

# Play Guidelines



*the city within  
a World Heritage  
National Park*

The Open Space and Recreation Strategy, and incorporated Play Guidelines have been directly informed by the Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035.

The strategic plan and guidelines fall under Council's Community Strategic Plan Key Direction of Care.

Ongoing review of its policies, programs and priorities allows Council to ensure that it is prepared and resourced to meet the challenges and opportunities of a changing community. It will inform Council's four year delivery program and resource allocation, now and into the future.

The strategic planning focus supports a whole-of-Council approach to delivering services in our local government area.

#### INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING FRAMEWORK



## Acknowledgement

The City of the Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Blue Mountains City Council recognises that Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners have a continuous and deep connection to their Country and that this is of great cultural significance to Aboriginal people, both locally and in the region.

For Darug and Gundungurra People, Country takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape—landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings and people—past, present and future.

Blue Mountains City Council pays respect to Elders past and present while recognising the strength, capacity and resilience of past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Blue Mountains region.

Adopted by Blue Mountains City Council at the 24 July 2018 meeting.

TRIM Reference 18/155719



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# Executive Summary

**The purpose of the Play Guidelines is to give direction on how play opportunities will be provided to children across the Blue Mountains by Blue Mountains City Council.**

The existing provision of play equipment and spaces needs to change because:

- The understanding of what children need in play to foster their development has increased significantly in the last few decades. There is a need to provide for inventive, imaginative and social play as well as climbing and swinging equipment.
- Nature play has become an acceptable and desirable means of providing play opportunities.
- There are no inclusive playgrounds in the Blue Mountains and limited parks with a safe path of travel these are required.
- Council has resolved to develop four district parks that have significantly improved play facilities: associated increases in maintenance, operational and renewal costs will need to be offset.

These guidelines provide information on how different types of play opportunities in the Blue Mountains should be spread across the hierarchy of parks and across each planning area.

The range of play opportunities to be provided by Blue Mountains City Council is:

- the four district parks including inclusive playgrounds with a full spectrum of play opportunities.
- local planning area parks and parks adjacent to sportsgrounds: one or two types of formal play equipment and other informal play opportunities.
- tourists parks, which will provide nature play only.
- neighbourhood parks– these will retain kinetic play as long as practical and provide at least one item of informal play. A variety of opportunities will be provided across the neighbourhood parks in each planning area to ensure the full range of activities is available to local residents.
- town centre spaces, which will be used for opportunistic provision of small integrated play opportunities.



An increase in expenditure on park development and maintenance is required for play opportunities to be provided by Council at the level these guidelines recommend.

Impediments to children having enough play are not related to play equipment only. The consultation process indicated that there is a lack of awareness of the play opportunities in the Blue Mountains. The Play Guidelines recommend consistently providing information and promoting the location and facilities available via multiple mediums.

A further impediment to play is the lack of knowledge on how to engage with the environment in places where there is little or no formal play equipment. These Play Guidelines recommends activities and events to encourage children and their carers to engage in nature play and imaginative play to enable them to play at a broader range of places.

If activities are provided through events, this would also provide more opportunities for social play. The proposed events tap into existing activities run by Council or groups, and can be delivered with minor modifications only.

The program for implementing changes to play spaces will be dependent on each playgrounds:

- place within the parks hierarchy
- potential for increases in inclusivity
- funding available
- coordination of upgrades and off-sets,
- providing connections between upgrades and off-sets, and
- the remaining useful life of the existing equipment

Council aims to provide play opportunities that are consistent across the five planning areas.

These guidelines allow for each planning area to have:

- A district park/s, within 20 minutes' drive or easy walk from a railway station, which provides a high quality inclusive play equipment and amenity
- A choice of at least two local parks which provide some formal play and toilets.
- Neighbourhood parks with some elements of play – a full range of which shall be available across the planning area.





# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The purpose of the guidelines

The purpose of these Play Guidelines is to support to the Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan providing direction on how play opportunities can be provided to children across the Blue Mountains.

These Play Guidelines will inform Blue Mountains City Council's budgets, priorities for play provision, park service levels with regard to play setting provision, and parks service levels with regard to maintenance of play equipment. It should be considered in the broader context of the Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan.

It does not cover play opportunities provided in Council's leisure centres or play opportunities provided by other organisations or commercial venues.

## 1.2 Document outline

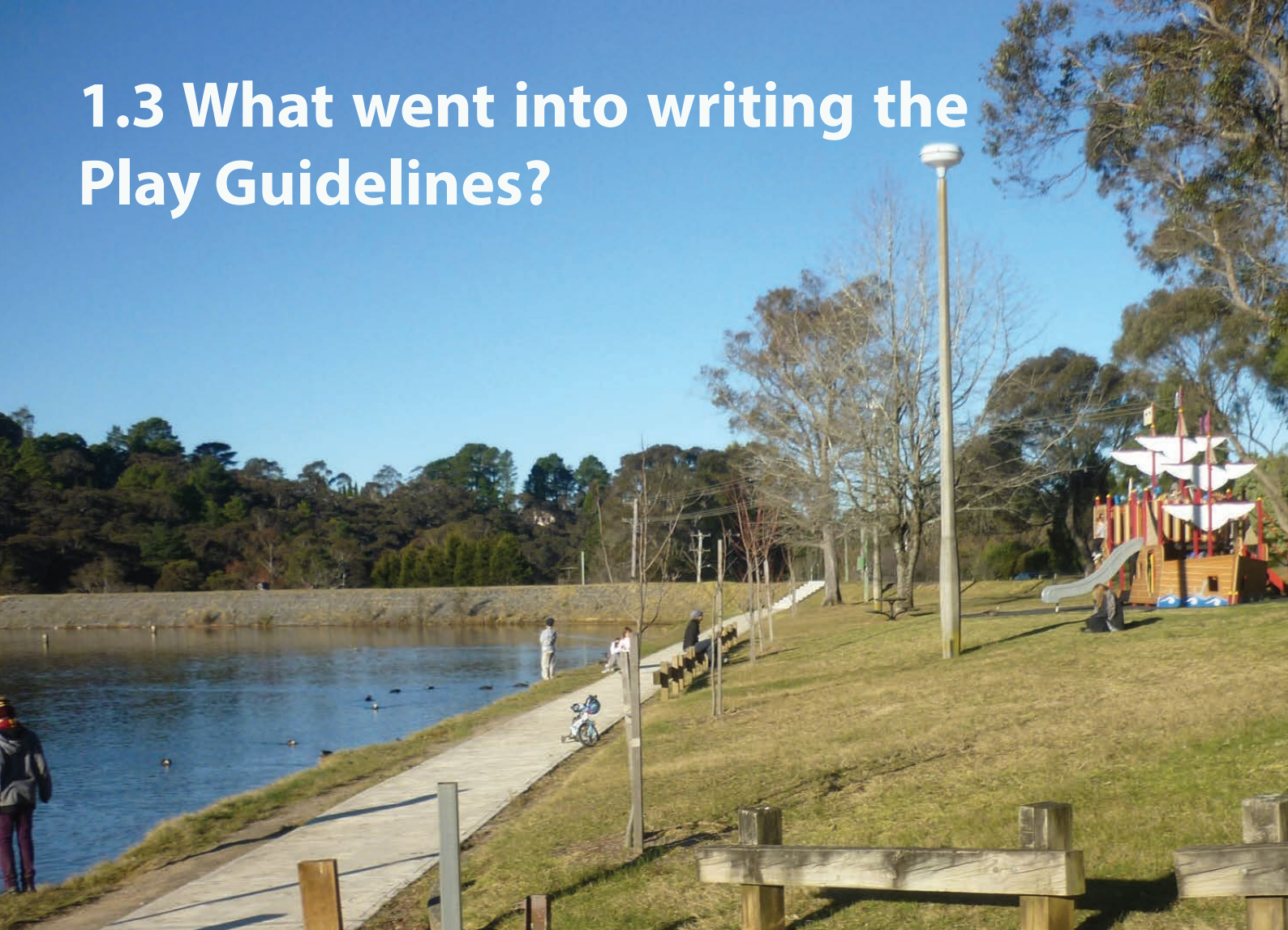
The Play Guidelines is presented in the following format:

Section 1	introduces the Play Guidelines and provides a glossary
Section 2	provides the background and context for the Play Guidelines, with information about other relevant strategic documents and the special Blue Mountains context
Section 3	describes the four pillars needed to support play for children, including the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and what can be done about it
Section 4	discusses risk and the approach to addressing risk with play
Section 5	provides a series of directional statements and principles for how and when change should occur
Section 5	describes current and future provision in each of the five planning areas
Appendix	provides detail on consultation that went into the development of the guidelines
References	





# 1.3 What went into writing the Play Guidelines?



This report was written with reference to the following documents:

- Existing Council strategic documents and Council's hierarchy for delivering services. These are outlined in section 2.1 and generally indicate that inclusive and high-quality playgrounds need to be added to the range of play opportunities.
- Best practice and understanding about what play opportunities children need to optimise their development. This understanding informs Section 3 and indicates that Council needs to ensure a broader range of play opportunities than are currently available are developed.
- The outcome of consultation with experts, children, teenagers and the general community—including online surveys, interviews with teenagers and children and workshops with professionals who work with children. Consultation outcomes are provided in the appendices. They indicate that carers need, or are seeking:
  - more information on where play opportunities are available
  - more information on how to play to benefit children's development
  - some higher quality playgrounds
  - playgrounds with more amenity such as shade and seating
  - playgrounds which allow risk to be better managed e.g. with fencing and
  - more inclusive playgrounds
- A review of the predicted replacement costs of the current formal play provision against the resources available and the Council resolution to raise the standard of provision at the four district parks—some re-distribution of funding is needed.

## 1.4 Glossary—definitions

### **Play**

“Play” is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. The unstructured element is an important part of the play and separates play from sport.

### **Play setting/play opportunity**

Anywhere play can happen easily, may include formal playgrounds, bike loops, rocks, slopes, a creek, or a simple concrete surface on which can be drawn a hopscotch or handball court.

### **Nature play**

A concept to encourage children to spend more time playing outdoors using their imaginations in a natural setting. It inspires open-ended possibilities for self-designed play, creativity, learning and socialising. Nature play has also been described as a designated, managed location in an existing or modified outdoor environment where children of all ages and abilities play and learn by engaging with and manipulating diverse natural elements, materials, organisms and habitats, through sensory, fine motor, and gross motor experiences. (Moore R. 2014).

### **Play equipment**

The range of items that are purpose-built for playing on that are commonly used in parks. They can be formal or informal (see below).

### **Formal play/play equipment**

This refers to purpose-made items such as swings, slides and climbing gyms. It may be bespoke or from a catalogue, or a combination of the two.

### **Informal play opportunities**

Informal play opportunities are closely associated with nature play and refer to site features such as creeks and to items, such as rocks, logs or mounds of earth, placed to create a play setting. The features can be naturally occurring or purpose-built, such as pump/junior dirt jump tracks for bikes or small bush tracks for exploring.

### **Inclusive playground**

A playground where the design and facilities provided are particularly focussed on allowing children with special needs to play alongside others. The idea supersedes an earlier concept of accessible playgrounds, which focused on play opportunities for children with special needs only. Inclusive playgrounds cater to diverse needs—physical and intellectual, all ages and all abilities, as well as to children from different cultural backgrounds. They also provide equipment and activities for families to gather, play and socialise.

### **Risk**

The combination of the probability of occurrence of harm and the severity of that harm.





## 2 Background to the Play Guidelines

A number of factors give direction to how play can be delivered in the Blue Mountains.

The most significant are:

- Council's strategic documents
- the service hierarchy
- resourcing available
- the Blue Mountains' context and character
- the outcomes of the community consultation

### 2.1 Strategic documents

The Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan 2035 has as one of its six key directions for 'Care' which specifically mentions the aspiration to have safe healthy environments in which people of all ages and abilities can play.

The Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) is a broad alliance of community organisations, government departments, voluntary organisations and businesses that aims to improve outcomes for children and their families across the Blue Mountains. The SFA produced the Child and Family Plan. This document has three pillars for action of which one is 'creating child-friendly communities'. The child-friendly concept emphasises the importance of play to children; the need for built environments and public spaces that are child and family friendly; and the need for information on play to be provided.

Councils Open Space and Recreation Strategic Plan provides strong strategic direction on how play will be provided. This document acts as a supporting document for that strategic plan.

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017–2021 provides direction seeking inclusivity and universal design across all public places.

## 2.2 Service hierarchy

Council provides a range of services. The level of service provided by Council varies with the hierarchy, with different levels of service being provided depending on whether a site is servicing a population catchment. The level of service refers to both the number of facilities provided and the level of maintenance undertaken. Parks, and the playgrounds in them, fall under the control of council's Recreation Service.

