



# Australian Play Summits

ROUND 1 – REPORT

**February 2026**

Canberra · Sydney · Melbourne · Brisbane · Adelaide · Perth

*“Australia is a country where every child thrives through equitable access to the health and wellbeing benefits of play within their community.”*

*The Play Australia vision.*

*“Fortune favours the Audacious”.*

*Desiderous Erasmus*



**Building  
a healthy  
Australia  
through play**

### Overview

This report captures the key themes, discussions, and recommended actions from Round 1 of the Australian Play Summit Series, held in February 2026. Play Australia convened these groundbreaking events to address one of childhood’s most fundamental yet overlooked rights: the right to play.

Throughout this report, each key theme is accompanied by a set of ‘Playfully Provocative’ questions. These are intentional invitations to think more deeply, to challenge assumptions, and to connect the ideas in this report to your own professional and community experience. More information about these and a summary of the questions is included in the appendix.

The Summit Series drew on two major bodies of expertise: the internationally recognised legal framework developed by Dr Naomi Lott (University of Reading) for implementing the child’s right to play — encompassing Space, Time, Acceptance, and Rights — and the findings of Play Australia CEO Robyn Monro Miller AM’s 2025 Churchill Fellowship, which examined international approaches to national and local play strategies across 8 countries, identifying critical success factors, barriers, and outcomes achieved for communities.

Research has demonstrated the critical importance of play for children’s basic developmental and health needs, as well as its intrinsic value as a critical element of childhood centred on notions of human dignity. Yet governments continue to struggle with implementation. The Play Summit Series was designed to move from principle to practice — generating shared momentum for a national play agenda in Australia.

#### Round 1 Sessions — Six Cities, February 2026

- **Canberra** — Friday 6 February, University of Canberra
- **Sydney** — Wednesday 11 February, Wesley Centre, Pitt Street
- **Melbourne** — Thursday 12 February, College of Law, Melbourne University
- **Brisbane** — Monday 16 February, Griffith University, Southbank
- **Adelaide** — Monday 23 February, Rydges Hotel
- **Perth** — Wednesday 25 February, Mercure Hotel

Each Summit featured presentations by Dr Naomi Lott and Robyn Monro Miller AM, as well as practical co-design activities enabling all delegates to contribute to this first stage of a national campaign to protect, promote and provide play for all children living in Australia.

This is the first of three Play Summits Play Australia will host in 2026. Round 2 follows in August and Round 3 in October. Each summit springboards directly from the last — expanding participants’ collective perception, building on the knowledge and conversations from previous sessions, and deepening shared understanding. Together we are growing our knowledge base, strengthening alliances, and building the momentum needed to collectively chart a path toward Plan4Play.

*Together, in 2026, we will develop a comprehensive national agenda for play in Australia — one that recognises children’s right to play not as a luxury, but as essential to their health, wellbeing, and development.*

#### Cover Photograph

by Robyn Monro Miller AM - “Water Play in Rockhampton, Queensland.”

#### Editor

Robyn Monro Miller AM

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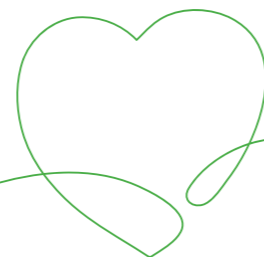
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## Opening Address

Play Australia is thought to be the oldest play advocacy organisation in the world still in existence today. Formed in 1913 — 113 years ago — by a group of concerned citizens including Patti Deakin, wife of our 2nd Prime Minister Alfred Deakin, its mission today is as pertinent as it was 113 years ago: to remove the barriers to play for children and adolescents.

Every year for the past few years, instead of resolutions, I have just chosen a word — one word. I draw on this word for inspiration in my life and work. Last year, the word was possibility.

And 2025 was certainly a year of possibility! Filled with possibility we oversaw a hugely successful Asia Pacific conference drawing in play champions from 7 countries and we witnessed the release of 3 inspiring position papers. I then finished the year with 8 weeks travelling internationally on a Churchill Fellowship, looking at policy for play, opening up new possibilities as to how in Australia we might achieve our own vision for a more playful nation.

So here we are in 2026 — and this year, my word is **AUDACIOUS**.

This series of Play Summits, which in fact DO make me nervous, are pretty audacious.

We have no funding.

Limited human resources.

And here we are!!!!

