

GEELONG PLAY STRATEGY: APPENDIX 1

Community Consultation - CoGG Policy Context



GEELONG: A GREAT PLACE TO PLAY
2012 - 2021

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CITY OF GREATER
GEELONG

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1.0 Community Consultation

1.0 Community Consultation

In order to gain a clear idea of the needs of the community and key stakeholders in terms of play space provision, demand and quality, a broad range of consultative processes was undertaken, as demonstrated in the following diagram. The results of each of these processes is summarised in this section of the Strategy.



1.1 Key Stakeholder Interviews

Key stakeholder interviews were held with City of Greater Geelong staff and leading play specialists to identify key priorities in the development of a Play Strategy. Seventeen staff were interviewed and four Councillors, along with one community member with expertise in play spaces.

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
City of Greater Geelong Councillors	Cr Kylie Fisher, Cr Jan Farrell, Cr Andy Richards, and Cr Dr Srechko Kontelj	General Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In medium density housing areas / activity centres, there is less opportunity to play on the street • The types of streets most suitable for play are courts • Is it possible to attract developer contributions from the development of a two unit site? • Community expectations for play developments need to be managed, given limited budgets • How are developments prioritised? • Need to provide guidelines about how community consultation should occur in relation to play developments • Consider establishment of an internal working group to manage play space developments • Consider developing Friends Groups for parks / play spaces

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<p>Specific Play Space Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rosella Park – rarely used • Evans Reserve – could be expanded – just put in a path and seat and take out slide. Structure Plan occurring. • Rapunyal Park – needs sealed path and seating (carved) • Windsor Park – needs improving. Master Plan is being prepared. • Boulevard (near Evans Reserve) – needs to be larger and also needs shade, seats and footpath • Stead Park – should become a regional park. Needs BBQs, rotunda and green space so that it becomes a destination. Council has committed \$100K to this development • Friendship Park – too tucked away. • Old Norlane High School Site – could be developed for play as this area is under-serviced • Chafey and Horn Square – situated under power lines – not ideal • Banks, Massey, Cox and Anakie Rd area – under-serviced • Goldsworthy Reserve – school is about to close – need local play space here

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletics Track – major roads are a barrier • Cloverdale Drive – community wants to activate open space area behind neighbourhood house area • Sutcliffe Reserve – could revitalise this site by developing a play space at the front of this site and involve German and Serbian Clubs in its development. • Malbac Loop Park and Vineyard – need shade • Western Grovedale and Coolibah area – under-serviced • Coolibah to Torquay Road – no parks in this area • John Croft Reserve – poor standard BMX track – site could be developed into a regional park • Reserve Rd – poor standard BMX track – site could be developed into a regional park • Eastern Grovedale – some play spaces have been built under power lines – this is not ideal • Grovedale East – small pocket park offers little play value • Grove Road – could develop as a regional park with soccer pitches and parking • Waurm Ponds Creek parkland –

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> could develop a play space Waurm Ponds Railway Station – acquire land for park Armstrong Creek – could develop a linear park
Recreation and Open Space Planning Unit and Urban Planning Unit (Felix)	Kathryn Cotter, Genevieve Twyford, Stephen Parker, Felix Hemingway, Paul Cotter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision is for every child to have the opportunity to play and to have quality play opportunities Play should be seen as a continuum Greater recognition of the value of natural play in the community Lack of group play opportunities where children learn to get along with their peers and develop and understand play ‘rules’ Loose materials and adventure play need to be considered Need to have a diversity of play equipment Monkey bars should be in every play space to help develop upper body strength – particularly for girls Play spaces in inner suburbs such as Geelong West may need a greater focus on natural play opportunities, whereas play spaces in rural areas such as Anakie may require a greater focus on activities involving socialisation

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some schools do not have any un-programmed play time Need to consider city based play opportunities – play should be everywhere in the city Need to ensure that people understand the rationale behind only providing fencing at some play spaces Risk versus benefits analysis needs to be articulated Play equipment near Youth Precinct along the Waterfront needs fixing up In the past there has been an over-emphasis on providing play opportunities for older children at the expense of young children Play spaces provide more of a social outing rather than a physical workout People will travel by car to a range of different play spaces Rubber softfall paths should be considered in some play spaces Lack of quality control with rubber manufacturing means that it may not necessarily be the safest softfall surface. Other softfall such as bark chips skids when children fall, helping to absorb some of the

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<p>impact of the fall, whereas rubber does not skid.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not necessary to install all play spaces in shade – sunshine and dappled light are important too • Should include an element in every play space that invites parents to do something with their children, e.g. tic tac toe game • Play areas should not necessarily be separated from other community spaces – skate park in Youth Space works well • Aim to provide one play space for every 250 children under 12 years of age • Need more parks with natural features that encourage contemplation • Need to consider amenity and feel of a site • Position of block and location of land are important in determining how successful a play space may be • In Armstrong East developers have provided over 10% of unencumbered land • Armstrong Creek is designed to be an accessible play space for people of all abilities

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50m is not wide enough for a park • Local / neighbourhood parks cost a minimum of \$30k, excluding paths • Paths, shade, trees and seats need to be included in play space design • Paths should reflect the proposed usage of a site in terms of its material and width • Are there enough regional and district / sub-regional play spaces? • Council has focused on replacing older equipment in recent years so most equipment now meets relevant standards • Annual replacement budget does not provide for seats, landscaping, etc • Possible over-supply of play spaces in Newcombe and Whittington, however, it is thought that car ownership may be less in these areas • Acquisition of land for play spaces is supported • Access to school play spaces will need to be achieved through Joint Use Agreements. Some schools have positioned play equipment where there is poor passive surveillance and there is uncertainty about frequency of

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play equipment inspections • Equipment in Rippleside Park will soon need to be replaced • Lifespan of equipment more closely related to use than number of years, e.g. regional may last 10 years; district / sub-regional 12 years; and local / neighbourhood 15 years • Need to consider whole of park development when upgrading a play space or developing a new one • Need to ensure that play spaces are promoted to the community • Need to consider when play spaces should be established in a housing development • Need to develop a toolkit to assess play space priorities • Need role clarification for play space design process.
Parks and Maintenance; Statutory Planning; and Social Planning	Grant Baverstock, Adrian Cobb, Marshall Sullivan, Liz Wood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All play spaces are inspected on a weekly basis • An independent external audit is conducted annually • Process for notification of repairs via customer service centre works well and is documented appropriately • A lot of equipment has been

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> updated in recent years • Need robust equipment that requires minimal maintenance • Need surfaces that are graffiti resistant • Don't use detention / drainage basins for play spaces • Can't maintain a slope of greater than 1:6 easily • Site needs to be designed so maintenance machinery can access it • Don't have luxury of closing down parks to allow plants to regenerate – would be useful at Eastern Park • Need to ensure that advanced tree stock is used in play space developments / upgrades • Most play spaces in municipality only designed for 4-7 year olds • Play spaces need to incorporate areas for sitting and talking, bike riding and basketball / netball • Challenge has been taken out of too many items of play equipment • Consider junior level skate parks in some area • BBQs and bins should be located no further than 20m inside park • Locate skate parks in commercial areas

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People need to be able to see through plants • Fences can be problematic in terms of collecting rubbish and for hiding behind • BBQs should be out in the open. They shouldn't take up too much space and should be easy to maintain. • Don't support play spaces under power lines • Need a coordinated approach to sign-off of developer planned play spaces • What status should Clause 56 of the Planning Scheme have in the development of play spaces (this document is a priority for the planning unit)
Community Development, Family Services, Arts and Culture	Erin McHugh, Frank Giggins, Duncan Esler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three types of play spaces are public, community centre and kindergarten / childcare • Important to inform community about the importance of play and its ability to facilitate participation and social connections • Quality of play spaces in municipality varies enormously • Siting of toilets is important • Amenity of play space determines how conducive a site is in bringing

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<p>people together</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No minimum standards exist for community centre and kindergarten / childcare play spaces and quality varies considerably • There are few master plans in kindergartens and limited resources available to develop play opportunities • Most community centre and kindergarten / childcare play spaces are managed by committees of management • Need to ensure that some community centre and kindergarten / childcare play spaces feature natural play opportunities • Native flora in play spaces helps children to feel more comfortable with their environment • Walkability and accessibility are important • Need to design play spaces so that they connect to place and strengthen identity • Interpretive signage should be incorporated where possible to help people learn about local heritage

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous protocols need to be addressed in play space designs • Consider themes in play spaces • Need to provide opportunities for functional and learning play • Engage with art and integrate artistic principles into play space design • Risk is an important part of children’s development and needs to be balanced against benefits • Many play spaces have become boring as a result of concern about risk • Need to be able to safely observe children in community centre and kindergarten / childcare play spaces • Need to identify the percentage of natural play surfaces that should be provided in community centre and kindergarten / childcare play spaces • Need to specify the percentage of local artists and local contractors who are involved in the design and development of play spaces • Need to determine what makes a good ‘chill space’ for teenagers, e.g. visually engaging spaces that allow them to plug ipods in,

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • electronic games, exercise bikes, etc • There should be a balance between open space and fixed equipment • Play spaces should not be condescending, i.e. thoughtless and unimaginative • Play spaces should tell a story and offer stimulating, sensory experiences • Play spaces should integrate with their surrounds, i.e. provide a peaceful experience in a park through to providing a lively experience in the vibrant city centre • Play spaces need to link to community facilities including cycling / walking trails • Play spaces should be accessible and engaging, to the point where children will drag their parents along to the park • There should be an equitable number of play spaces throughout the municipality and these play spaces should all offer quality play value • How do we get a better interface with other Council documents?

