



Playground Strategy



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Section1. Background

1.1 Purpose and Scope of Strategy

This Playground Strategy is intended to guide the provision of playground facilities and infrastructure in public open space in the City of Port Philip for the next 5 years.

The strategy presents a precinct analysis of playground provision and an audit of all playgrounds in terms of general condition and play value. A list of priority capital works is included in the strategy as a 5 year program.

The Strategy does not address ongoing maintenance of playgrounds but is intended to provide the strategic direction for provision and standards of playgrounds and related infrastructure. Routine maintenance of playgrounds is managed by Parks and Open Spaces maintenance contracts as per recommendations of regular audits by Ray Hutchison Associates.

The Strategy also discusses issues related to playground management such as fences, shade, dogs, adventure playgrounds and customer satisfaction.

1.2 Vision Statement for City of Port Phillip

The City of Port Phillip is a place with a diverse range of accessible play-spaces that provide opportunities for all children and their families to play safely and creatively in public open space. Playgrounds are a key component of our parklands and will reflect the high quality of public open spaces across the city.

1.3 Definition of playground

The definition of playgrounds for the purpose of this Strategy is; Play-spaces on public open space owned and managed by the City of Port Phillip, including 2 supervised adventure playgrounds at South Melbourne and St Kilda, Graham St skate park and free to public ball play areas.

1.4 The Value of Play

Playgrounds are a vital link to nature and open space for children in highly developed cities. The reduction of private space has led to an increasing need for public parks and play facilities. It is vital that Council provide children with the opportunity to learn through play to assist social and developmental growth.

Playgrounds in public open space provide children with both structured and self directed play experiences. Our local, neighborhood and regional play facilities support varied play experiences. The parks and open space that the playgrounds sit within, link children to nature and offer families with limited private space the opportunity to enjoy public beach, urban and lakeside environments.

This strategy provides a framework for the provision of high quality, sustainable playgrounds facilitated through the annual capital works program. The aim is to provide children with greater opportunity for both interactive self-directed play and unstructured and structured play experiences.

1.5 The Role of Public Open Spaces and Playgrounds for Children

Public open space and playgrounds provide an outlet for children to explore the outdoors and interact with others both with and without adult supervision. The location and design of play spaces should encourage children to explore and imagine their own worlds, through the creative use of landscape materials, introduction of sculptural pieces. Open ended play structures need to be introduced where appropriate.

Public play spaces and playgrounds should afford children the opportunity to socialise with others and create their own unique play experience.

Other public open space trends also need to be considered in response to publicly provided play spaces. High density living and growing inner city populations, diminish opportunities for exploration of natural or wild spaces. Parks in public spaces need to provide opportunity for learning skills such as ball games, bike riding, climbing, balancing and imaginative play.

The loss of private gardens and local “wilderness” places has been recently reflected in play space design. Botanical gardens often incorporate children’s play gardens as witnessed at the Ian Potter Foundation Children’s Garden in Melbourne and Geelong Botanical Gardens Children’s Play Space.

Land managers are required to provide parks, including playgrounds that are accessible for all. The definition of access for all abilities playgrounds is variable, but the intent is to provide public play spaces that do not exclude children and families of all abilities.

PRAV (Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria) and Sport Recreation Victoria are currently undertaking a study of Accessible Playgrounds. The results of this report (due in November 2006) will give some useful guidance regarding accessibility of playgrounds.

Playgrounds such as Hays Paddock in Kew, was originally designed as an accessible play space, but has proved to be extremely popular with all families across Melbourne due to its superior design and setting.

*The City of Port Phillip Disability Action Plan states;
The City of Port Phillip is committed to the progressive removal of barriers to access by people with a disability in the following areas:
physical access, communication, service provision and participation*

The popularity of St Kilda and South Melbourne Adventure Playgrounds provides evidence that families are willing to travel long distances for quality play experiences for their children. The unique design and diverse experiences provided by the Adventure Playgrounds is testament to the demand for child focused play spaces in Melbourne.

Currently we have 51 playgrounds managed by council in public open space. There are 17 playgrounds in council managed childcare centers. Most playground equipment in centers is portable while some are composed of permanent play equipment.

1.6 City of Port Phillip Policy

The City of Port Phillip Municipal Early Learning Years Plan (MEYP) (2005-2008) provides related policy direction for this strategy;

(MEYP) Principle 2, Valuing Play

An essential ingredient of childhood is play. Children's play is a rich and important experience. Five Principles have been identified to underpin Councils actions in respect to the creation of a child friendly city.

- 1. Honoring Childhood*
- 2. Valuing Play*
- 3. Respecting Children as Active Citizens*
- 4. A Child's Right to Grow in Healthy and Supportive Environments*
- 5. The Importance of Family*

1.7 Playgrounds in context of Public Open Space

The City of Port Phillip Open Space Strategy suggests that a Social Family Recreation facility be accessible within a walkable 400m distance of every residence within the city. Playgrounds form a key element of Social Family Recreation spaces and as such should be provided within walkable distance of all residences in the city.

