



PLAYGROUNDS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

VOLUME 1



Mary Jeavons, Director
Mary Jeavons Landscape Architects



LANDSCAPE PLAY AREA PLANNING AND DESIGN
1st Floor 171 Nicholson Street, Carlton North
VIC 3054
Australia

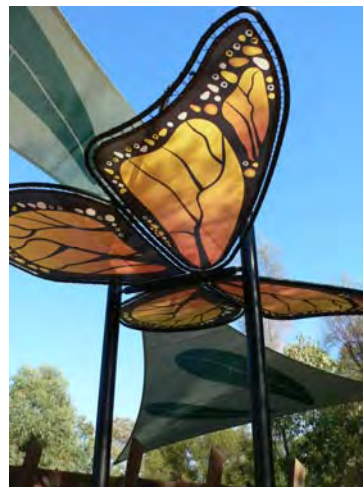
Phone: (03) 93877337

Fax: (03) 93877314

email: mjla@jeavons.com.au

www.jeavons.com.au

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Jeavons & Jeavons Pty Ltd
ABN 82 065 809 458



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Parks & Gardens Department

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SECTION 1

Executive Summary and Introduction



1.1 Executive Summary

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Section 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background to the Study

The City of Boroondara has 103 equipped playgrounds in public parks. These are audited regularly for safety on a cyclic basis and assessed annually for replacement. These playgrounds vary in age, style and design. Playgrounds represent a major investment by Council and an on-going maintenance commitment.

The Draft Playground Strategy provides Council with an analysis and overview of each of Council's 103 open space playgrounds with regard to key factors such as equitable geographic/demographic distribution, core levels of provision, playground classifications and functional design analysis. The Draft Playground Strategy also provides a detailed set of principles and guidelines for playground design, maintenance and public consultation including safety standards, accessibility, shade, landscape design, play value, fencing and amenities. It is envisaged that the Playground Strategy will be a working document from which a total playground management system would operate within the context of Council's Asset Management Plan.

Council has some specific issues that are of concern and has commissioned a Playground Strategy to address these. A specific concern was the need to Establish principles and policies about issues such as:

- Suitable playground classifications for each site,
- Core Levels of Provision for Local, District and Regional Playgrounds,
- Accessibility to children and adults with disabilities,
- Fencing, especially in relation to sites in which there is a dog-off-leash policy,
- Shade and amenities in play areas,
- Provision of age-appropriate play,
- Play value/qualities of settings and design themes,
- Rationale /process for establishing new playgrounds,
- Community Consultation processes,
- Safety and Standards,
- Management and Maintenance,
- Replacement Rationale.

This Strategy aims to improve the quality and accessibility of play opportunities and to establish a realistic set of policies to guide Council in future development and maintenance.



Process

- The Municipality was divided into precincts that determine the residential 'catchment' for each playground.
- Every playground was visited, classified and assessed.
- Maps and population data were analysed to obtain an overview of supply, demand and distribution of playgrounds.
- Recommendations were made for each site.

General guidelines for playground design and development are provided in Sections 3 and 4.

Findings

- There has been a lot of recent activity and new construction work at playground sites in the City of Boroondara.
- There is an excellent playground management system in place including auditing, maintenance and replacement.
- The majority of playgrounds comply with Australian Standards for playgrounds.
- The current replacement programme has reached a stage at which consideration should now be given to a strategic approach rather than a like-for-like replacement approach.
- Although parks are often beautiful settings, play area designs sometimes do not complement the park environment. They often lack landscape and non-equipment-based elements for play
- The designs are not always suitable for the intended age group.
- There are insufficient opportunities to develop imaginative and creative play.
- There is a consistent lack of available toilets in parks with playgrounds and those that are present and open are generally not accessible to people with disabilities.
- In spite of the large number of playgrounds, some residential areas are not well provided with play areas within their individual precincts.
- Not enough playgrounds are accessible to users with disabilities and many social settings such as picnic shelters and seats are also not accessible.
- There are very few shelters in parks.



Section 1.2 INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of Playgrounds

A playground is simply a place where children and their families and carers can play. For every society the context of that play will be different and the nature and purpose of the playground will differ. In this context we are discussing play out-of-doors, in public park settings.

In the past, purpose-built playgrounds were unnecessary as children's play needs were completely satisfied by unlimited access to their surrounding environment. As this has become more restricted in modern times, the provision of playgrounds has become a standard responsibility of local government.

Dilemmas

Councils are faced with many dilemmas associated with the provision of public playgrounds in parks. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the difficulty of genuinely meeting the play needs of a wide range of age groups in a public place, while at the same time ensuring that:

- playgrounds are visually acceptable to the local community and that,
- playgrounds neither expose users to injury nor the Provider to litigation.

Benefits of playgrounds and Play

The onerous nature of this responsibility has received much publicity in recent years. It has completely dominated more positive potential for discussions about the benefits of playgrounds to children and their families and how they should or could be designed, in order to meet best the needs of each local community.

This report aims to stimulate thinking, discussion and action about the provision for children's everyday play activities. It sets out to establish a set of basic guidelines that will ensure that public play areas:

- remain useful to children and families,
- remain realistic from Council's perspective,
- minimise the risk of injuries.

This report takes the position that children's play is important and that play is something in which it is worth investing.



Methodology

- All playgrounds in the City of Boroondara were visited, classified and assessed as part of this study.
- Public input was sought for the project, with information sessions and discussions with the community.
- Maps and population data were analysed, in order to establish a municipal overview of supply, demand and distribution of playgrounds.
- Recommendations were made in Section 2 of this report as to priority areas that lack access to playgrounds.
- Each site was analysed in detail. Site reports are found in Section 5 of this report (Volume 2)
- Some general guidelines for playground design and development are provided in Section 4 of this report.

Principles

This report recommends the equitable distribution of playgrounds in the Municipality. In some cases, this has meant recommending removal of playgrounds and not replacing them. In other cases it has meant proposing new playgrounds. In all cases, the following principles have guided our decision-making:

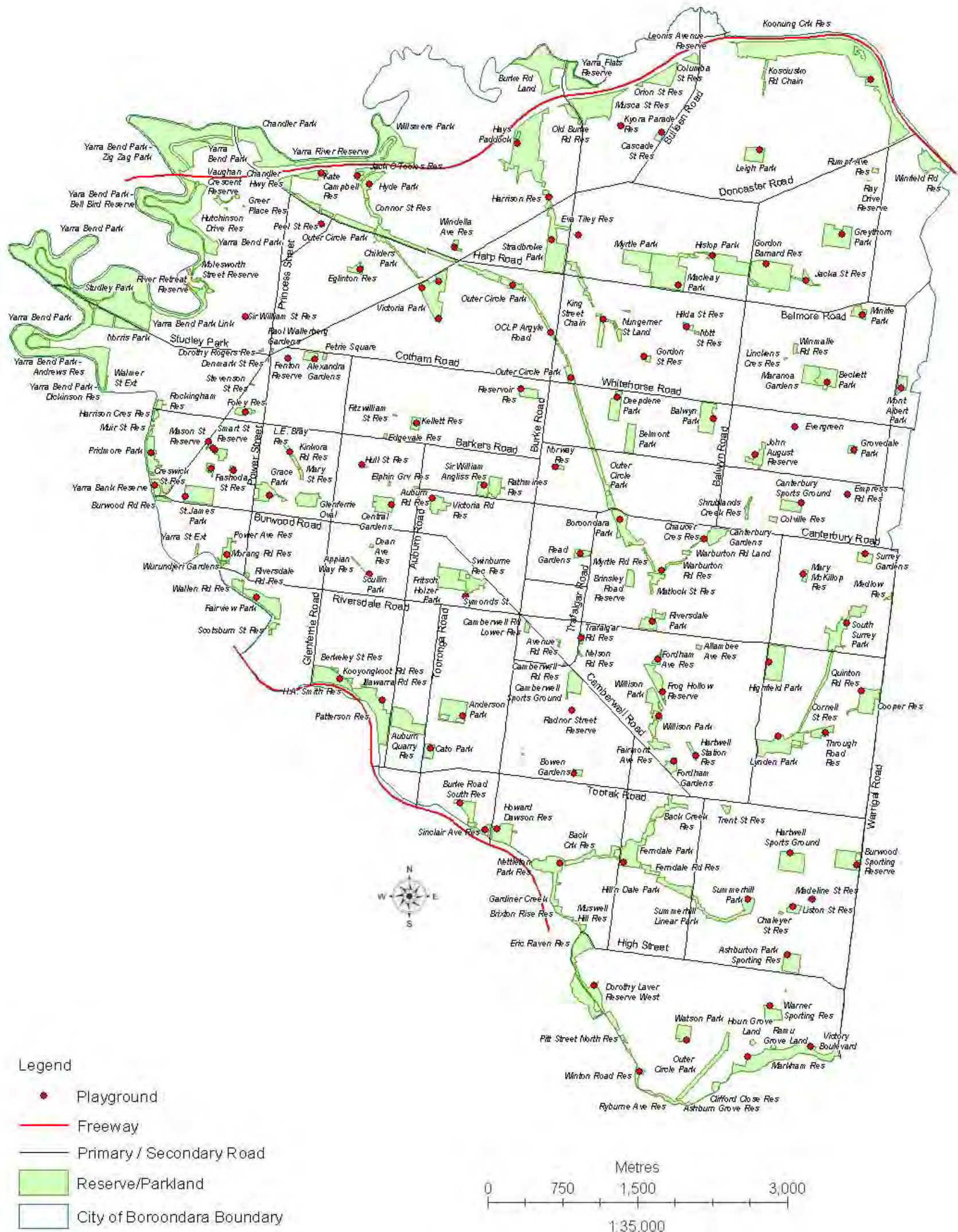
- One better quality playground is better than more than one poor or inadequate playground in the same area.
- Very small play areas with one or two pieces of equipment are generally not worth maintaining.
- The selection of the best location is critical and the best value will be obtained by siting playgrounds close to other community resources.
- New subdivisions may require the development of additional playgrounds. The location and design of these playgrounds needs to be carefully controlled.
- The presence of a public playground implies a certain underlying responsibility for safety by the provider/manager. Playgrounds should not be provided without a commitment to maintenance and on-going support.

Playgrounds are important because children are important and because play is of great significance in human development.

This report aims to improve the opportunities for play in the City of Boroondara.



Map 1
Location of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara



SECTION 2

Municipal Overview



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2.1. Demand for Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

This section discusses the demand for playgrounds as determined by the most recent ABS Census data (2001). In the next section, this information will be related to the distribution and accessibility (supply) of playgrounds.

Demand and Demographics

Demand for playgrounds is largely determined by the concentrations of children in the population, though it is also affected by the nature of housing, and family income. The higher the proportion of children in the population, the lower the income, and the more restricted the access to back yards and private recreation options, the more important it is that children and families have access within walking distance to quality parks, play areas and play opportunities.

It should also be noted, however that regardless of fluctuations in the population, a basic distribution of playgrounds across the municipality will always be required.

Concentrations of Children

In this study we have used ABS Census data (2001) and new birth statistics to provide a basic framework for understanding where the priorities lie, in terms of demand for playgrounds in the City of Boroondara.

This data was provided to us in the form of the City of Boroondara Community Profile [analysed by i.d. Profiles]. The information was supplied with the percentages of children as a proportion of the population already broken down into age groups as follows:

- 0-4 years
- 5-11 years, and
- 12-17 years.

These age brackets are useful as they reflect stages of schooling. The percentage of children in each of these age groups, for each suburb, has been compared with the overall population of the Municipality as a whole.

This data is organised by suburb for general planning purposes. Eleven suburban areas were used. See Map 2.

See also Table 1 and Map 3.

2004

It should be noted that this report was prepared in 2004. The Census data is now three years old. Children who were aged 12-17 in 2001 are now aged 15-20 years. The most useful indicators are therefore the younger cohorts, who are now aged three to seven and eight to 14 respectively.



Map 2
City of Boroondara
Location of Suburbs According to Community Profile

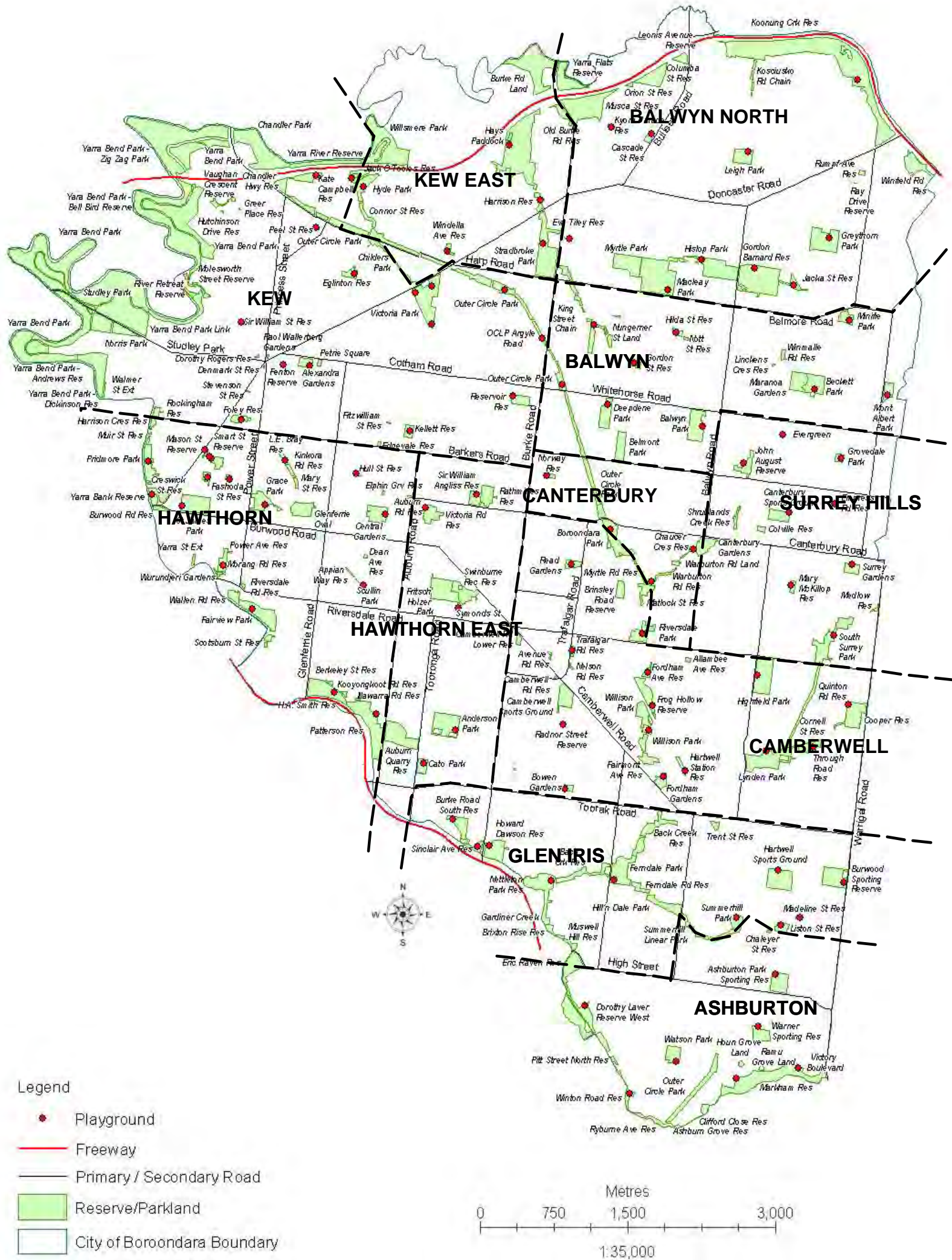


Table 1 DEMAND for PLAYGROUNDS ACCORDING to DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

