



# Member news

*promoting the value of play*

Spring 2019 :: Issue 07



## Executive Director's message

As the end of 2019 fast approaches I am happy to report that this year has been a 'game changer' for Play Australia.

In welcoming my colleague Kieran Brophy to the team, the outputs of activity have lifted exponentially as you would expect when the workforce increases by 100%. As reported previously, our 1000 Play Streets program is commencing with street play to happen in the City of Moreland and the City of Darebin in Victoria, the City of South Perth and the City of Vincent in WA and the Sunshine Coast Council in Queensland. We have received overwhelming support for Play Streets from across the country, and 2020 will see a rapid expansion of this initiative into a sustainable street play movement throughout Australia. We have connected with some inspiring leaders of 'Playing Out' an organisation operating in Bristol UK who have delivered 1000 play streets since beginning this movement 10 years ago, and we have strong support from officers and managers of Sport Australia who understand the importance of playing outside to increase physical literacy in Australia.

The Board has just undertaken a planning process to develop our Strategic Plan for 2020-2025. I thank the Board members for their amazing commitment to play in Australia, and their contribution to Play Australia. Without them, we could not do our work. If we are to have every Australian child playing outdoors every day, there is much work to be done. – **Continued Page 2**



## Play Australia Training in 2020

The Victorian training dates just announced for 2020 will be as follows:

**Wednesday 25 and Thursday 26 March**  
BOOKINGS OPEN NOW

**Wednesday 17 and Thursday 18 June**  
BOOKINGS OPEN NOW

**Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 August**  
BOOKINGS OPEN NOW

**Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 October**  
BOOKINGS OPEN NOW

All programs will be held at **Westerfolds Park, Templestowe.**

Please register on line and contact Barb at **barb@playaustralia.org.au** for further information.



For more information, or to book online, visit **www.playaustralia.org.au**





## Update

**Play Australia, supported by Sport Australia, welcomes Darebin City Council and Moreland City Council in Victoria as well as the City of South Perth and City of Vincent in Western Australia, as the first councils nationally to sign up to the 1000 Play Streets movement - helping Australians reclaim their local streets as places to come together with neighbours and play.**

Over the coming months, these four councils alongside one other council partner in Queensland (soon to be confirmed) will help their communities to co-ordinate Play Streets, with a goal to build local supports and create regular opportunities for residents to connect and play on their streets.

Play Australia and partners are working together to develop a new 1000 Play Streets toolkit for release in June 2020, to benefit all councils and help activate 1000 Play Streets nationally over the next 5 years.

For more information please email:  
[kieran@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:kieran@playaustralia.org.au)



*Play Australia National Board at the recent Planning Day in November.*

### – Continued from Page 1

The members in Queensland lead by Don Wark and Kylie Brannelly have begun to develop the Queensland Branch. An excellent One Day program on Designing for Play in Queensland commenced this process and we are thrilled that so many people committed to play wish to be involved.

In South Australia recently a 1 Day program on Managing Risk was conducted with a large attendance of members and potential members across South Australia. Thanks to the City of Unley for hosting this event at their very beautiful municipal complex.

The Play Australia Victoria Branch is soon to begin, and we thank Liz Cummins, also the Editor of this Newsletter, who is steering this group forward. 2020 will see a plan

of action, including continuation of the Local Government Play Network, a brilliant Victorian activity in operation since 2005, instigated by our then Vice-President, now Life Member, Joey Boothby!

Play Australia WA has engaged in excellent networking and support across the schools, and early years sectors. Thanks to Board member Kerry Logan who works tirelessly for the promotion of play in Western Australia.

2020 must see the establishment of Play Australia NSW.

Finally, thanks as always to our members across the country who continue to work in the interests of our children and young people. Thank you, and I hope that you all have a wonderful Xmas and New Year.

