

CITY OF PARRAMATTA

Play Space Network

Defining our play space network:

For the purposes of this Strategy, a play space can be defined as an area containing equipment and other elements that facilitate opportunities for play.

City of Parramatta Council (Council) acknowledges that play may occur anywhere throughout the City.

Council has developed a hierarchy for play spaces which assists in understanding the types of uses and network of facilities that are appropriate at each play space site:

Pocket play spaces

Typically refers to play spaces that cater to residents within the immediate area of the site, about 250m or a 5-minute walk from people's homes. They have a small range of facilities and amenity and are generally suitable for a targeted age range (for example, up to 5 years of age).

Provision of equipment typically accommodates younger users and is small in size. Provision of shade at these sites should be considered against Council's Playgrounds Policy criteria.

Local play spaces

Typically refers to play spaces that are within close proximity to local residents and are about 500m or a 5-10-minute walk from people's homes. They often have a range of facilities, with around 5 or more options targeted towards 0-12 year olds. Provision of shade at these sites should be considered against Council's Playgrounds Policy criteria.

District play spaces

Typically attract people from a wider catchment and are located on larger parcels of land and often co-exist with other facilities. They have a larger range of facilities, or have custom designed play opportunities for different age groups and abilities (cater for ages 0-5, 6-12 and 13+). They are up to 2km or a 5-10 minute drive from people's homes.

Regional play spaces*

Refers to highly used, significant play spaces that support a number of facilities and play opportunities for all age groups and abilities. They co-exist with a diverse range of other facilities and amenity. They service the broader community and attract visitors from outside our LGA.

**Regional facilities are considered out of scope of this document*

This play space chapter does not include water play spaces. This is addressed as part of the Aquatics chapter in this Strategy.

Play spaces are welcoming and inclusive spaces for our entire community.

Play allows children to engage with risks and challenges which are essential for children to test their abilities, to learn new skills, to build self-confidence and resilience, and to experience a sense of fun and adventure.

Play spaces offer a range of opportunities for children of all ages and abilities, and enable the development of social networks for existing and new community members and a sense of community belonging.

PLAY SPACE NETWORK

Current situation



12
Pocket play spaces

121
Local play spaces

9
District play spaces

KEY: ● Pocket ● Local ● District

City of Parramatta Council (Council) currently plays a significant role in provision of diverse play space offerings for our community. From pocket and local play spaces to district play spaces, Council works to meet the needs of people of different ages and abilities.

There are currently 142 play spaces within City of Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA).

Play spaces are also provided at schools, childcare centres and some non-government organisations within our local government area (LGA) as well as within privately owned businesses and commercial centres that are available to varying degrees to the general public.

Several regional play spaces that serve this and other LGAs exist within Parramatta Park and Sydney Olympic Park.

These facilities are not owned or maintained by Council and are therefore considered out of scope of this document.

Council also provides three water play parks within the LGA which are addressed in detail in the Aquatics chapter of this Strategy.



Play space - classification

This Strategy identifies three classification types for play spaces.

Across our LGA, individual play spaces must offer play value, and complement the play spaces located nearby.

Pocket play spaces

Typically refers to play spaces that cater to residents within the immediate area of the site, about 250m or a 5-minute walk from people's homes. They have a small range of facilities, limited amenity and are generally suitable for a targeted age range (for example, up to five years of age). Equipment typically accommodates younger users and is small in size. Potential shade provision at these sites should be considered with reference to Council's Playground Policy criteria.

- Typical core play space components:
Includes less than five pieces of equipment.
- Typical supporting facilities:
Seating and natural shade.



Sorlie Avenue Playground, Northmead



Irving Street Reserve, Parramatta

Local play spaces

Typically refers to play spaces that are within close proximity to local residents and are about 500m or a 5-10 minute walk from people's homes. They often have a range of facilities, with around five or more options targeted towards 0-12 year olds. Potential shade provision at these sites should be considered with reference to Council's Playground Policy criteria.

- Typical core play space components: Includes five to eight pieces of equipment and a non-structured play area
- Typical Supporting Facilities: Seating, pathways, natural shade and bin



West Epping Park, Epping

District play spaces

Typically attract people from a wider catchment and are located on larger parcels of land. They have a larger range of facilities, or have custom designed play opportunities for different age groups and abilities (cater for ages 0-5, 6-12 and 13+). They are up to 2km or a 5-10min drive from people's homes.

- Typical core play space components: Includes a substantial offering of play equipment and a non-structured play area. Ideally, will include special features such as an imaginative and creative area within a natural setting or an area for adult/carer amenity.
- Typical supporting facilities: Significant landscaping, toilets, pathways, car parking, shade (natural/structure), bins and water fountain
- May include: A range of special features such as a dinky bike track or picnic/BBQ facilities

Play space - play types

This Strategy identifies four play types which incorporate a variety of features to meet the needs of children and young people with a broad range of abilities

Depending on site opportunities and constraints, Council's play spaces can usually be designed to incorporate one or more play type.

Generally, the more play types that can be incorporated into a play space, the higher the play value for participants.

For a play space to be classified as one of the below, it must incorporate three or more elements specific to each play type.



Skill based play

Skill based play spaces are designed with various elements to cater for participants of different ages and abilities. They have a focus on physical activity, assisting participants to learn fine and gross motor skills as well as social skills through play. They are often structured spaces that encourage participants to think critically and to problem solve. Some examples might include elements that involve swinging, climbing and overhead equipment.



Nature play

Natural play spaces are designed for children of all ages and abilities. They have a focus on blending natural areas, environmental features and plants to spark the interest of participants. They are often unstructured spaces that encourage participants to engage in spontaneous play. The setting is critical for natural play spaces, with elements being authentic within their context (e.g. located near bushland). Elements of natural play should not be 'tokenistic'. Some examples include interaction with water and sand, rolling down hills, digging patches and compost areas.



