Playspace Strategy

Guiding the Strategic Development of Playspaces in Sorell

Draft Report

August 2025

ONE EIGHTY
SPORT & LEISURE
SOLUTIONS

Contents

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Background and Purpose

The Sorell Council is developing a playspace strategy to assess its current and future needs for playspaces across the municipality. With 14 playspaces currently, Council maintains a diverse variety of play environments for the passive and active physical activity.

Council has and continues to witness significant growth with a forecast to be that at twice the state average to 2052. To this end, Council has taken a strategic approach to its provision of assets including playspaces to address current and potential shortfalls by commissioning a Playspace Audit and Plan which will:

- identify the current and future needs for play spaces
- set out a framework to guide Council in delivering affordable and contemporary play spaces.
- consider the future development and upgrade of existing play infrastructure within the municipality.
- Identify where new playspaces will be required in new and emerging communities and developments
- provide residents with the parks and play spaces that reflect their expectations,

The play space audit and plan will also:

- investigate best practice models
- Project the future needs of the municipality considering population growth along with changing demographics and future development requirements.
- coordinate the future planning of Sorell's parks and play spaces which require significant maintenance and/or replacement and potentially decommissioning
- develop a set of standards for the allocation of suitable open space for play spaces; and
- consult and understand community expectations.
- align with the State Governments policies for the support, planning, provision and management of open space and recreation, including for the provision of play spaces.
- align with Council strategies and policies including but not limited to:
  - Social Strategy
  - Active Transport Strategy
  - Open Space Policy
  - Open Space Strategy (associated Audit and Implementation Plan),
  - Land Improvement Asset Management Plan and
  - other planning documents recognise the need to plan and coordinate the effective and timely provision of social infrastructure.

1.2 Project Scope

The scope of the strategy is to:

1 Examine all aspects of playspaces in Sorell Council, including:
   - Estimated use.
   - Estimate demands and
   - Identification of potential sites for development and for decommission.
2 Identify cost assumptions which will be included Council's Financial Management Strategy, Land Improvements Asset Management Plan, capital works and maintenance programs.
3 Prepare a consolidated report containing a plan that will guide the development of playspaces
4 Prepare a schedule of works for new and upgrade of existing facilities with priorities, estimated timeframes and cost.

The study aims to provide a balanced response to the demands of existing and future community needs in the municipality. The document is intended to assist with forward planning for the next 10 years, guiding a phased provision of play to 2035.

1.3 Project Objectives

In line with the project scope, are the following are identified objectives:

1. Identify existing playspace facilities and research all data through analysis of existing information.
2. Classify existing play space facilities into appropriate categories and establish a hierarchy of facilities including rationale (e.g. demographics and trends, population).
3. Assess the (local, regional, state and national) trends, current usage, needs and future demand for play space facilities in the region.
4. Identify gaps and overlaps in service provision.
5. Identify and prioritise facility development needs

1.4 Project Methodology

To meet the desired objectives of for the project, a comprehensive approach has been taken to include:

1. Developing a framework for playspaces based on understanding:
   - The importance and benefits of play
   - The different types of play and the hierarchy that council could consider
2. Establishing and understanding access to play based on existing provision, benchmarking, and future population trends
3. Undertaking a thorough audit of playspaces to identify areas of need, oversupply, and potential gaps
4. Consulting with the community and stakeholders to align expectations
5. Developing a comprehensive strategy based on all of the above and prioritising actions accordingly.

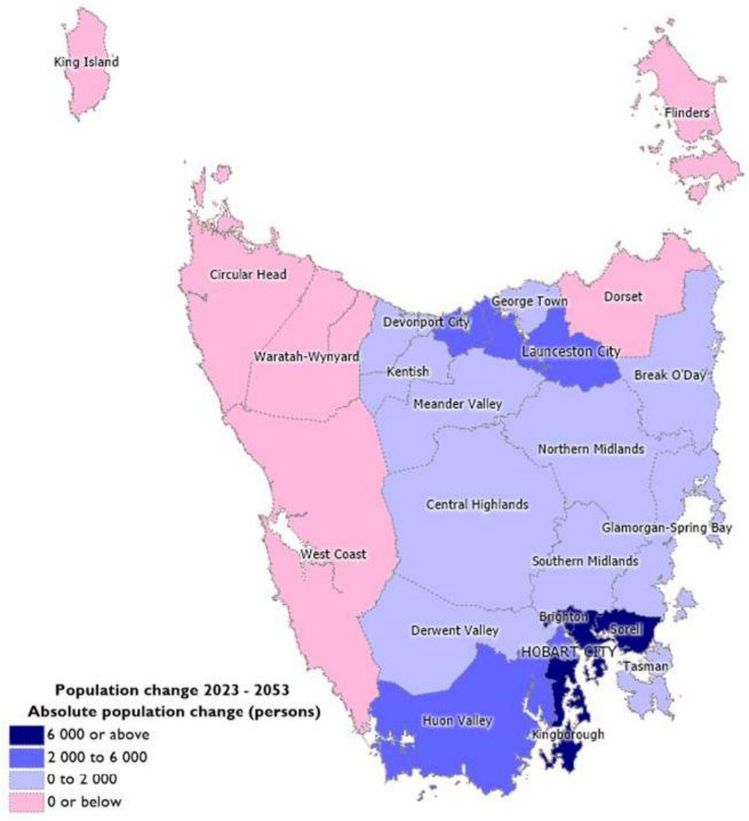
Section Two: Strategic Alignment

Several factors assist in shaping the strategy which can be discussed as both latent and expressed demand. The latter forms the basis of opinion from the community and is highlighted in Section five of this report, with the following as well as trends and societal influences in the following section, forming factors which require considering when planning for playspace development across the municipality.

2.1 State Growth

Tasmania's estimated population, as of 30 June 2023, was just over 573,000 people. By 30 June 2053, the population is projected to reach 641,045. This equates to an average annual growth rate of 0.37 per cent per year over the projection period which compares to an average annual growth rate of 0.65 per cent over the past 30 years[i].

Of the 29 Local Government Areas (LGA's) across Tasmania, 22 are projected to grow overall from 2023 to 2053, while the remaining seven are projected to experience population decline (Figure 1?)Clarence is projected to experience the largest with a projected population increase of 12,218 to 2053 with Sorell projected to be the fastest-growing LGA in percentage terms at a rate of 1.09 per cent per year.



Source: TasPOPP projections

Figure 1: Tasmanian LGA Growth Projections

2.2 Sorell Growth

With the anticipated growth of Sorell, it's important for Council to plan for the future and ensure its services and facilities will meet demand. As of 2023, Sorell had an Estimated Residential Population (ERP) of approximately 18,104 people from across 19 townships, six of which form the majority of the City's population as highlighted below in Table 1 and Figure 2.

	Township	2023 ERP Population
1	Dodges Ferry/Lewisham	5,219
2	Midway Point	3,384
3	Sorell	3,180
4	Carlton	1,363
5	Primrose Sands	1,209
6	Forcet	1,102
7	Penna	437
8	Orielton	430
9	Carlton River	347
10	Dunalley	304
11	Copping	200
12	Kellevie	185
13	Wattle Hill	176
14	Bream Creek	126
15	Nugent	117
16	Boomer Bay	117
17	Pawleena	112
18	Marion Bay	56
19	Connelly's Marsh	40
Total		18,104

Table 1: Sorell Townships and 2023 ERP Population

Figure 2: Sorell Council Townships

In a study commissioned by Council in 2024 by Remplan[ii], the Sorell Local Government Area (LGA) was broken down into four geographical areas as shown below and in Figure 3 and below

1 Sorell Town
2 Midway Point
3 Southern Beaches (Carlton, Primrose, Lewisham, Dodges) and
4 Balance (all others).

Whilst population growth is speculative and therefore not tied to absolute numbers, the report projected an additional 3984 people across the municipality which represents an estimated 23.47% increase. The area with the largest anticipated growth is in Sorell town which is projected to grow by almost 50% by 2046 (Table 2)

	2021	2026	2036	2046	% Growth
Sorell Town	2724	3125	3688	4062	49.12
Midway Point	3429	3761	3934	4010	16.94
Southern Beaches	6023	6381	6729	6983	15.94
Balance	4799	5136	5542	5904	23.03
Sorell LGA	**16975**	**18403**	**19893**	**20959**	**23.47**

Table 2: Projected Growth

Council administration has also suggested the following to support the Remplan figures:

- Growth is anticipated for Forcett, Carlton and Lewisham
- Orielton will also grow given there are 25 plus lots approved and at least the same number which will subdivided over time
- Dunalley will slowly grow as there is capacity for development.
- Primrose will grow proportionally more than other southern beaches areas as there are more holiday shacks that are and will be converted to permanent housing as well as 200 plus vacant lots

Figure 3: Sorell Geographical Areas

2.3 Strategic Plans

Council has recently developed several studies or master plans which make recommendations or have an impact on the provision of play across the municipality to include the following:

Southeast Sports Complex Master Plan: June 2025

Pembroke Park is a large regional level sports facility located in Sorell and is home to several sports including soccer, netball, football, cricket, and little athletics. It also has an indoor stadium for court sports such as basketball with the master plan suggesting other recreation opportunities such as a dog park, skate park, youth park, BMX tracks, and playspace to the northeast of the indoor stadium.

Figure 4: South East Sports Complex Master Plan

Midway Point Nature Play Park September 2024

Located in a new subdivision in the north of Midway Point is a site which connects existing open space areas and an area that has recently had a landscape plan which recommends the development of a nature play area.

The plan states that 'Midway Point Nature Play Park will bring vitality and health and amenity for the local community. This is an area where residents and families can come together to restore, relax and explore nature. The park will offer shady, passive retreats tucked underneath existing trees as well as abundant open space for active sport/exercise opportunities.'

Figure 5: Midway Point Nature Park

Section Three: Understanding Play

In conjunction with the previous section, is the need to understand latent playspace design and trends which will impact provision and management.

3.1 The Importance of Play

The vital place of play in children's lives is uncontested. Play is the vehicle through which children experience and interpret the world (Webb-Williams, 2019). Children are born with an innate drive to play. It's a natural instinct which means that children are intrinsically motivated to play. Children not only want to play, they need to play. Play is a biological, psychological and social necessity, and is fundamental to the healthy development and well-being of individuals and communities (Play England).

Moreover, play has been recognised as one of the most basic human rights by UNICEF. Article 31 in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (www.unicef.org), to which Australia is a signatory and a ratifying country, states "That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts[iii].

3.2 The Benefits of Play

Research shows that play has many benefits for children, including:

- increasing their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect.
- improving and maintaining their physical and mental health.
- giving them the opportunity to socialise with other children.
- allowing them to increase their confidence through developing new skills.
- promoting their imagination, independence, and creativity
- offering opportunities for all abilities and backgrounds to play together
- providing opportunities for developing social skills and learning
- building resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations
- providing opportunities to learn about the environment and wider community.

Research has suggested that activities involving risk through play emulates real life risk through play including exploration, curiosity, and fear. Risk taking play typically occurs in outdoor environments as it usually involves vigorous physical activity such as climbing, jumping, chasing, and play fighting. Engaging in this type of play allows children to overcome challenges building resilience, confidence, and gives them more awareness of the capabilities of their body. Evidence also supports wider benefits of play to include:

- parents feeling secure knowing their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves.
- families benefit from healthier, happier children.
- play services are frequently seen as a focal point for communities.
- offers opportunities for social interaction for the wider community and supports the development of a greater sense of community spirit and cohesion
- public outside spaces have an important role in the everyday lives of children and young people, especially as a place for meeting friends.
- parks and other green spaces are popular with adults taking young children out to play and for older children to spend time together.

Figure 6: Benefits of Play
Play benefits are well researched and support the importance and role in child development and their growth as good and healthy citizens.

3.3 Play Theory

It is also widely acknowledged and researched that play has a significant impact on the social, physical and mental development of the child. Play theory in general identifies three broad categories of play behaviour that apply across all ages but the way they are interpreted by each age group varies with some type of play assuming greater importance at particular stages of child development.

- **Cognitive Play** includes those activities that challenge the intellect of the child and can include games of strategy, exploration, observation or those that use and develop language. Council playgrounds can develop cognitive behaviour through natural areas for exploration and observation of living things; spaces and materials for outdoor games such as hopscotch and hide and seek and materials and tools for use in sand and water settings. Other concepts can include spaces for quiet activities such as reading, contemplation and nature observation of complex spaces or structures, which challenge the user's perceptual skills.

- **Social Play** can be found both by using existing physical equipment and through learning and exploring with friends in the natural environment. Whilst the latter have not been traditionally provided for in the public domain, councils are beginning to design playspaces through appropriate landscaping including sand, water, plants, trees and sculptures etc. to enhance natural play. Some small-group activities such as hopscotch, some ball games and the traditional rhyming and running games require small spaces, changes in level, possibly firm surfaces, semi-enclosure, objects as targets and focal points, and durable planting or other elements, which may be used during a game.

- **Physical Play** is also often referred to as gross motor activity and can include running, hanging, climbing, experiencing height, agility/gymnastic activities, sliding, jumping, balancing, swinging, crawling, bouncing, spinning, rocking, ball games, skipping etc.

These activities are generally more ‘active’ and therefore adequate space is required in a suitable environment where other users will not be disturbed. Some of these activities are well provided for by traditional play equipment although others are more dependent upon the size and qualities of spaces or other elements.

Figure 7: Examples of Play Theory
Top 2: Cognitive play
Bottom 2: Social Play
Right 2: Physical Play

3.4 Play Characteristics

'Play' is a broad term for a variety of activities and experiences that can be observed in humans of all ages. Philosophers, theorists, educators, and psychologists have been researching the value of play for centuries. But what is play? (Treasure, 2018).

Play is so rich and varied that it is difficult to define, label or assign to different categories. Just think of a toddler playing in the sandpit, a child on a zip line pretending to be a superhero or two adults playing chess. Play is evident across all these activities however they require different physical skills, different social skills, different emotional skills, and different cognitive skills (concentration, language, thinking etc.)

Furthermore, imagine play in a natural environment with sand, water, mud, secret dens hidden in bushes etc. Compare this with the kind of play you can imagine in an urban playground with a barren, concrete landscape. The play will be very different. Play differs according to materials/provision, context, culture, gender, age, ability, and socio-economic status. For example, research suggests that boys, regardless of culture, are more likely to engage in Rough & Tumble play, Superhero and play involving violent fantasy, Gun play and death fantasy and Active play.

Given this diversity, researchers agree that a single definition of play cannot adequately capture the complexity of play. There exist multiple definitions of play in the literature and there is much debate in the field however the concept tends to share some general characteristics which tend to include:

- Play is joyful, fun and stress free
- Play is intrinsically motivated
- Play is a process/it is unproductive
- Play is self-chosen, either at the initiation stage or through active sustained engagement and self-direction.
- Play is actively engaging/captivating attention
- Play involves imagination and creativity

When considering the definitions and characteristics of play, it is important to understand three points. First, there is not one single characteristic that denotes an activity as play, rather it needs to involve several characteristics – the more characteristics observed the more likely it is play. Second, whether something is play or not depends on the child's motivation and thinking. Two children may be doing the same thing yet one will be playing while the other is not. Third, some researchers make the distinction between work and play, however it is possible to be doing both –and in this way we consider the 'degree of playfulness' of an activity.

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul. Children have an innate ability to be curious and to investigate and play to find things out" (Frobel, 1887, p.55),

Many agree that play exits along a continuum from unstructured/minimal adult involvement to high structure/adult direction. Whilst all play involves some aspect of self-direction, choice & autonomy, children have more freedom towards the left side of the continuum.

There are multiple perspectives on the role of the adult in children's play and debates within the field focus on the amount of adult involvement and the unstructured versus structured aspect of play. For some, only play which is spontaneous, unstructured and initiated by the child can be called play. For others, guided play (which sits in the middle of the continuum) is an appropriate form of play where adults take a supporting role in the child's development & learning – helping to move from having support to independence.

3.5 Types of play

Effective play provision must consider the characteristics of play as well as the different types of play. Multiple types of play have been documented including:

- Physical Play (or Locomotor play) such as skipping, jumping, hoping, climbing
- Construction play
- Object play
- Pretend play (including superhero play & war play)
- Sociodramatic play
- Rough & Tumble play
- Social play

Socio-dramatic play is considered by some researchers to be the most complex and combines elements of the other forms of play. Family roles, character roles and functional roles are most featured in children's sociodramatic play (Hughes, 2010). Through imagination within socio-dramatic play, children create the characters, assign themselves roles, create the rules of the play, the dialogue and storyline, develop the plot, and are the scriptwriters and the director.

Social play is important when thinking about facilitating children's social interactions. Social play can be subdivided into five categories:

- Onlooker play is a term used to describe a child or children watching others engaged in play
- Solitary play refers to a child playing alone
- Parallel play involves children playing alongside other children with similar objects but without interaction
- Associative play refers to playing with others without shared goals or coordination
- Cooperative play can be observed when children are playing within a group with co-ordination and cooperation amongst players (e.g. players organise themselves into roles with specific goals in mind).

The above theory on social play (Parten 1932) can be applied to playspace design. For example, children onlooking are still playing so areas need to include places to watch others such as platform areas etc. Places to encourage cooperative play such as ball games or loose parts play can be incorporated in the design. Places for parallel play where children play side by side such as sand pits.

Another way of looking at the different types of play is through the Tool for Observing play outdoors (TOPO) which is a relatively new method of capturing play behaviours of children outdoors (Loebach & Cox, 2020). The TOPO outlines nine different play types including restorative play which focuses on resting and digital play involving the use of digital devices as well as a category involving plant play called 'Bio Play'. These contemporary play types open new possibilities for play space design and have been used in Australia to capture children's play behaviours as per those in Table 3 below (Kennedy-Behr & Webb-Williams, 2023).

Play type	Description of play type as per TOPO (Loebach & Cox, 2020)
Physical play	Outdoor play activity that is mostly physical in nature, where children's use or testing of their bodies and their physical capabilities are integral to the play event. Applies to behaviours such as running and climbing where children engage their large muscle systems or play which involves finer motor movements and hand–eye coordination through the gripping, movement, and manipulation of small objects and tools. Includes vestibular play, such as balancing, spinning, or rocking.
Imaginative play	Involves any element of pretence, role play, or imagination. Examples include pretending that a stick is a cell phone or a wizard's wand, to taking on social roles such as a parent, chef, or bus driver, to more fantastical roles like commanding a spaceship or playing a superhero.
Play with rules	Expands on previous play typologies' use of *games with rules* to more broadly capture any play activity or game by two or more children where there is some agreed-upon framework of rules governing the activity. Includes conventional games, such as hide-and-seek, capture-the-flag, or baseball, where there is a pre-established set of rules that tend to be universally understood by players. Includes games and scenarios where children invent, negotiate, and continually modify the rules of play.
Exploratory play	Exploring or manipulating the properties of an object or the environment, either in a more sensory-based learning capacity or towards some child-established goal. Includes passive, sensory-based interactions, such as rubbing a leaf to experience their textures, to more active manipulation of the environment, like shovelling dirt into a pail. Includes constructive activities where the child is actively building or forming something out of environmental elements.
Digital play	Involves using a digital device while in an outdoor play space. Includes digital technologies which are embedded within outdoor play spaces themselves.
Non-play	Includes behaviours which take place during an overall outdoor play cycle, but which are not considered to be 'play'. Includes scenarios where a child is stopping to take care of themselves in some way, such as tying a shoelace. This category can also be used when the primary behaviour observed is one of distress or aggression, such as crying.
Bio play	Includes moments when a child has focussed their attention on a living plant or animal in the playscape. Although these experiences might also be recorded in another category, such as *exploratory play*, the significance of these natural experiences is profound enough to warrant capturing these interactions through a distinct play type.
Expressive play	Involves communication or expression integral to a play activity. Includes interest in sounds, language play, and vocal performance. Includes expression through other artistic and creative endeavours, such drawing, painting, sculpting, mark-making, as well as through musical, dance, and dramatic performances.
Restorative play	Includes resting, retreat, reading, and onlooking. Includes times when children will retreat from a play episode or hesitate to join other children engaged in play.