Playgrounds have been classified as either local, neighborhood or regional. At a minimum, a local playground will be available to all residences within reasonable walking distance. Neighborhood playgrounds will be provided within a ten minute drive of all residences while regional playgrounds will be provided at appropriate locations to serve local tourist visitation.

Local: playgrounds will provide a small play space for one age group with basic facilities to cater for short stays (1 hour or less) and small numbers of visitors.

Neighborhood: playgrounds will provide a variety of play structures and facilities to cater for mixed age groups, for moderate visitation and medium term stays (2 – 3 hours).

Regional: playgrounds provide specialised play experiences for mixed aged groups and associated facilities such as BBQ, toilets, and seating to cater for large groups and/or longer stays (3+ hours).

A summary for the provision of playgrounds across this city in terms of the standard, is the provision of one playground within 400 metres of each residence. Each resident will have access to either a local, neighborhood or regional level playground within a 400 metre distance from their home. Exceptions to this standard is Elwood and Ripponlea (in part), East St Kilda (in part) and South Melbourne (in part).

Playgrounds owned by other land managers do exist in some of the areas devoid of Council play spaces, these areas are those close to Elwood Primary School, Elsternwick Park, Albert Park Lake and Park Towers Estate.

Areas without playgrounds of any type are;

- East St Kilda bounded by Alma Rd, Hotham/Balaclava and Orrong Rds.
- Ripponlea south of Glen Eira Rd.
- Port Melbourne south of Graham St

1.8 Guiding Principles for the Provision of Playgrounds in Port Phillip

- Children are a valued part of our community and a large proportion of users of local public open space
- Inventive and creative play is to be encouraged
- City of Port Phillip is a major provider of children's play facilities in public open space hence we need to be responsive to our community
- The more variety and diversity in play opportunities the better for children's development
- The play activity itself should be the driver of play space design, not other attributes such as aesthetics, costs and ease of maintenance and ease of installation.
- Physical activity is to be encouraged
- Adult participation in play needs to be included in the design of play spaces

- Successful play spaces are those set within attractive environments with shade, seating, drinking and toilet access, access for all.
- Interaction with landscape elements is an important part of child's play

1.9 Findings of recent research and customer feedback

Metropolis Research was engaged in January 2006 to survey users and families with young children in the city to ascertain the level of satisfaction with Council provided playgrounds in parks.

The survey interviewed 243 residents in 20 playgrounds. The sample was made up of some selected and some randomly chosen playgrounds. Interviews were conducted over a 4-week period.

Feedback from children and families was also referenced in the formulation of this strategy. Data from previous consultation with children related to preferences in playground design was incorporated into the principles and strategic direction. Customer feedback on specific playgrounds was considered in establishing recommendations for individual playgrounds.

Key findings of the survey are;

- The St Kilda Adventure Playground recorded the highest number of patrons per hour, followed by the St Vincents Gardens playground. Of those surveyed, the lowest visitation was recorded at HR Johnson and Morris Reserve.
- Playgrounds classified as regional or neighbourhood recorded higher visits than local playgrounds.
- About one third of visitors to playgrounds reside in the City of Port Phillip.
- Most respondents visited playgrounds daily or weekly. The median age of children visiting was 4.6 years old.

- The median number of children in a visiting group was 2.
- One fifth of visitors to playgrounds did not have children with them, but use the facility for exercise, reading or relaxing. About 50% of visitors stay between 30 minutes to 1 hour. Visitors to regional playgrounds stay longer.
- Parent's reasons for choosing a particular playground are often proximity to home and shade (note, summer survey).
- Quality of play equipment is more important to visitors of regional playgrounds than local ones.
- The most popular component of playgrounds is swings. (Over 80%)
- High levels of dissatisfaction were recorded in relation to furniture and facilities at play spaces.
- Most popular playgrounds were nominated as St Kilda Playground and Plum Garland.
- Albert Park Reserve playground was a popular non-council provided playground within the study area.
- The St Kilda Adventure playground and the foreshore facilities attract visitors from a wide range of Melbourne suburbs and tourists.
- 30% of respondents visit playgrounds as part of a group.

Recommendations drawn from survey;

1. The foreshore playgrounds (especially St Kilda) should be designed to cater for tourist visitation and provide a variety of quality play experiences. Ancillary facilities such as furniture, landscape, drinking, toilets should be with in easy access to playgrounds and support longer visits of groups.
2. The popularity of swings should be noted. A variety of swings should be available in all precincts to cater for all ages.
3. Ancillary facilities should be monitored at all playgrounds, this includes shade trees, seating close to the play equipment, drinking fountains, dog tie up posts, tables.
4. Where size of playground allows, provide experiences for a broad age range of children within a single play space to allow for easy supervision of more than one child.
5. Provide seating and other facilities suitable for groups of users. (Ie large size tables and seating.)
6. Continue to provide quality playgrounds in close proximity to all residences. Proximity to shops, cafes and schools is also important for location of playgrounds.
7. The 2005 Integrated Open Space Services study confirmed that Social/Family activities account for 39% of reasons for visiting local parks.