But we do have one thing — **an audacious dream**.

We want to start creating a vision for a framework that ensures all Australian children have access to play. It is too important not to see this vision realised.

Last week at a Parliamentary event to launch the Play Summits, I made this point: there are 5.8 million people in Australia currently impacted directly by the level of opportunities presented for play. By 2071, figures estimate that will be 7.2 million. These are children 0-18 years, covered under the UNCRC. The play needs of 0-18 year olds must not be silenced and marginalised.

Play is a biological imperative essential for healthy brain development and physical development of children. It is also a proven catalyst for social cohesion. As a preventative health strategy, play is paramount — and a proven panacea for trauma. Do you know of any other health imperative, affecting 1 in 5 of the population, that is not listed in health strategies and policy?

All of us have talked about it for many years, and all of us are working in our own way to achieve it. But now is the time to collectively harness that energy and go for it!

We can no longer sit on the sidelines and say ‘Government should’. We must start to say ‘Government will’. And that starts by all of us harnessing the will of the people to drive this through as a national health priority.

### What I learnt on my Churchill Fellowship.

- Through my Churchill Fellowship in 2025 I learnt:
- International examples of practice are examples — not road maps
- Government initiatives are subject to political whims
- National or state legislation and policy does not create change unless supported by a rigorous plan for implementation and education
- Process and procedures trump strategy for creating real, lasting change
- Play intersects all areas of human life and service delivery — urban planning, education, health, transport, social cohesion, and infrastructure
- Context is critical — understanding context and culture, combined with the co-design of those who will benefit, is essential for successful implementation
- Local government has an incredibly important role in creating the conditions for play
- Empowering communities to lead and engage creates and embeds long-term sustainability for play initiatives
- Investment in play is an investment in the health of our nation

More importantly, what I already knew, before the airplane wheels left the tarmac:

- Australia has really great things already happening for play.
- Australia has a rich play history and has, for many generations
- Has had more access to play than many other countries
- Australia is filled with passionate and engaged play advocates.

With this knowledge as a catalyst, Play Australia has decided to harness the opportunities already provided, the play memories of Australians, and the energy and enthusiasm of our people to bring our vision for play to life.

We have not determined a specific fixed idea of how that vision may be translated. Like play, we are going to enjoy the process, make it a time for exploration and see where it leads.



*L-R: Carly Goodrich (Play Australia Chair), Robyn Monro Miller AM (CEO Play Australia), Dr Naomi Lott and David Kutcher (Play Australia Vice Chair)*

It is a long term plan, commencing with 2 years of sustained, strategic work involving engagement and advocacy.

Thank you for agreeing to travel with us on this **audacious playful journey** to ensure a more playful Australia for us all.

Robyn Monro Miller AM

### A Two-Year Plan Toward Plan4Play

Play Australia will deliver over a 2 year period our Plan4Play... we want everyone to come along on the journey with us!

- **2026** — From Concept to Clarity: summits, inspiring speakers, conversations, reflections and collaborations. We will map our current strengths where play thrives, identify where play deserts exist, and build alliances and partnerships to bridge the gaps. Knowledge sharing is key and ensuring everyone has a strong understanding of play which creates a strong foundation for advocacy.
- **2027** — From Clarity to Action: we begin drafting Plan4Play — informed and supported by the work we undertake this year. Together we will build a plan that supports delivery, advocacy and investment to remove the barriers to play and deliver on the mission and build a strong foundation.

## KEY THEME 1

# Play Is for Everyone

A central insight from the Play Summits was that play is not limited to young children or playground spaces. Participants affirmed that play exists on a spectrum and must be understood as a universal human experience — one that belongs to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Participants were clear: play is not only for playgrounds. It occurs across all environments — in homes, schools, streets, parks, and communities. The framing of play as something confined to designated spaces was identified as one of the biggest barriers to broader societal acceptance.

