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PLAYGROUND STRATEGY

Executive Summary

The Griffith City Council has prepared the Griffith Playground Strategy (2013) to direct the provision and management of playgrounds within the Local Government Area.

Essentially, the strategy seeks to *“provide a diverse and experiential spread of quality play experiences for the community in a sustainable and economic manner”*.

It is the understanding of Council that quality playgrounds and play areas can significantly contribute to the physical health and increase the social connection that help develop a healthy and connected community. Recent study has revealed that access to parks can increase physical activity by 48.4% (Healthy Spaces & Places, 2011). Further, playgrounds play a pivotal role in the development of children, encouraging an increasing number of social connections and developing cognitive and problem-solving skills.

Griffith City Council faces a range of challenges as a number of playgrounds have deteriorating equipment and there is increasing financial restraint. There is also increasing concern over potential litigation that surrounds public open space, particularly playgrounds. However, playgrounds provide significant community benefit and it is Council’s priority to establish a clear direction in the design, provision and maintenance of playgrounds.

The Strategy states that the provision of cost effective playgrounds necessitates extensive community engagement. The strategy looks at introducing alternative play environments such as nature-based and contextual-based play to increase Council’s diversity of play while also promoting environmental sustainability.



Figure 1: Play is a fundamental element in our children’s development

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1.0 Background

Background

1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

The Griffith Playground Strategy (2013) has been developed to provide direction for the future provision and management of playgrounds within the Council.

Open space is an important feature within the Council area, providing both active and passive recreational experiences for residents and visitors. There are 41 playgrounds under the management of Council and a large number of parks and reserves that do not have a playground.

It is important to note that this Strategy only takes into account parks and playgrounds which are owned or under trusteeship of the Council. It is further noted that there are a few parks within the Local Government Area (LGA) which do not fall within this category, including Dave Taylor Park and Kubank Park which are under the ownership and management of the Department of Families and Child Services.

1.2 Background

Griffith City Council is committed to the continuing improvement of playground facilities within the LGA.

While there has been a significant number of new facilities developed from 2008-2012, Council has recognized there is a growing backlog of work to upgrade existing facilities. To further complicate the issue, Council is experiencing increasing financial constraint, placing considerable pressure to adequately maintain, upgrade and develop park facilities.

While a comprehensive and highly data rich strategy was prepared in February 2011 - Playground and Small Reserve Strategy (2011), Council chose not to adopt the strategy. It has been addressed that the recommendations of the previous strategy had significant budgetary and community implications that required review. Therefore, further direction was given to review the strategy and consider alternative approaches in tackling complicated issues facing playgrounds in Griffith City Council.

The interim position of Council is to remove and not replace playground equipment that is deemed unsafe (unless it is classified as a Regional or Precinct Park). This is a temporary initiative until a Strategy is adopted that can appropriately direct the design, provision and management of playgrounds in the future.

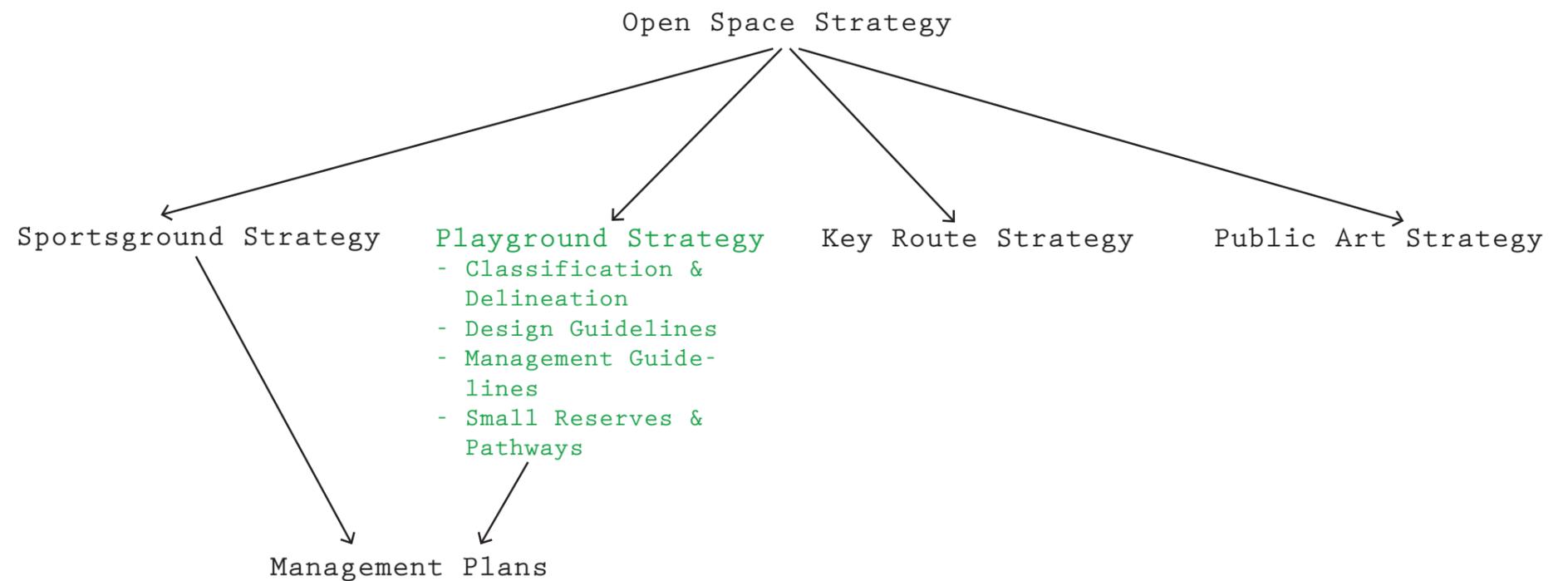


Figure 2: City of Griffith Planning Structure for Open Spaces



Background

1.3 Historical Context

The Wiradjuri people were the original custodians of the land contained within the Griffith City Council. Further, they were skilled fishers/hunters/gatherers of the land and their children had an intimate relationship with the natural environment. It is imagined that Wiradjuri children used the natural environment for unstructured play.

Playgrounds evolved as part of the Australian landscape post World War II. Generally, post war play equipment was rudimentary, consisting of swings, a slide and seesaw. Since the 1980s and 1990s there has been an increasing introduction of plastic play structures. These structures have been primarily designed and installed by the manufacturers and questions have been raised over the unimaginative nature of the play (Robbe, 2013). However, more recent trends have seen a revival in designer-led playgrounds that seek to capture the imagination of children.

In the past, children did not rely on playgrounds for play experiences, rather they used the environment at their disposal to create imaginative play. With increasing safety concerns, children are spending less time in parks.

1.4 Local Context

Griffith has ample supply of open space as originally planned for in Sir Walter Burley Griffin's initial Master Plan for the city. These open space areas provide a range of recreational spaces from wide road reserves to large drainage basins to expansive neighbourhood greens. Further, each of the surrounding villages addressed in the Strategy have access to at least one playground.

According to the Provision of Open Space and Community Facilities Report (URS, 2007) Griffith City Council has over 535Ha of recreational open space. At present, the Council area has 41 playgrounds under its jurisdiction and a number of parks and reserves that do not contain a playground. The playgrounds vary significantly in age and quality and there is little strategic direction to guide Council in the design, provision and management of these areas.



Figure 3 - View of Griffith according to Sir Walter Burley Griffin's Design

Background

1.5 Strategic Direction

It is important that the vision and objectives in the Griffith Playground Strategy (2013) represent economic outcomes without compromising the social benefit associated with play provision. Furthermore, the Strategy needs to uphold objectives that promote and ensure sustainable development in the future.

The vision of the Strategy is to:

“Provide a diverse and experiential spread of quality play experiences for the community in a sustainable and economic manner”

In keeping with the vision, the Strategy seeks to prioritize more sustainable provision of open space and playgrounds. This will be achieved through three main objectives that have evolved from the vision:

- Environmental Sustainability;
- Community Benefit; and
- Financial Stewardship (as referenced in Figure 4 - Objectives Model).



Figure 4 - Objectives Model



Background

1.6 Legislative Context

Griffith City Council develops and manages playgrounds under several Government Acts. The acts include the following:

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government Act 1993 provides guidance for Council concerning the operation and management of parks under its ownership or trusteeship. Further, the Act guides Council regarding the funding, acquisition and classification of land and the preparation of Plans of Management for land deemed as Community Land.

Crown Lands Act 1989

Council commonly operates as the trustee for Crown Reserves and therefore must comply with the Crown Lands Act 1989. Essentially, the Act guides Council concerning the operation and management of Crown lands. In addition, the Act provides guidance regarding the procedure for preparing Management Plans relating to Crown Lands.

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979

Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 relates to planning of lands for environmental conservation and/or recreational purposes under the control of Council. The Act places a number of land use restrictions on the land to assist in its management and it provides guidance on the acquisition and transfer of deemed land to Council.

1.7 Ownership

The majority of park land within the Griffith City Council is either land owned by Council (classified as Community Land) or Crown Lands held by Council under trusteeship. This land has been identified and designated as land for recreation and public purposes.

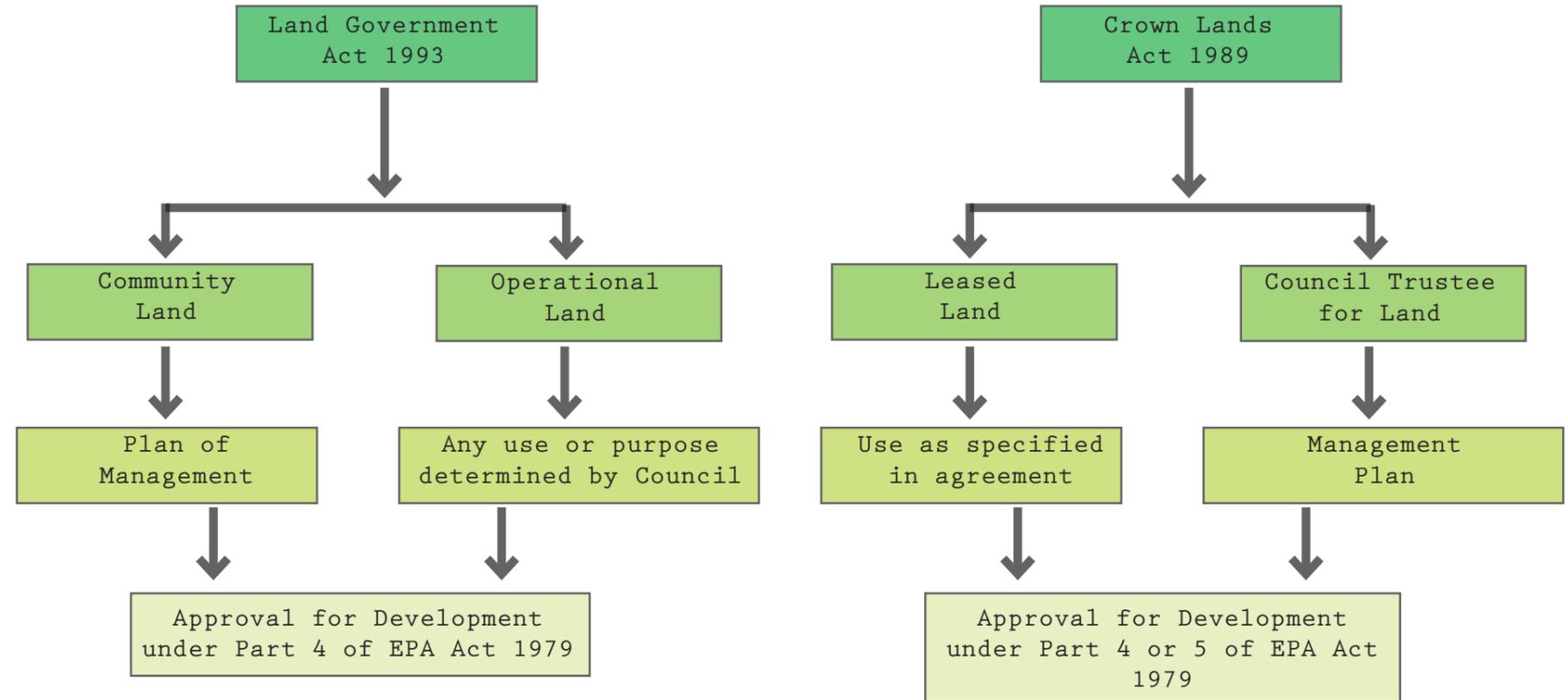


Figure 5: Lands Under the Local Government Act & Crown Lands Act

2.0 State of Play

Play

2.1 Importance of Play

“Play is an act that diverges from a normal life to create an imaginary one in which ideas and activities are developed, tested and performed within a safe environment”
(Sheppard-Simms, 2012).

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 (CABE, 2008).

A playground or play area provides a child with some of their first and most enjoyable outdoor experiences and hopefully develops an appreciation for the natural environment. In an age where child obesity is on the rise and children are spending less time outside, a playground becomes an important tool in encouraging families to be outside and regularly exercise (NSW Health, 2009).

A playground is an important meeting place for children and parents alike. With increasing levels of loneliness and isolation (Kelly et al, 2012), a play environment offers as much a social experience as it does a physical experience.

Access to play is viewed as a basic right for all children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) drafted several universal rights of children. Article 31 of the UN Convention states:

“That the right of the child to rest and leisure to engage in play and recreational services appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

Therefore, it is of fundamental importance to the Griffith City Council that there is an adequate provision of quality play areas for children of a variety of ages to further promote a more healthy and sustainable community.