**Barbara Champion**

## 2019 Play Australia Annual General Meeting

This year PLAY AUSTRALIA celebrates its 105th Year. All members are invited to attend the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING online on **Monday 25th November 2019 at 7.30 pm (AEST).**

Go To Meeting will be used to enable members to join the meeting on line. A link will be sent on request closer to the meeting for members to click on to participate in the meeting.

Please RSVP online to [barb@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:barb@playaustralia.org.au) if you wish to be sent the link to the meeting or to have your apologies registered.



Play Pod at Ainslie Primary School in Canberra.

## Life Cubed Play Pods

**Playtime is when children learn to problem solve and the playground is an increasingly important venue for the development of physical, social and intellectual development.**

Schools can magnify the impact of free play development by providing tools, which facilitate creative, consequential, group play.

A Life Cubed Pod is such a solution. A secure, sustainable hub for creative free parts play, the pod provides a base station from which children can find the tools and resources they desire, to build, play and create their own special projects, with little input or constraint from adults.

The pod can be filled with loose parts, such as surplus commercial materials, clean tyres, dress up clothes, fabric, mesh, pipes, tubes,

balls and rope, anything to inspire imaginative and creative play.

Life Cubed was founded by Sydney-based Nick Mansell in 2015. From an interest in bettering the planet for future generations, Nick used his experiences of raising three very different children and a background in manufacturing management.

Inspiration came from several sources including the University of Otago's trial at the Swanson School in Auckland NZ and the Scrapstore Playpod program in UK schools.

The team at Life Cubed are happy to assist schools with teacher training, materials selection and project development and demonstrations of pod play.



Play Pod at Ainslie Primary School in Canberra.

Read about pod play at a Canberra school <http://lifecubed.com.au/pods-in-the-press/>

For further information contact [nick@lifecubed.com.au](mailto:nick@lifecubed.com.au)

**www** For more information about Life Cubed visit [www.lifecubed.com.au](http://www.lifecubed.com.au)

## All-in-One Finger Entrapment Tool

**This all-in-one finger entrapment tool has been manufactured by Play Australia for the benefit of members and playground risk assessors nationally.**

"This all-in-one finger probe entrapment tool has 8, 8.6, 12 and 25mm diameter sections.

Openings >1m above the ground OR within the free space of equipment should be tested for finger entrapment.

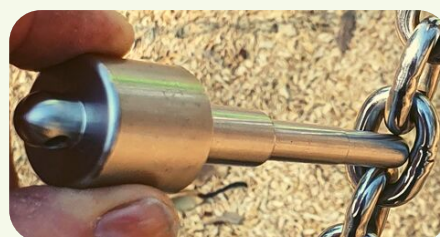
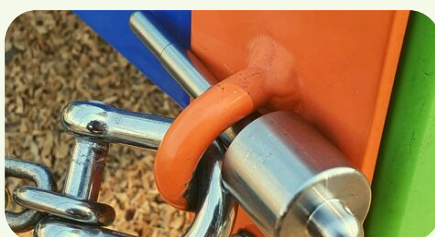
An opening is considered a potential finger entrapment if the 8mm section can be inserted, but the 25mm section cannot pass through the opening.

Chains should be tested regardless of height. Chain openings are too large if the 8.6mm section can be inserted.

Chain connections (e.g. S-hooks) have the wrong sized opening if the 8.6mm section can be inserted, but the 12mm section cannot be inserted.

**Important: this all-in-one finger entrapment tool does not have the AS4685 required lengths for the separate probes, however it provides an easy to carry, simple and quick method for checking most openings.**

**www** To purchase, go to [www.playaustralia.org.au](http://www.playaustralia.org.au) where you can order and pay online.





