EVERYONE CAN PLAY

LET'S CREATE INCLUSIVE PLAYSPACES

DRAFT FOR EXHIBITION

Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Planning and Environment acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to Elders past, present and future. We honour Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to place and their rich contribution to our society.

The community playground has always had a storied place in Australian culture. Many of us will look back on our childhood with fond memories of playing on the slides and swings with friends and family. It is a place where communities come together, interact, and enjoy the outdoors.

It is only natural then, that when kids grow up they want to make sure that everyone in future generations can share in these experiences. With the launch of Everyone Can Play we want to make sure that playspaces are better – and more inclusive – than ever before.

Everyone Can Play is a best practice toolkit for local governments, community leaders, landscape architects – or even passionate local residents – to use as a reference guide for creating world-class playspaces that are designed to be inclusive of everyone in the community.

On behalf of the New South Wales Government, I encourage you to review and provide feedback on this draft guideline. Your comments and suggestions will ensure that meaningful change can be made for future generations and that together we can create playspaces that leave lasting memories for the next generation.

– Anthony Roberts MP
  Minister for Planning and Housing

'Can I get there?'
'Can I play?'
'Can I stay?'

With the launch of Everyone Can Play, we want these three questions to be front-and-centre in the minds of everyone involved in creating and modernising playspaces across New South Wales.

Whether you're a local council, a playspace designer or a passionate community member, Everyone Can Play is your toolkit for checking that your playspaces are being designed and delivered according to best practice and can be used and enjoyed by everyone in the community.

At the heart of Everyone Can Play is a declaration that play really is for everyone, regardless of age, ability or cultural background. As you will read, even the smallest changes can do wonders for ensuring an inclusive playspace.

I would like to say thank you to everyone involved in putting this document together. Through sharing your stories, dedication and passion, you have been part of a landmark project that will leave a legacy of inclusive playspaces across NSW.

See you on the playground!

Fiona Morrison,
Commissioner Open Space and Parklands,
NSW Department of Planning and Environment

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Bec Ho, Touched By Olivia Foundation
Chris Maclean, Local Government NSW
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INFORM

**Inclusive playspaces
are for everyone.**

CONSIDER

**Key components to keep in mind,
from design to delivery.**

TOOLS

**The tools to translate
ideas into action.**

DRAFT FOR EXHIBITION

INFORM

Inclusive playspaces are for everyone.

A New Commitment for Inclusive Playspaces in NSW

Our society is incredibly diverse, made up of people of all ages, abilities and cultures.

In our communities we have playspaces for adventure, discovery, relationship building and memory making. But there is more we can do to ensure the playspaces we create are designed to bring people together.

Play is for everyone. Our playspaces should be too.

Playspaces exist at the heart of our neighbourhoods and should cater for everyone – young and old, families and carers, and people of all abilities.

Playspaces should be welcoming and comfortable, easy to navigate and interesting. They should offer a range of physical challenges, a variety of landscape settings to explore, and provide opportunities to connect with others.

Let's ensure Everyone Can Play in NSW.

Whether you are a member of local government, a community leader, a landscape architect or a passionate citizen, you can inspire change.

This document outlines the key principles of inclusive playspaces and provides the tools to convert your ideas into improvements.

Everyone Can Play is not a new standard, but it is our commitment to the future of play in NSW.

This is a set of best practice recommendations designed to encourage more people to create more inclusive playspaces.

The Importance of Inclusive Play

Play is for everyone. It is essential to children's development, shaping the way they interact with the world around them. It enables them to learn new skills, make friends and build self confidence. Play is also important to the health and wellbeing of people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

With 1.3 million people in NSW living with a disability, an ageing population who is increasingly involved in the everyday care of grandchildren, and a multi-cultural society, playspaces should provide an inclusive experience for all.

Playspaces are a key community asset, bringing everyone together in a fun, welcoming and comfortable environment.

Everyone Can Play will ensure NSW playspaces invite all people to participate in a variety of play experiences, in ways that challenge, excite and promote an active and healthy lifestyle.

Play is important for all children. Through play, children develop the skills they need for life. Play teaches children to socialise and interact with others. It allows children to develop creativity and imagination, and helps with emotional and cognitive development. Play gives children opportunities to take risks and challenges. Besides the obvious benefits of movement, exercise and fitness, physical play provides the building blocks to children's complete development, from balance, vision and hearing to tactile learning and sensory integration.
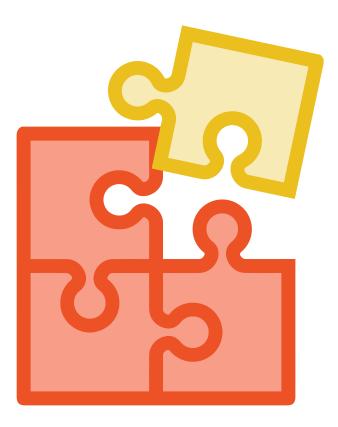
Everyone Can Play is not a new standard for playgrounds in NSW. By complementing existing standards and applying universal design theory, Everyone Can Play provides design principles and sets best practice recommendations for playspaces of all sizes, types and budgets. They play a key role in ensuring inclusive play becomes the norm in NSW.

What is Inclusive Play?

A playspace is the area within a park with playground equipment and any immediately adjacent supporting amenities, such as toilets, car parking, bike paths, picnic facilities, and open space or landscape areas.

Inclusive playspaces are easy to access, easy to move around in, provide a range of play types and challenges, and are equipped with appropriate amenities, in a comfortable environment. Inclusive playspaces allow everyone to stay as long as they choose.

Expanding the space beyond traditional playground boundaries helps to ensure there are suitable supporting amenities to create an inclusive experience.

Accessibility vs Inclusivity

Commonly associated with mobility standards and safety compliance, accessibility refers to the physical ability of people to access a place or thing. Accessible design predominantly addresses the movement needs of those with disabilities. When applied to playspaces, conforming to accessibility standards in key aspects including the equipment, surfacing and supporting amenities, creates an all abilities playspace.

Striving to remove obstacles and barriers that prevent people of all ages, abilities (both physical and mental) and cultural backgrounds from being invited to play, inclusive playspaces consider as many people's needs as possible. They provide a welcoming place where people feel comfortable, yet challenged.

Inclusive playspaces provide access to a variety of play experiences where everyone can engage and play together. Everyone Can Play encourages users to think beyond accessibility needs so that everyone can play.

Accessibility is just one piece of the puzzle.

Case Study

When Megan, who is legally blind, had her daughter Emily all she wanted to do was be able to take her to the playground. Megan wanted a place for her and her daughter to belong. She wanted to be an equal in a space that fosters connection and community.