Table 3: TOPO Play Types

Webb-Williams et al (2015) research showed that the types of play that were most popular amongst children included water play, sports play, pretend/dramatic play and nature play (see figure 4). These types of play align with findings from Veitch and colleagues, who noted that park features encouraging physical challenges, fitness activities, and ball sports are particularly effective at attracting visitors.

The alignment between these research findings suggests that children are drawn to activities that offer both **physical engagement** and **opportunities for creative expression.** Water play, which ranks highly, supports sensory exploration and imaginative scenarios, while sports play encourages physical fitness and teamwork. Pretend or dramatic play, another popular category, indicates that children enjoy activities that foster creativity and role-playing, allowing them to create stories and interact with their environment in a dynamic way.

These findings also parallel the evaluation of the Ian Potter Children's Wild Play Garden, where children's favourite activities included water play, the giant slide, and the treehouse/bamboo forest, all of which offer both **physical** and **imaginative experiences.** Less popular features such as cubby building, and the dry creek bed may have lacked the dynamic, hands-on interaction that children seek in play environments.

Given that the data supports the notion that children are attracted to play activities that combine **physical challenge, sensory interaction,** and **imaginative engagement,** it

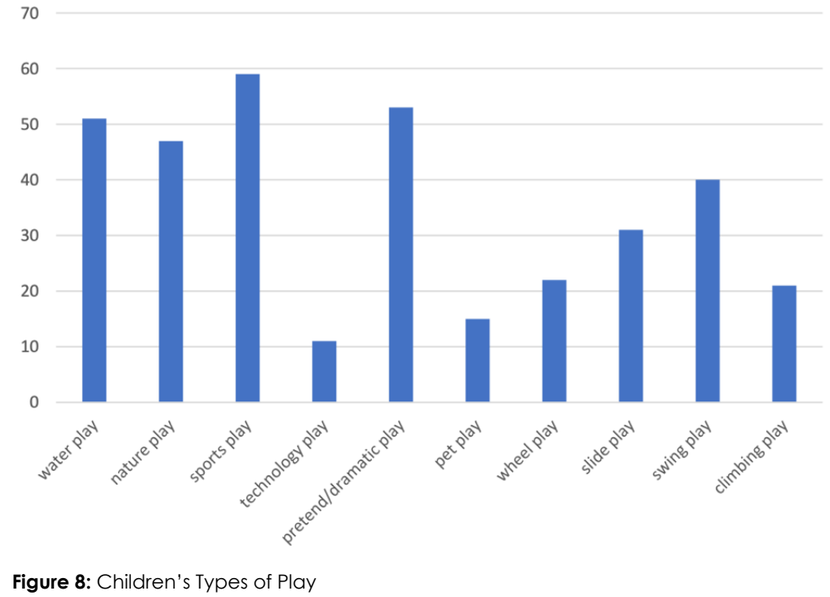


Figure 8: Children's Types of Play

is important to incorporate these elements when designing play spaces to foster children's creativity, engagement and physical activity.

Loose parts play involves materials that can be moved, carried, combined, redesigned, lined up, and taken apart and put back together in multiple ways. Children's self-direction, problem solving, and creativity is encouraged as there is not a single outcome, but numerous outcomes.

Loose parts are materials with no specific set of directions that can be used on their own or combined with other materials. Loose parts can be any size, shape, texture and can be natural or synthetic.

3.6 Planning for Different Needs

Given the broad categories of play theory, playspaces need to include several components to encourage cognitive, social, and physical elements. However, not all playspaces will include all of these as the hierarchy will offer differing play experiences and target different users. That is, playspaces can and should be designed for all ages to include:

- **Toddlers (ages 1-3):** Simple settings and small scaled and detailed environments with friendly surfaces and a familiar adult close by. These age groups cannot perceive danger and must be protected from hazards. Play areas for young children must be sited away from traffic.

- **Infants (ages 3-6):** The ages from three to six years cover a wide range of development in children. Co-ordination and physical skill development is relatively proficient by 5 years and children of this age need to practice and hone skills such as climbing, running, agility, skipping, and ball play.

- **Juniors (ages 6-12):** Older children may use play equipment as Incidental props in their group games. For example, play structures may be used as part of obstacle courses, part of chasing and hiding games, as a lookout or a refuge; as a meeting and socialising place for after school activities or as a 'base' for group activities.

- **Teenagers (ages 13 +):** Areas for 'play' for teenagers needs to be carefully managed and monitored and in some instance's youth recreation requires a separate study to determine the broader needs of this group. While it is acknowledged young people will use open space for several uses including skateboarding, bike riding, unstructured sport or just 'hanging out' with friends etc., the location areas need to be carefully managed to avoid potential conflicts of use with younger children and their carers while ensuring a sense of ownership by the young people.

- **Adults**: Adults should not be excluded from using playgrounds, and equipment needs to be designed and developed for use by this group, i.e. the provision of swing seats and rockers designed for use by adults is a way of encouraging adults to use park facilities with their children. Naturally, provision for adults at the exclusion of children is not the intention, but design standards now consider loadings and structural requirements to withstand use by adults.

- **Disabilities**: An inclusive playspace provides access to a variety of play experiences where everyone can engage and play together. This is not to say that every item of play equipment needs to be fully inclusive, but consideration should be given to access and inclusion in several playspaces across a Local Government Authority (LGA).

Figure 9: Planning for Play

It's important to understand the differing needs of various ages and circumstances when designing playspaces as these will change within relatively short periods of time and vary according to ability.

Top left: Toddlers *Top right: Infants*
Middle left: Juniors *Middle right: Teenagers*
Bottom left: Adults *Bottom right: Children with disabilities.*

3.7 Inclusivity and Accessibility

Playspace provision must ensure there are equal opportunities for play, ensuring that all children can play together, and have the same play opportunities regardless of ability.

The New South Wales Government has developed an Everyone Can Play Inclusive Guideline[iv], along with the South Australian Government with their Inclusive Play Guidelines for Accessible Play Spaces[v]

These documents aim to offer a framework of principles to support the creation of play environments that facilitate engagement for all children and families, fostering inclusive play experiences. It is essential that the design process integrates inclusive principles to ensure that the features and elements within a children's space promotes equal opportunity to engage in child-led play, connecting with others, and opportunities to engage with the natural environment.

For example, the NSW Government "Everyone Can Play" toolkit to ensure that playspaces are being designed according to best practice and can be used by everyone within the community (NSW Government, 2023). This toolkit is based around 3 principles of:

1. Can I get there?
2. Can I play?
3. Can I stay?

The Ian Potter Wild Play Garden in Sydney (Figure 5) is a good example of these three principles being implemented as the playspace is located within walking distance of public transport options and includes a carpark, public toilets, shade, table and chairs, a kiosk, barbecues, seating and drinking fountains. This enables users to stay at the playspace for longer periods of time which is common for higher classified playspaces such as district or regional.

Whilst these principles are a good place to start, they are more about the accessibility of the play spaces and less about gender etc and thus the need to be asking do children want to stay, is it fun, is it engaging, is there something for everyone to enjoy?

Play England have recommended 10 principles to design successful play spaces:

1. Enhances the settings
2. Are well located
3. Make use of natural elements
4. Provide a wide range of play experiences
5. Are accessible to both disabled and non-disables children
6. Meet community needs
7. Allow children of different ages to play together
8. Build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
9. Are sustainable and appropriately maintained
10. Allow for change and evolution

These principles provide crucial insight into making play spaces more engaging, dynamic, and beneficial for all users. By enhancing the physical environment and integrating natural elements, these spaces become not only visually appealing but also encourage unstructured and creative play. Ensuring accessibility for both disabled and non-disabled children is vital for fostering inclusivity, while designing for a wide range of play experiences allows for cognitive, physical, and social development across age groups.

Figure 10: Ian Potter Wild Play Garden

Moreover, the principles emphasise sustainability and adaptability, which are critical in ensuring that play spaces remain functional, environmentally friendly, and able to evolve with changing community needs. Incorporating risk and challenge gives children the opportunity to develop resilience and problem-solving skills, while maintaining these spaces ensures their long-term value and relevance. Overall, these guidelines encourage the creation of play spaces that promote health, social cohesion, and lifelong learning through play.

Facilities and provision need to consider multiple aspects of design including:

- **Accessibility**: parking, paths, surfaces, independent access to equipment etc.
  Safe and welcome: cultural inclusive signage, inclusive signage, height and text of signage, boundary fencing etc.
- **Different age and abilities** have challenges in the playspace. Range of slopes, climbing, different heights,
- **Stimulate all the senses** (vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell) and encourage movement: mud, plants, talk tubes, sand, water, aesthetics, textures etc.
- **Facilities**: seating, shade, toilets, water, phone charging, Wi-Fi
- **Social play** – large swing seats to play together, wheelchair access, provision so that adults can join in the play etc.

There is also a difference between a playspace being fully inclusive where everyone can play on everything versus partially where something is for everyone but separated for accessibility. Creating an Inclusive play space ensures children of all abilities can access all the equipment and spaces, meaning no child misses out on the fun due to their own limitations.

Inclusive playspaces consider as many needs as possible. They provide a welcoming place where people feel comfortable yet challenged and remove obstacles and barriers that prevent people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities (both physical and mental) from playing.

Inclusive playspaces provide access to a variety of play experiences people enjoy together. The Everyone Can Play guideline encourages users to think beyond accessibility needs, so everyone can experience the joys of play.

3.8 Designing Play to Include Girls

Research has shown that a significant difference exists between genders regarding playing outside. In a study conducted in the Netherlands it was found that two thirds of children playing outside were boys and one third were girls (Helleman, 2021). Boys and girls behave differently regarding their physical activity and play behaviours, where research has shown that they choose to play with different things in different ways.

Veitch and colleagues in Australia found that sport related features including sports goals, courts and skate parks were ranked highly among boys and non-sport features such as swings and water features were ranked more highly among girls. These findings were supported by another study conducted in Australia in teenage girls, where girls found that parks were important for social interaction, alongside using them for 'retreat' (Lloyd et al., 2008).

Veitch et al (2021) found no significant gender differences in physical activity levels which is surprising because this finding contrasts with many other studies. However, preferred activity types differed between boys and girls, which is in line with the findings from other studies where girls engaged more often in sedentary activities, locomotion, or activities on playground equipment, and boys were more likely to play sports or active games.

The data in table 4 below shows that as children get older, the frequency of attending public play spaces changes. For girls as they age, the frequency reduces whereas for boys it increases.

Age	Girls	Boys
0-4 years	45%	55%
5-8 years	44%	56%
9-12 years	28%	72%
13 years or older	23%	77%
Total	**34%**	**66%**

Table 4: Playspace Use by Age and Gender

These gender differences underscore the need to consider different demographic groups separately and to co-design play spaces that cater to every child's preference. In Sweden, researchers sought to address the gender disparity in park usage by involving girls in the design process. Their design emphasised elements such as vibrant colours, seating areas for face-to-face interaction, weather-protected spaces, and areas where girls could observe without being easily seen (Centre for Universal Design Australia).

This aligns with the findings in the *Make Space for Girls* 2023 report[vi], which highlights how many teenage girls feel disconnected from parks and play areas. One teenage girl summed up the issue, stating, "Why would I go to the park? There's nothing there for me."

Although facilities like skate parks, BMX tracks, and multi-use games areas (MUGAs) are often created with all young people in mind, these spaces are typically dominated by boys. To address this imbalance, design suggestions were developed in collaboration with teenage girls, ensuring that future play spaces are more inclusive and reflective of their needs (Figure 11)[vii].

Figure 11: Inclusive Playspace Design Targeting Girls

3.9 Risk and Play

When thinking about risk and safety it is helpful to consider the difference between a risk and a hazard. According to O'Connor (2018) a risk is a challenge that the children can see and choose whether to undertake or not, such as height, speed, being out of sight etc. A hazard is something that a child cannot see and therefore cannot manage/cognitively respond to. The table below lists the age considerations.

Sandseter (2007) identifies six categories of risky play (Table 3) through her research observing children playing in their natural preschool setting and interviewing both the children and staff regarding their perceptions of risky play (Sandseter, 2007). Kleppe and colleagues added to this research and identified three additional categories (Table 3) that reflect the play of children aged 1-3 years. (Table 5: Kleppe et al., 2017).

Categories	Examples
Play with great heights	Climbing, swinging on out of bounds scaffolding
Play with high speed	Sliding at high speed towards large patches of muddy puddles trying to aquaplane through the mud
Play with dangerous tools	Supervised activities involving an axe, saw, knife, hammer, or ropes (e.g., building a den or whittling)
Play near dangerous elements	Playing near fire or water Playing near out of bounds scaffolding
Rough-and-tumble play Play where children go exploring alone	Play fighting and wrestling Playing in areas which they're not allowed-unsupervised
Playing with impact	Playing aggressively, bumping into one another but happily laughing together
Vicarious risk	Watching other children be involved in risky play
Playing with dangerous elements	sharing features of objective risk, such as height or speed, but not sufficient to cause physical injury

Table 5: Risk and Play Benefit

3.10 Playspace Trends

Play and understanding its importance has developed considerably in recent years with many local authorities now developing strategies that not only assess playspaces as assets that need to be managed, but also their relevance in design and the changing needs of a child as they grow and develop. To this end, the traditional playspace equipment by way of slide, swings, and rockers whilst still important, are considered as only one component of the play spectrum. Other design elements are therefore being introduced to encourage an array of learning and development opportunities including the use of the natural environment (nature play), creative landscaping, and additional features that promote a sense of belonging and place to a park.

Playspaces are also considered not only as areas for children, but also the whole family and therefore now include aspects for adults and carers such as barbeques, shade and shelter and end of trip facilities such as water, bike racks, paths and trails, carparks and in some instances fencing to offer a sense of security when located near to main roads, traffic, waterways or when dogs may be present in open space areas.

Play standards have also come a long way with equipment now designed and developed to include and consider adult use and weight bearing to enable social interaction and play with and between children. Additionally, the introduction of fitness equipment is also becoming increasingly popular and offers a unique element to many parks and playspaces. They are often standalone areas separate from children's playspaces.

Liability and risk are always a key factor in the provision of any service or facility that is available to the public, and whilst Councils have an obligation and duty of care, aspects such as the promotion of nature play has caused some concern in recent years due to the absence of standards for 'nature'. However, more innovative, and proactive councils are working with their respective insurers to ensure a range of opportunities can be provided and children and their parents protected from perceived risks whilst still enjoying and benefiting from the experience of play in a natural setting.

Given societal concerns as highlighted above, play is becoming more important for researchers, parents, educators and policy makers. Contemporary playspaces need to:

- Ensure that children of different cultures, abilities and ages have equal opportunities to play.
- Activate all the senses and create a sense of wonder, curiosity, interest and enjoyment
- Cater for different types of play by including rich and varied opportunities including quiet spaces, active spaces, unstructured play spaces and creative areas such as loose parts play
- Encourage a connection/reconnection with nature
- Be designed with the community 'for' the community

Intergenerational Playspaces

There is growing recognition that play is vital for people of all ages, and that play does not stop as we age. Recent research, especially in the past five years since the COVID-19 pandemic, has highlighted the benefits of intergenerational play, where younger and older generations engage in play together. This interaction offers mutual advantages: children develop essential skills such as interpreting social cues, sharing, cooperation, and understanding cause and effect, while older adults experience increased social stimulation and connection, which has been shown to enhance well-being and alleviate depressive symptoms (Skropeta et al., 2014). The design of the built environments plays a crucial role in encouraging intergenerational play.

The guide "Inter-generational Parks: Design Guide for Physical Activity and Social Engagement Across Generations" recommends integrating six key areas to attract people of all ages and encourage physical activity and social interaction. These areas include pathways, playgrounds, open playing fields, dog exercise zones, outdoor exercise areas, and additional spaces for activities such as basketball courts and community garden. Therefore, incorporating these considerations into the design of play spaces is essential.

A 2014 study of 174 neighbourhood parks in 25 major U.S. cities found that while adults aged 60 and older accounted for 20 percent of the general population, they represented only 4 percent of total park users. Elements that deter their visits include areas that feel unsafe or risky in terms of potential for falling, as well as a lack of amenities such as clean and accessible restrooms and functional water fountains. An increase in the number of seated shaded spaces where children are playing, encouraged greater use by this age cohort.

Nature Play

Nature play spaces are becoming increasingly popular and offer a refreshing alternative to traditional playground equipment. These spaces can feature elements such as sand, logs, climbable trees, water features, and diverse natural landscapes. Location and integration of the playspace into the natural environment is vital and making sure the play is allowed to happen where children naturally want to play.

Natural play areas encourage unstructured play, fostering creativity, imagination, and physical activity while enhancing overall well-being. The World Health Organisation (WHO) acknowledges the importance of natural environments, particularly the positive effects of green and blue spaces on mental and physical health. Outdoor play provides all the benefits of indoor play while also enabling children to explore and engage with the natural world. It involves unstructured, open-ended activities like sand and water play, which stimulate creative thinking and problem-solving skills without direct adult supervision. Additionally, outdoor play encourages more vigorous physical activity than indoor play, helping children develop and refine fundamental locomotor skills (such as walking, running, jumping, climbing, and hopping), manipulative skills (like throwing, catching, and kicking), and stability skills (including bending, swinging, and twisting). Playing in natural environments offers the richest experiences, sparking wonder in children as they explore the beauty and diversity of various landscapes, wildlife, and the myriad shapes, sizes, weights, and colours found in nature. The design, harmony, and balance of natural settings engage all the senses, creating exciting and stimulating experiences. Humans have an inherent affinity for nature, and most people report a sense of well-being when immersed in natural surroundings. Nature provides children, adults, and families with endless opportunities to experience its sights, sounds, textures, and colours, enriching all our senses and enhancing our overall well-being.

Experimental studies have consistently demonstrated a wide range of benefits associated with exposure to natural environments (Jimenez et al., 2021). These include a reduction in anxiety, rumination, stress, and depression, highlighting the positive effects nature can have on mental health. In addition to alleviating negative emotional states, time spent in natural surroundings has been shown to enhance cognitive function. This cognitive boost includes improvements in attention, memory, and problem-solving abilities, which are crucial for overall mental well-being.

The calming influence of nature provides individuals with a respite from the fast-paced, technology-driven world, offering opportunities for reflection and mental restoration. Furthermore, exposure to natural settings has been linked to better emotional regulation and greater resilience to daily stressors. By promoting a sense of tranquillity, these environments allow individuals to detach from their worries and experience increased mindfulness and presence in the moment.

These findings suggest that integrating natural elements into urban spaces and daily life is essential for improving both mental health and cognitive functioning.

Figure 12: Natural Play Areas

Digital Play and Technology

A rapidly advancing trend in playspace design is the integration of technology. This includes interactive play equipment that uses augmented reality (AR) to transform ordinary play elements into extraordinary adventures.

For example, imagine a sand pit that, when viewed through an AR device, transforms into an underwater adventure. Children can dig in the sand to reveal virtual treasure chests, fossils, or sea creatures. As they play, they might encounter AR-generated dolphins, fish, and coral reefs as they play, creating an immersive oceanic environment where they can interact with virtual sea life while building sandcastles or exploring the sandbox. This use of AR not only makes the playground more engaging but also provides an educational element by introducing children to marine life and fostering their imagination and creativity. In addition to AR, technology is being integrated into playspaces through the development of "smart parks", which incorporate interactive and sustainable technologies.