### What Participants Said

- Play is for everyone — not only for the young — it exists on a spectrum of experience and expression.
- Acceptance of play as a central component of childhood must be actively and consistently promoted.
- Barriers to teenage play were specifically identified as an area requiring urgent attention — adolescent play landscapes are under-resourced and poorly understood.
- Play must be understood as embedded in everyday life - not cordoned off to particular times or spaces.
- Cultural change is required — not just policy change — to shift societal attitudes toward play.
- Societal acceptance of play is one of four key dimensions of the right to play, alongside space, time, and rights.
- Adults need to play too — and must model what play looks like for children; Parliamentary Friends of Play was proposed as an immediate political vehicle for this message.
- Play should be a component of everyone's workplace and everyday life, not a separate activity.
- Intergenerational play — shared spaces, programs connecting children and older adults — builds connection and wellbeing across all ages.
- Over-programming of children's time is a serious barrier; parents and children alike are losing mental space for free play.
- Screen time is displacing play; Australia's growing hunger for alternatives represents a genuine opportunity for the movement.
- Extending the conversation to include play in every home: parents infusing play into daily life was identified as a moral imperative.

***“We don't have to wait. We can turn it around now.”***

***– Play Summit Participant***

## Children's Rights and the UNCRC

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was a touchstone throughout Play Summit discussions. Participants highlighted the critical importance of grounding play advocacy firmly in rights-based frameworks — and of moving beyond awareness to genuine embedding in practice and law.

Dr Naomi Lott made a powerful distinction between a child's right and an adult's permission. Too often play is treated as something adults allow children to do, rather than something children are legally entitled to. This framing was seen as fundamental to reshaping advocacy, policy, and practice.



*Ideas flowing freely — energy and optimism in the room*

### Playfully Provocative



1. *Who in your community is missing out on play entirely — and what is the single most significant structural barrier that needs to be removed for them?*
2. *How does your organisation or community currently define 'play'? Does that definition limit who can access it, or where and when it can happen?*
3. *If play were genuinely woven into everyday life — not treated as a separate or scheduled activity — what would need to change in your work or community to make that a reality?*

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

#### **Dr Naomi Lott**

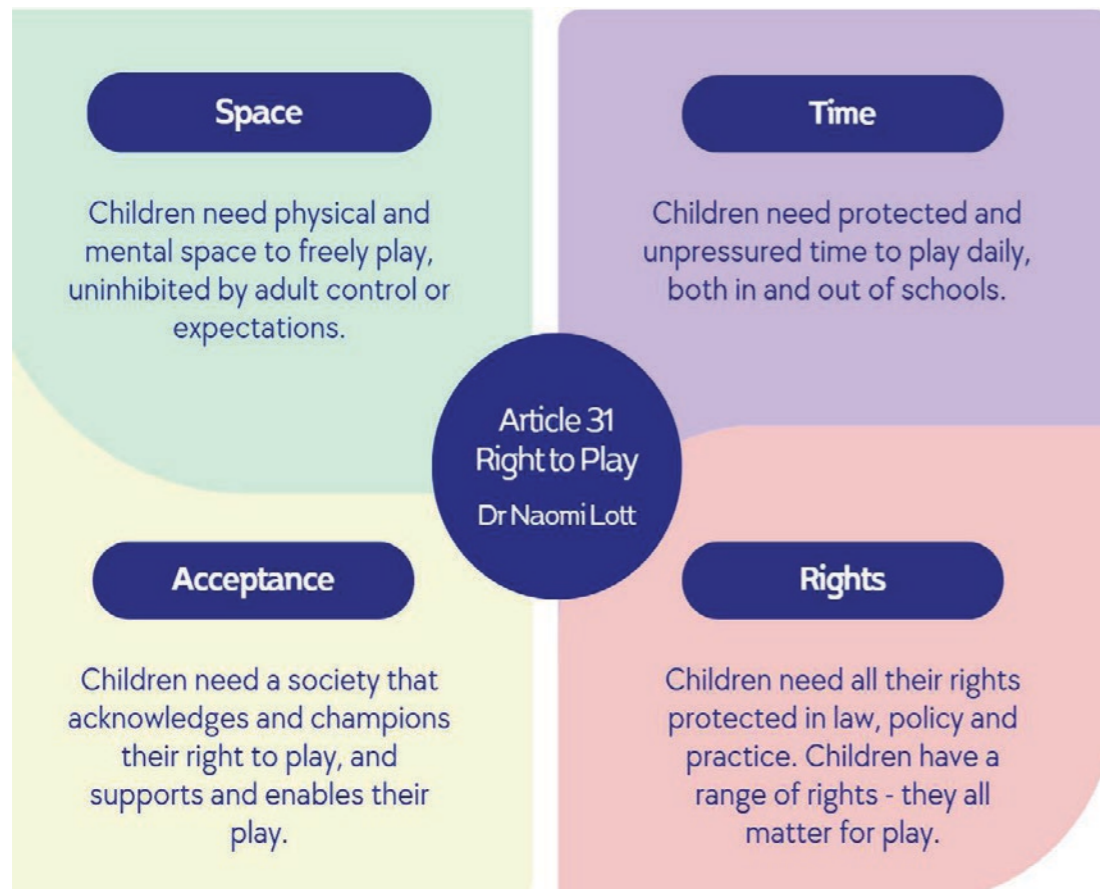
Lecturer in Law, University of Reading  
| UN CRC Expert