Level	What parks it applies to	General level of service
Regional (Tourist)	Not provided by Council	NA
District	Glenbrook Park, Buttenshaw Park, Wentworth Falls Lake and Blackheath Park	The highest level of facilities and maintenance within the resources available
Local Parks	The major park for each of Council's five planning areas—is often beside sports grounds. e.g Melrose Park, Katoomba	A medium level of facilities provided Regular servicing
Civic	Where available, a park or public area in larger towns and village centres. e.g Carrington Place, Katoomba	Same as local parks
Neighbourhood	Parks servicing a town or village or part of a town only. Some district or town parks may also be functioning as the neighbourhood park. e.g Warrimoo Oval	Minimal facilities with regular servicing
Rural locality	Parks in areas where parks tend to be used less often. e.g Megalong	As negotiated with the community
Undeveloped	There are a small number of parcels of land zoned for recreation that have not been developed as such	As needs only

Council divides the Local Government Area (LGA) into five planning areas to ensure an even spread of services is provided across the main population centres.

The five planning areas are;

- Planning Area 1 Mount Victoria to Blackheath, including the Megalong Valley, Mount Wilson, Mount Tomah and Mount Irvine
- Planning Area 2 Medlow Bath, Katoomba, Leura and Wentworth Falls
- Planning Area 3 Bullaburra, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford and Linden.
- Planning area 4 Faulconbridge, Springwood, Valley Heights, Winmalee, Hawkesbury Heights, Sun Valley and Mount Riverview
- Planning Area 5 Warrimoo, Blaxland, Glenbrook and Lapstone

These guidelines allow for each planning area to have;

- district park/s, within 20 minutes' drive or easy walk from a railway station, which provide high quality inclusive play equipment and amenity
- a choice of at least two local parks which provide some formal play and toilets
- neighbourhood parks with some elements of play—a full range of which shall be available across the planning area.



## 2.3 Resourcing available

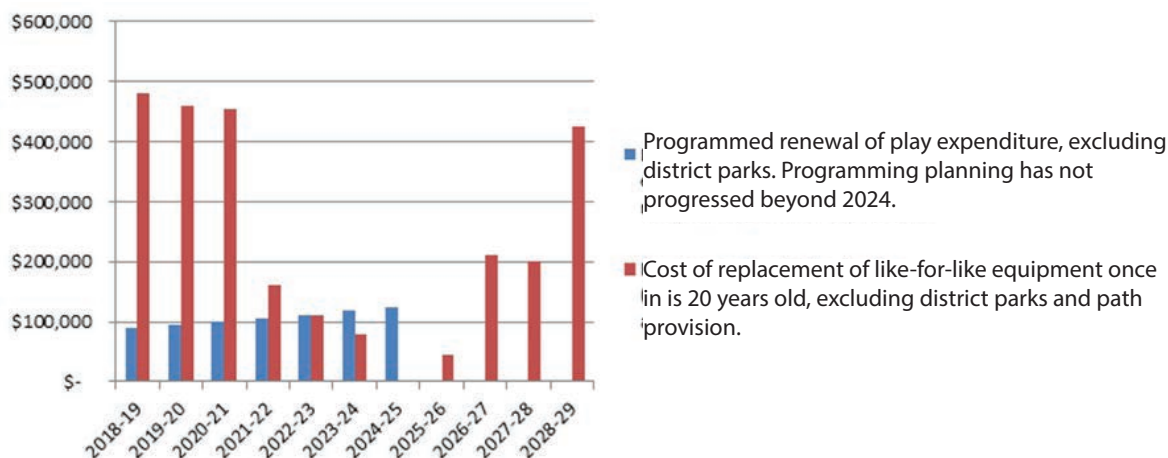
There are over 100 parks in the Blue Mountains and 56 have formal play settings in them. The resources available to Blue Mountains City Council to provide and maintain these parks, and the play settings within them, are less than in many other local government areas.

In more built-up or centralised local government areas, the number of households paying rates per park is much higher than in the Blue Mountains, allowing more money to be spent on each park. This shows in the amount of play equipment provided in Blue Mountains parks and their rate of replacement—much equipment is almost 20 years old. However, this thin spread of playground resources is off-set by the number of natural areas available to residents of the Blue Mountains.

The highly dispersed low density of the population affects all services provided by Council—there will always be competing demands for Council resources for services such as roads, drains and libraries etc.

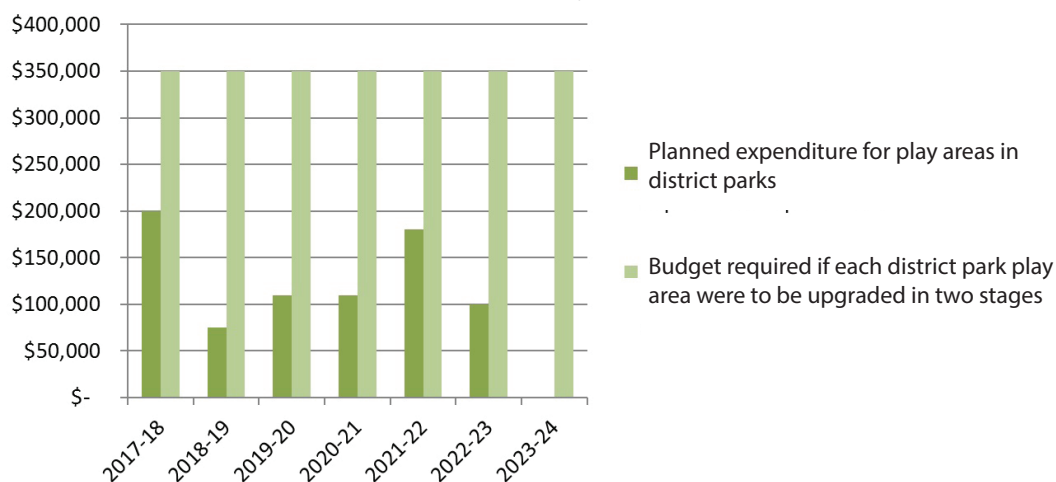
Below are a series of graphs demonstrating the budget implications of different approaches to play provision.

**Graph 1** compares the cost of replacing formal play equipment like for like, the cost of removing equipment and restoring a lawn surface, and the allocated budget. It does not include district parks or accessibility upgrades.



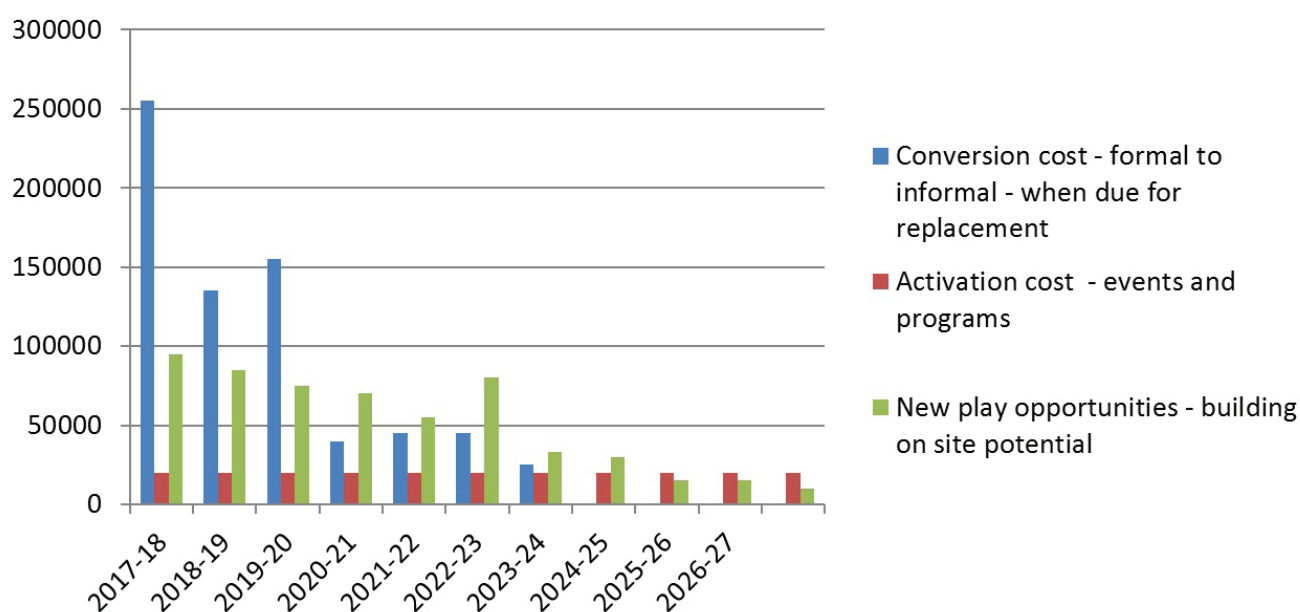
This assumes that play equipment in neighbourhood parks cost \$45,000 to replace like-for-like, and play equipment in local parks costs \$50,000 to replace like for like (This is an average figure across the diverse range). It assumes that play equipment is replaced every 20 years.

**Graph 2** shows the cost to provide a quality fully accessible playground in each of the four district parks. It based on the premise that each upgrade occurs in two stages costing \$500,000 each and that a \$300,000 renewal occurs at every 10 years, and also shows the current allocated budget.



**Graph 3**—Costs for converting formal play equipment to informal equipment when due for replacement. The graph shows the costs of altering how play is provided. It assumes that formal play equipment is converted to informal equipment when it is 20 years old. A budget of \$20,000 per year has been given to facilitate events in play spaces. This is a partial conversion only as some formal play equipment is retained in local parks. District parks excluded. The graph also shows \$20,000 per year being used to facilitate activation events. It also shows the cost of site characteristics introducing new play opportunities. Elements and estimated costs are:

- art projects and interpretive components—\$5000 for neighbourhood parks and \$10,000 for civic parks
- barriers to the road, social seating and shade structures—\$15,000 each
- ‘exploration grove’ plantings—\$5,000
- places at bushland edges—\$3,000
- exercise equipment—\$40,000 and
- junior pump track or bike loop—\$20,000
- 



In addition to the potential costs of replacing formal play equipment with like-for-like formal play equipment, additional expenditure will be required to:

- provide the four district parks with bigger, more engaging and inclusive playgrounds
- ensure that when playgrounds are replaced there is an improvement to the accessibility—a safe path of travel and possibly an accessible parking bay
- provision of bubblers near playgrounds to decrease dependence on bottled water
- provision of seating near playgrounds to respond to the needs of an aging population and their role in caring for children

The work required to maintain playgrounds is not separated from other park maintenance costs, but the income available to cover general parks maintenance costs is decreasing in relation to expenses.

There needs to be a change in the style of play equipment provided. An increase in expenditure on park development and maintenance is also required, at least during the change phase, for play opportunities to be provided by Council at the level recommended.

The long-term implications for resourcing are clear; to provide a good range of play equipment across the Blue Mountains, some offset in quantity and style will be required.





## 2.4 Blue Mountains context

Many people choose to live in the Blue Mountains because they appreciate the many environmental, natural and bush settings available in public places. The trend towards 'nature play' is strongly supported in the Mountains and the use of natural settings for play is widespread among Blue Mountains residents. The Play Guidelines can build on and develop nature play as a means of providing extra play opportunities in the Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains environment is characterised by sandstone, eucalypt forests and old-world charm. Use of materials that accentuate this to create nature play playgrounds could provide a point of difference between the more formal play equipment provision in other areas and that provided by Blue Mountains City Council.

## 2.5 Consultation outcomes

Council gratefully acknowledges the time spent by members of the community in providing initial input into the development of the Play Guidelines.

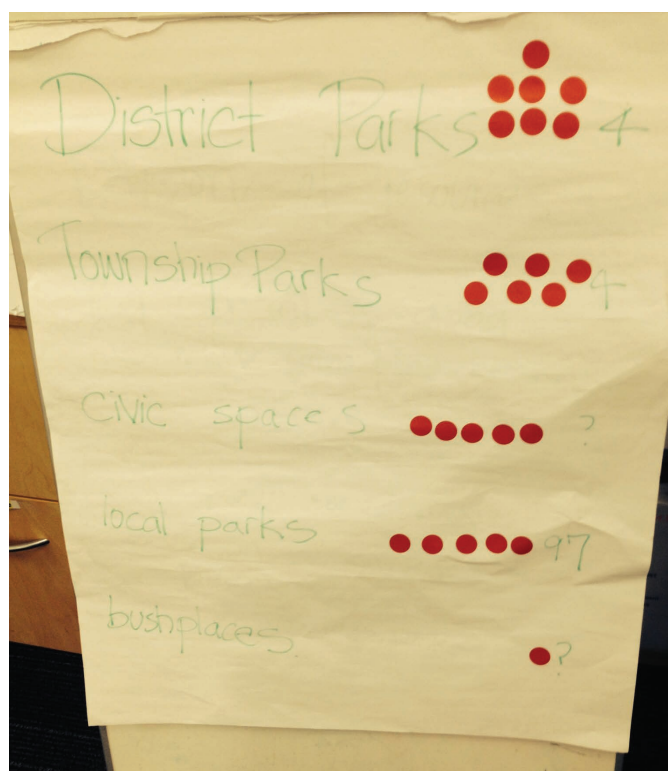
Consultation took many forms was undertaken with;

- general public
- special needs carers
- carers
- school children
- older children and teenagers
- childcare professionals

### Key findings

General community surveys indicate satisfaction with the play opportunities provided in the Mountains.

Those with a special interest in children or play said there is room for improvement and provided direction in the three broad areas summarised as follows.