Examples of smart technologies include smart furniture (such as bins, barbeques, and water fountains that notify the local councils when they need maintenance), energy generating paving, and electric vehicle parking. Research suggests that incorporating technologies that enhance both interaction and sustainability, can increase park visitation and encourage visitors to stay longer (30 minutes to an hour).

Case Study- PlayAlive
An example of digital play equipment is PlayAlive which provide innovative ways to integrate classic play with the virtual world by using interactive sensors allowing children to develop their coordination, reaction times, speed and reflexes. The PlayAlive Spider is inspired by a traditional climbing frame, however, has 12 built in sensors transforming it into an interactive social experience, with four game options. It encourages children to move, think, and engage in new ways, all while enhancing their fine and gross motor skills. Best of all, it motivates students to combine play and learning with enthusiasm.

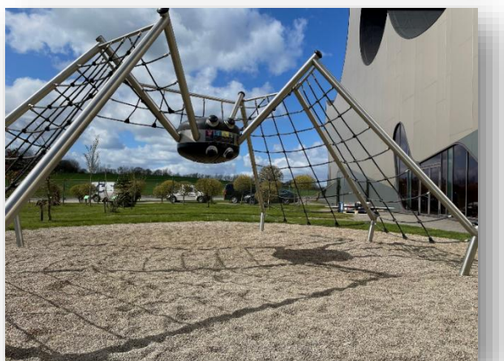


Figure 13: PlayAlive Spider and Smart Park Concept

Storytelling

Establishing a connection to the land and acknowledging the country on which a playspace is situated is becoming increasingly popular and in some instances essential. Playspaces can foster a deeper understanding and storytelling of the local landscape and its cultural significance. This can be achieved by designing natural elements to reflect the country's unique environment, such as incorporating features that mimic rivers, mountains, trees, and native animals.

The design process for playspaces is evolving through active community consultation. Landscape architects and designers are increasingly involving the community not only to understand usage patterns and demographics but also to ensure that the voices of those who will use the playspaces are heard and considered during the design stage.

Furthermore, the inclusion of children's input, often referred to as the "children's voice," is becoming more common in playspace design. There is a growing recognition of children's rights and an understanding that they are the primary users of these spaces. If children find a playspace uninteresting or "boring," it will not be used effectively (Webb-Williams, 2015, 2017).

Case Study- Yirran Muru playspace
The Playspace is designed as a physical representation of traditional travel routes across Dharawal Country, featuring stepping stones and pathways that mimic the seasonal movements of the Dharawal people. The overall aim of Yirran muru was to create an authentic Aboriginal interpretive playspace. The goals of the project included: Co-design an authentic Aboriginal playspace that was supported and endorsed by the local Aboriginal community[viii].

Figure 14: Yirran Muru Playspace

Multi Use Games Area

A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) is a versatile outdoor space designed for a wide variety of sports and is becoming increasingly popular for schools and communities with limited space and budget. Similar to the old 'Rage Cage' but made from artificial turf with multiple pitch markings, MUGAs allow children to enjoy various sports on one surface in a cost-effective way.

However, despite their benefits, MUGAs can be dominated by specific groups, such as teenage boys playing football, which may discourage other demographics from using the space. Table 6 below outlines potential solutions to make these play spaces safer and more accessible to people of all ages and genders[ix].

Potential actions	Who could be involved?
Further assessing the safety of the cage over a set time period before a follow-up meeting, in order to further answer the questions in the assessment framework – this may involve structured observations, resident surveys, data analysis, consulting local schools, etc.	All attendees – specific actions for each
Training and paying local young people to audit the safety of the cage. Undertaking activities to engage local young people in principles of Contextual Safeguarding, using CS Network resources.	Young people; youth professionals; social care
Mapping local organisations and facilities in the surrounding area	Council officers; youth professionals
Analysing available data on activities in the cage	Council officers
Organising safeguarding and signposting training for existing guardians or adult users of the cage	Social care
Making physical changes (e.g. lighting, adding 'roof' netting, trimming hedges, adding seating, locks)	Council officers
Adding signage (e.g. with support numbers or info on local activities, guardian info)	Council officers
Timetabling guardianship activities (e.g. agreeing that certain residents will be informally overseeing activities at certain times) & agreeing a protocol to gain cage users' consent for this & for referrals	Residents; young people; social care
Approaching local organisations to run activities in the cage, or local services to work in the cage (e.g. detached youth workers to include the cage in their local 'rounds'), especially to diversify use	Residents; social care; youth professionals
Exploring possibilities for training local older young people to run activities for younger young people, either in voluntary or paid roles	Youth professionals; sports organisations
Planning events on the cage (e.g. BBQ, friendly sports competition) to bring together a wider group of stakeholders in an informal way, for a wider conversation and to establish broad community ownership & responsibility over the cage	Could involve all kinds of stakeholders outlined in assessment framework
Running informal surveying activities for young people who use the cage – e.g. running activities for young people which also allow for gathering insights from young people about the cage	Youth professionals; sports organisations
Approaching local councillors and other decision makers to lobby for refurbishment or other significant physical improvements to the cage which may carry significant cost	Residents; young people; councillors
Applying for funding to make physical improvements to the cage or to bring provision onto the cage	Residents; young people; youth organisations
Approaching organisations who run activities in a different local cage, to learn from their practice	Residents; youth professionals
Inviting residents from another local neighbourhood to share how they have made their cage safer	Residents

Table 6: MUGA Management Principles

Renewable Sources

Eco-friendly and sustainable playspaces are a growing trend as the urgency of addressing climate change intensifies. These playspaces are not just about using recycled materials, but they also focus on creating environmental awareness among children.

Building sustainable, renewable playgrounds is crucial for reducing environmental impact, promoting children's health, and ensuring long-term durability. These eco-friendly spaces use recycled, non-toxic materials, reduce maintenance costs, and foster community involvement. Additionally, they provide educational opportunities about sustainability while supporting the physical and mental well-being of children through exposure to nature.

Sustainable playgrounds benefit both the environment and the community, creating resilient, engaging spaces for future generations. The Kompan play institute is an example of sustainable play solutions, where their products are made up of 95% of post-consumer waste such as single use plastic and fishing nets to reduce its carbon footprint.

Figure 11 below is a concept of a sustainable playspace designed by Kompan in France, inspired by the region's natural elements such as the salamander, using durable, sustainable materials and prioritising minimal excavation to preserve the land[x].

Figure 15: Example of a Renewable Playspace in France

Section Four: Councils Role in Play

With a clearer understanding of play and its benefits, is the need to better understand how council can assist through its public play areas and how they are designed and managed. Understanding this, will mean Council can provide a range of opportunities over a 'cookie cutter' approach to play provision, and ensure its play spaces meet the differing stages of a child's development through social, physical, and cognitive development opportunities.

4.1 Playspace Development Model

To better understand the hierarchy of playspaces, a 'playspace development model' has been developed that can be adopted as a guide for councils when planning and developing playspaces.[xi] The model is widely recognised to illustrate the elementary factors required to establish an area specifically for play and includes five aspects of:

4.1.1 Play Equipment

Play equipment has historically been the dominant factor in playground provision. However, equipment should complement rather than replace the 'playspace' and should align with the intended user and classification of the park. Equipment suitable and interesting to a toddler will be vastly different from equipment for a 'junior child and generally speaking the more opportunities provided tends to increase the 'classification' of the playspace.

4.1.2 Imaginative and Creative Area

This is often the most neglected aspect of play provision, and it requires sensitivity to develop possibilities. Some areas, however, simply need to be left in their natural state whereby others can be designed using the natural environment to encourage exploration and imagination.

Nature play is becoming popular with many councils understanding and realising its importance and investing in such initiatives. In turn this encourages more children into the outdoors and away from some forms of technology that has negative impact on their physical development. As such, playspaces are being designed to encourage the use of the natural environment and to enhance cognitive, social and physical development.

4.1.3 Unstructured Area

This is an open space area that should not be confused with formal sport requirements and in essence will encourage activities to develop spontaneously among children. Traditionally these areas appeal to older children and are often used as a meeting place/socialising area or for informal ball games such as kick to kick, basketball, netball rings etc.

4.1.4 Adult/Family Area

Adults accompanying children to play areas require a comfortable area where they can passively monitor children whilst socialising with other carers or parents. The inclusion of items such as seating, shading, BBQ's, shelters, water etc., all of which may result in longer periods of use by families and increased presence increasing passive surveillance and safety.

4.1.5 Special Feature

This is an optional component which may be included in the playspace and although these are not essential, could include open air theatres, rotundas, water features, artwork or other natural or built features which would attract greater use, visitation, and general interest. The more components of the playspace development model a playspace has, the higher its classification. A local playspace for example may be situated on a small block of land and include only a swing and a slide, whereby a regional playspace would generally include all components of the PDM and include bespoke play areas and unique opportunities that would attract visitation from far and wide.

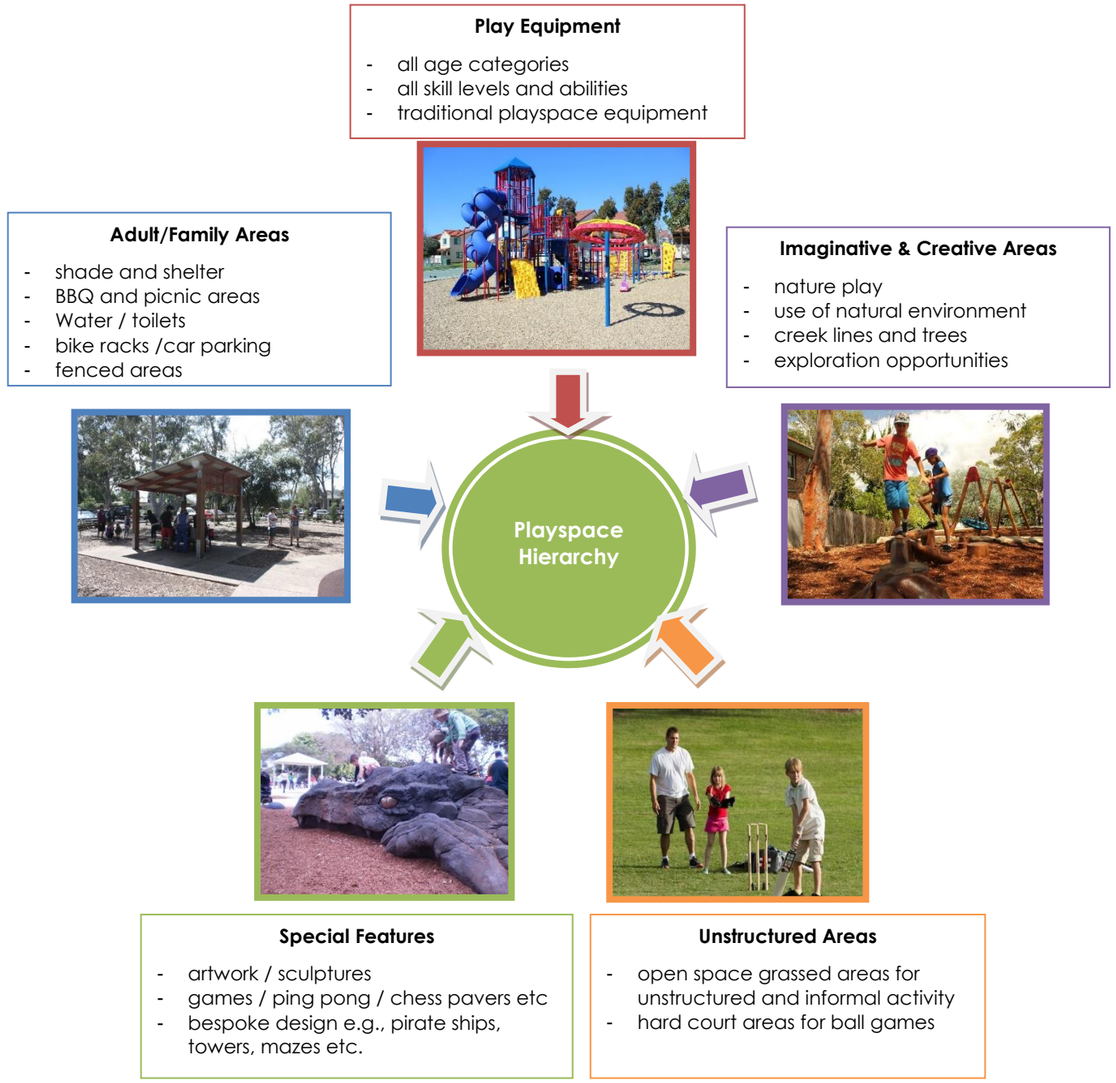


Figure 16: Playspace Development Model

4.2 Classifying Play

Playspace design is largely reflected in their hierarchy and often aligned with the open space on which it sits. This is however not always the case, and smaller local playgrounds are often found on larger classifications of land, and whilst this is not necessarily bad, it is important to ensure and even distribution of opportunity across a municipality and avoid the 'cookie cutter' approach to provision.

Higher level playspaces generally mean more components by way of equipment and complementary design elements. Whilst not prescriptive, the following provides an overview and the common elements within each.

4.2.1 Local Playspace

This level of playspace is ideally located within a collector district area whereby walking to a destination up to 500 metres would be acceptable for most if not all ages and abilities. Local playspace primarily cater for younger children's needs (toddlers and juniors) and may also be used incidentally i.e. en-route to or from a destination such as shops, schools, or from public transport and in some instances as physical links to other open space systems. Alternatively, such playspaces may be used deliberately as a need for low impact play and exploration for young children under the guidance of adult supervision.

Components

While playspaces in a local setting will primarily be targeted at younger children (1-6) due to the proximity to the home and the understanding that older children (6-12) can and may travel greater distances either on foot or bike with their parents or carers; play opportunities should include aspects of cognitive, social, and physical play and include approximately 3-5 pieces of play equipment as a suggestion. However not all local playspaces need to comprise formal play equipment areas and could include an imaginative (natural) play area to ensure provision is complemented and not duplicated within short distances of each playspace i.e., each should (where possible) offer its own setting with a different set of opportunities from the parks nearby. It is such that local playspaces include complementary components of:

- Play Equipment Area (3-5 pieces)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)

It must be noted that not all Local play spaces would include both of the above, but these elements developed in conjunction with similar parks nearby, i.e. planning should ensure playspaces are complemented and not duplicated within a close proximity to each other. Specific areas set aside for adults are not necessarily developed in local playspaces due to the age of the child requiring constant surveillance by the carer. However, playspaces and seating should have natural or formalised shading with the latter situated to ensure both active and passive surveillance by carers.

4.2.2 Neighbourhood Playspace

Neighbourhood playspaces consider broader 'suburbs' and thus the need to provide for a more diverse range of opportunities and offer a wider range of opportunity for children primarily in the 4-12 age groups (infants and juniors) but should also include equipment for toddlers. When discussing neighbourhood playspaces, it is assumed that:

- People will travel further to use the park and therefore tend to do so deliberately rather than incidentally.
- Generally located within each suburb and therefore facilities such as toilets may not be required.
- Would be no more than approximately 1-2 kilometres from homes.

Components

Neighbourhood playspaces are designed to cater for the needs of more than one user group, and for more than one type of activity. Toddler, junior and senior play areas will be provided and sited around a picnic areas/shelters and tables. Neighbourhood playspaces might be set along an urban waterway or natural settings and key components can therefore include:

- Play Equipment Area (5 pieces +) for age groups 1-12 in secured areas and where possible away from main roads and
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non-Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area
- Bins

4.2.3 District Playspace

The third level in the hierarchy is the District Playspace. District Parks tend to serve wider catchments and are sited where special features (natural or manmade) such as a water body, a cluster of sporting facilities, civic areas, or historic site are located. In discussing this classification, it is assumed that visitors are offered greater recreation opportunities and therefore stay longer at the 'park'. As such, amenities such as water, car parking, toilets, barbecues and rubbish bins etc may all be warranted.

Other key aspects of District playspaces include a safe (normally fenced) play area for young children and areas where parents and carers can meet and socialise in a safe environment. Children's birthday parties are common occurrences in such parks and parents can prepare barbecues in areas with good surveillance of play equipment which has an additional safeguard of fencing to prevent children from leaving the playspace.

District level open space can also be used for specific activities such as youth recreation, sporting facilities, dog parks or adult exercise areas whereby the land parcel is designed to be used for several 'specific' activities normally identified in a separate recreation, leisure, or open space strategy.

Components

When discussing the playspace component of District level parks, it is assumed that the following components would be provided:

- Play Equipment Area for all age groups (often fenced or secured in areas of high safety concern such as main roads)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non-Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area

4.2.4 Regional Playspaces

Regional playspaces are similar to the district classification but with additional components that would attract both local and regional visitors. This may be in the form of an adventure playground, water park, or unique aspect such as additional space for larger community events such as carnivals and concerts.

Regional playspaces are often well landscaped and/or use the natural landscape to offer a unique experience and are often bespoke in design and aligned with a theme or an array of experiences and opportunities for the whole family.

4.3 Additional Design Elements

While the highlighted playspace classifications align themselves with the Playspace Development Model, this does not consider other design concepts which should and could be included within all playspaces and parks. These will obviously vary from classification to classification and in some instances park to park but could include some or all the following additional design elements which have been referenced from several industry sources.

Shade

Shade, particularly during the hotter summer months is vital. Natural shade through trees is highly desirable but due to the time it takes for growth in 'new' playspaces, built shade in the form of pergolas or shelters may be appropriate. Should natural shading be available, tree management and maintenance need to be considered due to the potential falling limbs and branches.

Fencing

Fences provide an additional safeguard in relation to forming a barrier between the child and physical dangers such as main roads, major waterways or steep embankments in natural settings.

Paths

Paths within playspaces and parks should be sited carefully to minimise their impact upon other uses of a park. For example, two paths criss-crossing a reserve will break it into four small spaces which may each be too small to be useful. Busy paths, especially cycle paths, may intrude upon quiet spaces and disturb users. Paths open up otherwise inaccessible places, and the desirability of a path cutting through an area must first be carefully assessed. All path surfaces should be selected to blend visually into the surrounds. Path systems need to be considered for at least two purposes:

'Functional' paths

These have a main purpose of efficient circulation of people between two or more points. Such paths may have 'functional' convenience as their primary purpose, but the pleasure of users and the visual and functional impact on the landscape is important.

Paths also need to be well sited to ensure users are not forced out of their way and sometimes it may be valuable for Council to monitor patterns of use ('desire lines') before constructing a 'formal' route.

Recreational paths

These are not necessarily the quickest way between points but may be sited to pass through attractive or interesting areas, simply for the pleasure of the journey. They may be intended for walking or cycling, and the surfaces should be considered for their contribution to the recreation experiences of users.

For example, rough or bumpy dirt paths are increasingly rare in the suburban landscape, but children derive great pleasure from walking or riding along such paths, especially if they pass through varied terrain, over puddles, bridges and other features, and at times pass through overhanging vegetation or long grass. These opportunities are important as part of the recreation spectrum but should not be confused with the need to provide convenient access ways through the neighbourhoods.

Softfall

Kidsafe has developed a series of information sheets pertaining to play design and management one of which pertains specifically to softfall. All playground equipment with a fall height 600mm or more must have an 'impact attenuating' surface beneath to minimise serious head or other injuries in the event of falls.

Whilst no one material has proven to be the best product for impact attenuating surfacing, consideration of factors such as environmental conditions, cost and personal preference may be applied when selecting a material. The two main types of playground surfacing products are loose fill and solid materials.

Loose Fill

Loose fill includes products such as bark mulch, wood chips, wood fibre, rubber mulch, grape seed and sand and these products are generally less expensive than solid materials upon installation but require regular maintenance and top ups. Considering the cost of ongoing maintenance, solid materials may compare favourably over the lifespan of the surfacing.