Figure 6: Play can happen in almost any environment



Figure 7: ...and at any age

Play

2.2 State of the Child

Griffith City Council has a high concentration of children (0-14 years) within its local government area (ABS, 2011). The health, well-being and development of these children is a high priority to Council because it will have lasting affect on the community.

The 2012 Australian Early Development Index found that 28.3% of children (0-5yrs) in the Griffith City Council were developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains which included physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity and language and cognitive skills. The Index also revealed that 15.4% of the children were developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains mentioned (AEDI, 2012). These statistics are significantly higher than the state and national averages.

It is widely acknowledged that accessible and quality play areas significantly contribute to the physical health, social competence and cognitive development of children. A recent study has revealed that good access to parks can increase physical activity by 48.4% (Healthy Spaces & Places, 2011). Therefore, the design, provision and management of playground in Council plays an important role in children's development and building a more healthy community.

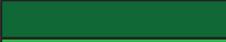
Legend Values	
Highest Proportion	
	
	
	
Lowest Proportion	

Figure 8: Proportion of Children Developmentally Vulnerable

GRIFFITH COMMUNITY	Children Surveyed	Proportion of Children Developmentally Vulnerable (%)						
		Physical Health & Wellbeing	Social Competence	Emotional Maturity	Language & Cognitive Skills	Communication skills & General Knowledge	Vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI	Vulnerable on two or more domains of the AEDI
Australia	289,973	9.3	9.3	7.6	6.8	9.0	22.0	10.8
New South Wales	94,572	8.3	8.5	6.2	4.8	8.5	19.9	9.2
Griffith	403	11.5	11.0	11.3	11.3	15.7	28.3	15.4
LOCAL COMMUNITY								
Griffith	274	12.3	13.4	14.2	13.4	18.4	33.7	18.4
Hanwood	20	6.3	0.0	0.0	6.3	6.7	20.0	0.0
Lake Wyangan and surrounds	56	9.1	5.5	3.6	9.1	14.5	18.2	9.1
Yenda	17	5.9	5.9	5.9	0.0	0.0	5.9	5.9
Yoogali/Bilbul/Beelbanger	36	15.2	9.1	9.1	6.1	9.1	18.2	15.2

Table adapted from the AEDI 2012 Community Results Table - Griffith Community, NSW
Source: Australian Early Development Index, 2013



Play

2.3 Unstructured Play

As a community, we have commonly accepted that a play area must consist of standard play equipment (swing, see saw, slide and sand pit). However, “the playground” is typically an artificial environment with heavily manicured and irrigated lawns and a combination of plastic/steel playground structures.

Councils nation-wide have also been guilty of placing an over-reliance on selecting play equipment from a catalogue and creating ‘KFC’ playgrounds - *kit, fence and carpet* (as described by CABA (2008)). Designing play spaces in this manner produce environments that lack character and imagination.

More recently, researchers have become concerned that the decline in unstructured play is contributing to increasing levels of obesity in children (Sheppard-Simms, 2012).

Children often find natural environments such as creek beds, flora, fauna and rocks more stimulating than traditional playground environments. Further, these environments become important educational experiences as children explore nature.

Studies have shown that children quickly tire of playground equipment as they master the different pieces of equipment and as a result playground suppliers have needed to design increasingly complicated equipment to engage children. There has been a growing movement towards nature-based play as research has proven that it has numerous benefits to a child’s development far beyond the traditional playground (Kid Safe NSW).

It is also thought that if children have little connection and knowledge of the natural environment, they will have little care for it in the future. Therefore, nature-based play will be a useful platform for promoting environmentally sustainable initiatives in the future.

Figure 8a and 8b is one example of how a traditional playground might be converted to a more unstructured (nature-based) play environment.



Figure 8a: Noel Hogan Park - one-dimensional nature of playgrounds



Figure 8b: Artist Impression of Noel Hogan Park with natural play setting

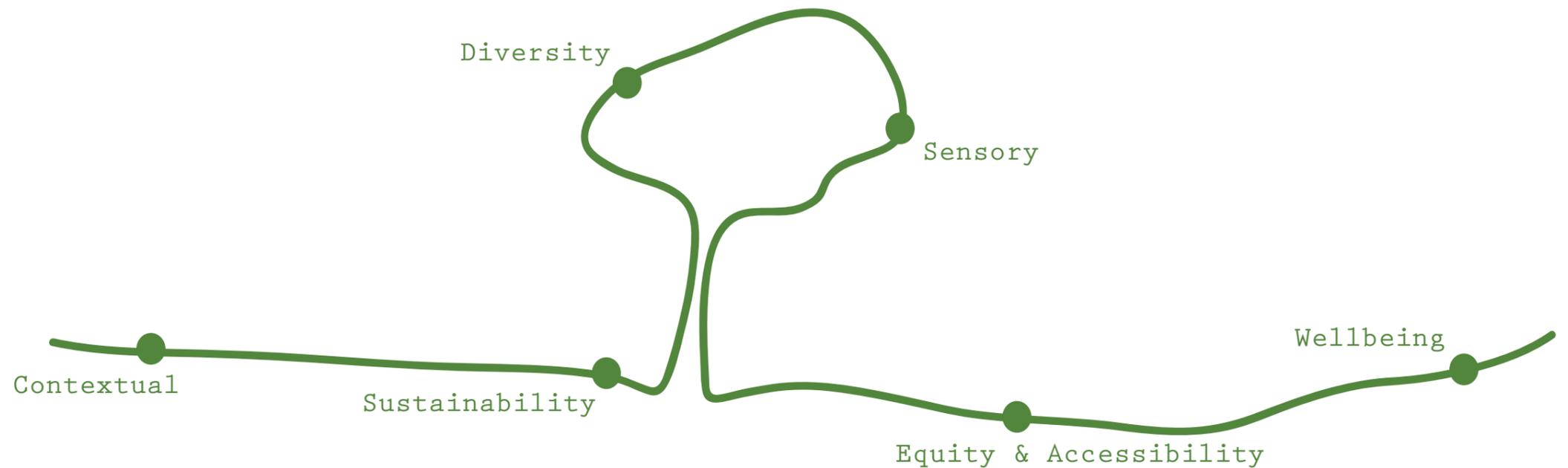
3.0 Play Design

Play Design

3.1 Guiding Principles

A significant body of research has confirmed that parks are good for us. It is also been identified that the quality of design of public open space has a direct bearing on how often a community uses public space, how safe they feel when they are there and what level of enjoyment they gain from the experience (Landcom, 2008). Therefore, the question isn't necessarily about the quantity of public open space but the quality and accessibility of such a space.

Importantly, the Strategy wishes to promote creativity, exploration and imagination within the design of playgrounds. Further, it is essential that the community are instrumental in the design process, particularly children and teenagers.



Contextual	Sustainability	Diverse	Sensory	Equity & Accessibility	Wellbeing
Play space design needs to be in context with the site and surrounding environment. Having contextual elements provides greater identity and provides a point-of-difference from other areas.	Play space design should strive to be environmentally and financially sustainable. This should occur by applying water sensitive design principles and/or using recycled materials for play equipment.	Play space design should cater for a diverse range of ages and abilities. No one play area should be the same but reflect the cultural diversity that is present in the community.	Play space design should look to emphasise the five senses. It is important to design play spaces that consider touch, smell, sound, sight and taste.	Play space design must make parks accessible to the surrounding areas. It is also important that play areas cater for a variety of children that might have learning difficulties, sensory/ mobility impairments or mental health issues.	Play space design must promote a more healthy lifestyle. The designed space should become a destination, encouraging the community to spend more time in public space.

Recommendation: Design Principles

Council employ the following principles when designing or contracting others to design play spaces

Play Design

3.2 Natural Play

Play areas within the Griffith City Council are typically one-dimensional, offering limited variety (as described in more detail in Section 4.6 - Condition of Play).

A potentially inexpensive and well supported form of play design centres around nature-based play. Kid Safe NSW describes natural play spaces to be a blend of natural areas, environmental features and plants designed to create unstructured play for children. It is considered that this allows for more diverse and creative play spaces that are more cost effective than traditional playgrounds.

Designing a natural play space might include (but not limited to) the following features:

- Dry creek bed
- Rocks and boulders
- Fallen trees
- Sand pit
- Mounds
- Water
- Frog ponds / nesting boxes
- Sensory landscaping
- Edible plant garden

However it is important to stress that the success of nature-based play is largely dependent on the level of community participation - particularly in consulting with children and teenagers.

3.3 Native Landscaping

A native landscape provides a diverse environment for children to explore, with opportunity to touch, smell, pick and experience nature. This will also reduce the irrigation and mowing requirements associated with extensive lawned areas.

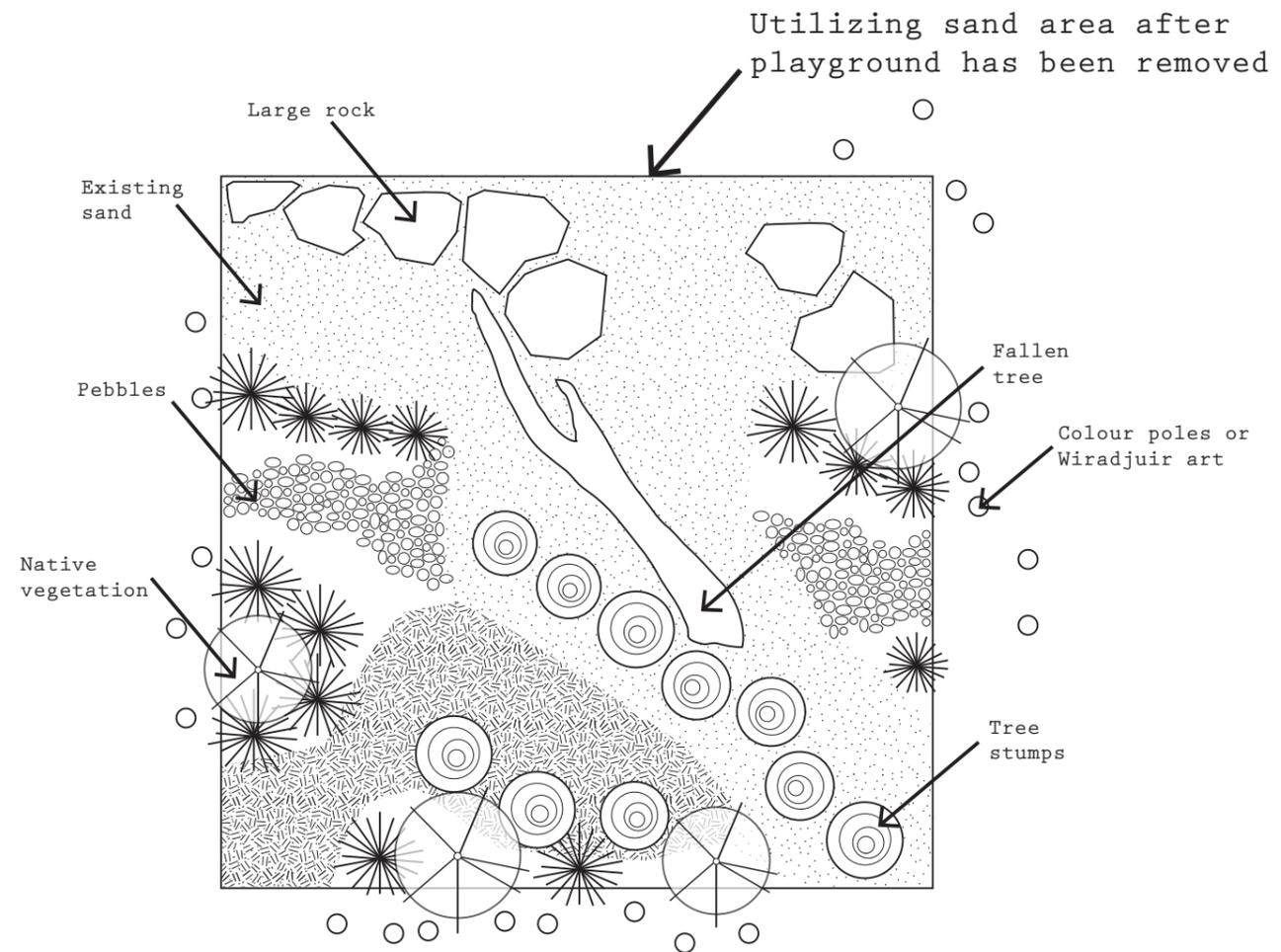


Figure 9: Design concept utilizing existing vacant play areas



Figure 10: Natural play area (Kathleen Day Playground)



Play Design

3.4 Contextual Play

There is opportunity to design playgrounds in context with the local community. The local community is an invaluable resource for designing a meaningful context and strengthening community image.

Effective contextual design often involves recycled or reused elements that are inexpensive and readily available. Shackell et al (2008) state that good play design must consider sustainable or recycled sourced materials. These elements might include:

- Recycled/retrofitted play equipment
- Storm-water drainage pipes
- Farm machinery
- Freight containers
- Tyre structures
- Interactive public art

‘Good play spaces are designed and constructed bearing in mind sustainability but they are not necessarily tidy, and bits of scrub or long grass, fallen leaves and twigs, may all provide additional play opportunities.’ (Shackell and others, 2008)

Traditional playgrounds incorporate play equipment that has a short life span and high carbon footprint. While Council has applied various methods in extending the life cycle of play equipment, they come with high maintenance costs.