Above: Play Workshop activity. Participants allocated and prioritised limited funds across the hierarchy for play



## How many playgrounds and where?

- Community members are willing to travel up to half an hour to a district park playground for a special play experience.
- Parks that are located close to people's homes have value as they cater for daily play requirements and social play.
- Playgrounds associated with other facilities/attractions—town centres or sports grounds. Provide the best value.

## What is in a playground?

- There is a shortage of inclusive playgrounds.
- There is a shortage of play opportunities for older children and teenagers—they want big exciting play opportunities for which they are willing to travel.
- Younger people also want safe hangout places to socialise.
- For teenagers and older children active transport access to parks—footpaths and bike paths is as important as the parks.
- Carers are seeking greater amenity near play equipment; seats, paths, parking, bubblers, bins, toilets.
- Carers are seeking easier supervision—fences, shade, improved sight lines and close by car park.
- A greater range of play is sought, including nature play elements—much existing formal play equipment is considered 'old fashioned' or 'boring'.
- Visitors are seeking a Blue Mountains experience—something different from the Sydney playgrounds.

## Knowing about playgrounds and play:

- Many carers do not know where play opportunities are available.
- Information is not readily available.
- Children and carers do not always know how to engage with the environment for play where there is no formal play equipment.

Consultation and research undertaken in the preparation for these guidelines indicate a need for an increase in the range of play opportunities provided and a change in how they are distributed.

These Play Guidelines seek to address by changing the distribution of play equipment across each of Council's five planning areas.

The principles are outlined in Section 5, and the distribution across each planning area is shown in Section 6.





# 3 Providing a play service

There has been a significant shift in how play is provided over the last decade. This new approach stresses the importance of diversity, inclusion and the play opportunities possible in more informal play environments.

## 3.1 Play needs

Play is fundamental in our human development, shaping our physical, social, cognitive and emotional development. But most importantly, play is fun, significantly contributing to our feeling of happiness.

Play is essential for children to develop into fully functioning adults. It is also each child's right to be able to play. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child notes, in Article 31, 'Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.'

There are four key pillars to providing play for the children live in and visit the Blue Mountains:

- diversity to support developmental needs
- safety and amenity
- awareness of where play opportunities are located
- knowledge about how to engage with different play environments





## 3.2 A range of play settings

The first pillar of play provision can be achieved by providing of a range of play settings that are suited to children's diverse needs and ages.

To determine what play Council can best provide in public areas, Council consulted experts in child development, to understand children's primary needs for play opportunities. There has been a paradigm shift in best practise play provision over the last decade. As a result, the play needs of children are better understood and nature play has become established as a normal form of provision.

The types of play identified to meet the developmental needs of children is different from what was considered necessary when the majority of Council's play equipment was installed. The benefits of each type of play and possible ways for providing for are outline below. There are many ways to group or label play, and of course most play activities includes multiple play types.



Play opportunities can be provided in either formal or informal settings. Nature play (see Glossary) has become an acceptable and desirable means of providing a diversity of play opportunities in informal environments. There are many opportunities for nature play in the Blue Mountains but it is not currently promoted as a resource for the community.

Council has consulted widely with the community—see Appendix. Much input into the Play Style and Play categories that are wanted was provided. The consultation supported the need for a change in how play is provided. The consultation also indicated that carers are seeking an increase in supporting infrastructure.

Children's needs around play equipment and environments also vary with age.

## 3.2.1 Moving the body play



This is play based on moving the body—running, climbing, swimming, jumping, throwing and catching, etc.

### What developmental needs does it meet?

Fitness, obesity management, motor skills, coordination, balance, proprioception, risk management and resilience.

### Necessary equipment/facilities

Running and ball games; Open level grassed spaces, goal posts, bounce walls, etc

Climbing, balancing and jumping: climbing equipment, boulders, trees, mounds rocks and logs.

Water play—access to pools, creeks, dams and puddles.

Inclusivity—linking paths to and within playgrounds.

### Suggestions arising from consultation

More parks for big kids and little kids, equipment for older children, disability access, rock-climbing walls, basketball courts, gyms.

### Supplementary play items that children and carers can bring

Bats and balls, frisbees, skipping ropes, gym equipment.

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## 3.2.2 Kinetic play



Kinetic play is where you have your body moved by an external force, although children may apply some of the force.

### What developmental needs does it meet?

Risk management, balance

### Necessary equipment/facilities

Swings, slides, roundabouts, flying foxes.

Bikes scooters and skate boards help in this area too, so bike paths, skate parks, BMX or pump/junior dirt jump tracks, steep slopes for rolling or sliding down

Provide back-support on flying foxes, swings etc.

### Suggestions arising from consultation

More parks with equipment for older children, disability access, bike paths to and within parks, skate parks, trampoline, zip lines, flying foxes, giant swings

### Supplementary play items that children and carers can bring

Bikes, scooters, skateboards, cardboard boxes.





### 3.2.3 Social play



This is any form of play where children meet and interact.

#### **What developmental needs does it meet?**

Social skills, self-reliance, resilience, navigating the social world outside the home and in public places is where there is not total control over children and who they interact with. It includes the spontaneous creation of games and social engagement.

Social interaction helps with a sense of connection—to place, peers, their local community and the environment.

Independence—learning to be in a public place without an adult, and to deal the various people they may encounter, is an important developmental task.

#### **Necessary equipment/facilities**

Places to meet and interact, seating and shelter, level lawns—formal or informal—for both small and large groups  
Areas not completely hidden but also not 100% exposed to view from street that allows partially hidden games; tree groves, walks through shrubberies  
Wi-Fi, music playing outlets  
Artworks that reflect particular cohorts

#### **Suggestions arising from consultation**

Free places for older kids to hang out and do things together in town centres, with Wi-Fi and/or art  
Inclusivity—play settings with room for multiple children including wheelchairs, quiet corners, speaking tubes, sand pits

#### **Supplementary play items that children and carers can bring**

Music systems, portable barbeques, folding chairs and picnic blankets, cameras



## 3.2.4 Explorative play



Children are naturally curious about the world and want to find out as much as they can. This play includes exploring the environment, in a hands-on way (not just looking), digging, prodding things, picking things up, collecting rocks and ongoing observation.

### **What developmental needs does it meet?**

Fosters learning enthusiasm, environmental understanding and a scientific approach. If children can to ask their own questions and collect their own data they become better students. Albert Einstein is reported to have said 'play is the best form of research'.

### **Necessary equipment/facilities**

Access to the natural world

Places to explore and things to discover, with an emphasis on environmental components—ie. creek lines, ponds, swamps with bridges, jetties, stepping stones, tree groves, walks through shrubberies and/or meadows particularly with loose materials such as sticks, leaf litter, sand

Inclusivity—lots of texture and sensory experiences

### **Suggestions arising from consultation**

Nature, bush and bushwalks, environment, water play and information/artwork and signs prompting what to look for.

### **Supplementary play items that children and carers can bring**

Information, maps such as bush trackers, binoculars, magnifying glasses, cameras, notebooks, sketch pads, spades, kites, collecting jars and books for identifying things.





## 3.2.5 Imaginative, creative and inventive play



This is play where children make up stories, dress up, make and re-arrange things. It can result in an artwork, a cubby house, a dammed creek, a sandcastle or a mess.

### **What developmental needs does it meet?**

Developing a sense of self and learning skills, self-confidence, social skills, resilience and ability to adapt.

To make sense of the world and who they are, to adapt to change and to develop resilience children need to engage in role playing, acting out things, re-enacting things and exploring options.

To re-inforce a sense of self and confidence children need to be creative and to see an outcome from their play;

### **Necessary equipment/facilities**

Opportunity to make, build and control surroundings e.g. bushland settings, soil, sticks, mulch, water, junk, etc.

Also fostered by prompts to imagine things - creatures, boats and the like but not too specific - and spaces and stages for acting things out or drawing with chalks, etc.

Spaces and stages for acting things out or drawing with chalks, etc.

### **Suggestions arising from consultation**

Fun, nature play, cubby house frames, sticks, long grass, bare earth being available.

### **Supplementary play items that children and carers can bring**

Dress ups and accessories like swords, crowns, fairy wings, dolls, chalks for drawing, books to act out, paint, paper, glue, scissors, video camera

## 3.2.6 Inclusive play



Inclusive play can occur with any of the play styles already described.

Inclusive play seeks to ensure that all children can come to, and play in a play setting.

Children with special needs and their carers are easily excluded. Careful design can ensure barriers to visiting or playing are removed.

The barriers to play vary considerably. Consultation with the local community will help council to identify the most relevant inclusive elements.

### 3.3 Age influence on provision of play



Children's play needs vary with age:

- Younger children require more frequent but shorter visits to playgrounds and parks. They require smaller playgrounds closer to residential areas than older children.
- Younger children do not tolerate long travel times. Older children and teenagers are more independent and thus able to access opportunities further from home.
- Items favoured by older children and teenagers tend to be more expensive than those for younger cohorts.
- Older children are more independent and less reliant on parks and parents to provide play opportunities. They seek out less formal and more diverse play opportunities, e.g, bushland for adventure and exploration, and ovals for social and more athletic play. They also seek events, information on places they can hangout and better activation of areas in town centres.

For these reasons, Council will focus on distributing locally provided formal playgrounds for younger children and provide a district level youth focused playground. This will be complemented by additional informal settings for older children and teenagers.



## 3.4 Safety and amenity

The second pillar of play provision is 'safety and amenity'. The need for amenity and concerns about safety must be addressed so that carers feel comfortable to take children to play or to allow them to go themselves. With increasing levels of loneliness and isolation in Australia (Kelly et al, 2012), a play environment offers as much a social experience for carers as it does play opportunity for children.

Appendix 1 outlines some community consultation results on this topic. Consultation indicated that carers are generally seeking Council to increase:

- accessibility: safe paths of travel from parking places to play settings
- safety: fences, shade, safe equipment and maintenance
- ease of supervision: clear sight lines, fences, adjacent or off-street parking
- amenity: seating, shade, bubblers, toilets

These requirements are particularly important where children have special needs. While it is not possible to provide everything in every park, elements can be provided in varying degrees depending on the hierarchy of the park and the resources available. District parks are suitable for provision of the best possible playgrounds.

Consultation during the design phase can assist in identifying community requirements.

Some carers are looking for a playground where they can relax, not participate in the play and not have to supervise their children. Blue Mountains City Council is not seeking to provide play areas as places of parental respite. No playground can be provided where children will not need to be monitored or supervised.

## 3.5 Knowledge about where the play settings are and how to get there

The third pillar of play provision is knowledge about where the play settings are and how to get there. This can be provided by Council through websites and brochures.

Consultation has indicated that some people are unaware of where parks are that suit their needs. They may assume that they are unavailable or too far away. Information on what play settings are available can be provided through a range of media —websites, facebook pages and fliers at local venues.

## 3.6 Knowledge on how to use play settings

The fourth and final pillar of play provision is knowledge about how to use the play settings. This can be provided by Council through activation events. Strange as it may seem, current research indicates that one of the major impediments to children playing outdoors is lack of knowledge on how to play. This is both on the part of the children and their caregivers. While children's natural tendency to play and explore may enable them to discover play opportunities in many places, they can be denied the opportunity because a lack of confidence, information or knowledge by caregivers on how to support and encourage children's play outside of formal play environments. If children are limited to formal play settings their developmental needs are not met and there is a risk that they will not reach their potential. It also means that play opportunities in public places are often not utilised as they could be.

Council has the opportunity to educate children and their parents on play. Provision of reference material and activation are the two most common methods of education that Council could employ. Groups in the Stronger Families Alliance (SFA) have established reference materials or programs that can be tapped into or adapted. A notable example of reference material is the Bush Trackers series of maps.

Activation is where events are held and participating children and their caregivers are exposed to managed play. Examples of existing groups and/or programs that could be used include:

- the Healthy Waterways team's Connect with Nature programs
- Bush kindy programs for pre-schools
- Stronger Families Alliance programs such as 'Paint the Blue Read'
- school-centred community hubs
- Neighbourhood centres events could be held in parks
- library reading events—let's do them in the park ... under a tree ...
- Waste to Art workshops
- Bushcare

### Summary

Provision of play opportunities that address all four pillars outlined in this section underpins these Play Guidelines.

To ensure Blue Mountains children are supported in their development, Council aim to provide a variety of inclusive, informal and formal play opportunities for a range of ages. This means changing how we provide play equipment and spaces by updating out-of-date equipment and/or replacing it with more informal spaces for nature play, consolidating resources into district parks, and ensuring our community is aware of the play opportunities provided and how to use them.

To fully understand community aspirations and issues at existing playgrounds consultation, including consultation with children, should be undertaken before any changes are made.





# 4 Risk management and responsibility

## 4.1 Risk

Risk is integral to play and an essential component of it. Learning to recognise, assess and deal with risk is one of the major developmental needs of children. And children are attracted to risk: it is what makes many play opportunities fun. An acceptable degree of risk needs to be carefully considered and planned for.

Research shows that an indiscriminate risk-minimisation policy can be a source of harm, not benefit.

However, not all risk is acceptable. Blue Mountains City Council has used Australian Standards to determine an acceptable degree of risk for its play settings. Assumptions have also been made around carer supervision of children. While Council will seek to provide play settings free of risk of permanent injury or death, it remains the role of carers to monitor the children in their care at all times.