Dr Lott is the leading academic voice on children's right to play, having published the first legal monograph on the right — *The Right of the Child to Play: From Conception to Implementation* (Routledge, 2023). Her framework for implementing the right to play — Space, Time, Acceptance, Rights-Informed — was published in the *Human Rights Law Review* in 2025 and has informed the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, policy actors, and civil society organisations throughout the UK and internationally. Dr Lott was appointed as an expert commissioner to the Play Commission, conducting a national inquiry on play.



*Dr Naomi Lott, Lecturer in Law, University of Reading, presenting on the Right to Play and its application*

Dr Lott presented on deepening understanding of the right to play and its application, including the interdependence of Article 31 with other Convention rights. Her Space–Time–Acceptance–Rights framework provided participants with a practical lens for understanding and advocating for children's play entitlements.



### Key Points from Discussion

- The UNCRC should be incorporated into domestic legislation — not merely referenced, but embedded.
- Play is always a legal protection — a right, not a permission granted by adults.
- Article 42 requires that children know their rights — this must be embedded in practice, not only shared as information.
- The child is the rights holder — this framing must inform all advocacy, policy, and practice.
- The interdependence of play with all other rights in the CRC should be explicitly acknowledged — Article 31 does not stand alone.
- Space, time, acceptance, and rights are four distinct but interconnected dimensions of the right to play.
- Play sufficiency — knowing whether children have enough play — should become a measurable policy indicator.
- Removing barriers to play is more empowering than simply creating new conditions.
- Legal consequences should exist for denying a child’s right to play.
- Children should be empowered to participate in political processes and to have genuine agency over their communities.

***“The right to play is always a legal protection. Letting children know their rights and their ability to express them is not optional — it is required under the Convention.”***  
— Dr Naomi Lott, University of Reading



### Playfully Provocative



1. In your professional or community context, how is the distinction between a ‘child’s right’ and an ‘adult’s permission’ currently playing out — and what would it take to make the rights-based framing the genuine default in your setting?
2. Article 42 requires that children be informed of their rights. How are children in your setting currently learning about their right to play — and what would it mean to truly embed this in everyday practice rather than just share it as information?
3. If the right to play were formally incorporated into Australian domestic legislation, what would be the most significant opportunity — and the most significant challenge — in your context?

## Co-Design & Community Involvement

Participants drew a clear and consistent distinction between formal consultation and genuine co-design. Authentic co-design — where children and communities are partners throughout the process, not simply consulted at the end — was identified as far more effective than policy or strategy alone in creating lasting cultural change.

The point was made strongly: policy and strategy do not trump process. Without genuine co-design embedded into how play initiatives are conceived, planned, and implemented, even well-intentioned strategies will fail to create the cultural shift that is needed.

### What Participants Said

- Children must have a genuine seat at the table in co-design processes — not token involvement.
- A child with autism was meaningfully engaged through targeted, accessible consultation on playground design — a model for inclusive co-design.
- Consult with children on playgrounds and play spaces — and share success stories widely to inspire replication.
- Policy and strategy do not create cultural change on their own — authentic co-design is essential.
- The Christchurch example was highlighted as a model where embedded process consistently outperformed top-down policy.
- Context is critical — co-design must be culturally responsive and locally grounded.
- Involving communities, not just agencies, creates long-term sustainability for play initiatives.
- Less documentation and more responsiveness to what already exists was highlighted as a strength of international examples.
- Many local governments lack effective mechanisms for genuinely hearing from children; some councils do this well and should be shared as models.
- Child impact assessments should require child voice as a component, not treat it as optional.
- The Redfern community park upgrade was cited as a powerful Australian co-designed success story worth amplifying nationally.