Section 2. Playgrounds in Port Phillip

2.1 Supply and Location of Playgrounds

The demographics of the City of Port Phillip suggest that playgrounds are required equally across the city to provide for families and visitors with children.

Population and household forecasts to 2016 suggest that growth in the 0 to 5 age group and the 5 to 11 years age group is concentrated in the areas of Elwood Ripponlea, South Melbourne, Port Melbourne, Middle Park and Albert Park. Modest increases in these age groups are expected in most areas to 2016 although Middle Park- Albert Park is forecast to have a minor decrease. The number of families with children is anticipated to increase moderately between 2001 and 2016 most notably in Port Melbourne.

In addition to the local population, the City of Port Phillip attracts a large number of visitors, particularly to the foreshore areas. The foreshore currently has 7 playgrounds between Elwood and Sandridge Beach. Most of these have high use year round with the exception of the small playground near Sandridge Lifesaving Club. The foreshore areas of St Kilda and Elwood attract high regional visitation and the quality of play-spaces at these locations should reflect this type of activity.

2.2 Asset Management of playgrounds

The total playground asset managed by Council is currently valued at \$1,473,696. This includes playgrounds at all Council managed childcare centers, kindergartens and parks, but not the two Adventure Playgrounds.

The Adventure Playgrounds have a contractor employed at a cost of \$30,000 per year this is for labor only and the level of works undertaken is day to day maintenance on existing play equipment. An additional \$5,000 is spent on materials for maintenance.

Council currently spends an average of \$40,000 per year on maintenance of playground equipment and an additional \$1,500 on shade sails repairs.

The maintenance of the 17 childcare playgrounds is a \$50,000 contract managed by Parks.

Playground units are assumed to have a useful life of 15 years, but at 10 years a special report from safety auditors is recommended.

Some elements, such as metal swings may operate safely for many years, subject to regular inspection. Wooden play units require regular inspection and maintenance and generally would not survive beyond 15 years.

Australian Standards

All Council owned playgrounds are inspected quarterly to assess their condition in relation to *Australian Standards for Playground Surfacing, Equipment, Design and Construction*, by Ray Hutchison and Associates. Regular reports on all elements of playgrounds are lodged with the Co-coordinator of Parks and Open Spaces. All urgent works are automatically referred to maintenance teams for immediate action. Safety audits include inspection of soft fall, seating and any landscape elements.

The Adventure Playgrounds are supervised play-spaces and are assessed against the recently completed *Australian Government Funded Adventure Playgrounds Physical and Service Guidelines 2006*. Upgrades are in progress at Skinners and St Kilda Adventure Playgrounds to bring both play-spaces up to standard.

Playgrounds in City of Port Phillip Child Care Centers

Currently these playgrounds are maintained by Council in response to condition rating by Ray Hutchison. The replacement of these assets are not currently flagged by these reports, but could in the future. Any capital replacement requirements to childcare playgrounds should be noted and reported to the Manager of Children's Services.

Parent sponsored play facilities need to be project managed by Asset Planning or Asset Design and Delivery to ensure compliance with Australian Standards.

2.3 District Analysis of Playgrounds

2.3.1 South Melbourne District

The South Melbourne District has 15 playgrounds managed by City of Port Phillip and 2 in Albert Park Reserve managed by Parks Victoria. The community playground at Albert Park off Armstrong St attracts large numbers of local visits, usually as part of a 1 to 3 hour visit to Albert Park.

A playground is located on Park Towers Estate Bank St South Melbourne, on Office of Housing land. This facility includes a basketball half court.

Popular playgrounds are St Vincent Gardens, Plum Garland on the beach and Skinners Adventure Playground in South Melbourne. A number of playgrounds in the district are very small and in low profile areas. Danks St playgrounds are situated in road medians, but are fenced facilities.

The following playgrounds offer limited play value due to the size of land and location;

- Little Page Street
- Little Finlay Street
- Neville Street

Opportunities for teenage or older children are limited in the current suite of playgrounds. A basketball ring exists at Ashworth St play space, but other playgrounds cater largely for younger children.