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
Play Specialist	John Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to educate people about the benefits of play • Decreasing access to play spaces due to loss of backyard and street play culture • School playgrounds are one of the few play spaces that children are allowed to play • Schools have decreased amount of unstructured play time and provide more supervision of play times • The 'blame culture' is impacting on the value of play spaces • Teachers have an increased responsibility to supervise children in play spaces • Fear of litigation has resulted in boring play spaces at schools and in the community • Regulations and policies have made it difficult to retain creativity, space and movement in play spaces • Need to retain playgrounds and play time in schools • Need to change public attitudes to educate people of the value of play and to let them know that accidents will happen occasionally • Risk taking is an important part of

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<p>play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is greater supervision from adults in play and sport, thereby taking control and creativity away from children • Important to retain space around home, on footpaths and in streets to allow street play culture to exist • Many children are driven to play spaces, thereby taking control away from them • New housing developments should create play spaces and streetscapes that allow children to move and play in safety • 'Stranger danger' has increased significantly • Less children use active transportation to school and play spaces • Children spend a lot of time indoors on electronics as many don't have a backyard big enough to play in and they aren't allowed to walk to the playground • Many play spaces are designed to be 'unused' as they are boring and sterile • Fixed equipment in play spaces prevent children from exploring properties of equipment /

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Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> materials Children enjoy moving apparatus and high equipment Need to create a balance between children playing alone, with other children and with their parents at play spaces.
Grandparents Victoria and Kinship Carers Association	Anne McLeish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grandparents are concerned that children do not have enough unstructured play time both within and outside the home Many children are driven to structured activities such as ballet or basketball to 'play' Street play culture rarely exists any more Many children are not exposed to the benefits of risks with their play and need access to more adventurous places to play Children may not develop a sense of place in their neighbourhood as they are not connecting with it Need to change community attitudes to play Need more natural play spaces with loose materials so that children can learn about changing seasons, dig in dirt and shape their environment Play spaces should be

Organisation	Individuals	Issues / Discussion
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> neighbourhood based and easily accessible so that children can play with children from a variety of different cultures and backgrounds locally, thereby increasing tolerance and understanding of differences in people By children mixing with different people at play spaces, they can learn to be more assertive and confident in their interactions Grandparents require seating, shade and paths in play spaces

1.2 Reference Group Workshop

Two workshops were held on 23 March 2011 with Reference Groups specifically formulated to provide advice on play. Workshop attendees included representatives from the following organisations:

- SCOPE (1 representative)
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Specialist Children’s Services (2 representatives)
- City of Greater Geelong, Community Child Health Team (4 representatives)

Key outcomes of this workshop included:

Planning and Design

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- None of the organisations involved in the workshop currently have a role in advising appropriate play opportunities in Council managed play spaces, although they do advise on play in other settings such as schools.
- Some children with disabilities need fencing in a play space so that they do not inadvertently wander from the space or run away from the space.
- Ideal play spaces for young people with disabilities would include fencing (or barriers), trees, creative play opportunities, water and plants with different textures and smells.
- Preferred type of shade is from trees as trees offer opportunities for people with disabilities and young people to enjoy the experience of dappled light and watching leaves move. Trees also provide cooler temperatures than man-made structures.
- Inclusive play equipment for people with disabilities should be considered in some play spaces, e.g. hammock swings, tyre swings with a base, roundabouts with wheelchair access, see-saws, etc.
- Colours in play spaces need to be incorporated so that they best assist young people with visual impairments to find their way around safely.
- 0-2 year olds will typically enjoy sand play, water play, small climbing apparatus, swings and spinning activities.
- Design of play space needs to consider that some families will have very young children and older children; hence play opportunities should be situated in a space that allows parents to supervise both groups.
- Provision of activities that provide some form of risk or challenge is important, as are activities that strengthen upper bodies such as monkey bars.
- When installing equipment such as spring critters or standing spinners, consider installing two of each, side-by-side to allow young people to 'race' or compete with each other.
- Many families enjoy taking their dog to a park and need somewhere secure to tie them up while children play on equipment.
- Need to consider installing children's size toilets in some play spaces and in those play spaces without toilets, there should be a sign indicating where the closest toilet is.
- Key planning considerations include: safety, containment, shade, shelter, seating, environmentally friendly design, access to water, sense of fun and curiosity, accessibility, cleanliness, opportunities for natural play such as mud, developmentally appropriate play opportunities and settings that are attractive, aesthetically attractive and colourful.
- Need to consider how parks / play spaces can be used by the broader community for a range of different activities, as is the case in places like China where parks are used for mah jong, tai chi, singing groups, ballroom dancing groups, giant games of chess, etc.
- Consider providing opportunities for people to take part in art at the site.
- More maintenance is required for softfall to ensure that it is free of animal excreta and / or dangerous materials and that it remains evenly spread

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Barriers

- SCOPE limits its play space visits only to those spaces that are disability friendly.
- Liberty swings are used infrequently due to the need to pick up a key from another location first – this has an impact on the spontaneity of play.

Marketing / Promotion / Consultation

- Maps such as Melways often do not identify parks with play equipment.
- Development of a map or poster of Geelong showing where all play space are, including those that are accessible for people with disabilities, would be useful for service providers and their clients, including new parent's groups.
- Brochures developed for each area of Geelong (e.g. north, south, east and west) identifying all play opportunities and presented in simple, plain English.
- Signage and maps should incorporate the international symbol for playgrounds, i.e. two people on a swing.
- When consulting with the local community in terms of future play spaces or upgrades, consider using school newsletters and notices through schools.
- Development of a website to promote play opportunities would be useful. Could consider tapping into existing one on the internet or establishing a connection to City of Greater Geelong's website.

- Signage needs to incorporate information about who to contact if the play equipment has been damaged or is in need of repairs.

Partnerships

- Consider partnerships with primary schools in relation to community play afterwards. Such an arrangement can increase the passive surveillance of school grounds after hours, decrease vandalism, and at the same time increase play opportunities for the general community.
- Community Child Health Team encourages families to use parks and play spaces by setting up walking groups / pram walks in these environments.

Specific Recommendations

- Wheelchair access is required at Rippleside Park.
- Shade is required at the play space on the corner of Purnell Road and Bacchus Marsh Road.
- Fencing is required at Church Street and Sparrow Park play spaces in Geelong West.
- Additional seats are required at Sparrow Park.

1.3 Young People's Mobile Workshop

The Belmont 1st Scouts took part in a facilitated mobile workshop on 19 March 2011 whereby 19 young people travelled around the municipality in two mini buses for the day with the project team to assess play value at five different play spaces. Participants were

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provided with some project information, some basic training and a checklist to use during the assessment of play spaces. This checklist asked participants to describe how they felt at each play space, what they liked, what they didn't like, aspects that could be improved, etc. This information was then used to assist with the development of planning principles and design guidelines. Participants ranged in age from four years of age to twelve. Key outcomes of this workshop included:

Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
Percy Street, Newtown	<p>From a first impression, 10 of the 19 children said that they would not come back to the park again. Eight children said that the play space was too small and four children said that they did not feel safe. Three children said that the play space was boring and another three said that there wasn't much to do in the space. Some children said that more maintenance is required, as well as more trees.</p> <p>The children identified 13 different activities at the play space including: swinging, basketball, climbing / monkey bars and sliding.</p>	<p>The children tended to gravitate to equipment that they could use with other young people, such as the four person see-saw. A number of young people played imaginative games (soldiers) in the long grass. The monkey bars were also reasonably popular.</p>

Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
	<p>The majority of children believe that the play space is most suitable for 5 to 8 year olds.</p> <p>Most liked aspects of the play space included: swing, monkey bars, basketball court and slide.</p> <p>Least liked aspects included lack of things to do, lack of public toilets and limited size of the space.</p> <p>Most children rated the play space as either poor or very poor.</p>	
Sparrow Park, Geelong West	<p>All children made very positive comments about this play space. They said that it made them happy and excited, that it was great / awesome, that it was very big and that it made them feel safe. Thirteen children said that they would come back. The only negative (from one child) is that it needs more play opportunities</p>	<p>The children dispersed to all parts of this play space on arrival. Several children enjoyed the maze, whilst others played on the swings, monkey bars and fireman's pole. The skate park was not utilised as</p>

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Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
	<p>for older children.</p> <p>Twenty different potential activities were identified by the children, including climbing / monkey bars, swinging, riding a bike / scooter, skating, playing in the sandpit, going through the maze, sliding, going on the see-saw and running / playing chasey.</p> <p>Most children believe the play space is suitable for 0-13 year olds.</p> <p>The most popular aspects of the space included: the maze, the skate park, the open space and the fact that there was so much to do.</p> <p>Least popular aspects included the fact that the bar above the walking chain was hard to hang on to; that the maze could be a little larger and more challenging; and that the sandpit needs to be improved.</p>	<p>children did not bring skateboards or scooters with them. No one used the open space, basketball / netball court (as they did not have any balls with them) or the sand pit.</p>

Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
	<p>The majority of children rated Sparrow Park as an excellent play space.</p>	
<p>Eastern Beach, Geelong - East Geelong - Drumcondra</p>	<p>Extremely positive remarks from all children. Thirteen children said that they would come back again and many said that the play space made them feel happy.</p> <p>Children identified 15 different activities at the site and most believe the space is suitable for 0-13 year olds.</p> <p>The most popular opportunity in the play space by far was the wizzy dizzy. Some children also said that they enjoyed seeing the Thomas the Tank Engine train drive around near the play space.</p> <p>The least favourite aspect of the play space was the lack of open space.</p> <p>Most children rated this play space as good or very good.</p>	<p>As soon as the children arrived at this play space, they climbed aboard the wizzy dizzy. Not only were they attracted to an activity that they could do together, they enjoyed the spinning sensation and the challenge that the equipment provided. Several children fell from the apparatus onto the softfall, but seemed to accept that this was part of the activity, dusted themselves off and climbed aboard again. Several children wandered off to check out the rest of the equipment, but most just played on the</p>

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Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
		wizzy dizzy.
Play Space at Eastern Park, East Geelong	<p>Very positive comments from the children again with a number commenting that they would come back again and others saying that they like the natural feel of the space and the trees. Interestingly one child stated that s/he thought that there were too many trees.</p> <p>Children identified 15 different activities that could take place in the play space, with the three most popular activities identified as playing games on the pirate ship, rock climbing and playing chasey.</p> <p>Children had mixed opinions on the most suitable age groups, but general consensus was that the space is suitable for 2-13 year olds.</p> <p>The most popular aspects in this play space are the pirate ship and the wizzy dizzy, followed by the umbrella tree, the mirror, the bush, the</p>	<p>This play space was well received by all age groups. The older children spent a little bit of time on the rock climbing wall and the standing spinner before playing hide and seek in the bamboo and climbing one of the trees with their friends. The younger children tried out the slide, played on the pirate ship and swings, and enjoyed the maze. Most children, as well as other adults in the play space, played on the bridge with bells. This item encouraged interaction between adults and children, more than any other item during the day.</p>

Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
	<p>maze, the music bridge, the swing and the fact that it is a comfortable space with a lot of different activities.</p> <p>Least liked aspects varied, with comments relating to the need to: fix the creek, enlarge the sandpit, provide more shade over the play equipment, provide more swings for younger children and slides, provide more activities, provide more grassed areas, provide a space for riding; provide more challenging activities.</p> <p>Ten of the 18 children rated the play space as very good, with a further 4 rating it as good and 4 as average.</p>	<p>One adult was overhead to say “I feel like a little kid again!”</p>
Ising Street, Newcomb - Moolap	<p>The overall impression by children was that Ising Street Play Space is boring and small, and they have no interest in returning to the site.</p> <p>13 different activities were identified such as sliding,</p>	<p>The older children in the group essentially ignored the equipment (which is designed for children between 2-8 years of age) and played in the long grass. One</p>

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Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
	<p>swinging, playing with a clock, playing with an abacus, bouncing critter and climbing.</p> <p>Most children thought that the play space was suitable for children between 2-9 years of age.</p> <p>Swings were the most liked activity at this site, along with peace and quiet, the ladder, equipment in general and the long grass.</p> <p>Least popular aspects of this play space included lack of equipment, lack of trees / shade, lack of maintenance and mowing.</p> <p>The majority of children rated this play space as very poor.</p>	<p>group of children moved to a corner of the park with wooden fences on either side, sat in the grass and talked. Another group played 'soldiers' until they decided to pull the long grass out and 'bury' a friend. The younger children mostly played on the equipment. Interestingly, two children from a neighbouring house came across the road to play at the site with the 19 children taking part in the workshop. Instead of viewing such a large number of children in one space as a negative, these two young children (who accessed the play space independently of their parents /</p>

Play Space	Comments from Young People	Observations by Project Team
		<p>carers), saw the large group as a positive and a source of company and potential play mates.</p>

1.4 Children's Art Exhibition

Schools were invited to participate in an art exhibition whereby students completed a piece of art work detailing their favourite place to play outdoors and what they like doing most in that place, with support from the project team. Two schools were involved in the art exhibition (St Francis Xavier Primary School in Corio with 66 students in prep and grades 4, 5 and 6; and St Patrick's Primary School in Geelong West with 92 prep to grade 2 students). Works from St Francis Xavier were displayed at Corio Library and works from St Patrick's displayed at Geelong West Library. These art exhibitions also attracted members of the community. Key themes that emerged from the art exhibition included:

Favourite Places:

The beach was identified by 49 children as their favourite place to play, followed closely behind by parks / play spaces (48 children). A further 18 children identified sports grounds as their favourite places. Twelve young people indicated that their backyard was their preferred play

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area, with another 10 listing swimming pools as the most desirable place to play.

This information can tell us a number of different things. The fact that beaches have been identified as the number one play space may indicate that children enjoy playing with natural features such as water and sand. However, there was also very strong support for parks / play spaces, indicating that children also enjoy playing of equipment or in park environments with trees, grass and landscaping.

Favourite Activities:

A wide range of favourite activities were identified by children, with the ten most popular answers being:

- Sliding (27)
- Swimming / playing in water (23)
- Playing football (15)
- Building sandcastles (15)
- Playing at the playground (14)
- Playing games with family and friends (14)
- Playing with animals / walking dogs (11)
- Swinging (10)
- Climbing trees (6)
- Playing soccer (6)

This information tells us that within play spaces children enjoy traditional play equipment such as sliding and swinging, but also would like the opportunity to play with water and sand; to climb trees; to

have space to play ball games with friends and family such as football and soccer; and to walk the family dog.

Observations:

Part of the exercise of children's art work involves reading the narrative supplied with the drawing. The other component involves observing key themes from the drawings themselves. The most common themes identified from these drawings included images of:

- Friends (59)
- Play equipment (57)
- Grass (54)
- Sand (40)
- Water (37)
- Trees (32)
- Animals (26)
- Sports equipment (22)
- Family members (9)
- Sports grounds / courts (13)

This information informs us of what aspects children enjoy in play spaces. Clearly they are places that they like to go with their friends, usually featuring play equipment of some description and surrounded by natural features such as grass, sand, water and trees. For some children the ability to take their pet with them to play is important and some like to go to play spaces with family members. Sport also features as an activity that a number of children enjoy.

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1.5 Children's Surveys / Interviews

50 young people under the age of 18 were interviewed at one of three community events held in Ocean Grove and Geelong on Australia Day. Young people were also invited to fill in a Play Strategy survey that was promoted in school newsletters, and on Council's website. In total, 73 surveys / interviews were completed by young people. The top three findings identified for each question through this process included:

- Most popular activities: swimming (15); games with friends, e.g. chase, hide and seek (12); and riding scooters / ripsticks (11)
- Who they play with: friends (56); family (32); and pets (2)
- Where they play: park (15); beach (13); Eastern Beach (7); and school (7)
- How they get there: walk (39); passenger in car (27); and ride bike (12)
- What they like most: play equipment (21); big space (13); and ability to hang out / play with friends (12)
- What would make it better: more equipment (15); more trees / gardens / grass (5); pool (5)
- Age: Good distribution from under 5 to 16 years of age. 10 (17); 8 (9); and 12 (7)
- Gender: girls (39); boys (32); no answer (2)
- Suburb of Residence: Geelong East (19); Ocean Grove (11); Geelong (6).

1.6 Parents and Carers Surveys / Interviews

54 parents and carers living in City of Greater Geelong were interviewed at one of three community events held in Ocean Grove and Geelong on Australia Day. Parents and carers were also invited to fill in a Play Strategy survey that was promoted in school newsletters, in the media and on Council's website. In total, 105 surveys / interviews were completed by parents / carers. The top three findings identified for each question through this process included:

- Play space most often visited: Rippleside Park (12); Russell Sharp Reserve (12); and Eastern Beach (8)
- Features most liked at this site: close to home / easy to get to (48); open space (27) and safe / fenced (18)
- What would make it better: more equipment (26); improved maintenance - mowing lawns and cleaning site (16); and more shade (15)
- Mode of travel to site: drive (56); walk (41); and ride a bike (17)
- Improvements needed to site: more equipment (15); more cleaning / maintenance (10); and security / fencing (9)
- Place of residence: Ocean Grove (16); Whittington (14) and Highton (7).

1.0 Community Consultation

1.7 Barwon Valley Fun Park Surveys

Thirty-six (36) young people and fourteen (14) adults were interviewed by the Belmont 1st Scouts at Barwon Valley Fun Park in 2010 in order to gain ideas about desirable features in play spaces. Of this group of people surveyed, the majority of young people were aged between five and eight years of age. Two thirds of participants were female and 60% of participants lived in postcode area 3216, which covers the areas of Belmont, Freshwater Creek, Grovedale, Highton, Marshall, Mount Duneed, Wandana Heights and Waurin Ponds.

Favourite activities outdoors include: riding bicycles / quad bikes; water play / swimming; playing in playgrounds or parks; just being outdoors in the fresh air chilling out; and jumping on trampolines. Participants were asked to nominate the best park they have ever seen. Barwon Valley Fun Park ranked as number one (although this was the interview site), with descriptive words such as fun, big in size, big slides, swings and lots of things to do were important. The Adventure Park was the next highest ranked play space.

When asked what would feature in their ultimate dream park, participants suggested things such as slides, swings, pool, flying fox, spinner, sand pits, water slides and jumping pillows / trampolines.

Barwon Valley Fun Park was identified by participants as their favourite, followed by Sparrow Park and Adventure Park. In their favourite parks, participants most like to play on the equipment, have a picnic, run around on the grass, play ball games and explore in the trees and plants. The main reason for visiting their favourite parks is to have fun.