What does taking Emily to the playground mean to you?

"Going to the playground is extremely meaningful for me, as it allows me to feel like I'm being a great parent. I'm not the parent with a disability who can't read her daughter print books. I'm the parent who can take her to the park and race her down the slippery dip. It's a place where I feel I can go and be myself, and my daughter can be herself. We can be comfortable, and people can be comfortable with us.

Playgrounds are where our children get to learn boundaries. They are where we, as adults, get to teach our children about sharing, collaboration, cooperation and community. If a park does one thing, it breaks down barriers. It breaks down cultural barriers, diversity barriers, and disability barriers. Inclusion matters on all levels, and it's about everybody."

Megan and Emily
– Mother and daughter

Inclusive Playspaces

An inclusive playspace invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to come together to socialise and thrive.

Who is Everyone Can Play for?

Children and Adults

Playspaces are utilised by a range of people, including children, adults, families and carers. Everyone Can Play will ensure there are inclusive play opportunities available for a broader range of users.

Communities

Playspaces exist in diverse communities, with people of all ages, abilities and cultures. By improving the network of inclusive playspaces, our communities will be more resilient and connected.

Playspace Professionals

Playspaces are built through collaboration from councils, developers, designers, planners and manufacturers. Everyone Can Play provides the considerations and tools to guide the planning, design and delivery process. Our playspaces are inspected and maintained on an ongoing basis by councils. Everyone Can Play sets best practice recommendations for planning, evaluation and ongoing monitoring.

Universal Design

Universal Design is the process of designing for everyone. It is the "design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation and specialised design", Ron Mace, 1997.

Everyone Can Play and its framework is strongly influenced by universal design thinking. Everyone Can Play takes the emphasis for design of playspaces beyond accessibility and ability, to ensure equal emphasis is placed on maximising play opportunities and social integration for people of all ages and cultures.

The principles of inclusive playspaces provided in Everyone Can Play are an adaptation of the *Seven Principles of Universal Design* developed by (Ron Mace et al, 1997) and the *Eight Goals of Universal Design* (Steinfeld and Maisel, 2012). These principles and goals have been applied in a practical way in this guideline.

7
Principles of Universal Design

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive to use
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance for error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use

8
Goals of Universal Design

1. Body fit
2. Comfort
3. Awareness
4. Understanding
5. Wellness
6. Social integration
7. Personalisation
8. Cultural appropriateness

How was Everyone Can Play developed?

Everyone Can Play's goals and principles were defined by a review of current theory and research into both playground design and universal design. A common set of principles and criteria have been developed, setting expectations and priorities for improved inclusive play opportunities in both regional and metropolitan areas.

Everyone Can Play was developed through a highly consultative process. Two focus groups were established (advocacy and advisory groups) with members representing key industry and community stakeholders. These groups reviewed elements of Everyone Can Play and their feedback and recommendations were incorporated. At key points in its development, Everyone Can Play underwent rigorous testing against sample playspaces. This included desktop reviews of playspaces currently in the design phase, as well as on-site assessments of existing playspaces.

NSW Commitment

- Establish a Vision
- Endorse Vision
- Understand Key Issues: Evaluate Existing Strategies, Standards and Processes
- Workshop Key Ideas and Principles
- Form Guiding Principles and Draft Strategy
- Confirm Direction and Assess Principles
- Prepare Everyone Can Play and Evaluation Criteria
- Engagement and Feedback
- Develop Everyone Can Play and Evaluations
- Review and Advise
- Refine Everyone Can Play and Test Criteria
- Recommendations and Feedback
- Everyone Can Play Draft

We are here ——○ Exhibition

- Everyone Can Play Final

Inclusive Playspaces
(Everyone Can Play)

Case Study

When Mia's mum, Leila, wants to take her daughters, Mia (four) and Andie (two) to the playground, she has to do her research. She needs to check access to the playspace, what the play surfaces are (bark chips are the hardest for Mia to navigate with her prosthetic leg) and that there is equipment both her girls can interact with.

A trip to the playground can be a source of anxiety for many parents and carers. Everyday things can present huge obstacles to people like Leila and Mia.
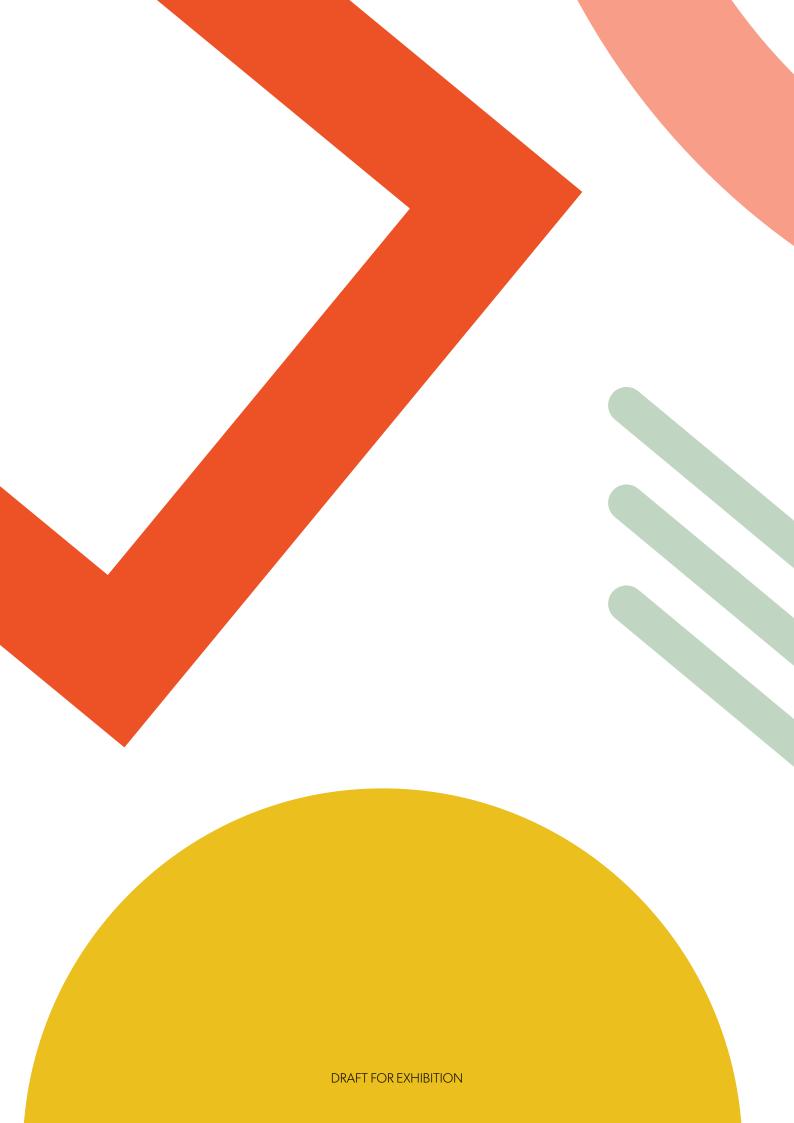
Leila observes that "so many playspaces have no options that suit everyone, it's disappointing to me because Mia is more able than some. If I struggled, I can't imagine how it must feel for people who have children or family members with higher needs. It would make such a big difference if designers were to think about accessibility to the playspace and the choices of equipment for everyone in the community."