South Melbourne District Playgrounds – Description and Recommendations					
1	Sol Green Reserve	Nelson Rd	Sth Melb	Ausplay unit age 2003	Has basketball half court, BBQ, drinking fountain, swings x 4. Caters for 5 year olds
2	Lyle & Iffla St	Dorcas St	Sth Melb	Ausplay unit 2005	Upgrade furniture; remove old set of seats close to road. 2-5 yrs age range is appropriate.
3	Sun Playground	St Vincent Gardens	Albert Park	Ausplay unit 1994	Schedule for replacement Yr 4. Retain location and diversity of ages Very popular Needs new seating/tables near playground, dog tie-up, Drinking fountain
4	Gas Works Park	Foote St	Albert Park	Kompan 2004 swings/springers only	Upgrade to increase age range /diversity (post contamination works) Arts theme playground in future
5	Plum Garland	Beaconsfield Pde	Albert Park	Allplay 2003 Kompan 2003	Shade structures to remain
6	Danks St	Victoria St	Albert Park	Ausplay 1991	Needs replacement Yr 3
7	Little Page	Little page st	Albert Park	Omnitech 2005	Not suitable location for park or playground as poor visibility and too small to offer quality play. Recommend review function of space re Open Space Strategy
8	Danks St (Mazda section)	Danks St	South Melbourne	Ausplay 1997	Schedule for replacement along with park landscape works in Yr 3. Mostly for young children
9	Ashworth St	Off McGregor St	Middle Park	Miracle unit 1992	Needs park upgrade Year 3 Retain basketball ring
10	Neville St	Neville St	Middle Park	Kompan unit 1994	Consider viability of park as playground function. Furniture in poor condition. Retain as green space. Unit in poor condition Swing not compliant
11	Crean Reserve	Richardson St	Middle Park	Playspace unit 2005	3- 10 year age range has seats and tables
12	Little Finaly	Little Finlay St	Albert Park	Kompan unit 1994	Consider viability and future as site for playground, very small.
13	Ludwig Stammer Res	Moray St	Sth Melb	Adventure unit 2001	Good example of pocket park in good location – high visibility – good design

14	Eastern Rd	Cnr Eastern Rd & Park St	St Melb	Omnitech 2004 Kompan unit 1995	<p>Park upgrade including playground Year 3. Needs park upgrade and playground in smaller footprint. Make pavilion more attractive.</p> <p>Has dark pavilion but no table, has on site toilet. In close proximity to Child Care Centre Park has potential for greater local use with picnic and/or BBQ facilities, as high density housing in area.</p>
15	Skidders Adventure Playground	Dorcas St	Sth Melb	Established 1978 as a supervised play facility. Funded by Federal Govt. (YouthLinx) as playground for young people aged 5-12 for those in socio-economic need	<p>Has a variety of play structures in process of up grade by City of Port Phillip. Note recent Adventure Playgrounds Physical and Service Guidelines, 2006. Planned upgrades include new indoor activity centre. Requires continued upgrades to bring equipment to standards as per Adventure Playground Guidelines</p> <p>Continue with upgrades to achieve standards as per Guidelines</p>
	Playground removals				
	Cardigan Place	Albert Park	2004		
	Danks Withers	Albert Park	2002		

Recommendations for South Melbourne district

South Melbourne

Eastern Road should be developed to become main parkland for play in South Melbourne district, with new rationalised playground in smaller footprint, improved shelter with BBQ or picnic facilities and more green space.

Continue to upgrade Skinners Adventure Playground and promote as play-space for local children between 5 – 12 years, as per Federal funding.

The open space at Park Towers is owned and managed by Department Human Services and is subject to a bid to provide a community garden in 06/07. City of Port Phillip could advocate for improved open space outcomes at this site as part of planned building and open space upgrades.

Albert Park

The most used playground in this area is St Vincent's Gardens. This playground should have improved seating for young families who often use this facility. The location of playground should remain as is, re recommendations in St Vincent's Gardens Conservation Plan.

Two very small lots of land in Albert Park provide very limited play value due to the size of land on which they sit (approximately 200 square metres) Little Page St reserve and Little Finlay St offer very limited play experience and poor visibility and surveillance. It was revealed during the Metropolis survey of playgrounds in early 2006, that South Melbourne Police regularly patrol these small playgrounds.

Consider future of Little Page as useful public open space by undertaking an audit of space. Superior play facilities are provided within 300metres at Plum Garland and 150 metres at Danks St.

Consider future of Little Finlay as play-space but retain as greenspace.

Upgrades to Danks St Playgrounds including landscaping of median will provide quality play-spaces in this precinct.

Middle Park

Community Playground at Albert Park is a popular local playground accessible via Armstrong St underpass.

Upgrade Ashworth Reserve and retain basketball space for older children.

Consider value of Neville St as functional POS. Retain as small greenspace with picnic facilities.

2.3.2 St Kilda District

There are a large number of playgrounds in the St Kilda District offering a variety of play experiences from Adventure Playground to small local playgrounds. Some of the high profile sites do not have high quality play spaces, such as Catani Gardens and the St Kilda Botanical Gardens. Visitation at both these sites justifies higher quality play spaces and visitor facilities.

St Kilda Adventure Playground continues to be one of the city's most popular play destinations upgrades to this play space should continue as planned to meet Guidelines and facilitate large visitation and improved visitor facilities.