CHILDREN AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION (2001), BY SUBURB¹ Compared with the average for the whole Municipality Includes 2011 Population projections for 0 to 4 Age Group, by Suburb									
Suburb [numbered in order of priority, according to demand]	% of pop'n aged 0 to 4 years			% of pop'n aged 5-11yrs			% of pop'n aged 12 -17 yrs		
	Suburb	City of Boroondara	Difference	Suburb	City of Boroondara	Difference	Suburb	City of Boroondara	Difference
1. Glen Iris 2001 2011 projection ²	6.9 5.7	5.3	1.6	9.9	8.7	1.2	8.5	8.2	0.3
1. Surrey Hills 2001 2011 projection	6.4 5.2	5.3	1.1	11.1	8.7	2.4	9.9	8.2	1.7
1. Ashburton 2001 2011 projection	6.9 6.1	5.3	1.6	10.3	8.7	1.6	7.6	8.2	-0.6
2. Canterbury 2001 2011 projection	5.2 5.2	5.3	-0.1	10.0	8.7	1.3	9.8	8.2	1.6
2. Kew East 2001 2011 projection	7.0 5.3	5.3	1.7	9.3	8.7	0.6	6.8	8.2	-1.4
2. Camberwell 2001 2011 projection	5.6 4.8	5.3	0.3	9.2	8.7	0.5	8.7	8.2	0.5
3. Balwyn 2001 2011 projection	4.7 4.9	5.3	-0.6	9.3	8.7	0.6	9.4	8.2	1.2
3. Balwyn North 2001 2011 projection	5.1 5.3	5.3	-0.2	9.6	8.7	0.9	9.5	8.2	1.3
3. Hawthorn East 2001 2011 projection	5.7 5.3	5.3	0.4	7.3	8.7	-1.4	6.2	8.2	-2
4. Hawthorn 2001 2011 projection	4.5 4.0	5.3	-0.8	5.7	8.7	-3	6.3	8.2	-1.9
4. Kew 2001 2011 projection	4.5 3.9	5.3	-0.8	7.8	8.7	-0.9	7.9	8.2	-0.3

¹ Source: Profile.ID www.id.com.au Boroondara Community Profile 2001 and 1996 Census

² Source <http://www.id.com.au/boroondara/forecastid/default.asp?id=108&gid=10&pg=10>



The Importance of Retaining the Open Space Network

As population dynamics shift, a suburb which may be ageing at present will eventually be renewed, and a whole new generation of children will emerge.

For this reason it is vital that the investment in parks and open space must always be protected, for those future generations. Having a relatively low population of children does not mean that Council should divest itself of any parks or open space.

Whether or not a playground is located on a particular site will be determined by policies at any particular time in history, but we consider it vital to protect the parks themselves.

In some cases we have recommended removal of a play area we consider to be unnecessary. We do not at any time suggest that the park itself is unnecessary.

Establishing Priorities

As mentioned above, this data is only one method of establishing where areas of demand lie. We have used it, along with supply and distribution information, to establish:

- which suburbs take priority in seeking out new spaces for new play areas (due to a shortage of play spaces)
- where it is most urgent to consider the needs of children of particular age groups, and
- which playgrounds should be upgraded first, when this is required.

Interpretation

This demographic information has been used to roughly determine the demand for playground provision in each suburb, based upon concentrations of children in local populations.

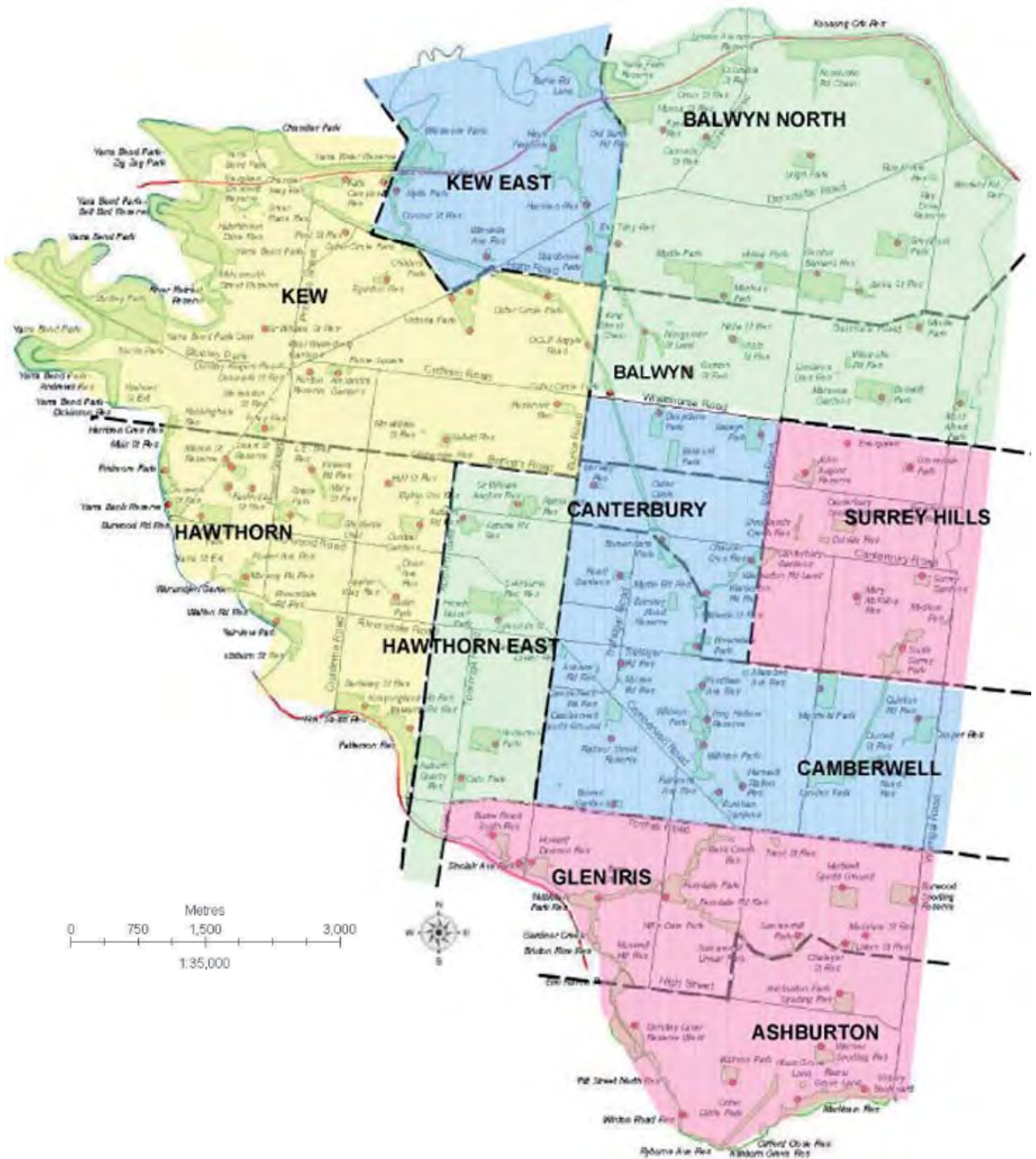
For each suburb, the percentage of each age group in that suburb's population has been compared with the percentage in that age group for the whole municipality.

Areas with higher-than-average percentages, especially over all three age cohorts, are described as higher demand, and this factor has been considered in allocating priorities for playground provision.

Note that in the final allocation of priority to the playground sites, other factors will be also considered, such as the quality and distribution of other playgrounds in the precinct.



Map 3 City of Boroondara Demand for Play Area Provision According to Concentrations of Children



LEGEND: Demand for playgrounds, based on number of children as a percentage of the population



1.



3.



2.



4.

Demand for playgrounds shaded according to priority from 1 - Highest priority through to 4. - Lowest priority.

Refer to Table 1 (Page 7) for actual demographic data, broken down by suburb.

2.2 Physical Distribution of Playgrounds

Distribution and Demand

This section analyses the distribution of playgrounds across the municipality and considers this information in the light of the demand information discussed above. Only 'formal' [as in equipped] public play grounds managed by Council are considered. Map 1 shows the location of playgrounds.

Access to Playgrounds - Principles

Given that there is a limit to the number of playgrounds which can realistically be provided and managed by Council, the following location principles assist Council to decide where playgrounds should be located to ensure the most equitable distribution.

- Residents should ideally have access to a playground within walking distance from home.
- 400 to 500m is considered a reasonable walking distance. This is widely accepted in Australia. In some areas this may not be achievable, but this is a general goal
- Barriers such as busy roads and railway lines need to be taken into account as they can prevent access to playgrounds by children. As children grow older, they are expected to gain more independence, travelling by bicycle or on foot, but crossing busy roads is a major barrier to this independent movement.
- This municipality has a large number of very busy roads. These roads form the precincts discussed below.

Local Precincts.

The City of Boroondara has been divided into a number of smaller local geographic areas separated by the major barriers such as roads, rivers or railway lines. For the purposes of this study these areas have been referred to as local precincts. These boundaries are shown on Map 4 and the precincts have been numbered.

See Map 4 Local Precincts



Map 4 City of Boroondara Boundaries of Local Precincts



Refer to Legend on following page.

A detailed discussion of the above precincts is located in section 5 (Volume 2) of this report.

Map 4 - Boundaries of Local Precincts : Legend

Precinct 1	Studley Park	Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury
Precinct 2	Kew	Precinct 25	Hawthorn
Precinct 3	Kew East	Precinct 26	Hawthorn
Precinct 4	Bellevue	Precinct 27	Hawthorn
Precinct 5	Balwyn North	Precinct 28	Hawthorn
Precinct 6	North Balwyn	Precinct 29	Hawthorn/Camberwell
Precinct 7	Kew East	Precinct 30	Hawthorn/Camberwell
Precinct 8	Balwyn	Precinct 31	Canterbury
Precinct 9	Greythorn	Precinct 32	Canterbury
Precinct 10	Greythorn	Precinct 33	Hawthorn
Precinct 11	Kew	Precinct 34	Hawthorn
Precinct 12	Balwyn	Precinct 35	Hawthorn East
Precinct 13	Balwyn	Precinct 35A	Hawthorn East
Precinct 13A	Mont Albert	Precinct 36	Camberwell
Precinct 14	Kew	Precinct 37	Camberwell
Precinct 15	Kew	Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell
Precinct 15A	Kew	Precinct 39	Camberwell
Precinct 16	Kew	Precinct 40	Glen Iris
Precinct 17	Deepdene/Canterbury	Precinct 41	Glen Iris
Precinct 18	Surrey Hills	Precinct 42	Glen Iris
Precinct 19	Hawthorn/Yarra	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood
Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	Precinct 44	Ashburton West
Precinct 21	Hawthorn	Precinct 45	Ashburton East
Precinct 22	Hawthorn		
Precinct 23	Hawthorn East		



Definition of 'Precinct'

A precinct is a residential catchment for local playgrounds. The boundaries for precincts are roads or barriers which make movement outside the precinct difficult for children.

Analysis

The demand information, such as concentrations of children, and the distribution information discussed above, can be used to establish:

- how well the parks are distributed across the municipality, in relation to residential areas, and in particular to concentrated populations of children
- which local precincts are well served by playgrounds, and which are without access to playgrounds.

It can also be used to establish:

- which playgrounds, if any, are unnecessary
- which local precincts are under-supplied with playgrounds.

This information has been used in the overall analysis and in individual site reports to determine actions and priorities for individual sites and precincts.

Allocating Priorities

There are 103 playgrounds in the City of Boroondara. Some need replacement, and many others have been identified in this report as in need of some modifications, upgrading, or change.

Clearly these cannot all be addressed at once. We take the following into account when allocating priority to a particular reserve:

- urgent safety issues
- supply information, such as whether a particular residential area has access to any play areas locally
- how many other alternatives there are, within any particular precinct, for play for children of various ages and abilities
- the quality and nature of the local options, if any
- demand information- such as whether there is a high proportion of children in the local population.



2.3. Classification of Parks and Playgrounds

Playgrounds, like parks and open space, can be classified according to their position in a hierarchy which takes into account:

- the size and nature of the playground
- the range of attractions it offers
- the function of the park and playground in the community
- the level of facilities and amenities provided
- the distance people are likely to travel. This is defined as the catchment
- the duration of visits
- the need for car parking, toilets, and the capacity of the immediate neighbourhood to absorb visitors.

It is important that the level of development is appropriate to the classification, especially for Local parks, where over-developed sites may attract visitors from further afield and create parking and other problems to local residents.

On the other hand it is important that a District or Regional park offers adequate facilities to match the level of that park in the hierarchy.

For the purposes of planning, parks with playgrounds have been classified as:

- Pocket
- Local
- District, and
- Regional.

Each of the terms used is explained in the following Section. Each classification comes with a set of benchmarks for design general planning playgrounds within parks. Playgrounds are not used in isolation but within the context of a whole park system. Section 3.3 outlines a set of core activities specifically for design of playgrounds.



Pocket playgrounds

- These are often the sites which have just one swing, or a pair of spring animals.
- They are often an historical anomaly, left over from an earlier period.
- They are often located on very small reserves which are not typically large enough to provide the full range of social/recreation functions that a full sized park or playground offers.
- These sites often have a very important function as green space, visual amenity and perhaps as a sitting space.
- They cater mainly for local residents, within walking and cycling distance of their homes, and usually offer, at best, the opportunity of a quick swing en-route to somewhere else.
- Because a playground comes with an implied commitment to maintenance and legal liability, we do not consider that playground equipment is usually appropriate in such settings.
- Occasionally, we have recommended retention of such playgrounds when there is a serious shortage of alternative options.



Local Parks and Playgrounds

- These cater mainly for local residents within walking and cycling distance of their homes, and are unlikely to attract visitors who do not live in the immediate surrounds.
- Their function is typically described as social/family recreation.
- Visits are likely to be of short duration, with the expectation that visitors will not require car parking, toilets or BBQ facilities, although shade, tables and seats will always be valuable.
- These parks are very important. For children old enough to walk or cycle to playgrounds independently, these could fulfil a very important role, providing extended space for the kinds of activities often played in the back yard. For children without access to quality backyard play, these parks are needed to make up for this lack of private space. Parks linked by off-road trails allow older children to gradually expand their territory safely.
- The design of local playgrounds needs to offer some flexibility to cater for a good range of local play opportunities which can be adaptable for children's needs as they grow. This is unlikely to be achieved through reliance on a small collection of fixed play equipment which children simply operate as if play is simply a mechanical set of movements.
- The types of environments which offer the best value for children's play tend to be those which:
 - stimulate the imagination
 - facilitate interaction between children with a fantasy element(determined by the children)
 - allow children to 'borrow' loose materials from the environment (leaves and twigs, sand, pebbles, etc), and
 - use natural features such as planting, trees, logs, and landform to complement the built playground structures.
- Combinations of built structures and free choice 'loose' landscapes and materials can provide the best of both worlds.