Sensory play

Sensory play spaces are designed for children of all ages and abilities. They have a focus on stimulating participant's sense of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing and include elements which target these senses, for example, through the use of various textures or musical features. Participants are encouraged to learn about their body movements in the context of their environment. Some examples might include equipment that requires spinning, swinging, pulling, balancing or peddling.



Imaginative play

Imaginative play spaces are designed for children of all ages and abilities. They have a focus on encouraging children to use their imagination and to design their own course of play. Social interaction is encouraged through theming and may include components that can be transformed or manipulated. Some examples might include equipment that is shaped as a castle or a pirate ship or the inclusion of sculptures and other props such as fire trucks or shop fronts.

Play space - age focus

This Strategy identifies three target age groups for play spaces.

Each age group incorporates a variety of features to meet the diverse needs of children and young people, particular to their stage of development. Play spaces can meet the needs of one or more age group.

For a play space to be classified as one of the below, it must incorporate three or more elements specific to each age group.

Preschoolers (0-5 years)

(Focus on sensory play and exploration, where children are learning how to crawl, walk and pull themselves up):

- This age group requires play spaces that are situated away from traffic.
- Small scale spaces where children can have the space to move and explore, as well as to crawl, stand and walk.
- Ramps with pieces attached for grasping.
- Low tables for sand, water and manipulation of materials.
- Tricycle/scooter paths.
- Various textures and colours.
- Flexible spring rockers.
- Sand areas with covers and shorter slides.



Eric Primrose Reserve, Rydalmere

Juniors (6-12 years)

(Focus on fine motor skills, gross motor skills, coordination, strength and balance):

- Developmentally age appropriate play areas for school-age children.
- Elements for coordination and physical skill development such as climbing pieces, horizontal bars, rope or chain climbers.
- Cooperative pieces for social development such as tire swings.
- Slides and sliding poles.
- Equipment and spaces that promote creativity.
- Open spaces to run and play with a ball.
- More challenging equipment to practice skills such as overhead rings and parallel bars.



North Rocks Park, North Rocks

Teenagers (13+ years)

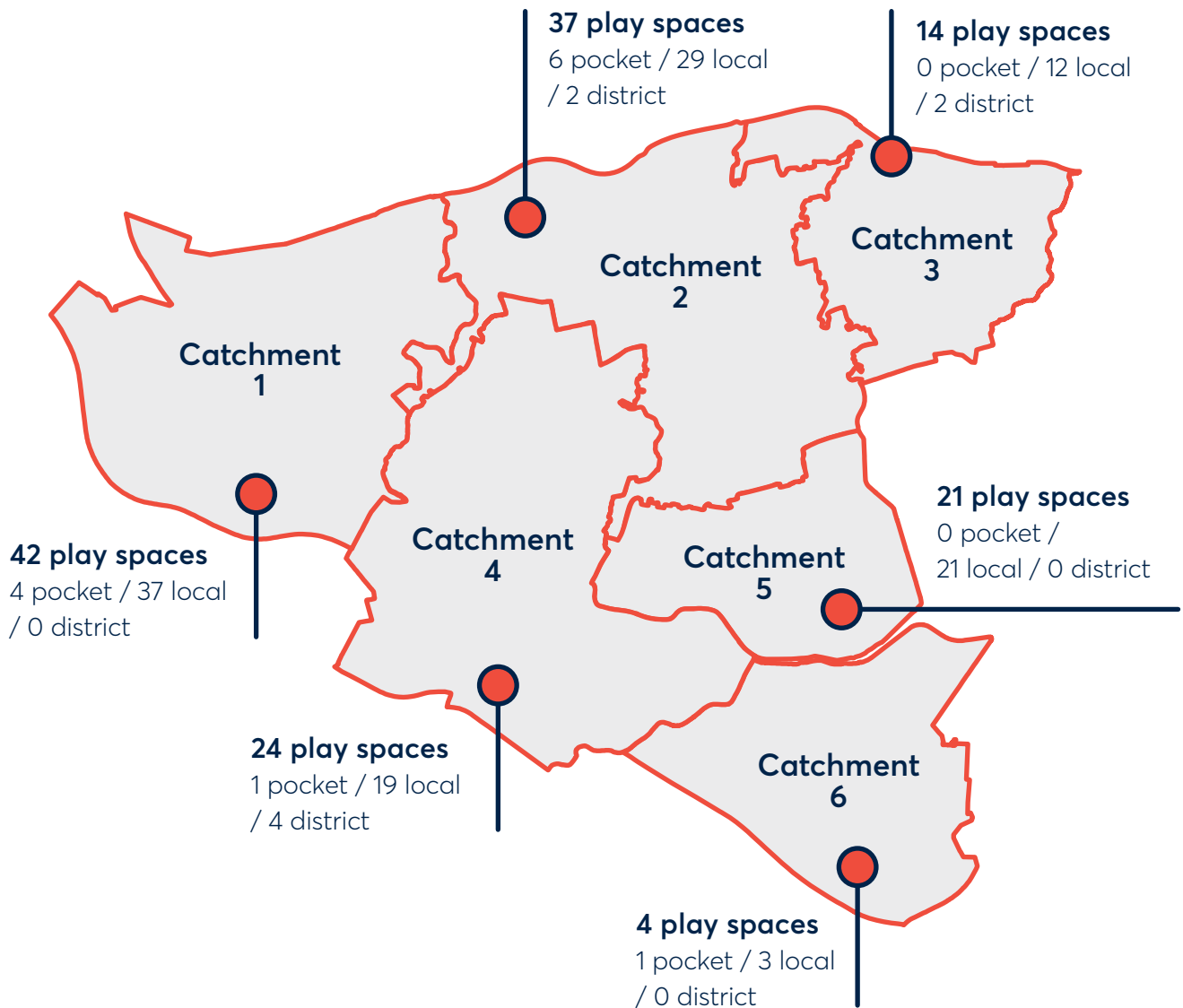
(Adventurous playgrounds and equipment that is challenging and supports movement):

- Larger equipment (appropriate size for this age group).
- Variety of equipment that promotes a sense of fun and adventure.
- Co-located with other facilities such as recreation courts/ sports fields/ skate bowl.
- Swings, climbing activities, spinning activities, ball game activities.
- A meeting place for after school activities.
- The location of play space elements for this age group need to be carefully managed to balance use with younger children and their carers while ensuring a sense of ownership by young people.