Elwood

Elwood has 5 playgrounds 4 of which are on the foreshore. Clarke St reserve is the only playground away from the beach in this suburb. Elsternwick Park, although outside the municipality provides good quality local play facilities within easy walking distance of Elwood.

Ripponlea

Only one playground at the Railway station in Morris St for younger children and should be retained.

St Kilda East

Has two playgrounds at Alma Park and Hewison Reserve. Alma Park has a unique play space for both junior and senior age groups as well as water play and tree house. Hewison provides a fenced junior playground and high standard landscaping and furniture.

St Kilda

St Kilda District has 13 playgrounds, 2 of which are situated on the foreshore. Catani Gardens playground is very outdated and should be upgraded to provide for longer stays and provide for groups and older children. Associated facilities should reflect foreshore visitation and include picnic facilities, shelter, shade and drinking fountains.

Catani playgrounds footprint could be smaller, but should remain on the existing site. Alma Park will continue to provide the most comprehensive play experiences for the district, with a unique playground for a variety of ages along with BBQ and water play facilities.

William St Reserve playground is at the end of its useful life and should be replaced as soon as possible. St Kilda Botanic Gardens playground should be upgraded to provide a higher standard and variety of play for this popular park. All Elwood playgrounds are in good condition and provide high quality play and high visitation.

St Kilda District

1	HR Johnson Reserve	Cowderoy St		Swings only, 1974	Poor use, remove when end of life and not replace play equipment leave as small passive park.
2	Jacoby Reserve	Cowderoy St	St Kilda	1992 Ausplay	Small popular playground near café. Equipment should be replaced in Year 2 and include sandpit and other equipment for young children. Furniture should be updated and sight lines from café deck retained.
3	Catani Reserve	Beaconsfield Pde	St Kilda	Evans unit 1986	Replace with new equipment in smaller footprint close to BBQ and shelter. Consider furniture for large groups and equipment for groups Upgrade in Year 2
4	Church Square	Church Sq	St Kilda	Allplay 2001	Small playground for younger children on church land. Formal agreement needed re shared use of land.
5	Rotary/ Stokehouse	Jacka Boulevard	St Kilda	Omnitech 2002	Popular playground for young children
6	Renfrey Gardens		St Kilda	Ausplay 1996 Cubby 2004	Increase diversity of play to cater for range of ages when upgraded. Update furniture
7	Peanut Farm Reserve			Basketball court with netball ring	Link Peanut reserve with Renfrey Gardens.
8	Moran Reserve			Exercise unit Omnitech steel	At end of life replace with outdoor gym equip. Retain popular units
9	Point Ormond	Point Ormond Rd	Elwood	Kompan 1996	Shade sails. Junior and senior areas Upgrade seating and picnic facilities

10	Elwood Beach House		Elwood	1991-2004	Mainly younger children. Picnic facilities in landscaped setting Architect designed and standard equipment mix in fenced facility
11	Elwood Park south		Elwood	Api 2000 Swings 1986	Shade sails over large playground for older children; complements play space at Beach House Café. BBQs nearby
13	Burnett Grey Gardens	Morres St Ripponlea		Adventure Play 1998	Small play space near station.
14	Clarke Reserve	Clarke st Elwood			2005 upgrade
15	St Kilda Botanical Gardens			1977 steel climbing units 2003 elements	Introduce landscape playgarden setting with traditional play elements Reduce footprint of playground Upgrade Year 4
16	Talbot Reserve	Barkly St		Ausplay 2004	Create hard surface under basketball ring as per resident requests.
17	Waterloo Crescent			Allplay 2002	Long block with narrow frontage BBQ rubber surface playground unity
18	Charnwood Rd			Ausplay 1994	Small playunit in landscaped space used as sitting space park.
19	Jim Duggan Reserve	Marriot St St Kilda		2003 timber play unit	Neighbourhood park with basketball half court, BBQ picnic facilities Green spaces
20	Pakington St			2000 Kompan	Small park as pedestrian link local play space for younger children
21	William St	Balaclava		1993	Replace play unit and reduce footprint. Upgrade Year 1

22	Alma Park East	Alma Rd	St Kilda East	Mary Jeavons 2005	Upgrade senior playground Year 1 Major place space for district for wide age range and longer visits.
	St Kilda Adventure Playgrounds	Grey St Reserve	St Kilda	Established as a supervised play facility. Funded by Federal Govt. (YouthLinx) as playground for young people aged 5-12 for those in socio-economic need	Has a variety of play structures in process of upgrade by City of Port Phillip. Note recent Adventure Playgrounds Physical and Service Guidelines, 2006. Requires continued upgrades to bring equipment to standards as per Adventure Playground Guidelines Continue with upgrades to achieve standards as per Guidelines

Recommendations for St Kilda District

Replace William St playground as soon as possible as the unit is at the end of its useful life. (Parts removed due to safety in November 2006).