The assumptions made are as follows:

### Babies, toddlers and young children

Babies, toddlers and young children will be constantly monitored by their carers, and their carers will be actively engaged in facilitating play.

### Children in middle childhood

Children in middle childhood, who can sometimes be left unmonitored or who monitored 'with half an eye' will play in groups that can self-monitor and who have the skills to know when and how to obtain adult assistance if needed. Carers will facilitate play by arranging to meet with other children and by providing suitable props.

### Older Children and teenagers

Older children and teenagers who are left unmonitored are trusted by their carers to manage the degree of risk to which they will be exposed in a play setting.

The *Australian Standards for Play Equipment* are constantly revised by experts who review child accident data. The standards do not seek to mitigate the risk of minor injuries such as scrapes, bruises or sprains. The standards seek to avoid any permanent injury or death. Council will use the Australian Standards for Play Equipment and the Everyone Can Play in NSW guideline when installing new play equipment.

## 4.2 Particular risks

### 4.2.1 Children running off

Council does not consider that formal play equipment poses a risk of children running off over and above other parts of parks or public spaces. Where public spaces have an adjacent risk - such as a busy road—this will be managed with a whole-of-park approach.

It is acknowledged that some children are 'runners', so inclusive playgrounds and a portion of others require some fencing. Council prefers to limit the fencing around play equipment, as opposed to barriers to dangers, as it has the following disadvantages:

- Fencing a play space from the rest of an open space limits the scope and variety of children's play, it effectively 'cages' play into a contained space. This is not in the spirit of child-friendly places.
- Fencing and child-proof locks restrict access, making it virtually impossible for wheelchair users to enter fenced spaces. It can also provide opportunities for bullies to corner their victims.
- Maintenance and repair costs of fences are high and experience tells us that gate systems regularly fail in public spaces.
- The installation costs of fencing can significantly erode the funds available for other play opportunities.
- Fences can reduce perception of immediate parental responsibility.

### 4.2.2 Children getting dirty or wet

This is not considered an unacceptable risk. The Child Accident Prevention Foundation of Australia - Kidsafe – says; 'Kids need to..... Make a mess Be noisy Get dirty....'

### 4.2.3 Organic softfall

Organic softfall has sometimes been criticised for being dirty or unpleasant. Council will continue to use organic softfall because:

- it is much cheaper than other forms of softfall
- it is not as hot in hot weather
- it is relatively easy to top up if damaged
- when well compacted, it can be used by wheelchairs

### 4.2.4 Heat and sun exposure

Except in the limited circumstances where shade may be provided in the future, heat and sun exposure needs to be managed by carers in line with the recommendations of the Cancer Council.

### 4.2.5 Broken items

Broken items, litter, sharps and the like. While regular park inspections occur, Council cannot guarantee that all parks are free of such items at all times. It remains the responsibility of carers to check for the dangers where the children in their care will be playing. If community members see an item like this in a playground they should inform Council so that the issue can be rectified.



# 5 Play provision statements



Principle	Statement
<b>Diversity</b>	<p>1: Council will use the parks hierarchy to determine the quantity of play opportunities provided in each park or town centre, and seek to provide play opportunities across the full spectrum of developmental needs and ages by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing a full range of play opportunities at each district park where space and resources permit, with at least one district park being developed with a strong youth focus</li> <li>• providing two formal types of play equipment and an additional informal play opportunity at local parks</li> <li>• provide the full range of play opportunities in each planning area, spread across neighbourhood parks and local parks, civic spaces and bushland areas</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision</b>	<p>2: While Council will seek to provide play settings free of the risk of permanent injury or death, it remains the role of carers to monitor the children in their care at all times. Council playgrounds will be set up to deliver developmental play opportunities—the children need to be supervised in an age-appropriate way.</p>
<b>Risk management</b>	<p>3: To manage risk at playgrounds Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that all formal play equipment meets the Australian Standards for Play Equipment when installed</li> <li>• carry out an annual independent audit on formal play equipment</li> <li>• carry out regular in-house inspections on formal play equipment</li> <li>• rectify identified faults, prioritised according to level of risk</li> <li>• provide barriers between play equipment and major roads, for inclusive playgrounds and where the play setting is less than 15 metres</li> </ul>
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	<p>4: Council will seek to provide play opportunities for a variety of abilities by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing an inclusive playground in district parks as resources and space permit</li> <li>• providing at least one accessible item and a safe path of travel in civic and local parks, when the play equipment is upgraded</li> <li>• fostering inclusive play</li> </ul>



<b>Looking after the carers</b>	<p>5: Council will seek to provide comfort, and a sense of safety and welcome, for carers at playgrounds by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• providing seating—formal or informal—near the play area</li> <li>• ensuring that a significant portion of each play setting is visible from the road</li> <li>• providing water and shade near the play area (note that shade will be provided by trees in most circumstances)</li> <li>• providing some fencing and barriers to roads at a portion of parks, particularly those close to busy roads</li> <li>• scheduling regular maintenance activities, except for undeveloped parks</li> </ul>
<b>Blue Mountains style</b>	<p>6: Play equipment in the Blue Mountains shall reflect the Blue Mountains character through use of natural materials such as sandstone, timber and native plantings where appropriate</p>
<b>Inform</b>	<p>7. Council will promote knowledge of play settings in the Blue Mountains by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regularly updating information on Council's website</li> <li>• seeking other forms of distributing information</li> </ul>
<b>Activate</b>	<p>8. Council will provide play education in the Blue Mountains through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encouraging events and groups to use the parks for play</li> <li>• adapting a portion of programmed Council events to deliver play learning activities</li> <li>• working with the Stronger Families Alliance to promote and adapt existing programs to include play learning activities</li> </ul>









# 6 Existing and future play provision

## 6.1 Assessment of play provision

This section provides an overview of current and future provision of play in the Mountains. For the purpose of providing services at a town level, Council has identified five separate planning areas across the Mountains.

Council has over 60 sites where formal play equipment is provided, with most towns and villages having one or two sites with formal play equipment. Many more sites with informal play settings are available—including ovals, bushland and town centre settings—but these are not formally recognised as play opportunities.

### Evaluation of Blue Mountains City Council's delivery of play opportunities in 2017

	Diversity of play opportunities provided	Safety and Amenity	Information on where to play easily found	Engaging with the environment events
Doing well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many sites available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety well managed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social networking strong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many events available or potentially available as play activation</li> </ul>
Need to move forward with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Big play destinations,</li> <li>• Inclusive play,</li> <li>• Opportunities for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth play</li> <li>• Explorative play</li> <li>• Imaginative/creative/inventive play</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Encouraging carers to bring supplementary play items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting paths</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Easy supervision: fences, adjacent or off-street parking.</li> <li>• Amenities: seating, shade, bubblers, toilets and reducing maintenance needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting informal play opportunities without formal equipment</li> <li>• Information available through digital platforms and social media including Council's website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing and promoting play events</li> <li>• Adapting events to facilitate engagement with the environment</li> <li>• Working in partnership to deliver events</li> </ul>



## 6.2 Transition to provision as per Play guidelines

How transitions will occur over time will be guided by the following:

### 6.2.1 Timing of changes

The program for implementing the proposed changes to spaces and equipment will be dependant on:

- priority of the park within the hierarchy
- potential for increases in inclusivity
- funding available
- providing a nexus between upgrades and offsets and the remaining life of the existing equipment

Previous Council planning has estimated the lifespan of a formal playground is 20 years. But for most equipment, wear and tear can be addressed through repair rather than complete replacement, e.g. of bearing, chains etc. This allows for retention of play items in local parks for longer periods.

Community feedback has also indicated that the retention of the old play equipment, especially kinetic items such as swings and slides, is desirable.

For these reasons, replacement of play equipment in all parks except, district parks, will no longer be based on a set 20 year time frame but on when items can no longer be maintained.

### District parks

It is anticipated that the four designated district parks will be upgraded in phases over the next 10 years.

### Local parks

Safe and functioning play equipment will be retained and maintained on site as long as practical. As the formal items fail, a portion will be replaced with new equipment so that there are always two or three items available. Depending on the quantity of existing play, the other play opportunities on site and available budget, some items may be replaced by informal play items as they fail.

### Neighbourhood parks

Safe and functioning play equipment will be retained and maintained on site as long as practical. As formal items fail items they may be replaced by informal play items. See 6.2.4 on page 30.

The only exceptions would be where a much underutilised item is relocated to a higher use site, or where a playground is being upgraded.

### Civic parks

Safe and functioning play equipment will be retained and maintained on site as long as practical. Play opportunities suitable to an urban setting will be developed where possible.

## 6.2.2 Associated infrastructure

Improvements to amenity, accessibility and supervision improvements—fences, seats, bubblers, connecting paths will occur as funds permit. This is expected to occur over a long time frame. Priority will go to:

- areas with highest number of small children or largest catchments of users
- where it is cheaply and easily done, to enable as many upgrades as possible within the budget available
- where it can leverage off other works, grants or community donations

## 6.2.3 Process of changes to play settings

District park playgrounds will be developed with specialist playground designers. Each will have an extensive consultation phase, focusing on the needs of any local groups with special needs to ensure that each playground is as inclusive as possible.

Other Parks—as provision of informal play equipment and nature play are relatively new to the Blue Mountains, demonstration sites will be developed in each planning area. This will allow both the community and Council staff to understand what can be offered and how it will be received. The play opportunities provided will vary with each site to ensure diversity. For each park a landscape architect with playground skills will draw on:

- These play guidelines to ensure a diversity is offered across each planning area (no cookie-cutter approach)
- the opportunities provided by each site
- community input where a consultation process will be offered to the park users

## 6.2.4 Informal and nature play

Examples of informal play include bike loops, pump tracks, boules courts, basketball half courts, group seating, and sculpture installations provided through community art projects can act as a placemakers and gathering points for social interaction. Nature play is not just undeveloped bushland.

It can take many forms:

- items retrofitted into natural settings to facilitate play such as small loop walks, stepping stones, frames to encourage cubby house building amongst trees where fallen branches are available, and hand holds onto rock outcrops for climbing



Source: <http://www.field-studies-council.org/outdoorclassroom.aspx>

- creation of play settings using natural materials; rock piles for climbing, grassed earth slopes for rolling, logs for balancing and climbing, openings along creek lines for water play





<http://www.learninglandscapesdesign.com/guest-post-on-nature-play/>

<http://nicros.com/climbing-walls/playground-boulders/>

- combinations of natural play elements and traditional play equipment. (See image below as an example).



Example from <http://www.learninglandscapesdesign.com/westmoreland-nature-play-area-opens/>

## 6.2.5 Provision of information and activation

Council is updating its website in 2018–2019 and it is proposed to provide information on parks will be available through this medium.

Social media and leisure centre newsletters should also be used to inform residents of what parks are available. They can also be used to promote events and community consultations.

# 7.1 Planning Area 1

Mount Victoria to Blackheath, Megalong Valley, Bell and Mount Wilson, Mount Irvine and Mount Tomah

## Overview of Planning Area 1—Direction

**District park:** Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park. Proposed new centralised toilet facilities, picnic shelters, improved access, inclusive playground, more older children's play opportunities, a heritage loop walk and creek lines opened up.

**Local parks:** Jubilee Park precinct (including Blackheath Oval) and Memorial Park in Mount Victoria. These will have open toilets, retained and enhanced formal play equipment and informal play, with inclusive elements, drinking water

**Civic spaces:** include play opportunities into town centre upgrades in Blackheath and Mount Victoria will be explored.