West Epping Park, Epping

City of Parramatta Council play space network 2019:





Council's play space network

KEY		
CATEGORY	P	Pocket
	L	Local
	D	District
TARGET AGE RANGE	P	Preschoolers (0-5)
	J	Juniors (6-12)
	T	Teenagers (13+)
PLAY TYPE	SB	Skill based
	NAT	Natural
	SEN	Sensory
	IM	Imaginative

CATCHMENT 1

Overall number of play spaces = 42 (4 pocket/ 37 local / 0 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Constitution Hill											
Peachtree Avenue Reserve											
Richill Park											
Birk Park											
Alice Watkins Park											
Greenleaf Park											
Northmead											
Sorlie Avenue Playground											
Northmead Reserve											
Robin Hood Park											
Arthur Phillip Park											
Charles Herbert Reserve											
Willsford Holmes Park											
Pye Avenue Reserve											
John Hourigan Reserve											
Otto Losco Reserve											
Excelsior Park											
Winton Avenue Reserve											

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Pendle Hill											
Joseph Knox Park											
Winston Hills											
Caroline Chisholm Reserve											
Timbergetters Reserve											
Caber Park											
Hillcrest Avenue Park											
Palestine Park											
Model Farms Reserve											
Bruce Cole Reserve											
John Berger Reserve											
John Curtin Reserve											
Winston Hills Lions Park											
Third Settlement Reserve											
Mcmillan Avenue Reserve											
Melbourne Road Reserve											
Toongabbie											
Ron Hill Park											
Reynolds Park Playground											
Ambrose Hallen Park											
Willmot Reserve											
McCoy Park											
Rausch Street Reserve											
Old Toongabbie											
Binalong Park											
Gallery Gardens											
Doris Sergeant Park											
Wentworthville											
Frank Hayes Park											
Thane Street											
Shannons Paddock											

CATCHMENT 2

Overall number of play spaces = 37 (6 pocket/ 29 local / 2 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Carlingford											
North Rocks Park											
Rainbow Farm Reserve											
James Hoskin Reserve											
Bradley Drive Playground											
Peggy Womersley Reserve (Kingsdene Oval)											
Talinga Park											
Larry Bolitho Reserve											
Kilpack Park											
Hazelwood Rose Park											
Dunrossil Park											
John Wearn Reserve											
Pinetree Drive Reserve											
Carmen Drive Reserve											
North Rocks Park											
Cox Park											
Douglass Avenue Reserve											
Mcmullen Avenue Reserve											
Robin Street Park											
James Farnell Reserve											
Hunts Creek Reserve											
Dundas											
Williams Reserve											
Fred Robertson Reserve											
Anna Maria King Park											
Arrunga Street Reserve											
Jenkins Reserve											

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Dundas Valley											
Dundas Park											
Sir Thomas Mitchell Reserve											
Rapanea Community Forest											
North Rocks											
Seville Reserve											
Don Moore Reserve											
Speers Road Reserve (Hazel Ryan Oval)											
Hunts Creek Reserve											
Jason Place Reserve											
Telopea											
Homelands Reserve											
Acacia Park											
Sturt Park											
William Wade Park											
Elizabeth Macarthur Park											

CATCHMENT 3

Overall number of play spaces = 14 (0 pocket/ 12 local / 2 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Beecroft											
Bingara Road Reserve											
Orchard Road Reserve											
Lynbrae Avenue Reserve											
Eastwood											
Somerville Park											
David Hamilton Reserve											
Epping											
Boronia Park											
West Epping Park											
David Scott Reserve											
Henry Brigg Park											
Mobbs Lane Reserve											
Loftus Square											
Forest Park											
Pembroke Street Reserve											
Kim Rutherford Reserve											

CATCHMENT 4

Overall number of play spaces = 24 (1 pocket/ 19 local / 4 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Granville											
F.S. Garside Park											
Wallawa Park Reserve											
Tiara Place Reserve											
Harris Park											
Rosella Park											
North Parramatta											
Lake Parramatta Reserve											
Doyle Ground											
Sherwin Park											
Roslyn Blay Park											
Barton Park											
Symonds Avenue Reserve											
Belmore Park											
Oatlands											
Walter Brown Park											
Burnside Gollan Reserve											
George Gollan Reserve											
Parramatta											
Ollie Webb Reserve											
CBD Foreshore Reserve											
James Ruse Reserve											
Jones Park											
Jubilee Park											
James Ruse Reserve											
Bill Thomson Reserve											
W.R. Musto Park											
Irving Street Reserve											
Noller Park											
Rosehill											
Biplane Park											

CATCHMENT 5

Overall number of play spaces = 21 (0 pocket/ 21 local / 0 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Ermington											
George Kendall Riverside Park											
Cowells Lane Reserve											
Bruce Miller Reserve											
Thomas Wemyss Park											
Lockyer Reserve											
Halvorsen Park											
Ken Newman Park											
River Park											
Tynan Park											
Eccles Park											
Hughes Avenue Reserve											
Rydalmere											
Upjohn Park											
Winjoy Reserve											
Marri Badoo Reserve											
Eric Primrose Reserve											
Rydalmere Park											
Bretby Park											
John Carver Reserve											
Hannibal Macarthur Park											