With a large number of metal fabricators and skilled tradespeople in the Griffith region, there is opportunity to use their expertise in recycling disused play equipment.



Figure 11: recycled tyres and play equipment



Figure 12: recycled shipping containers

Play Design

3.5 Sensory Play

We have five senses - sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. These senses are well developed in children and are important areas to emphasize in play design.

Sensory design is the process of creating a play space to engage children in a sensory experience, where several of their senses are evoked through the play experience. In addition, sensory design is particularly important for the development of children with sensory impairments or learning difficulties.

Sensory design might include the following elements:

- Edible gardens
- Elevated flower beds
- Chimes, bells and bongos
- Colour varieties
- Artistic expression - blackboard
- Variety of ground cover
- Resting places (tepee or tent)

Play space design should question whether the play opportunity appeals to a variety of senses and whether the play experience provides interesting textures, shapes, weights, vibrations, movement, flexibility and temperatures to touch (Sensory Trust).



Figure 13: how many sensory experiences are created in a running stream?



Figure 14: chimes (Hazelwood School, Glasgow)



Play Design

3.6 Community Engagement

The success of a playground is largely dependent on the level of community involvement at the initial stages of design - participatory design. Having children, parents, community groups and maintenance staff involved in the design process ensures quality play areas are created (White & Stoecklin, 1998). The community's input means that play areas establish greater community ownership.

Further, play areas are typically designed by adults, with play equipment designed by adults, which in turn greatly reduces the ability for the child to imagine play (CABE, 2008). Therefore, children and youth need to be extensively consulted in the design process.

Moreover, an engaged community, is a community which is given power to design, construct and manage their park. With greater decision-making power, a community willingly takes ownership over its neighbourhood park. It is of critical importance that those using and/or maintaining a park have a voice in the design process (Landscape Architecture, 2013). This ensures the park is well utilized and it provides community pride and identity.

INFORM

CONSULT

INVOLVE

COLLABORATE

EMPOWER

Levels of Community Engagement
(IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum)



Figure 15a: Land Army Park (Hanwood) has limited community personality



Figure 15b: Artist Impression of Land Army Park with community personality

4.0 Play Provision

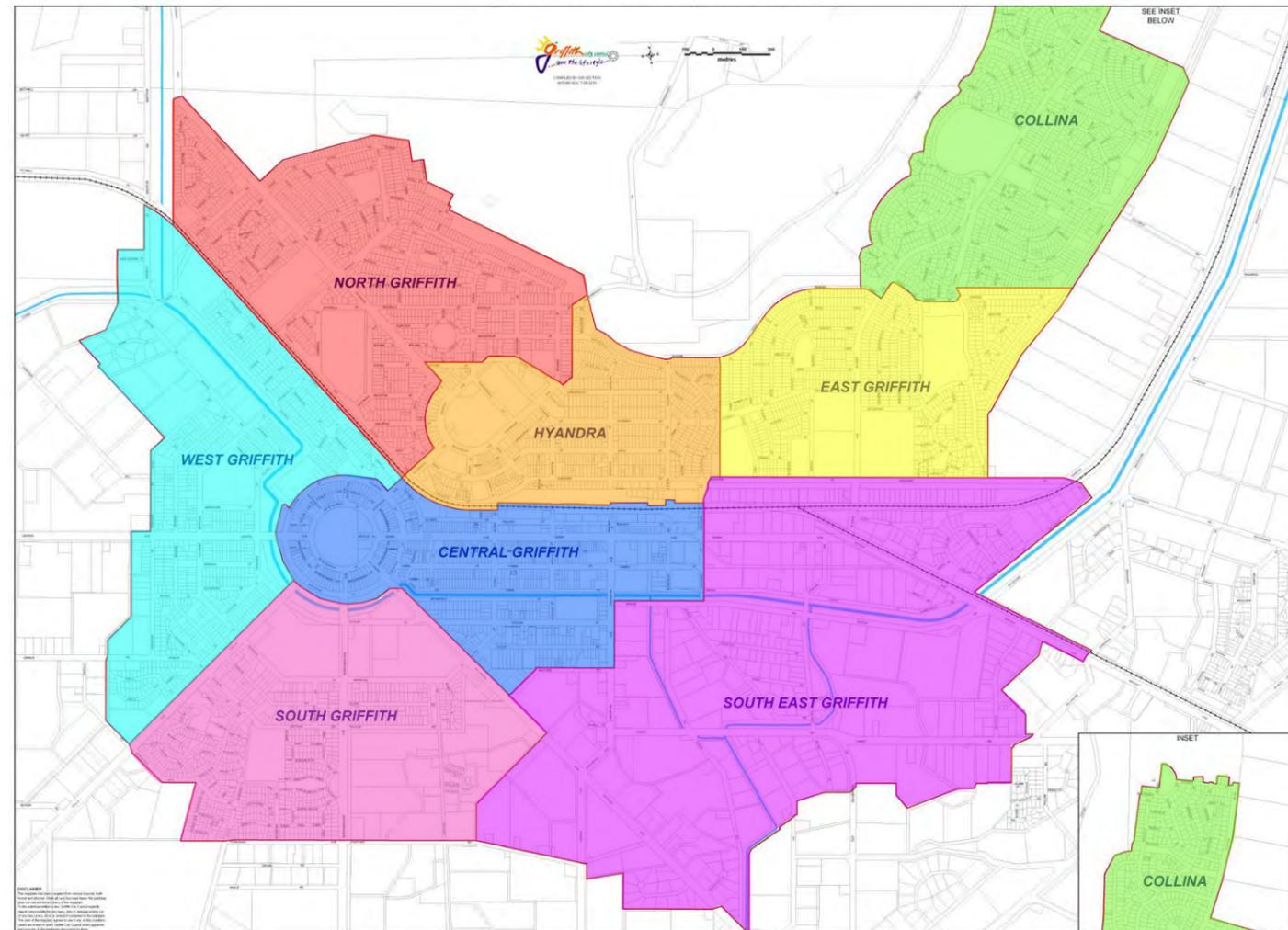
Play Provision

4.1 Play Planning

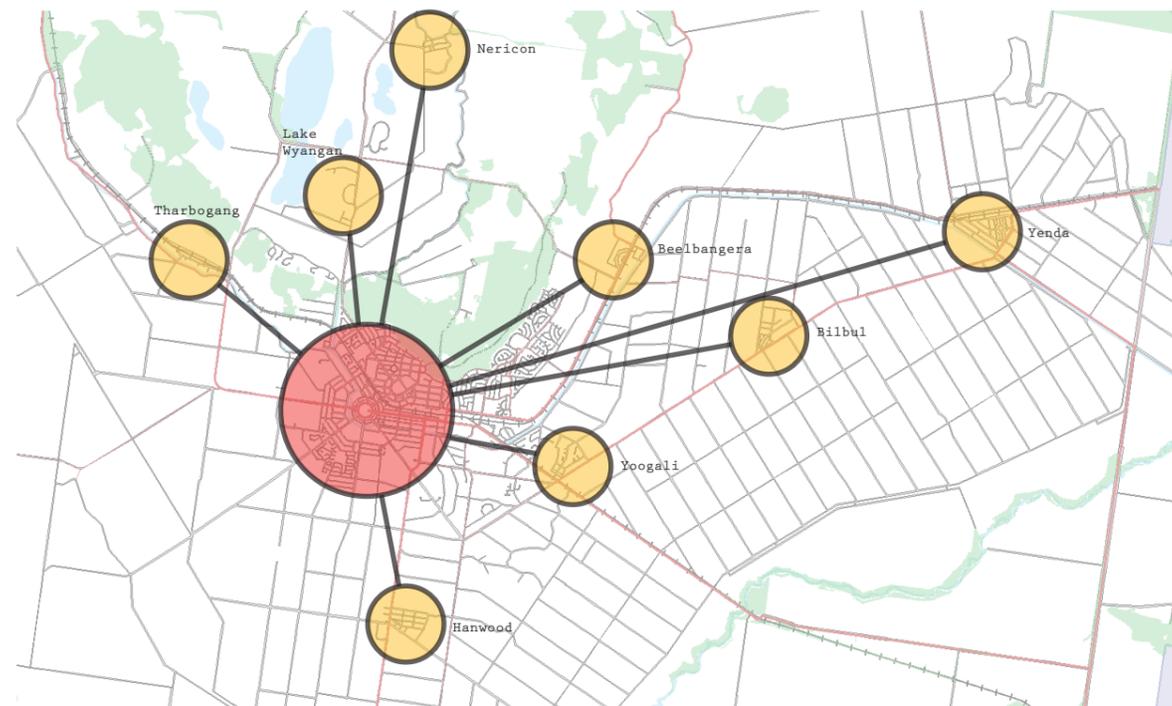
The Griffith Playground Strategy 2013 assesses playgrounds within the Griffith City Council, this includes 30 playgrounds in the Griffith municipality and another 11 in the surrounding villages.

Ideally, Council desires a playground within walking distance of every residence in the Griffith urban area and the surrounding villages. A distance of 500 metres has become generally accepted as a reasonable distance for people to walk (NSW Health, 2009). In applying a 500m radius around existing playgrounds, an adequate assessment can be given of shortfalls in supply

It is also essential that the strategy is supported by considerable demographic analysis, particularly focusing on the proportion and expect growth of children (between 0-14 years) in a precinct. This will establish current and future demand in the Council area.



Map 1a: Griffith Precinct Map



Map 1b: Villages Map

Play Provision

4.2 Demographic Analysis

4.2.1 City of Griffith

The data set out in the Griffith Economic Study and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures indicate that Griffith LGA is one of the strongest growth centres in New South Wales. The Griffith City Council had 24,364 people at the 2011 Census. The Council area has steadily grown in the last 10 years and it is forecasted that it will have a population of 30,299 by 2031 (forecast.id, 2013).

Griffith City Council has a larger proportion of children compared to the state and national statistics, as shown below:

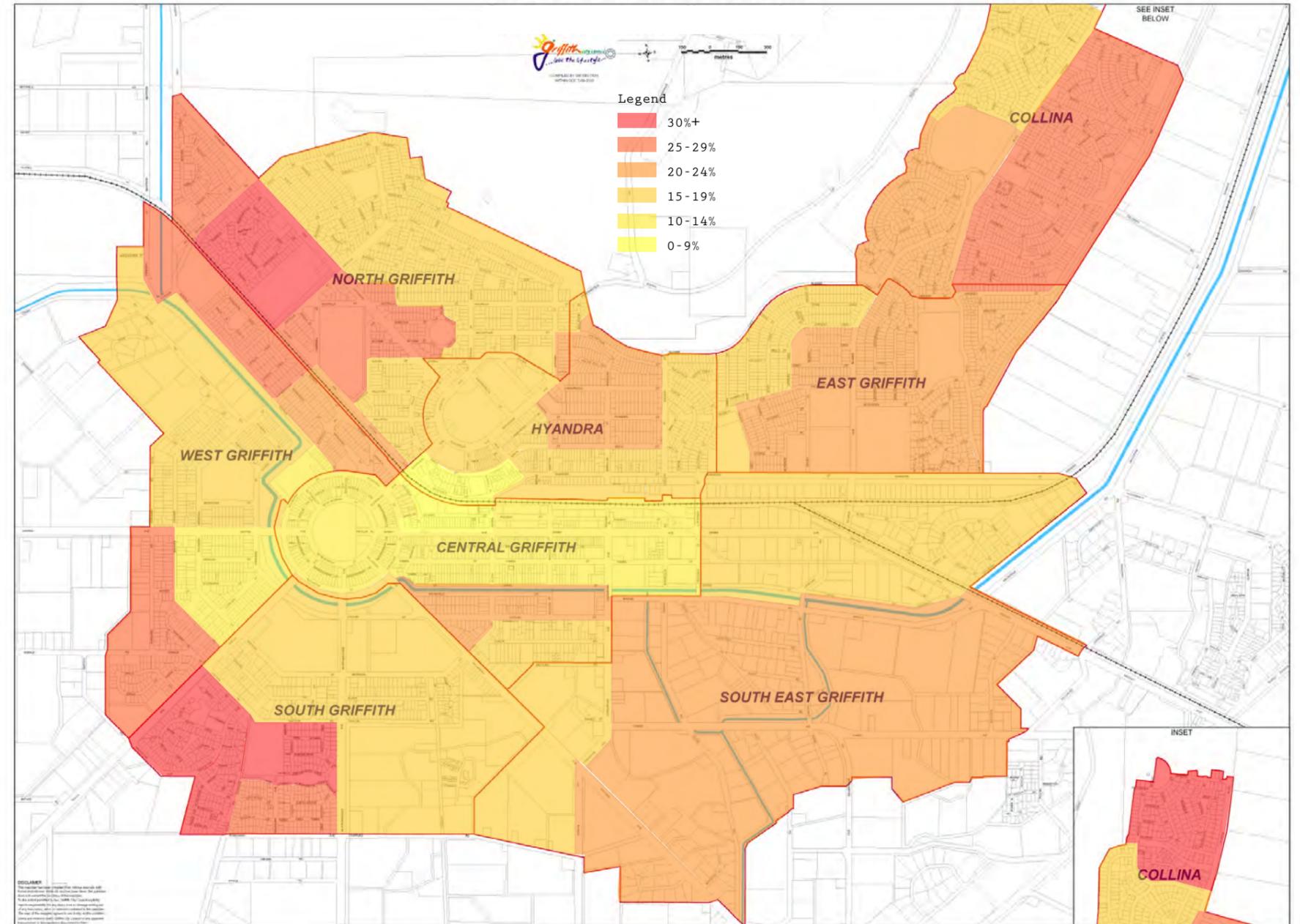
Table 1: Proportion of Children Compared to State and National Statistics (ABS CData, 2011)

Age Structure	Griffith Population	Griffith LGA	NSW	Australia
0-4	1805	7.4%	6.6%	6.6%
5-9	1855	7.6%	6.3%	6.3%
10-14	1824	7.5%	6.3%	6.4%
15-19	1667	6.8%	6.4%	6.5%

Map 2(a) illustrates the concentration of children aged 0-14 years in the urban area of Griffith. There is a high concentration of children at the urban fringes of Griffith, particularly to the north west, south west and north east.