Solid Fill

Solid Materials include products such as synthetic grass, rubber tiles and wet pour rubber. The impact attenuating qualities of solid materials varies according to the thickness of the layer and the composition of the material. Solid materials can work well in combination with loose fill products providing a fixed surface beneath heavy traffic areas such as under swings and at the run-out (base) of slides. This reduces both the ongoing costs and labour to replenish the loose fill, as required.

Whilst some studies support loose fill over solid with regards to safety when falling from height, the aesthetics of solid over loose combined with a perception of foreign objects

finding their way into loose fill softfall, has led to an increased demand from the community to construct more playspaces with solid fill.

As stated however, there is no one answer for this and each playspace must be considered in isolation, but the more natural areas such as local playspaces and potentially components of nature play in larger developments may not warrant the cost or design impact of solid fill. Each will be unique and ultimately the choice of Council must be put down to several factors to include budget, aesthetics, playspaces type and ultimately and foremost, safety and adhering to national standards.

Nature Play

Nature play is making a resurgence as local authorities are recognising the importance of promoting play and offering children an opportunity to learn and grow through interaction with their natural environments. Traditionally this has been difficult for some councils to embrace given the 'lack of standards for 'nature', but increasingly many are now introducing natural areas into playground designs to encourage cognitive, social and physical development of the child.

Many good examples are now emerging across Australia whereby the use of the landscape is enhanced to create natural areas such as creek beds, sand pits, tree logs and areas for exploration. Normally these are included in higher level playspace developments, but consideration should be given to lower, less well-developed areas and the notion that a child will play where equipment is not present and therefore a local open space that is well designed and managed, can in itself be an excellent opportunity to promote and develop nature play.

Barbeques

Generally, barbeques are not considered appropriate for smaller parks or playspaces, but they may be considered for higher levels if warranted through demand and certainly regional parks if the conditions are suitable. However, the installation of barbeques often requires an associated level of facility provision (tables, toilets, water, shelter, lighting, electricity supply, car parking etc.) and a commitment to maintenance and therefore it is recommended that these be kept to a minimum and supplied only in District or higher-level parks.

Seating and Tables

Seating is an important way of encouraging adults to accompany their children to play, as well as providing for the elderly and others. Seating should be available in winter sun and under summer shade. More than one configuration of seating is valuable, to cater for more than one group at a time and to facilitate either solitude or interaction, depending upon the users wishes. Seating should also consider:

- Formal seats with back and arm rests are valued by many older people.
- Caregivers need to be able to sit close to playing children and
- Edges to 'perch' on and to adapt to more than one purpose (such as walking and balancing on, as a table for sand play, as a marker or boundary in games etc) will be valued by both children and teenagers.
- A diverse range of seating is thus more likely to satisfy the needs of a diverse range of users and should be available in all parks and playspaces (natural or manmade)

Picnic tables are not always necessary in a reserve and are recommended to be developed only in Neighbourhood playgrounds or higher classifications. They may however be useful if sited so adults can supervise children while seated and the shape and orientation considered both for the comfort of users and for ease of supervision. Hexagonal or octagonal shaped tables allow parents to change their position and to monitor children in any direction.

Ancillary Services

As with toilets, ancillary services such as, water, bike racks and formalised car parking for example, may all be considered important in destinations where people travel further to and therefore tend to stay longer.

Co-design - Involve community

Community consultation in the design process is changing playspace development. Landscape architects and designers are not only seeking an understanding of usage and demographic but are giving community a voice in the process so that the users of the playspaces directly input into the development at the design stage. Moreover, children's input (known as children's voice) in play space design is becoming more prevalent as there is growing recognition of the rights of the child and it is acknowledged that children are the consumers of the playspace and if they find the place space 'boring' then they play space will not be utilised (Webb-Williams, 2015, 2017).

4.4 Benchmarking and Provision

Whilst there is no one universally agreed standard for the provision of playspaces, approximately 1 playspace for every 2000 residents is suggested and used in within the recreation and leisure industry in Australia.[xii]

Similarly, and in previous studies undertaken by One Eighty SLS in relation to playspace planning and management, the age cohort 0-14 is assessed separately as these are the primary users of playspaces. These studies have established an average ratio of approximately 1 for every 400-500 children is a good benchmark in Australian towns and cities.

Over 14-year-olds are generally grouped as young people and planned for separately due to their specific needs. it is also essential to ensure a targeted consultation strategy with this group to ensure they are included, and their needs met.

From a planning perspective, the notion of playspaces being developed in areas where young families are prevalent is now an outdated planning method as the needs of a child (and demographics generally) will change in relative short periods of time (2-3 years) whereas a playspace as an asset may last more than twenty years.

Additionally, young children may have grandparents, aunties, uncles, carers etc., that they may visit and who they will also use and visit playspaces with. Ensuring play facilities are located within access of all residents similar to the open space pedshed principle is therefore important, as is ensuring unique and different opportunities and experiences across a municipality.

Section Five: Sorell Playspaces

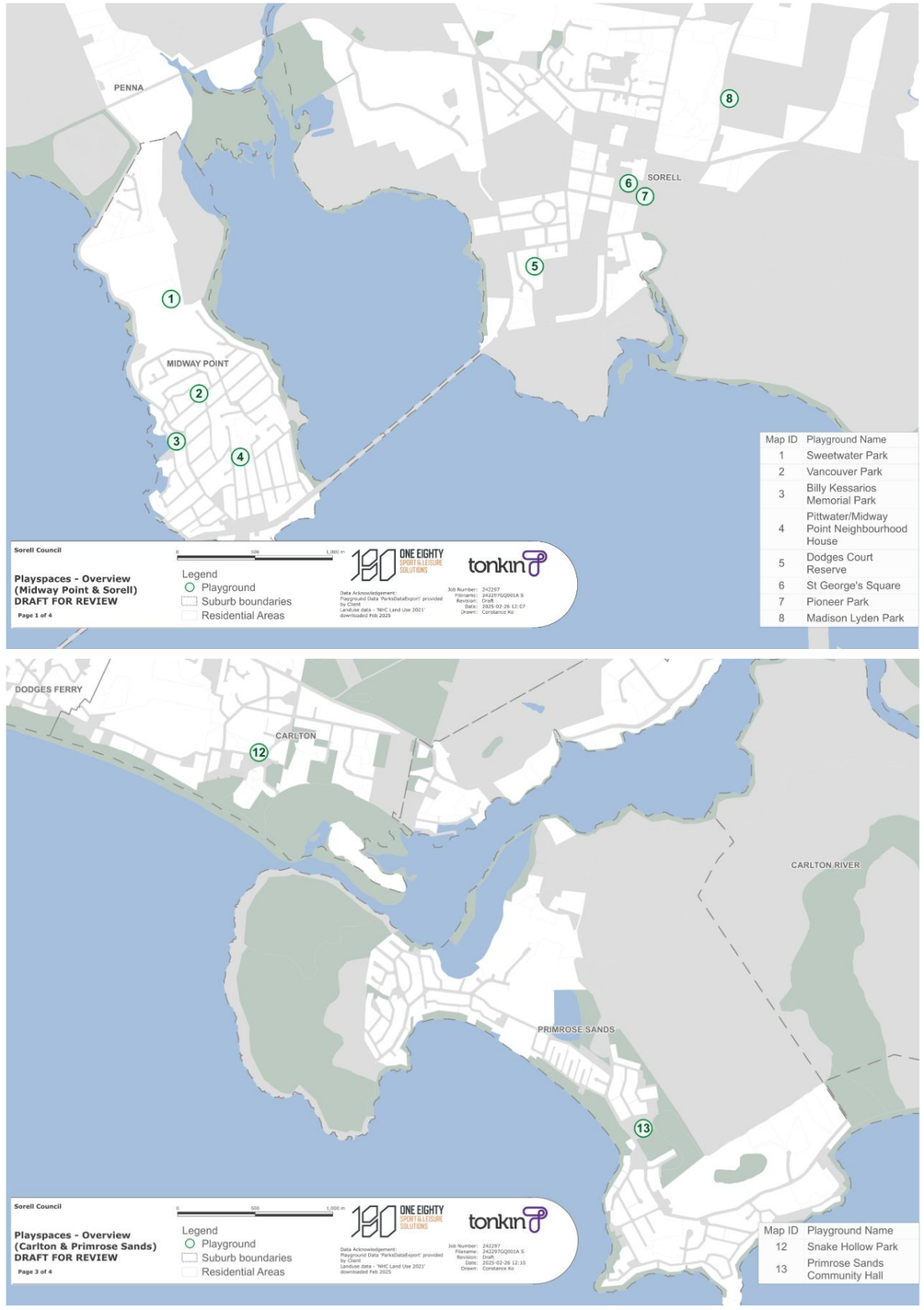
5.1 Playspace Supply and Demand

Sorell Council has 14 playspaces, 4 of which are located in Midway Point, 4 in Sorell, 2 in Lewisham, and 1 in Dodges Ferry, Carlton, Primrose Sands, and Dunalley respectively (**Figure 17)**

To better understand the overall provision of play across Sorell, an assessment of its 14 playspaces was undertaken with Table 8 on the following pages highlighting the preliminary findings and **Table 7** below highlighting a synopsis of what was assessed as part of the audit.

Key	Description	
Location	Street/Township/Map ID	
Classification	L = Local N = Neighbourhood D = District R = Regional	(target 0-6) (target 0-12 (target all ages) (target all ages)
Age	Grouped according to the mean age of all pieces of equipment combined noting some playspaces have old and new equipment within the one location	
Additional Play Opportunities	S = Skate HW = Hitting Wall C = Court	B = Bicycle SF = Special Feature O = Open Space F = Fitness
Supporting Infrastructure	Additional aspects of the playspace development model which will enhance the classification and experience	CP = Car Park PT = Public Toilet
Shade	Discussed in terms of overall coverage with natural shade assessed if within 10 metres of the playspace	B = Built Structure N = North E = East S = South W = West No = None
Softfall	Levels and type underplay surfacing	

Table 7: Audit Key



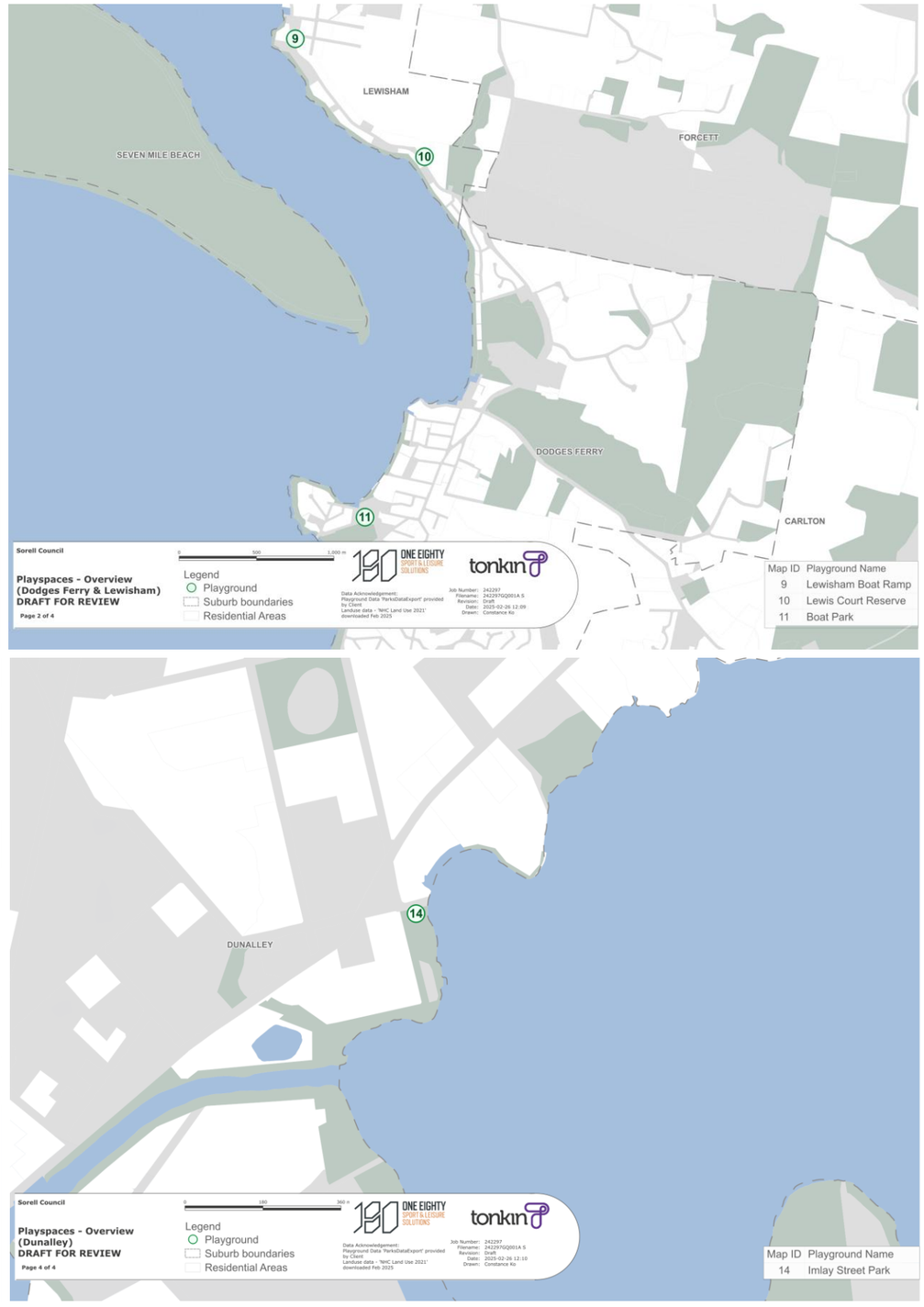


Figure 17: Current Playspace Supply

5.1.1 Sweetwater Park (1)

Location	Cnr Sweetwater Rd and Sandpiper Dr Midway Point							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
		■						
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
	■							
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■		■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
					■			
Soft Fall	Sand							

Sweetwater Park is a new high neighbourhood (HNH) low district (LD) playspace with approximately 7 pieces of equipment and an average asset age of 2.29 years. Its fully fenced with a sand-based softball but is very open to the elements with no shade.

As with most if not all playspaces, it has a rubbish bin and some benches and a minor natural play area by way of climbing rocks and landscaping.

Pros
- new play equipment and playspace
- well landscaped offering some natural play opportunity
- fenced
- some opportunity for older children

Cons
- sand based throughout makes access difficult
- no shade

Opportunities
- additional equipment and shade would enhance the experience

Figure 18: Sweetwater Park

5.1.2 Vancouver Park (2)

Location	Vancouver Street Midway Point							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
			■					
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
			■					
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■	■		
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
		■	■		■	■		
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
			■					
Soft Fall	Sand							

Located on a large (approx. 0.7ha) parcel of land, the park has 24 pieces of play and park equipment with an average age of 11.96 years and has an open space area for informal recreation and play. It also has toilets, nature play, picnic areas, and play for children 0-12 and is a high neighbourhood, low district park.

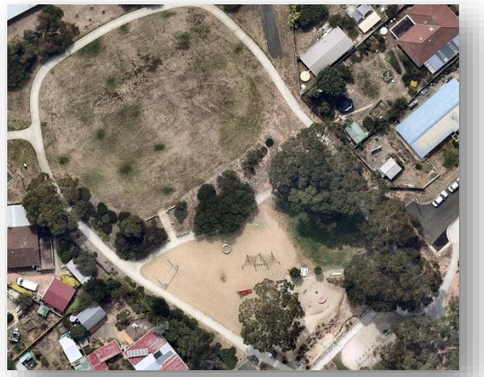
With trees along its north and eastern boundaries but too far from the playspace to offer shade, there is some coverage on the southern boundary but the playspace is generally open to the elements.

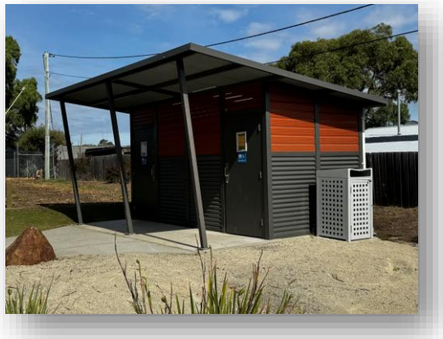
The playspace is elevated and offers good southerly views but lacks good passive surveillance and has a closed-circuit TV camera mounted on a pole opposite the public toilets.

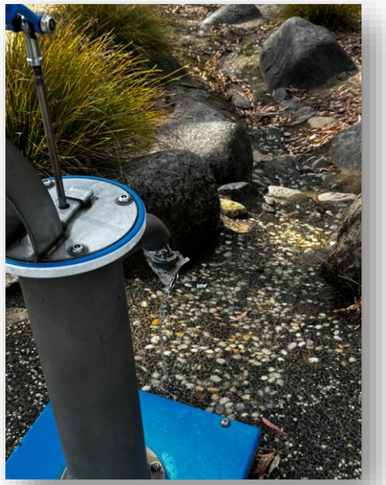
Pros:
- relatively modern equipment
- variety of age opportunities
- toilets
- some opportunity for older children
- good open space

Cons
- sand based throughout makes access difficult
- poor shade
- passive surveillance

Opportunities
- additional use through more equipment and facilities may assist in passive surveillance







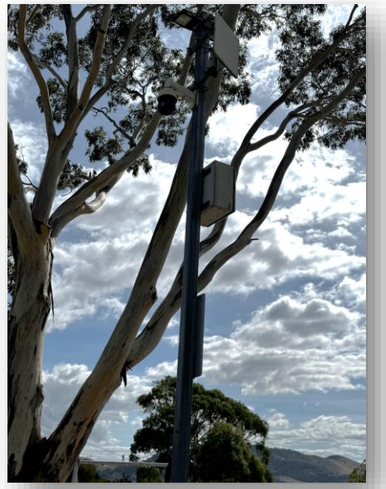


Figure 19: Vancouver Park

5.1.3 Billy Kessarios Memorial Park (3)

Location	Brady St and Panna Rd Midway Point							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
	■							
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■			
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
				■				
Soft Fall	Bark							

A small thoroughfare linear park connecting Brady Street and Panna Road, the park has 4 pieces of equipment with an average age of 5 years. Play areas have minimal tree coverage with only the western boundary of the swings having some shade.

Pros:
- neat local park likely to be used incidentally

Cons:
- lacks variety but is a local playspace
- no shade

Opportunities
- development to a true local playspace with additional equipment

Figure 20: Billy Kessarios Memorial Park

5.1.4 Midway Point Neighbourhood House (4)

Location	Raynors Road Midway Point							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
			■					
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■			
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
							■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
	■	■						
Soft Fall	Bark							

The playspace is located along a public thoroughfare linking Hoffman Street and Raynors Road and inside the fenced boundary of the Midway Point Neighbourhood House.

The playspace is a small 10-year-old climbing frame, shop and slide, and there is also a special feature cubbyhouse. Given its location inside the neighbourhood house fence line, the playspace is not accessible outside of the centre opening hours. Staff consider removing the fence to be beneficial as there are elements of vandalism and damage to the community house which has led to the installation of a CCTV system.

Pros:
- fully fenced
- natural shade from trees and building.

Cons:
- not accessible outside of community house opening hours
- linking with the centres management causes some operational challenges for staff
- poor passive surveillance

Opportunities
- fence removal to allow greater access and secure neighbourhood house

Figure 21: Midway Point Neighbourhood House

5.1.5 Dodges Court Reserve (5)

Location	Dodges Court Sorell							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
			■					
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
						■		
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
					■			
Soft Fall	Bark							

Located on a road reserve island in the southern residential area of Sorell Town, the playspace is a double swing set with no supporting infrastructure. The reserve offers ample opportunity for development with plenty of open space and primarily would only serve the immediate local residents.