BENCHMARKS FOR THE DESIGN OF LOCAL PLAYGROUNDS

- The level of facilities will vary, but barbecues, car parking and toilets are not expected.
- Sites are likely to be smaller than for other parks. Minimum size recommended not less than 0.75ha. Parks smaller than this often have difficulty providing adequately for the social /family recreation which is their main function. The use of smaller parks needs to be justified by a lack of alternative open space in that catchment.
- Access for people with disabilities to the site, into the park and to some play equipment is important, but full accessibility will not always be achievable or feasible.
- The level of development, and the target age group will vary from site to site.
- The whole local precinct needs to be considered as a 'package', in which no single park necessarily caters for everyone, but within the local precinct there will ideally be a good choice of facilities for different user groups.
- A choice of seats, shade and shelter is important.



District Playgrounds

- Are used by families and children who visit these sites from further afield, usually travelling by car.
- Are possibly accessed by bike, along one of the many linear trails which this municipality is fortunate to have.
- May often be connected with sporting fixtures.
- May need to sustain play activities for some visitors for longer periods of time than local play areas.
- Provide a playground as part of the reserve but the playground is not its primary function.
- Will also function as a local playground for families living near them.

PRIMARY DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN DISTRICT AND LOCAL PLAYGROUNDS

- People will travel further from home to use the park and its playground.
- People will generally spend more time in District Parks.
- There are other attractions at the reserve.

BENCHMARKS FOR THE DESIGN OF DISTRICT PLAYGROUNDS

- The 'package' of attractions is an important feature.
- A more detailed approach to the design of the whole site is expected than for Local Parks.
- Play areas need to cater for all age groups.
- Disabled access will be required to all facilities and to a good range of play activities.
- Visits will be longer than for a local playground. Toilets, picnic / BBQ facilities, and shade/shelter will therefore most likely be required, depending upon the site.
- Car parking will be required.



Regional Parks and Playgrounds

- Attract visitors from across the municipality or from outside the municipality.
- Typically offer a special attraction or variety of attractions, one of which could be a unique major playground.
- Are typically located on a large site with some unique landscape feature/s or man made attraction.
- Typically offer a larger range of activities than a District or Local Park.
- Visits to these sites will be expected to be of at least some hours' duration, and a range of amenities will be expected to provide for these longer visits.
- Sites which are accessible via public transport or cycle paths are preferred.

BENCHMARKS FOR THE DESIGN OF PLAYGROUNDS WITHIN REGIONAL PARKS

- High quality facilities.
- Targeted at all ages.
- All facilities and most play activities accessible to children and adults with a range of disabilities.
- The unique character of the site will be reflected in the design.
- The site will offer sufficient interest to attract visitors for longer duration stay.
- Accessible car parking, toilets, shade/ shelter etc. are mandatory.



2.4. An Effective Open Space/Playground System

Section 3 of this report contains some guidelines for locating parks and playgrounds. Some key points are repeated below, because they have been fundamental in appraising the distribution of playgrounds in this municipality and they underlie some of the conclusions made in this section.

An Open Space System

- Parks and playgrounds which form part of an open space system and which are linked by off-road trails or paths tend to provide better value than isolated parks, and allow children to safely expand their territories by bicycle or on foot. The City of Boroondara is fortunate in having many such links.

Urban Design

- The relationship between the street layout and parks is very important
- Poor street layout causes permanent planning problems and great expense to Councils attempting to improve access to open space.

Prominence

- To maximise usage, a playground has to be easily seen by passers-by.
- Parks that face the fronts of houses tend to be better used and to have fewer incidents of vandalism.
- Narrow frontages to parks, and battleaxe blocks surrounded by rear fences should be avoided.

Avoid Exclusivity

- The relationship between parks and the street layout should maximise the number of residences which feel 'ownership'
- Parks which join up small courts, or link the rear and sides of house blocks, are often treated as an extension of private yards for the few who back onto them, to the exclusion of others.
- Avoid the 'dress circle' (one row of houses which completely surrounds a park), or one small court or group of courts opening exclusively onto a park.



Security

- Informal surveillance from passers-by and neighbours reduces vandalism.
- Playgrounds should be sited on prominent sites so that views into and across the park can be generally maintained.

Access

- Accessibility generally, and specifically to children and to users with disabilities, is important. As a bare minimum, there must be a path system to the park, into the park, through the park and to any facilities.

Size

- One large interesting park is more valuable than many small pieces of unusable open space. A very small park cannot provide the range of play opportunities that is required. This is not an argument to dispose of tiny parks, but is a guide for future development.

Diversity

- Mown grass and play equipment do not, on their own, provide an adequate range of play experiences for urban children who do not have access to alternatives for play.
- Parks need more variation in their landscape qualities, to allow for the needs of children.



2.5 Accessibility to Parks and Playgrounds for People with Disabilities across the Municipality

Introduction

More details on this subject are included in the Principles and Policies Section 3 of this report. However, the subject is introduced here as it is an important planning issue, as well as a design issue.

Council should aim to achieve a reasonable geographic distribution of playgrounds that are accessible to children and adults with disabilities. The degree of accessibility expected varies, depending upon the importance of the site. The implications of this aim are discussed below.

Local Parks

These parks and playgrounds are not expected to have as sophisticated a level of accessibility but the parks themselves need to be accessible from the street. It is also important that people with disabilities can access seating/shade areas conveniently, supervise their children, access play areas and participate in at least a selection of play activities.

Different local parks within a precinct or group of precincts might, between them, offer a choice of different accessible play options.

District Playgrounds

These parks are expected to have seamless access into and around the park, accessible car parking, fully accessible toilets, shelters, pavilions, picnicking and other facilities and a choice of accessible play activities.

See Table 2 for the classification of play areas.

Regional Playgrounds

These would be expected to offer the same degree of accessibility as District parks, but with more purpose built accessible options for play.

More information about the design of playgrounds that are accessible for people with disabilities is found in the Guidelines in Section 4 of this report

.



2.6 Conclusions and Recommendations Regarding the Location and Distribution of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

Each playground will be discussed in detail in Section 5 with specific recommendations for that site. However, some brief observations related to the overview of demand, supply and location information, from the previous sections, are summarised below.

Demand and Supply

This section summarises the municipality in the five major geographic zones. For each of these, a map and a legend are included, showing:

- each precinct, numbered
- each playground
- proposed classification
- areas within each precinct which are estimated at more than 500m from a playground.

A brief overview is then included which outlines some of the primary issues affecting that geographic zone.

The municipality was divided into 5 major geographic zones. These are based on existing divisions used for social planning in the City of Boroondara and for analysis of census data. This was useful to analyse demand and supply data for playgrounds and each zone represents a logical grouping of precincts.

There are five zones:-

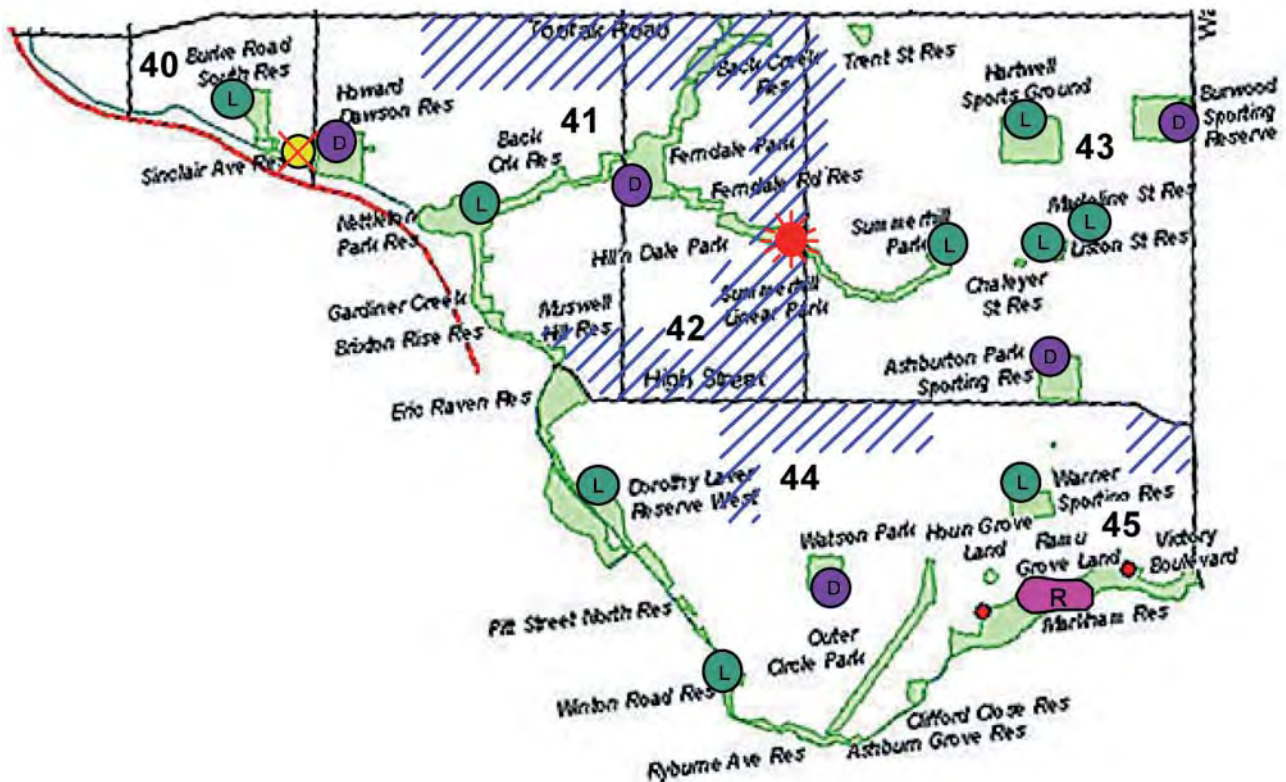
Southern Zone
Central East Zone
Central Western
North Western
North Eastern

A map of each has been included in the following pages. A table summarising the proposed classification for every reserve is also included, on page 34.












SOUTHERN ZONE (South of Toorak Road)

Ashburton and Glen Iris - Precincts 40, 41, 42, 43, 44 and 45



MAP 5- Overview of Southern Zone

LEGEND: Proposed Classification of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

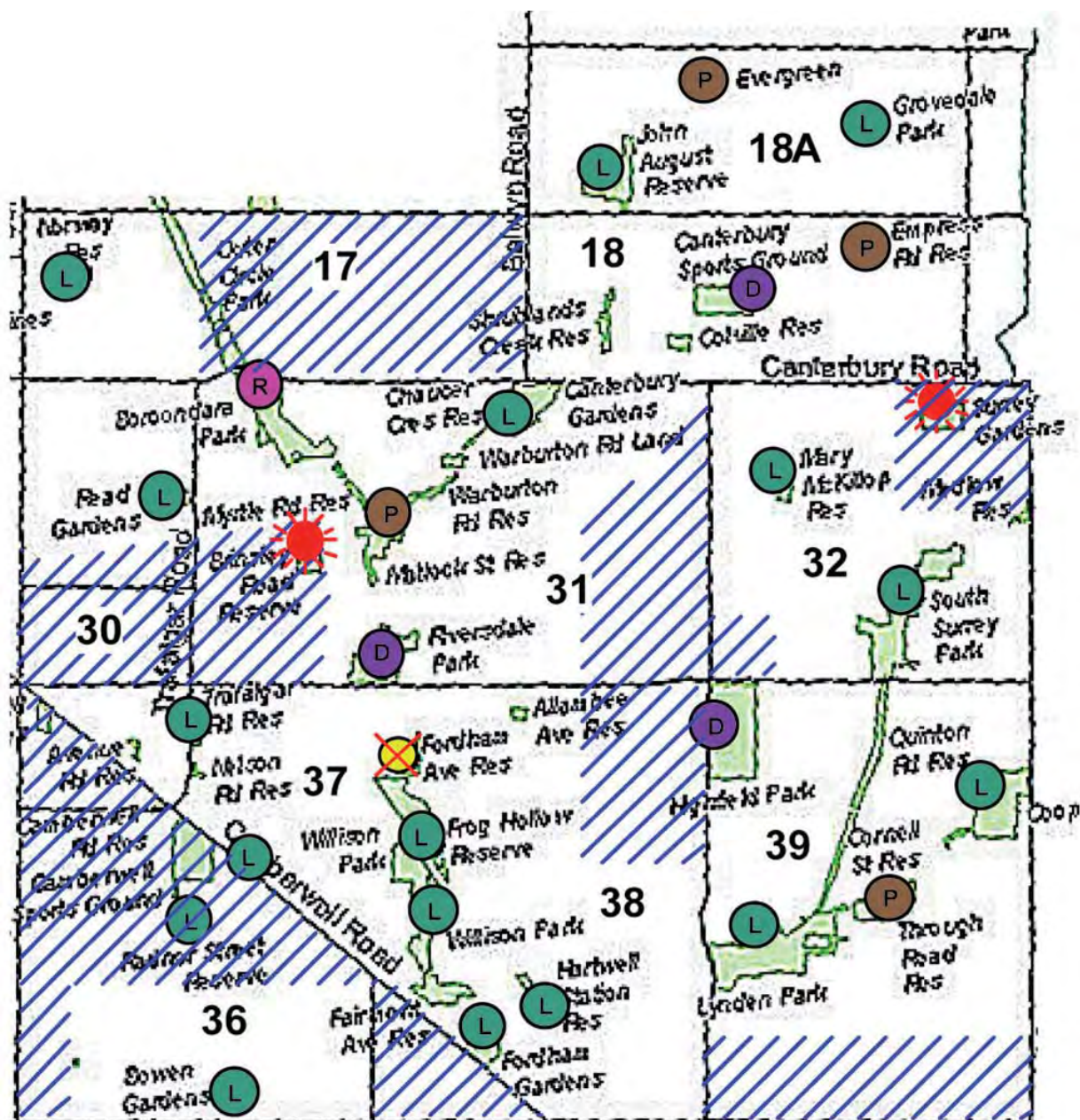
- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  New Playground site |  Regional Playground |  Pocket Playground |
|  Playground proposed for removal |  District Playground |  Amalgamated Playground |
|  Areas more than approx. 500M from a play area |  Local Playground |  School Grounds - To be approached re sharing facilities |

Overview of the Southern Zone

- These suburbs have higher than average proportions of children in the population and are considered, to be areas of high priority for playground provision.
- Playgrounds in Ashburton are well distributed
- There are some parts of Glen Iris where residents do not have access to a playground within 500m
- As this is a high demand area, we recommend consideration of a new playground on the creek reserve, somewhere in the vicinity of Hill'n Dale Park.
- We recommend upgrading four sites to a District Playground classification:
 - Burwood Reserve,
 - Ashburton Park,
 - Watson Park,
 - Ferndale Park.
- These four sites were selected because on each site there is the potential to use existing public toilets during daylight hours and the proximity of other facilities such as sports fields that already have public access, barbecues and parking.
- We recommend that the pocket playground at Sinclair Avenue Reserve should be removed due to the close proximity of a local playground, in the same park system, at Burke Road South Reserve.
- We recommend that Markham Reserve and Victory Boulevard Reserve playgrounds should be amalgamated to form a regional playground.