What does the playspace mean to Mia and Leila?

"It means Mia can be a kid! She gains more confidence, improves her motor skills and gets to make new friends! Every time we get to the playground her face lights up and she has the biggest smile. With the right design, it's a place she can be on the same level as all of the other kids."

Leila and Mia
– Mother and daughter

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CONSIDER

Key components to keep in mind,
from design to delivery.

Playspace Design Theory

With ever-changing technology, an increasing awareness of the differing needs of our community, and a greater understanding of child psychology and physical development, a review of best practice theory and design recommendations was required to give Everyone Can Play a well-informed foundation.

Various industry leading publications were reviewed, both local and international, to gain an understanding of current innovative design for all abilities. They were also reviewed for intergenerational play, sustainable playspace initiatives and the influence of cultural perceptions on play.

The consultation undertaken for Everyone Can Play was a critical source of knowledge, bringing together industry leaders from design, delivery, playspace management organisations and community advocates. People we consulted were those whose daily lives would be improved by the successful delivery of more inclusive playspaces.
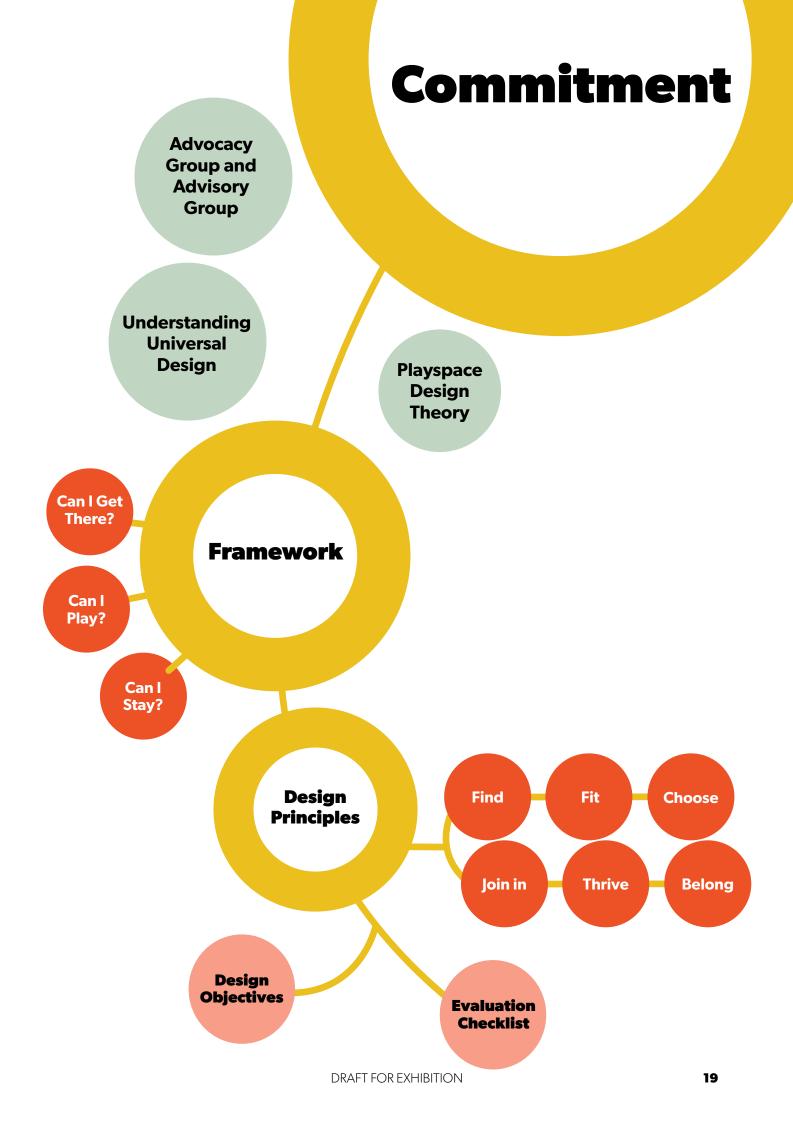
The understanding and insight gained from this consultation was key to ensuring Everyone Can Play developed a holistic approach to inclusive play opportunities, both for participants and carers.

How was the Everyone Can Play Framework Developed?

Everyone Can Play is a key resource to assist in the planning, design and evaluation of new and existing playspaces in NSW. The framework is led by the commitment to ensure everyone can play in NSW and sets expectations and priorities for improved inclusive play opportunities in both regional and metropolitan areas.

Everyone Can Play was developed through an understanding of current playspace design theory and an acknowledgment of the importance universal design plays in creating comfortable places for everyone to feel included.

The journey taken to develop Everyone Can Play included the establishment of the framework and design principles. The design principles provide key guidance for the planning, design and delivery of inclusive playspaces.

Commitment

Advocacy Group and Advisory Group

Understanding Universal Design

Playspace Design Theory

Framework

- Can I Get There?
- Can I Play?
- Can I Stay?

Design Principles

- Find
- Fit
- Choose
- Join in
- Thrive
- Belong

Design Objectives

Evaluation Checklist

When it comes to determining if a playspace is truly inclusive, it is important to consider the wider context. Look outside, around and through the playspaces and ask: Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?

Can I Get There?

A considered location and layout, adequate signage and wayfinding and accessibility will ensure everyone can find their way to, in and around the playspace.

Can I Play?

The play experience as a whole, including the equipment and surfacing, should enable everyone to experience a variety of challenging and engaging play opportunities in a way that suits them.

Can I Stay?

Sufficient consideration of safety, amenities and the wider environment and landscape will ensure everyone can stay at the playspace for as long as they would like.

Case Study

"I love taking my three grandchildren, Alfie, Ollie, and Charlie, to the park. We love going to playgrounds that provide for everyone.