***“Strategy does not trump process. The most powerful change happens when communities are genuinely involved from the beginning — not consulted at the end.”***

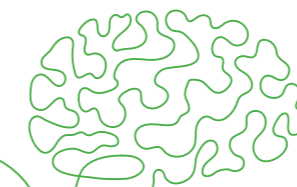
***— Play Summit Participant***



*Brisbane Play Summit in session — participants in table groups*

### Playfully Provocative

1. Think of a play initiative you have been involved in. Was it driven by genuine co-design, or did consultation happen after key decisions were already made — and what was the real impact of that approach on children?
2. What does meaningful participation look like for children with diverse needs and abilities in your context? What would need to change to make co-design more accessible and genuinely inclusive?
3. The Christchurch example showed that embedded process can outlast formal policy. What community-based processes already exist in your context that could be strengthened right now to create more durable change for children’s play?



## Government Engagement at All Levels

Embedding play across all levels and functions of government was seen as essential for lasting, systemic change. Play intersects with multiple policy domains — including health, education, urban planning, transport, and social cohesion — and government at all levels has a role to play.

A key insight from Robyn Monro Miller’s Churchill Fellowship was that local government has an incredibly important and often underutilised role in creating the conditions for play. Participants reinforced this strongly — noting that local government decisions on planning, parks, streets, and community spaces directly shape the play environments children inhabit every day.

### What Participants Said

- Active and regular engagement with local, state, and federal government is needed — not occasional advocacy.
- Play should be embedded in planning, community development, health settings, and home environments.
- Child impact policy must extend beyond portfolios directly focused on children — all government decisions should consider their impact on children’s play.
- Child rights impact assessments should be embedded in every council policy review process, with child voice required as a component.
- Local government has an incredibly important role and must be a key partner — it is where tangible change can start now.
- Play sufficiency should be a measurable policy indicator — do children in this community have enough play?
- Language matters: use words and frameworks that slot into existing local government legislation and planning processes.
- Government initiatives are subject to political whims — which is why process, community engagement, and legislative embedding are more durable than strategy alone.
- We must shift from saying ‘Government should’ to saying ‘Government will’.
- Parliamentary Friends of Play was proposed as an immediate, achievable political vehicle for building cross-party support.
- A broad range of stakeholders needs to be at the table: elected members, facilities managers, maintenance teams, Departments of Education and Health, Children’s Commissioners, urban planners, youth parliament, disability groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, media, philanthropists, and more.

***“Play intersects all areas of human life and service delivery — urban planning, education, health, transport, social cohesion.***

***Government at every level has a role to play.”***

***— Robyn Monro Miller AM***



*Participants working through advocacy priorities — moving from concept to clarity*

### Who Needs to Be at the Table?

Across all sessions, participants generated a comprehensive map of the stakeholders who need to be engaged in the play movement. Play’s genuinely cross-sectoral nature means everyone gets a role.

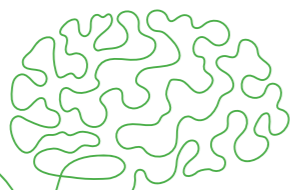
#### STAKEHOLDERS IDENTIFIED ACROSS ALL SESSIONS

- Government: Members of Parliament, local councillors, state and federal ministers, Children’s Commissioners, Treasury, regulators
- Education: Departments of Education, school principals, early childhood educators, OSHC providers, RTOs and universities — with play units mandatory in all teaching degrees
- Health and wellbeing: Preventative Health bodies, paediatricians, maternity ward staff, health sector broadly
- Planning and infrastructure: Urban and town planners, landscape architects, facilities managers, maintenance teams, sport and recreation planners, national park staff
- Community and youth: Children and young people themselves, Youth Parliament, parents and caregivers, disability groups, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representatives, intergenerational groups, playgroups
- Media, philanthropy and business: Media (to tell positive stories about play), corporate philanthropy, police and community safety, public communicators with broad reach

## Playfully Provocative



1. Which level of government — local, state, or federal — has the greatest untapped potential to create change for children’s play in your area right now, and what is the single most important ask you would make of them?
2. Think about a government decision in your community that had an unintended negative impact on children’s play. How might a child impact assessment process — with genuine child voice — have changed that outcome?
3. How could ‘play sufficiency’ be measured and made visible to decision-makers in your local area — what data already exists, and what stories need to be told?