CENTRAL EASTERN ZONE (Mont Albert/Whitehorse Rd, East of Burke Rd) Surrey Hills, Camberwell, and Canterbury - Precincts 17,18A,18,24,30,31,32,36,37,38,39



MAP 6- Overview of Central Eastern Zone

LEGEND: Proposed Classification of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  New Playground site |  Regional Playground |  Pocket Playground |
|  Playground proposed for removal |  District Playground |  Amalgamated Playground |
|  Areas more than approx. 500M from a play area |  Local Playground |  School Grounds - To be approached re sharing facilities |

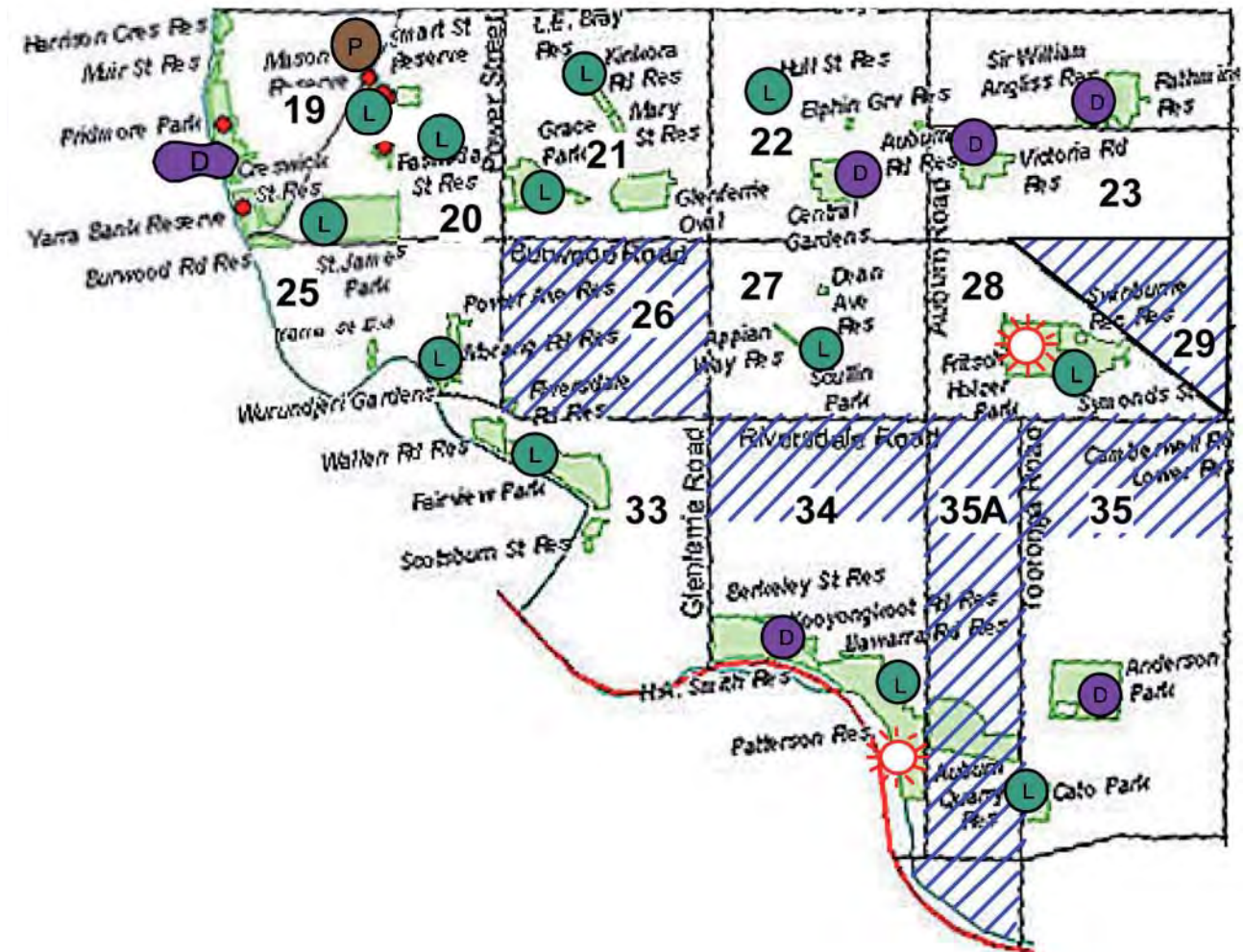
Overview of the Central Eastern Zone

Surrey Hills is a High demand/Priority 1 Precinct according to demographic data. Canterbury and Camberwell are Priority 2 Precincts.

- There are a number of areas within these zones that do not have access to play areas. As Precinct 30 contains no play areas at all, we recommend that a new play area be considered for Brinsley Road Reserve. This would require further investigation and community consultation.
- We recommend removing the single swing at Fordham Avenue Reserve.
- We recommend upgrading Highfield Park, Canterbury Sports Ground and Riversdale Park to district classification playgrounds.
- We recommend upgrading Boroondara Park to a Regional classification playground.
- Although there is no playground within 500m of in the northern section of precinct 36. A playground is not recommended for Camberwell Sports Ground due to the shortage of available open space, combined with the potential hazard from balls struck out of the field of play.












CENTRAL WESTERN ZONE (Barkers Rd to Toorak Rd, West of Burke Rd) Hawthorn and Hawthorn East - Precincts 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 35, 35A



MAP 7- Overview of Central Western Zone

LEGEND: Proposed Classification of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  New Playground site |  Regional Playground |  Pocket Playground |
|  Playground proposed for removal |  District Playground |  Amalgamated Playground |
|  Areas more than approx. 500M from a play area |  Local Playground |  School Grounds - To be approached re sharing facilities |

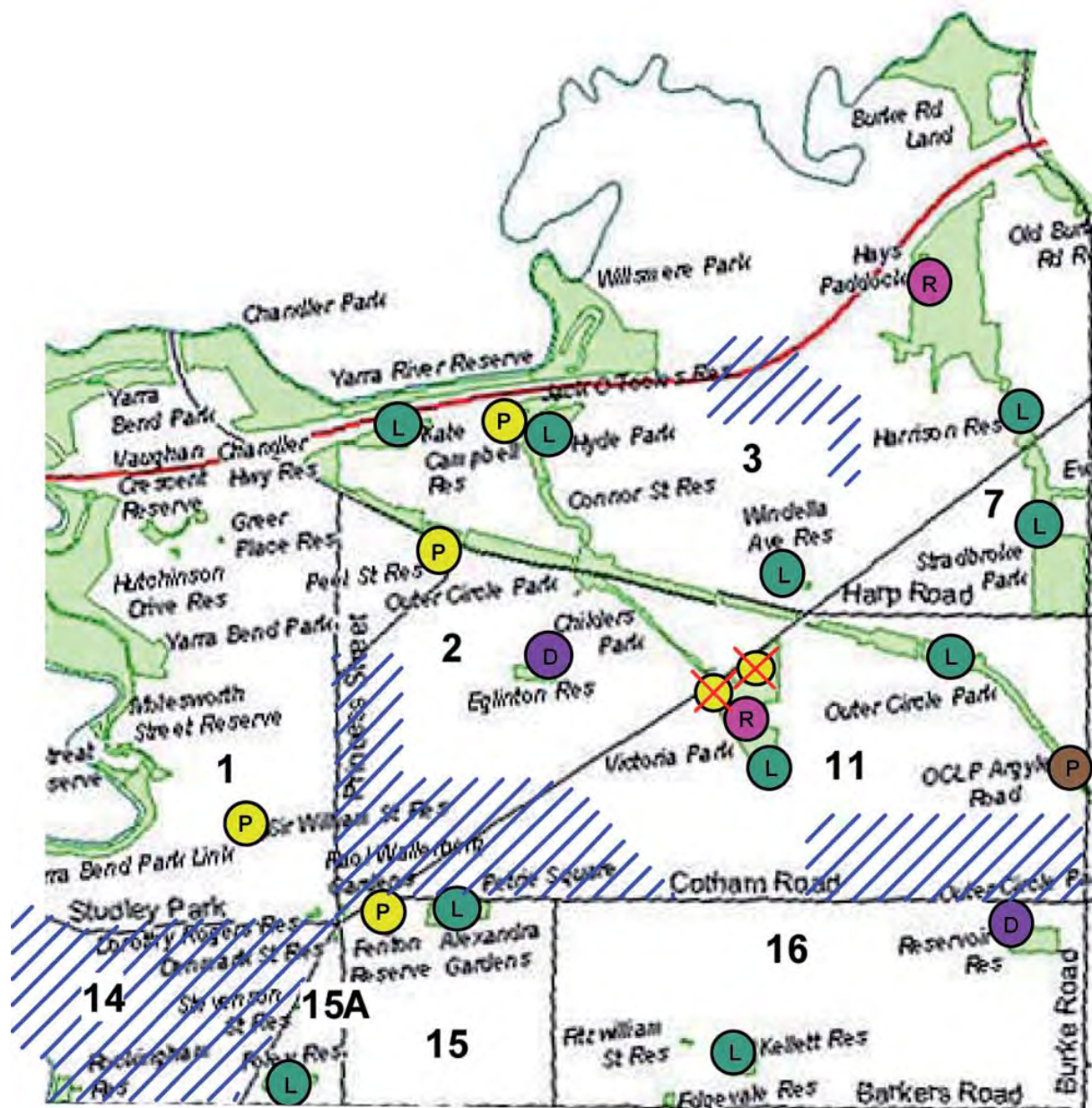
Overview of the Central Western Zone

- Hawthorn is classified as Priority 4 and Hawthorn East as Priority 3, based on demographic data indicating that these areas are below-City averages for children's age groups as a percentage of the population.
- A basic framework of parks and playgrounds is nonetheless required.
- The following playgrounds have been suggested for amalgamation:
 - Pridmore Park Playground and Yarra Bank Reserve Playground to be consolidated into a District classification play ground, at the southern end of Pridmore Park.
- Five playgrounds are recommended for classification as District playgrounds in this Zone:
 - Anderson Park,
 - Central Gardens,
 - Sir William Angliss/Rathmines Reserve,
 - Pridmore / Yarra Bank Reserve
 - H.A Smith Reserve.
- It is recommended that a Regional classification playground be considered at Fritsch Holzer Reserve that caters for children of all abilities.
- There remain some sizable residential areas in this zone that do not have access to playgrounds. In view of the demographic data, the need to address this is not as urgent as in other zones.












NORTH WESTERN ZONE (Cotham Road to Burke Road)

Kew, Kew East - Precincts 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 14, 15, 15A, 16



MAP 8- Overview of North Western Zone

LEGEND: Proposed Classification of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  New Playground site |  Regional Playground |  Pocket Playground |
|  Playground proposed for removal |  District Playground |  Amalgamated Playground |
|  Areas more than approx. 500M from a play area |  Local Playground |  School Grounds - To be approached re sharing facilities |

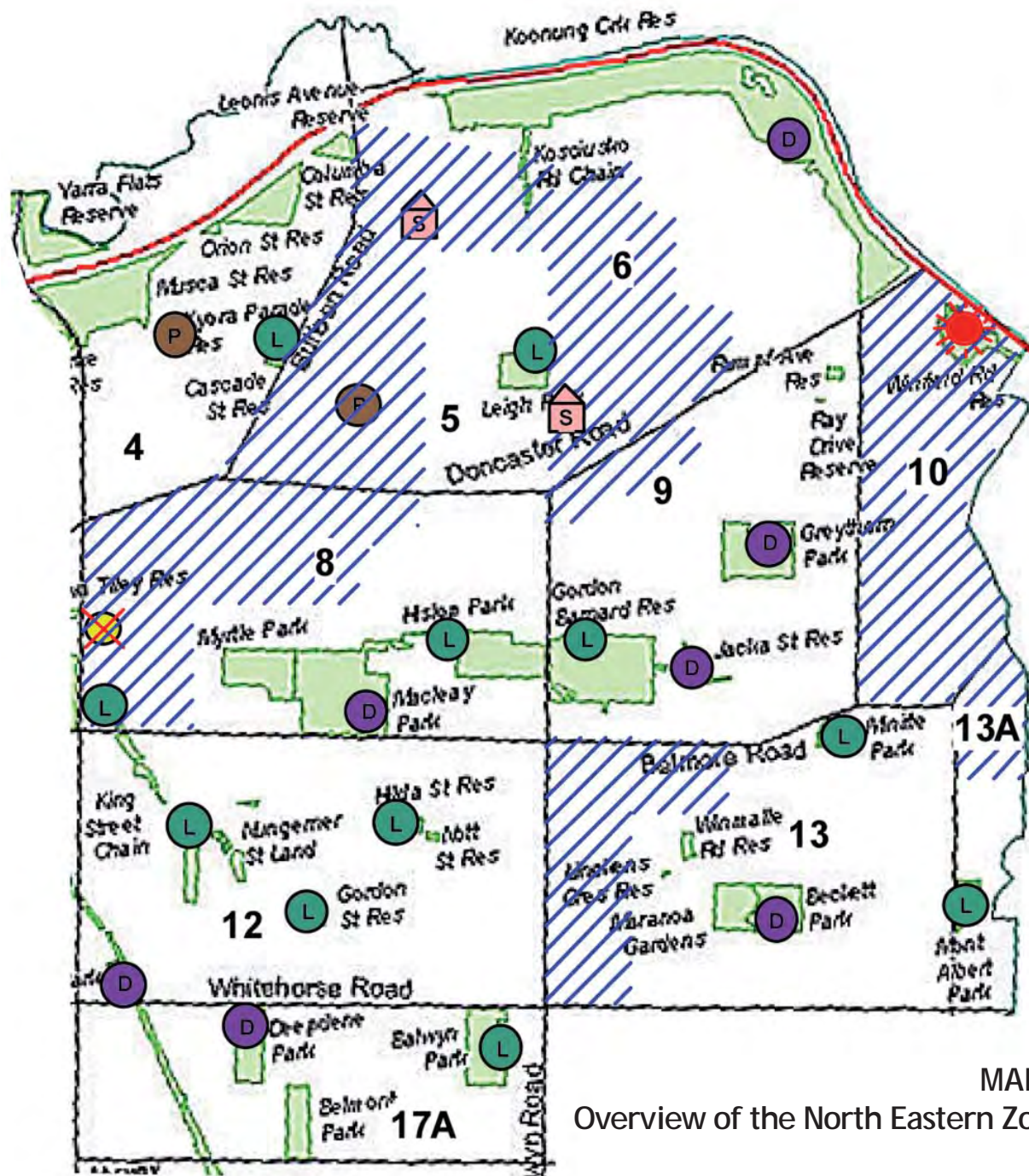
Overview of the North Western Zone

- In spite of an abundance of open space located along the river, some precincts within this zone are deficient in playgrounds.
- Precinct 14 has one playground managed by Parks Victoria in Dickinson Reserve and Precinct 1 has only one very small, pocket playground.
- Based on demographic data, Kew is a low, Priority 4 zone for playground provision and no other siting options are obvious. We recommend that the City of Boroondara works in conjunction with Parks Victoria in order to investigate the construction of a Playground at Wills Street Picnic Area.
- Kew East is a Priority 2 zone, given the numbers of young children. Fortunately, the distribution of play spaces here is good except for the central north section, between Hays Paddock and Hyde Park. Given there are few other options, it is important to upgrade Windella Avenue Reserve playground into a larger play space.
- We recommend that Eglinton and Reservoir Reserves should be classified as District classification playgrounds.
- Hay's Paddock is already considered to be a Regional attraction.
- We recommend that two playgrounds at Victoria Park be consolidated into a distinctive, new, Regional playground and that a local playground be retained at the Park Hill Road end of the park.