Pros:
- local reserve serving immediate residents

Cons:
- no supporting infrastructure
- basic in design
- no shade

Opportunities
- upgrade to a true local
- provide supporting infrastructure such as seating and bins

Figure 22: Dodges Court

5.1.6 St Georges Square (6)

Location	Cnr Tasman Highway / Fitzroy St Sorell							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
		■						
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
			■					
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■	■		
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■			■
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
	■							
Soft Fall	Bark							

St Georges Square is a civic plaza and classed as a district level open space centrally located in the town of Sorell. With historical buildings, church, rotunda and landscaped areas and amenities, the park seems to be a well-used asset for residents and visitors alike.

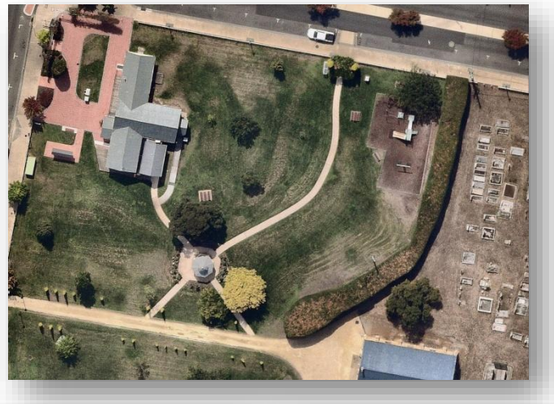
The playspace itself is located in the northeastern corner of the site with natural shade to the north and a high hedge to the east. Due to the additional space and setting, the playspace is a high local / low neighbourhood playspace with tee bar swings and a climbing frame with slide.

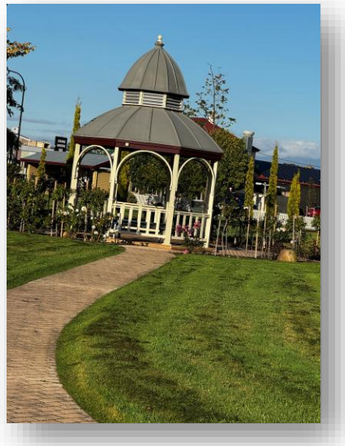
There is opportunity to theme play with the area and blend the historical and cultural significance of the park with play as there are several special features including the rotunda and landscaped gardens.

Pros:
- good central setting
- plenty of open space
- good line of sight

Cons:
- Tucked away and separate to the park itself
- Play equipment itself only a local in a district setting

Opportunities
- alignment with the park
- theme
- enhance should the need arise





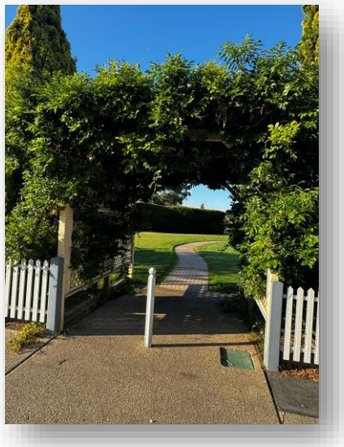


Figure 23: St Georges Square

5.1.7 Pioneer Park (7)

Location	Parsonage Place							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
		■						
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
			■					
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
						■		
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
Soft Fall	Sand							

Also located in the main precinct of the Sorell, Pioneer Park is a district level park and includes landscaped open space, picnic areas, off street carparking and a fenced playspace with an average age of 10 years.

Heavy sand based softfall makes access around the playspace difficult, and equipment primarily targets the 0-12 age profile making it a high neighbourhood playground

Pros:
- central location
- off street carparking
- additional opportunities such as picnic areas and open space
- toilets

Cons:
- Heavy sand based softfall makes access around the playspace difficult
- No shade

Opportunities
- Potential to enhance should the need arise
- Blend with the broader open space precinct

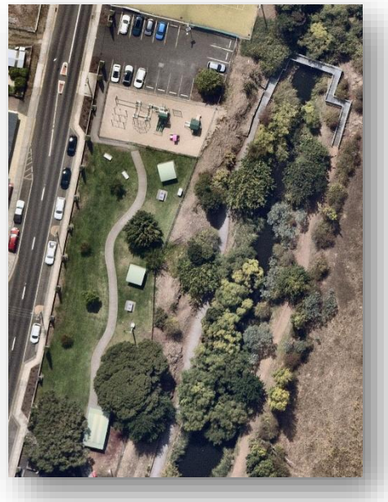


Figure 24: Pioneer Park

5.1.8 Madison Lyden Park (8)

Location	Pawleena Road Sorell							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
			■					
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
	■							
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■		■	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■		■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
					■			
Soft Fall	Sand							

A new playspace is bespoke in design and constructed as part of a new development. A focus on activity with the inclusion of a ninja course, the playspace provides opportunity for all age groups and is a high district / low regional playspace as it is fully fenced, targets all age profiles, but has no shade or supporting infrastructure such as picnic facilities or toilets. Evidence suggest further enhancement will occur to the site to and as and when this occurs, the playspace will more than likely reach regional classification

Pros:
- All ages targeted
- Access and location

Cons:
- Sand based softfall throughout
- No shade
- No supporting infrastructure

Opportunities
- Potential regional playspace with inclusion of supporting infrastructure

Figure 25: Madison Lyden

5.1.9 Lewisham Boat Ramp (9)

Location	Lewisham Scenic Drive							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
		■						
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
					■			
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
					■			
Soft Fall	Bark							

A corner reserve on the esplanade of the Lewisham foreshore, the parcel of land has a 6-year-old rocker and an old and new park bench. Whilst offering some elements of play for infant children (1-3), the playspace is generally below what could be classed local and has no shade or protection from the elements.

Pros:
- Vistas across to the ocean

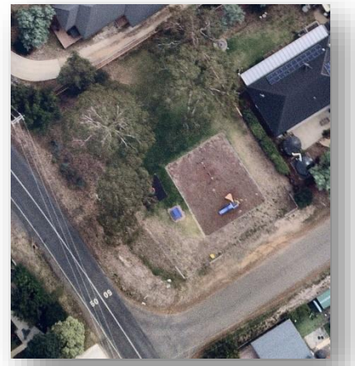
Cons:
- No real play value
- Location adjacent to main road (unfenced)
- No shade or shelter

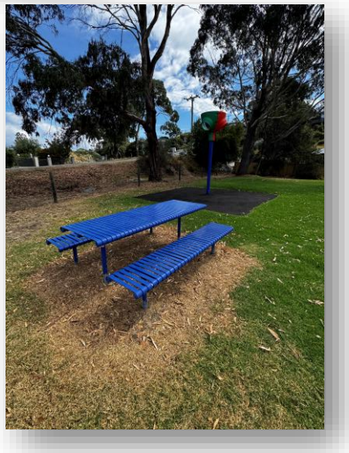
Opportunities
- Removal or relocation

Figure 26: Lewisham Boat Ramp

5.1.10 Lewis Court Reserve (10)

Location	Cnr Lewisham scenic drive and Lewis Ct							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
		■						
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
			■					
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■		■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
				■				
Soft Fall	Bark							





Located on a small corner reserve in the south of Lewisham, the play equipment is an average age of 8.7 years and is a high local / low neighbourhood playspace. Additional opportunities include a small hard-court area with 3 ring multi ball sport basket/hoop, and minor open space for informal and unstructured recreation. The park is however fully fenced and offers some natural shade along the northern and western boundary

Pros:
- fenced and good location

Cons:
- residential boundary
- lack of shade
- lack of play variety

Opportunities
- enhancement potential with minor upgrades

Figure 27: Lewis Court

5.1.11 Boat Park (11)

Location	Tiger Head Road Dodges Ferry							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
				■				
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
		■						
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
				■	■			
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
		■	■	■	■	■	■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
	■	■	■	■				
Soft Fall	Sand							

The only regional playspace in the municipality, Boat Park targets all ages with a focus on younger children with bike tracks and physical and cognitive play opportunities such as sensory musical equipment.

The park also has several picnic areas, toilets, shelters, and is filly fenced with bike racks and water but could be enhanced to target older children.

Pros:
- Large regional park
- Variety of equipment
- Ancillary services and facilities
- Shade
- Fenced
- Picnic area

Cons:
- Additional equipment for older children
- Limited off street carparking

Opportunities
- Further enhancement to target a larger catchment
- More formalised car parking
- Potential to theme and enhance

Figure 28: Boat Park

5.1.12 Snake Hollow Park (12)

Location	Carlton Beach Road							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
	■							
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
	■							
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■			
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
			■		■			■
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
	■	■	■	■				
Soft Fall	Bark							

A small but well sited playspace in a natural setting, the play equipment itself is local classification, but there is an opportunity to enhance play experience with the site topography and location to the special feature natural creek line.

The playspace is well shaded with tress on all sides and would benefit from the inclusion of seating, picnic areas, and end of trip facilities to enhance the paly and carer experience.

Pros:
- Natural setting and shade

Cons:
- Small triangular corner block limits development

Opportunities
- Enhancement to include additional opportunities and end of trip facilities

Figure 29: Snake Hollow

5.1.13 Primrose Sands Community Hall (13)

Location	Primrose Sands Road							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
			■					
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
		■						
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
	■		■	■		■	■	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
		■	■		■	■	■	■
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
	■	■		■				
Soft Fall	Bark and Sand							

A large playspace and block of land located adjacent to the Primrose Sands Community Centre, the playspace offers play experiences for all ages as well as teenagers with a BMX track, half pipe skate ramp, half-court basketball area and plenty of open space to 'hang out'.

The park also has fitness stations and two separately fenced playspaces which target toddlers and infants in one, and juniors in the other. With several picnic areas, seating, toilets, and both built and natural shade, the playspace is a district classified area that could easily be developed to regional if required but given its location its suggested as keeping at the current district level classification targeting the whole community.

Pros:
- Plenty of variety
- All age cohorts targeted
- Fenced playspaces
- Large open space
- Community ownership

Cons:
- Some ageing equipment
- Sand based softfall

Opportunities
- Retention as a district with newer equipment

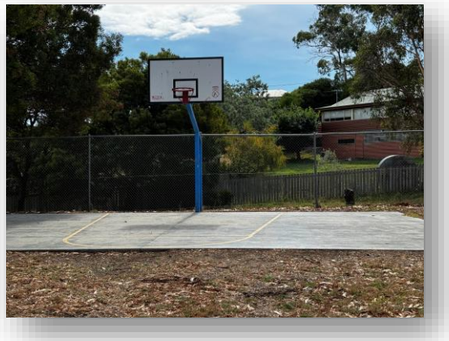


Figure 30: Primrose Sands

5.1.14 Imlay Street Park (14)

Location	Imlay Street Dunalley							
Classification	L	N	D	R				
			■					
Age	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25+		
		■						
Additional Play	S	HW	C	B	SF	O	F	
					■		■	
Supporting Infrastructure	CP	PT	RB	WB	PB	BQ	FF	PF
	■	■	■			■	■	
Shade	N	E	S	W	None			
					■			
Soft Fall	Sand							

A newer (average 7 years) district playspace, Imlay is ideally located overlooking the inland lake with shade structures, natural play opportunity, picnic areas, and good use of the natural terrain and topography where play has been designed into it.

The park also has fitness stations, toilets and an interconnected path network which leads to the foreshore and therefore encouraging true nature play under carer guidance.

Pros:
- Natural setting
- Good use of topography
- Fully fenced park

Cons:
- Limited off street carparking

Opportunities
- Maintain as district with potential theming

Figure 31: Imlay Street Park

5.2 Playspace Classification

As is common across many local authorities, the majority of Councils playspaces (6 or 43%) are local with 3 (21%) being neighbourhood, 4 (29%) district and 1 (7%) regional. The higher percentage of district playspaces is not common although this is to be commended particularly in a small council such as Sorell which shows a greater quality of playspaces over the smaller, potentially less used assets.

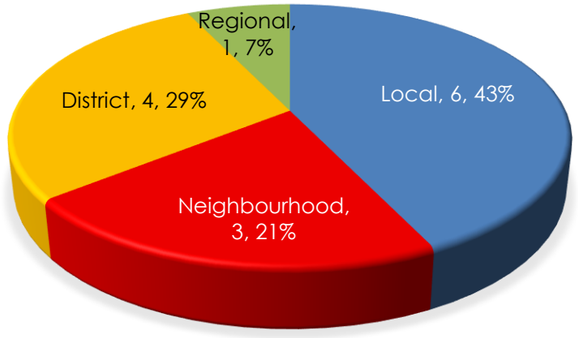


Figure 32: Playspace Classification

5.3 Playspace Age

The age of playspaces in is also surprising with all being under 15 years of age which is uncommon. When undertaking its playspace strategy in 2021/22 for example, the Glenorchy Council showed that 68% of its playspaces were over 20 years in age which posed a significant challenge for Council and its asset replacement strategy. Particular focus and attention need to be given to older playspaces over 15 years needing to be reassessed and a 10-year strategy for replacement, removal, or enhancement considered. The Sorell Council currently has no play spaces in this age category, with only 5 being over 10 years to include:

- Vancouver
- Midway Point Neighbourhood House
- Dodges Court
- St Georges and
- Pioneer Park

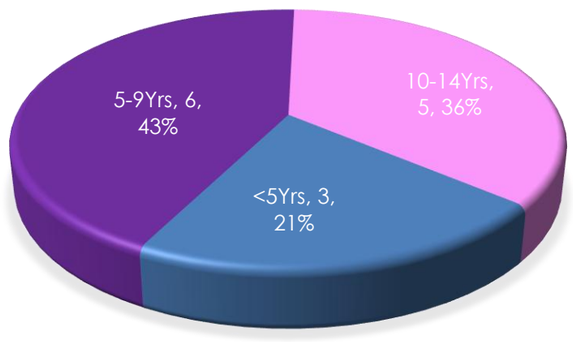
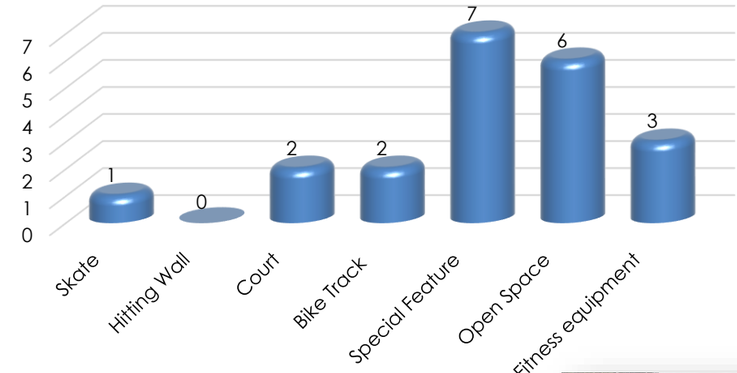


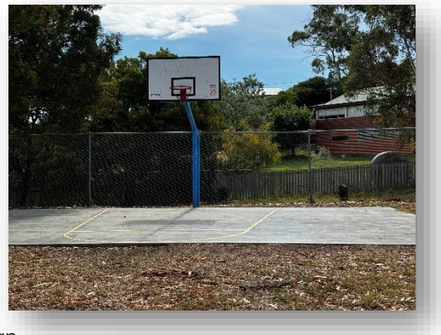
Figure 33: Playspace Age

5.4 Additional Play

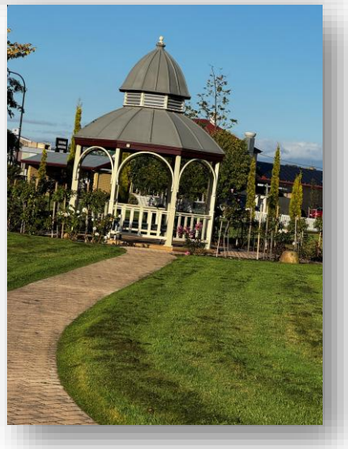
Playspaces that offer additional opportunities outside of the play equipment itself, tend to be higher classification of district or regional. Primrose Sands is a good example of this whereby several additional play opportunities such as skate areas, BMX track, basketball courts and fitness equipment etc., are complimented with supporting infrastructure such as toilets, BBQs, and fenced playspaces. Several playspaces also offer natural special features and given Sorells location, these should be capitalised on and promoted furtehr outside of formal play equipment.

Figure 33: Additional Play Opportunities





Left:
Lewis Court is an example of a Local Playspace, where Boat Park is of regional significance.



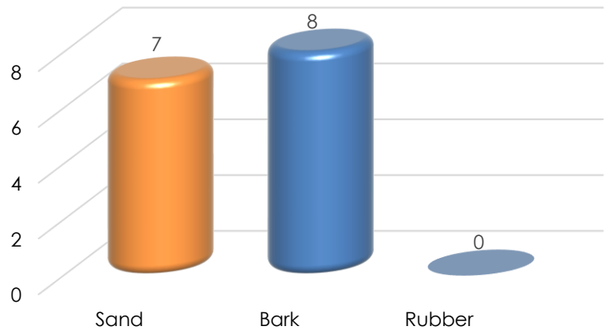
Right
Playspaces with additional features are generally of a higher classification

Figure 34: Sorell Playspaces
Lewis Court is an example of a Local playspace, whereas Boat Park is of regional significance

5.5 Softfall

All playspaces have softfall with a tendency for council to provide either sand or bark chip as their preferred means. Whilst both of these are common, they have their pitfalls particularly in relation to access whereby people with mobility challenges find it difficult to navigate on uneven and often heavy ground underfoot. These types of softfall can also hide foreign objects which may pose safety issue to children and their carers and also require additional maintenance. In some instances, playspaces have more than one types of softfall.

Figure 35: Softfall Type



5.6 Shade

Shade can either be natural in the form of trees or built by way of shade structures. The latter are generally more effective as they offer year-round cover but can be expensive. Tree coverage can also carry with it elements of safety concern in relation to falling limbs and therefore need regular maintenance.

An assessment of Councils playspaces shade found that 5 had no shade whatsoever, with a further 5 having only 25% or shade on one boundary of the playspace. Snake Hollow may be said to have full natural shade, with Pittwater neighbourhood House having good natural cover as does Primrose Sands. Playspaces with no shade cover include:

- Sweetwater
- Dodges Court
- Pioneer Park
- Madison Lyden and
- Lewisham Boat Ramp

Figure 36: Shade & Canopy Coverage

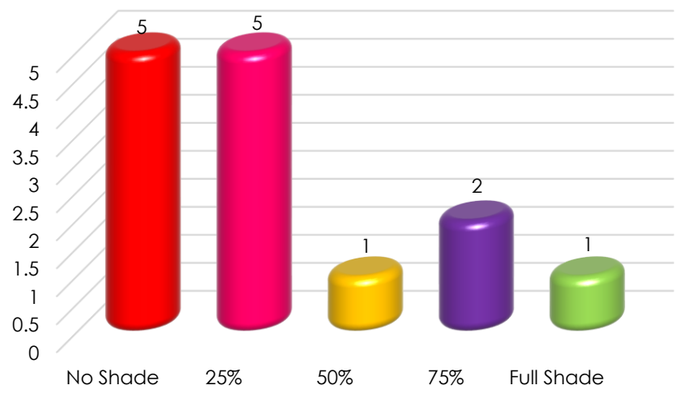


Figure 37: Shade and Softfall
Sand and bark chip are common softfall types in Sorell and cause challenges underfoot.
Shade can be natural or built but five of council's 14 playspaces offer no shade whatsoever.

5.7 Benchmarking

Whilst the national benchmark of 1:2000 was discussed previously, this does not account for the unique community profile of regions, particularly those in the growing towns and cities of Tasmania.

It's useful therefore to undertake a benchmarking exercise with similar local authorities to gauge what 'regional' provision may look like. That is, whilst the national industry benchmarks consider urban and suburban areas, they also consider larger metropolitan cities which may not align with smaller States and Territories and their unique communities.