I've just turned 71 so I want to relax, but two-year-old Alfie wants to run around, enjoy himself and make new friends. These playgrounds have seats and shade, but what we enjoy most is when I can join in and play alongside him. We love to play on the big basket swing together and the higher we swing the bigger he smiles.

If I could influence the design of playgrounds, I would ask the designers to imagine how the playground will be used all year round. I would ask them to design the park to be exciting and enjoyable for the children, but also to make it comfortable for the adults who accompany them. I would ask them to make sure it's easy for us to get to with prams or walkers, that there's shade, water and bathrooms close by and places for all of us, even the big children, to play."

Colin and Alfie
- Grandfather and grandchild

Our playspaces are diverse. The steps we take towards improving them will be diverse as well.

Everyone Can Play is designed to assist in meeting the needs of all ages, cultures and abilities, by making recommendations for the planning, design and delivery of inclusive playspaces. Everyone has a role in the process, from community understanding of limitations, to council maintenance crews providing ongoing monitoring of all playspaces.

Not all stages will be needed for all projects. This framework should be used to establish different roles and includes recommended steps to help deliver inclusive playspaces in your community.

Creating Inclusive Playspaces

PLAN
Review play strategies and networks to improve quality and distribution.

DESIGN
Use best practice recommendations to inform inclusive playspace design.

EVALUATE
Use the evaluation checklist to review existing playspaces and determine improvements.

DELIVER
Build or renew to improve inclusive play opportunities.

MONITOR
Continually review and provide feedback to measure success.

CHAMPION
Become an inclusive playspace champion.

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PLAN

Successful delivery of inclusive playspaces requires enthusiasm and commitment, but it also requires careful thought about location, resources, policies and community needs and perceptions.

Making appropriate plans to deliver improved playspaces will provide a strong base for engagement and successful delivery. Each organisation involved in the development of new or renewed playspaces should consider the following initiatives throughout the planning process.

Planning Considerations

Context of Everyone Can Play

Determine where Everyone Can Play sits in relation to the organisation's strategic and statutory planning documents.

Consultation

Stakeholder and community consultation is an important part of delivering inclusive playspaces.

Developing an engagement strategy will ensure:

- The community feels part of the process.
- Everyone has a clear understanding of the community's needs and priorities.
- The community and stakeholder's expectations are managed.
- There is a sense of ownership over the playspace.

The expectations and requirements of a community evolve over time, so ongoing consultation is key to success.

Community Understanding

Gaining an understanding of the unique community you are planning for is essential. Appreciation of their needs, priorities, backgrounds and expectations is essential to implementing the changes they need and ensuring as much of the community as possible, can play.

Planning Documents

A review of key planning documents relevant to inclusive playspaces is recommended to align those documents with the aims and principles of Everyone Can Play.

This may include a review of: current master plans, plans for management, development control plans, community strategic plans, open space strategies, public domain technical manuals and voluntary planning agreements between developers and local governments.

Networks and Distribution

Appreciation of the spatial distribution of existing inclusive playspaces and the needs of local communities will help target strategies for improvement where they are needed most.

Budget and Funding

Inclusive playspaces are incredibly valuable to all social groups in our communities. It is important that appropriate budgets are allocated to the design, delivery and maintenance of inclusive playspaces.

There are costs required to create change, but simple solutions can have a big impact. Consider appropriate budgets for the planning, design, delivery and ongoing maintenance of new and renewed playspaces to ensure they provide long-term benefit to the community.

Resources

An understanding of inclusive playspace design principles and the vision behind Everyone Can Play by all resources involved will help ensure improvements are delivered successfully.

Design Collaboration

Collaboration between planners, designers, builders and managers will help achieve best practice inclusive improvements.

Planning Steps

1. Use Everyone Can Play to review and inform strategic planning documents and improve inclusive playspace distribution.
2. Consult with the local community to understand their priorities, cultural considerations and expectations.
3. Understand who you are providing inclusive playspaces for and their unique requirements.
4. If required, update planning documents to incorporate key inclusive playspace considerations or reference Everyone Can Play to inform future thinking. Consider whether an inclusive playspace implementation plan is required to ensure success.
5. Understand where existing or potential inclusive playspaces could sit within the local playspace network.
6. Establish inclusive playspace priorities and work through the funding needed to deliver improvements.
7. Ensure appropriate resources are available to plan, design, evaluate, deliver and monitor inclusive playspaces.
8. Use the three Everyone Can Play principles (Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?) to inform a brief or return brief and define the objectives and expectations for the playspace.
9. Collaborate with suitably qualified professionals to design and deliver improvements.

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Case Study

In her role in recreational project delivery and design, Rachael delivers playspaces for her region and knows the importance of thoroughly assessing a space to create an inclusive strategy for each playspace. Rachael tested this guide's evaluation checklist (located in the toolkit section) and shares her experience of how it will help her in pre-design planning and evaluation.

"The checklist will empower my team to confidently assess existing and new playspaces against the criteria and ensure we are providing the best possible facilities for our community. It will highlight areas where improvements can be made – especially small changes for big gains and ensure making playspaces inclusive becomes ingrained in the planning stages of all facilities in the Central Coast.

Using this checklist will guarantee that all aspects of inclusiveness are considered and addressed when designing, constructing and maintaining our playspaces.

Simply by going through the list, you understand that designing for inclusion is more than just accessibility, it's about making spaces that are better for the whole community, and that small changes can make a big difference to so many users.

Everyone Can Play and the tools it includes will help ensure we consistently evaluate and plan our spaces. It gives me a tool to promote and to educate staff, project managers and senior management on the importance of providing inclusive facilities."

– Rachael
Project Manager for Recreational
Project Delivery and Design
Central Coast Council

DESIGN

Playspaces can be designed and built to a range of different sizes, each with unique requirements. Whether regional or metropolitan, with a small or large budget, playspace designers should consider the site's characteristics, community considerations and design aspirations.

Refer to the **best practice design recommendations** for your next playspace project.

Design Steps

1. Understand where the playspace sits within the local playspace network.
2. When designing a new playspace, determine a suitable location within the park using the design principles and considerations as a guide.
3. Consider the site's context and plan to celebrate the space's unique qualities.
4. Understand who you are designing for by consulting with the local community to recognise their priorities and expectations.
5. Use Everyone Can Play to inform your design brief.
6. Use the design framework when shaping your concept and detailed design phases (or renewal works) to ensure you are enhancing inclusive play opportunities.
7. Critically review your playspace design against Everyone Can Play.