Most people stated that they go to the park with their parents (78%) or siblings / cousins (62%). To a lesser extent, they will visit the park with their friends (52%) or grandparents (30%). Only 6% of participants said that they visit the park by themselves. Parents who completed the survey said that they go to the park with their children.

Favourite play spaces are generally visited a few times per month (35%) or once per week (23%). Eight percent (8%) of participants visit their favourite park daily, whilst a similar amount (8%) only visit their favourite play space once per year.

When visiting the park, the majority of people stay for one hour (38%) or more (33%). Almost all participants visit the park by car (90%), with 29% walking and 22% riding a bike or scooter (note that participants could provide more than one answer to this question). All participants stated that they felt safe at the park and 94% believe that the park is kept in a clean state.

Other improvements suggested by participants included the need for more shade and need for some type of barrier to prevent children from falling into river.

1.0 Community Consultation

1.8 Written Submissions

Local residents were invited to submit a written submission, outlining their ideas on play development in the municipality. The opportunity to undertake written submissions was advertised in the media and also on Council’s website. Residents were also able to pick up a survey at key locations throughout the municipality. Six written submissions were received during the project. Key issues included:

Submission Number	Comments
1	Russell Sharp Reserve in Thompson St, Whittington has potential to be developed for multiple users. Local nursing home nearby often takes older people to the site. Only basic play equipment for children. Would like to see more parkland utilised.
2	Residents of Eden Park Aged Care would like to see the Russell Sharp Reserve in Thompson St, Whittington improved so that they can walk across the road and spend time in a peaceful environment. Visitors to the facility could take their children across to the park so that residents could enjoy watching their great grandchildren or young relatives play.
3	Russell Sharp Reserve in Thompson St, Whittington could be upgraded to include more things in the park for children to play with seating and a BBQ for residents of the nearby nursing home.
4	Kenworthy Park in Wellington St, Geelong West would be enhanced by incorporating a ½ court basketball court, shade over play equipment, extra seating and replanting of grass with a drought tolerant species.
5	Highton Reserve play space needs toilets or at least signs

Submission Number	Comments
	directing people to the closest toilets.
6	Hewitt Drive (estate opposite Deakin University in Waurin Ponds) needs a basketball tower and concrete pad. Petition received from a 13 year old girl with over 300 signatures on it.

2.0 City of Greater Geelong Policy Context

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A range of different reports and documents were reviewed in order to gain an understanding of previous policies and plans that impact or may impact on the further development and management of play within the City of Greater Geelong. A summary of these documents follows:

City Plan (2010-2014)

The City Plan is the key document that guides Council's strategic direction for a four year period. Council's vision is: "Geelong: coast, country and suburbs is the best place to live through prosperous and cohesive communities in an exceptional environment". The key strategic direction of most relevance to play spaces is: "Community Wellbeing: to improve the health and quality of life of all residents of Greater Geelong".

Of specific relevance to play spaces, the City Plan identifies a budget of \$715,000 over the 2010-2014 period for:

- Core development program
- Delruna Avenue playground infrastructure and equipment
- Playground maintenance at children's community facilities
- Playground Strategy development
- Stead Park playground.

Additional funding has also been set aside for development of play areas attached to community facilities, such as:

- Lara Community Centre children's play area.

Some play spaces created or upgraded since the previous City Plan, specifically mentioned under the wards achievement area include:

- Apollo Drive Preschool playground upgrade
- Delruna Avenue playground creation
- Highton Preschool playground upgrade.

The report notes some other major developments that have a relationship to play, including the LeisureLink Gym and Aquatic Centre which will feature a range of water play initiatives and the sustainable living Armstrong Creek development which will incorporate 15,000 new homes, business and retail zone and a range of education, recreation, health and wellbeing spaces and services.

City of Greater Geelong Environment Management Strategy (2006-2011)

The purpose of this Strategy is to provide a clear direction about Council's policy on a number of key sustainability issues. The primary sustainability principles developed as part of this Strategy are:

Environmental protection

The City of Greater Geelong will:

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- Recognise the importance of the extent of Geelong's biodiversity and acknowledge the need to protect, restore and enhance the diversity and resilience of our natural systems.
- Use all natural resources sustainably and dispose of any wastes responsibly.

Economic prosperity

The City of Greater Geelong will:

- Establish and foster a strong vibrant economic base without compromising the current condition of the environment and our quality of life or the ability of future generations to grow and prosper in a healthy environment.
- Encourage access to facilities, services, goods and other people in ways that minimise impacts on the environment.

Social Needs

The City of Greater Geelong will:

- Protect human health and amenity through safe, clean and attractive environments and quality health services focused on prevention as well as cure.
- Empower all sections of the community to participate in decision-making and consider the social and community impacts of decisions.

Secondary sustainability principles include:

- Precautionary principle
- Ensure inter-generational equity
- Conservation of biodiversity and ecological integrity
- Limits on natural resource use
- Global perspective
- Efficiency and resilience
- Community participation

Specific actions of relevance to play spaces include:

- Undertake an ongoing program of removing treated timber used for seats and tables from all Council conservation, waterway and coastal reserves and replaced with structures made from suitable materials.
- Develop operational guidelines for the management of indigenous vegetation on Council land.
- Where suitable, encourage the extensive use of local indigenous vegetation on all Council open space reserves and parks. Develop horticultural operational guidelines.
- Provide to all sporting clubs occupying Council reserves information on the importance of protecting native vegetation and encourage revegetation with indigenous species.
- Continue to upgrade public facilities along the coast at reserves managed by the City, including car parks, toilets, and picnic and fishing structures. Facilities will be assessed on sustainability grounds and implemented accordingly.
- Establish as Council policy that no waterways and wetlands are drained or disturbed as part of any development or works.
- Establish as Council policy that as part of the detailed planning for new major urban growth areas that the design of the residential areas focuses on the provision of public transport, cycling and interconnecting with walkways and open space and areas to accommodate carbon sinks.
- Continue to undertake planting and greening programs to provide carbon sinks and improve urban air quality.
- Promote the use of sustainable forest products, plantation grown timber and recycled timber by Council. Present a report to Council recommending the prohibition of the use of rainforest timber for its buildings and outdoor projects.

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- Introduce a program to increase the use of drought tolerant indigenous plantings and native grasses for lawns in public gardens and open space areas.
- Solar lights shall be installed in all coastal reserve car parks and reserves (where suitable).
- Council to continue to actively use and promote recycled products and materials.
- Continue to expand the dog poo collection and disposal program throughout the municipality.
- Actively promote safe walking and cycling routes throughout the municipality.
- Develop landscape guidelines for developers to promote the effective planting of local indigenous species in new development. These are to be incorporated into the new Sustainable Development Guidelines.
- Actively implement the recommendations in the Open Space Strategy and when available, purchase key parcels of land identified to be added to the open space network.
- Install bicycle parking facilities at key open space, recreational and community facilities/centres.

The City of Greater Geelong Youth Strategy (2007-2011)

The Youth Strategy 2007-2011 is the key policy document guiding Council decision making, resource allocation and Council actions required to respond to the issues and concerns of young people within the City of Greater Geelong from 2007-2011.

In relation to play and open space, this Strategy identifies Local Government's role as central in planning, supporting and providing places and spaces for young people. This requires planning young

people into the community rather than planning them out of community spaces. It also recognises Local Government's role in conducting or facilitating programs and events for young people and providing opportunities for youth participation in areas such as planning and designing public spaces.

Geelong Community Safety Strategy 2010-2013

This Strategy adopts a holistic approach to improving community safety through the involvement of the broader community including Council, State Government, Victoria Police and community representatives. A key objective of the Strategy is to facilitate initiatives to enhance safety in neighbourhoods, including public spaces.

The strategy of most relevance to play in the City of Greater Geelong is to "Encourage the use of Safe Design principles for both public and private developments".

Geelong Health and Wellbeing Plan

This Plan identifies current and future health issues that provide a focus for the City and other agencies' planning. It is based on a social model of health that recognises that a quality environment and community promotes and maintains good health. Strategies of relevance to play spaces include:

- To integrate 'Healthy by Design' concepts into future urban growth areas and within existing areas.
- To encourage participation in physical activity by people of all ages and abilities.

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- To facilitate appropriate urban development that encourages a healthy environment and healthy human behaviours and responses.
- To increase participation in active transport.

The City of Greater Geelong Domestic Animal Management Plan (2008)

The policy states that dogs are allowed unleashed in public parks and reserves, although they must be on a leash within 10 metres of children’s play equipment, picnic and barbeque areas. Other areas where they are required to be on-leash include sporting grounds during organised sport, high use areas, shopping centres, roads, footpaths, nature strips, jetties and piers. Two of the key recommendations contained within this plan of relevance to play spaces are to educate the public about places where dogs are and are not allowed and to explore partnerships to establish pet activity areas. Council has devised a five category system which has conditions of dog use attached to them. The following parks and reserves require dogs to be on leashes at all times:

Milton Reserve	LJ Keavy Park	Tilly Reserve
Belmont Heights Neighbourhood Park	Bank Reserve	Wilton Avenue Reserve
Herd Reserve	Fairnie Reserve	Buckingham Reserve
Iona Reserve	Bennett Reserve	Fairmont Reserve
Kindale Reserve	Cara Reserve	Maynooth Reserve
Kyle Reserve	Ferndale Reserve	Crane Reserve
Morris Reserve	Lambhill Reserve	Hollywood Reserve

Stork Reserve	Thornbury Reserve	McShane Reserve
Clunies Reserve	Cornthwaite Reserve	Chandos Reserve
Rodborough Reserve	Ising Reserve	Aitken Park
Stradling Reserve	Janet Reserve	Stan Swain Children’s Playground
Osborne Reserve	Lancaster Reserve	Vincent Park
	Pitman Avenue Reserve	

Dogs in Public Places Brochure

This brochure outlines the areas in which dogs may be on and off-leash. It specifically states that dogs are to be on leash within 10 metres of playgrounds, picnic and BBQ areas

Independent Playground Reports

The City of Greater Geelong commissions independent consultants on an annual basis to undertake safety inspections and audits of each play space. The report prepared provides photographs on each play space and a written report detailing the condition of various components and replacement dates.