## Urban Design and Built Environments

The physical environment was identified as a critical lever for enabling or restricting children’s play. Participants emphasised the need to influence urban design at a planning level — moving play from an afterthought to a design principle embedded from the outset.

Participants were drawn to international examples — particularly from Sweden — that demonstrated lighter-touch, community-based approaches to play environments. These approaches work with what is already present in communities, require less documentation, and are more responsive to local context and culture.

### What Participants Said

- Urban design should actively create and protect play opportunities — play must be a design principle, not an add-on.
- Barriers — physical, social, and cultural — must be identified and systematically removed.
- Swedish play landscape approaches were highlighted as inspiring: community-based and responsive to what is already there.
- Neutral physical spaces designated for play should be created and protected in all communities.
- Streets, public spaces, and natural environments are play spaces — not just designated playgrounds.
- Local government planning decisions are a key lever for embedding play into the built environment.
- Play spaces must serve all ages — intergenerational design including adult swings and shared spaces builds community.
- Playful public art activations and play streets can transform ordinary community spaces.
- Adventure playgrounds with updated standards should return to mainstream use.
- Cities should be deliberately designed for children and play — what works for children works for everyone.

***“Play is not only for playgrounds. When we design our cities and communities with children in mind, we create places that are better for everyone.”***

***— Play Summit Participant***

## Hopes, Fears and Audacious Dreams

Participants were invited to reflect on and share their hopes, fears, and audacious dreams for the future of play advocacy in Australia. This activity generated rich and honest conversation about what is possible — and what stands in the way.



### Playfully Provocative

1. *Think about the built environment in your community. What are the biggest physical barriers to children's play — and who specifically has the power to remove them?*
2. *Swedish play landscape principles emphasise working with what is already present. What existing spaces or assets in your community could be activated for play right now with minimal intervention?*
3. *How could urban planners and play advocates work more effectively together in your local area — and what would need to change for play to become a genuine design principle from the outset?*

#### HOPES

- Play Australia mobilises people and government — and investment in play becomes the norm
- Shared understanding of the spectrum of play develops, along with shared values around its importance
- Funding for play grows — and with it, the need to justify play diminishes
- Play becomes a recognised national health priority
- Children are valued for who they are, not just what they produce — and play is central to that
- Children know their rights and feel empowered to express them
- Play is understood and advocated for across all disciplines
- Adults remember what play is — and model it for children
- Children are allowed to play outside independently again
- Every child has pockets of play in their own neighbourhood
- Community and sense of belonging are rebuilt through play
- A cultural shift so profound that advocating for play feels unnecessary

#### FEARS

- Play remains only accessible to privileged, neurotypical children — and equity gaps widen
- Play advocacy becomes captured by commercial or political agendas
- Play is deemed trivial — and the movement loses momentum
- Australia remains stuck, unable to create the momentum needed for change
- Community long-term agendas are overtaken by short-term political cycles
- Children do not know their rights, and adults do not create space for them to exercise those rights
- This positive movement doesn't make impact across the whole of Australia
- Children are designed out of public life — more screen time, less freedom, less space
- Adults forget how to play — and most people keep a narrow view of what play is
- Technology takes over play entirely; the play-based childhood disappears
- Passionate advocates burn out without community support
- Lone champions cannot be sustained without finding their tribe

## Audacious Dreams

- A National Play Framework that guarantees every Australian child access to play — regardless of postcode, ability, or background.
- Play embedded in all government decision-making — from transport to health to housing.
- Children’s rights protected in law – embedding the UNCRC across national and local government.
- A cultural shift so profound that advocating for play feels as unnecessary as advocating for breathing.
- Children actively participating in the design of their communities, schools, and play spaces.
- Australia leading the world in play — not following.
- A Minister for Play or Play Commissioner — or Parliamentary Friends of Play as the immediate step.
- Play sufficiency legislation in Australia, modelled on the Welsh example.
- Design cities for children and play — playful public art, play streets, adult swings everywhere.
- Mandatory play training for everyone working with children; play units in all teacher education degree.
- A specific philanthropic Foundation dedicated to funding play in Australia.
- International Day of Play elevated as a unified national moment of action across Australia.
- Get sport to talk to play and play to talk to sport — build a shared language and joint advocacy.