# What is the useful life of play equipment?

**Message received from John Wilkinson of the City of Charles Sturt Council SA.**

**'Just doing some research on the useful life of play equipment as defined in council asset management plans. Has the industry undertaken any research on this topic? I expect it is also influenced by manufacturer warranties, materials and location. Most council's appear to reference 15 or 20 years. Any advice is appreciated.'**

'I am not aware of any research on this issue, and yes, I am sure you are right, that councils will be given advice by suppliers on their views, but in the back of my head, 15 years comes to mind as a time used by many councils, but it is probably an estimate as opposed to any evidence. I also think that the life of a playground is determined by so many other factors, that I don't know how significant this issue is from a strategic point of view. It is something I would be happy to do a bit of research on, in that I could ask our council members and our supplier members about it. I will cc Don Wark, who runs the Play Works in Brisbane, and Mark Chapman who sells Kompan in Victoria, both Board members of Play Australia,

and Andrew Reedy of Play Check in WA, if they have any views on the matter. I will also ask Paul Grover what he thinks, as he will have observed council's policies over some years now, and will get back to you on it. Given it is the end of the financial year, I know that they are all flat out, so they mightn't respond for a few days.'

**– Barb Champion, Play Australia.**

'It will vary enormously with differences in base materials, coatings, production values, use levels, local area (eg salt water, cultural impacts eg vandalism), climate, shade levels, functionality (ie static or dynamic), maintenance, tolerance for cosmetic degradation, type of undersurface, etc. Recent years have seen much wider use of stainless steel rather than electroplated mild steel and this will extend useful life of some things but there's also been a big increase in the use of rope structures which don't generally have the same resilience under heavy or even normal use. We also see much more use of timber in nature playgrounds, and the useful life of those will vary with species, production values, and local conditions. Undersurfacing life is yet another can of worms entirely.

So in summary, it depends...'

**– Don Wark, Playworks**

'I agree. I've seen plenty of well-maintained stuff out there over 20 years old sometimes well-over, which was probably deemed to have a design life of 15-20 years when installed.'

'It depends... good summary, Don.'

**– Paul Grover, Play DMC**

'I concur with Don and Paul's comments. Most equipment will outlast the manufacturers recommended life if well maintained (obviously environmental impacts will have a greater impact in some areas than others). In my experience most playground equipment is replaced, not because it is unsafe or in an unfit condition, but because it looks old and tired and community expectations demand something more current.'

**– Andrew Reedy, Play Check**

'I would say that anything less than 15 years and the client is not getting what they paid for. Many materials now have Lifetime Warranty and an expectation that the playgrounds may be in place for up to 30 years. As Don suggests, there are many variables to playgrounds but I would think the minimum lifespan should be 15 years but really the goal should be 20+ years.

**– Mark Chatman, Kompan**



# Kids learn valuable life skills through rough-and-tumble play with their dads

## Kids learn valuable life skills through rough-and-tumble play with their dads

Play is an important way for children to learn about the world around them.

Through play, they learn cultural norms, socialisation guidelines and experiment with different ways to interact with their environment.

But play between a father and their child or children can offer a different type of play. It's often boisterous, physical and competitive, and this all has an equally important role to play in a child's development.

### The rough-and-tumble play

Dads tend to engage in more active, physical play activities with their young children – rough-and-tumble play.

Dads often engage in activities such as play wrestling and throwing their child into the air.

This type of play is full of excitement and challenge, and if it weren't for the clear enjoyment of both parties, it might sometimes seem a little aggressive to an outsider. But this play isn't just fun. Research has shown it's also important for healthy child development.

Of course, rough-and-tumble play doesn't have to be exclusive to dads. Mums can also engage in such play with their kids and, although that's not been the subject of research to date, there's no reason the results can't be just the same.

### Rough-and-tumble play improves social skills

In one study we looked at the quality of father-child rough-and-tumble play, and children's emotional and behavioural problems.

High-quality rough-and-tumble play was defined as being warm and sensitive, dominance-sharing and playful in nature.

We found high-quality play was related to higher levels of what's termed prosocial

behaviour. Prosocial behaviour includes things like being considerate of other people's feelings and sharing well with others. In other words, high-quality rough-and-tumble play is linked to nice children who are probably going to have an easier time making friends with their peers.

### Rough-and-tumble play improves emotion regulation

Play that's active, physical and competitive has also been linked to better emotion regulation.