NORTH EASTERN ZONE (East of Balwyn Road)










Balwyn, North Balwyn - Precincts 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 13A, 17A



MAP 9

Overview of the North Eastern Zone

LEGEND: Proposed Classification of Playgrounds in the City of Boroondara

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  New Playground site |  Regional Playground |  Pocket Playground |
|  Playground proposed for removal |  District Playground |  Amalgamated Playground |
|  Areas more than approx. 500M from a play area |  Local Playground |  School Grounds - To be approached re sharing facilities |

Overview of the North Eastern Zone

- Both these suburbs have been classified as Priority 3 areas for playground provision. Both have a higher-than-average percentage of older children, though the older of these is now more than 15 years old.
- There are some large areas without access to any playgrounds such as the whole of Precinct 10 and large parts of Precincts 5, 6 and 13.
- As this is an area with a higher than average percentage of older children, we recommend installing two new local playgrounds at Winmalee Road Reserve and Winfield Road Reserve.
- We recommend reclassifying Koonung Creek Reserve playground to a District playground.
- We recommend reclassifying the playground at Macleay Reserve to a District playground to complement the recently completed netball facilities.



TABLE 2 ALPHABETICAL LIST OF RESERVES, PRECINCTS, & PROPOSED CLASSIFICATION

Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
Alexandra Gardens	North Western	15	Local	Local
Anderson Park	Central Western	35	Local	District
Ashburton Park	Southern	43	Local	Local
Balwyn Park	North Eastern	17A	Local	District
Beckett Park	North Eastern	13	District	Regional
Boroondara Park	Central Eastern	24	District	Regional
Bowen Gardens	Central Eastern	36	Local	Local
Brinsley Road Reserve	Central Eastern	30	-	Proposed local
Burke Road South Reserve	Southern	40	Local	Local
Burwood Reserve	Southern	43	Local	Proposed District
Canterbury Sports Ground	Central Eastern	18	District	District
Cascade Park	North Eastern	4	Local	Local
Cato Park	Central Western	35	Local	Local
Central Gardens	Central Western	22	District	District
Chaucer Crescent /Canterbury Gardens	Central Eastern	24	Local	Local
Cooper Reserve	Central Eastern	39	Local	Local
Deepdene Park	North Eastern	17A	District	District
Dorothy Laver Reserve (Saxby Rd)	Southern	44	Local	Local



Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
Eglinton Reserve	North Western	2	District	District
Empress Road Reserve	Central Eastern	18	Pocket	Pocket
Eva Tilley Reserve	North Eastern	8	Pocket	Remove
Evergreen Reserve	North Eastern	18A	Pocket	Pocket
Fairview Park	Central Western	33	Local	District
Fashoda St Reserve	Central Western	20	Pocket	Pocket
Fenton Reserve	North Western	15	Pocket	Pocket
Ferndale Park	Southern	42	District	District
Foley Reserve	North Western	15A	Local	Local
Fordham Avenue Reserve	Central Eastern	38	Pocket	Remove
Fordham Gardens	Central Eastern	37	Local	Local
Fritsch Holzer Reserve	Central Western	28	-	Proposed Regional
Frog Hollow Reserve	Central Eastern	38	Local	Local
Gordon Barnard Reserve	North Eastern	9	Local	Local
Gordon Street Reserve	North Eastern	12	Local	Local
Grace Park	Central Western	21	Local	Local
Greythorn Park	North Eastern	9	District	District
Grovedale Reserve	Central Eastern	18A	Local	Local
H. A.Smith Reserve	Central Western	34	District	District



Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
Harrison Reserve	North Western	3	Local	Local
Hartwell Sports Ground	Southern	43	Local	Local
Hartwell Station Reserve	Central Eastern	38	Local	Local
Hays Paddock	North Western	3	Regional	Regional
Highfield Park	Central Eastern	39	District	District
Hilda Street Reserve	North Eastern	12	Local	Local
Hislop Park	North Eastern	8	Local	Local
Howard Dawson Reserve	Southern	41	District	District
Hull Street Reserve	Central Western	22	Local	Local
Hyde Park	North Western	3	Local	Local
Jack O'Toole Reserve	North Western	3	Pocket	Pocket
Jacka Street Reserve	North Eastern	9	Local	Local
John August Reserve	Central Eastern	18A	Local	Local
Kate Campbell Reserve	North Western	3	Local	Local
Kellett Reserve	North Western	16	Local	Local
King Street Chain	North Eastern	12	Local	Local
King Street Reserve North - Belmore to Burke	North Eastern	8	-	Proposed Local
Koonung Creek Reserve	North Eastern	6	Local	District
Kyora Parade Reserve	North Eastern	4	Pocket	Pocket



Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
L. E. Bray Reserve	Central Western	21	Local	Local
Leigh Park	North Eastern	5	Local	Local
Liston Street Reserve	Southern	43	Local	Local
Lynden Park	Central Eastern	39	Local	Local
Macleay Park	North Eastern	8	Local	District
Madeline Street Reserve	Southern	43	Pocket	Pocket
Markham Reserve	Southern	45	Local	Regional To be amalgamated with Victory Boulevard Reserve
Mary McKillop Reserve	Central Eastern	32	Local	Local
Mason St Reserve	Central Western	20	Pocket	Pocket
Matlock St Reserve	Central Eastern	31	Local	Local
Minifie Park	North Eastern	13	Local	Local
Mont Albert Park	North Eastern	13A	Local	Local
Morang Road Reserve	Central Western	25	Local	Local
Nettleton Park Reserve	Southern	41	Local	Local
Norway Reserve	Central Eastern	17	Local	Local
Outer Circle Park 1 (Campbell Street)	North Western	11	Local	Local
Outer Circle Park 2 (Argyle St)	North Western	11	Pocket	Pocket



Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
Outer Circle Park 3 (Whitehorse Road)	North Eastern	12	District	District
Patterson Reserve	Central Western	34	Pocket	Relocate/local
Peel Street Reserve/ Duke St	North Western	2	Pocket	Pocket
Pridmore Park	Central Western	19	Pocket	District; To be amalgamated with Yarra Bank Reserve playground
Read Gardens	Central Eastern	24	Local	Local
Reservoir Reserve	North Western	16	District	District
Riversdale Park	Central Eastern	31	District	District
St James Park	Central Western	20	Local	Local
Scullin Park	Central Western	27	Local	Local
Sinclair Avenue Reserve	Southern	40	Pocket	Remove
Sir William Angliss/Rathmines Reserve	Central Western	23	District	District
Sir William Street Reserve	North Western	1	Pocket	Pocket
Smart St Reserve	Central Western	20	Local	Local
South Surrey Park	Central Eastern	32	Local	Local
Stradbroke Park	North Western	7	Local	Local
Summerhill Park	Southern	42	Local	Local
Surrey Gardens	Central Eastern	32	-	Proposed Local



Reserve Name	Zone	Precinct No	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification
Symonds Street Reserve	Central Western	28	Local	Local
Through Road Reserve	Central Eastern	39	Pocket	Proposed local
Trafalgar Road Reserve	Central Eastern	37	Local	Local
Victoria Park 1 (High St)	North Western	11	Pocket	Remove
Victoria Park 2 (Adeney Avenue)	North Western n	11	District	Proposed Regional
Victoria Park 3 (Parkhill Road)	North Western	11	Local	Local
Victoria Road Reserve	Central Western	23	Local	Local
Victory Bvd (Sunderland Court)	Southern	45	Local	Regional To be amalgamated with Markham Reserve
Warner Sporting Reserve	Southern	45	Local	Local
Watson Park	Southern	44	Local	Proposed District
Windella Avenue Reserve	North Western	3	Local	Local
Willison Park	Central Eastern	37	Local	Local
Winfield Road Reserve	North Eastern	10	-	Proposed Local
Winmalee Road Reserve	North Eastern	13	-	Proposed Local
Winton Road Reserve	Southern	44	Local	Local
Yarra Bank Reserve	Central Western	19	Pocket	District; To be amalgamated with Pridmore Park playground



TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF EXISTING & PROPOSED PLAYGROUND CLASSIFICATIONS

	Playground Classification	Existing number of playgrounds	Proposed number of playgrounds
	Pocket	19	11
	Local	64	62
	District	16	21
	Regional	1	6



SECTION 3

Principles, Policies and Recommendations

Specific Design & Management Issues



3.1	Community Consultation Processes	Page 42
3.2	Safety Standards & Risk Management	Page 45
3.3	Materials For Use In Playgrounds	Page 50
3.4	Access For Children With Disabilities	Page 53
3.5	Shade & Sun Protection	Page 55
3.6	Landscape Design In Playgrounds	Page 59
3.7	Fences & Play Areas	Page 61
3.8	Toilets	Page 63
3.9	Special Settings For Playgrounds	Page 64
3.10	Public Information About Playgrounds	Page 66

3.1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESSES

Introduction

- In 1996 Council adopted a Leisure Strategy Plan³ that recommended a transparent process *involving the community wherever possible in a truly participative model*. A major survey was conducted as part of this brief and playgrounds were noted as important facilities in leisure provision.
- The community's views and opinions provide a valuable contribution to the design process, providing local knowledge and reflecting the needs of local communities. By taking local issues into account, parks and playgrounds are likely to represent better value for money and to increase resident satisfaction.
- Council can make mistakes, when changes are undertaken in parks and playgrounds, if the local community is not consulted in the right manner. In turn, residents do not always understand the issues with which Councils have to deal. A good two way communication process assists both sides.

Principles

- We recommend that Council officers take frequent opportunities to consult residents about their local parks, through:
 - ongoing opportunities for residents to contribute information and local knowledge,
 - public meetings for displaying concept designs,
 - formal processes to invite participation regarding proposals for major changes. In all cases, this should occur before a design is finalized and certainly prior to implementation.
- Residents should be informed about any hidden issues or policies that will affect the outcome of the project.
- It is a mistake to complete a design without some kind of 'asking' process before hand.

³ <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/yourcouncil/LeisureFacilitiesStrategyPlan.pdf> 1996



General Recommendations for Community Consultation Processes

- *Before commencing* a design, the designer or Council officer or both should make some observations of how the space is used at busy times and where possible speak to local users; there is no substitute for local knowledge.
- An information gathering process such as a public survey or questionnaire to seek local ideas relating to a specific project/proposal is recommended *before commencing the design*. This is valuable and will serve to alert the designer to site-specific issues and needs. If possible this process should be structured to include children's opinions.
- An on-site public meeting is a valuable secondary consultation tool after the results of the preliminary information gathering process have been analysed. Residents should be provided with an opportunity to review a design or a selection of designs and make comments on them.
- Residents need to be informed that sometimes there are strategic or legal issues at stake that mean their individual preferences will not always be met.
- The privacy of residents must always be respected.
- In all cases the responsibility for the design has to rest with Council and or the designers to solve the technical issues presented by the project and Council's decision must be final.

Avoid:

- shopping list type consultations where residents are asked to choose items from a limited selection or equipment catalogues
- tokenistic approaches where residents are asked only to select the colour of major items
- display of finalised plans without consulting residents before-hand
- designs that too closely reflect the personal needs of a few local residents, and which are unlikely to meet the ongoing needs of future residents.



Community Consultation for Local and District Playgrounds

- *Before commencing* a design, the designer or Council officer or both should make some observations of how the space is used at busy times and where possible speak to local users; there is no substitute for local knowledge.
- An information gathering process such as a public survey or questionnaire to seek local ideas and feedback is recommended *before commencing the design*. This is valuable and will serve to alert the designer to site-specific issues and needs. If possible this process should be structured to include children's opinions.
- Council officers to prepare a brief for designers based on collected information.
- Detailed site design proposals to be presented to residents at public meetings on site; enough interpretation and information should be supplied so that residents can gain sufficient understanding of the intent.
- Residents to be invited to provide feedback within a specified time frame.
- Designs to be modified as required.

Community Consultation for Regional Playgrounds

- A public request in the form of media advertisements, on-site notice boards and Council web-site listings in conjunction with a formal information gathering process such as a public survey or questionnaire to seek local ideas and feedback is recommended *before commencing the design* and prior to establishing a detailed brief.
- A steering committee comprising representatives of special interest groups should be established; this could involve representatives of children and adults with disabilities, local residents, children of different age groups including teens, special interest groups as applicable and Council officers. This group should be involved in each stage of the process.
- Public display of plans and public meetings as required.



3.2 SAFETY STANDARDS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Playgrounds have been identified in numerous City of Boroondara studies, Council Policies and Strategy documents as facilities that are of great importance to the Boroondara community. They need to be carefully managed in order to reduce the risk of injury to users and the resulting exposure to Council from litigation.

Risk management⁴ is a co-ordinated effort to protect such assets. This approach involves three steps

- systematic identification of risks,
- analysis of their probable frequency and severity,
- implementation of measures to reduce or eliminate risks.

A comprehensive, systematic approach is vital providing "a consistent way of thinking about risk".⁵

Risk Management in Playgrounds

Safety hazards in playgrounds typically arise from:

- Poor siting,
- Poor initial layout, design or construction,
- Vandalism and damage,
- Poor maintenance over time, and
- The behaviour of users which places themselves or others at risk of injury.

Benchmarks for Safety in Playgrounds

The following Australian Safety Standards provide the basic rules for compliance in Australian playgrounds

AS 4685	2004	Parts 1 to 6
ASNZS 4486 1	1997	Playgrounds and Playground Equipment Part 1 Development, installation, inspection maintenance & operation
AS/NZS 4422	1996	Playground Surfacing Specification, requirements & test methods.

⁴ <http://www.ericdigests.org/1994/risk.htm>

⁵ Dunklee, Dennis R., and Robert J. Shoop. A PRIMER FOR SCHOOL RISK MANAGEMENT: CREATING AND MAINTAINING DISTRICT AND SITE-BASED LIABILITY PREVENTION PROGRAMS. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1993. 209 pages.



Principles

An effective risk management strategy requires that:

- all playgrounds must comply with Australian Standards for functional design, layout and construction. This requires an inspection and sign-off following installation or upgrading,
- all playgrounds should be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that these remain in good condition,
- the frequency of such inspections needs to be established for each site, depending upon the nature of the site and its usage patterns,
- there is an effective system for reporting damage including equipment and material failures,
- there is an effective and fast response and repair system,
- risky behaviour that could lead to injury is discouraged.

Good design is especially important as a strategy to reduce this risk. For example:

- encourage good supervision by making playgrounds welcoming and comfortable for adults as well as children,
- make it difficult for children and teenagers to reach and climb onto roofs and to other hazardous situations,
- make sure that the design includes a range of choices so that children can select a degree of challenge which suits their level of skill,
- locate playgrounds where informal surveillance is easy in order to reduce vandalism, broken glass and anti-social behaviour,
- avoid uninteresting playgrounds that lead to boredom and risk-seeking which can lead to injury
- some sites will require more intensive management as they are more intensively used, especially over summer and holiday periods,
- good records need to be kept of site inspections and actions taken to rectify problems

Risk Management needs to be established within the resources and capability of Council.



RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend the following risk management strategies for playgrounds:

Recommendations for Managing Risk in Design -

Assess and sign-off on the design *prior to installation* for

- Play value,
- Access, and
- Safety Standards compliance.

Recommendations for Managing Risk in Installation

- Carry out a Site Inspection following installation and attend to any design non-compliance.

Recommendations for Inspections and Auditing

- Manufacturers need to supply maintenance requirements of their own equipment.
- Establish the frequency of inspections required for each site depending upon the risk assessment, the nature of the playground, patterns of use and seasonal requirements:
- A routine (visual) inspection will be required daily or weekly on some sites in busy periods,
- An operational inspection should be carried out on all sites every 3 to 4 months. The operation of moving parts, wear on components stability of structures should be checked systematically and recorded,
- At this time all under surfacing and sand should be replenished and minor repairs carried out on the spot while grounds staff or contractors are on site. These actions should all be systematically recorded,
- An annual, thorough inspection by competent personnel should check long-term levels of safety,
- Repairs should be carried out promptly and recorded.