Forecast.id (2013) suggests that areas such as East Griffith, Collina and Lake Wyangan typically attract young and mature families and areas such as South Griffith, Central Griffith and North Griffith tend to attract young couples without children.

Projections forecast that there is likely to be growth in the proportion of children aged 0-14 years over the next 20 years, particularly as young adults begin to start having families. With a higher proportion of children in the Council area and likely continued growth in this age group there will be increasing demand for quality playgrounds and play areas and careful consideration and planning into the provision and management of playgrounds across Council is needed.



Map 2(a): Child (0-14 yrs) Concentration in Griffith Precincts



Play Provision

4.2.2 Surrounding Villages

From the available statistics it is difficult to accurately assess the population growth or decline of the surrounding villages. Generally, villages in close proximity to the city of Griffith have growing populations, whereas Yenda has a declining population.

Map 2(b) illustrates the concentration of children aged 0-14 years in the surrounding villages. The surrounding villages of Tharbogang, Nericon, Hanwood, Bilbul, Lake Wyangan, Yenda, Beelbanger and Yoogali have relatively high distributions of children (0-14 years of age), ranging between 20-30% of the total populations.

There are slightly higher distributions of children occurring in Lake Wyangan and Hanwood.



Map 2b: Child (0-14 yrs) Concentration in Villages

Play Provision

4.3 Supply of Playgrounds

4.3.1 City of Griffith

The Griffith City Council currently maintains 41 playgrounds. In comparison with other regional Councils, Griffith has a large proportion of playgrounds for its population.

There is a playground for every 594 residents and every 134 children between the ages of 0-14 years. This is a relatively high ratio in comparison to the national average which has a playground for every 300 children.

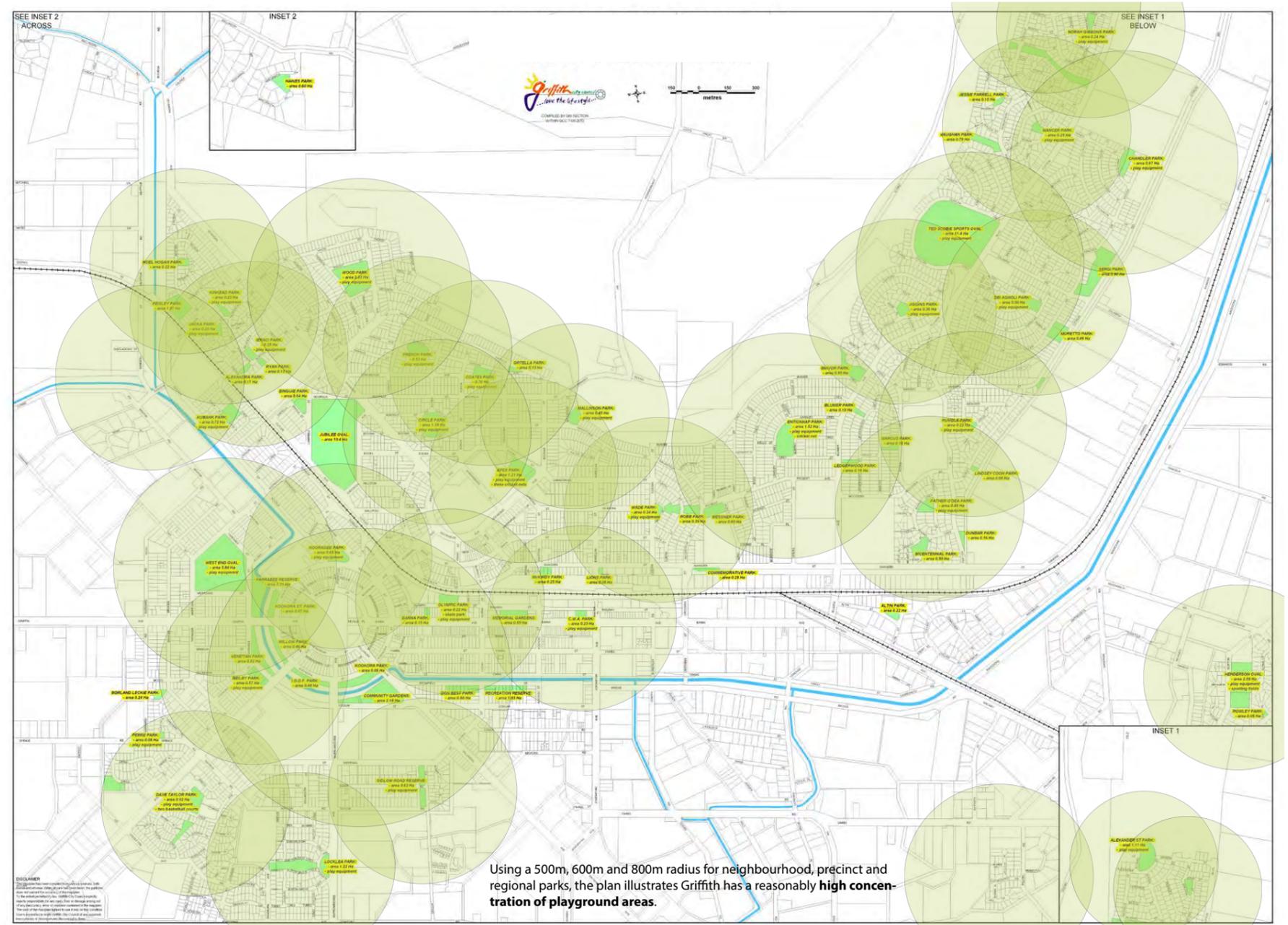
Table 2: Distribution of Existing Playgrounds

Precinct	Child Population (0-14yrs)	Number of Playgrounds	Playground Ratio
Collina	804	7	1:115
North Griffith	629	7	1:90
Central Griffith	83	2	1:42
East Griffith	522	3	1:172
West Griffith	405	3	1:135
Hyandra	410	3	1:137
South Griffith	592	3	1:197
South East Griffith	334	1	1:334

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

In applying a 500m, 600m or 800m radius around existing playgrounds (depending on the playgrounds classification), Maps 3(a) and 3(b) illustrate that Griffith City Council has a reasonable spread of playgrounds.

However, Map 3(a) illustrates there is disparity between the distribution of playgrounds and concentration of children in the southern region of Griffith. While it might be argued that City Park alleviates any potential shortages in play provision in the south, this region has a growing population of children and there is demand for playgrounds at the fringes of the South Griffith Precinct and South East Griffith Precinct.



Map 3(a) - Playground Walkability Survey (Griffith)

Recommendation: Playground Development

Council establish a greater distribution of playground facilities in the southern region of Griffith

Council develop an appropriate play spaces in consultation with the relevant communities in South Griffith, West Griffith and South East Griffith.



Play Provision

It is further mentioned that the southern region of Griffith is a low socioeconomic area placing greater inequity in the distribution of playgrounds. With significantly higher health issues in this region, a greater provision of play spaces may encourage greater physical activity and alleviate a number of the health problems in the region.

4.3.2 Surrounding Villages

Each of the surrounding villages have at least one playground. There is a relatively even distribution of playgrounds in comparison to the number of children in each village.

Table 3: Distribution of Existing Playgrounds

Villages	Child Population (0-14yrs)	Number of Playgrounds	Playground Ratio
Yenda	249	3	1:83
Yoogali	194	1	1:194
Hanwood	154	2	1:76
Nericon	62	1	1:62
Lake Wyangan	85	1	1:85
Bilbul	58	1	1:58
Beelbangera	81	1	1:81
Tharbogang	56	1	1:56

Planned population growth within the Council area is likely to occur in the Lake Wyangan area, between Collina and Beelbangera and adjacent Hanwood. While there is ample supply of playgrounds in Collina/Beelbangera and Hanwood, population growth in Lake Wyangan would require an additional playground.



Map 3b - Playground Walkability Survey (Villages)

Play Provision

4.4 Park Hierarchy

There are many factors that should determine a particular location for a playground or play space. In establishing a clear hierarchy, it will assist Council in planning and designing an appropriate play area for a particular space. Further, a hierarchy will be useful in determining the necessary cost associated to maintaining and upgrading certain parks.

It is noted that the Council area has a number of open space areas labelled as parks that do not necessarily serve as parks and might be more appropriately labelled and managed as reserves (as discussed in more detail in Section 4.7.3).

The playground hierarchy is illustrated in Figure 16.

4.4.1 Regional Parks

A regional park is generally a large park with unique features of important cultural and social significance. This type of park should be highly accessible, having a high level of amenity and be well patronized by residents across the Council area.

A regional park should be well designed, catering for a range of ages and providing a variety of play experiences. For example, City Park represents a regional park in Griffith City Council.

4.4.2 Precinct / Large Village Parks

A precinct park or large village park is a medium to large scale park with several play experiences on offer. This type of park is well accessible within a city precinct or village and has a reasonable level of amenity. A precinct or large village park should be within a 800 metre radius and/or a 10 minute walk from every residence.

A precinct park should be designed in context to the surrounding area and have a well developed theme to attract interest. It should provide a range of play experiences for children and teenagers. For example, Chandler Park represents a precinct park and Yenda's War Memorial Park represents a large village park in the Griffith City Council.

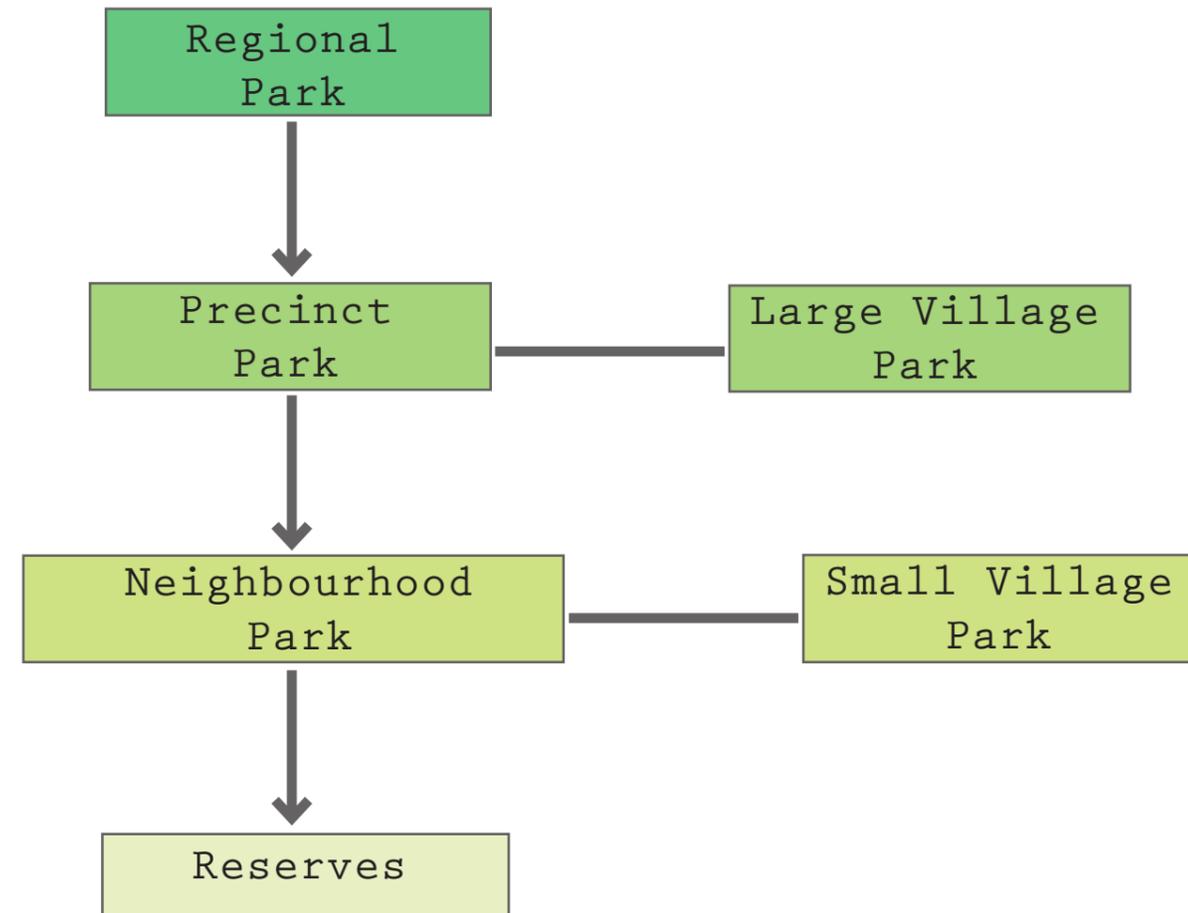


Figure 16: Park & Reserve Hierarchy



Play Provision

4.4.3 Neighbourhood / Small Village Parks

A neighbourhood park or small village park is usually a small park that offers a more narrow scope of play than regional and precinct parks. Essentially, this type of park serves the immediate neighbourhood or village and does not have the same level of amenity of precinct and city parks.