An assessment of Sorells 6 neighbouring councils was undertaken using the 2023/24 Estimated Residential Profile (ERP's) and the current provision of playspaces for each. Table 8 highlights that there are an estimated 249 playspaces in the region which gives an average supply of approximately 1 playspace for every 1036 people.

Using this as a benchmark, we can determine the required number of playspaces for each local authority to better understand if they are under or over supplied. Sorell shows that a required 18.1 (18) playspaces are required, or a current shortfall of 4.1 (4). However, when we use the different benchmarks and base this on both current and future population numbers, the following is assumed:

Current population of 18,104
1:2000 = 9.05 required or a surplus of 4.95
1:1500 = 12.07 required or a surplus of 1.93

For the purpose of the Sorell strategy, we suggest the 1:1000 benchmark is adopted given this aligns with the region (1:1036) and the anticipated demand for quality facilities and services as the community grows in the coming years.

Projected 2041 population 23,897
1:1000 = 23.90 required or a shortfall of 9.9 (10) playspaces

It must be noted however that this is only one aspect of assessing provision, and a more detailed understanding of access will also be applied as discussed in the next section.

					Benchmark
	2023/24 ERP				1000
City	Population	Playspaces	1 Playspaces per Pop.	Required Playspaces	Total Surplus / Deficit
Clarence	63,663	68	936	63.66	4.34
Hobart	55,964	52	1076	55.96	-3.96
Glenorchy	50,808	44	1155	50.81	-6.81
Kingborough	44,179	48	920	44.18	3.82
Brighton	19,998	17	1176	20.00	-3.00
Sorell	18,104	14	1293	18.10	-4.10
Glamorgan Spring Bay	5,237	6	873	5.24	0.76
Total	257,953	249	**1036**	23.34	-8.95

Table 8: Regional Benchmarking and Provision

5.8 Playspace Access

Whilst the benchmarking exercise highlights the number of required play spaces based on supply, it does not take into consideration whether playspaces are located in the optimal location nor whether they offer a variety of experiences for learning and play. That is whilst the overall number of playspaces may meet or be within the benchmark, it is important to identify gaps and play offerings to ensure a range of opportunity and experiences are provided.

Playspace planning is therefore similar to open space planning whereby provision should be based on access by the whole community and not just young children and their families or carers. That is, provision should be based on an even distribution across any community given the needs of a child will change in relative short periods of time (2-5 years) whereas a playspace as an asset will last more than twenty years.

Like open space therefore, playspaces should be planned according to either a 'pedshed' or 'catchment', with the former being the distance to safely walk to a point, and the latter being a centre point distance (radius) outward.[xiii]

Ped sheds can also be defined as the area covered time (a 5–10-minute walk for example) as these are the basic building blocks for walkable cities and generally considered in all urban planning exercises. This measurement of time however does have limitations in that not all people can walk the same distance in the same time. A healthy person would normally walk 1km in 10-15 minutes, yet for an older adult or a person with mobility challenges for example, this would take much longer.

For the purpose of play therefore, a 500m pedshed is recommended for access to any playspace regardless of its classification, but catchments used for higher classifications which tend to offer a greater range of opportunity and target all age ranges. It's these playspaces where people tend to travel to for the specific purpose of play and as discussed in section 2.6 'Planning for Different Needs', classifications should be based on the age range it caters for and therefore designed accordingly (Table 9).

Playspace Classification	Primary Target Group	Catchment
Local	0-6	500m Pedshed
Neighbourhood	0-12	1km Catchment
District	All ages	2km Catchment
Regional	All ages	As available

Table 9: Proposed Play Classifications and Catchments

5.8.1 Access Gaps

The figures on the following pages highlight the existing provision based on the 500m pedshed (for all classifications) across Sorell and show existing residential gaps (RG) in access provision in the following areas:

Midway Point
MP RG1: The new development to the north of Sweetwater and east of Penna Road noting the proposed Midway Point Nature Play Park will address this gap
MP RG2: To the south of Sweetwater (Barilla Court / Reynolds Road
MP RG3: Eastern area between Vancouver Park and Lake Vue Parade
MP RG4: Southwestern residential area
MP RG5: Southeastern residential area

Sorell
S RG1: Northern residential areas noting the development of the playspace at the Southeast Sports Complex will assist in filling this, but a gap will still exist
S RG2: Northwestern residential area in and around Amelia Court
S RG3: Residential areas east of Tasman Highway

Lewisham
L RG1: Township gap

Dodges Ferry
DF RG1: South of Lewis Court
DF RG2: North of Boat Park
DF RG3: Residential areas in Bally Park

Carlton
C RG1: areas north of Moonar Street
C RG2: Steeles Island

Primrose Sands
PS RG1: Residential area northwest of Primrose Sands Beach
PS RG2: Area south of Tamarix Road and north of Esplanade
PS RG3: Gypsy Bay

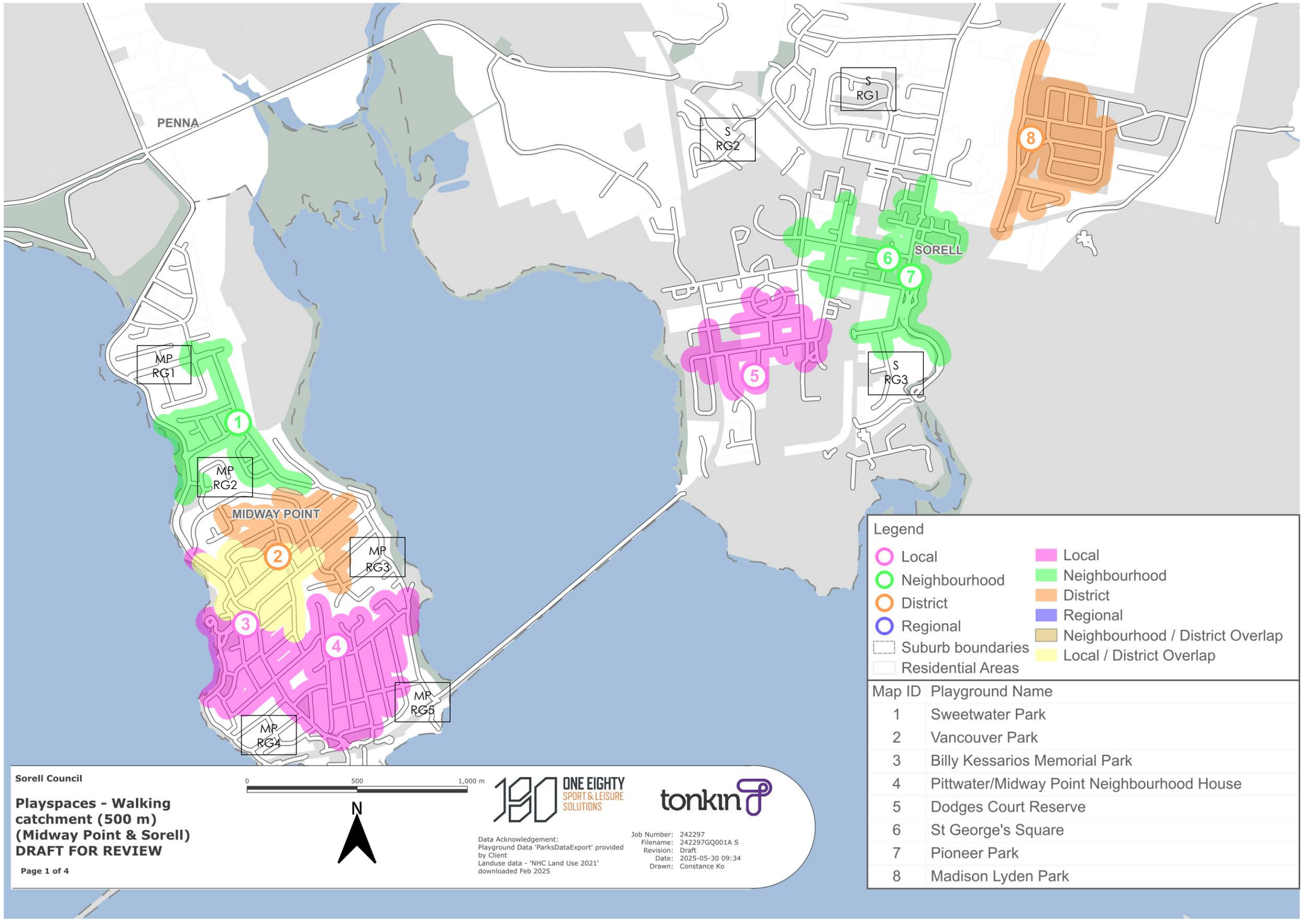


Figure 38: Midway Point and Sorell Residential Gaps

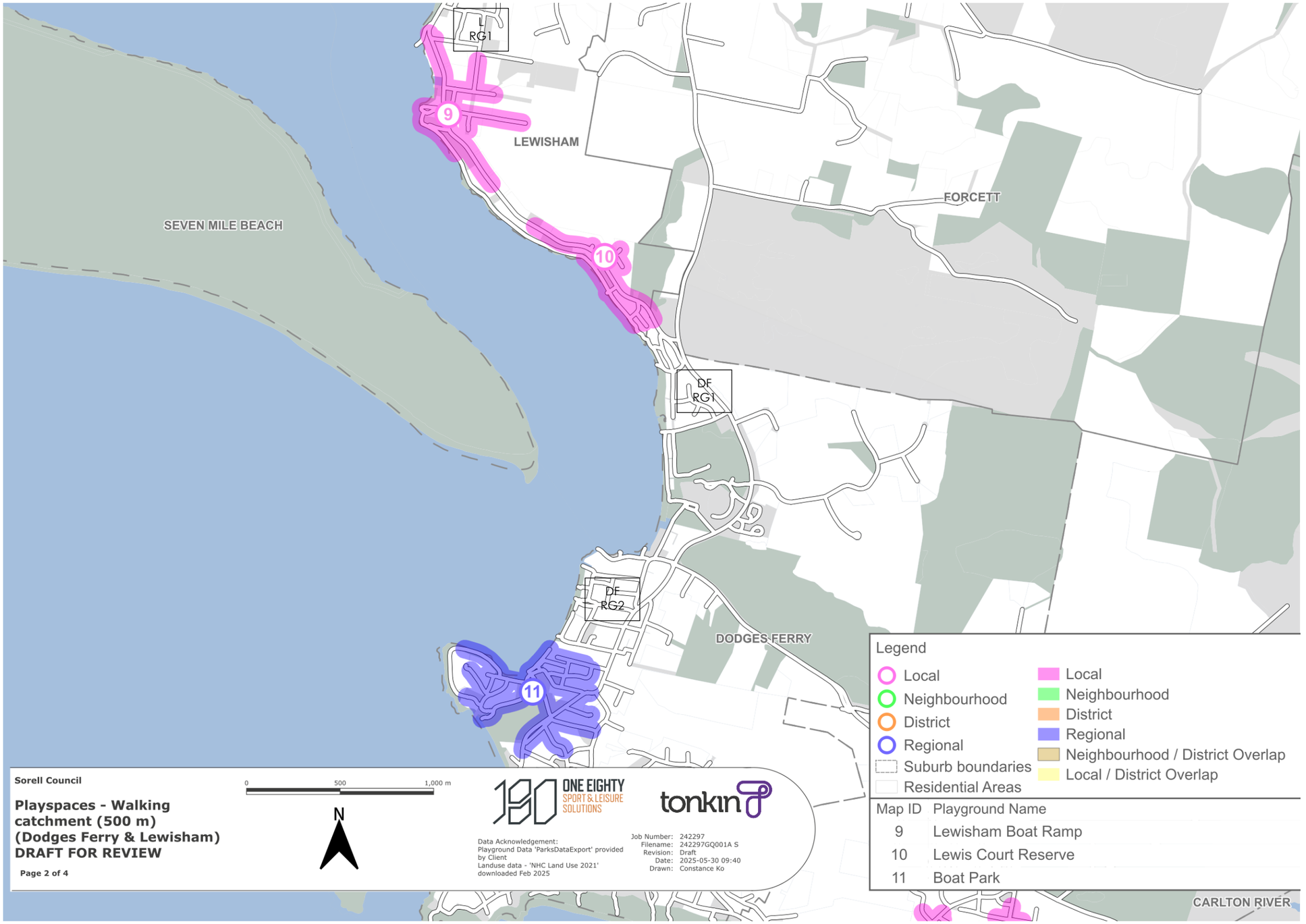


Figure 39: Lewisham and Dodges Ferry Residential Gaps

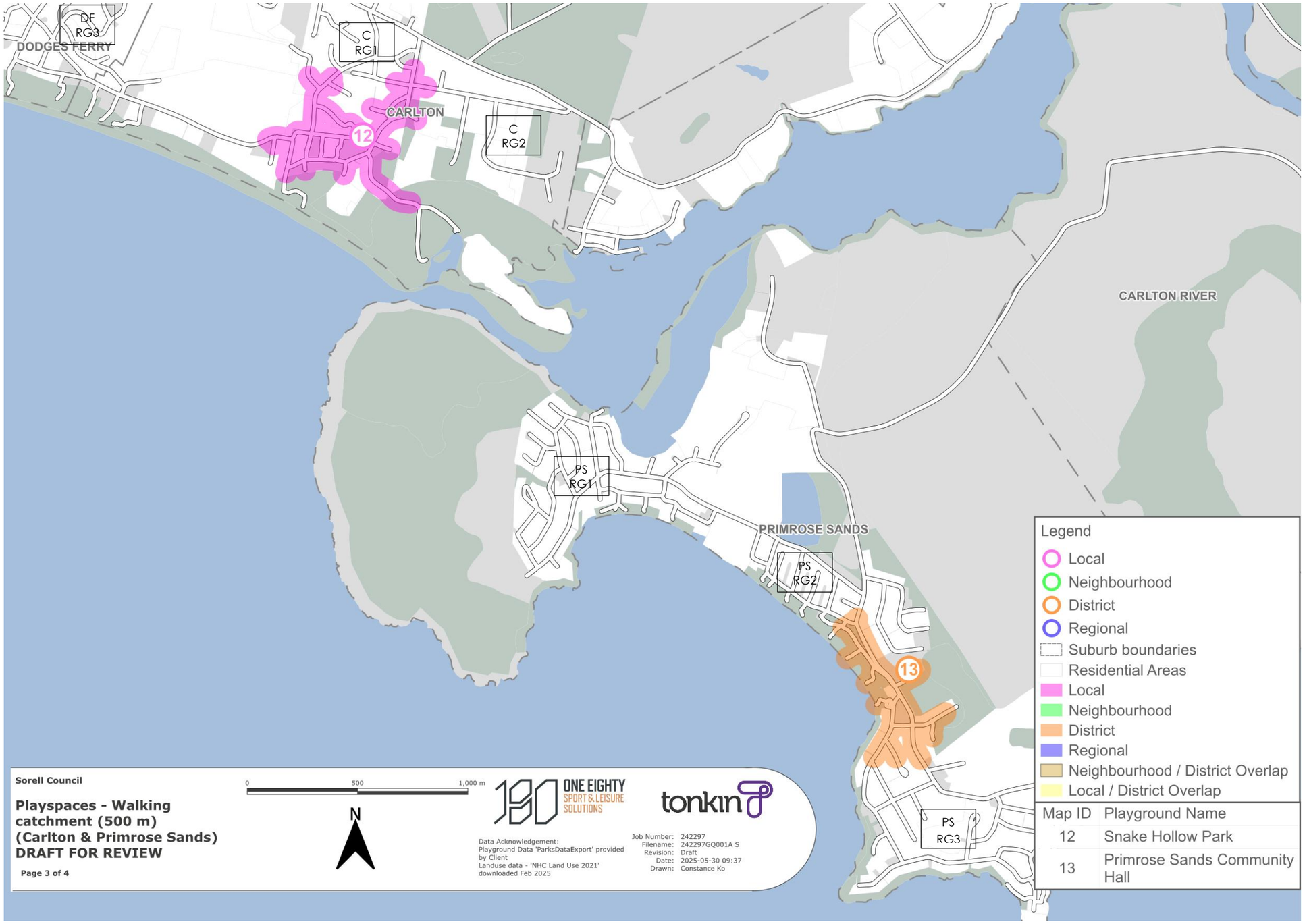


Figure 38: Dodges Ferry, Carlton, and Primrose Sands Residential Gaps

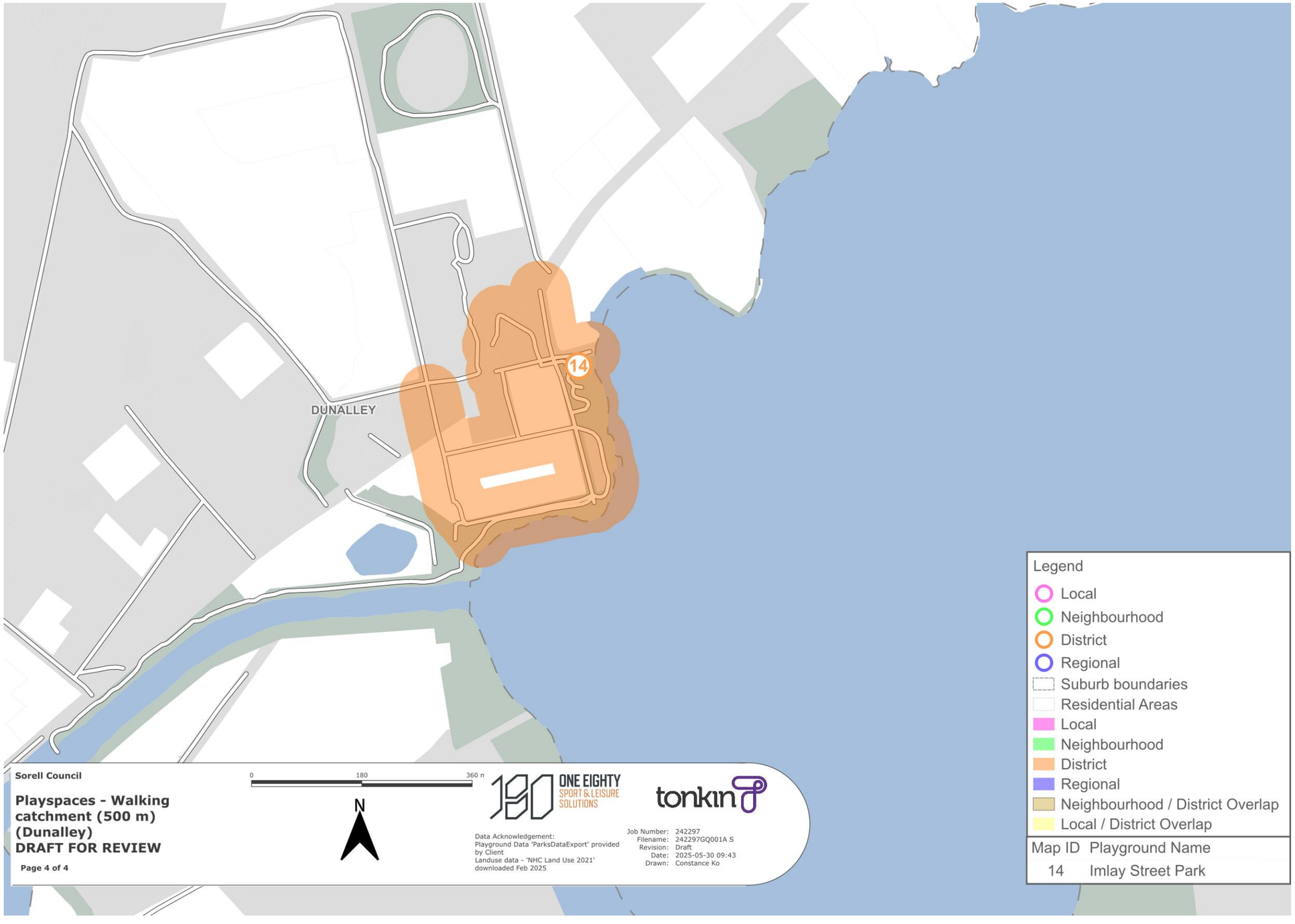


Figure 39: Dunally Pedshed

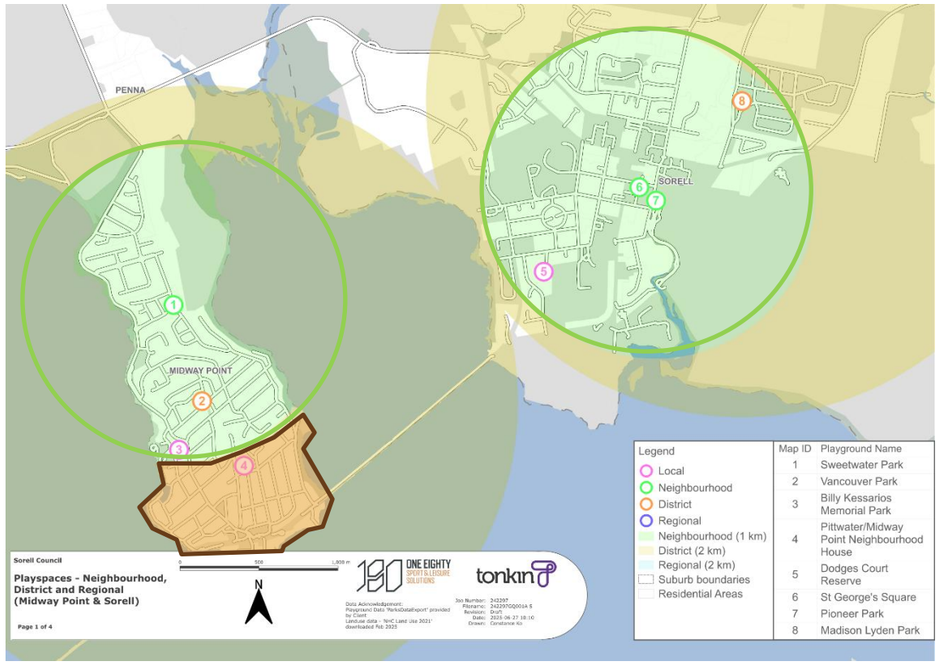
5.8.2 Classification Gaps

As shown in Figure 32 on page 39, the majority of councils playspaces are either local or neighbourhood (64%) which will attract and target younger children. Council does however have a relatively high number of district playspaces with 4 or 29% offering opportunities for children of all ages but there is only one regional.