Dads have a tendency to push their kids to the limit, to set goals that are just a bit beyond their reach, and to rough-and-tumble play in a way that gets the kids worked up.

Good rough-and-tumble play is play where the kids don't just get worked up and potentially frustrated, but where the child learns how to handle these emotions – how to regulate them. This is important as better emotion regulation allows children to understand and manage their own behaviour and reactions.

### Rough-and-tumble play reduces injury risk

Now this one might seem a bit counter-intuitive.

In one of the studies we conducted, we looked at the relationship between father-child rough-and-tumble play and childhood injury rates in 46 families.

What we found was the more dads engaged in rough-and-tumble play with their kids, the fewer injuries those kids sustained.

We think the rough-and-tumble play is teaching kids about their limits – how far they can physically push themselves.

### Winners and losers

One of the important lessons from any rough-and-tumble play, though, is about the balance between winning and losing. It's important parents don't dominate.

One of my favourite rough-and-tumble

games is the sock wrestle. Each player puts on just one sock. The aim of the game is to get your opponent's sock off their foot. Give it a try. It's simple, but a lot of fun!

When you're playing this with your kid (or kids if you want an extra challenge!), make sure you share the winning and losing.

It's important for your child to both win and lose, as without the losing and the frustration that comes with that, you're not helping to teach them how to regulate their emotions.

So it seems as though the rough-and-tumble play with kids isn't just enjoyable, it's also an important part of a child's development.

It's teaching children how to regulate their emotions, how to safely push and extend their limits, how to assess risky situations, and how to get along well with others.

Not only that, but physical activity has multiple health benefits too. Rough-and-tumble play is the sort of thing we should be encouraging parents to do regularly.

**Author: Emily Freeman.**

Lecturer in Psychology, University of Newcastle.



*This piece has been reprinted in full under the Creative Commons Licence and was originally published in The Conversation on September 5, 2019*

For references in this article visit <https://theconversation.com/kids-learn-valuable-life-skills-through-rough-and-tumble-play-with-their-dads>

**THE CONVERSATION**



## Report Update

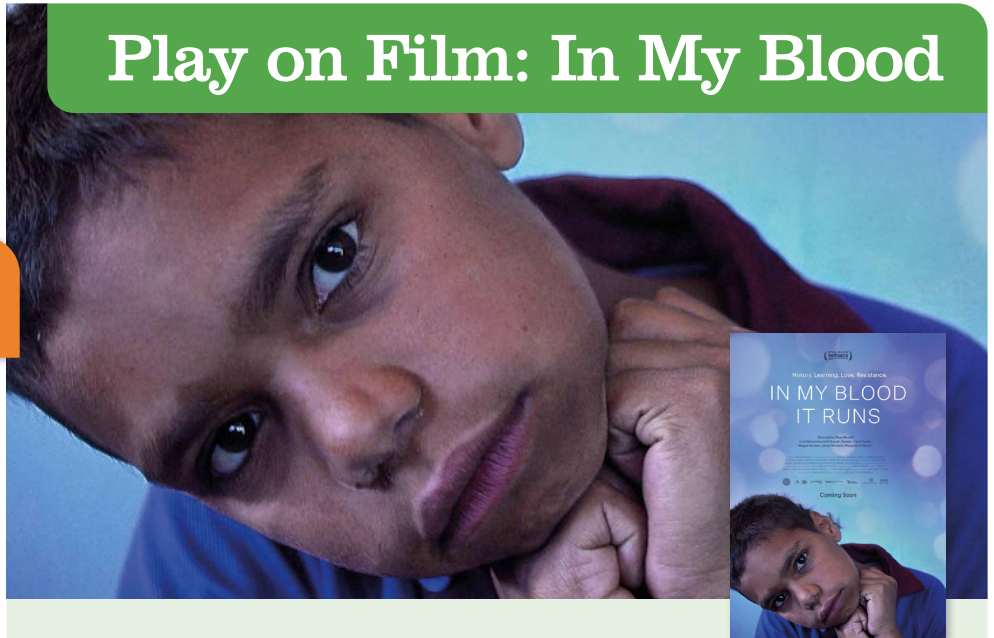
### Rotary Overseas Recycled Playgrounds Project

Following on from our article by Melanie Kinsey last issue on the RORP project, Peter Cribb has reported that he and the RORP team have been extremely busy removing and preparing play equipment for overseas projects in collaboration with various local Rotary branches in Victoria. This play equipment is mostly destined for projects in Sri Lanka, but in the Philippines and Timor Leste as well.