Upgrade Catani Gardens make its footprint smaller in consort with St Kilda's Edge project.

Upgrade St Kilda Botanic Gardens

Continue to upgrade the Adventure Playground

Complete Alma Park senior playground upgrade

2.3.3 Port Melbourne District

Discussion of Port Melbourne District

There are currently 14 playgrounds in this district. Many are reaching the end of their useful life. There is no playground in Port Melbourne that caters for longer stays for all ages. Garden City Reserve should be upgraded to provide a neighbourhood play space for greater Port Melbourne.

There is no playground south of Graham St in Port Melbourne, but the demographics of apartment dwellings would suggest that playgrounds may not be in high demand.

Playgrounds are available at Swallow St and Edwards Park.

Retain informal BMX space at Turville Place for bikes using mounds to complement Graham St Skate Park underpass.

Port Melbourne District

1	Murphy Reserve	Williamstown Rd	Port Melbourne	1984 Alcock unit Status - local	Programmed for replacement in Yr 1. Keep as local playground mainly for use with sporting club use. To complement larger play space at Garden City Reserve. Main focus for younger children.
2	Cyril Letts	Edwards Ave	Garden City	1997 Forpark unit Status- local	Retain as small playground for younger children at same site. Move away from roads at next upgrade.
3	Buckingham Reserve	Lind and Enterprise Ave	Garden City	Ausplay unit 1996 Status- local	Upgrade in Yr 5 to provide equipment for older children. Provide paths and seating.
4	Sandridge Lifesaving Club	The Boulevard	Garden City	 Status - local	Move west to accommodate new pedestrian path across road to beach. Provide clear site lines to BBQ from playground.
5	Julier Reserve	Gellibrand Rd	Garden City	1996 Allplay Status - local	Upgrade in yr 5 retain as play space for wide variety of ages. Need to plant shade trees Has free to public basketball courts, toilets and drinking tap on site. Large green area,
7	Morris Reserve	Ross St	Port Melbourne	At tennis courts	Remove and not replace as there is an alternative play space at Railway Cres
8	Railway Crescent Reserve	Swallow St	Port Melbourne	Prime time 1996 Local Park Status	Small playground for variety of ages. Retain in same location
9	Graham St Skate	Swallow St	Port Melbourne	Installed 2000	Small skate park under Graham St

	Park				underpass. For use by younger children and learners.
10	Walter Reserve	Evans/ Bridge St	Port Melbourne	Omnitech 2004 Local Park Status	New playground caters for mixed age groups.
11	George Sangster Reserve	Princes /Raglan Sts	Port Melbourne	Kompan unit 1995 Local Park Status	Retain as small site for young children, remove fence. Upgrade with swings and creative play unit such as cubbie house. Integrate into park.
12	Crichton Reserve	Princes St	Port Melbourne	Ausplay unit 2000 Local Park Status	Retain as playground for variety of ages
13	Edwards Park	Dow St	Port Melbourne	Adventure play unit 2002 Neighborhood Park Status	Retain as neighbourhood park for this district. Shade sails not required in long term
14	Beacon Vista Reserve	Beacon Vista	Beacon Cove	Megatoy swings and unit. Local Park Status	Very small playground installed by developer. Only caters for young children for short stays as has limited play value.
15	Westport Foreshore	The	Garden City	Removed 1999	Playground removed

Section 3

3.1 Adventure Playgrounds – Issues and Future Direction

Background to Adventure Playgrounds

Definition

For the purpose of this report the definition of Adventure Playground is one receiving funding from the Youthlink program, Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA).

An adventure Playground is a fully supervised informal playground where children can develop their own ideas of play and where they are given an opportunity to undertake individual or group activities that would not be otherwise available to them.

Adventure playgrounds differ from public playgrounds for the following reasons:

- They are only open at certain times.
- Children are supervised at all times the playground is open.
- Generally there is less emphasis on the provision of manufactured play equipment.
- There is a greater emphasis on creative, social and cognitive play types. This could be through unstructured experimental play or through the delivery of structured activities.
- Activities with greater elements of risk are acceptable and encouraged within the boundaries of a safe community space.
- They provide an increased level of engagement with the community and family.
- They are often referred to as communal backyards.
- They often have a haphazard, uncoordinated appearance.
- Adventure Playgrounds often incorporate animals, water features, community buildings and informal landscapes.

Background

The Port Phillip Adventure Playgrounds are two of five existing in Australia and have been operating for over 25 years.

The adventure playgrounds receive annual funding from FaCSIA and are currently receiving \$226,000. The funding is to provide a service to local families and their children aged 5 –12 years that would usually be unable to access cultural and recreational activities due to social or financial constraints. The playgrounds provide referral services for young people and their families.

The playgrounds are also funded by the City of Port Phillip and receive payments for group visits, parties and some donations from the community.