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Design Principles

These six guiding design principles address the intent of inclusive playspace design in greater detail. Established through a review of current theory and research into playground and universal design, the principles are an important reference for inclusive playspace design.

The design principles extend the focus beyond accessibility to include opportunities for play and social interaction for people of all ages, abilities and cultures.

Find

Communicate the purpose and location of play elements, facilities and amenities.

Fit

Provide a range of play opportunities for people of all abilities and sizes.

Choose

Enable exciting individual experiences and social interaction.

Join In

Create opportunities for everyone to connect.

Thrive

Challenge and involve people of all capabilities.

Belong

Create a place that is welcoming and comfortable.

Find:

Communicate the purpose and location of play elements, facilities and amenities.

Can you easily navigate to, in and around the playspace in an intuitive way?

- Can the entire playspace be viewed from a single point which has seating for carers to supervise from?

- Is there a gateway or sense of arrival to the playspace, including pause points at all entries to pace introduction to the activity zones?

- Is the playspace ideally positioned next to an informal kick-about space?

- Is it linked to pedestrian and cycle paths and near to toilets, food and parking amenities?

Design Considerations:

Intuitive	Accessible
Legible	Informative
Connected	

Fit

Provide a range of play opportunities for people of all abilities and sizes.

Are there a range of adaptable play opportunities for people of different sizes, abilities and ages where people can play together?

- Can people of all ages, sizes and abilities fit individually or together on a variety of play experiences?

- Are the basic supporting elements of the playspace (gates, furniture and pathways) universally designed?

Design Considerations:

Adaptable	Intergenerational
Accessible	Multi User

Choose

Enable exciting individual experiences and social interaction.

Can you personalise how you experience the playspace and interact with others through flexible use to build confidence and comfort in decision making?

- Are there multiple interesting play opportunities (both comfortable and challenging) provided for everyone?

- Can people decide how they want to play and with who?

Design Considerations:

Equitable	Personalisation
Flexible	Confidence
Multi Experience	Comfortable

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Join In

Create opportunities for everyone to connect.

Are there opportunities to connect through common experiences and co-operative participation?

- Can people of different age groups and abilities play together in a safe and comfortable way?

- If there is a minimum equipment piece, is it engaging and accessible for all people?

Design Considerations:

Co-operation   Participate
Interactive   Common
Inviting   Experience
Engaging

Thrive

Challenge and involve people of all capabilities.

Are people of all capabilities challenged through stimulating and imaginative activities that improve wellbeing?

• Is the playspace challenging for people of all ages and abilities?

• Does the design include flexible, imaginative and unique play opportunities not solely reliant on equipment pieces for play value?

• Do the activity zones provide subtle separation of play types and ages where safety may be of concern?

Design Considerations:

Activity	Stimulating
Challenge	Imaginative
Fitness	Achievement
Manageable Risk	

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Belong

Create a place that is welcoming and comfortable.

Is it a welcoming community place that people find comfortable and secure?

- Is there a central gathering point with seating and shade to promote social interaction and provide carer respite?

- Does the playspace design promote community building through sense of ownership and local participation?

- Is the playspace well integrated into its surrounding landscape through edge planting, existing vegetation integration and maintaining key views?

Design Considerations:

Welcoming	Meeting Place
Comfortable	Cultural
Diverse	Awareness

Collaroy Beach, Sydney

Best Practice Case Study

No two inclusive playspaces will look the same, but small inclusions can make a big difference.

Carousel flush to allow ease of access

Pause point on entry to allow paced movement into activity zones

Shade to the majority of the playspace activity zones and central seating areas

Play experiences suitable for all ages and abilities co-located with more challenging play experiences

Formal enclosure through walls and fences to provide sense of safety and comfort adjacent to potential hazards (e.g. water bodies and roads)

All abilities equipment pieces co-located with standard pieces of same play type (e.g. liberty swing immediately adjacent to other swing types)

Surfacing colour contrasted to show activity vs circulation space

Set within existing landscape features to provide strong sense of place

Located adjacent to informal kick-about space

Orientation path of consistent width and material linking entry points and play zones

Primary entry celebrated with signage and artwork

Multiple seating options (some with backs and arms) with sufficient circulation space

Main climbing structure with interactive elements at ground level, as well as graduated challenge

Accessible parking spaces adjacent

Passive lawn area away from activity zone for rest and quiet play

Sydney Park, Sydney

Best Practice Case Study

No two inclusive playspaces will look the same, but small inclusions can make a big difference.

Multiple play opportunities (both challenging and comfortable) to engage people of different ages and ability levels

Appropriate lighting provision to enhance time of day use and provide a feeling of safety

Orientation path of consistent width and material linking entry points and play zones

Sensory focused and natural elements

Equipment for all abilities and ages that is fully integrated into the playspace and reachable for everyone

Passive lawn area away from activity zone for rest and quiet play

Sufficient hard surface adjacent to seating to allow for wheelchair and pram parking, without obstructing the path

Provide variation of seating types at regular intervals on the orientation path to ensure everyone has appropriate rest options

Informal play opportunities to encourage creativity

Surfacing colour contrast to show activity vs circulation space

Westport Park, Port Macquarie

Best Practice Case Study

No two inclusive playspaces will look the same, but small inclusions can make a big difference.

Formal enclosure through fences to provide sense of safety and comfort adjacent to potential hazards (e.g. water bodies and roads)

Passive lawn area away from activity zone for rest and quiet play

Orientation path of consistent width and material linking entry points and play zones

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Picnic/BBQ facilities in central location with solid shade to provide all year-round weather protection

Located adjacent informal kick-about space

Play equipment that reflects the local environment and integrates the playspace into the surrounding landscape

Clear sightlines for passive surveillance

Carousel flush to allow ease of access

Equipment that provides multi-user play opportunities for all abilities and ages that is fully integrated into the playspace and reachable for everyone

Surfacing colour contrast to show activity vs circulation space

EVALUATE

Refer to the **evaluation checklist** to cross reference your playspace against the Can I get there? Can I stay? Can I play? framework.

Essential for determining improvements to existing playspaces, the evaluation checklist provides a set of specific criteria to guide you through an on-site assessment. The results from this comprehensive set of questions will determine the improvements needed to deliver inclusive playspaces in NSW.

Conducting a rigorous on-site evaluation of all playspaces in a community will establish the current provision of inclusive play opportunities. From this process, key considerations for inclusive playspace delivery can be identified, and opportunities for improvement can be developed. Actions developed from the evaluations set the basis for an implementation strategy, which includes costing, budgeting and programing requirements.