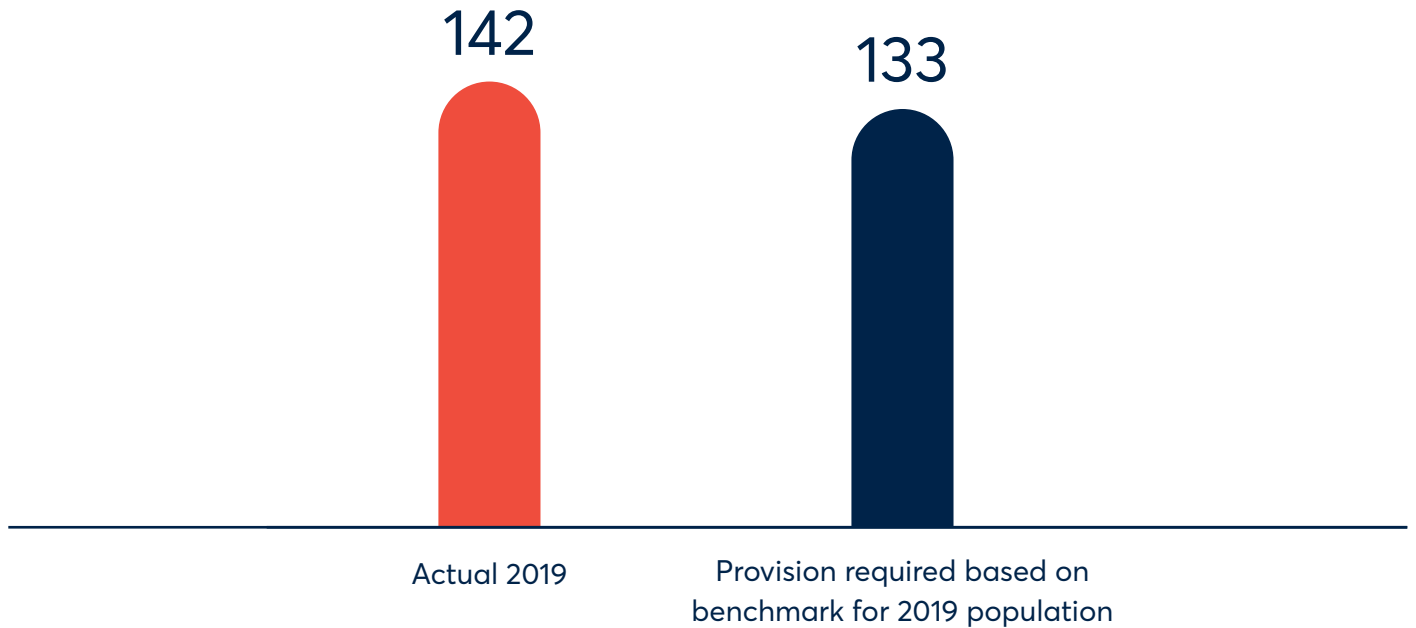
CATCHMENT 6

Overall number of play spaces = 4 (1 pocket/ 3 local / 0 district)

Suburb and site	Category			Target age range			Play type				Toilet
	P	L	D	P	J	T	SB	NAT	SEN	IM	YES
Newington											
Cumberland Square											
Buruwang Park											
Pierre De Coubertin Playground											
Blankers-Koen Park											
Silverwater											
Silverwater Park											
Deakin Park											

Rates of provision

City of Parramatta: 2019 Council-owned play space provision against benchmark*



KEY: ● Current provision of play spaces
● Play spaces required for 2019 population (as per benchmark)

*Benchmark based on standard identified by Parks and Leisure Australia, *Guidelines for Community Infrastructure, 2012*

City of Parramatta's current provision of play spaces available to the general public aligns with provision rates indicated by population benchmarking.

Benchmarking indicates that at least 133 play spaces would be ideal to meet City of Parramatta's resident population of approximately 266,000 people. There are currently 142 play spaces in City of Parramatta LGA. Distribution of play spaces throughout is uneven, with some areas underserved and others overserved.

All people within City of Parramatta should have access to good quality play opportunities, ideally within 400m of their homes, and ideally within 250m for those living in high density areas. Notable gaps in provision exist for communities in catchments three, four and six.