Recommendations for Maintenance and Repairs

- It is not logistically possible for Council staff to be aware, between regular inspections, of damage that is the result of wear and tear or vandalism. The community should therefore be encouraged to report any defects and graffiti immediately.
- A sign on each site is a useful tool to inform users of a telephone number to contact to report damage or vandalism.
- Council's website and phone book should also list a number to report problems.
- By prompt action, residents will be encouraged that such calls are worthwhile.
- Graffiti should be removed immediately in line with Council's graffiti removal policy.
- A system of fast response, with some components available in-store including temporary fencing materials - in case repairs cannot be undertaken immediately - is very important and effective in managing risk.

Recommendations for Managing Reports of Injury

If an injury should be reported:

- Council officers should take every step to find out exactly what happened, what the cause of the injury was, and the behaviour that led up to it.
- Accurate records should be kept of any injury report.
- Site details should be photographed and recorded immediately before any remedial work is undertaken and all records pertaining to the site should be checked.



Recommendations for Replacement and Upgrading Playgrounds

- When a site is identified for repairs or major upgrading works, it is important to get best value out of the opportunity to change the playground.
- Take the opportunity to check three aspects of the design all at once: safety, access to users with disabilities and play value. Upgrade all of these where possible.
- When assessing a playground for possible replacement, the following issues need to be taken into consideration:
 - relative age of the equipment,
 - compliance with current safety Standards,
 - lack of play value,
 - forthcoming changes in the precinct such as a new housing development,
 - a new Master Plan for the whole park, that may propose a new playground,
 - the cost of continual repairs,
 - excessive vandalism that has caused major structural damage.

Recommendations for Adult Supervision as a Risk Management Strategy in Playgrounds

Adults play an important role in modern playgrounds:

- children frequently have to be taken to playgrounds by an adult,
- adults play an important role in selecting which site to visit,
- adults play an important role in safety and injury prevention,
- seating and shade for adults are important in determining the length of stay

Recommendations

- Provide a choice of seating for adults in summer-shade, and winter-sun.
- Seating and tables can be centrally located in a play space, with the playground wrapped around this.
- Ensure that there are steps up to elevated equipment as well as other more challenging climbing options; this makes rescue by adults easier if required.
- Ensure that any central seating area has barrier free access.



3.3 MATERIALS FOR USE IN PLAYGROUNDS

Sand

Sand is a high quality and valuable play material that is not adequately provided for in the City of Boroondara. Although sand presents some management issues, these are generally exaggerated and should be assessed on a site-by-site basis.

Recommendations for Sand	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand is not recommended as an impact absorbing material under any item in playgrounds where children are moving such as under slides, swings and sliding poles as children playing in the sand are at risk from collisions.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid sand near fibre-glass slides as sand is very abrasive.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand should be clean, washed river sand provided with good drainage and at least 450mm deep.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It should be managed to prevent fouling. If fouling by pets proves to be a problem, sites which are already fenced may be ideal.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand and loose surfaces should be avoided on sites with a high vandalism record and especially where syringes and broken glass are frequently found.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent raking and cleansing on intensively used sites is recommended.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shade needs to be provided over sand pits.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand works extremely well when provided in conjunction with imaginative play settings such as cubbies, low flat rocks, water and vegetation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand can be a hazard on paths and steps as it is very slippery and needs to be carefully sited.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand should not be placed adjacent to soft fall areas as the two will inevitably become mixed up.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand needs a sweepable, beached edge to prevent spillage and to aid in maintenance



Impact Absorbing Surfaces Under Play Equipment

Current Safety Requirements

Playgrounds with fall heights of more than 500mm require an impact absorbing surface within their fall zone. The recently introduced Standard AS 4685 Parts 1 to 6 requires fall zones in public playgrounds which vary, depending upon the height of the equipment, and the type of motion involved, if any.

Organic Mulch

- The materials used for such surfaces vary widely across Australia but mulch, and bark are very common.
- These products must be certified to have been tested for their impact absorbing properties, advising the depths required to meet certain head injury criteria.
- In practice there is evidence that most organic materials test out in similar ways and that between 250mm and 300mm compacted depth of most mulches provides impact absorption adequate to prevent brain trauma.
- Mulch surfaces require constant and ongoing maintenance.
- Mulch does provide a valuable medium for imaginative and creative play.

Synthetic Materials

- The use of synthetic materials as an under surface is becoming widespread. These offer a few major benefits in providing a wheelable surface that is impact absorbing, and wear resistance in areas of intense usage such as at the base of swing seats and the end of slides.
- Synthetic materials have a number of disadvantages:
 - they are extremely expensive,
 - they are marketed for their durability but in practice are often poorly laid and do not live up to the promised life expectancy,
 - most purchasers do not have the capability to verify the impact absorption certification,
 - they can be very hot if un-shaded and can cause burns,
 - they can have an unpleasant smell.

Recommendations for Impact Surfaces	
	▪ Loose surfaces should not be laid onto a sloping site, especially where there is a path on the lower side where spillage will become a hazard.
	▪ Minor leveling for the mulched area will help to retain the material
	▪ Depths of surfaces should be monitored during routine playground inspections. Those playgrounds with particularly high dispersal rates should be maintained more frequently. In lower-use sites, a three or four monthly replenishment regime appears to be adequate.
	▪ Synthetic pads can be placed under swings and at the base of slides but these should be placed under the mulch. No hard edges can be exposed. Under swings the material should be installed to avoid catching feet.
	▪ Synthetic surfaces for wheelchair accessibility should be used in conjunction with other materials as applicable.
	▪ Narrow paths and sharp edges dropping off into the mulch should be avoided.



Timber

Advantages

Timber is a widely used material that offers some distinct advantages for play structures

- The energy consumed in timber production is considerably less than steel, recycled plastics and much less than aluminium.
- It is an ideal material for custom designs and for use in conjunction with other materials.
- Timber does not burn children's skin when exposed to the hot sun.
- Statistically, children have expressed preferences for timber play structures.

Treated timber

- In-ground durability of timber is important. For this reason, CCA treatment of radiata pine was introduced in the 1970s and has been widespread until 2004.
- Earlier in 2004, the safety of CCA treatment was investigated by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. This organisation has subsequently ruled that this material may not be used where there is 'frequent and intimate contact' such as picnic tables and play equipment. An alternative treatment called Aqueous Copper Quaternary (ACQ) is becoming more available as a possible replacement, though this is more expensive than CCA.
- White Cypress Pine is also reasonably durable in ground and is frequently used as an alternative but there is a question whether these trees are sustainably produced.

Recommendations for Timber and Timber Treatment

- A selection of materials should continue to be used for playgrounds, as this provides a diverse range of settings.
- Timber must be durable in-ground.
- CCA treatment should not be utilised, having been excluded from use in playgrounds by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. An alternative such as ACQ should be used, and high quality re-dried timber should be specified.
- Old CCA treated timber, when removed from playgrounds, must be disposed of carefully as recommended by current authorities; IT MUST NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE DISPOSED OF BY BURNING as this is known to be highly toxic.
- Plantation grown timbers should be favoured over timber from other sources.



3.4 ACCESS TO PLAYGROUNDS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Disability Discrimination Act [1992]

In the provision of goods, services and facilities, the Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the basis that they have a disability. All council areas are covered by the DDA including public facilities and parks.

Council also has a Disability Access Implementation Plan⁶.

In this document, Council commits to:

- make toilets accessible.
- include toilet facilities for people with disabilities in all renovations of public toilets.
- review access to all council-owned properties and facilities and develop a plan for their progressive upgrading.

This plan sets the backdrop for improving access to public playgrounds and to public toilets in parks.

Guidelines for Accessible Playground Design

More information is provided in Section 4 regarding the details of making playgrounds more accessible

General Recommendations Regarding Accessibility

- Individual sites will vary in their potential for accessibility.
- Every opportunity should be taken to make a local play area accessible, if this is feasible.
- The principle of *social inclusion* or being able to participate in social and play activities along with everyone else is as important as basic physical access.
- All parks need a seamless path system leading to focal points in the park.
- Certain activities, if provided, must *always* be made wheelchair accessible such as ground level mazes, cubbies and imaginative play settings, boats and trains.

⁶ <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/yourcouncil/DisabilityAccessPolicy.pdf>



Recommendations Regarding Accessibility in Local playgrounds

- A good selection of local playgrounds in each zone need to provide a choice of accessible play activities.
- A selection of seating areas, picnic table settings, drinking fountains and shaded activities need to be accessible wherever possible.
- Sites with accessible opportunities should be equitably distributed across the municipality.

Recommendations Regarding Accessibility in District Playgrounds

- All new facilities and amenities need to be fully accessible.
- A selection of existing picnic facilities and drinking fountains should be modified to provide seamless access.
- A selection of accessible play activities need to be provided in most existing District parks, and in all new designs for District playgrounds.

▪

Recommendations Regarding Accessibility in Regional Playgrounds

- All new regional playgrounds need to provide a substantial choice of play activities to children and adults with disabilities.
- All amenities and facilities must be fully accessible.



3.5 SHADE AND SUN PROTECTION

Introduction

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Sun protection during childhood and teenage years is considered to be particularly important for preventing the development of skin cancer in later life.⁷

Provision of shade in playgrounds is a critical factor in the planning process for new playground design.

Shade in Playgrounds - Principles

Shade has become a critical part of the design of a play space and needs to be addressed at an early stage in the planning and design process.

The amount of time spent in the sun and the time of day are critical factors in determining exposure. For these reasons:

- playgrounds that attract visits of a longer duration require more particular attention to shade provision,
- Council needs to offer an equitable geographic distribution of shaded play areas across the Municipality.

In some situations, it is worth noting that winter sun may be desirable and that the provision of shade should be designed to permit sun light penetration during these months.

The surface surrounding the play area determines levels of reflection and U.V. exposure. Soft, darker-coloured, complex surfaces such as grass have low reflective indexes whereas dry sand and paved areas have a high reflective index. Interestingly, wet sand has a much lower reflective index than dry sand.

⁷ <http://www.shadeaustralia.com.au/news3.php>



Design for Shade

Shade needs to be an integral part of a new playground design and should be part of the design criteria given to designers from the outset

Effective shade needs to provide projected shade for children at three critical times of the day - depending upon the context of the site:

- from the east for morning use,
- overhead for midday use in summer,
- from the west for afternoon use.

Certain play settings need special consideration for effective shade:

- sand-play areas because of the high reflective index and the fact that children are often sedentary for some time in sand,
- play areas for younger children and those in which children with disabilities play,
- steel and aluminium components especially slides, seats, grips.

Appropriate provision for shade can be made in many ways. The most successful shade solutions are often those that offer a choice of types of shade.

Three most common solutions include:

Tree Shade

- Trees provide one of the most attractive and multi-purpose forms of shade and have a major positive impact on the aesthetics of any site.
- Trees also have major play value.
- Unfortunately these take time to establish and are easily vandalized, especially when young.

Shade Awnings and Sails

- Shade sail structures can have an attractive and dramatic appearance and can be an integral part of a new playground design.
- Effective shade sail structure designs can be costly and require on-going maintenance including cleaning and re-tensioning.
- These structures can often be designed to complement tree shade.
- These tend to be tensioned fabric supported by steel poles of various heights and angles.
- Fabrics vary considerably in durability and U.V. protection.
- Shade structures may be ineffective if these are designed to allow morning or afternoon sun penetration, under the sides.
- If these are low enough to provide projected shade, there is an increased chance that shade structures can sometimes be climbed upon which has caused injury and even deaths from falls.
- Shade sail structures may have large footings that can increase fall zone areas in playgrounds.
- Shade sails are easily and often stolen.
- Shade sails are increasingly becoming targets for vandals to set-alight or tear.



Roofs

- Roofs vary enormously in their effectiveness for sun protection.
- Typical small roofs over tiny decks have only a very minor benefit for shade.
- A generous-sized, shelter roof will provide all weather protection and is likely to provide the best value.
- Roofs can be designed as an integral part of a playground and can shade slides from the western and eastern sun, sand play areas, and structures.
- Roofs can provide a strong visual and aesthetic statement.
- They are less-easily vandalised from below and are durable.
- There is a variety of suitable materials including those that can admit light but not U.V. rays including custom orb/corrugated iron, polycarbonates, timber slats, mesh and even pergolas with planting.
- An East-West orientation of a rectangular shaped roof maximises the protection of a play area under the middle of the roof and permits winter sun to be maximised.

General Recommendations for Shade in Playgrounds

- All Regional playgrounds should provide effective shade over substantial parts of the play area. Much of this shade needs to be functional from the date of opening, with additional shade developing as trees grow.
- All District playgrounds must provide a choice of shaded play areas within the site. Ideally some of these will include roofed areas for immediate shade.
- A roofed picnic shelter should ideally be provided at all Regional playground sites and at an equitable distribution of District playgrounds across the municipality.
- Local playgrounds should be designed in such a fashion as to maximize existing shade opportunities from existing trees and with roofs. Designs should seek to incorporate new tree planting for future shade opportunities.



	General Recommendations for Sails and Roofs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sails and awnings should not be used on sites that have poor surveillance and a history of vandalism without special design considerations that reduce this risk.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be most effective, roofs need to be carefully located to ensure that shade projects over the play area during times of maximum usage.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roofs and sails should be complemented by tree shade preferable on the eastern and western sides.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roofs and sails need to be carefully designed to prevent climbing, to utilise overhangs, steep angles and to eliminate foot and hand holds. Roofs must be designed to permit clear visibility and in such a way that adults can use roofed areas.

	General Recommendations for Shade from Trees
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every site needs a basic framework of tree planting that will possibly take time to establish and will be an investment in the future.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If possible choose a site for a new playground where there are existing mature trees that can provide at least some effective shade.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plant trees as early as possible, preferably well before the playground is installed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that the protection of existing trees and root zones is an accountable part of any works contract.



3.6 LANDSCAPE DESIGN IN PLAYGROUNDS

Landform

Children value elevation in play spaces, using mounds and undulations where they can to:

- View-out and over their surroundings,
- run up and down landforms and ride bikes over bumps,
- hide and play.

Spatial Definition

Earth forming, as well as planting and structures, can be used in many ways to help define spaces and give them qualities that are more aesthetically appealing. A choice of scales suited to the activities of the space, is important. Like rooms in houses, the size of the space needs to be appropriate for the size of the group and the type of activity:

- intimate spaces are needed for small children's play areas, with a sense of containment and places where small groups can sit and talk comfortably,
- larger, open spaces are required for less personal ball-kicking areas and public gathering spaces.

The ways spaces are defined is important:

- low walls contain a space, allowing views through, seating and activities such as balancing,
- mounds with very steep sides are difficult to maintain and look unnatural ('elephant graves'),
- high mounds can be exciting for children,
- gentle mounding can define a series of spaces and provide seating and viewing areas around courts and play areas,
- open-trunked trees provide shade/spatial definition, allowing views through
- hedges, boulders, low shrubs and many other elements can divide spaces,
- parks with a variety of different spaces will provide more interest than those with simple, open flat space.



Recommendations For Landscape Design in Playgrounds

In order for the community to get best value from open space, parks and playgrounds, it is important to use good planning and design processes.

- Decide on the primary function of the park and make sure all design elements contribute to that role.
- Increase diversity in the range of settings; parks should be varied.
- Optimise circulation and access.
- Optimise the relationships between activity areas. For example, place seating areas where people can observe activities on courts and playgrounds.
- Improve visual appeal and interest, increase complexity, take advantage of views, changes in level; light and shade.
- Make use of edges, paving, planting, layout of structures and details to create an integrated whole rather than a jumble of elements.
- Invest in good quality materials that will last and are durable.