A neighbourhood park or small village park should be located within a 500 metre radius of every residence. For example, Beilby Park represents a neighbourhood park and Nericon's Mallee Park represents a small village park within the Griffith City Council.

It is envisaged that a number of neighbourhood parks will be redeveloped as natural play spaces in accordance with community input and the level of community resources.

4.4.4 Reserves

A reserve is land set aside for urban infrastructure requirements or environmental protection. In relation to the Strategy, this primarily encompasses urban infrastructure, such as stormwater detention and road reserves.

A reserve has a low level of amenity with little or no amenities. It has no structured play experiences or play equipment.

Sidlow Road Reserve is the one exception as it accommodates a playground.

4.4.5 Large & Small Village Parks

It is important to address that village parks play a slightly different role than precinct and neighbourhood parks in the city. These parks have an important social and cultural role within their immediate communities.



Figure 16: William Bull Park, Bilbul



Figure 17: Memorial War Park, Yenda

Play Provision

4.5 Application of Hierarchy

According to the definitions prescribed in the park hierarchy, Griffith City Council currently has the following:

- 1 Regional Park;
- 6 Precinct Parks;
- 1 Large Village Park;
- 23 Neighbourhood Parks;
- 10 Small Village Parks.

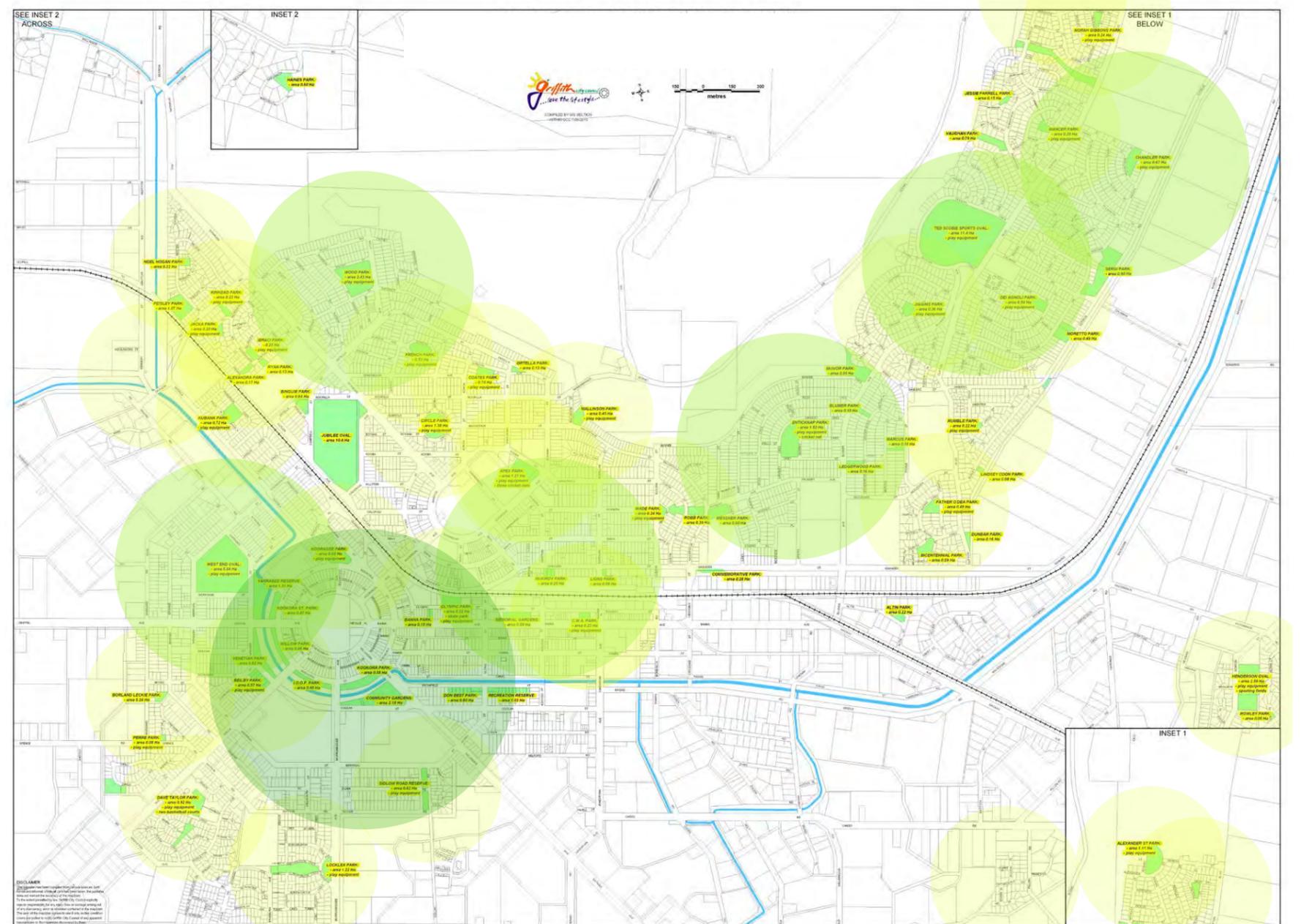
This is further illustrated in Map 4: Park Hierarchy.

Table 4: Park Hierarchy

Playground Hierarchy	Street Address	Precinct
Regional Park		
City Park	Kookora St	Griffith LGA & South Griffith

Playground Hierarchy	Street Address	Precinct
Precinct Park		
West End Oval	Merrigal St	West Griffith
Enticknap Park	Langley Cres	East Griffith
Chandler Park	Polkinghorne St	Collina
Ted Scobbie Oval	Doolan Cres	Collina
Wood Park	Messner St	North Griffith
McKirby Park	Wakaden St	Hyandra
War Memorial Park	Yenda Pl	Yenda

Playground Hierarchy	Street Address	Precinct
Neighbourhood Park		
Circle Park	The Circle	North Griffith
Coates Park	Gordon Ave	North Griffith
French Park	Gordon Ave	North Griffith
Ieraci Park	Northgrove Dr	North Griffith
Kinkead Park	Dickson Rd	North Griffith
Noel Hogan Park	Nelson Dr	North Griffith
Beilby Park	Yarrabee St	West Griffith
Kooragee Park	Bringagee St	West Griffith
Locklea Park	Riverdale Pde	South Griffith



Map 4 - Park Hierarchy (Griffith)



Play Provision

Sidlow Road Reserve	Sidlow Road	South Griffith
<i>Unknown Park Name</i>	Catanzariti Dr	South East Griffith
Father O'Dea Park	Turnell St	East Griffith
Rumble Park	Hoad St	East Griffith
Mallinson Park	Mallinson St	Hyandra
Apex Park	Kooba St	Hyandra
Wade Park	Wade St	Hyandra
Alexander Park	Alexander St	Collina
Jiggins Park	Graham St	Collina
Mancer Park	Meakin St	Collina
Norah Gibbons Park	Pauling St	Collina
Dei Agnoli Park	Summer St	Collina
CWA Park	Banna Ave	Central Griffith
Olympic Park	Olympic St	Central Griffith
Brolga Park	Rankins Springs Rd	Beelbangera
William Bull Park	The Crescent	Bilbul
Restyn Park	Yarran St	Hanwood
Woman's Army Park	Beech St	Hanwood
Meggit Park	Mason St	Lake Wyangan
Tharbogang Park	Goodfellow Pl	Tharbogang
Halse Park	Allen St	Yenda
Rotary Park	Bingar St	Yenda
Henderson Oval	Gorton St	Yoogali
Mallee Park	Alpen St	Nericon

The Griffith LGA has a number of other parks that do not contain a playground and which haven't been included in the hierarchy. It is also stressed that there are a number of open space areas that have been poorly classified and while they have been labelled as parks they primarily act as reserves.



Figure 18: City Park - Regional Park



Figure 19: Chandler Park - Precinct Park



Figure 20: Bielby Park - Neighbourhood Park

Play Provision

4.6 Condition of Play

Playgrounds in Griffith City Council are in varying states of condition. The Council area still retains a number of the functional “four Ss” (swing, sand box, slide and seesaw) established post World War II, while also accommodating numerous adventure play sets established in the 1990s. More recent playground development has occurred in Collina and along the southern side of the canal.

In general, playgrounds in the Council area are one-dimensional and provide a narrow scope of play.

4.6.1 Play Space Development Model Assessment

In applying the Play Space Development Model to current playground provision in Griffith City Council (Figure 21), Griffith has ample supply of Active Play and Open Space elements of the model but there is limited provision of other elements, particularly Creative/Explorative Space.

4.6.2 Playground Condition Assessment

A number of the parks have been identified as being in need of repair, replacement or upgrade. A playground audit regarding the condition of playgrounds is as follows:

	Number of Parks	Percentage
Excellent	3	7.5%
Good	3	7.5%
Average	11	27.5%
Poor	17	42.5%
Very Poor	6	15%
TOTAL	40	100%

The audit reveals that the majority of playgrounds are either in an average or poor condition - nearing the end of their life cycles. This will result in a significant need to replace, redevelop and/or retrofit a large number of playgrounds in the near future to reestablish a quality spread of playgrounds across the Council area.

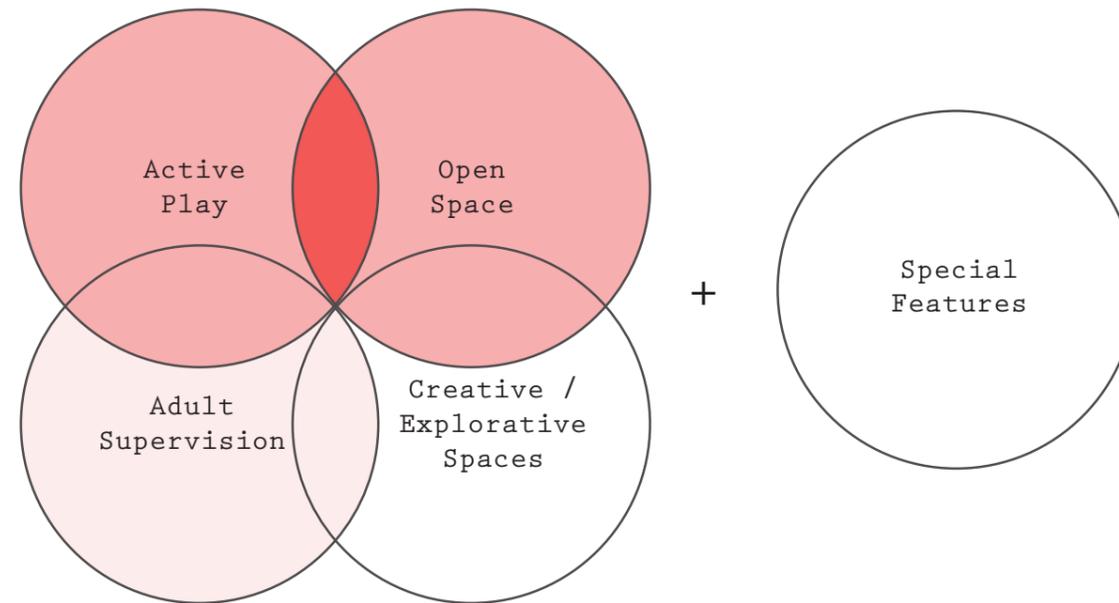


Figure 21: Play Space Development Model

Recommendation: Play Space Development Model
Council provide a greater variety of play spaces including Creative/Explorative Space and Special Feature elements



Play Provision

4.6.3 Accessibility

While Griffith City Council generally has a healthy distribution of playgrounds, this does not ensure that playgrounds are accessible. Physical barriers and poor quality pedestrian infrastructure significantly affects the accessibility of playgrounds to the community.

There is generally a limited supply of neighbourhood footpaths in the LGA and few parks provide good connection. It should be acknowledged that this reduces the quality of experience for current and future playground users. Research suggests that the more desirable the destination and quality of journey, the further people are willing to walk or cycle to access it (Kent, Thompson and Jalaludin, 2011). Further, research has suggested that improving connectivity is effective in combating community chronic disease.

The Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) prepared by Council in 2004, provides a detailed plan on pedestrian access but does not consider parks as a significant pedestrian trip generator and focuses on other areas. It is necessary that a pedestrian and cycle access plan be prepared by Council to inform playground provision and development.

Essentially, people with good access to open space are significantly more likely to be physically active which promotes a more healthy community (Kent, Thompson and Jalaludin, 2011).



Figure 22: Lions Park - fronting railway line

Recommendation: Accessibility

Council prepare a pedestrian and cycle access plan to better inform playground planning and development

The proposed Pedestrian & Cycle Access Plan should be in conjunction with the current PAMP but consider pedestrian and cycle access to parks. This study might be further extended to include pedestrian and cycle access to employment areas and inform the CBD Strategy.

Play Provision

4.7 Park Closures & Reclassifications

4.7.1 Park & Reserve Closures

The initial “Playgrounds and Small Reserves Strategy, 2011” identified several parks that might be considered for closure, however issues over ownership (with a large number of parks being owned on Crown Land) and anticipated community resistance has significantly limited the potential for any park closures.

4.7.2 Park to Reserve Reclassifications

Griffith City Council has a number of parks that are primarily acting as urban reserves.