Table 9 on page 41 also highlights the notion of a 500m pedshed being applied to all playspaces with analyses showing some gaps in overall provision. It also highlights that access to 'higher' classifications should also be considered as these are destinations where people will purposely travel to for the play, and therefore tend to stay for longer periods of time. These playspaces therefore require, or have additional facilities such as toilets, shelters, BBQ's, open spaces, and special features.

A catchment principle of 1km is therefore applied to neighbourhood playspaces, and 2 kilometres to district as people tend to travel to these by car, bike, or public transport and therefore a pedshed is not appropriate. To this end, Figure 40 highlights higher gaps in:

1. The southern areas of Midway Point and
2. Carlton south



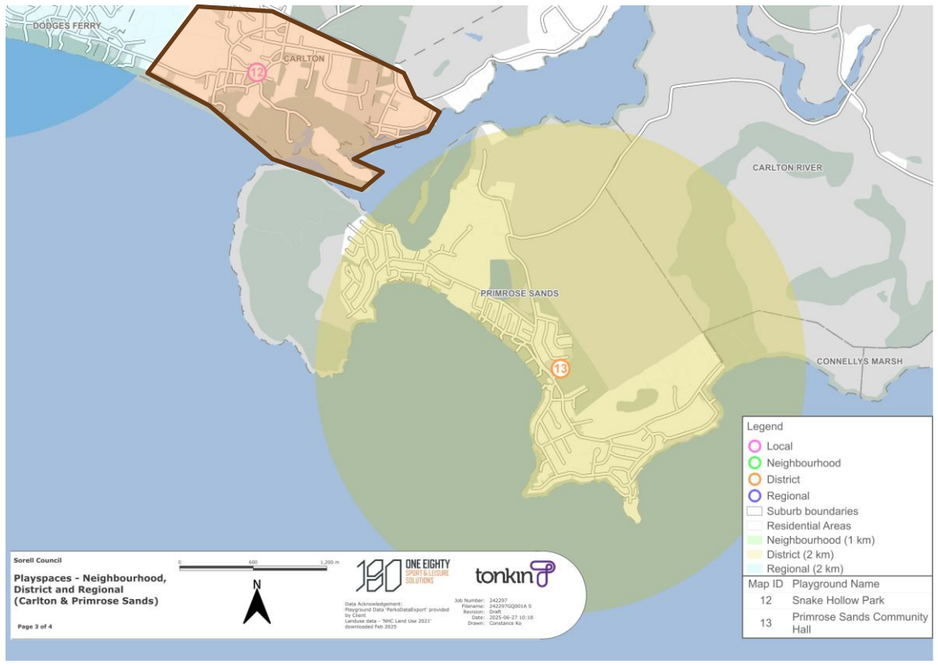


Figure 40: Quality Playspace Gaps

Section Six: What the Community Thinks

This following highlights key findings from consultation with local stakeholders and residents with an interest in the development and management of play in Sorell.

6.1 Stakeholder Feedback

A workshop with key stakeholders was held at the council offices on 13 March 2025 with the following key points being raised:

Playspace Design

- Less plastic, more nature / natural play
- Use of the natural environment and landscape of Sorell. Promote actual nature play associated with beaches and reserves. 'Permission to Play' strategy.
- Promote community involvement in the design of playspaces to foster ownership
- Avoid pine bark and sand that make it difficult to push wheelchairs and prams.
- Promote and develop more sensory play areas for young children and those with disabilities

Play for All

- Find solutions where adults can play with their children at the same time - making structures more accessible.
- Consider the new chairs instead of the liberty swings for disabled but within the playspace
- Incorporate more fitness structures for older people
- More areas where older children can interact

Support Facilities

- Toilets and shade are needed particularly for disability groups that use playspaces
- Fence larger playspaces
- Shade is a common issue and needs to be addressed
- Signage and wayfinding. Promote and theme with the local history, heritage, and culture. Not clear where the community can access
- For larger parks more picnic tables / BBQs

6.2 Community Survey

An online survey was made available to the community for a 6-week period, findings from which were as follows.

6.2.1 User Profile

Most respondents (84%) were parents of children predominantly aged 3-6 (35%) followed by grandparents with 66% stating they visited playgrounds weekly or more than once a week (32% and 34% respectively). A further 31% stated they visited playspaces once or twice a month with the main means of transport being car

Figure 41: Respondant

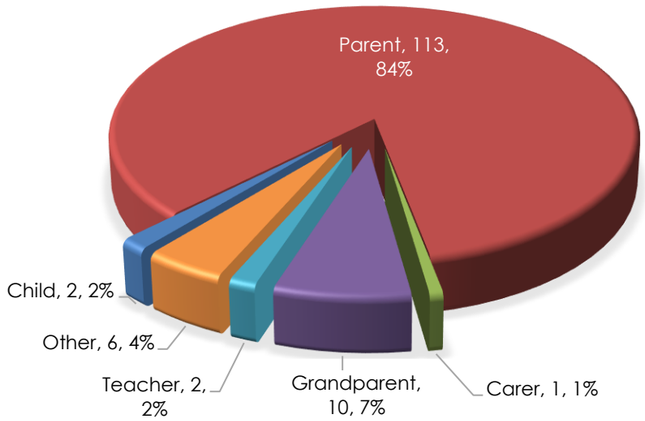


Figure 42: Age of Child Using Playspaces

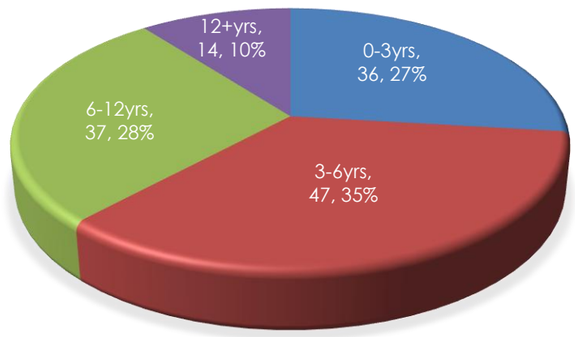


Figure 43: Frequency of Use

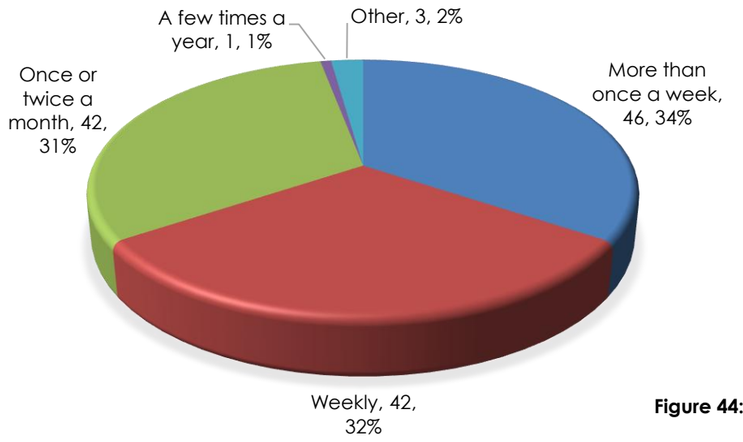
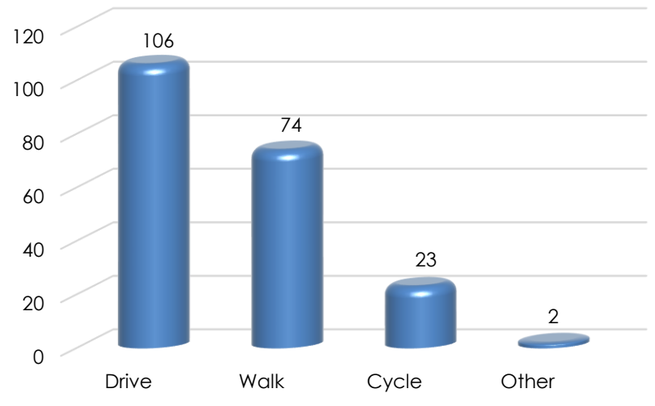


Figure 44: Travel to Playspace By



6.2.2 Playspaces Use

Carres stated that the type of play their child participates in were predominantly those that offered physical play (126) followed by social play (96), constructive play (74) closely followed by imaginative play (69).

Swings and slides remain the most common type of preferred equipment closely followed by climbing, water play, flying fox, and nature play areas.

Figure 45: Type of Play Child Engages In

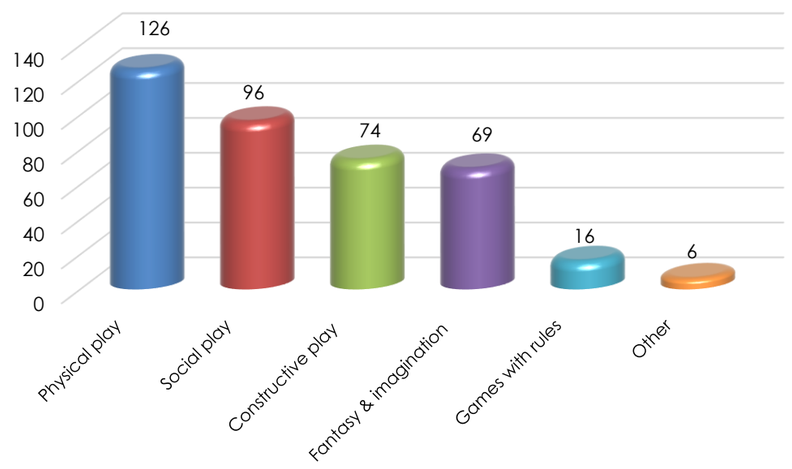
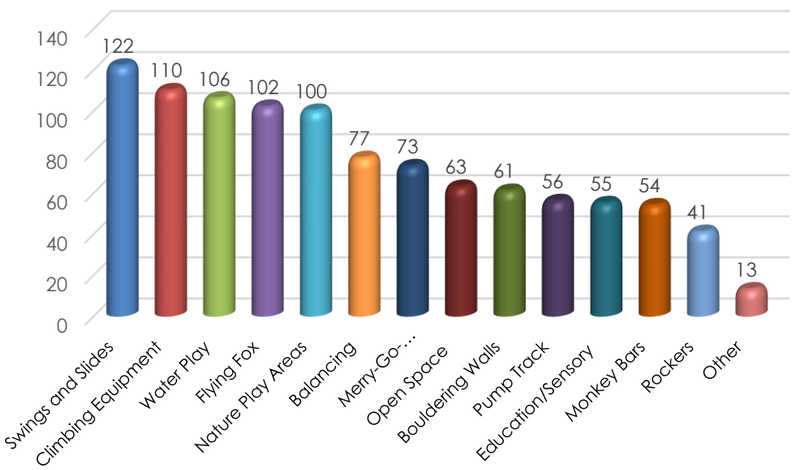


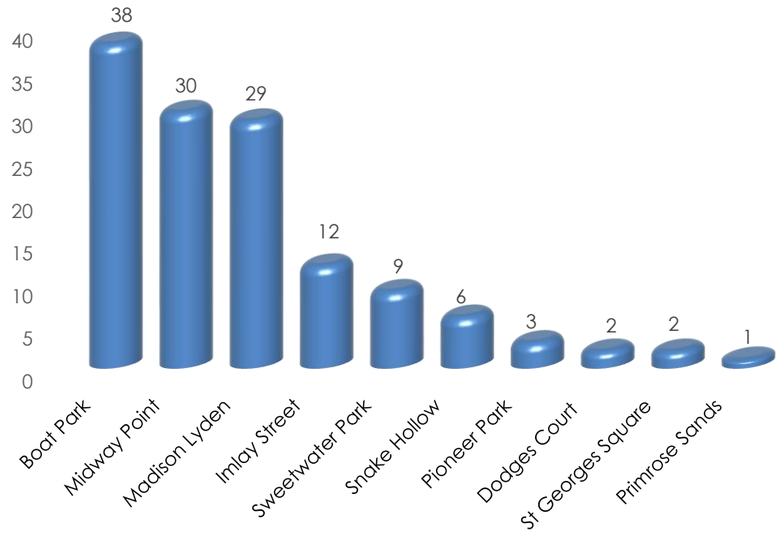
Figure 46: Preferred Equipment



6.2.3 Favourite Playspaces

Residents were asked which their favourite playspaces in Sorell were with the higher classified playspaces of Boat Park, Midway Point (Vancouver), and Madison Lyden all being mentioned. To a lesser degree and potentially due to its location, Imlay Street in Dunalley was also popular as was Sweetwater and Snake Hollow.

Figure 47: Favourite Playspaces in Sorell



When asked which other playspaces were used, these were grouped according to the municipality in which they were located and included playspaces in:

- Clarence
- Hobart
- Kingsborough
- Glenorchy
- Brighton
- Other Tasmania wide

By far the most popular playspaces were Bellerive and Simmons in Clarence, and Kingston Playspace in Kingborough (Figures 48 and 49)

Figure 48: Other Playspaces Used

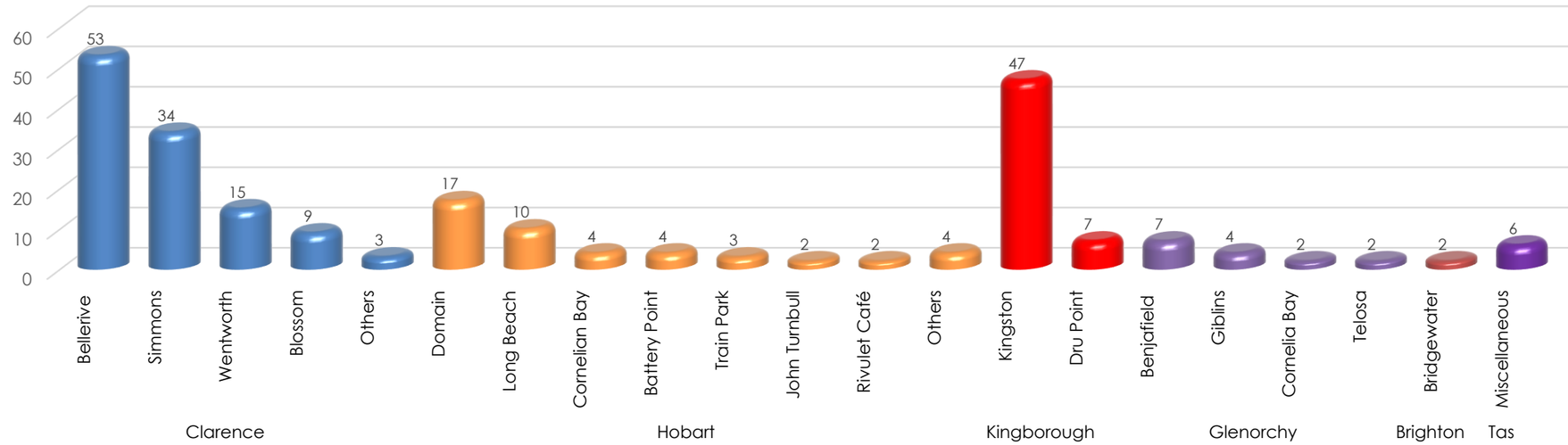


Figure 49: Favourite Playspaces Outside of Sorell

Left: Bellerive. **Middle Left**: Simmons. **Middle Right**: Domain. **Right**: Kingston

6.2.4 Importance v Perception

Respondents were asked what they thought were important aspects of playspaces verses their perception of what was being delivered in Sorell. This Importance/Perception (IP) gap provides a good insight into areas in need of improvement for Council in regard to its management and provision of its playspaces and highlights the greatest areas of concern in order to be:

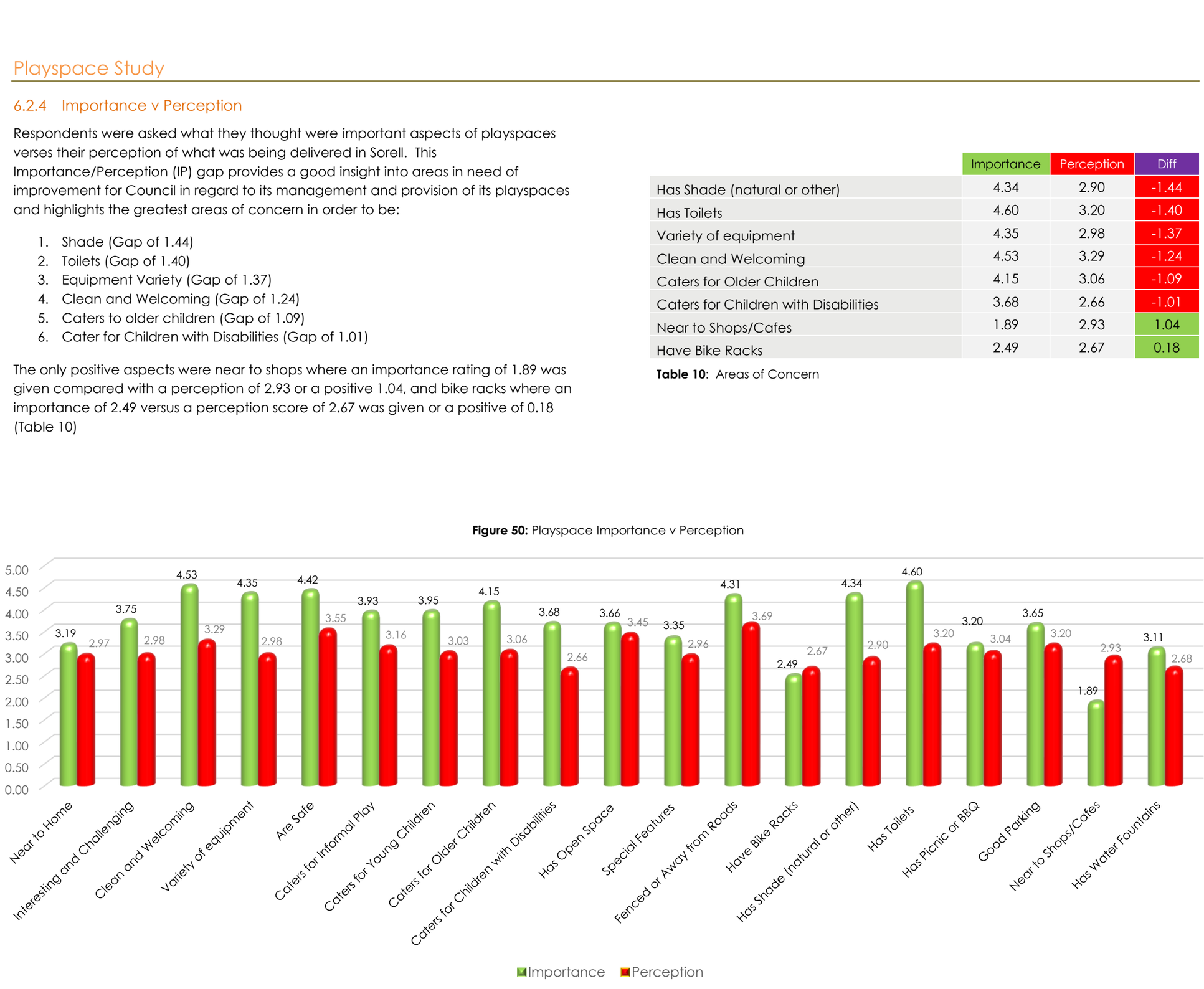
1. Shade (Gap of 1.44)
2. Toilets (Gap of 1.40)
3. Equipment Variety (Gap of 1.37)
4. Clean and Welcoming (Gap of 1.24)
5. Caters to older children (Gap of 1.09)
6. Cater for Children with Disabilities (Gap of 1.01)

The only positive aspects were near to shops where an importance rating of 1.89 was given compared with a perception of 2.93 or a positive 1.04, and bike racks where an importance of 2.49 versus a perception score of 2.67 was given or a positive of 0.18 (Table 10)

	Importance	Perception	Diff
Has Shade (natural or other)	4.34	2.90	-1.44
Has Toilets	4.60	3.20	-1.40
Variety of equipment	4.35	2.98	-1.37
Clean and Welcoming	4.53	3.29	-1.24
Caters for Older Children	4.15	3.06	-1.09
Caters for Children with Disabilities	3.68	2.66	-1.01
Near to Shops/Cafes	1.89	2.93	1.04
Have Bike Racks	2.49	2.67	0.18

Table 10: Areas of Concern

Figure 50: Playspace Importance v Perception



Section Seven: The Strategy

7.1 Summary of Opportunities

From the analysis and findings from this report, several opportunities have presented themselves for Sorell to include the following:

1. Using the 1:1000 benchmark, there will be a shortfall in provision across council of ten (10) playspaces from 2024 – 2041 with priority focus given to the identified 17 pedshed gaps in the three main geographical areas of Midway Point, Sorell, and the Southern Beaches
2. The Balance areas should be monitored for growth, particularly:
   - Forcett
   - Orielton and
   - Primrose
3. The development of playspaces at the Southeast Sports Complex and Midway Point nature play park are supported as they will assist in addressing pedshed gaps in those areas
4. Other open space precincts, particularly those with existing sporting and recreation infrastructure, should be considered as good places for playspace development of at least a high neighbourhood level.
5. Play spaces of at least neighbourhood and district classifications should also be accessible to the whole community and gaps are evident in south Midway Point and Carlton
6. At least one if not two flagship regional playspaces are warranted but consideration given to the impact these will have on local communities within their vicinity. In particular, additional car parking will be required as they will attract visitors from outside of the council area which may bring benefits to the local economy, but an assessment as to the rationale behind development should be carefully considered.
7. With the exception of Midway Point Neighbourhood House, and the Lewisham boat ramp, the current location of playspaces is good albeit with some room for improvement to fill the identified pedsheds gaps.
8. Sand, and to a lesser extent bark chip softfall poses a challenge for the less mobile and whilst has merit in some areas of playspaces, should be considered for replacement with rubber softfall.
9. Sorell has many areas of natural beauty and there is opportunity to promote play in the natural environment, beaches, and bushland under careful supervision of adults and carers.
10. Ancillary facilities such as fences should be considered in neighbourhood or higher playspaces or where there is a potential perceived hazard.
11. Shade should be considered in all playspaces whereby at least 50% of play areas should be covered by natural or built structures.
12. Access to toilets, BBQ, and end of trip facilities are warranted in play areas of a district or higher classification. Local and neighbourhood playspaces should be those within walking distance of homes and this should form the rationale for their inclusion/exclusion. Consideration should however be given to the placement of neighbourhood playspaces and if possible, within walking distance of toilets in nearby shops or public places.
13. Community ownership of playspace sand open spaces should be encouraged and this is evident particularly in the smaller townships.

7.2 Guiding Principles

Several Guiding Principles are suggested to assist in the ongoing management and supply of playspaces across Sorell which should be used in both day to day and ongoing strategic decision making in relation to playspace management in Sorell:

GP1: Understanding Play

The importance of play is recognised by Council, and it will provide opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to assist their cognitive, social, and physical development. It also acknowledges the various stages of development and will refer to age groups and their needs as:

- Infants 0 - 3 years of age
- Toddlers 3 - 6 years of age
- Juniors 6 - 12 years of age
- Young People 12+

GP2: Playspace Classifications

Playspaces will be classified according to the needs of a child as they grow and learn and council will design, supply, and manage its play assets according to the intended age of the child and includes the following as a guide:

- Local = 0-6 years of age
- Neighbourhood = 0-12
- District and Regional All ages and abilities

GP3: Access to Play

The whole community should have access to play and this principle is based on the notion that where possible, practical, and feasible, a playspace will be within a 500m walking pedshed distance of homes in the three main geographical areas of council.

GP4: Play in the Balance Areas

Where growth occurs in the Balance areas of Council and a community reaches a population of 500 or more, the development of a consolidated high neighbourhood or low district playspace (similar to that of Primrose Sands), should be considered.

GP5: Quality Play Experience

The community should be able to access higher standards of play with a 1km catchment recommended for neighbourhood play opportiuites, and a 2km for at least district. District and higher playspaces will be designed with additional play opportiuites and experiences in mind, and the unique landscape and history of the region promoted.

GP6: Playspace Design

Design of playspaces will be in line with their intended classification and standards that guide their construction and installation.[xiv] It will also align with natural advantages to include existing trees for shade, line of site, connectivity to path networks and alignment with crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles.

Risk management will be considered and whilst mitigated, will be balanced alongside learning, development, and fun, and where possible, the topography and natural advantages used to promote nature play.

GP7: Public Facilities
Toilets are warranted in playspaces of a district and regional classification, and consideration given to accessing public facilities within walking distance of neighbourhood playspaces. Toilets are not warranted in local playspaces.

GP8: Fencing
Fencing of playspaces should be considered for district and regional classifications that offer play experience for all ages and where families stay for longer periods of time and often children roam and explore. Local and neighbourhood playspace should be fenced if there is an inherent risk such as main arterial roads, steep embankments, or other identified safety hazard.

GP9: Playspace Shade
Council will endeavour to ensure playspaces offer shade and protection. As a matter of principle, playspaces of district and regional should offer full effective shade (built or natural) with local and neighbourhood playspaces being a minimum 25-50% coverage.

GP10: Precinct Play Development
Areas of open space that are currently designed and used for sport and recreation should be considered for playspace development. These areas are traditionally where families watch sport and often where young children may need entertaining. Where gaps exist, it is recommended that playspaces be of at least neighbourhood classification.

GP11: Playspace Removal
Where a playspace has been identified for removal or surplus to requirements, the following principles will be applied:

Rationale
removal of playgrounds will be based on several factors including physical condition where it can no longer be certified, and/or whether another playspace can be enhanced within the nominated pedshed as per GP3. Playgrounds that are not to be renewed will only be dismantled once an adjacent playground is upgraded or is deemed an unacceptable risk to the public.

Park Improvements
Prior to removing a playground, a landscape concept plan will be developed to indicate proposed future improvements or uses to the park. Improvements to parks, where playgrounds are proposed for removal, should occur within a 6–12-month timeframe from when the playground was removed.

Consultation
Consistent with Council's community engagements policy, residents surrounding parks where playgrounds are to be consolidated, will be notified with the reasons and rationale clearly explained.

GP12: Partnerships and Stakeholder Relationships
Council will identify and work with partners and stakeholders to ensure a full range of accessible playspaces are provided in the community. This may include but not limited to, developers, education department/schools, and private childcare providers.

7.3 A Vision for Play

Councils vision for play has been founded on the findings of this report, the clarification of stakeholder expectations, and the growth of the community in the coming years and states:

The Sorell Council understands and acknowledges the importance and benefits of play and will work toward designing, managing, and monitoring opportunities that promote the physical, cognitive, and social development of children in accessible, challenging and safe environments.

Our playspaces will be interesting, diverse, and offer a range of opportunities for the whole family and children of all abilities and will showcase the unique aspects of Sorell and its natural surrounds.

7.4 Proposed Changes

Changes to play in Sorell are based on a 10-year strategy for playspace management as this is realistic and will enable Council to prioritise works and allocate budgets and resources.

Table 11 below summarises the suggested changes for the overall provision of playspaces noting costs are not discussed at this stage as these will invariably change with time and dependent on the level of design of each playspace. Priorities are therefore discussed in terms of the following timeframes:

- High: 1-3 years
- Medium: 3-5 years
- Low: 5-10 years
- Maintain: Ongoing

	Remove	**Rm**	Remove and do not replace in the same location
	Replacement	**Rp**	Replace with same classification
	Change	**C**	change to a new classification
	Maintain	**M**	maintain the current classification

Table 11: Proposed Recommendations

Table 12 on the following page summarises each action for current and playspaces across the council area with Table 13 being recommendations to fill the identified residential and classification gaps noting that the availability of land has not been explored, and therefore a further assessment of options and opportiuites will need to be explored by Council.

Existing Playspaces																					
Playspace Location and Map ID			Current Classification				Recommendation				Comment	Future Classification					Priority			
			L	N	D	R	Rm	Rp	C	M		L	N	D	R	X	H	M	L	X
Existing	1	Sweetwater Park									Add shade structures to the park and additional carer areas such as seating and shelters									
	2	Vancouver Park									Potential site master plan to enhance district class. use and passive surveillance of the park.									
	3	Billy Kessarios Memorial Park									Additional low-key equipment to enhance the local classification									
	4	Pittwater/Midway Point NH									Remove from accessible play but maintain in the boundary of the NH and develop a new (O3)									
	5	Dodges Court Reserve									Replace the playspace or enhance the existing site with a new local									
	6	St George's Square									Enhance playspace to district and theme with the cultural aspect of the park									
	7	Pioneer Park									Replace softfall with rubber and maintain the NH classification									
	8	Madison Lyden Park									Include shade structures, replace softfall and add additional play opps., facilities and toilets									
	9	Lewisham Boat Ramp									Remove and develop a new playspace on the opposite side of road near public toilets									
	10	Lewis Court Reserve									Maintain in its current state with minor upgrades to equip and seating / shade									
	11	Boat Park									Master plan to upgrades and enhance regional classification									
	12	Snake Hollow Park									Upgrade to NH and natural play opportunities and include carer area and seating									
	13	Primrose Sands Community Hall									Monitor and maintain the site and replace ageing infrastructure in the									
	14	Imlay Street Park									Maintain at its current district level and consider replacing some of the sand softfall with rubber									

Table 12: Existing Playspace Recommendations

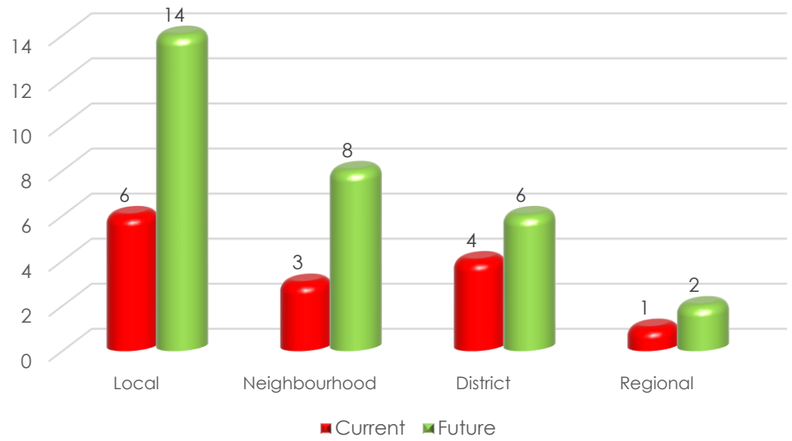
Proposed Playspaces												
Opportunity and Suburb			Gap Location	Comment	Future Classification				Priority		
					L	N	D	R	H	M	L
Opportunities	O1	Midway Point	MP RG1	Proposed nature play park in the new subdivision in the north of Midway Point							
	O2	Midway Point	MP RG2	Open space within housing development or consider shared use agreement with Lady Gowrie ELC							
	O3	Midway Point	MP RG3	Foreshore Lakeview Parade or other available open space within the vicinity							
	O4	Midway Point	Land to the east of Midway Point NH house and north of tennis courts (Classification Gap)	Replace access issues associated with the Midway Point neighbourhood house.							
	O5	Midway Point	MP RG4	Any available open space in the southwest corner of Midway Point and west of Penna Road							
	O6	Midway Point	MP RG5	Midway Point Park and Ride. Existing playspace and half court located on this parcel of land. Ownership?							
	O7	Sorell	S RG1	Available land in the northeast of Sorell north of Pennington and west of Weston Hills Road							
	O8	Sorell	S RG2	Proposed playspace in the Southeast Sports Complex to meet the residential gap							
	O9	Sorell	S RG3	Available open space in the development south of Parsonage and east of the A3 carriageway							
	O10	Lewisham	Remove Boat Ramp playspace	New neighbourhood playspace developed on the opposite side of the road adjacent to toilets							
	O11	Dodges Ferry	DF RG1	Development of a district playspace in the Shark Park sports complex to fill classification gap							
	O12	Dodges Ferry	DF RG2	Playspace development on Jetty Road or available land near to foreshore							
	O13	Dodges Ferry	DF RG3	Available open space along or near Carlton Beach / Bally Park Roads							
	O14	Carlton	C RG1	Available open space to the south of Carlton River Road and west of Moomere Street							
	O15	Carlton	C RG2	Available land in and around Steels Island and west of the Carlton River							
	O16	Primrose Sands	PS RG1	Available open space adjacent to Carlton Bluff Road with potential use and access of the Beach							
	O17	Primrose Sands	PS RG2	Available open space on foreshore reserve along Primrose Sands Road. Potential fitness trail							
	O18	Primrose Sands	PS RG3	Available open space in and around Gypsy Bay / Place with potential for Renard Point or other foreshore location							

Table 13: New Playspace Recommendations

7.5 Provision Change

Using the recommended benchmark of 1:1000 there is a current shortfall of 4 playspaces (Total 18) which will rise to 10 (24) in 2041. This does not however consider physical pedshed gaps and whilst it is understood that many areas of Sorell are rural and semi-rural, pedsheds and provision should be considered for communities and neighbourhoods that exceed a population of 500. To this end and assuming the existing and proposed playspace recommendations are implemented, Council will have a total of 30 playspaces or an approximate 1:700 provision ratio. It is likely however that not all new recommendations can or will be implemented, but focus should be given to the three main growth areas of Midway Point, Sorell, and the Southern Beaches, with careful monitoring of the balance areas for growth and demand.

Figure 51: Current v Future Playspace Provision



7.6 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this report, the following now provides the basis of recommendations for Council regarding its playspace management for the next 5-10 years:

Recommendation 1: The Playspace Framework
Formally adopt the playspace framework that outlines Councils understanding and definitions of play including play classification and target user groups.

Recommendation 2: Guiding Principles
Adopt, endorse and implement the proposed 12 guiding principles for playspace design, provision, and management

Recommendation 3: A Vision for Play
Adopt and strive toward the vison for play across Sorell that aligns with the playspace framework and principles

Recommendation 4: Existing Playspaces
Implement the suggested changes to existing playspaces with a focus on high priority projects and individual site master plans.

Recommendation 5: Proposed New Playspaces
Develop a staged and budgeted development plan of the proposed new playspaces considering their feasibility in the suggested gap areas.

Recommendation 6: Balance Area Growth
Monitor growth in the balance of Council areas noting a suggested tipping point for provision being a district level playspace (similar to that at Primrose Sands) when the community reaches 500 people.

Recommendation 7: Softfall
Consider softfall replacement from sand to rubber noting some may lend themselves better to the former, particularly those on coastal areas.

Recommendation 8: Playspace Design
Ensure each playspace is carefully designed to align with its intended classification and target age cohort. Consider all aspects of child development and ensure higher classifications of district and regional are bespoke to include aspects highlighted in Section 3 (understanding play) of this report. District and regional playspaces should also consider children and adults of all abilities.

Recommendation 9: Licence to Play
Develop a 'Licence to Play' campaign that highlights the natural areas of Sorell and promotes Council's' understanding of play and its benefits. The campaign should highlight specific areas and promote the concept of natural play and exploration of Sorells environment including bushland and beaches.

Recommendation 10: Friends of Play
Include the community in playspace design and management by fostering community groups to take carriage of play areas. This may include regular reporting to Council, and general involvement in the day-to-day management of play, particularly in the more rural and regional areas of Council.

Recommendation 11: Stakeholder Partnerships
Where required, feasible, and practicle, enter into partnership with other providers of play and consider joint use agreements for the ongoing access to facilities not directly owned by Council whilst considering risk mitigation and safety.

Recommendation 12: Monitoring and Review
Monitor play provision and ensure the strategy is regularly reviewed in line with the projected growth of the community.

7.7 Summary and Conclusion

Sorell is a small council covering a large land mass with a relatively new provision of play assets with all being under 15 years of age. These assets will however require monitoring as they age, and the need to respond to this strategy will become more evident in the next 5 years in particular.

The projected growth of the community will also need to be monitored, and whilst there is currently a relatively good supply of playspaces, the need for more will be in line with growth.

This strategy aims to provide Council with the information it needs to be proactive rather than reactive to change, as it establishes a solid understanding and appreciation of play being much more than the provision of the traditional 3-piece rocker, swing, and slide.

The needs of a child also change in relatively small periods time and the need to maintain their interest and involvement in play is critical as it provides many benefits as outlined in this report. Playspaces should therefore be designed to challenge and excite and also include areas and opportiuites for the whole family and carers to play with their children.

Playspaces should also be strategically placed across the municipality rather than just in areas where young families with children reside and offer unique design aspects which showcase Sorell as a great place to live, work, and visit. Careful consideration should however be given to where larger playspaces are developed, as these will invariably attract people from far and wide and will therefore require additional car parking and ancillary facilities such as toilets, shade, shelters and picnic areas. These parks are highly attractive and can have impact on neighbouring residents and should therefore be carefully planned.

With the tools now at hand to understand, plan, manage, and monitor play, Council is well equipped to serve the needs of current and future generations and be a leader across Tasmania in playspace design and management. The plan should however be regularly reviewed to ensure it stays in touch with trends associated with play and its design, and ensures Council remains aware and able to respond to the 'state of play' across the municipality.

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