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Playground Development Guidelines

These guidelines have been produced by the City of Greater Geelong to assist Council staff, community based organisations, businesses and developers to develop play spaces that meet the needs of the local community and also adhere to relevant safety standards. It defines the current play space hierarchy (i.e. *neighbourhood / local, district / sub-regional* and *regional*) and also provides information about distribution, landscape settings, Australian Standards and minimum requirements for siting of play components, under-surfacing, safe fall zones and playground equipment.

Open Space Networks Study (2001)

One of the key objectives of the Open Space Networks Study is to “provide a strategic overview of the existing open spaces in the City and identify possible future uses, provision opportunities and linkages so as to maximise the relevance and effectiveness of open space to the community”.

The Study does not make any specific recommendations relating to play spaces, however, it does identify that there is a very low number of possible future open spaces and undeveloped open spaces, suggesting a need to reserve additional open space sites if future requirements are to be effectively met. It also states that the quantity and quality of informal parks and unclassified spaces is a reflection of past policies on open space acquisition and management of spaces, which do not necessarily reflect the current or future need for such spaces. It suggests that such analysis needs to be matched against

demographic analysis and local needs assessment.

Sustainable Communities – Infrastructure Development Guidelines (2010)

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to “facilitate the development of sustainable communities through quality planning, design and construction of infrastructure in the City of Greater Geelong”.

In relation to play spaces, this document states that “playgrounds will be provided at a rate of 1 playground for every 250 children under the age of 12 in open space parkland within 500m walking distance from every household, with consideration given to barriers such as major roads, railway lines, rivers and creeks, etc”. Further, it states that a tree planting plan should be developed for all play spaces to provide shade and a more aesthetically pleasing environment.

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It develops a hierarchy for play spaces as follows:

Hierarchy Level	Features
Local / Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small facilities • Able to be accessed independently without travelling long distances or crossing major barriers • Designed for children 3-7 • Activities to include solitary play, parallel play and group play • Multi activity play equipment • Standard access to all levels of equipment in the play space • Any swings should be fitted with both toddler and strap seats • Carefully sited to maximise open space for other activities • Seat for carers • Generally minimum of 1 ha, but could be as small as 0.5 ha if a special feature is identified.
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to large facilities • Equipment for juniors (3-7 year olds) and seniors (7-14 years of age) • Sites should have good visibility, access and be well located • Seating, shade/shelter, access to toilet facilities and drinking water • Minimum of 2 ha in size.
Sub-regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium to large facilities • Equipment for juniors (3-7 year olds) and seniors (7-14 years of age)

Hierarchy Level	Features
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites should have good visibility, access and be well located • Seating, shade/shelter, access to toilet facilities and drinking water • Minimum of 5 ha in size.
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad catchment • Should cater for all age groups • Junior equipment should be low theme based structures to encourage role-play whilst providing a list of challenges • Senior equipment should be more activity based providing linked accessories to assist with motor skills, hand-eye coordination, balance and agility • Toilets, drinking fountains, picnic facilities, park furniture and access for people with disabilities • Minimum of 5-10 ha.

Bellarine Peninsula Recreation and Leisure Needs Study (2004)

The aim of this strategy is to determine future recreation and leisure needs of the Bellarine Peninsula community. Specific recommendations relating to play spaces include:

- Upgrade the playground at the Smythe St Reserve (Portarlington) between Smythe and Nottingham Streets at a cost of \$15,000.

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- Enhance the reserve at the eastern end of Tuckfield Street (Ocean Grove), overlooking Collendina by developing a playground, landscaping, seats, car parking, picnic area; being mindful of minimising any potential adverse impact on existing view lines and proposals to widen the road for through traffic in this area (\$50,000).
- Acquire a 0.5-1 hectare site for an informal park incorporating a playground in the area south of Geelong Road, west of Golf Links Road (Barwon Heads) as part of the subdivision process (funded by developer contributions).
- Upgrade the playgrounds in the Village Park and The Mews reserve (in accordance with the Master Plan, i.e. installation of more modern equipment to supplement existing features). The Mews could specifically be targeted to cater for the toddler age group (2-5 years) as the park provides a safe location for this age group and is located close to young families. The Mews upgrade should include toddler swings, slide, rockers and a shade sail (\$30,000).
- Install an appropriately designed playground (having due regard to potential drainage/flood events) within the drainage reserve off Newby Close (Barwon Heads) at a cost of \$30,000.
- Relocate the playground at Portarlington Reserve, as per concept plan (\$20,000).
- CoGG owns a parcel of residential zoned land on Batman Road (Indented Head). The City has been discussing the future of this parcel with a potential developer in conjunction with residential development of the area between Batman Road and Church Road. Council should actively pursue the opportunity to negotiate a land swap with the developer in order to provide a substantial linear parcel of open space incorporating protection of significant vegetation, walking tracks and appropriate park furniture including a playground. This site should be linked throughout the development and connections provided to existing residential areas via a network of footpaths, including a footpath along the southern side of Batman Road through to the foreshore. To be funded through Developer Contributions.
- Development of a new significant regional playground is not recommended. Rather Council's focus and investment in playgrounds should concentrate on providing improved variety of play experience and creativity in play equipment.
- New playgrounds are to be fully accessible where practicable, or at least aim to provide some items of equipment that can be accessed by those with mobility impairments. Appropriate support facilities are to be provided at playground locations such as park tables, seating, shade and drinking taps.
- Acquire a suitable site for an Informal Park, including playground, in the Goandra Estate residential development in conjunction with the proposed open space corridor/Yellow Gum Reserve. To be funded through Developer Contributions.
- Explore opportunities to improve community use and access to the Begola Wetlands area, including appropriate walking tracks, park furniture and possibly a playground (\$20,000 for a local playground).
- Upgrade the Seaforth Drive Reserve (Portarlington) through installation of improved walking paths, park furniture and playground equipment (\$40,000 for entire upgrade).
- Development West of Jetty Road, Clifton Springs - A site for an Informal Park incorporating a playground should be provided

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along the creek corridor and also along the foreshore (which is more central to the development area).

Grovedale / Waurn Ponds Open Space & Recreation Needs Study (2002)

The aim of this Study is to review the current facilities and opportunities available at Grovedale Recreation Reserve in order to identify a prioritised list of developments required to improve the site and the range of activities available.

Key finding of this Study in relation to play spaces include the need to improve passive recreation and landscaped areas at a total cost of between \$73,000 - \$105,000. Specifically it recommended:

- Development of upgraded playground (\$30,000 - \$40,000)
- BBQ area, lighting and shelter (\$25,000 - \$27,000)
- Furniture (\$8,000 - \$10,000)
- Additional landscape development and art features (\$5,000 - \$10,000)
- Reconstruction of BMX track (\$5,000 - \$8,000)

Armstrong Creek Integrated Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2009)

This Integrated Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been developed to assist investors to create liveable sustainable communities in which there is less dependence on cars, access to public transport, permeable streets which encourage walking and cycling, public open space within

easy access to all homes, social infrastructure within walking distance of homes, land set aside for schools, high quality local employment opportunities, well designed community buildings that can be adapted to changing needs, etc. It has become a blueprint for development for the area.

In relation to play spaces, the Plan highlights:

- There will be a local park within 400 metres walk of all dwellings in the growth area
- Creation of synergies with schools and activity centres will be considered in relation to open space provision and development
- Safe and efficient walking / cycling trails will be developed to connect to areas of open space such as play spaces
- Play spaces to be co-located with sports fields, aquatic facilities and lawn tennis courts where possible.

G21 Regional Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Strategy (2006)

This Strategy, commissioned by City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Golden Plains Shire and the Borough of Queenscliff, aims to identify opportunities to establish sport and recreation facilities of regional significance.

Although the report considered opportunities for non-sporting infrastructure such as playgrounds, skate facilities, parks, picnic / BBQ areas, it was determined that individual Local Government Authorities in the G21 region require access to their own informal recreational

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activities within their boundaries. The report states that single facilities within the categories listed above would not adequately meet the needs of the entire region.

Skate / BMX Facilities Management Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for the management of skate/BMX facilities in the City of Greater Geelong and to address the various management and maintenance issues. It also aims to provide a mechanism to receive community feedback regarding skate and BMX facilities and to address issues.

The report outlines management, risk management, communication and education, programming, event management, conditions of use, roles and responsibilities regarding maintenance and facility inspections.