A big thanks to everyone who has participated as the project so far and RORP is now filling a third container to be shipped.

Special thanks to John Arena, Omnitech, Adventure+ and Naturform who have provided great support to this project.

*For further information on how you can be involved in this project please contact Peter Cribb via email [ptcribb@gmail.com](mailto:ptcribb@gmail.com)*



The Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians were privileged earlier this year to view an advanced screening of the documentary film 'In My Blood It Runs' from director, Maya Newell. The following statement on this film was endorsed by them:

**The film tells a powerful story through the eyes of 10-year-old Djujan, an Arrernte/Garrwa boy living in a town camp in Mparntwe (Alice Springs).**

Djujan is a multi-lingual hunter and healer with a rich curiosity about his culture and ambitious dreams for his future. Yet, he is becoming disengaged from school and falling under increasing surveillance by police and welfare agencies—increasing his alienation from the institutions intended to educate, uplift and protect him.

This film illustrates the value and importance of listening to and understanding children's voices and experiences from their own perspective. By positioning viewers to see the world through Djujan's eyes, we see first-hand the systemic injustices that create barriers to him fulfilling his potential and his gifts, in favour of interventions that increase his risk of spiralling into the criminal justice system.

This film makes a compelling case to address the systemic racism that is too often embedded in our educational, justice and child welfare systems. It demonstrates the importance of raising the age of criminal responsibility in favour of supportive interventions that prevent youth offending. It shows the love and care that Aboriginal families have for their children, the power of culture for children, and the painful ways this is often called into question. It portrays the strength and resilience of Aboriginal communities still fighting the legacy of colonisation. The film will also challenge viewers from Aotearoa/New Zealand, where similar issues are faced by many indigenous Maori children.

As Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates, we commend the film's centering of Djujan and the significant level of input, ownership and control Djujan, his family and his community had in shaping the film and defining the social impact objectives they want to achieve from sharing their stories. We support measures to ensure children have access to culturally safe, inclusive schools; efforts to address systemic racism in all our institutions; and reforms to prevent the criminalisation of young children like Djujan, including reforms to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility.

The film celebrates the continuation of Aboriginal traditional practices through the talents of young Djujan. The Aboriginal Children's Commissioners, in particular, felt the film reminded the audiences of the uniqueness and significance of Aboriginal children as vessels of the longest continuous culture in the world. Much needs to be done to support Aboriginal children to be safe and connected to family with the balance of culture and identity; as without the balance, their wellbeing and their inherent rights as Aboriginal children cannot be fully realised.

We encourage all Australians to see the film, to share its message and to engage with the uncomfortable truths it reveals about how First Nations children and families are too often treated in our society.

[www.inmyblooditruns.com](http://www.inmyblooditruns.com)



## Heat and Playgrounds

**Last issue we looked at heat in public playspaces, this issue we look at an initiative in New South Wales where heat in playgrounds is being addressed. This is particularly pertinent as we head into the summer months in Australia.**

The 'Cool Schools' initiative is lead by Western Sydney University and was launched in 2018 to develop interdisciplinary research programs for heat-resilient primary and secondary school environments and design of heat-resilient curriculum. They have released a report summarising current research in health and environmental sciences, planning policy, legislation and standards, sustainability education, and innovative design trends. Its purpose is to inform future research into student thermal comfort and cooling solutions for schools in Western Sydney and NSW.

