. Children on the Autism Spectrum are less aware of risks associated with getting lost or lack knowledge of road safety so need to be keenly watched by a care giving adult. Parents of typically developing children give instructions like "don't go past that tree", or "stay where I can see you" or "stop. Come back please" But children with Autism have difficulty discriminating their parents voice amidst the noisy environment, are less likely to comprehend the instruction and those who may hear and understand, their rigid thinking compels them to stay on track and continue wandering.

Other children have a tendency to escape when they feel overwhelmed. If a child is unable to tolerate the playground environment, they may experience a sense of panic which can quickly escalate into a meltdown which may compel the child to run and keep running despite parent request to stop and regardless of roads or other risks that may cross their path.



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2. Standard, regulation fall zones might not be sufficient

It's the child with Autism who is likely to be the one who plonks herself right at the base of the slide to play with her toys in the bark chips or who walks right under the swing while its in use because she doesn't have a sense of safety and often doesn't notice what others are doing. Having colour coded safe zones around equipment means (with instructions for parents to teach their children) means that children can be empowered to understand safety and where they can and can't play.

3. Generously spaced layouts help children to get from A to B

Children rely on a number of sensory motor skills to help them to navigate even a vacant play space. With underdeveloped sensory motor systems, children with ASD find it hard to plan the steps to get from A to B or may struggle with spatial awareness so are likely to bump into people or equipment. Providing spacious play areas means children are free to play without worrying about having to consciously plan their path or hurting themselves or others along the way.

Author: Sarah Ferguson (Director Leaf Autism Services)

PASA Committee Member Profile



**Craig Johansen, City of Salisbury,
Team Leader Landscape Design**

I have been at the City of Salisbury for 11 years with my position always being involved in the development and renewal of playgrounds/ playspaces.

My journey with play started as a child, engaging in play in open spaces around home, being out of home for hours on end playing in the local park and gullies, filling that sense of adventure that I always have had.

This passion lead me into open spaces as a child and into my profession as a Landscape Architect. Which gives me an opportunity to be in the outdoors and open spaces that are on offer here in Australia.

The key part to my role at the City of Salisbury is engaging with the community to develop playspaces across the city. The insight that this gives into our community is great as it shows how connected the community is to its local area. It is an encouraging part of my role to see ideas and comments come in from the younger generation (5-12yr olds) of our community as to how they use the space and would like to see it developed. The key to any open space development is trying to match expectations with budgets, to achieve an outcome that brings great enjoyment to its users.

I have been able to be part of some great play projects within the City of Salisbury with the cities first Accessible Playspace and more recently the upgrade of the St Kilda Adventure Park.

Best part of my job at the City of Salisbury is seeing first hand the joy and excitement that play can give within the open spaces of the city, closely followed by a positive response (written or verbal) from a member of the community.



Upcoming PlayAustralia training and professional development



PASA - 2017 Networking Event

Thursday 4 May Event hosted by City of Onkaparinga- 9:30am-11.30am Site 1 Frank Hilton Reserve, Gulf Parade at Maslin Beach, followed by a quick drive and coffee break at Port Noarlunga Bakery and a short stroll to Site 2 Jubilee Adventure Playspace. Event to finish at approx 11.30am

Stuart Lester and Wendy Hamilton (UK) - Thinking Differently About Play! Design, Local Government, Parks, Schools and Early Years

Monday 5th June 10.30-3.00pm @ City of Charles Sturt Woodville

Stuart and Wendy are both senior lecturers in Play and Playwork at the University of Gloucestershire, each with over 30 years' experience in the playwork sector. We are excited to have them come and visit Adelaide and share their experiences and knowledge with us.

Register online @ playaustralia.org.au

PASA - Networking Event and AGM

27th July 4.00pm at The Ranges Early Learning and Care Centre 137 Mt Barker Road, Stirling.

The Ranges ELC undertook an extensive redesign of their outdoor space to better utilise the natural environment for the children who attend this centre. Working in conjunction with one of their parents from Brown Falconer the new playspace provides plenty of opportunities for open ended play.

Register online for these events playaustralia.org.au

For more information on any of these events please contact

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Considering becoming a member

Play Australia is the national peak membership play organisation in Australia. It provides members a unique opportunity to access specific information in relation to playgrounds and play experiences for children, families and the community. Play Australia members come from all different walks of life. Many are involved in the development of playgrounds, equipment or just the love of play for children.

Discounted membership are available to new South Australian members, from rural and metro councils.

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

Welcome to our new SA members

+ Bradley Williams + Yusuke Shimizu + Grey Ward Childrens Centre



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