### Neighbourhood parks:

- Reduce the number of formal play settings as equipment fails
- Replace end-of-life play equipment with new formal equipment where necessary to ensure all play types are available across each planning area
- Replace some formal play equipment with more informal nature play options
- Provide safe paths of travel into parks from nearby parking
- At least 2 fenced parks/playground options in the planning area
- Way-finding to parks from town centres and transport hubs, especially in Blackheath

### Overall:

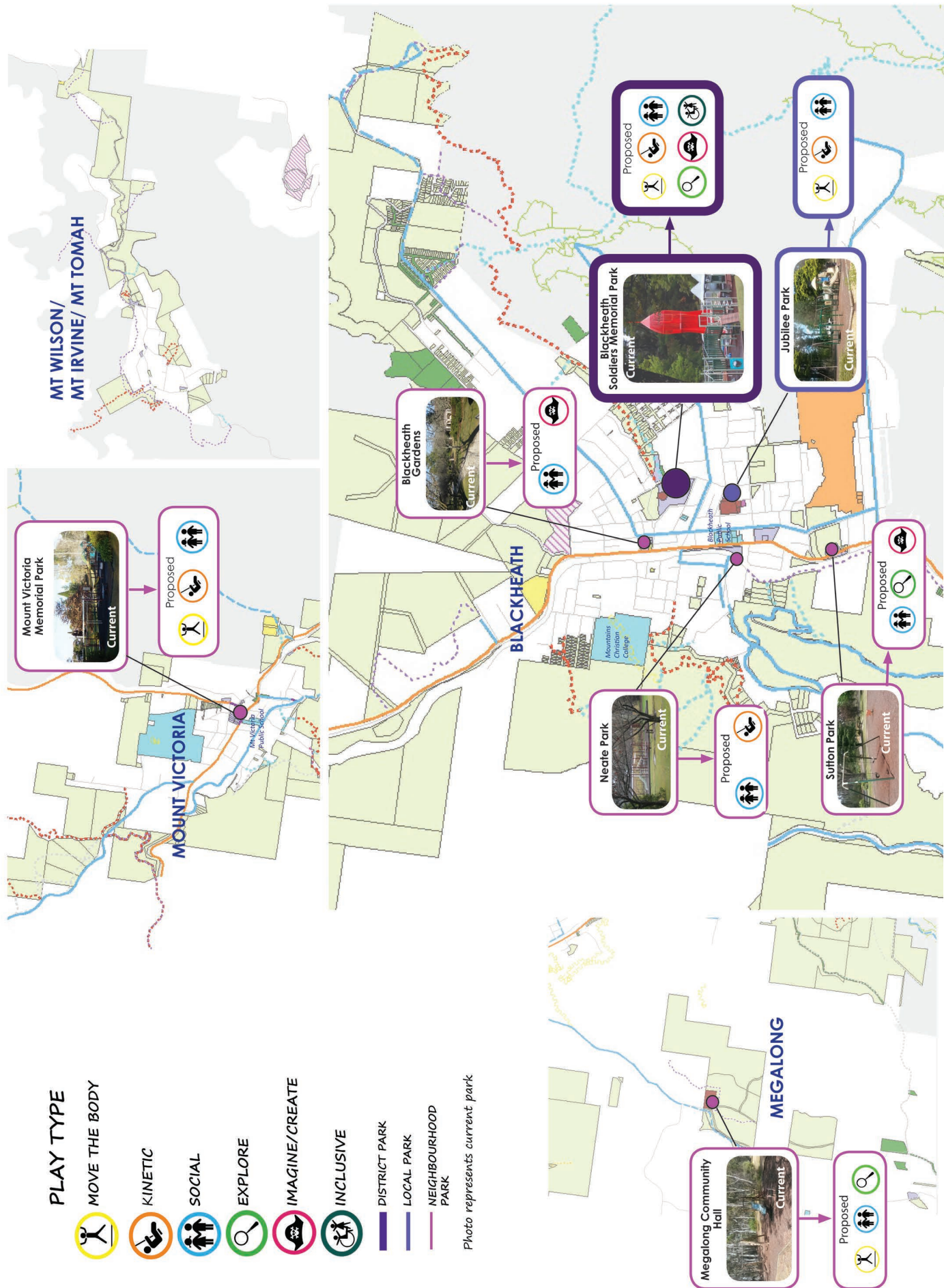
- More information on where to go and what to do
- Hold and promote occasional activation events
- Have footpath connections from stations and schools

## Planning Area 1—Existing play provision

	<b>Play Type</b>  Move  Kinetic  Social  Explore  Imagine  Inclusive Carers F - Formal Play equipment	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
<b>DISTRICT PARK</b>			
Blackheath Soldiers Memorial Park	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore - F Imagine - F Inclusive - F Carers	Traditional park with heritage style play equipment and setting. Pool, three playgrounds, social opportunities Good range, lacking older children/teenage play and inclusive elements	Masterplanning programmed for 2018 Improvements to inclusivity Better toilet facilities Accessible pathways
<b>LOCAL PARKS</b>			
Jubilee Park (incl Blackheath Oval), Blackheath	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Oval and courts Play equipment, including tall swings	Retain swings
Memorial Park, Mt Victoria	Move - F Social - F Imagine - F	Tennis courts, grottos Some formal play	No change



CIVIC PARK	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Blackheath Town Centre Spaces		Long-term plans for town square	Potential for imaginative items within the streetscape
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS</b>			
Blackheath Gardens	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Formal junior play Some explorative scope	As park is fenced and close to town centre, it would suit an intergenerational item e.g boules
Neate Park, Blackheath	Move - F Kinetic - F Social	Skate park Formal junior climbing/play equipment	Retain skate facility Reduce formal play equipment
Blackheath Glen		Camping site with creek line and bush	No change
Whitley Park , Blackheath	Move Explore	Fenced dog off-leash with some bushland Open area close to highway	No change
Sutton Park, Blackheath	Kinetic - F	Rocker and swings at highway road stop. Toilets	Extend life of swings Nature play
Old Ford Reserve, Megalong	Move Social Explore Imagine	Explorative play with water	Explorative play and make more inviting particularly for carers
Errol Bardon Park , Mt Victoria	Social Explore	Open sloping lawn and seat Other parks near by	No change
Fairy Bower , Mt Victoria	Explore	Picnic tables in bushland setting	Suit social setting as base for explorative play. Fence
Mount York Reserve, Mount Victoria	Social Explore Carers	Open space in bushland setting Historic items with interpretative signage. Picnic facilities	
Rotunda Reserve, Mount Victoria	Social	Rotunda provides social setting, Close to Mount Vic Park	Provide barrier to road
Cathedral Reserve , Mount Wilson	Move Social Explore	Camping site	No change
Founders Corner, Mount Wilson	Social Explore	Picnic seating. Flag pole	No change
Gregson Park, Mount Wilson	Social Explore		No change
Sloan Reserve, Mount Wilson	Social Explore		No change
War Memorial Reserve, Mount Wilson	Social Explore	War memorial	No change
Silva Plana, Mount Wilson	Social Explore Move	Open playing area sometimes used for sport	Promote
Waterfall Reserve, Mount Wilson	Social Explore	Bush track	No change



PLANNING AREA 1—CURRENT AND PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION



# 7.2 Planning Area 2

## Medlow Bath, Katoomba, Leura and Wentworth Falls

### Overview of Planning Area 2—Direction

**District park:** Wentworth Falls Lake, developed over time with an environmental theme, new centralised toilet facilities, improved access, inclusive playground, outdoor class rooms, a lake loop walk, and partial fencing along Sinclair Crescent.

**Local parks:** Melrose Park in North Katoomba, Maple Grove/Katoomba Reserve Oval and Gordon Falls. Open toilets, retained and enhanced formal play equipment and informal play with inclusive elements, bubblers

**Civic spaces:** Include play elements in upgrades to Katoomba, Leura and Wentworth Falls town centres







#### Neighbourhood parks:

- Reduce the number of formal play settings as equipment fails
- Replace end-of-life play equipment with new formal equipment where necessary to ensure all play types are available across each planning area
- Replace some formal play equipment with more informal nature play options
- Provide safe paths of travel into parks from nearby parking
- At least 2 fenced parks/playground options in the planning area

#### Overall:

- More information on where to go and what to do
- Occasional activation events and
- Footpath connections from stations and schools

### Planning Area 2—Existing play provision

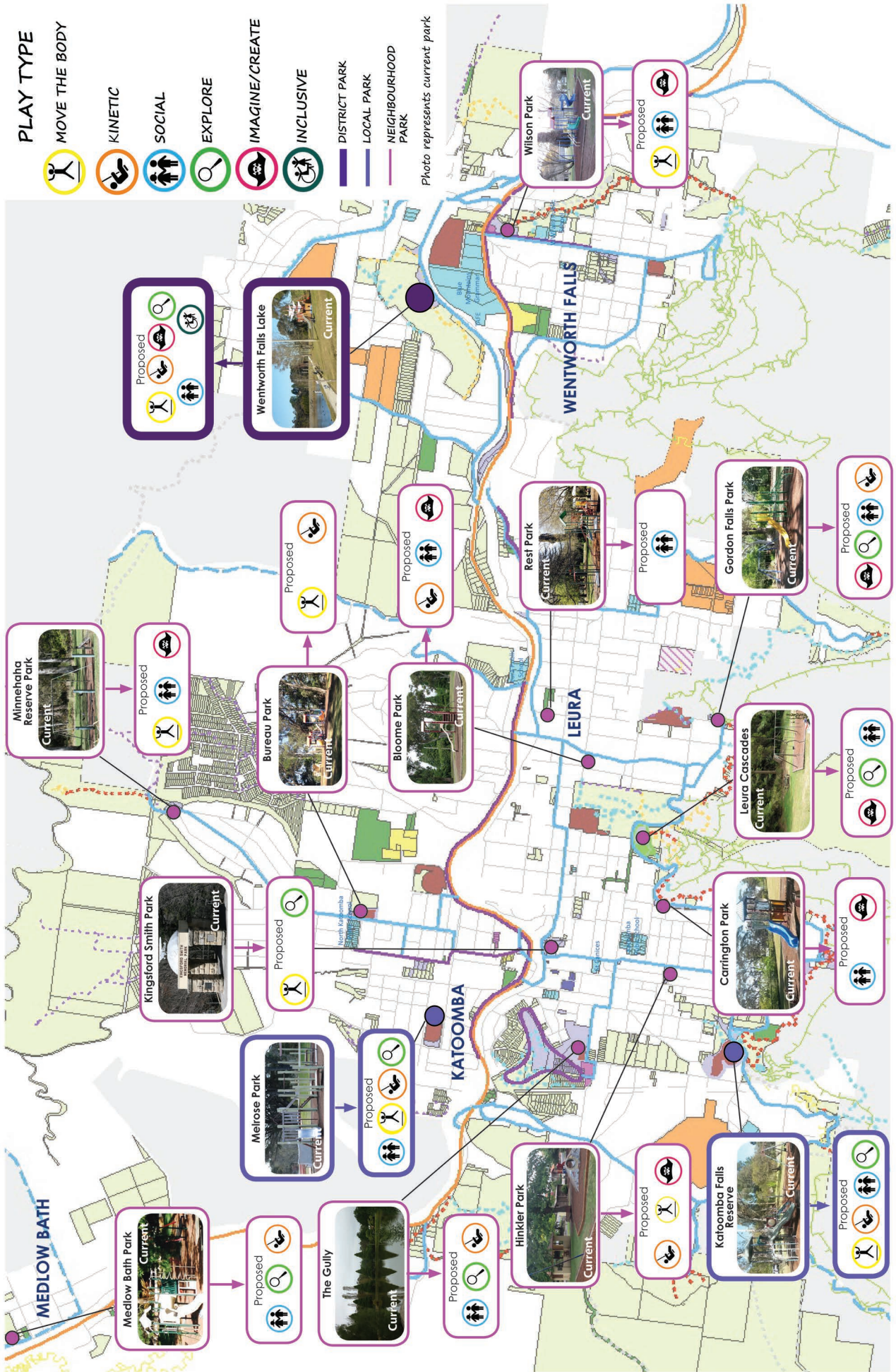
Name	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
	 Move  Kinetic  Social  Explore  Imagine  Inclusive Carers F - Formal Play equipment		
<b>DISTRICT PARK</b>			
Wentworth Falls Lake	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore - F Imagine - F Inclusive - F Carers	Nature-based park with environmental themed play settings. Good range Lacking middle childhood and teenager opportunities Some inclusive elements	Lots of potential, loop walk, more formal play with room for big inclusive setting. More explorative play. Partial fence Sinclair Crescent. New improved central toilets
<b>LOCAL PARKS</b>			
Melrose Park, North Katoomba	Move - F Kinetic - F Social Explore	Oval, play equipment including tall swings, junior skate park, patch of bushland	Potential for development of explorative play in patch of bushland. Retain skate and kinetic play. Make toilet available
Maple Grove/Katoomba Reserve Oval, South Katoomba	Move Kinetic - F Social Explore Imagine	Picnic, toilet, formal playground, oval, bushland	Suitable for nature explorative play Retain kinetic items Improve inclusivity

CIVIC PARK	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Carrington Place, Katoomba	Social - F Explore Imagine	Central space, easily used for events. Detailed interpretation to explore	Fully developed. Limited potential for additional play development
Civic Place, Katoomba	Social Imagine	Events. 'Peace' sculpture. Attractive space with seating and shade,	Roads on all sides limits scope
Courtyard of Cultural Centre, Katoomba	Social Carers	Space used for events	Scope for developing social and imaginative – especially for youth
Forecourt of Cultural Centre, Katoomba	Social	Adjacent to library	Underused. Safe from road so good for some forms of play. Social & imaginative
Coronation Park, Wentworth Falls	Social - F	Wentworth Falls Town centre, adjacent station, includes war memorial. Fully developed	Formal play unsuitable with formal gardens and war memorial.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS			
Dr Alex Allen Park	Social	Small park on corner of two busy roads, with art components and some seating	Being on corner of two busy roads limits scope, unless fenced
Lilianfels Park	Move Kinetic Social - F Explore Imagine Carers	Tourist function. Picnic facilities, grottos	Suitable for nature play
Brownie Park	Explore	More a set of steps than a park	Poor surveillance—potential imaginative play items
Carrington Park	Move - F Kinetic Social	Play equipment very junior Picnic shelter and tables	Suitable for nature play
Hinkler Park South Katoomba	Move - F Social - F Explore - F Carers	Includes old play plane and tunnel and small new formal play, shelter, partial fencing	Potential to make more of the heritage play and increase the fencing
Kingsford Smith Park	Move Social - F Explore Carers	Paths down slope good for exploration, sound shell Very damp soil	Poor surveillance
Minnie Ha Ha Reserve	Move Kinetic - F Social Explore	Open area, picnic tables, track head, bushland and creek line and swings. Recent rise in popularity	Very suitable for nature play items and explorative and imaginative play
Murray Park	Move Explore	Sportsground and cricket nets	
Silver Mist Park	Move Explore	Some tourist use trackhead	Remove hedge to improve surveillance Encourage explorative play
Vale Street Wetlands	Explore	Some open space around a fenced wetland	



NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS (cont.)	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
The Gully (formerly Frank Walford Park), Katoomba	Move Kinetic Social Explore Imagine Inclusive Carers	Loop track good for bikes Water body, bushland, social spaces Aboriginal Interpretation	Already well developed Information only needed to encourage play
Bureau Park, North Katoomba	Move Kinetic - F Social - F	Sports field, formal play, near school. Share dog-off leash	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Gordon Falls Reserve, Leura	Kinetic - F Social - F Explore	Formal play, includes semi-formal area, grottos and picnic facilities, including BBQ's.	Potential to encourage exploration and creative play in bushland
Leura Cascades picnic area	Kinetic - F Social - F	Swings, picnic area, creekline and trackhead	Potential to encourage exploration and creative play in bushland
Bloome Park, Leura	Kinetic - F	Close to Leura town centre. Open park with some formal play	Potential to replace formal with nature play and to build on amphitheatre semi-formal space to facilitate events associated with town centre
Margery Anderson Reserve, Leura		Picnic area on tourist drive, steep bushland, no formal play	Some potential to encourage explorative play
Rest Park, Leura	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Westgate Park, Leura		Picnic area on tourist drive; no formal play	Limited potential. Small space near railway, near other parks and not suited to high play use
Medlow Park, Medlow Bath	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Large park with tennis/basketball court, shelter, creek line, grove, bushland. Play a good distance from road. Share dog-off leash	Potential to encourage exploration and creative play in bushland and tree groves, and existing slope, and creek lines, Possible pump/junior dirt jump track
Wilson Park, Wentworth Falls	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Tourist park with track head and adjacent bushland. Near tennis courts. Toilets Formal play	Potential to encourage exploration and creative play in bushland, level site suitable for junior bicycle track
Central Park, Wentworth Falls		Open space with drainage line and bushland	Potential to encourage exploration and creative play in bushland
Kedumba Park, Wentworth Falls		Highway park with limited access	Poor access and surveillance Not suitable for play development
Maskey Place, Wentworth Falls		Small local park, very steep	Limited potential for play development
Myoori Place Park, Wentworth Falls	Explore	A grove of trees ringed by residential frontages	Information on how to use the unusual setting preferred to changes to park
Pitt Park	Move	Sports ground Adjacent bushland for exploring, some use for dirt jump historically	Enhance dirt jump capacity Provide some formal play

- PLAY TYPE**
- MOVE THE BODY
  - KINETIC
  - SOCIAL
  - EXPLORE
  - IMAGINE/CREATE
  - INCLUSIVE
  - DISTRICT PARK
  - LOCAL PARK
  - NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK
- Photo represents current park



**PLANNING AREA 2—CURRENT AND PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION**



## 7.3 Planning Area 3

Bullaburra, Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford and Linden

### Overview of Planning Area 3

**District park:** Wentworth Falls Lake with an environmental theme and Buttenshaw Park with a youth and family theme, will be developed over time - improved amenities, improved access, inclusive playground.

**Local parks:** Gloria Park and the former Lawson Golf Course, when it is developed. Open locked toilets, retained and enhanced formal play equipment and informal play, with inclusive elements and internal parking.

**Civic spaces:** Include play elements in upgrades to Lawson, Hazelbrook, Woodford and Linden town centres.







#### Neighbourhood parks:

- Maintain formal play items for as long as is safe and practical
- Reduce the number of formal play settings as equipment fails
- Replace end-of-life play equipment with new formal equipment where necessary to ensure all play types are available across each planning area
- Replace some formal play equipment with more informal nature play options
- Provide safe paths of travel into parks from nearby parking
- At least 2 fenced parks/playground options in the planning area

#### Overall:

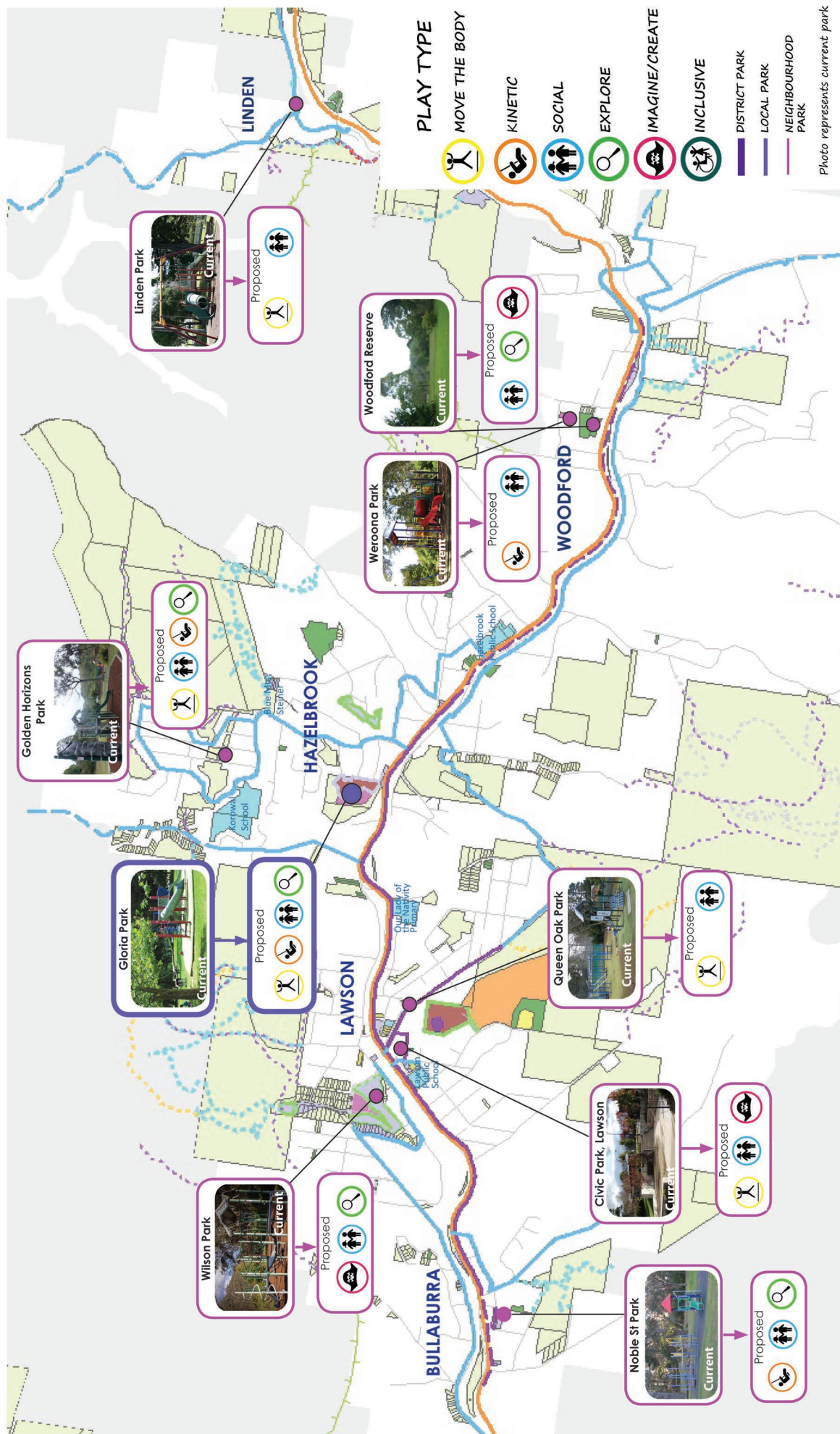
- More information on where to go and what to do
- Occasional activation events
- Footpath connections from stations and schools

### Planning Area 3- Existing play provision

Name	<b>Play Type</b>  Move  Kinetic  Social  Explore  Imagine  Inclusive Carers <b>F</b> - Formal Play equipment	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
<b>LOCAL PARKS</b>			
Gloria Park, Hazelbrook	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Oval and tennis courts Formal play equipment Bushland and cave	Potential to replace some formal equipment with nature play Improve inclusivity
Former Lawson Golf Course	Move	Open spaces	Provision of a formal playground in association with new sporting fields
<b>CIVIC PARK</b>			
Lawson Town Centre	Move - F Social - F	Existing social and some play opportunities. Community centre also provides play opportunities	Some scope for increased kinetic and imaginative play

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Noble Street Park, Bullaburra	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Carers	Formal junior play Bike loop	Potential to replace formal equipment with nature play and encourage explorative play
Sir Henry Parks Park, Bullaburra		Small park with many large pine trees	Encourage explorative play
Golden Horizons Park, Hazelbrook	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play Big open space with gentle slope with partial fence Some bushland	Potential to replace formal with nature-play. Potential for pump/junior dirt jump track
Memory Park, Hazelbrook	Social - F	Social formal landscaped space. Some interpretative signage and steep undeveloped slope with path	No change
Bellevue Park, Lawson	Kinetic - F	Skate park near town centre	Retain skate park
Wilson Park, Lawson	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Formal play Creek line Australia water feature, Adjacent to Lawson pool	Potential to relocate formal play area within park and to focus on nature play utilizing natural setting
Honour Gardens, Lawson		In centre of road	Limited potential because of roads
Queens Oak Park, Lawson	Move - F Kinetic - F	With tennis court (poorly accessed). Fenced, wall on part perimeter	Potential to replace formal with nature play and make wall into climbing wall
Linden Park, Linden	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play, Basketball half-court	Potential to replace formal with nature-play
Bulls Camp, Woodford		Roadside rest area	High vehicular visitation not suited to playground
Weroona Park, Woodford	Move - F Kinetic - F	Tennis courts Formal Play Community building	Potential to replace some formal equipment with nature explorative play. Possible re-use of one tennis court for riding/other ball sports
Woodford Memorial Park, Woodford		Poor access. War Memorial	Transition to a natural area
Woodford Reserve, Woodford		Associated with historic Woodford Academy building	Open area Potential for event space and interpretation of heritage interest





### PLANNING AREA 3—CURRENT AND PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION

# 7.4 Planning Area 4

Faulconbridge, Springwood, Valley Heights, Winmalee, Sun Valley  
Hawkesbury Heights, and Mount Riverview

## Overview of Planning Area 4

**District park:** Buttenshaw Park with a youth and family theme, will be developed over time with improved amenities, improved access, inclusive playground with a sporting and youth focus.

**Local parks:** Summerhayes Park, Lomatia Park and the small parks of Macquarie Street Springwood as a package. These will have open toilets, retained and enhanced formal play equipment and informal play, with inclusive elements, internal parking.

**Civic spaces:** inclusion of play opportunities into town centre upgrades in Springwood will be explored.







### Neighbourhood parks:

- Maintain formal play items for as long as is safe and practical
- Reduce the number of formal play settings as equipment fails
- Replace end-of-life play equipment with new formal equipment where necessary to ensure all play types are available across each planning area
- Replace some formal play equipment with more informal nature play options
- Provide safe paths of travel into parks from nearby parking
- At least 2 fenced parks/playground options in the planning area

### Overall:

- Provide more information on where to go and what to do
- Hold occasional activation events
- Provide more footpath connections from stations and schools