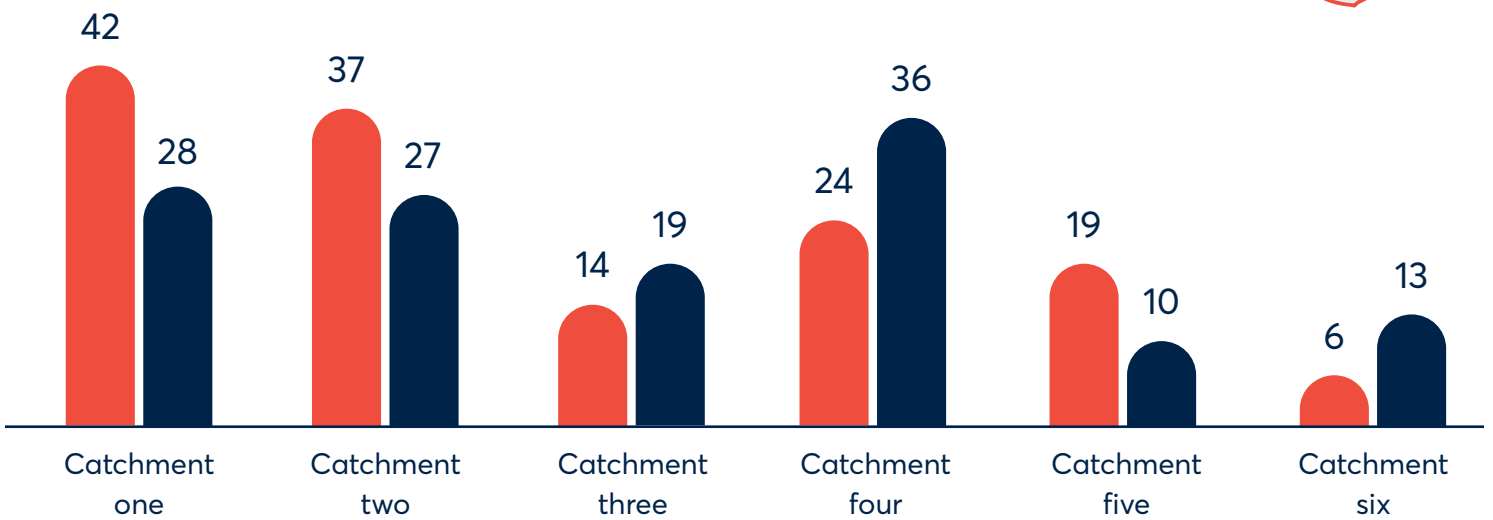
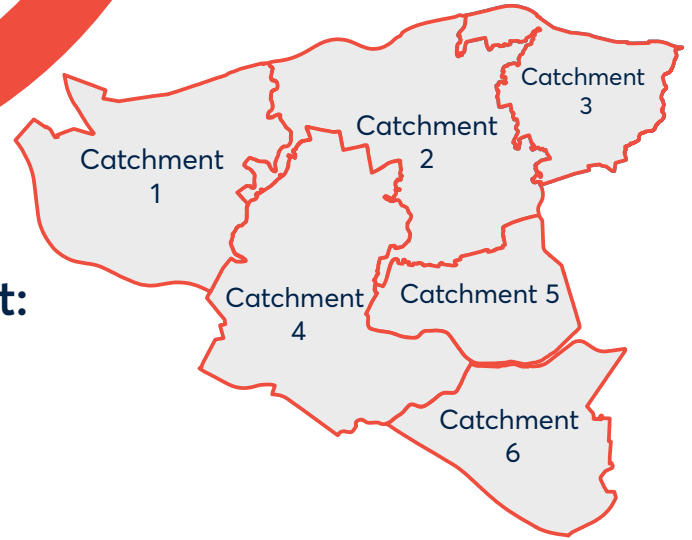
Play space benchmarks

Parks and Leisure Australia (2012) identify a benchmark provision of:

- One play space per 2,000 people (including district and regional provision).

For more information on the application of benchmarks and their strengths, weaknesses and considerations, refer to the 'Table of benchmarks' pages 60-61.

City of Parramatta by catchment: 2019 Council-owned play space provision against benchmark



KEY: ● Current provision of play spaces
 ● Play spaces required for 2019 population (as per benchmark)





Facts at a glance

In 2019, City of Parramatta's play space network had:

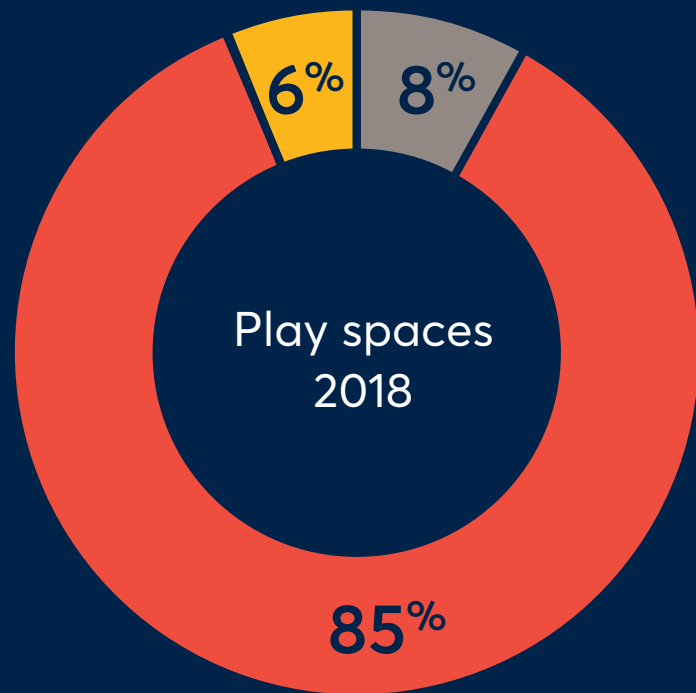


Gaps in existing play space classification

An effective play space network for our LGA involves provision of pocket, local and district play spaces that offer a diversity of play experiences.