Skate facilities are currently located at:

- Barwon Heads Skate Park - Barwon Heads Village Park, Barwon Heads
- Corio Bowl - Fountain of Friendship Park, Corio
- Lara Skate Park - Austin Park, Lara
- Norlane Skate Park - Windsor Park, Norlane
- Clifton Springs Skate Park - Jetty Road Reserve, Clifton Springs
- Hamlyn Heights Skate Park - Vines Road, Hamlyn Heights
- John Hansen Memorial Skate Park - Leopold Memorial Park, Leopold
- Ocean Grove Skate Park - Shell Rd Reserve, Ocean

- Portarlington Skate Park - W.G Little Reserve, Portarlington
- St Leonards Skate Park - St Leonards Lake Reserve, St Leonards
- Wauron Ponds Skate Park - Wauron Ponds Valley Parkland, Wauron Ponds
- Youth Activity Area, Geelong Waterfront
- Grove
- Rosewall Skate Park - Connections Park, Rosewall
- Sparrow Park Learn to Skate Area - Sparrow Park, Geelong West
- Whittington Mini Ramp - Whittington Link Reserve, Whittington

BMX tracks are currently located at:

- South Barwon Reserve, Belmont
- Grovedale Recreation Reserve, Grovedale
- Whittington Link Reserve, Whittington
- Connections Park, Rosewall
- Grinter Reserve, Whittington
- John Crotts Reserve, Grovedale
- Wauron Ponds Valley Parkland, Wauron Ponds

Walking More – Walking Safely (2004)

This study focuses specifically on ways to facilitate sustained participation in walking, as a legitimate recreational, fitness or transport option. It identifies that the built environment (footpaths, parks, streets, trails, etc) has the most significant impact on whether or

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not people choose to walk for exercise or to commute to key destinations.

The report identifies the key components of a walkable environment in public open space (such as play spaces, parks and reserves) as having:

- Appropriate and accessible entry and exit points to walking paths and trails which are well signed;
- Surfaces are walkable at all times of the year (except after severe weather);
- Gradient of walking paths are (wherever possible) appropriate for walkers of all abilities and ages;
- Resting places are provided, where necessary;
- Provision of relevant and appropriate signage (e.g. street names, walking paths, distances, nearest toilets, codes of behaviour for walkers, dog owners, cyclists and other path users);
- Availability of appropriate maps;
- Preference is given to pedestrians over motor vehicles at strategic intersections and crossings;
- Pedestrian safety and accessibility is given high priority in urban design consideration and traffic engineering; and
- Urban developments feature high quality public open space and linkages with existing open space networks.

The Strategy recommends that:

- Council influences relevant planning processes to create walkable environments and support the principles of liveable neighbourhoods.

- Council review resource allocation to provide greater balance in expenditure and staffing allocation between structured sport and unstructured sport and recreation.
- Council completes its Open Space Land Acquisition Strategy incorporating identified gaps in the walking network.
- Council develops and implements policies to incorporate walking infrastructure and pedestrian accessibility into the design, development and provision of community facilities.
- Walkability is recognised and promoted by Council as an important aspect of community connectedness and community building.
- Council develops policy regarding the provision of footpaths and walking infrastructure in new housing developments. Policy guidelines to include: footpath specifications; type of path provided in specific circumstances (i.e. asphalt, granitic, crushed rock / shell, etc); landscaping; casual surveillance and sightlines; seating (including style, number to be provided and locations); connectivity to public open space, local facilities, public transport; timing of works specified (i.e. installation of footpaths to be completed before people reside in subdivision); and developer contribution levels.
- Collaboration is undertaken to develop a process to monitor provision and management of public open space areas utilised or (underutilised) by walkers.
- The community is engaged in walking path and open space network improvements (e.g. via customer satisfaction surveys, website comments forum, maintenance report process).

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- Opportunities for open space acquisition and open space network development and trail development (as per open space strategy) are identified and given high priority.
- Links are developed with incidental walking (e.g. public transport hubs connecting to recreation spaces and places).
- Pedestrian audits of 5 major spines of public open space are undertaken at: Barwon River (in conjunction with Barwon Water); Waurin Ponds Valley Parklands; Bellarine Rail Trail; Hovells Creek; and Cowies Creek.
- The proposed hierarchy of walking tracks in public open space is confirmed. This hierarchy reflects quality of walking experience, track amenities/facilities, popularity, profile or usage levels. The grading of tracks should guide the staging of track upgrades/amenities and identifies to users the quality of experience and expectations of facilities or amenities provided.
- Implement recommendations of the Study of Open Space Networks (Sept 2001).

Greater Geelong Cycling Strategy (2008)

This Strategy aims to provide strategic direction to the future development of cycling. Whilst it does not specifically mention play spaces, it does identify the need to connect parks and sport and recreation areas to quality bicycle paths. It also mentions the need to develop clearly visible, well lit bicycle parking close to high pedestrian areas within key recreational areas. It states that bike parking should be designed to allow cyclists to lock both the wheel and the frame of the bike to the parking device. It also mentions the importance of

signage on trails, adequate cycle connections, appropriate end of trip facilities, and an assessment of the need for stop off facilities on off road cycle routes (e.g. seating, shade, drinking fountains and toilets). A series of maps included in the Strategy identify both existing and future trails.

Great Ocean Rides and Great Ocean Trails Brochures – City of Greater Geelong

These brochures provide descriptions and maps for a range of road rides, rail trails, off-road trails and mountain bike parks.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a human rights treaty. It sets out the rights of the child in all spheres of life including: social, cultural, political, civil and economic. Article 31 of the Convention states:

“1. Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity”.

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Australian Safety Standards

There are a number of safety standards that have been produced by Standards Australia in recent years to ensure the safety of people using play equipment and to ensure that play equipment has been installed correctly. A summary of relevant standards is as follows:

AS 4685:2004 (Parts 1 to 6)

AS 4685:2004 (Part 1 to 6) sets out the general and specific requirements for playground equipment in six parts

1. AS 4685.1: 2004 Pt 1 General safety requirements and test methods
2. AS 4685.2: 2004 Pt 2 Particular safety requirements and test methods for swings
3. AS 4685.3: 2004 Pt 3 Particular safety requirements and test methods for slides
4. AS 4685.4: 2004 Pt 4 Particular safety requirements and test methods for runways
5. AS 4685.5: 2004 Pt 5 Particular safety requirements and test methods for carousels
6. AS 4685.6: 2004 Pt 6 Particular safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment

AS/NZS 4422: 1996

Playground Surfacing - Specifications, Requirements & Test Methods

AS/NZS 4486.1: 1997

Playgrounds and Playground Equipment - Part 1: Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation

AS 2155: 1982

Playgrounds: Guide to Siting and to Installation and Maintenance of Equipment

AS 2555: 1982

Supervised Adventure Playgrounds - Guide to Establishment and Administration

AS 1428.3: 1992

Design for Access and Mobility - Requirements for Children and Adolescents with Physical Disabilities

AS 1924, Parts 1 and 2: 1981 - Superseded

Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use

- Playground equipment manufactured and installed according to AS 1924, Parts 1 and 2: 1981 shall remain compliant with AS 1924: 1981. When parts of existing equipment are replaced, the item will need to meet compliance with AS 4685: 2004.

AS 4989: 2006

Trampolines - Safety Aspects.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) – Design and Access for Mobility

The purpose of the DDA Act – Design and Access for Mobility, is to ensure that all community members have unimpeded access to premises in the built environment, including “a place (whether enclosed or built on or not)”. In addition to the Building Code of

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Australia, there are four Australian Standards that currently apply to access and mobility:

- AS 1428.1(2001) - Design for Access and Mobility: General Requirements for Access – New Building Work
- AS 1428.2 (1992) - Design for Access and Mobility: Enhanced and Additional requirements- Buildings and Facilities
- AS 1428.3 (1992) - Design for Access and Mobility Requirements for Children and Adolescents with Physical Disabilities
- AS 1428.4 (2001) - Design for Access and Mobility: Tactile Ground Surface Indicators for the Orientation of People with Vision Impairment.

DSE Safer Design Guidelines (2005)

This document provides guidelines aimed to create well designed, well managed, safe, accessible and livable places that encourage community participation. Some of the key objectives and design suggestions contained within these Design Guidelines of relevance to play spaces include:

Objective 4.1: To maximise natural surveillance of parks and open spaces to encourage use and support people's perceptions of safety:

- Ensure that parks, public open spaces or play areas are visible from neighbouring streets, houses, schools and other buildings.
- Buildings with active frontages should be located and designed to overlook public open spaces and parks.

- Public open spaces, parks and playgrounds should have active frontages on at least three sides to provide natural surveillance and sightlines deep into the park.
- New sub-division layouts should avoid rear fences backing onto public open space and parks.
- Avoid cut-off dead spaces or isolated pockets of land within a park that cannot be overlooked. Instead, convert these areas into new residential lots that can overlook the park.
- Locate children's play areas where they are clearly visible from surrounding properties and streets. Install see-through fencing to control access and prevent children from roaming while still providing visibility from the street and surrounding areas.

Objective 4.2: To encourage the use of parks and open space by a range of users at all times of the day to improve the quality of life for the community and improve perceptions of safety in public places:

- Provide comfortable places with well-placed seating, good shade and interesting views. These areas are important for encouraging people, particularly the elderly, to use and enjoy public spaces.
- Design and position elements such as public furniture, lighting, drinking fountains, public information, public toilets, and play equipment to encourage the informal use of parks.
- Provide generous seating opportunities throughout all public open space that is carefully positioned to attract and support its use.