## Playfully Provocative

1. Which hope resonates most strongly with you — and what is one concrete step you could take in the next three months to help make it real?
2. Which fear feels most urgent in your context right now, and what existing strengths — in your community, sector, or organisation — could be drawn on to address it?
3. If you could name your single most audacious dream for children’s play in Australia — one that feels almost too bold to say out loud — what would it be, and what would it take to make it real?

## Recommended Actions and Next Steps

Drawing on discussions across Play Summit Round 1 sessions, the following actions are recommended for Play Australia and its partners as we move through 2026 and into the development of Plan4Play in 2027.

### Policy and Legislation

- Advocate for incorporation of the full UNCRC into Australian domestic legislation
- Develop a child rights impact policy template that can be adopted across all government portfolios
- Use language and framing that slots into existing local government legislation and planning processes
- Champion play sufficiency as a measurable, reportable policy indicator
- Build the case for play as a national preventative health priority
- Pursue Parliamentary Friends of Play as an immediate and achievable political foothold
- Explore play sufficiency legislation modelled on the Welsh example

### Practice and Co-Design

- Prioritise authentic co-design over formal consultation in all play projects
- Develop and share a toolkit for genuinely inclusive consultation with children, including those with diverse needs and abilities
- Collect and amplify success stories from co-design processes to build the evidence base and inspire replication
- Embed play decision-making across all areas of government and service delivery
- Learn from and adapt international examples for Australian contexts — treating them as examples, not road maps

### Child Empowerment and Rights Education

- Ensure children are informed of their rights under the UNCRC (Article 42)
- Move beyond information-sharing to embed rights literacy in practice and everyday settings
- Support children's genuine participation in civic and political processes
- Consistently use the framing: the child is the rights holder

### Built Environment and Urban Design

- Engage with urban planners and local government to embed play into design standards from the outset
- Advocate for the removal of physical and social barriers to play across all age groups, particularly teenagers
- Explore and adapt lighter-touch, community-responsive play landscape principles for Australian contexts
- Protect and create neutral physical spaces designated for play in all communities
- Champion intergenerational design in public spaces — play spaces for all ages, not just children

### Community and Cultural Change

- Elevate International Day of Play as a unified national moment of action across Australia
- Utilise National Neighbour Day as a community play activation opportunity
- Develop a simple, powerful public message about play — the 'play version of 10,000 steps'
- Work with media to shift narratives around play — positive stories, not just risk and restriction
- Get sport to talk to play and play to talk to sport — build a shared language and joint advocacy

### Play Australia Organisational

- Continue positioning Play Australia as the national peak body that convenes, connects, and advocates across all sectors
- Continue distributing the State of Play Report and 'A Case for Play' resource to politicians and decision-makers
- Pursue philanthropic funding for a dedicated play foundation
- Strengthen Play Australia's presence in the health sector and preventative health discourse
- Plan regular state-based member networking events to sustain the movement and prevent isolation
- Adopt Dr Lott's right to play framework

# Playfully Provocative – A Summary of Questions for Deeper Reflection

## What Are the Playfully Provocative Questions?

Throughout this report, each key theme is accompanied by a set of ‘Playfully Provocative’ questions. These are intentional invitations to think more deeply, to challenge assumptions, and to connect the ideas in this report to your own professional and community experience.

The questions are designed to disturb comfortable thinking, surface what is often left unspoken, and open new possibilities. Each set contains a maximum of three linked questions that build on each other — moving from observation to honest reflection to imaginative action.

Used individually, they are a catalyst for personal reflection. Used with teams or communities, they are powerful tools for professional development, planning dialogue, or community consultation.

## How These Questions Feed into Play Summit Round 2

Play Summit Round 1 was designed to open the conversation — to surface ideas, identify shared values, embed a children’s rights approach to play, and map the terrain of play advocacy across Australia. Round 2 (August 2026) builds directly on this foundation.

Participants and readers are encouraged to sit with these questions between now and August — in their own organisations, teams, and communities. The insights, tensions, and stories that emerge will directly shape the agenda and working sessions of Round 2. Each summit expands our collective perception and builds on the knowledge generated in the previous one. Collectively, we are growing our shared understanding and strengthening the knowledge base that will ultimately inform Plan4Play.