## Planning Area 4—Existing play provision

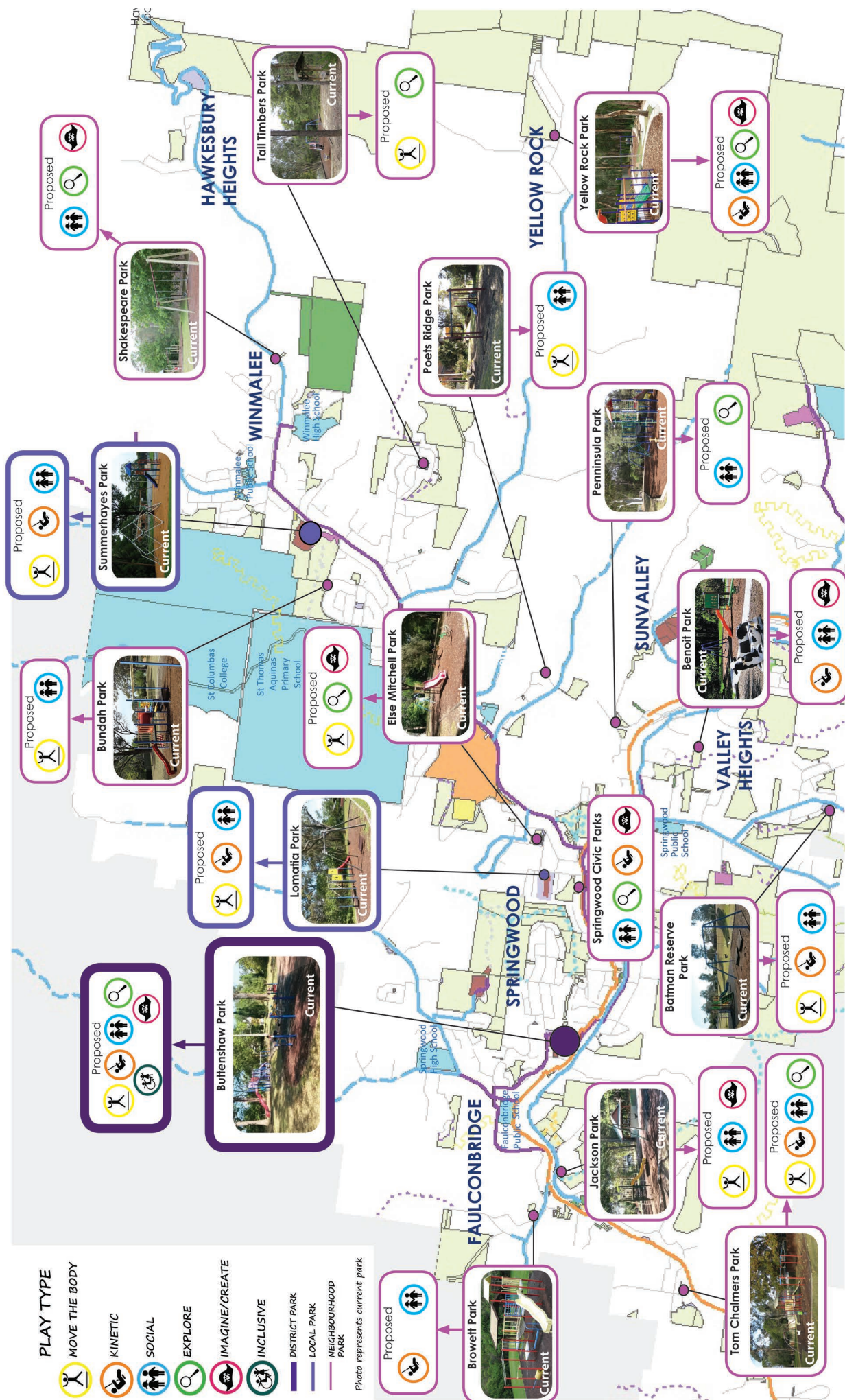
Name	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
	 Move  Kinetic  Social  Explore  Imagine  Inclusive Carers F - Formal Play equipment		
<b>DISTRICT PARK</b>			
Buttenshaw Park, Springwood	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore - F Imagine - F Inclusive - F Carers	Park associated with sporting facilities (Leisure Centre and courts) Limited range of opportunities and limited age range catered to. Lacking inclusive elements	Develop inclusive play, potential to balance child and family focus with youth Youth focused play—larger kinetic and sporting elements Improve inclusivity



LOCAL PARKS	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Summerhayes Park, Winmalee	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Formal play equipment Sports fields. Skatepark	Retain some formal Potential to replace formal with nature play
Lomatia Park, Springwood	Move - F Kinetic - F Social	Park with sportsground Courts Formal play adjacent bushland	Replace formal with nature play, level site with space good for bicycle loop
CIVIC			
Macquarie street parks including Springwood Hub forecourt, Manners Park, School of Arts Square, Buckland Park	Social - F	<p>Hub forecourt: play needs to balance with space being used for events and markets, Very hot</p> <p>Manners: small park with social play functions, Youth Service with heritage components</p> <p>School of Arts: Urban setting Long term plans for expansion</p> <p>Buckland Park: War memorial Used for events Large area of lawn with back area with trees but poor surveillance</p>	<p>Hub forecourt: to provide play with foot print that does not impede events Provide shade</p> <p>Manners: enhance social play in synergy with Youth Service Need to retain heritage values</p> <p>School of Arts: Imaginative play components</p> <p>Buckland Park: increase level areas and formal elements where visible from main road for social and movement play in synergy with event space development</p>
NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS			
Corridor of Oaks, Faulconbridge		Formal setting	Formal play inappropriate to setting—direct to Jackson park instead
Jackson Park , Faulconbridge	Kinetic - F Carers	Toilet, picnic shelter, formal play equipment, track head	Replace portion of formal with nature explorative play, but retaining kinetic
Ticehurst Park, Faulconbridge		Cultural interest	No change
Browett Park, Faulconbridge	Move - F Kinetic - F	With hall, adjacent bush	No change Formal equipment not expected to fail within 10 years
(Tom) Chalmers Memorial Park, Faulconbridge	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play, flat open space Mostly fenced	Potential to replace formal with nature play Potential for dirt track, and tree grove for exploration
Lindsay Park, Faulconbridge		Bush block Some parking Roads on all sides	

	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Patrick O'Possum Reserve, Faulconbridge		Small mown area at end of a cul-de-sac, backing onto bushland	Potential for social space Nature-play and encourage nature play
The Lily Pond, Faulconbridge	Social - F	Poor vehicular access	Not recommended for further development
Magic Pudding Place, Faulconbridge		Small mown open space with through path	Potential to provide nature play
Hall Park (also known as Reservoir Park), Mt Riverview	Move - F Kinetic - F Social Carers	Some formal play. Adjacent tennis courts and clubhouse. Mural on watertank	Extend existing format Potential to replace formal with nature play
Harley Park, Mt Riverview	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Imagine - F	Mostly fenced Shelter	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Batman Reserve, Springwood	Move - F Kinetic - F	Large level lawn, formal play, adjacent bushland fenced off Occasional use for helicopters - need to keep open area open	Potential to replace formal with nature play Good for bike loop
Else –Mitchell Park, Springwood	Move - F Kinetic - F Explore - F Imagine - F	Formal play, large stone lizard for imaginative play, shelter Long association with bushcare	Potential to replace formal with nature play Synergy with bushcare for exploration play
Picnic Glen, Springwood	Social - F	Small area with picnic shelter	Potential to provide nature play
Poets Ridge Park, Springwood	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play only, roads on two sides, steep slopes	Potential to replace formal with nature play and provide partial fencing
Rest Park, Springwood		Path and shade	Future of park is uncertain
Telecom Park, Springwood	Social - F	Managed but not owned by Council	No scope for development
Bundah Reserve, Winmalee	Move - F Kinetic - F	Large open area with some formal play	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Emma Reserve, Winmalee	Social - F	Small level area, Community group very interested in park	Potential addition of play
Tall Timbers Reserve, Winmalee	Kinetic - F	Small quantity of formal equipment only Much bushland	Potential to replace formal with nature play and bike loop
Shakespeare Park, Winmalee	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play, bushland, Near Winmalee High school	Potential to replace formal with nature play, lends itself to exercise equipment
Benoit Park, Valley Heights	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Imagine - F	Park with play equipment, bike track, Cow sculpture Adjacent bush	Equipment not expected to fail within 10 years
Peninsula Park, Valley Heights	Move - F Kinetic - F	Formal play, bushland, Partially fenced/ducked away	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Yellow Rock Reserve	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F	Adjacent bushland Formal play with small bike loop Mosaic	Recently developed Not expected to fail within ten years





## PLANNING AREA 4—CURRENT AND PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION

# 7.5 Planning Area 5

Warrimoo, Blaxland, Glenbrook, Mt Riverview and Lapstone

## Overview of Planning Area 4

**District Park:** Glenbrook Park—stage two (7 to 12's play) will be developed. Improved amenities, improved access, inclusive playgrounds.

**Local Parks:** Warrimoo Oval, Blaxland Oval, Glenbrook Oval. Locked toilets will be opened. Retain and enhance formal play equipment and informal play with inclusive elements. More picnic facilities.

**Civic Spaces:** Explore inclusion of play opportunities in Blaxland town centre upgrades.







### Neighbourhood Parks:

- Maintain formal play items for as long as is safe and practical
- Reduce the number of formal play settings as equipment fails
- Replace end-of-life play equipment with new formal equipment where necessary to ensure all play types are available across each planning area
- Replace some formal play equipment with more informal nature play options
- Provide safe paths of travel into parks from nearby parking
- At least 2 fenced parks/playground options in the planning area

### Overall:

- Provide more information on where to go and what to do
- Hold occasional activation events
- Provide footpath connections from stations and schools

## Planning Area 5 - Existing play provision

Name	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
	 Move  Kinetic  Social  Explore  Imagine Carers  Inclusive F - Formal Play equipment		
<b>DISTRICT PARK</b>			
Glenbrook Park	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore Imagine Inclusive - F Carers	Entry point to Blue Mountains Oval, picnic facilities, artworks, historical features, Formal play equipment Play equipment is limited in age range, run down and not large capacity. Bushland corner, significant trees Hot park with limited shade and seating	Plan of Management identifies site for an inclusive play setting with shade. Showcase Blue Mountains with a child and family focus Junior upgrade delivered 2017-2018. Deliver senior playground

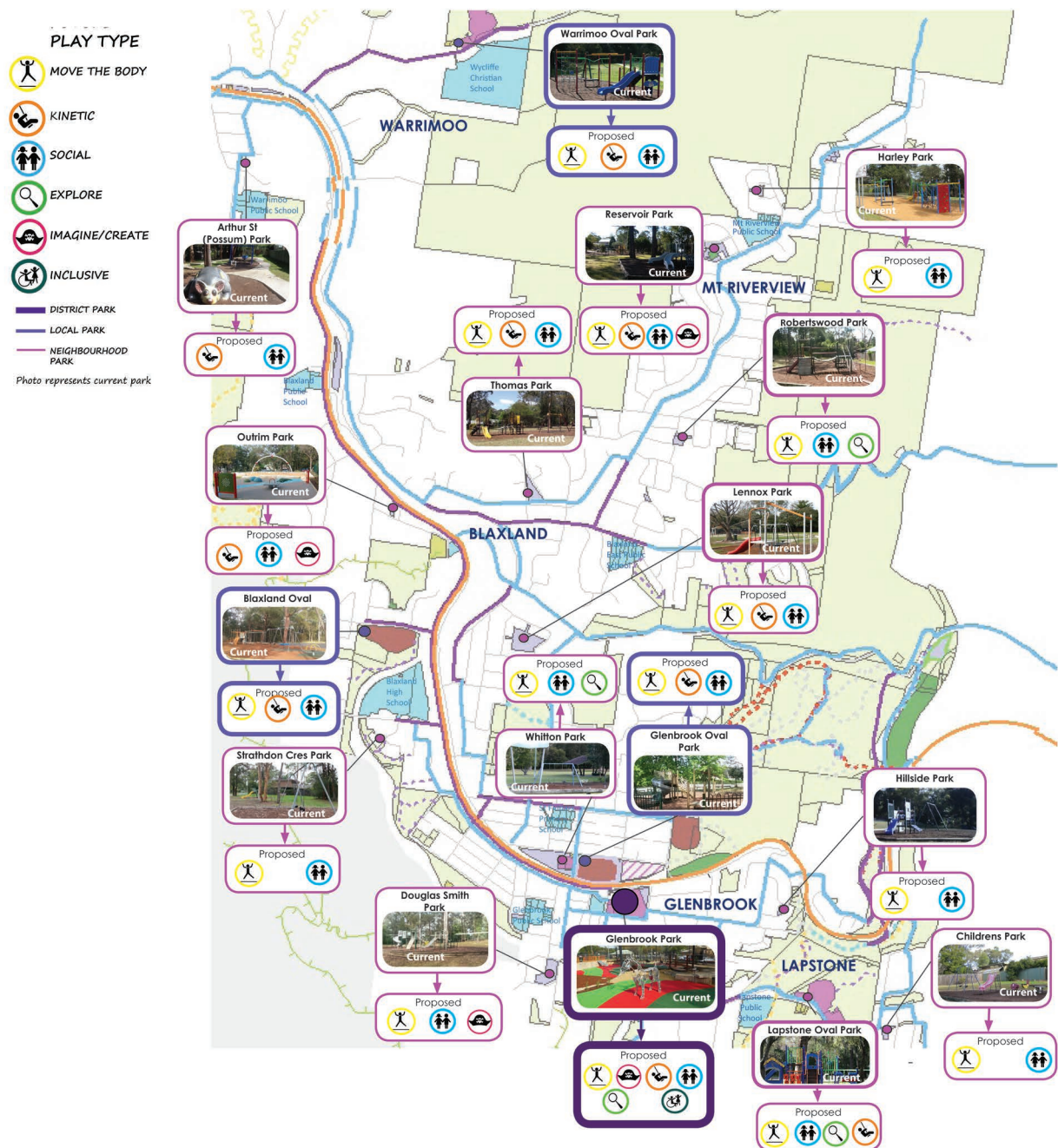


LOCAL PARKS	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Glenbrook Oval, Glenbrook	Move - F Kinetic - F	Skate park, oval, and formal play equipment Play equipment not necessarily in best place	Potential to replace formal with nature play
Blaxland (St Johns) Oval, Blaxland	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore -F Carers	Site with formal play equipment Oval and court bushland	Potential to replace formal with nature play Not expected to fail within 10 years
Knapsack Oval, Glenbrook	Move Kinetic Social Explore Carers	Oval, mini-field, bushwalks, no formal play	Potential to develop a social space with formal playground to service oval and locals
Lapstone Oval , Lapstone	Move - F Kinetic - F Social Explore Imagine Carers	Oval, tennis and netball courts Formal Play equipment one corner of large site only, adjacent bushland	Potential to expand play opportunities further around site, encourage use of courts for riding and ball games
Warrimoo Oval, Warimoo	Move - F Kinetic - F Social Explore Carers	Two sports fields with slope in between, tennis courts, Formal play equipment, adjacent bushland	Potential for loop track, exercise stations, bounce wall More informal seating, some exploration play
<b>CIVIC PARK</b>			
Outrim Park, Blaxland	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Imagine - F	Formal play Small with some issues with fencing	Recently developed Not expected to fail within 10 years Fencing could be reviewed
Blaxland Town Centre spaces		Includes Outrim as per above and other undeveloped spaces	Potential being explored through Masterplanning process
Glenbrook Town Centre Spaces	Move - F Kinetic - F Social	Much available through Glenbrook town centre spaces	Rely on existing and Glenbrook Park
<b>NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>			
Blaxland War Memorial Park, Blaxland		Poor pedestrian access Between noisy highway and railway. Bushland	Unsuitable for development
Lennox Park, Blaxland	Move - F Kinetic - F Social - F Explore -F Carers	Formal play Bike loop tennis courts, small shelter Toilet block Drainage line through centre	Recently developed, not expected to fail within 10 years Drainage line has potential for nature play
Strathdon Crescent Reserve, Blaxland	Kinetic - F	Very small area with just a swing set	Potential to replace formal play equipment with nature play Seating may make more useable
Robertswood Park, Blaxland	Move - F Kinetic - F	Some formal play Partial fencing Seating. Trees and flat terrain	Potential to replace some formal with nature explorative play