Distribution mapping that indicates the current distribution of inclusive play opportunities can be gauged from the evaluations. This will help identify gaps that can be addressed to provide equitable access to inclusive playspaces across NSW.

The Everyone Can Play evaluation checklist is intended as a best practice measure for existing playspaces to assist in identifying ways in which to improve inclusive play opportunities across NSW.

The checklist is aligned to Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay? to ensure each playspace is assessed against the key playspace objectives.

Case Study

"Play has been part of my life since my landscape architecture degree. Play is such an important part of growing up and developing our skills, no matter what age or ability.

It's not just something that's important in my work, but in my personal life too. I have five children, two of them have special needs. So it's really important I can take them places they feel part of and can socialise. It's something I take seriously in the playspaces I work on.

Everyone Can Play will help people like me plan more inclusive playspaces. We can use Everyone Can Play to design something that will actually bring everybody together, and will have ongoing impacts for everyone. It's an awesome guide for every council, but particularly us in the regional areas that don't always have a lot of support and information about inclusive play."

– Lucilla
Landscape Architect and
Group Manager, Community Place,
Port Macquarie Hastings Council

DELIVER

Following the design of the inclusive playspace, it is important to revisit the three key outcomes for delivery:

Can I get there?
Can I play?
Can I stay?

We acknowledge that everyone will have different methods of delivering inclusive playspaces to the community. By collaborating with a wide range of people, including traffic engineers, play equipment manufacturers, landscape architects, developers, community group representatives, open spaces planners and the community, you will ensure the most inclusive outcome for everyone can be achieved.

Delivery Considerations

The Planning

Developing an inclusive playspace implementation plan may be beneficial to assist in the immediate and ongoing delivery of improvements to inclusive playspace provision.

The Technical Elements

We recommend you review all playspaces against the evaluation criteria. Once this is complete, undertake any necessary on-site improvements. Look to review local, state-wide and Australian policies and standards to ensure your design is compliant.

Consultation

Consultation is key to success. Undertake consultation with the local community, play equipment manufacturers, advocacy groups, designers, and people who use the playspace to assist with the delivery.

Partnerships

We can't always do it alone. Partnering with others will help to deliver a better playspace. Seek partnership opportunities with neighbouring councils, government agencies, local businesses, developers, advocacy groups, designers, and international service organisations, such as Lions Club and Rotary Clubs.

Beyond Delivery

Ongoing maintenance will ensure the playspace looks and functions as intended. It is important we educate and upskill professionals on Everyone Can Play, and arm people with a toolkit to maintain and improve the playspaces. Partner with neighbouring councils to share resources and knowledge, or establish community working groups to foster a sense of ownership and pride over the playspaces.

MONITOR

It is essential that both new and improved playspaces are continually reviewed, monitored and adjusted accordingly. We recommend you review these spaces on an annual basis, possibly in line with safety checks already being undertaken.

As the people who make up our communities change, so too will the requirements for playspaces. Similarly, as new equipment and technology is developed, there will be an opportunity to review and adapt our inclusive playspaces accordingly.

Everyone Can Play serves as an important tool for monitoring playspaces. The design principles, considerations, and evaluation checklist are key resources to help review playspaces and ensure they continue to succeed.

These documents will help us understand if and to what extent inclusive playspaces are becoming the norm.

Monitoring Steps

1. Use the design section of Everyone Can Play to inform your thinking for new playspaces and existing playspace designs.

2. Understand the current provision, condition, access and distribution of playspaces and identify areas for improvement.

3. Undertake ongoing consultation with the community to understand their changing priorities, cultural considerations and expectations.

4. Update and review relevant planning documents including implementation plans, maintenance programs, playspace strategies, and the Everyone Can Play planning section on a regular basis.

5. Keep up to date with current research and innovation of playspace equipment, surfacing materials and inclusive products.

DRAFT FOR EXHIBITION

CHAMPION

Inclusive playspaces play an important role in the lives of countless Australians. They are spaces for development – of physical and social skills, of learning, enjoyment and growth. Many people experience their first memories at playspaces, and many people continue to visit them throughout their lives.

To champion change, we need the support and dedication of all people involved. This goes beyond the communities and extends to developers, councils, suppliers, maintenance staff and everyday people.

Championing inclusive playspaces can be as easy as leading by example. It can be creating best practice playspaces incorporating the principles of inclusive playspace design, or communicating to and educating others on what you know or where they can find information. You can collaborate with other professionals to overcome challenges and barriers to inclusion, or consulting with users to achieve playspaces that are embraced by the community and well used. It could simply be promoting great playspaces; drawing attention to best practice examples and encouraging others to create more inclusive playspaces.

Case Study

Playspace champion Bec knows there's more than just softfall and wider paths to creating an inclusive community place.

"It's about leading and educating, working together to solve problems, and challenging people to think differently.

Once we know what inclusive play looks like, it's so important to keep spreading the message, and to promote compassionate design that shows kindness to everyone in the community who will use the space.

Play is the thing that equalises us all. It's the measure recognised internationally of a happy individual, and society. Being a champion means you stand up and speak out. You use your capabilities to enable every member of the communities you service to belong."

Bec
- Inclusive playspace champion

TOOLS

The tools to translate
ideas into action.

Best Practice Design Recommendations

The best practice recommendations are designed to inspire innovation, challenge existing processes and trigger designers to create inviting playspaces with inclusion top of mind.

Not all design recommendations will be relevant for all playspaces. Consider the unique context of the playspace to ensure the design is appropriate for the site's characteristics, size, budget and design aspirations.

Location, Layout and Accessibility

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
Connect to street footpaths and the park entry with safe road crossing points.	●	○	○	○	●	○
Connect with transport networks and include appropriate arrival amenities: pedestrian and cycle routes, accessible parking, mini-van drop off zones, bus bays through close proximity.	●	○	○	○	●	○
Orientate and position the playspace to utilise the site's unique features, including views, existing vegetation, topography and passive surveillance.	●	○	○	○	○	●
If possible, locate the playspace adjacent to supporting amenities, such as toilets, informal recreation spaces/kick-abouts and food and beverage facilities.	○	●	○	○	○	●
Include an accessible path (without stair-only access) from/to the street, carpark and supporting amenities that are wide enough for a wheelchair and pram to pass each other with ease.	●	○	○	●	●	○
Include sufficient hard surface adjacent to all seats, allowing wheelchair and pram parking without obstructing the path.	○	○	○	●	○	●
Consider a primary entry point that is linked by an orientation path to help people connect between all points of entry and exit.	●	○	○	○	●	○