The Adventure playgrounds at South Melbourne and St Kilda are open after school hours, weekends and during school holidays. The Adventure playgrounds offer supervised and unsupervised play facilities and structured programs.

Early in 2006 a Physical and Service Guidelines for Federally Funded Adventure Playgrounds document was released with the aim of providing a set of guidelines for the maintenance of infrastructure and provision of services. This document does not replace Australian Standards for the establishment and administration of adventure playgrounds AS25555 (1982) but assists in the maintenance of these unique playgrounds.

A survey of visitors to the two Adventure Playgrounds was conducted by City of Port Phillip playground staff between January and April 2006. The aim of the survey was to determine patterns of use and to measure levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the playgrounds. The survey was held both in school holiday period and school term times.

A summary of findings at Skinners Playground at South Melbourne;

- Skinners operate as a local playground with the majority of its users living in the South Melbourne area in the local housing estates.
- The majority of the children who use the playgrounds are aged 6-12 years and on average visit the playground 5+ times per week.
- During school term 75% of users live within the CoPP, this changes during the school holidays, with only 54% residing within CoPP.
- On average the visitor stay longer than 2 hours, which is reflective of the local children using the playground as a 'backyard'
- The local children site the main reason they attend Skinners as it is their 'home' and own space where they can meet with friends.
- Visitors from outside the local area state that the main attraction to Skinners is the unique environment and play experience.

St Kilda

- The St Kilda Adventure Playground is operating as a regional facility with high visitation numbers indicating it is the most popular playground in the City of Port Phillip.
- During the school term 54% of visitors are from within the CoPP, this changes significantly during school term with 81% of visitors residing outside the CoPP.
- Most visitors use car to visit, which reflects the visitation from across Melbourne, especially in school holidays.
- High number of longer stays, which reflects the long distances, traveled to get to St Kilda Playground and the variety of activities.

- The main age group of children using St Kilda Adventure Playground is 6 to 11 years
- The unique play facilities and environment are the main attraction.
- Word of mouth recommendations are the main way visitors find out about the facility.
- Currently 40,000 people visit St Kilda Adventure Playground per year.
- City of Port Phillip recognises the regional role St Kilda Adventure Playground plays and will explore multiple funding modes, if required to keep this very popular facility open into the future.

Infrastructure issues

- A building audit in 2005 identified a backlog of works required to bring larger items up to standard, works were valued at \$70,000. A further \$23,000 is required to buildings in the sites.
- Implications for the future of Adventure Playgrounds in City of Port Phillip
- The City of Port Phillip is proud of the tradition and achievements of the Adventure Playgrounds and fully appreciates how popular they are for local residents and greater Melbourne.

It is now time to evaluate the future for Adventure Playgrounds. Funding sources need to be assessed now to ensure adequate funds are available to keep both playgrounds in working order and relevant for locals.

Both the Adventure Playgrounds play an important role in providing opportunities to local children who would not otherwise be able to access cultural and recreational activities due to social or financial constraints. This focus on supporting local children should continue.

This is critically important at Skinners, as this provides a safe play space for local children and offers referral services to local agencies that can support the children and their families.

It is recommended that Skinners Playground focus on the local neighborhood while St Kilda functions as a regional facility. Once both playgrounds are restored to meet the recently endorsed guideline standards, future funding models and programs need to be endorsed by Council to ensure the long-term future of both playgrounds.

Section 4

Ideas from other playgrounds:



Photo 1: Princes Park, Carlton, an example of group play with 5 seater swing set which encourages social activity between children at play.



Photo 2: Landscape feature used as "cubby-house" feature at Geelong Botanical Gardens Children's Playground.



Photo 3: Sandpit with water pump at Geelong Botanical Gardens playground



Photo 4: Forest walk at Geelong playground

Section 5

Summary of recommended capital works program 2006-2012:

Priority	Park	Works	
Yr 1			
	Murphy Reserve Port Melb	Upgrade of whole playground and BBQ area	
	Williams St East St Kilda	Replace with new in smaller footprint	
	Adventure Playgrounds Sth Melb and St Kilda	Continued upgrade to meet new guidelines standards	
	Alma Park	Upgrade of senior playground	
Yr 2			
	Jacoby Reserve St Kilda West	Upgrade in same location. Link sightlines with nearby café	
	Catani Gardens St Kilda	Replace with new playground in same site, but smaller footprint	
	Garden City Port Melb	Upgrade of whole playground as major neighbourhood playground.	
Yr 3			
	Danks St – Victoria St Albert Park Danks St Sth Melb	Replace in similar location Replace in similar location	
	Ashworth St Middle Park	Upgrade park setting and playground	
	Eastern Rd St Melb	Upgrade entire park including playground to make major local playground	
Yr 4			
	Botanical Gardens St Kilda	Major new playground in same location, but introduce landscape as play components. Consider retaining some historic elements such as rocket climbing units.	
	St Vincents Gardens	Replace in same location	
Yr 5			
	Te –Arai Reserve East St Kilda	Upgrade playground Do not replace shade sails when at end of life.	
	Julier Reserve Port Melb	Upgrade playground in same location. Plant shade trees	
	Buckingham Reserve	Replace in same location	