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Objective 4.4: To ensure landscaping maintains sightlines of paths in parks and open spaces and allows for natural surveillance:

- Where possible, park planting and topography should not block views of paths and open spaces from surrounding streets and houses.
- Where landscaping is provided in public open spaces, or in adjacent
- Streets or parks, ensure trees or vegetation do not block the field of vision between 0.7 metres and 2.4 metres above ground level.
- There should be at least one safe through-route in all parks, with frequent 'escape routes' linking the through-route to surrounding streets and car parks.
- Tall shrubs can provide hiding places and should not be planted close to paths or fences.
- Ensure vegetation does not obscure lighting, either during its growth phase or at maturity.

Other relevant objectives include:

- To ensure streets and public spaces are attractive and well used to signal care and attention and support people's feeling of safety
- To co-locate pedestrian, cycle and vehicle movement routes, where practical, to maximise activity and natural surveillance opportunities

- To provide convenient paths with generous proportions to encourage walking and cycling and promote natural surveillance
- To maintain long sightlines along paths and into adjacent spaces to maximise visibility
- To provide signage to assist in way finding
- To ensure all facilities are well maintained and graffiti is promptly removed to promote a perception of safety and encourage use
- To design all car parking areas to maximise natural surveillance and pedestrian visibility
- To provide public toilets in highly visible and accessible locations to promote their use and enhance people's perception of safety
- To provide cycle parking in highly visible and accessible locations to enhance user safety
- To ensure lighting is carefully integrated to further enhance visibility and natural surveillance of parks and open spaces
- To design signage that is easy to see, read and understand. This will assist people to interpret their surroundings and help their way-finding.

PRAV – The Good Play Space Guide – I Can Play Too

This document, commissioned by Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria and the Department of Planning and Community Development is designed to assist stakeholders to understand

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accessibility in play spaces, and guide the planning, design, construction, maintenance and management of play spaces.

The document specifically identifies:

- The benefits of play
- Access and inclusion
- Demonstrates how to make a play space accessible and how existing spaces can be made more accessible
- Provides guidance on developing accessible play spaces.

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design is concerned with the relationship between the physical environment and the people who use that environment. It focuses on designing the environment in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of criminal behaviour. It aims to achieve this through:

Natural access control – limits access to areas (through gates, fences, walls, footpaths, landscaping and lighting) and increases natural surveillance to provide easy observation of potential criminals

Natural surveillance- aims to keep potential offenders and intruders under observation through the creation of environments where there is sufficient opportunity for people engaged in their normal behaviour to observe the space around them

Territorial reinforcement - is a design concept that clearly delineates private space from semi-public and public spaces and also creates a

sense of ownership. When there is a sense of ownership within a space, strangers and intruders stand out and are more easily identified.

AAA Access Audits Australia

Access Audits Australia has developed a series of handbooks to help planners ensure that spaces such as playgrounds, parks, outdoor areas and supporting infrastructure such as signage are accessible to all people of all abilities. A key point made by these handbooks is that play spaces should provide opportunities for young people with a range of disabilities to participate in and use play components and areas alongside other children; supporting the notion of inclusion and social interaction. It states that play spaces should be designed with some challenging components and areas, as well as passive play and spaces to rest, but that the ability to use spaces as independently as possible is very important. Opportunities within the play area should stimulate the senses and consideration should be given to providing play components at both an elevated level and at ground level. Access for carers needs to be provided. A continuous Accessible Path of Travel should also be developed to allow young people with disabilities to travel to and through a play space and to use the play components provided.

Clause 56 Walkability Toolkit

This document provides an overview of design considerations to create conditions that allow more people to walk more often. It provides a

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checklist which can be used by Local Government Planning departments to assess the walkability of new sub-divisions.

Heart Foundation - Healthy By Design

The Heart Foundation (Victorian Division) has produced a series of resources to encourage planners to develop Supportive Environments for Physical Activity¹. Some key points to note are:

Design Area	Some Key Design Considerations for Recreation Reserves
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect walking and cycling routes within open spaces with the broader network • Ensure that feature parks and parks located on busy roads can be accessed via pedestrian crossings leading to or near park entrances • Provide a range of facilities to create active recreation opportunities for children and youth. For example, children’s play equipment, basketball rings and playground markings to encourage activities like hopscotch. • Provide exercise and training equipment along walking paths to encourage more vigorous activity. • Feature park attractions such as community gardens. These provide a sense of community

¹ The Heart Foundation (Victorian Division): Healthy by Design: A Planner’s Guide to Environments for Active Living (2004): [http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/admin.nsf/Images/Healthy_by_Design.pdf/\\$File/Healthy_by_Design.pdf](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/admin.nsf/Images/Healthy_by_Design.pdf/$File/Healthy_by_Design.pdf)

Design Area	Some Key Design Considerations for Recreation Reserves
	<p>spirit and local ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a variety of paths that allow recreational walking around parks or direct passage through parks. • Landscape open spaces to provide pleasant places for people to sit, meet and talk. • Plant tall trunk, broad leaf, broad canopy trees to provide useful shade and an aesthetically pleasing Environment. Avoid planting trees that require frequent watering and pruning. Consider drought resistant plants. • Select appropriate species and locate trees to maximise access to shade throughout the day, winter and summer. Chose low maintenance varieties. • Provide natural shade or structured shelter within open spaces to promote sitting, meeting and talking and to provide protection from weather extremes. • Maintain open spaces to a high standard to ensure pedestrian spaces are clean and usable. • Provide drinking fountains in parks and open spaces. • Provide secure trip end bicycle parking facilities for people riding to open spaces
Walking and Cycling Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieve clear and safe connections through signage, landscaping, lighting and edge treatments. • Maintain clear sightlines along walking and cycling routes using low vegetation (up to 700

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Design Area	Some Key Design Considerations for Recreation Reserves
	<p>mm). Trim tree foliage up to an overhead clearance of 2400 mm above ground level (refer AS1428.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use art to encourage interest and repeated use of the route. • Complement walking and cycling routes with trees for aesthetics and shade. • Maintain walking and cycling routes to a high standard to ensure continuous, accessible paths of travel. • Enable comfortable passage for people in wheelchairs, people with prams, learner cyclists and people walking comfortably side by side with footpaths that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A minimum of 1.5 metres wide along collector or lower order streets. - A minimum of 2.5 metres wide along arterial roads and approach routes to predictable destinations such as schools, parks and shopping precincts. (Three metre paths or wider are preferred to allow for greater contingency). • Ensure a durable, non-slip surface and even paving designed and constructed for minimum maintenance.

Victorian Government - Blueprint for Education & Early Childhood Development (2008)

This Blueprint aims to identify strategies to ensure that quality education and early childhood services are implemented throughout Victoria to ensure that children are provided with the best possible opportunities in their early years. The Blueprint has a focus on developing strong partnerships with parents, families, local communities and businesses; and providing quality education for early childhood workers to achieve its goals. The vision contained within the Blueprint is:

“Every young Victorian thrives, learns and grows to enjoy a productive, rewarding and fulfilling life, while contributing to their local and global communities”.

The Blueprint recognises that:

- “The period from birth through to eight, and especially the first three years, sets the foundation for future social, physical, emotional and cognitive development
- Effort and investment in the early years yields the best outcomes for children and families
- Development is supported by healthy, safe and stimulating environments”.

There will be a greater emphasis on the promotion of children’s centres as community hubs and the Early Years Development Framework (to be developed by the State Government) will provide further information about how children learn and develop.

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Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments - Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (2009)

The aim of this Framework is to “assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning”. Its vision is that “All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and the nation”. The Framework has a specific focus on play-based learning and aims to ensure that children are offered quality learning experiences by quality educators.

The Framework also identifies three inter-related elements which support children’s learning:

- “Principles
 - Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
 - Partnerships with families
 - High expectations and equity
 - Respect for diversity
 - Ongoing learning and reflective practice
- Practice
 - Holistic approaches
 - Responsiveness to children
 - Learning through play
 - Intentional learning
 - Learning environments

- Cultural competence
- Continuity of learning and transitions
- Assessment for learning
- Learning outcomes
 - Children have a strong sense of identity
 - Children are connected with and contribute to their world
 - Children have a strong sense of well-being
 - Children are confident and involved learners
 - Children are effective communicators”.

Play has been identified as a key context for learning that:

- “Allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness
- Enhances dispositions such as curiosity and creativity
- Enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning
- Assists children to develop relationships and concepts
- Stimulates a sense of wellbeing”.

The Framework recognises the value of learning through play. It states:

“Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other’s thinking and build new understandings. Play provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Play can expand children’s thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn. In these ways play can promote positive dispositions towards learning. Children’s immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy being.

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Early childhood educators take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning. They engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking. They provide a balance between child led, child initiated and educator supported learning. They create learning environments that encourage children to explore, solve problems, create and construct. Educators interact with babies and children to build attachment. They use routines and play experiences to do this. They also recognise spontaneous teachable moments as they occur, and use them to build on children's learning. Early childhood educators work with young children to promote and model positive ways to relate to others. They actively support the inclusion of all children in play, help children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community".

The Framework also recognises the value of learning environments, including outdoor play spaces:

"Learning environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting and respond to their interests and needs. Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions. Outdoor learning spaces are a feature of Australian learning environments. They offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environments include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. They foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing

environmental education. Indoor and outdoor environments support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, early childhood educators, families and the broader community. They promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning.

"Materials enhance learning when they reflect what is natural and familiar and also introduce novelty to provoke interest and more complex and increasingly abstract thinking. For example, digital technologies can enable children to access global connections and resources, and encourage new ways of thinking. Environments and resources can also highlight our responsibilities for a sustainable future and promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment. They can foster hope, wonder and knowledge about the natural world.