Table 5: Reclassification of Parks to Reserves

Park Name	Precinct	Current Use	Reclassification
Peisly Park	North Griffith	Detention Basin	Urban Reserve
Dunbar Park	East Griffith	Detention Basin	Urban Reserve
Moretto Park	Collina	Detention Basin	Urban Reserve
Sergi Park	Collina	Detention Basin	Urban Reserve
Vaughan Park	Collina	Drainage	Nature Reserve
Mclvor Park	Collina	Drainage	Nature Reserve
Commemorative Park	South East Griffith	Road	Road Reserve
Ortella Park	North Griffith	Road	Road Reserve
Haines Park	Maegraith Place	Detention Basin	Natural Reserve

The reclassification of parks to reserves will not change the purpose of the land use but reduce Council responsibilities, particularly in respect to mowing and irrigating the land. This will result in reserve land no longer being irrigated and grass would be mown at 40mm in comparison to 25mm in parks.

Recommendation: Park Provision

Council ensure that comprehensive assessment is given before removing playgrounds

In assessing the removal of a playground it is important to assess its condition and evaluate the risk alongside the benefit of keeping the equipment. It is also important that consideration is given to the existing provision of playground facilities in the area and the removal of a playground coincides with the development of a new playground in the area.

Recommendation: Park to Reserve Reclassification

Council move to reclassify several parks as reserves, namely:

- **Dunbar Park to Dunbar Reserve**
- **Moretto Park to Moretto Reserve**
- **Sergi Park to Sergi Reserve**
- **Vaughan Park to Vaughan Reserve**
- **Ortella Park to Ortella Reserve**
- **Haines Park to Haines Reserve**

The reclassification of several parks to reserve land will reduce Council’s maintenance obligations.



Play Provision

4.7.3 Playground Removals

The state of playground facilities in the Council area means that a number of playgrounds will need to be removed in future. If any playground becomes unsafe and no longer complies with the Australian Standards it needs to be removed.

Considering Griffith City Council has a high supply of playgrounds (as referred to in Section 4.3.1 and Map 3(a)) there is some justification in removing and not replacing a few playgrounds while still maintaining a good spread across the Council area. However, these playgrounds should not be removed before they are deemed unsafe or without considerable community consultation

Collina and North Griffith have a high supply of playgrounds and there are several playgrounds in pockets of the precincts that can be removed whilst still providing a playground in walking distance to each residence. Considering the nature, condition and concentration of playground provision it is proposed that the playgrounds are removed from the following parks:

- Norah Gibbons Park
- Coates Park
- Woman's Land Army Park (Hanwood)

The strategy recognizes ~~requires~~ that any other playground removed from a park would need to have a plan in place to replace the playground and maintain an even distribution of play across Griffith City Council.



Figure 23: Aging Infrastructure (West End Oval)

Recommendation: Park Provision

Council to remove and not replace playgrounds in the following parks:

- **Norah Gibbons Park**
- **Coates Park**
- **Woman's Land Army Park (Hanwood)**

However the playground equipment should not be removed before they are deemed unsafe and not without considerable community consultation.

Play Provision

4.8 Future Play Provision

To date the current provision of open space is high in the Council area (approximately 2.8 hectares of open space per 1,000 people). However, open space, parks and playgrounds have not always been developed well and have served little function. For example, Figures 24 and 25 illustrate two playgrounds that are located less than 500m of one another and represent an over supply of play facilities in the area.

The strategy suggests that lesser open space might be considered in the future development of residential land as long as it is well designed and serves multiple functions to the community. This would also reduce maintenance costs and increase developer contributions to reflect the lesser amount of land provided by the developer.

It is also important that future playground provision include greater partnership with Council and developers. A Plan of Management is proposed that requires developers consult with the Parks & Gardens and Urban Design units at Council before a playground can be signed off. Further, the Playground Strategy should provide direction for Council, designers, developers and the community in achieving better playground outcomes.



Figure 24: Alexander Street Park



Figure 25: Nora Gibbons Park

Recommendation: Developer Contribution

Council consider reducing piecemeal open space provision in place of well designed and multiple purpose parks in new housing estates

This recommendation should be reflected in the new Development Control Plan concerning public open space provision

Recommendation: Developer Contribution

Council encourage a participatory design approach in designing future community infrastructure. Council are to put in place a Plan of Management which ensures developers consult with the Urban Design and Parks & Gardens units at Council before signing off on any community infrastructure.



Play Provision

4.9 Future Replacement Priorities

In keeping with the design priorities discussed earlier in the strategy, future provision of parks should incorporate a diverse range of play experiences. It is important to stress that the future design and development of park facilities should be done in extensive consultation with the community, particularly with children and teenagers.

As mentioned in Section 4.6.2 Playground Condition Assessment, approximately 70% of Griffith City Council's playgrounds are in an average or poor state of condition. This requires that an accelerated replacement program is in place to improve the state of play across the Council area.

It is critical Council prioritize the redevelopment and upgrade of several precinct parks, including West End Oval, McKirby Park (new development), Wood Park, Enticknap Park and Memorial War Park (Yenda). It has been assessed that precinct parks are destination points in a neighbourhood. If each of the precinct parks are developed to a high standard, connected to other facilities (sport, corner shop and school) and in response to community needs there might be less pressing need to redevelop neighbourhood parks.

It is also identified that village playgrounds are often the only play facility in the village, therefore the space often has greater social and cultural significance than neighbourhood parks in the precincts). Therefore, it is important that the redevelopment of play spaces in the villages have priority.

Recommendation: Park Provision

Council prioritize developing and/or upgrading the precinct and village parks stated in the Strategy

Precinct parks are destination points in the Council and should be given a degree of preference. The design of precinct parks should involve wide and extensive community consultation and incorporate points-of-difference.

Village parks are usually important reference points in the villages and there is opportunity to emphasise and celebrate a village's identity in each playground upgrades, particularly if the planning and design stages have a strong community engagement focus.

Recommendation: Park Provision

Council replace a number of lawn areas in parks with native landscapes

While acknowledging that lawn areas provide important recreational spaces for a variety of activities, the lawn areas in Griffith are excessive and a number could be replaced by native landscapes. This would reduce irrigation costs, create more diversity in park environments and provide alternative unstructured play environments for children to play in.

5.0 Play Management

Play Management

5.1 Maintenance

The management of playgrounds falls under the role and responsibility of the Parks & Gardens Unit of Griffith City Council. Parks & Gardens manage 41 playgrounds and 100 parks. While Griffith City Council is fortunate to have such a large supply of open space, this places considerable pressure on the Parks & Gardens to manage the playgrounds at a standard in keeping with community expectations. This issue is further complicated by Council being stretched for resources.

Playgrounds require regular and ongoing management and maintenance, involving regular inspections, repair and/or replacement of worn or damaged equipment, continual sifting of sand and the removal of graffiti and rubbish. While maintenance costs are somewhat unavoidable, costs can be minimized through the better design of play areas and greater community participation.

5.1.1 Neighbourhood Working Parties

The community can play a greater role in the management and maintenance of parks and playgrounds. Equipped with the appropriate training and equipment, it is proposed that Council consider facilitating community groups (neighbourhood working party) to be responsible for mowing and irrigating the park. In return, this party would be given considerable decision-making power in the future direction of the park.

While this will take considerable organization, the long-term benefits of the community owning and managing public open space in the Council area are considerable - reducing maintenance costs, minimizing instances of graffiti and vandalism and increasing potential sources of finance.



Figure 26: Community participation (Rye's Up! Community Playground)

Recommendation: Community Participation

Council encourage and support the creation of neighbourhood working parties to manage and maintain parks and playgrounds through the Council area

Play Management

5.1.2 Minimizing Mowing & Irrigation

Mowing and irrigation of community land is a regular and repetitive commitment, conducted by the Parks & Gardens Unit.

Griffith City Council have a number of open space areas with extensive lawns. While these areas remain important for both active and passive recreational purposes, the extend of lawn areas should be reduced to minimize ongoing maintenance costs.

It is proposed that Council consider reducing lawn areas through the replacement of native water-sensitive landscaping. While establishing these landscapes would result in an initial cost, this would be compensated in the long-term by reduced mowing and irrigation requirements. It is also a sustainable initiative that compliments the objectives within Council.

Council has conducted similar projects through the rehabilitation of native vegetation as part of several Griffith Urban Salinity Projects within the council area.



Figure 27a: Kooragee Park - typical large lawn areas associated with Griffith parks



Figure 27b: Artist Impression of Kooragee Park incorporating areas of native vegetation

Recommendation: Minimizing Ongoing Maintenance Costs

Council seek to reduce ongoing maintenance costs through replacing extensive lawn areas with native landscaping



Play Management

5.1.3 Vandalism & Graffiti

A large portion of Council resources are spent repairing vandalized equipment and removing graffiti. This is both a frustrating and unnecessary occurrence that happens throughout Local Governments and especially a problem experienced throughout Griffith City Council.

Research suggests that with greater and regular community engagement graffiti and vandalism can be significantly minimized. If community engagement strategies seek to empower the community, it gives them decision-making power and in turn the community takes greater ownership over the space. It also helps establish stronger community pride and value in the park and increases the frequency in which the park is used.

Deakin University has revealed that the introduction of natural landscapes in parks (coupled with good play design) reduces crime and fosters wellbeing (CFbD, 2010).

5.1.4 Playground Removals

With aging playground equipment, Griffith LGA has seen a number of playgrounds removed and there is likely to be a number of playground removals in future. With limited finance, Council has been unable to replace playground equipment resulting in the parks having limited purpose.

Future playground removals require extensive consultation, primarily to inform the community as to why the playground will be removed and what Council's future plan is for the park in question. It is important that playground removals are done in coordination with the development and upgrade of the existing park or another park in close proximity. The community should be able to see an added benefit in the removal.



Figure 28: Community ownership has numerous benefits in the management of playgrounds

Recommendation: Community Consultation

Council adopt meaningful community consultation in the removal and design of playground facilities

Council needs to avoid tokenistic attempts to engage the community and be transparent at any opportunity.

Play Management

5.2 Risk Management

Risk is something that we and our children are faced with everyday. It is essential that children both assess and manage their own risk and that playgrounds encourage challenging elements. It should also be stated that playgrounds remain low risk environments for children (Ball, Gill and Spiegel, 2008), even though they are commonly perceived as high risk environments. Moreover, in the last 10 years Griffith City Council has not reported a single claim over a playground injury.

Of the playground injuries that resulted in hospitalization, the main reasons for the injury were:

- Condition or state of repair of equipment;
- Height of apparatus;
- Nature or type of playing surface; and
- Depth of playing surface (Helps & Pointer, 2006).

Council has a 'duty of care' which requires it take reasonable care to avoid foreseeable risks of injury to patrons using the play areas under its jurisdiction. A playground is an environment that has a number of potential hazards that Council is responsible for managing. But this duty must not run the risk to reducing playgrounds uninspiring and risk adverse environments. The Australian National Quality Standards (2011) state that designers are to:

"plan learning environments with appropriate levels of challenge, where children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks in their learning"

It should also be noted that children are generally good at assessing their own risk and it is essential that there are environments in the community that promote a level of challenge for children to play within.

Designing playgrounds or play spaces involves designing challenging play areas, while avoiding unnecessary risk. It is important that Council does not fall into the trap of playing it too safe, resulting in uninspiring and one-dimensional play spaces.

5.2.1 Risk-Benefit Assessment

Risk-benefit assessment weighs the benefit of a play area and its features to children against the potential risks. It allows a play area to be designed with challenges important in a child's development but offers protection from unacceptable risk of death or serious injury (Play England, 2008).

It is important Council apply thoughtful and comprehensive risk-benefit assessment for the removal, replacement and development of play spaces. Those responsible for assessing risk must question; does the benefit to the child outweigh the risk the equipment presents to the child? (Dodd, 2013)

5.2.2 Community Risk Assessment

There are various examples across Europe where the communities have agreed to a level of acceptable risk that is higher than a Council's threshold for litigation. This was in response to there being a number of playgrounds that lacked challenge that were not being used by the community. The agreement between the community and Council allowed for far more creative and challenging play environments.

With greater community consultation it is foreseeable that neighbourhoods might agree to a higher level of acceptable risk if they can see the benefit associated with such an agreement.

Recommendation: Risk Management

Council adopt a risk-benefit assessment appropriate to designing challenging play experiences but avoiding unacceptable harm.

Recommendation: Risk Management

Council write a Risk Management Plan for assessing the risk (and benefit) associated with Nature Play and other alternative forms of play.



Play Management

5.2.3 Australian Standards

An over-reliance and an absolute application of standards ultimately produces one-dimensional playgrounds. The standards are a guide on how to avoid unacceptable risk, but not applied absolutely without consideration of the local context (Ball, Gill and Spiegel, 2008). Often the Australian Standards have been used as an absolute requirement towards assessing risk in a play environment and this is at times at the expense of common-sense (Dodd, 2013).

As stated by David Eager (Associate Professor in Risk Management), designers and engineers need to work together and use the latitude within the relevant standards to create imaginative and exciting play spaces (Sheppard-Simms, 2012).

It should also be noted that the current Australian Standards are soon to be changed, essentially adopting the European Standards. This change is likely to make the standards more flexible, creating slightly higher free height of fall and slightly smaller fall zones (Dodd, 2013).