Other projects to consider;

- Consider future of Little Page St ,Little Finlay St and Neville St Playgrounds
- Upgrade furniture at Point Ormond playground and BBQ area.
- Create hard surface under basketball ring at Talbot Reserve as requested by residents.
- Move Sandridge playground to accommodate new pedestrian path and crossing, improve access to BBQ and seating
- Review furniture at all playgrounds and upgrade at Foreshore as first priority
- Secure future of Adventure Playgrounds with view to maintaining both playgrounds, Skinners as a local facility and St Kilda as regional.
- St Kilda and Skinners Adventure Playgrounds to focus on providing recreational and cultural activities for local children who would not normally have access due to social or financial constraints.
- Develop a 4-year renewal plan for both Adventure Playgrounds
- Integrate the maintenance of the Adventure Playgrounds into Urban Services programs.
- Investigate provision of natural shade at all playgrounds.
- Investigate exercise stations or circuits at variety of foreshore locations.

Section 6

Discussion of Issues related to Playgrounds

Fencing of playgrounds

Currently City of Port Phillip has several fenced playgrounds at Plum Garland, Beach House Café, Hewison Reserve, Danks St playgrounds, Ashworth St, George Sangster Reserve, Frank and Mary Crean Reserve.

As a matter of policy direction, no additional playgrounds in Port Phillip will be fenced, unless they are located in close proximity to major roads. A balance of fenced and unfenced play spaces is already provided across the city. Fences have the potential to create barriers to entry of playgrounds for disabled or elderly visitors. Feedback from other land managers indicates that fenced playgrounds send a message to parents that dogs and or children maybe left unattended in an enclosed playspace. Many councils around Melbourne are now removing fences from around playgrounds.

Shade in Playgrounds

The provision of shade at playgrounds was raised by many participants in the Playground Survey of March 2006. While it is possible to provide shade sails at some playgrounds, the infrastructure of sails can interfere with the safe function of the playground. Sailcloth is expensive to install and maintain and should only be installed at playgrounds where no other solutions can be provided.

Shade sails are a reasonable means of providing shade at foreshore playgrounds and childcare facilities, but should not be installed at other locations. Shade trees should be a priority for all playgrounds in parkland settings. Trees have the effect of creating shade and attractive settings year round in playgrounds and are the preferred method of shade provision. Care should be taken to place seats and tables in shade at regional playgrounds.

Community awareness of sun protection for young children is probably at a level where most parents do take responsibility for family skin care.

Most visits to local playgrounds are about 20 minutes in duration and therefore do not necessarily warrant shade sail installation. Many shade sails produce unattractive dark and cold spaces in playgrounds, especially in the cooler months. Many other land managers are moving away from installation of shade sails for similar reasons.

Dogs at playgrounds

Dogs are not permitted within 5 meters of Council playgrounds. Popular playgrounds should provide dog tie up poles near playground sites to encourage dog owners to secure their dog and not allow animals to enter playgrounds.

All playgrounds need to be signed to this effect. Opportunities for families to play with their dogs exist at some beaches and off lead parks.

Teenage Play Areas in parks

Currently there are a variety of play spaces for older children, these include, free basketball courts at Peanut Farm and Julier Reserve Port Melbourne, exercise station at Elwood, informal BMX area at Turville Place.

Skate park facilities are play spaces for children, youth and adults. A skate facility is an important play facility that provides opportunities for young people to be physically active in an unstructured environment. Specifically designed skate parks create an alternative to street skating and provide a safe space in which to enjoy the sport

There is currently one skate facility located in Graham Street Port Melbourne. The City of Port Phillip is constructing a second Skate Facility in Albert Park Reserve on the corner of Lakeside Drive and Fitzroy Street. It is anticipated that this facility will be built in 2007. Off road bike paths are provided along the foreshore and Elwood Canal.

While the play facilities above do provide a variety of opportunities, recreation and social facilities in open space for older children should be considered at all new park developments. The provision of wide-open grassed areas should not be underestimated for casual sport use such as ball games.

Exercise Stations in Parks

The only Council managed exercise station is at Moran Reserve in Elwood. This could be upgraded with new outdoor gym equipment now available. Additional exercise stations at Sandridge or Port Melbourne have been requested by community members. The Playground Survey found that many adults without children visit playgrounds; one reason is the use of equipment for exercise or warm-ups.

The foreshore and Albert Park Lake are the most suitable locations for exercise circuits or stations.

References

Metropolis Research Pty Ltd (2006). *Port Phillip City Council Playgrounds Survey*

Adventure Playgrounds in Port Phillip Attendees Survey 2006

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