The report also noted concerns that trees are disappearing from schools

at an alarming rate. Dr Sebastian Pfautsch, Senior Researcher questions how outdoor education can safely be delivered if temperatures are increasing, yet school yards are becoming distinctively empty and offer minimal shade.

"Trees provide significant environmental, economic, social, psychological and physiological benefits to students. As well as offering shade, trees create fresher air and provide fantastic habitat and food sources for insects and animals, resulting in beneficial learning and recreational environments for children. It's very concerning to see even more trees rapidly disappearing from our schools," said Dr Pfautsch.

Whilst gathering information for the report Dr Pfautsch created a standardised measurement of playground performance and safety by developing a star rating system.

The system considers attributes such as surface type (blue soft rubber, black

rubber, sand, grass, woodchips), level and type of shade (shade sail, trees), and predicts for globe temperature on an average 30-degree day in summer. Globe temperature is a combination of incoming solar radiation, reflected heat from a surface and air temperature.

Dr Pfautsch hopes to get several councils onboard to co-fund his project. Until then, he is pushing ahead with his work and plans to analyse 30 to 50 playgrounds predominately across western Sydney. The ranking system will be ready by next summer.

"It's a tool for councils and a decision-making tool for the public so they can show responsibility when it comes to summer heat and so they can advise parents," he said. "It will help parents choose where to go with their kids; it might be a great playground to use, but not good for summer."

For references in this article visit [https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1480325/Cool\\_schools.pdf](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1480325/Cool_schools.pdf)



# Members Corner

Our place for information and profiles on  
Play Australia Members and Membership

## Member Profile

## Andrew Reedy

Andrew Reedy is Director of Play Check, based in Perth providing safety advice, auditing and training to the playground industry, which he has been involved in since 1994. Andrew is also a Life Member of Play Australia.

In 2014, Andrew brought his wealth of experience in playground safety and design to co-authoring Play Australia's guide to Risk Management in playspaces 'Getting The Balance Right'.

### Tell us briefly about yourself

I have been involved in the playground industry since 1994. After spending 20 years with Forpark Australia, I resigned as General Manager in 2014 to start Play Check, a consultancy specialising in providing advice to all sectors of the playground industry, in terms of playground design, safety and risk management. I've been a member of the Standards Australia committee for playground equipment since 2002 and have been involved in the development all versions of AS 4685, as well as AS 4422. I am also the father of 6 children, so have plenty of first-hand experience in children's play the need for challenge as they grow and develop.

### What prompted you to become a member of Play Australia?

Having worked closely with Barb Champion on the Standards Committee I quickly realised that

the core values of Play Australia were very much aligned with my own views in relation to children's play. As the peak Australian body for children's play, becoming a member was a logical fit.

### Is there a highlight achieved within your work that you could share regarding an innovation for children's outdoor play experiences?

A highlight of my time in consulting has been to witness a real and positive shift in the way the industry, and local government in particular, in Western Australia is beginning to view the value of acceptable risk in play. I spend a lot of time involved in risk assessments and talking about the value of some level of risk in play. As a result of this shift I have had the opportunity to be involved in many exciting playground developments, which would probably never have eventuated a decade ago.

### How does Play Australia support you as a member?

Being based in WA I do not have the direct benefit of many of the programs and events run by Play Australia, but the information available through PA provides great resource. Having the ability to use Barb Champion as a sounding board over the years has also been invaluable.

### Why is it important for you to work in the play sector?

My priority in life has always been family. Having the opportunity to combine the interests of my children when younger with my work-life has enabled me to work in an industry that I'm passionate about. I have experienced great satisfaction in having the opportunity to play some small part in helping shift attitudes toward the need to allow acceptable levels of risk in playgrounds, enabling the development of many exciting and challenging play spaces.



## Got Something to Share on Play?

We'd like to make our Members News a little more interactive. As such we'd like to hear from you on themes and ideas for future editions to pass on to our editorial team. If you have something you'd like to share please email [newsletter@playaustralia.org.au](mailto:newsletter@playaustralia.org.au)



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*promoting the value of play*

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