Planting

Trees have already been discussed in detail in Section 3.5 on Shade. Other vegetation also has a major beneficial impact on the aesthetics and amenity of a playground site. Planting can be used to define spaces, to provide play materials, to attract birds and wildlife, for climbing and to add a layer of visual complexity. All of these need to be thought through carefully on a site-by-site basis.

Recommendations

- A site plan should be prepared for every new playground design proposal that includes elements such as a planting plan.
- Species selection needs to take into account any special requirements such as the need for indigenous planting in many settings especially those on creeks and rivers; for exotic planting in heritage zones and other conditions specific to individual sites.
- The design should utilize tough species especially in front- line areas, immediately adjacent to high-impact zones, that can withstand at least some plucking and picking of leaves bark fruit or flowers by children for their play.
- Avoid blocking views into a playground by over-planting street frontages.



3.7 FENCES AND PLAY AREAS

Introduction

- It is not necessary to fence every playground and fences should not be considered as a fundamental component of every site design.
- In those locations where:
 - a playground abuts a busy road or other hazard such as a water body,
 - it is necessary to exclude dogs,
 - a playground has specific design requirements or clients with special needs,fences could be designed as an integral part of the site, but this needs to be considered on a site-by-site basis.
- A choice of sites with fencing distributed throughout the municipality will be a great help to parents of children with particular behavioural characteristics and intellectual disabilities, including autism.
- Fences can, however, instill a false sense of security in parents and can be used to enclose children *in-lieu* of supervision.
- It is also very difficult to design a gate that will keep a child in but that can be still be opened by people in wheelchairs. Replacing locks on gates is an ongoing expense.
- Some sites are much easier to fence than others such as those sites that have narrow street frontages or where there is already existing fencing. These sites will be the preferred choice if Council and the community express a wish to fence some sites.

Dogs and Fences

- In 1997, Council adopted a Domestic Animal Management Policy⁸.
- Its objectives were to:
 - provide balanced and fair access to open space for all users,
 - to provide appropriate, designated reserves for off-leash areas,
 - to exclude dogs from playground areas.
- 42 parks were designated as dog off leash areas. Most of these have play areas.
- The policy states that no dog may be within 10 metres of a playground area.
- There are, however, many problems in dog off-leash parks where dogs run freely and cannot be kept away from playgrounds.
- In some cases, at large, off-leash, dog-walking sites, playground designs should incorporate fencing for whole play areas where owners cannot or do not control their pets.

⁸ <http://www.boroondara.vic.gov.au/yourcouncil/DomesticAnimalManagement.pdf> 1997



Recommendations for Fences and Playgrounds

- In all cases avoid fencing just a small compound within a park containing the play equipment or a single sand pit. It is preferable to find suitable sites where the whole park or a large part of it can be contained within the fence line.
- Choose a selection of sites across the municipality, reasonably geographically distributed, in which a park with a play area can be easily, economically and aesthetically fenced.
- Choose a selection of Local, District and Regional sites to fence.
- Choose a selection of dog off-leash parks in which particular problems have been noted and examine the opportunities to separate dogs and playgrounds on a site-specific basis.
- There may be other solutions that should be explored such as particular surface types, planting, smells, sounds or other solutions that might be unattractive to dogs but unnoticeable by humans.
- Where it is decided to fence a play area, the fence must be:
 - effective,
 - visually unobtrusive, designed in low-key colours and style and positioned with vegetation,
 - sited to enclose a large enough space for the playground, some grass and planting, shade, movement and seamless circulation.



3.8 TOILETS

Introduction

- Toilets are frequently identified as important on sites that attract visits of a longer duration.
- There are few playgrounds in the City of Boroondara that have public toilets open for users.
- Many sites have pavilions but these toilets are often reserve for sporting clubs and are not open to the general public.
- Accessibility of toilets to people with disabilities was not assessed as part of this project but of the few inspected, many do not comply.
- Families with children with disabilities place a great deal of importance on accessible toilets, especially those with large sized change tables.

General Recommendations for Toilets

- Sites that already have toilets should be inspected with regard to accessibility and be prioritised for an upgrade.
- A strategic approach to providing toilets in parks will establish the most cost effective way to manage this issue.

Recommendations for Toilets in Local and District Playgrounds

- Local playgrounds do not typically require a toilet.
- A good, geographic distribution of district playgrounds with public toilets should be established.
- In those locations where there are sports pavilions equipped with toilets, it is recommended that the feasibility of making these toilets available to the general public be investigated.

Recommendations for Toilets in Regional Playgrounds

- All regional playgrounds need to provide an accessible public toilet
- These need to have multi sex/family cubicles with an adult-sized change bench.



3.9 SPECIAL SETTINGS FOR PLAYGROUNDS

Some settings have particular characteristics that need to be taken into account when designing playgrounds. This may relate to the visual character of what is provided or to the particular needs of users in that context.

River and Creek Settings

- The City of Boroondara is fortunate to have long river and creek frontages, along the Yarra River, Gardiner and Koonung creeks as well as other smaller creeks. There are a number of playgrounds in these environments. Some, especially the Yarra River, have very distinctive characteristics and these should be reflected in any landscape design and playgrounds built in a river environment.

Historic Settings

- There are several locations throughout the municipality in which historic and culturally significant parks and gardens with exotic plantings, landscapes and historic building contain playgrounds. Playgrounds can be designed to be compatible with these environments without necessarily resorting simply to heritage colours.

Recommendations for Playgrounds in Special Settings	
	▪ Playgrounds in river and creek settings should be designed with special characteristics that reflect and have regard to their unique surroundings.
	▪ Playgrounds in heritage zones and in historic gardens can likewise be designed to reflect these special surroundings.
	▪ The materials, layout, planting themes and actual activities need to be carefully selected.



Linear Trails and Playgrounds

- The City of Boroondara is also fortunate to have very long systems of shared linear trails, especially along creeks, rivers and along the outer and inner circle railway lines.
- The many playgrounds on these trails all function as social or gathering places along the trail as well as local playgrounds for surrounding residents.
- Certain aspects of the design become more important in this dual role.

Recommendations for Playgrounds along Linear Trails

- Shelters and drinking water are important for cyclists and walkers.
- Site the playground well away from the path, as cyclists can move quickly; children and fast moving cycles provide a safety hazard to each other.
- Ensure that all playgrounds along the same trail are entirely different from each other as the same users can visit more than one in the same trip.
- Where playgrounds are located on creeks or other natural features, take the special setting into account in the design.



3.10 PUBLIC INFORMATION ABOUT PLAYGROUNDS

A good source of information about playgrounds will make it a lot easier for residents to seek out and find settings that suit their needs. In particular, locations of playgrounds with some of the following features will be requested:

- shade,
- fences,
- sites with activities for particular age groups,
- accessible designs,
- public toilets,
- sites located close to public transport.

Recommendations for Public Information

We recommend that Council should

- prepare a full list and map of play areas and their features,
- make this information available to residents,
- post this on Council's website and keep this updated.



SECTION 4

Guidelines for Playground Design



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4.1 SITE SELECTION FOR PLAYGROUNDS

Selective Siting

Playgrounds represent a considerable investment to Councils, not just in design and the initial capital expense, but more importantly in the long-term management of these facilities. Accordingly, playgrounds should not be constructed without considerable thought as to:

- the overall suitability of the site,
- the catchment area and target population
- the need for the development,
- value to the maximum number of users,
- the degree of informal surveillance,
- the capacity of the Council to maintain the playground after construction.

Occasionally the community may request a new playground on an unsuitable site. Council must be confident in the site selection process to enable these suggestions to be adequately assessed and rejected if required. Some of the issues that need to be considered are discussed below.

Prominence

Playgrounds should be sited in a prominent position:

- in locations that can be seen from the road,
- ideally no playground should be tucked away down dead end streets where only a handful of residents will know it is there.

Size

Very small playground sites such as those which can only fit two pieces of equipment and nothing else are not recommended as they do not offer sufficient flexibility in design to be useful to children, will not provide sufficient space to comply with Australian Standards pertaining to Fall Zones and are expensive to maintain.

Our observations of parks and open space have lead us to conclude that no park should have any dimension less than approximately 70m.



General Accessibility

Playgrounds need to be accessible via more than one street, and to both local residents and passers-by.

Playgrounds should be located:

- in locations where they provide for a reasonable catchment or number of residents and are accessible to more than one street or court,
- in areas that can be reached by pedestrian and bike paths as well as by road.

Exclusive Design

Avoid sites such as dead-end courts and small squares in which there is often a sense of territoriality by local residents immediately surrounding the site to the exclusion of others.

Co-location

Ideally playgrounds should be sited where there is provision for a multi-purpose catchment such as in areas close to shops or sports facilities and where playgrounds can offer maximum value to the widest number of visitors.

In locations where playgrounds are located adjacent to another facility with a specific group of clients such as a disability service or an early childhood centre, the playground must specifically provide for that type of user in addition to any other target group.

Multi Purpose and Flexibility

Playgrounds and parks should be able to provide for the future needs of populations that will change over time. Standards change, needs change as populations mature and play spaces and design must be adaptable.

Spaces that are large enough and that have undeveloped sections will be the easiest to adapt for changing needs.



4.2 LOCATING PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT WITHIN RESERVES

- Locate playground equipment in such a way as to allow useful space for ball games and other activities.
- Avoid locating playground equipment too close to houses, where elevated decks and equipment can overlook private yards and where noise may affect residents.
- In small parks, avoid noisy forms of equipment.
- Avoid dotting equipment all over the park; it makes supervision very difficult for parents and increases expense for items such as under surfacing and edging.
- Establish a relationship between play items, rather than a series of unrelated items around the site. For example, where there is a bridge this should link to other items rather than being located on its own.
- Single, free standing slides should also be avoided as slides appear to have better play value when connected to other equipment.
- It is generally important to provide equipment for a range of age groups at each site. These need to be sited in such a way that it is possible for carers to supervise children of more than one age group at any one time.
- Avoid rigid designs that will be expensive to change if modifications are required to the space.



4.3 CORE ACTIVITIES FOR A MINIMUM LOCAL PLAYGROUND

A Local Playground Package

Following careful observation of playgrounds, we have found that the following package appears to cater well for a good range of play needs and age groups at a local level. These guidelines can, and indeed should, be interpreted in a wide variety of ways and their use allows a range of settings and character to be maintained in parks.

Local playgrounds should provide:

- at least one two-seat, swing frame fitted with one toddler seat or tyre basket and one strap seat or safety seat,
- some form of imaginative play setting such as a cubby located under a deck, a small copse of trees or a train or boat containing a steering wheel; these should be made wheelchair accessible wherever possible,
- low-key agility items such as a horizontal ladder, turnover bar, parallel bars or similar. If there is only one horizontal ladder, this must not be higher than 1800mm to 1900mm. Only if there are two such ladders, should one be higher,
- turnover bars must offer a choice of heights and preferably be freestanding,
- one item that offers some alternative kind of movement such as rocking/rotating in addition to a swing,
- specific provision for a variety of age groups,
- an elevated structure this has at least one safe access, such as a stair, for young children to access a slide, in addition to alternative, more challenging options,
- a different theme, character and style from all nearby playgrounds,
- as a minimum, shade from trees,
- open grass for ball games in one good-sized space, as well as any play equipment or other features,
- at least one seat facing the equipment from which an adult can be close enough to see children, talk to them while on equipment and reach them quickly if required.



Complementing play equipment

Playground equipment is not the only way in which good play value and challenge can be provided.

Landscape elements

Useful examples include:-

- bike paths and bike play areas - bumps, dirt or sealed,
- hard surfaces, courts and rebound walls,
- mounds, earthworks and boulders,
- trees, mini forests, shrubs and vegetation,
- creative areas for cubby building,
- logs,
- sculptures,
- sand and water,
- offer high play value and are often totally adaptable to the needs of local children.

Safety and Challenge

It is always good to provide a physical challenge for children but this always needs to be done in context. Playground equipment that serves as the only accessible equipment on a site, should not be excessively challenging because a range of age groups must be able to use it.

In a location that offers a good choice of equipment, however, some items should be designed to be quite challenging. The same item that is inappropriate at one site could be quite acceptable elsewhere.

Safety is always an issue that must be considered in context.



4.4 AGE APPROPRIATE PLAYGROUNDS

A simple outline of some of the elements suitable for each age group is discussed below.

Toddler (3 years and under)

- small scale equipment and landscape elements with basic climbing, sliding, swinging, balancing, rocking and rotating elements,
- minimise risks. Take particular care not to introduce inadvertent hazards such as installing swings in locations that cross children's paths,
- protection from falls from decks through openings, under guardrails and between decks,
- carefully designed means of access with at least one set of stairs ,
- intensive supervision with adult access provided to every part of equipment,
- consider sand,
- small scale, imaginative/dramatic play including item such as cubbies, trains and steering wheels,
- paths for wheeled toys,
- consider the installation of fences or barriers to traffic,
- open areas of grass.

Junior (4 to 7 years)

- a range of physical challenges such as climbing, swinging, hanging, balancing, agility and rotating,
- imaginative and dramatic play with items such as cubbies, trains and boats designed for group play and for social interaction,
- manipulative elements such as sand play and construction activities,
- complex arrangements of play structures and other elements, to allow chasing and hiding games,
- natural elements such as trees, planting, dirt, sand, water and flowers,
- open areas of grass for ball play,
- consider the installation of fences or barriers to traffic.



Senior (8 to 12 years)

- a range of more challenging physical activities,
- a good choice of agility items,
- complex arrangements of play structures and other elements to allow chasing and hiding games,
- open areas of grass,
- court spaces for ball games,
- hard surfaces for skating,
- elevated areas for 'hanging around'/observation,
- small-scale spaces for social interaction and group activities,
- natural elements - trees, planting, dirt, sand, water and flowers,
- physically challenging structures and play events,
- ball game areas such as open grass, hard courts and areas to sit and watch,
- skate facilities including low key and street style facilities including ramps,
- a location far enough away from houses to minimise noise interference but where informal surveillance is possible.



4.5 *MAKING PLAY MORE ACCESSIBLE -*

TIPS ON THE DESIGN OF PLAY AREAS FOR USERS WITH DISABILITIES

Each type of disability has its own implications for playground design.

Wheelchair access

Some simple additions that would make many spaces more accessible and more interesting to many disabled users include the following:

- ensure that there is permanent access into the park,
- eliminate level changes and provide a path system with barrier-free surfaces,
- provide turning spaces large enough for wheelchair use (1800mm diameter),
- provide wheelchair access to at least some play settings but in particular to the focal points of the playground where every child would want to play with specific regard to including cubbies, dramatic/imaginative play areas and musical elements,
- eliminate barriers such as log borders, steps or stairs to any of these sections,
- design activities in such a way that it is possible to allow a person in a wheelchair to face the activity front on and get their knees under a shelf, counter or similar,
- incorporate surfaces that make wheeled play interesting and fun,
- include ramps allowing wheelchair access to elevated areas,
- provide synthetic impact absorbing surfaces in key areas allowing access across mulch to play structures,
- provide access to creative elements such as music and sand,
- provide opportunities to experience texture, sound, smell and other sensory delights,
- incorporate seats immediately adjacent for carers to assist in the play,
- provide opportunities to leave the wheelchair, and to lie or sit in an alternative supportive position.



Making Play more Accessible -tips on design of play areas for users with Disabilities, cont.