	Play Type	Existing Play Provision	Potential Adjustment within 10 Years
Thomas Park, Blaxland	Move - F Kinetic - F Social Carers	Formal play equipment and shelters Commonly used for parties Plenty of trees	Build on tree theme with nature play Retain group capacity
Douglas Smith Park, Glenbrook	Move - F Explore	Large formal play, Very Steep site down to road Plenty of trees	Provide informal barriers to roads and/or off-street parking Build on tree theme with nature play Create level areas Exercise circuit
Children's Park, Lapstone	Move - F Kinetic - F	Hidden away and not well known Steep sections	Lack of surveillance limits potential
Hillside Park, Glenbrook	Move Kinetic	Exposed site leading steeply down to unfenced roads on two sides	A level area with informal seating could be easily created, possible hardstand area Fencing to road useful Grove planting for exploration play
Ardill Park, Warrimoo	Social	No formal play Picnic shelters Close to busy roads Not highly used for play	Introduce small scale move or kinetic items Community art components to encourage use Consider partial fencing







## PLANNING AREA 5–CURRENT AND PROPOSED PLAY PROVISION

# Appendices

## Community Consultation

### Who provided input?

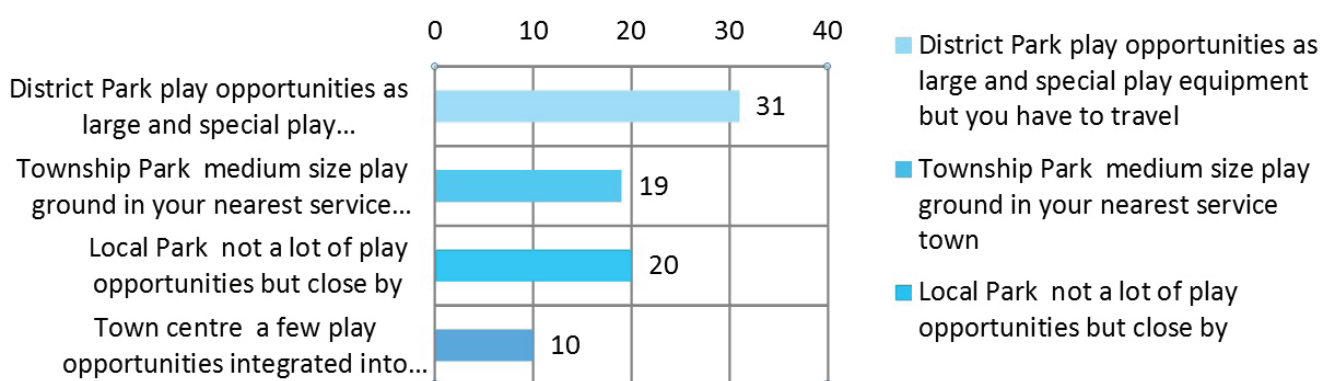
The Play Strategy survey was on Blue Mountain City Council's online forum [www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au](http://www.bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au). Over 200 people looked at the page and 83 contributed.

- All respondents indicated they came from the Blue Mountains.
- The majority of respondents (92%) were female.
- The majority of respondents (87%) were between 25 and 44 years old, with only two respondents younger.
- The majority of respondents (80%) use parks once a week or more already and (74%) of respondents had children under years old or (23%) between 5–10 years old.

What that means: Parents with young children are particularly interested in play provision and Council needs to actively target other groups in future consultations.

### What level of play provision does the community want?

#### Which places would you like to see a range of play opportunities at



What that means: The Play Guidelines needs to provide for a variety of places with different levels of play opportunities.



## Willingness to travel to different types of parks

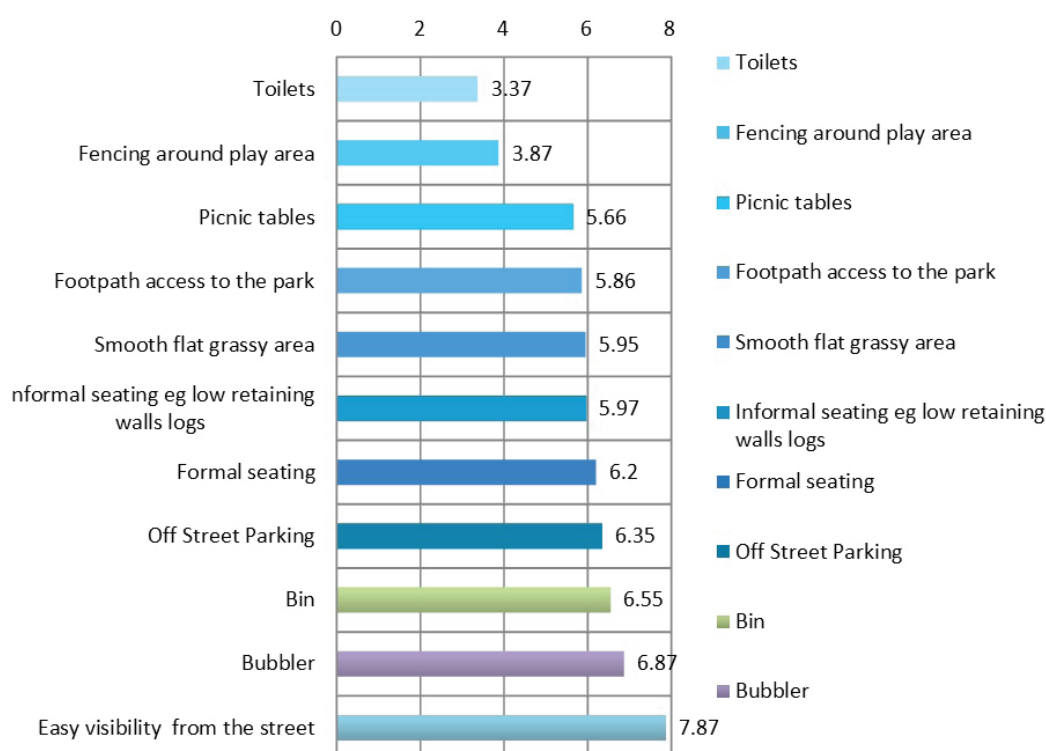
Survey responses on acceptable travel distances show that people:

- are prepared to drive 30 minutes to reach parks that have a lot of specialised play equipment
- want some play opportunities located near town centres
- want some simple play opportunities in parks within 10 minutes of their homes

What that means: Council needs to provide for a range of play opportunities across different types of parks.

## What else to provide near play settings?

### Rank the facility you would like to see the most



What that means: More facilities would be appreciated. Further consultation may assist Council determine which to prioritise.

## Playing in parks

Eighty-four percent of the respondents indicated that they would like to take children to the parks more often. The main reason stated for not going to the park more often was (72%) that the parks are not enticing enough.

What that means: There are many possible interpretations of these results:

- The Play Guidelines could recommend more money is spent on play and supporting facilities across all parks although there is limited capacity for this to occur. The Play Guidelines could alternatively recommend the development of special parks within 30 minutes' drive of most homes.
- The Play Guidelines could recommend a change the style of parks, not necessarily with normal play equipment but to ensure they are more attractive and support children's developmental needs.
- The Play Guidelines could recommend assisting people to understand more about playing in parks and natural areas – this is in line with current trends in play provision.

## Letting children go to the park

- Generally people would not let children 6–10 go to a park without an adult, even if with other children.
- Generally people would allow children 10–16 to go to a park without an adult if in company with others.
- Generally people would allow youth over 16 to go to the park without an adult.

What that means: This indicates that if children are to have more play time in parks that either parent need to be enticed to go too, or parks and/or the path of travel need to be made to feel safer.

## Other consultation results

In addition to the online survey, Council has undertaken other consultation which provides useful insight into what youth and middle childhood are looking for in play opportunities in public places.

In June 2016 children in Blackheath, Hazelbrook and Lawson in the 10–12 year age group responded to questions on what community means to them. They were given four questions which they discussed before completing a written response.

The questions were:

1. What kind of community do you want to live in?
2. Why is that important to you?
3. How is that different from how things are now?
4. What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

The responses touched on many things. The need for fun activities was frequently mentioned but not all of it relates to what play opportunities can be provided by Council in public places. Shopping opportunities, commercial entertainment venues such as Flip Out, sports requirements, dog related places, events and festivals, are outside the scope of this Guidelines to address.

The relevant responses for the Play Guidelines are:

Young people consider connections to parks as important as the parks: they are seeking improved bike paths and footpaths.

That youth consider there is inadequate play provision, particularly in the category of having your body moved for middle children and youth. Flying foxes and the like were noted as absent.

Proper walking paths on all streets. More parks/outdoor areas to hang out at. More activities for all ages, bigger ovals for more activities to do. Bigger parks. (Lawson).

Lots of parks and places to go and play. More play equipment.

Parks were emphasised heavily in Blackheath and Hazelbrook. In Blackheath there was more mention of trees, bikes and paths.

Paths were also a strong point in Hazelbrook as well as shops and a pool.

A skate park was a popular idea also mentioned by 5 in Lawson.

Parks for older kids 9-15.

Get more kids out on their bikes (Blackheath).

Activities and places for older kids to hang out and do things together in safety and recognition of difference and disability with access as a major concern.

In Hazelbrook there was a lot of mention of dog parks and places where you could swim with dogs.

More nature and a bike path.

More and flatter foot paths and safer ... a playground in memory park. More zebra crossings (Hazelbrook).

More bike paths because I want to travel to more places with no danger.

Right now you can't travel much on bikes. More bike paths



**Table 1: Themes and frequency**

Theme	Frequency	Theme	Frequency
	193	Everyone	75
Roads	34	Clean	24
Highway	19	Litter	13
Street	25	Rubbish	10
Speed	6	Bins	6
Paths/walkways	73	Pollution	25
Walk/ing	53	Help	33
Bike/s	78	Care	22
Ride	24	Freedom	6
		Fire	8
Playground/playgrounds	17	Animals	27
Play	22	Friendly	42
Park/s	114	Respect	18
Waterpark	2	Fun	113
Place/s	79	Happy	75
Space/s	14	Trust	3
		Accept	819
Environment	42	Access	19
Bush	23	Sport/sports	75
Bushwalks	2	basketball	10
Track/s	20	Soccer	15
Trees	88	skate	21
		gym	4
Friends	53	trampoline	3
Family	5	swim/swimming	8
Mum	11	oval	3
Dad	8	hockey	3

More activities are also important:

A place where you can play basketball for free.

We need a big kid playground. With a really long zip line. A long park for walking and climbing. Giant swing things.

You should include rock climbing walls.

There was a desire for separate parks for big and little kids: 'At the skate park the big kids knock over my brother'.

There was a lot of emphasis on places for sports such as soccer and basketball, dog walking, athletics equipment, hand ball courts and cricket pitches. Bush walks, 'programs to educate people about wildlife' and 'open spaces for animals' were also mentioned.

Other things that were important included parks, a games arcade, gymnastics, a jumping castle, Dreamworld, and the youth centre being safe.

Ideas of community related to safety, having places for teenagers to socialise that don't cost money;

Good ecological environment, places to go and walk. Ents







# References

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2014 National Wildlife Federation and Natural Learning Initiative America

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[www.internationalschoolgrounds.org](http://www.internationalschoolgrounds.org)  
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'Blueprint for an Active Australia—Government and community actions to increase population levels of physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour in Australia, 2014–2017' First edition 2009

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) 2008  
'Designing and Planning for Play'

Kelly, Breadon, Davis, Hunter, Mares, Mullerworth, and Weidmann (2012),  
'Social Cities'. Grattan Institute, Melbourne.











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**Blue Mountains Have Your Say**

[bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au](http://bluemountainshaveyoursay.com.au)



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