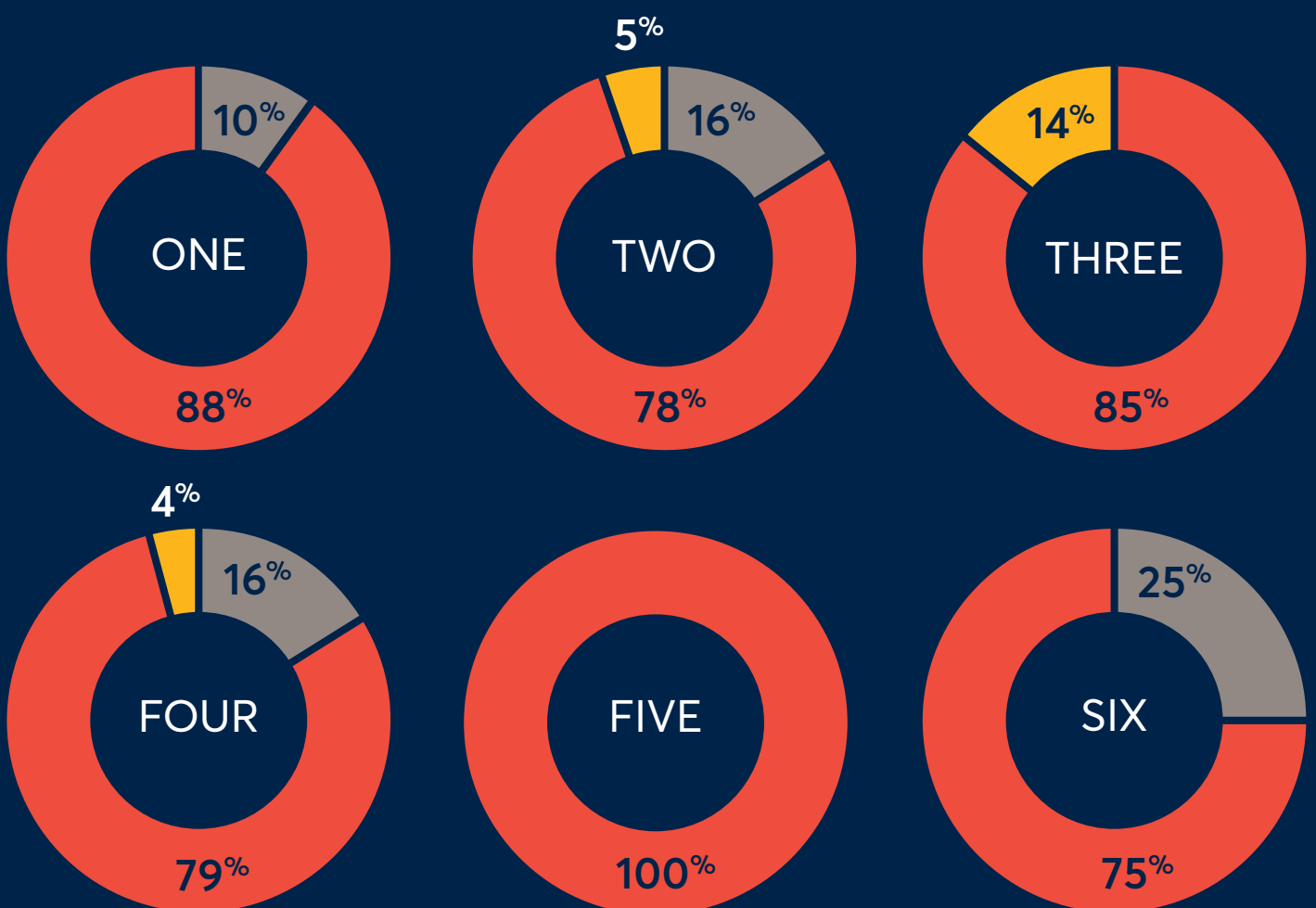
The majority of play spaces within City of Parramatta are classified as 'pocket' (20%), or 'local' (74%), together accounting for 94% of all assets across the LGA. There is an under supply of district facilities, currently making up only 6% of our play space network.

City of Parramatta play spaces 2019: by classification



KEY: ● Pocket
● Local
● District

Play space classification by catchment highlights the uneven distribution of different types of play space assets across the LGA:

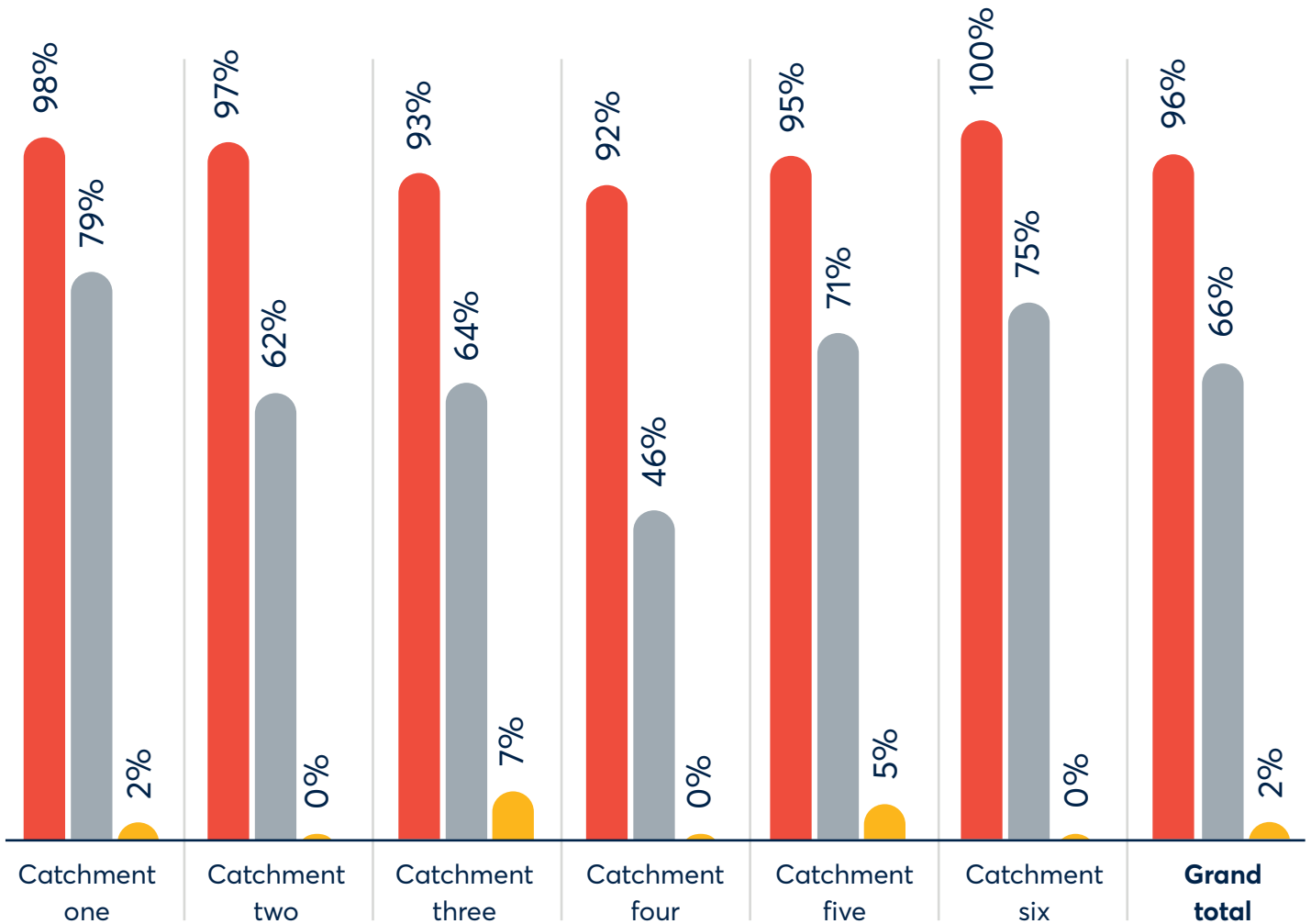


KEY: ● Pocket
● Local
● District

Gaps in existing age focus

The majority of play spaces within City of Parramatta are targeted at children 0-5 years of age (96%) or young people between the ages of 6-12 (66%). There is a significant gap in provision of play spaces with elements that cater for young people aged 13+, with only 2% of our current play space network providing for this age group.

City of Parramatta play spaces by catchment 2019: age focus



KEY: ● Percentage of play spaces targeted at 0-5 year olds
 ● Percentage of play spaces targeted at 6-12 year olds
 ● Percentage of play spaces targeted at 13+ year olds



Gaps in existing play types

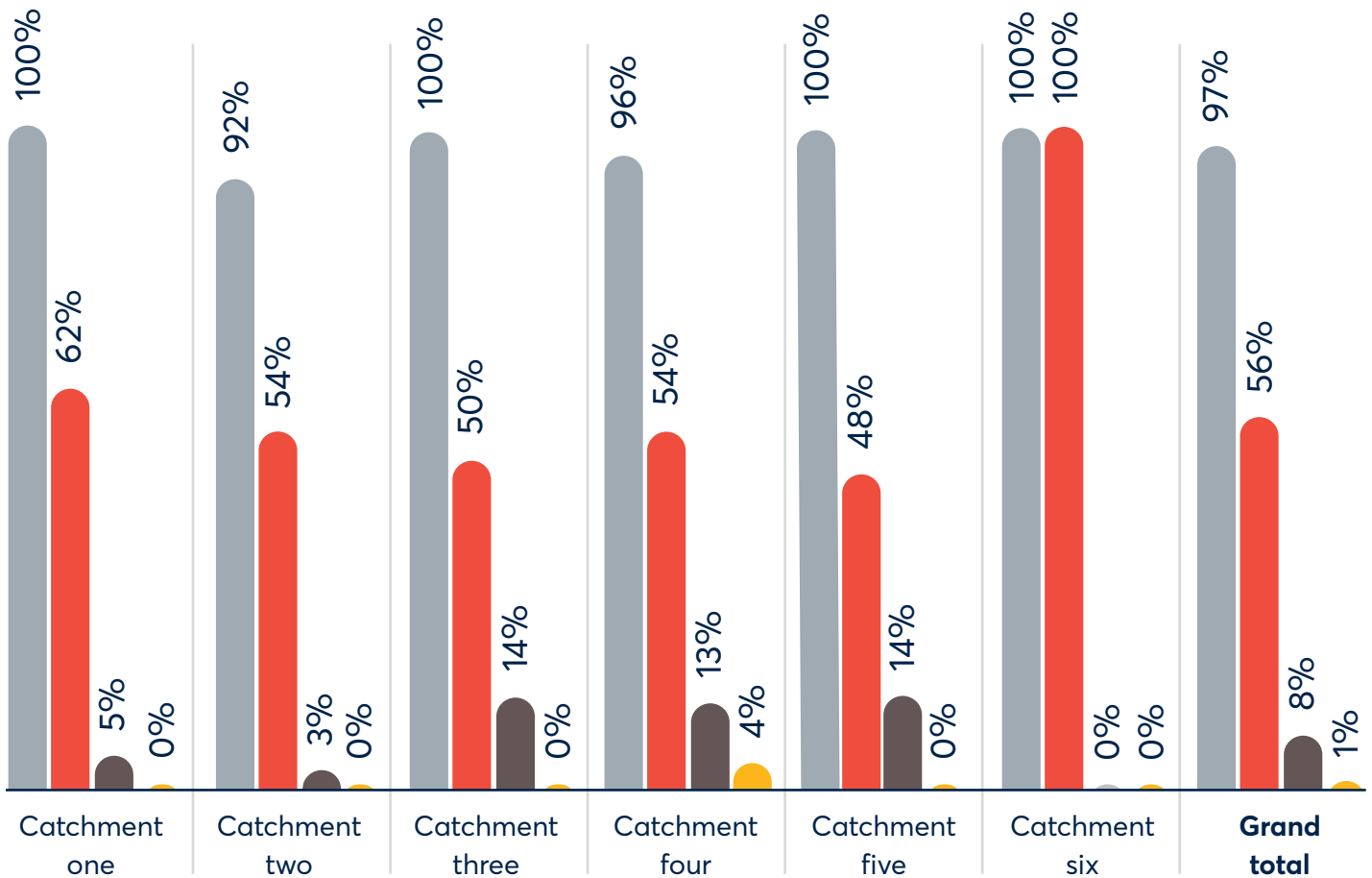
Play value can be maximised through designing play spaces that cater to different 'play types' and incorporating a variety of features that meet the needs of diverse user groups. Generally, the more play types that can be incorporated into a play space, the higher the play value for participants.

The majority of play spaces (97%) within City of Parramatta incorporate 'skill-based' elements. 7% of City of Parramatta Council's play spaces incorporate 'imaginative' elements, 56% incorporate 'sensory' elements and 1% incorporates 'natural' elements.

Depending on site opportunities and constraints, City of Parramatta's play spaces can usually be designed to incorporate one or more play types.

Catchment analysis shows that there are significant gaps in catchment six. Across all catchments there is a lack of 'natural' and 'imaginative' play when compared to provision of 'skill based' play.