Ambulant disabled children

- provide coloured hand grips at changes of level within structures,
- design hand rails along paths and to steps and stairs that will aid balance,
- incorporate flat treads and stairs instead of or as well as rung ladders,
- provide smooth surfaces without trip hazards,
- ensure that easily negotiated choices of route within climbing structures are provided,
- Ensure that particular care is taken with design for safety so that children with balance problems and visual impairments do not inadvertently fall through openings in guard rail or cross the paths of swings,
- Provide Back support with simple back support structures on seats, swings, see-saws and in sand pit areas. This is also important for carers with children.

Visitors with low or no vision

Children with low or no vision need orientation cues such as:

- texture codes on paths,
- strongly-coloured cues on level changes, key parts of structures and as a warning,
- yellow-coloured hand grips,
- other sensory cues such as a limited palette such as only one species at a time in scented gardens,
- use of sound, texture and different spatial qualities for interest.



Fine Motor Disabilities

It is important to include manipulable elements for creative play that are accessible and do not require great physical strength or fine motor skills to operate such as:

- steering wheels,
- musical elements,
- levers, pulleys and other gadgets.

These must be within reach for a child in a wheelchair and able to be used front-on in a wheelchair.

Intellectual/cognitive

For children with intellectual disabilities:

- spaces may need to be fenced off from hazards,
- sites need to be easy to orient around,
- seats on play components, usually provided for young children, may need to be of a larger scale so that older but developmentally delayed children can use these,
- imaginative play items may need to be very obvious so that children know what they are for and how to use these,
- entry and exit points may need to be graded in challenge and be obvious to users.
- incorporate 'Retreat Spaces' where a frustrated child can have 'time out' with dignity.

General Amenities

- Shade and shelter are vital.
- Accessible drinking water is required. An accessible tap must be provided as well as a drinking bubbler or fountain because many disabled users and children are unable to use such devices.
- Toilets should be accessible when provided and an adult-sized change bench should be provided.
- Seating areas and path systems need to be fully accessible. This means that a group that includes one or more people with a disability can enter and move around the park together equitably and sit together in a picnic/BBQ area.



4.6 AMENITIES IN PLAYGROUNDS

Seating for supervision

Play areas should be designed to facilitate the adequate supervision of children. Seating for adults is an important component of this. Seating should be:

- provided with back support,
- positioned closely to different sections of the play area,
- located so that there is a choice of sun and shade.
-

Tables are another useful addition to most playgrounds

Seats and tables should be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities. This means locating these on a barrier-free path system, making space near benches to park wheelchairs, making sure that benches are not elevated above the path system and ensuring that tables can be reached and used by people in wheelchairs.

- In addition to formal seating as described above, less formal provision for seating such as edges, logs, low walls and the like can be a valuable addition to a play area. These will be utilised by children and teenagers, in particular.
- Play structures themselves should be designed so that adults have relatively easy access to playing children for supervision and rescue, if required.



Appendix 1: List of Precincts, showing all reserves and page range

Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Reserve Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Precinct 1	Studley Park	Sir William Street Reserve	1-3
Precinct 2	Kew	Eglinton Reserve	4-10
Precinct 2	Kew	Peel Street Reserve	4-10
Precinct 3	Kew East	Harrison Reserve	11-24
Precinct 3	Kew East	Hay's Paddock	11-24
Precinct 3	Kew East	Windella Avenue Reserve	11-24
Precinct 3	Kew East	Hyde Park	11-24
Precinct 3	Kew East	Jack O'Toole Reserve	11-24
Precinct 3	Kew East	Kate Campbell Reserve	11-24
Precinct 4	Bellevue	Cascade Reserve	25-30
Precinct 4	Bellevue	Kyora Parade Reserve	25-30
Precinct 5	Balwyn North	Leigh Park	31-34
Precinct 6	North Balwyn	Koonung Creek Reserve	35-38
Precinct 7	Kew East	Stradbroke Park	39-41
Precinct 8	Balwyn	Macleay Park	42-47
Precinct 8	Balwyn	Hislop Park	42-47
Precinct 8	Balwyn	Eva Tilley Reserve	42-47
Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	Greythorn Park	48-54
Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	Jacka Street Reserve	48-54
Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	Gordon Barnard Reserve	48-54

Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Reserve Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Precinct 11	Kew	Victoria Park (High Street)	55-67
Precinct 11	Kew	Victoria Park (Adeney Avenue)	55-67
Precinct 11	Kew	Victoria Park (Parkhill Road)	55-67
Precinct 11	Kew	Outer Circle Linear Park (Campbell Street)	55-67
Precinct 11	Kew	Outer Circle Linear Park (Argyle Road)	55-67
Precinct 12	Balwyn	Outer Circle Linear Park (Whitehorse Road)	68-79
Precinct 12	Balwyn	King Street Chain	68-79
Precinct 12	Balwyn	Gordon Street Reserve	68-79
Precinct 12	Balwyn	Hilda/Knot Street Reserve	68-79
Precinct 13	Balwyn	Beckett Park	80-85
Precinct 13	Balwyn	Minifie Park	80-85
Precinct 13A	Mont Albert	Mont Albert Park	86-88
Precincts 14 & 15A	Kew	Foley Reserve	89-91
Precinct 15	Kew	Fenton Reserve	92-97
Precinct 15	Kew	Alexandra Gardens	92-97
Precinct 16	Kew	Kellett Reserve	98-105
Precinct 16	Kew	Reservoir Reserve	98-105
Precinct 17	Deepdene/Canterbury	Norway Reserve	106-108
Precinct 18	Surrey Hills	Empress Road Reserve	109-115

Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Reserve Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Precinct 18	Surrey Hills	Canterbury Sports Ground	109-115
Precinct 19	Hawthorn/Yarra	Yarra Bank Reserve	116-122
Precinct 19	Hawthorn/Yarra	Pridmore Park	116-122
Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	St. James Park	123-133
Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	Mason Street Reserve	123-133
Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	Fashoda Street Reserve	123-133
Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	Smart Street Reserve	123-133
Precinct 21	Hawthorn	L.E. Bray Reserve	134-139
Precinct 21	Hawthorn	Grace Park	134-139
Precinct 22	Hawthorn	Hull Street Reserve	140-144
Precinct 22	Hawthorn	Central Gardens	140-144
Precinct 23	Hawthorn East	Victoria Road Reserve	145-150
Precinct 23	Hawthorn East	Rathmines/Sir William Angliss Reserve	145-150
Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	Boroondara Park	151-160
Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	Read Gardens	151-160
Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	Chaucer Crescent Reserve	151-160
Precincts 25 & 26	Hawthorn	Morang Road Reserve	161-165
Precinct 27	Hawthorn	Scullin Park	166-168
Precinct 28	Hawthorn	Symonds Street Reserve	169-172
Precincts 29 & 30	Hawthorn/Camberwell	Brinsley Road Reserve	173
Precinct 31	Canterbury	Matlock Street Reserve	174-180

Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Reserve Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Precinct 31	Canterbury	Riversdale Park	174-180
Precinct 32	Canterbury	South Surrey Park	181-187
Precinct 32	Canterbury	Mary McKillop Reserve	181-187
Precinct 33	Hawthorn	Fairview Park	188-190
Precinct 34	Hawthorn	H.A. Smith Reserve	191-195
Precinct 35 & 35A	Hawthorn East	Anderson Park	196-201
Precinct 35 & 35A	Hawthorn East	Cato Park	196-201
Precinct 36	Camberwell	Bowen Gardens	202-206
Precinct 36	Camberwell	Radnor Street Reserve	202-206
Precinct 37	Camberwell	Trafalgar Road Reserve	207-214
Precinct 37	Camberwell	Willison Park	207-214
Precinct 37	Camberwell	Murdoch Street Reserve	207-214
Precinct 37	Camberwell	Fordham Gardens	207-214
Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	Frog Hollow Reserve	215-221
Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	Fordham Avenue Reserve	215-221
Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	Hartwell Station Reserve	215-221
Precinct 39	Camberwell	Highfield Park	222-234
Precinct 39	Camberwell	Lynden Park	222-234
Precinct 39	Camberwell	Cooper Reserve	222-234
Precinct 39	Camberwell	Through Road Reserve	222-234
Precinct 40	Glen Iris	Burke Road South Reserve	235-240

Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Reserve Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Precinct 40	Glen Iris	Sinclair Avenue Reserve	235-240
Precinct 41	Glen Iris	Howard Dawson Reserve	241-246
Precinct 41	Glen Iris	Nettleton Park	241-246
Precinct 42	Glen Iris	Ferndale Park	247-251
Precinct 42	Glen Iris	Summerhill Park	247-251
Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	Hartwell Sports Ground	252-265
Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	Burwood Reserve	252-265
Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	Madeline Street Reserve	252-265
Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	Liston Street Reserve	252-265
Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	Ashburton Park	252-265
Precinct 44	Ashburton West	Watson Park	266-273
Precinct 44	Ashburton West	Winton Road Reserve	266-273
Precinct 44	Ashburton West	Dorothy Laver Reserve (Saxby Road)	266-273
Precinct 45	Ashburton East	Warner Reserve	274-283
Precinct 45	Ashburton East	Markham Reserve	274-283
Precinct 45	Ashburton East	Victory Boulevard Reserve	274-283

Appendix 2: Alphabetical listing of reserves, cross-referenced by precinct and page number

Reserve Name	Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Alexandra Gardens	Precinct 15	Kew	92-97
Anderson Park	Precinct 35 & 35A	Hawthorn East	196-201
Ashburton Park	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	252-265
Beckett Park	Precinct 13	Balwyn	80-85
Boroondara Park	Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	151-160
Bowen Gardens	Precinct 36	Camberwell	202-206
Brinsley Road Reserve	Precincts 29 & 30	Hawthorn/Camberwell	173
Burke Road South Reserve	Precinct 40	Glen Iris	235-240
Burwood Reserve	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	252-265
Canterbury Sports Ground	Precinct 18	Surrey Hills	109-115
Cascade Reserve	Precinct 4	Bellevue	25-30
Cato Park	Precinct 35 & 35A	Hawthorn East	196-201
Central Gardens	Precinct 22	Hawthorn	140-144
Chaucer Crescent Reserve	Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	151-160
Cooper Reserve	Precinct 39	Camberwell	222-234
Dorothy Laver Reserve (Saxby Road)	Precinct 44	Ashburton West	266-273
Eglinton Reserve	Precinct 2	Kew	4-10
Empress Road Reserve	Precinct 18	Surrey Hills	109-115
Eva Tilley Reserve	Precinct 8	Balwyn	42-47
Fairview Park	Precinct 33	Hawthorn	188-190

Reserve Name	Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Fashoda Street Reserve	Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	123-133
Fenton Reserve	Precinct 15	Kew	92-97
Ferndale Park	Precinct 42	Glen Iris	247-251
Foley Reserve	Precincts 14 & 15A	Kew	89-91
Fordham Avenue Reserve	Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	215-221
Fordham Gardens	Precinct 37	Camberwell	207-214
Frog Hollow Reserve	Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	215-221
Gordon Barnard Reserve	Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	48-54
Gordon Street Reserve	Precinct 12	Balwyn	68-79
Grace Park	Precinct 21	Hawthorn	134-139
Greythorn Park	Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	48-54
H.A. Smith Reserve	Precinct 34	Hawthorn	191-195
Harrison Reserve	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Hartwell Sports Ground	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	252-265
Hartwell Station Reserve	Precinct 38	Camberwell/Hartwell	215-221
Hay's Paddock	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Highfield Park	Precinct 39	Camberwell	222-234
Hilda/Knot Street Reserve	Precinct 12	Balwyn	68-79
Hislop Park	Precinct 8	Balwyn	42-47
Howard Dawson Reserve	Precinct 41	Glen Iris	241-246
Hull Street Reserve	Precinct 22	Hawthorn	140-144

Reserve Name	Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Hyde Park	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Jack O'Toole Reserve	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Jacka Street Reserve	Precincts 9 & 10	Greythorn	48-54
Kate Campbell Reserve	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Kellett Reserve	Precinct 16	Kew	98-105
King Street Chain	Precinct 12	Balwyn	68-79
Koonung Creek Reserve	Precinct 6	North Balwyn	35-38
Kyora Parade Reserve	Precinct 4	Bellevue	25-30
L.E. Bray Reserve	Precinct 21	Hawthorn	134-139
Leigh Park	Precinct 5	Balwyn North	31-34
Liston Street Reserve	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	252-265
Lynden Park	Precinct 39	Camberwell	222-234
Macleay Park	Precinct 8	Balwyn	42-47
Madeline Street Reserve	Precinct 43	Glen Iris/Burwood	252-265
Markham Reserve	Precinct 45	Ashburton East	274-283
Mary McKillop Reserve	Precinct 32	Canterbury	181-187
Mason Street Reserve	Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	123-133
Matlock Street Reserve	Precinct 31	Canterbury	174-180
Minifie Park	Precinct 13	Balwyn	80-85
Mont Albert Park	Precinct 13A	Mont Albert	86-88
Morang Road Reserve	Precincts 25 & 26	Hawthorn	161-165
Murdoch Street Reserve	Precinct 37	Camberwell	207-214
Nettleton Park	Precinct 41	Glen Iris	241-246

Reserve Name	Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Norway Reserve	Precinct 17	Deepdene/Canterbury	106-108
Outer Circle Linear Park (Argyle Road)	Precinct 11	Kew	55-67
Outer Circle Linear Park (Campbell Street)	Precinct 11	Kew	55-67
Outer Circle Linear Park (Whitehorse Road)	Precinct 12	Balwyn	68-79
Peel Street Reserve	Precinct 2	Kew	4-10
Pridmore Park	Precinct 19	Hawthorn/Yarra	116-122
Radnor Street Reserve	Precinct 36	Camberwell	202-206
Rathmines/Sir William Angliss Reserve	Precinct 23	Hawthorn East	145-150
Read Gardens	Precinct 24	Camberwell/Canterbury	151-160
Reservoir Reserve	Precinct 16	Kew	98-105
Riversdale Park	Precinct 31	Canterbury	174-180
Scullin Park	Precinct 27	Hawthorn	166-168
Sinclair Avenue Reserve	Precinct 40	Glen Iris	235-240
Sir William Street Reserve	Precinct 1	Studley Park	1-3
Smart Street Reserve	Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	123-133
South Surrey Park	Precinct 32	Canterbury	181-187
St. James Park	Precinct 20	Hawthorn West	123-133
Stradbroke Park	Precinct 7	Kew East	39-41
Summerhill Park	Precinct 42	Glen Iris	247-251
Symonds Street Reserve	Precinct 28	Hawthorn	169-172
Through Road Reserve	Precinct 39	Camberwell	222-234

Reserve Name	Precinct Number	Suburb Name	Page range (Vol. 2)
Trafalgar Road Reserve	Precinct 37	Camberwell	207-214
Victoria Park (Adeney Avenue)	Precinct 11	Kew	55-67
Victoria Park (High Street)	Precinct 11	Kew	55-67
Victoria Park (Parkhill Road)	Precinct 11	Kew	55-67
Victoria Road Reserve	Precinct 23	Hawthorn East	145-150
Victory Boulevard Reserve	Precinct 45	Ashburton East	274-283
Warner Reserve	Precinct 45	Ashburton East	274-283
Watson Park	Precinct 44	Ashburton West	266-273
Willison Park	Precinct 37	Camberwell	207-214
Windella Avenue Reserve	Precinct 3	Kew East	11-24
Winton Road Reserve	Precinct 44	Ashburton West	266-273
Yarra Bank Reserve	Precinct 19	Hawthorn/Yarra	116-122