Play Australia invites all Summit participants and report readers to:

- Reflect on the questions that resonate most strongly in your own context
- Use the questions as prompts for conversations with colleagues, teams, or community members before Round 2
- Note the responses, tensions, and ideas that emerge — and bring them to Round 2
- Share responses with Play Australia ahead of Round 2 to help shape the agenda: [ceo@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:ceo@playaustralia.org.au)

## THEME 1 Play Is for Everyone

These questions challenge the boundaries we unconsciously place around who play ‘belongs’ to. Asking readers to name who is missing out and to examine how their own organisation defines play surfaces the gap between aspiration and reality. The third question pushes toward imagining structural change — a key input for Round 2 discussions on community-level action.

1. *Who in your community is missing out on play entirely — and what is the single most significant structural barrier that needs to be removed for them?*
2. *How does your organisation or community currently define ‘play’? Does that definition limit who can access it, or where and when it can happen?*
3. *If play were genuinely woven into everyday life — not treated as a separate or scheduled activity — what would need to change in your work or community to make that a reality?*

## THEME 2 Children’s Rights and the UNCRC

These questions shift readers from knowing about rights to genuinely applying a rights lens. The first asks them to examine their own setting honestly. The second moves from awareness to embedded practice. The third invites strategic thinking about legislation — a conversation that Round 2 will develop into concrete advocacy planning.

1. *In your professional or community context, how is the distinction between a ‘child’s right’ and an ‘adult’s permission’ currently playing out — and what would it take to make the rights-based framing the genuine default in your setting?*
2. *Article 42 requires that children be informed of their rights. How are children in your setting currently learning about their right to play — and what would it mean to truly embed this in everyday practice rather than just share it as information?*
3. *If the right to play were formally incorporated into Australian domestic legislation, what would be the most significant opportunity — and the most significant challenge — in your context?*

## THEME 3 Co-Design and Community Involvement

These questions move readers past the rhetoric of co-design toward honest self-appraisal. The first asks them to examine a specific experience with candour. The second focuses on inclusion. The third challenges readers to identify existing community assets that could be strengthened now, generating practical material for Round 2’s focus on implementation.

1. *Think of a play initiative you have been involved in. Was it driven by genuine co-design, or did consultation happen after key decisions were already made — and what was the real impact of that approach on children?*
2. *What does meaningful participation look like for children with diverse needs and abilities in your context? What would need to change to make co-design more accessible and genuinely inclusive?*
3. *The Christchurch example showed that embedded process can outlast formal policy. What community-based processes already exist in your context that could be strengthened right now to create more durable change for children’s play?*

## THEME 4 Government Engagement at All Levels

These questions move readers from broad agreement that government matters to specific, actionable thinking about their own context. They generate the place-based intelligence that Round 2 will draw on to develop targeted advocacy strategies.

1. Which level of government — local, state, or federal — has the greatest untapped potential to create change for children’s play in your area right now, and what is the single most important ask you would make of them?
2. Think about a government decision in your community that had an unintended negative impact on children’s play. How might a child impact assessment process — with genuine child voice — have changed that outcome?
3. How could ‘play sufficiency’ be measured and made visible to decision-makers in your local area — what data already exists, and what stories need to be told?

## THEME 5 Urban Design and Built Environments

These questions ground the urban design conversation in the reader’s own physical environment — moving past generalisation to accountability, identifying immediate opportunities, and imagining new cross-sector collaboration.

1. Think about the built environment in your community. What are the biggest physical barriers to children’s play — and who specifically has the power to remove them?
2. Swedish play landscape principles emphasise working with what is already present. What existing spaces or assets in your community could be activated for play right now with minimal intervention?
3. How could urban planners and play advocates work more effectively together in your local area — and what would need to change for play to become a genuine design principle from the outset?

## THEME 6 Hopes, Fears and Audacious Dreams

These questions move from the collective to the personal, and from passive identification to active commitment — asking for concrete actions, connecting fears to existing strengths, and inviting genuine audacity that will shape the visioning work at Round 2.

1. Which hope resonates most strongly with you — and what is one concrete step you could take in the next three months to help make it real?
2. Which fear feels most urgent in your context right now, and what existing strengths — in your community, sector, or organisation — could be drawn on to address it?
3. If you could name your single most audacious dream for children’s play in Australia — one that feels almost too bold to say out loud — what would it be, and what would it take to make it real?

## Share your reflections with Play Australia

Your responses will help shape the agenda for Play Summit Round 2, August 2026.

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**Building  
a healthy  
Australia  
through play**