Recommendation: Australian Standards

Council must strive to design creative play spaces while also complying with the relevant Australian Standards:

- AS 4685:2004 (General safety requirements and test methods)
- AS/NZS 4486.1: 1997 (Playgrounds and Playground Equipment - Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation)
- AS/NZS 4422:1996 (Playground Surfacing)
- AS 1428.3: 1992 (Design for Access and Mobility)

Play Management

5.3 Marketing & Promotion

At present, Council provides little promotion or marketing of its existing playgrounds. Playgrounds are an important and attractive community asset and are sought after and used by a variety of people within and outside the Council area.

With a comprehensive community directory and several facility guides, the community can be better informed of existing and future play facilities in Griffith City Council. In addition, Council's website can be a powerful platform for engaging the community. It might also be used for sourcing community and corporate finance.

The screenshot shows the Sydney City Council website's 'Playgrounds' directory page. At the top, the 'CITY OF SYDNEY' logo is followed by navigation tabs: LIVE (Everyday life), EXPLORE (Places to go, Things to do), LEARN (About Sydney), COMMUNITY (Services and support), BUSINESS (Programs and networks), DEVELOPMENT (Planning and building), VISION (Sydney's future), and COUNCIL (What we do). A breadcrumb trail indicates the user is in 'Home > Explore > Facilities > Parks > Playgrounds'. A sidebar on the left lists categories: Getting around, Libraries, Arts and culture, Facilities (selected), Community services, Community centres, Parks (Major parks, Local parks, Off-leash parks, Playgrounds), Public toilets, Sports facilities, Swimming pools, and Places to go. The main content area features a 'Playgrounds' header with a photo of children playing. Below this is a 'Come out and play' section with a video player showing a playground scene. At the bottom is a map of Sydney with numerous colored pins indicating the locations of various playgrounds. A size key below the map explains the pin colors: yellow for toddler and younger children, green for all ages, and red for all ages access.

Figure 29: Sydney City Council Playground Directory



6.0 Play Implementation

Play Process

6.1 Play Process

The play process has been adapted from the Play Space Design Cycle model in *Design for Play: A Guide to Providing Successful Play Spaces* (Shackell, Butler, Doyle & Ball, 2008) and is to be applied to the design or redevelopment of playgrounds or play spaces in Griffith City Council.

1. PREPARE

The planning and preparation behind play space management is important and should not be rushed. Essentially, a well considered development will save time and money to develop and lead to a better quality design. It is important to give due diligence in assessing and identifying the need and to involve the community at the earliest point in planning and preparing a play space.

2. PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

The design of play spaces should always involve the community and relevant stakeholders. It is important that the design process includes a combination of local knowledge and professional expertise, formulating a working team that is committed to seeing a quality play space designed, constructed and managed. Play design must illustrate an understanding and application of the design principles mentioned in the Strategy and be a “value for money” project. Further, play space development should have a clear budget and project time-line.

3. BUILD

The construction of playgrounds has typically involved procuring external contractors. With greater community consultation, it is envisaged that more of the construction of a play space can be built by the community (or at the very least local contractors). It is essential that the community is involved during the construction process.

4. USAGE

Utilize the initial excitement of a new play space by celebrating its opening and arranging community events around the play space.

5. MAINTAIN

It is envisaged that a greater degree of the maintenance and inspection of the play space might be given to the community. This would require establishing working relationships between the community and Council. A general Plan of Management should be prepared which clearly assign roles and responsibilities of each party.

6. EVALUATION

It is important to have an honest review and evaluation for play space development - to learn from past mistakes and understand that a play space needs to evolve and adapt over time. Further, it gives an opportunity to celebrate successes that might be applied to other projects in Council.



Play Budget

6.2 Budget

The budget allocation for playground equipment replacement is minimal. The budget prioritizes between \$50,000 - 70,000/annum over the next 10 years has been allocated for the replacement and upgrade of playground equipment in the Griffith LGA.

To put the existing budget into perspective, playgrounds are increasingly expensive to install and \$50,000 would only cover a single neighbourhood playground upgrade. The problem is further compounded by the increasing need to remove and replace aging playground equipment requiring Council commit to several playground redevelopments each year to improve the state of play facilities across in the Council area.

The strategy not only looks at replace play equipment but seeks to completely redesign each play area, ensuring that they are more accessible, imaginative and quality experiences.

6.2.1 Projected Need

In assessing the condition of play facilities in Griffith City Council, it has been found that the majority of playgrounds are in poor or average condition, necessitating that immediate priority is given to redeveloping and/or replacing existing play equipment (Section 4.6.2).

In projecting the need for playground replacement over the next 20 years, it is calculated that approximately 20 playgrounds will need replacing in between 2013 - 2020, another 14 playgrounds replaced between 2021 - 2027 and 6 replaced between 2028 - 2033 (as illustrated in the Figure 30).

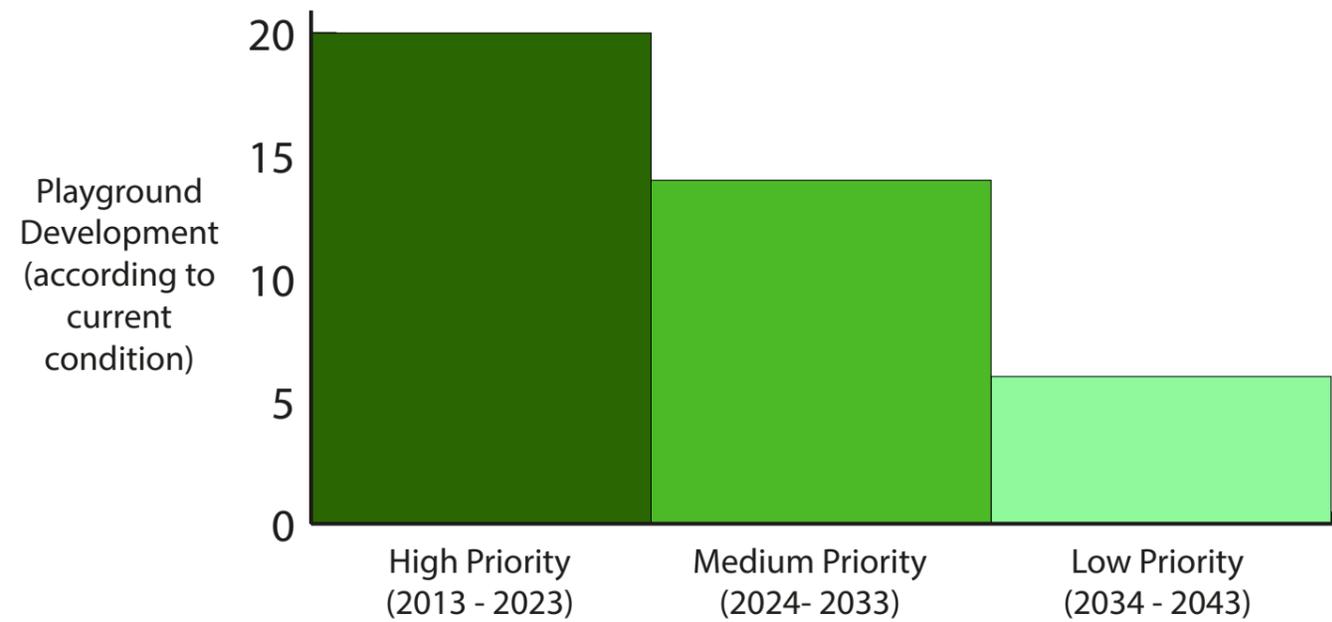


Figure 30: Staged Need for Replacing and Redeveloping Playground Equipment

Play Budget

6.2.2 Proposed Budget

If the life span of a playground is 20 years, Griffith City Council needs to apply an accelerated process in replacing and redeveloping its existing play environments. The existing budget would not allow this accelerated process to happen and therefore the Strategy proposes a budget increase.

In applying the proposed hierarchy, it is estimated that a redeveloped playground (on a significant budget) would cost the following:

- Regional Park \$250,000
- Precinct Park \$100,000
- Neighbourhood Park \$50,000

Therefore, over the next 10 years the strategy requires the following financial contributions:

	Existing Budgeted Amount for New Play Equipment	Proposed Budgeted Amount for Upgrading Playgrounds	New Budget
2013/14	\$51,750	0	\$51,750
2014/15	\$53,561	\$67,439	\$121,000
2015/16	\$55,436	\$69,799	\$125,235
2016/17	\$57,376	\$72,242	\$129,618
2017/18	\$59,384	\$74,771	\$134,155
2018/19	\$61,462	\$77,388	\$138,850
2019/20	\$63,614	\$80,096	\$143,710
2020/21	\$65,840	\$82,900	\$148,740
2021/22	\$68,145	\$85,801	\$153,946
2022/23	\$70,530	\$88,804	\$159,334

The proposed budget from 2013-2023 has been based on committing to two playground redevelopments each year. The budget also accounts 10% for initial maintenance of playground replacement or redevelopment. As the strategy requires an accelerated process, financial contribution beyond 2023 should be significantly less.

It should also be noted that a 3.5% increase has been applied each year for inflation (consistent with Council's current budgetary process).



Play Budget

6.3 Alternative Financial Sources

As playgrounds play an important role in the community there are often a variety of alternative financial sources in the community that might be utilized to part fund a playground replacement and/or development.

6.3.1 Community Participation and Funding

“Community consultation is an opportunity for community participation”
(Marion City Council, 2008)

There are numerous examples of communities successfully raising funds to provide better or larger play environments. With limited Council funds allocated for playground renewal and redevelopment, the community should be encouraged and supported in sourcing additional funding for playground development.

An example of community funding might include the community being able to purchase fence posts or brick pavers with their name on it. This not only becomes a source of finance but ties the community to the park, creating greater identity and ownership.

Another example might include utilizing community skills and abilities in the construction and design of the park and/or playground - a money in kind process. Not only does this potentially reduce construction costs but it fosters community participation and creativity.

6.3.2 Corporate Sponsorship and Donations

Griffith City Council accommodates a diverse number of businesses, who are often willing to invest in the community as part of their corporate social responsibility. It is commonly accepted that businesses that invest into the community receive the benefit of community goodwill. This should be utilized further in the future development of playgrounds in the Council area.



Figure 31: Community pavers



Figure 32: Community pickets (Rye's Up! Community Playground)

Recommendation: Alternative Financial Sources

Council investigate a range of alternative financial sources in funding the redevelopment of parks and playgrounds across the Council area

It is important to note that the following assessment of the existing playgrounds is not an extensive analysis required for any redevelopment or upgrade of playground facilities. This should only be used as a brief guide towards identifying some of the needs and opportunities within each playground environment.

Playground	Type	Description	Area	Opportunities	Priority	Comments
Wood Park	Precinct	The park is a large open park with a variety of trees. The park has no under-storey vegetation but extensive lawns. The playground is located the southern corner of the park and has old equipment situated on sand.	2.43 Ha	The size and location of Wood Park make it ideal for a precinct park but it lacks quality facilities. The park needs to create interest and encourage more activities. This might occur in locating a sports field, native grades and natural play areas. Wood Park is likely to be well patronized if it had quality facilities.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Wood' Park - play on words, incorporate wood structures / elements into park design - Develop mounds to break up flat topography - Establish under storey vegetation around mature trees - Design a variety of experiences at the park - Design paths through the park that direct pedestrian to areas of activity - Upgrade play equipment
Circle Park	Neighbourhood	Circle Park is a large circular park, the circle being indicative of Griffin's initial plan for Griffith. The park has a number of mature trees and extensive lawns. The park also has a strong N-S path axis but with no experiences along the pathway. The playground has a mixture of old and new equipment which is located on sand.	1.38 Ha	New development should focus a variety of experiences along the existing pathway. This might involve having several pieces of public art alongside the path. The park could incorporate more private / serene areas, seating nestled in native gardens.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate a historic theme for the park - Relocate the playground to be closer to the existing path - Establish under storey vegetation around mature trees - Design a variety of experiences along the existing path - Upgrade swing equipment
Coates Park	Neighbourhood	Coates Park is a medium park with several dwelling having frontage to the space. The park has a number of mature trees and extensive lawn area. The playground has old equipment situated on sand.	0.70 Ha	The park should establish a focal point and stronger connections.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential to remove play equipment as French Park and Circle Park are nearby - Establish a natural play area
French Park	Neighbourhood	French Park is an almond shaped park and well framed by mature vegetation. The playground has relatively new equipment.	0.53 Ha		Medium	
Ieraci Park	Neighbourhood	Ieraci Park is a small park with young vegetation. The playground has relatively new equipment. The park has little character.	0.25 Ha	The park should develop a stronger character or personality to the park.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a stronger character or personality to the park - Establish hedge vegetation along the northeast boundary of the park
Kinkead Park	Neighbourhood	Kinkead Park is a small park with little vegetation. The park provides good connection between streets and the playground is relatively new. The park has little distinguishing character.	0.23 Ha	The park should develop a stronger character or personality to the park.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a path connecting the Robson Road and Northgrove Drive - Establish more vegetation - Establish hedging along the fence lines
Noel Hogan Park	Neighbourhood	Noel Hogan Park is a small park with randomly placed vegetation. The park has limited connection with three sides bound by residential development. The play equipment is relatively new.	0.22 Ha	The park should develop a stronger character or personality to the park.	Medium	