Location, Layout and Accessibility

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Consider a formal entry zone that provides a sense of welcome to the playspace and a pause point to observe the layout, become familiar with the space and decide where to go first. A slow introduction to the playspace is important to some people.	●	●	○	○	○	○
• Include a vantage point/s with seating and shade from which the carers can see the whole playspace.	○	●	○	○	○	●
• Ensure there is an appropriately located flush edge to the play surface from the access path to help wheelchairs, prams and people with limited mobility travel between the areas with ease.	○	○	○	●	●	○
• Create a quiet area away from the activity zones with seating and a sense of enclosure to provide a place for quiet play and rest.	○	●	●	○	○	●
• Arrange activity zones with subtle separation, without boundaries or significant distance between them.	○	●	●	○	●	●

Signage and Wayfinding

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Include universally designed and multi-sensory entry signage and emergency/maintenance contact details if appropriate.	○	○	○	●	○	●
• Develop a map of the playspace that outlines the location of key features to help people navigate the space. (Primarily for destination playspaces only.)	●	●	○	●	○	○

Play Experience

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Create a flexible, imaginative and unique playspace that is not solely reliant on equipment for play value.	●	○	●	○	●	●
• Consider a range of dynamic play options to balance, climb, rock, slide, swing or spin.	●	●	○	○	●	○

Play Experience

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Provide multiple play opportunities (both comfortable and challenging) to engage people of different ages and ability levels.	●	○	●	○	●	○
• Ensure fun and challenging individual and multi-user play options are included.	○	●	●	○	●	●
• Create informal and imaginative play opportunities to encourage creativity.	○	●	●	○	●	○
• Consider including sensory focused and natural elements. These could include interactive technology, music, sand, water and planting to stimulate the senses.	○	●	●	○	●	○
• Position seating and shade directly adjacent to water play to ensure carers can closely supervise.	●	○	●	○	○	●
• Explore opportunities for bike tracks and play paths. This could include directional or activity-themed markings, a variety of bumps, dips and level changes.	○	●	●	○	●	○

Equipment and Surfacing

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Include equipment pieces for all abilities and ages (flush carousel, hammock or basket swing, in-ground trampolines, ramp access to feature structure) that are fully integrated into the playspace and reachable for everyone.	●	●	●	○	●	○
• Ensure the majority of equipment pieces provide inclusive and engaging play experiences for all people.	○	○	●	●	●	○
• Consider a variety of play surfacing to provide a contrast between activity, fall and circulation zones.	●	○	○	○	○	○
• Ensure surfacing to all abilities play pieces is accessible and compliant with the relevant Australian standards.	○	●	○	○	●	○

Equipment and Surfacing

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Create surfacing to sensory play and main equipment pieces that is comfortably trafficable by all, including those with limited mobility.	○	●	●	○	●	○

Landscape

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Include a landscape area (e.g. turf kick-about) close by to provide opportunities for unstructured play and connections to the local environment.	○	●	●	○	●	○
• Develop a design that reflects the local environment and integrates the playspace into the surrounding landscape, utilising existing vegetation and key views.	●	○	○	○	○	●
• Establish a well-considered planting palette specific to the playspace's context (orientation, shade and wind provision) and environment. This will create a micro-climate for year-round enjoyment with seasonal variation and maximise comfort at all times of day.	○	○	○	○	●	●
• Include shade structures, sails and significant tree canopies to provide shade to play zones and seating areas.	○	○	○	○	●	●

Safety

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Ensure clear sight lines for passive surveillance from the street or surrounding property are not obstructed.	●	○	○	○	○	○
• Provide a formal or informal boundary enclosure (fence, gate, landform, planting) to provide a secure environment from potential risks. Risks could include busy roads and open water bodies.	●	○	●	○	○	●
• Create a sense of distinction between quiet areas and activity spaces through landform, planting and surface materials.	○	●	●	○	○	●

Safety

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Provide appropriate lighting provisions (streetscape or playspace specific) to ensure playspaces are safe at different times of the day.	●	●	○	○	○	●
• Provide appropriate lighting to the orientation paths and amenities in larger playspaces to enhance time of day use opportunities and provide a feeling of safety.	●	○	○	○	○	●
• Ensure all playspace equipment, fall zones and surfacing complies with relevant Australian standards.	○	○	●	○	●	○

Amenities

	FIND	CHOOSE	THRIVE	FIT	JOIN IN	BELONG
• Create a gathering point with seating and shade to promote social interaction.	●	○	○	○	●	●
• Provide variation of seating types (back and armrest, platform seating) at regular intervals on the orientation path to ensure everyone has appropriate rest options.	●	●	○	○	●	●
• Provide bins, bubbler/water and bike racks near playspace entry points and picnic facilities. (Ensure these facilities are accessible to people of different sizes and mobility.)	●	○	○	○	●	●
• Provide appropriate, accessible picnic and BBQ facilities situated within the playspace or close by.	●	●	○	○	●	●
• Include picnic facilities with a solid shade structure to provide year-round weather protection.	○	○	○	○	●	●
• Include an accessible toilet/s and feature change facilities (babies, children, adults) near the playspace.	●	○	○	○	●	●

Evaluation Checklist

The evaluation checklist is designed to ensure more people can get to, play and stay at existing playspaces in our communities.

Playspace Name:
Playspace Address:

Can I Get There?

Location

Y N

○ ○ Is there information about the playspace available before I go?

○ ○ Is car parking easily available/ close to the playspace? E.g. Street parking or a dedicated car park.

○ ○ Are accessible car parking bays provided?

○ ○ Is the playspace connected to a shared path or cycle route?

○ ○ Is there a public transport link (bus stop, train station, light rail, etc.) close to the playspace?

Y N

○ ○ Can the access point to the playspace be easily and comfortably used by most people without having to cross a main road or other barriers? Other barriers may include un-signalised intersections, kerbs, streets without footpaths or pram ramps.

If no, what obstacles to inclusion exist?

Location Notes

Layout

Y N

◯ ◯ Can the layout of the playspace be easily understood by a first-time user?

◯ ◯ Does the playspace need signage or a map to help navigate it?

◯ ◯ Are the points of entry and exit easy to locate from inside and outside the playspace?

◯ ◯ Is there a pause point at the main entry or exit point to view and assess the play opportunities on arrival?

◯ ◯ Is there an area within the playspace for carers to interact and supervise?

◯ ◯ Are there clear lines of sight throughout the playspace for carers?

◯ ◯ Is play equipment for different ages grouped together without being separated from the main area of activity?

◯ ◯ Is seating (formal or informal) provided in appropriate locations? E.g. Regular intervals, near shade, adjacent to activity areas.