"Educators can encourage children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions to the learning environment. They can support engagement by allowing time for meaningful interactions, by providing a range of opportunities for individual and shared experiences, and by finding opportunities for children to go into and contribute to their local community".

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations - National Quality Framework Information Forum

The National Quality Framework was instigated by the Council of Australian Governments with the intention of establishing new standards for long day care, family day care, preschool and outside school hours care. It (along with approvals processes, fees for services and qualifications) is part of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, which is expected to be passed in the latter half of 2011.

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The Act will be operational from January 2012, with a phased implementation of staffing qualifications and ratios.

The National Quality Standards within the Act assesses specific early childhood services against seven key criteria:

- Educational program and practice
- Children’s health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development - Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – For all children from birth to eight years (2009)

This document follows the *Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development* and aims to advance all children’s learning and development from birth to eight years. It shares the same vision and learning and development outcomes as the former document. According to this document, “during the period from birth to eight years, children experience more rapid brain development and acquire more skills and knowledge than in any other period in their lives”.

The Framework acknowledges the importance of play in children’s development and the inter-relationships between child-directed play and learning; guided play and learning and adult-led learning.

City of Greater Geelong – Disability Action Plan (2009-2013)

This document aims to identify and address barriers to participation in daily life by people with disabilities. The most relevant section of this plan is Section 38 (1) a and c of the Disability Act 2006, which focuses on reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services and facilities; and promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability. Relevant performance measures include:

- Plan and prioritise ongoing access audits for identified areas not yet audited, to identify barriers encountered by people with a disability and complete any outstanding access audits (e.g. community and corporate buildings such as senior citizens centres, child care centres, public toilets, parks and reserves, sports pavilions, leisure centres, car parks, streetscapes, and signage.
- Ensure parking compliance with Local Laws including proper use of disabled (accessible) parking bays within the City.
- Undertake regular pruning and care of street trees and vegetation to prevent physical barriers and the risk of slipping in order to promote universal access of footpaths.
- Ensure selection of tree species that are less likely to create a slipping hazard by the shedding of seasonal vegetation on to ramps and footpaths.
- Continued implementation of Council’s footpath remedial upgrade program.
- Provide Council documents, when requested, in a range of accessible communication and language formats, for example, Braille, large print, audiotape, ‘Easy English’.

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UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre – Building Child Friendly Cities – A Framework for Action (2004)

This document identifies a framework for defining and developing Child Friendly Cities. A child friendly city guarantees the right of every young citizen to:

- Influence decisions about their city
- Express their opinion on the city they want
- Participate in family, community and social life
- Receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter
- Drink safe water and have access to proper
- sanitation
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Walk safely in the streets on their own
- Meet friends and play
- Have green spaces for plants and animals
- Live in an unpolluted environment
- Participate in cultural and social events
- Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

The nine building blocks of a Child Friendly City include:

1. CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION:

promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes

2. A CHILD-FRIENDLY LEGAL FRAMEWORK:

ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures which consistently promote and protect the rights of all children

3. A CITY-WIDE CHILDREN'S RIGHTS STRATEGY:

developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention

4. A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS UNIT OR COORDINATING MECHANISM:

developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspective

5. CHILD IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION:

ensuring that there is a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children – in advance, during and after implementation

6. A CHILDREN'S BUDGET:

ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children

7. A REGULAR STATE OF THE CITY'S CHILDREN REPORT:

ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights

8. MAKING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS KNOWN:

ensuring awareness of children's rights among adults and children

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9. INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN:

supporting non-governmental organisations and developing independent human rights institutions - children's ombudspeople or commissioners for children - to promote children's rights

Wyver, Shirley et al (2010), *Ten Ways to Restrict Children's Freedom to Play: The Problem of Surplus Safety*

This article explores the impact of fear of risk, or 'surplus safety' in relation to children's play. It argues that the restrictions imposed upon children's play to promote safety, may actually "expose children to more serious short and longer term threats of illness and limit children's life opportunities". The ten ways identified to restrict children's freedom to play are:

1. Assume that adults are the best people to manage children's risk-taking
2. Assume that there are good and bad playground surfaces
3. Prioritise regulation over pedagogy in early childhood centres
4. Assume that restrictions on play freedom are necessary in a modern western environment
5. Assume some children are injury prone
6. Assume long periods of walking will be too stressful for toddlers
7. Be convinced by the statistics that all hazards in the playground must be avoided
8. Assume parental guilt leads to good outcomes for children

9. Design neighbourhoods without considering children's right to play
10. Assume that you can help children get ahead by stimulating them with extra activities

Be Out there National Wildlife Federation (2010) *Whole Child: Developing Mind, Body and Spirit through Outdoor Play*

This American research paper correlates lack of time spent playing outdoors with an increase in childhood illnesses and conditions such as myopia (short sightedness), obesity, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, anxiety, childhood depression, vitamin D deficiency (which may lead to an increase in bone problems, heart cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma)

The report found that today's children devote as little as four to seven minutes per day on unstructured outdoor play and that by the time most children attend kindergarten, they have watched more than 5,000 hours of television. The report also found that "children who spend time outdoors learn to work as a team and are better problem solvers as adults. They score high on assessments of cognitive ability and standardized tests".

Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics believes that "sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health".

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City of Greater Geelong (2006) *Municipal Early Years Plan: Creating Communities for Children – A Local Plan for Families, Children and the Community*

The aim of this plan is to provide a framework to guide future developments and inform local planning to enhance support for children and families throughout the City of Greater Geelong.

The five guiding principles identified in this plan are:

- Provision of a range of early childhood services
- Quality of services
- Service efficiency
- Service development and management
- Facility development and management

Key themes of relevance include:

- Strengthening children's education: early years are learning years
 - "To achieve optimal development children need opportunities for discovery, experimenting and exploration. Children need to be able to construct their understanding of themselves, other people, and the world around them through experiences, which include play, interactions with other children and adults, and the stimulation of creative environments".
- Building healthy communities: encouraging children's physical activity

- "Physical activity also represents the principal medium by which creative, cognitive, social, and emotional development in infants and children is stimulated and encouraged. Their development is accelerated as the quality and quantity of opportunities for physical activity increases and as they are provided with new challenges".

Key actions of relevance identified in this plan include:

- Ensure the early childhood facilities are maintained in accordance with regulation requirements and quality service standards.
- Participate in relevant urban design and planning consultation processes.
- Advocate for the 'up-front' provision of community and social infrastructure to be incorporated in all new subdivision and urban planning frameworks.
- Ensure children and families are included as a key priority target group in relevant Council community consultations.
- Develop appropriate consultation resources and approaches for use with children and families.
- Participate in relevant planning and design processes for new playgrounds, community facilities, sport and recreational amenities and retail developments that have relevance to children and families.
- Examine potential development of municipal play policy.
- Promote importance of children's physical activity amongst early childhood and community service providers.

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- Provide high quality playground and recreational facilities that accommodate children’s diverse interests and abilities.
- Ensure playground and recreational facilities are designed and maintained in accordance with quality standards.
- Ensure new and existing early childhood building and facilities conform to disability access standards and requirements for children and parents.
- Establishment of the ‘Special Play Space (All Abilities Playground) Project at Eastern Park.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2009), *Children’s Services Regulations*

Of particular relevance to play spaces, the regulations state:

97 Outdoor space

(1) A licensee must ensure that outdoor space is provided at the children's service that—

- (a) has a useable area of at least 7 square metres for each child who is cared for or educated by the children's service; and
- (b) includes features that enable each child who is cared for or educated by the children's service to explore and experience the natural environment; and
- (c) includes adequate shading to protect children from harmful exposure to the sun.

(2) In calculating the area of useable outdoor space, the following must be excluded—

- (a) pathways or thoroughfares less than 3 metres wide;
- (b) car parking areas;

(c) storage sheds and other fixed items that prevent children from using the space;

(d) any other ancillary area.

(3) This regulation does not apply to a limited hours children's service, a short term children's service or an outside school hours care service.

98 Outdoor space—outside school hours care services

(1) A licensee of an outside school hours care service must ensure that the following is provided for each child cared for or educated by the service at or near the service—

- (a) outdoor space with a useable area of at least 12 square metres; or
- (b) indoor playing space with a useable area of at least 12 square metres.

99 Fencing

(1) A licensee must ensure that—

- (a) any outdoor space provided at a children's service is enclosed by a fence or barrier that is at least 1.5 metres high measured from ground level; and
- (b) a child being cared for or educated by the children's service cannot go through, over or under the fence or barrier or any gate or fitting.

There are a variety of other requirements that state that children must be adequately supervised at all times in supervised early childhood centres and that these children are protected from any hazard likely to cause an injury. The regulations also state that developmentally appropriate educational or recreational programs need to be made available to children in such services and that suitable equipment is

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made available for such programs. Further, the regulations state that children's services must be kept in safe, clean, hygienic condition.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2007) – *Fencing Guidelines for Licensed Children's Services*

These guidelines have been produced by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development specifically for supervised early childhood playgrounds. The regulations state that outdoor spaces in children's services need to be enclosed by a fence or barrier that is at least 1.5 metres from the ground and designed in such a way so that children cannot go through, over or under the fencing or barriers.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2007) *Outdoor Play Guide for Victorian Children's Services*

This document provides planning, design and maintenance guidelines to ensure that children who are in attendance at licensed children's services are given the freedom to play and explore, in an environment that is safe.