Playground	Type	Description	Area	Opportunities	Priority	Comments
City Park	Regional	City Park is a celebrated park offering a range of play experience to all ages. It also provides barbecue and shelter facilities and a food forest experience.		Develop better connection to Benerembah Street	Low	
West End Oval	Precinct	West End Oval is a large sports ground accommodating a range of sports (i.e.. hockey, cricket, basketball and badminton). The area is well framed by mature native trees. An aged playground is located at the north point of the ground. It is isolated from the rest of the sports ground.	6.44Ha	The current playground facilities at West End Oval is desperately in need of an upgrade and the size, nature and location of the area provide a great opportunity to develop the playground into a precinct area. The play area could possibly support a sport theme and have better connection to the oval and surrounding residential development.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a sport theme - Create stronger connections between the oval and residential area - Design a variety of experiences at the park - Upgrade play equipment
Borland Leckie Park	Neighbourhood	Borland Leckie Park is a small park and well vegetated. The park has been vegetated and maintained by a local resident. There is no play equipment or amenities located within the park.	0.24Ha	The park is located in a residential area absent of play facilities. As the park already has a high degree of community ownership it is opportune to develop strengthen facilities in the park.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a play space in the park in accord to community advice - Establish a seating area
Kooragee Park	Neighbourhood	Kooragee Park is a medium park with extensive lawn areas and mature vegetation. The park has little character. The playground equipment is poorly positioned and aging.	0.68Ha	The park is in close proximity to the town and should provide better connection between the surrounding neighbourhood, town centre and hospital. Further, the extensive lawn area could be supplemented with native gardens, becoming a public meeting place.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design strong connections to town centre and hospital - Develop a character for the park - Establish native gardens - Establish meeting area - Upgrade play equipment and/or develop a natural play area
Perre Park	Neighbourhood	Perre Park is a very small park with two road frontages - Spence Road and Johnson Place. The park has recently had its play equipment removed.	0.08Ha	While being small, the park has good connection between residential development. It would benefit from having a distinguishable feature.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a distinguishable feature - natural play area, native garden or public art
Sidlow Road Reserve	Neighbourhood	Sidlow Road Reserve is a long narrow reserve between the two road carriages of Sidlow Road. The reserve is well vegetated but upkeep and a aged playground is located to the southern end of the park.	0.62Ha	The playground is located in an adequate location but it is also one of only a few playgrounds in South Griffith. The playground is in need of an upgrade and the reserve should be reclassified as a park to better represent its purpose.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrade the playground facility - Higher maintenance requirements - Seating and shelter facilities to encourage greater usage - Implement traffic calming techniques to reduce incidents
Bielby Park	Neighbourhood	Bielby Park is a small park on the north west side of the Griffith Showground. The park has a sound playground, with a reasonable theme and relatively new equipment. The park also has good vegetation and signage.	0.57Ha	In general, Bielby is a reasonable example of a neighbourhood park. However, the park is located too close to City Park. In addition, the park could benefit from developing better connection to the canal and showground.	Low	
Locklea Park	Neighbourhood	Lecklea Park is a long park also acting as a detention basin. The play equipment is relatively new and the vegetation frames the park well. There is a decent grassed area for ball games and picnicking.	1.22Ha	The park would benefit a barbecue and shelter area to further support recreational activity in the park.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a barbecue and shelter area

Playground	Type	Description	Area	Opportunities	Priority	Comments
Enticknap Park	Precinct	Enticknap Park is a large park with extensive vegetation. The playground in the park has old equipment and is in desperate need of replacement. Further, there is limited connectivity through the park.	1.52Ha	Enticknap Park is in desperate need of an upgrade. It is a central park within the neighbourhood but its deteriorating facilities do not attract public usage. The park should look to establish a playground facility, providing a range of play experiences. In addition, a shelter and barbecue would facilitate more usage.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a distinct image for the park - Upgrade the playground and provide a range of play experiences for all ages - Support informal sport games (i.e... soccer nets, volleyball, table tennis) - Establish a shelter and barbecue area - Emphasize the mature vegetation by creating native gardens in the park - Design paths through the park that direct pedestrian to areas of activity
McKirby Park	Precinct	McKirby Park is a reasonably small park but is located within medium density residential development and in close proximity to the city centre. The park is no playground facilities and limited amenity.	0.25Ha	McKirby Park might incorporate a play area or sporting activity to promote greater community interaction in the area. Even with limited amenity, the park is well used by the community.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a link between the rail freight terminal and park (i.e. incorporate containers into the park design) - Develop a play area and/or sporting activity (volleyball) - Establish informal seating areas in the park
Apex Park	Neighbourhood	Apex Park is a large park, well connected to community and sport facilities and schools. It has a generous playground and fenced steam train as its main features.	1.21Ha	Apex Park in close proximity to community facilities and plays an important role with the neighbourhood. It needs to establish better connection between the schools and community facilities. In addition, the train is a prominent feature which is lessened by fencing.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish pedestrian connection from schools to the park - Emphasise steam train theme and remove fencing - Develop shelters and/or natural shade for encouraging families to use the park for longer periods
Rumble Park	Neighbourhood	Rumble Park is a small park, with the playground situated at the centre of the space. The playground has minimal and dated equipment.	0.22Ha	The park needs a playground upgrade and strong pedestrian connection.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a nature-based play space in the park - Improve the pedestrian connection to and through the park
Mallinson Park	Neighbourhood	Mallinson Park is a medium size park with a playground situated at the centre. The park has good pedestrian and cycle connection and is adjacent Scenic Hill.	0.45Ha	Mallinson Park is a prominent park along Macarthur Street and there is potential to highlight this by incorporating interesting play elements or public art that might make people stop. The park should also develop connection to Scenic Hill Reserve and establish native landscaping along the park's boundary.	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish a pedestrian connection from the park to Scenic Hill Reserve - Incorporate native landscaping along the park boundary - Upgrade the playground
Wade Park	Neighbourhood	Wade Park is part of four connected parks (Messener, Robb, Bobb and Wade Parks). Wade is a small park at the end of the parks with a generous sized playground at its centre. There is a path and lighting that connects the parks but this considerable dated and in need of repair.	0.24Ha	The four parks provide an intriguing pedestrian connection through Griffith's residential suburbs. There is potential to emphasise the journey by creating points of interest along the path.	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrade the footpath and lighting through the parks - Upgrade the playground - Establish points of interest (public art, natural play area, native garden, etc) along the pathway - Develop a theme through the four parks
Father O'Dea Park	Neighbourhood	Father O'Dea Park is a medium size park with good road frontage. The playground is situated at the centre of the space. There are several mature trees that frame the park.	0.49Ha	The park would be better served with seating, pathways and trees that shade the play area.	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve the pedestrian connection to and through the park - Establish seating areas and natural shade around the play area - Upgrade the playground



Collina & Central Griffith Precincts

Playground	Type	Description	Area	Opportunities	Priority	Comments
Chandler Park	Precinct	Chandler Park is a relatively new park with a variety of play equipment, gardens and a shelter.	0.67Ha		Low	- Landscaping lacks cohesion and planting is too close to the play area
Ted Scobie Oval	Precinct	Ted Scobie Oval is a large sportsground (primarily soccer) and a play area is situated towards the southern portion of the oval, providing a good mixture of play experiences. There is also a fitness track running around the boundary of the space.	11.4Ha	Ted Scobie Oval has a clear theme and purpose - active recreation and this should be further emphasized. The oval has prominence in the city and operates almost as a second regional park in the city.	Low	- Good use of native landscaping surrounding the play area
Alexander Park	Neighbourhood	Alexander Park is a reasonably new park and accommodates a new playground. The park also acts as a stormwater detention area.	1.11Ha	Alexander Park lacks character. It is just a playground facility with little distinction and poor accessibility.	Medium	- Establish a theme or park identity (orange orchards and Scenic Hill provide an interesting backdrop) - Native landscaping to replace manicured lawns
Jiggins Park	Neighbourhood	Jiggins Park is a small park with relatively new play equipment. The play equipment is geared for teenagers and provides good variety.	0.36Ha	Jiggins Park is well patronized and could be better served with a shelter and seating area.	Low	- Establish a shelter and seating area to encourage greater usage
Mancer Park	Neighbourhood	Mancer Park has a playground facility and pathway connecting Meakin and McMahan Streets.	0.29Ha	The pedestrian connection in the park makes it prominent in the neighbourhood	Medium	- Upgrade playground
Norah Gibbons Park	Neighbourhood	Norah Gibbons Park is a small park with limited play equipment. The park also acts as a stormwater detention area.	0.24Ha	The playground equipment has little purpose and it should be questioned as to why it is there.	Medium	- It is questionable whether a playground is necessary in this area as other playgrounds are in close proximity to the location - Limited character or purpose
Dei Agnoli Park	Neighbourhood	Dei Agnoli Park is a medium sized park with limited play equipment, native landscaping and seating areas. There is good connection through the park.	0.5Ha	The park has been well designed with effective landscaping and well shaded seating areas, but it has been desperately neglected.	Medium	- Reestablish landscaping, particularly ground cover - Strengthen the play area with additional equipment - Upgrade seating - Existing street trees are not necessary against the native landscaping
Olympic Park	Neighbourhood	Olympic Park is a long stretch of land between Olympic Street and the railway line. The park has aging play equipment to the east and a skate park to the west. There is a youth community centre with outdoor basketball courts and bicycle circle in the middle.	0.62Ha	This is an important play area particularly for teenagers in the Griffith area but has been neglected. The skate park and youth centre is well patronized. The park could be developed into a teenage play precinct.	Medium	- Remove and upgrade new play facilities, particularly with teenagers in mind - Provide the skate park and bicycle track with a face-lift (urban art work for the skate park and native landscaping)
CWA Park	Neighbourhood	CWA Park (more affectionately known as Egg Park) is located on the northern side of Banna Avenue. It has good play facilities and is well patronized.	0.23Ha		Low	- Disability swing is a good inclusion but is isolated from the rest of the park

Surrounding Villages

Playground	Type	Description	Area	Opportunities	Priority	Comments
War Memorial Park	Large Village	War Memorial Park is located in the centre of Yenda and operates more as a town square than a traditional park. It has a dated playground, tennis courts and seating facilities.	0.62Ha	The park is an important meeting place in the village and should be celebrated in such a way with strong established pathways, quality seating and shelter areas and a mixture of play activities.	High	- Park is in desperate need of an upgrade - Develop the park as a gathering place - Incorporate public art and gardens
Rotary Park	Small Village	Rotary Park is a medium sized park with a swing and seating area. The swing is old but the grounds are well kept.	0.39Ha	The park is beginning to formulate character with an interesting shade structure made of machinery. This type of ingenuity should be further encouraged.	Medium	- Establish a more comprehensive play facility at the park
Halse Park	Small Village	Halse Park is a long narrow strip of land with a playground to the middle of the space. It is well vegetated.	0.2Ha	Halse Park is not that well connected to the village.	Low	- Incorporate seating areas - Establish native landscaping
Henderson Oval	Small Village	Henderson Oval is a medium sized oval with sporting fields, toilets and a playground in Yoogali. The playground is dated and limited.	2.59Ha	Considering the size of Yoogali and that Henderson Oval provides the only play equipment in the village there is pressing need to upgrade the play facilities at the oval.	High	- Upgrade play equipment
Tharbogang Park	Small Village	Tharbogang Park lies along the canal to the rear of residential development facing Dunne Street in Tharbogang village.	1.28Ha		High	- Hidden location with limited surveillance
Mallee Park	Small Village	Mallee Park is a medium sized park with a playground in Nericon. The play equipment is aging. The park is true to its name accommodating a number of Mallee trees.	0.58Ha	The park would ideally suit a nature-base play area, in keeping with the existing Mallee vegetation.	High	- Build on native vegetation theme - Establish a nature-base play area - Upgrade play equipment
Meggitt Park	Small Village	Meggitt Park is a reasonably large play area with various play equipment but it is starting to age.	0.2Ha		Medium	- Upgrade play equipment
Lake Wyangan Recreational Reserve	Recreational Park	The recreational reserve is a large recreational area, popular during warmer months. The reserve contains toilets, wildlife sanctuary, barbeque facilities and a playground. The playground is outdated and isolated from the rest of the reserve.	307.7Ha	The recreation reserve is in need of a greater Master Plan and the design of a new play area should be considered in this process. The playground should be located in a more prominent location.	Medium	- Development should be done in conjunction with a larger Master Plan for the area - Playground does not serve Lake Wyangan community and is more likely to serve greater Council area.
Women's Land Army Park	Small Village	The park is to the western end of Hanwood Sports Oval. The park has a small stone memorial, toilet, playground and carparking, however the park is in desperate need of a facelift.	1.13Ha	The Women's Land Army has an interesting history and this should be reflected in the park. Further the playground and toilet needed to be removed. A new play area should compliment the history of women in the army.	High	- Establish a strong historical theme - Upgrade play equipment - Upgrade toilet facility - Upgrade memorial
Restyn Park	Small Village	Restyn Park is a small triangular park adjacent the Hanwood Primary School. The has a central play equipment with aging equipment but is well maintained.	0.19Ha		Medium	- Upgrade play equipment
William Buck Park	Small Village	William Buck is a small park within Bilbul with the playground as its main feature. Swing set needs to be replaced	0.22Ha	The park could be better served with a shelter and barbeque area to encourage greater usage.	Medium	- Upgrade play equipment
Brolga Park	Small Village	Brolga Park is a small central park within Beelbanger. The park has an attractive garden and playground.	0.31Ha	Brolga Park appears to have good community ownership and is an effective meeting place. Establishing a shelter and barbeque area would encourage greater community usage.	Medium	- Upgrade play equipment



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