Layout Notes

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Signage

Y N

◯ ◯ Is signage easy to read, using simple language and graphics and high colour contrast?

◯ ◯ Is signage located at a height that is easy to read for all playspace users? Including children and those in wheelchairs.

◯ ◯ Are pictographs and braille provided on key instructional and safety signage?

Signage Notes

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Wayfinding

Y   N

◯   ◯   Is there a map at the playspace entry to assist with navigation and decision making? If no, is one required? This is primarily for destination playspaces.

If yes, does the map follow the points listed for inclusive signage? E.g. Easy to read and located at a height that all users can see.

◯   ◯   Would directional signage be of benefit along activity trails, if sight lines are an obstacle, to communicate location of play opportunities?

◯   ◯   Is there a clear path network hierarchy? E.g. Easy to distinguish between the main orientation path, circulation paths and any play paths.

◯   ◯   Is there an appropriate colour contrast between the paths and the play surfaces?

Wayfinding Notes

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Access

Y   N

◯   ◯   Does the site's topography create an obstacle or barrier to accessing the playspace? E.g. Steep slope with no footpath or stair-only access.

If yes, can this barrier be overcome with the inclusion of a ramp?

◯   ◯   Is there an 'orientation' path linking to, in and around the playspace that links to access points and key activity areas?

If yes, is the 'orientation' path clearly identifiable?

◯   ◯   Does the 'orientation' path have a consistent width and surface finish? If no, why not?

◯   ◯   Is the 'orientation' path width suitable for the playspace's size and its users?

I.e. Is it wide enough for prams, wheelchairs and mobility devices to pass each other with ease?

◯   ◯   Should it conform to relevant Australian access standards?

◯   ◯   Does the 'orientation' path connect directly to all access points? If no, why not?

◯   ◯   Are the majority of play elements connected to a circulation path? This could be the orientation path in smaller playspaces.

◯   ◯   Does the circulation path have a consistent width and surface finish? If no, why not?

Access

Y N

◯ ◯ If there isn't an 'orientation' path or a 'circulation' path within the playspace, is there a flush edge from path surface to play surface for easy access by all users? (Note: the entire interface does not need to be flush, just as key transition points.)

◯ ◯ Can access gates be operated by an adult using a wheelchair or mobility device?

Access Notes

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Can I Play?

Play Experience

Y N

◯ ◯ Does the playspace provide opportunities for a variety of age groups? E.g. Toddlers, children, teenagers and adults.

◯ ◯ Are there varied types of play provided?

◯ ◯ Is there a variety of multi-user equipment pieces?

◯ ◯ Are there opportunities for intergenerational play?

◯ ◯ Is the equipment challenging for multiple age groups and ability levels?

◯ ◯ Can play opportunities be accessed at a variety of heights?

◯ ◯ If there is a main play piece, can everyone access it and have meaningful play experiences?

◯ ◯ Are there multiple play opportunities for people with limited mobility?

◯ ◯ Are there unprogrammed spaces for imaginative play?

◯ ◯ Are there quiet points within the playspace for rest and passive interaction?

Play Experience Notes

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Equipment

◯ ◯ Is the equipment well connected?

◯ ◯ Is the majority of equipment designed so that adults can fit in, on or under? E.g. Swings, slides and climbing structures.

◯ ◯ If elevated, does the main equipment piece (if present) include a ramped access point for people of various ages with limited mobility?

◯ ◯ Are dynamic play pieces arranged in a sequence which promotes skill and challenge progression?

◯ ◯ Does the equipment theming and colour palette respond to local context?

Equipment Notes

Surfacing

Y   N

◯ ◯ Is there an accessible edge or points of access (flush or ramped) from the circulation path to the majority of play surfaces?

◯ ◯ Do all accessible equipment pieces have an accessible surface treatment to enable ease of use?

◯ ◯ Do the majority of play pieces have an accessible surface treatment or an accessible path to the equipment's entry and exit points (consider relevant fall zone surfacing requirements) to enable ease of use?

◯ ◯ Do the path surfaces provide sensory play opportunities through materiality or texture features?

◯ ◯ Is there enough circulation space (beyond the fall zone requirements) around the majority of equipment to provide safe movement?

Surfacing Notes

Can I Stay?

Safety

Y   N

Passive Safety
○ ○ Can the playspace be clearly observed from the street or neighbouring properties? If not, what obstructs the view?

Sight Lines
○ ○ Are there clear sight lines to all play equipment pieces from the pathways and seating options to ensure comfortable supervision by carers? If not, what obstructs the view?

Secure Location
○ ○ Is the playspace located in an area adjacent to potential risks? E.g. Busy roads, open water bodies.

○ ○ If yes, is there a sufficient boundary enclosure to provide a secure environment? E.g. Fence or natural features, such as mounds, rocks and planting.

Lighting
○ ○ Is there adequate lighting provided from the street or within the playspace to support appropriate time of day use?

○ ○ Are the supporting amenities (BBQ, toilet, carpark) adequately lit?

Safety Notes

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Amenities

Y   N

Seating
○ ○ Is the seating provided adequate for the scale and use of the playspace? Does the seating provide:

Various options to cater for a range of users? E.g. Varying heights, back rests, arm rests.

Various seating arrangements? E.g. Individual and group seating.

○ ○ Is there enough clearance space adjacent to the seat to park a pram, wheelchair or mobility device without blocking the circulation space or path?

○ ○ Are there seating opportunities provided in a quiet location for retreat?

Water
○ ○ Is there access to drinking water?

○ ○ Can the water provision be easily accessed by all playspace users and does it have fixtures that are easy to operate?

Rubbish Bins
○ ○ Are rubbish bins provided and are they suitably located?

○ ○ Can the bins be utilised by all playspace users?

Toilets
○ ○ Is there access to toilets within the playspace or nearby?

○ ○ Is there an accessible toilet nearby and does it include changing facilities for babies, children and adults?

Amenities

Y   N

BBQ and Picnic Tables
Are there picnic tables provided
within and adjacent to the playspace?

Are there BBQ facilities provided?

Are the facilities (picnic table
and BBQ) accessible to all users,
considerate of children's safety and
easy to operate?

Amenities Notes

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Landscape

Y   N

Shade
Is there an adequate amount of
shade to cover:

The majority of play activities?

The seating areas, to protect
park users?

Environment
Does the surrounding landscape
provide a comfortable and
enjoyable environment to be in?

Are there views or visual links to the
local context outside the playspace,
to contribute to the sense of play?

Landscape Notes

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Key Findings
Considerations

Key Improvements
Actions

Playspace Sketches