City of Parramatta play spaces by catchment 2019: play types



KEY: ● Percentage of skills based
 ● Percentage of sensory
 ● Percentage of imaginative
 ● Percentage of natural

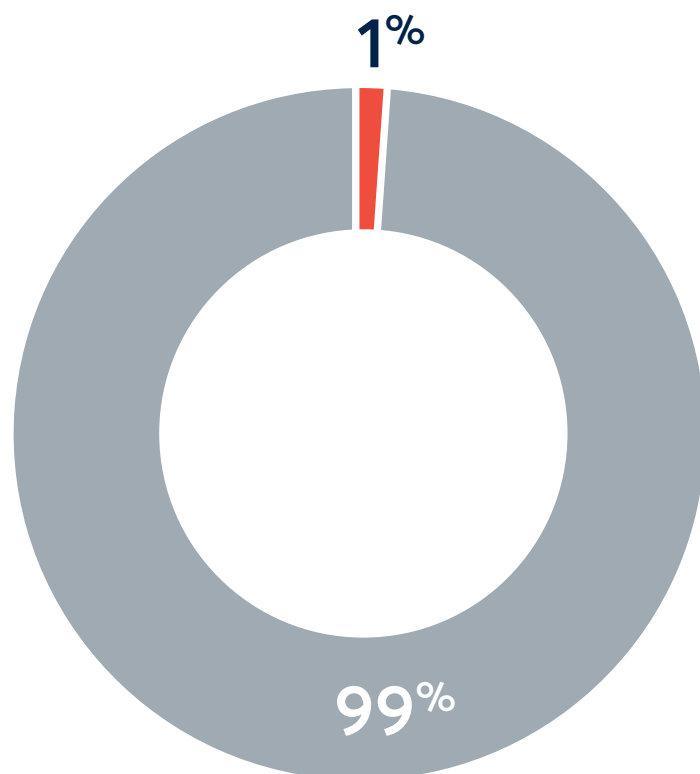
Inclusive play spaces

Play spaces that are inclusive and accessible for all people regardless of their age or ability benefit the entire community. Designing, building and maintaining inclusive play spaces is critical to providing high quality play opportunities for everyone to enjoy.

Many of the play spaces throughout City of Parramatta incorporate inclusive and accessible play elements (e.g. a basket swing).

City of Parramatta has a severe shortage of fully inclusive play spaces, with one out of 150 play spaces within the network currently identified as being fully inclusive.

City of Parramatta play spaces 2019: inclusive play spaces



KEY: ● Fully inclusive
● Not fully inclusive

How well positioned is our current play space network?

The strengths of our play space network include:

- Play spaces are well-maintained.
- Our play spaces provide a range of opportunities for play, social interaction and other activities.
- Many of our play spaces have been upgraded as per their lifecycle-based asset management plan.
- Many of our play spaces are co-located with parks or other outdoor recreation facilities.
- Some of our play spaces are significant (large, innovative and unique).
- New additional play spaces are being delivered within urban renewal precincts.

Despite some strengths, our play space network has weaknesses:

- There is fragmented provision of playgrounds, with areas of both over-supply and under-supply in our City. For our residents, this has resulted in inequitable access to play spaces.
- Many of our older play spaces are of poor quality and design and require review.
- Our play spaces are heavily focused on providing equipment for younger children which means our network does not provide enough facilities for older children.
- Many play spaces are underutilised.
- Many play spaces are not designed to support inclusion and accessibility.
- Many of our play spaces lack a variety of facilities to meet the broader needs of diverse user groups. There is a lack of 'nature' and 'imaginative' play types.
- The development of many play spaces has occurred in response to requests from members of our community. In some instances this has resulted in ad hoc facility development unaligned to an overall strategy for the play space network.

Ollie Webb Reserve

Parramatta's first all-abilities, all-inclusive play space and water play park

Ollie Webb Reserve is set to be City of Parramatta's first all-inclusive play space and water play park.

Recently completed, the new play space employs universal play space principles, and includes a diverse range of equipment to maximise creative, physical, social and cognitive play for young people. This play space provides a unique opportunity for children of all ages and all abilities to play together.

Close by to the Parramatta CBD, Ollie Webb Reserve is co-located with a sportsground, exercise stations, picnic facilities and a walking track.

Features of the new accessible play space incorporate elements of skill based, sensory and natural play and include:

- Carousel.
- Three bay swing.
- Trampolines.
- Embankment slide.
- Water play.
- Sand pit.
- Music chimes.
- Creek channel play.

Because of its high quality design, Ollie Webb Reserve is a very popular family friendly environment, where people choose to meet and socialise while their children play together.

**CASE
STUDY**



What our community has told us...

The first version of this Strategy was publicly exhibited between August and October 2017, and the updated draft Strategy was publicly exhibited between September and November 2019.


These engagement opportunities allowed Council to better understand the needs and expectations of our community. This information has been useful for strengthening this document. Through the consultation process we heard that:

Our community values:

- The important role of our play spaces in meeting the social and developmental needs of growing children.
- The quality and maintenance of our current play spaces.


Our community would like to see:

- An increase in provision of play spaces, particularly near high density dwellings.
- An increase in the quality of our play spaces.
- More shade for those accessing our play spaces.
- A more diverse offering of play spaces, targeting a larger variety of age groups, skill levels and abilities.
- A greater number of safer places to take children to play and socialise with other children and their families.
- An improved system for the community to understand the play offerings at each location, for example, a website page that indicates the availability of play equipment, the supporting facilities (such as toilets) and the targeted age range for that site.
- Arrangements for the sharing of school facilities with the community, including play spaces, where it is appropriate to do so.
- Easily accessible play spaces that are co-located with other community facilities.
- Improved supporting facilities for play spaces that can better meet user needs (e.g. amenities).



"...It is important to take a multi-level approach – not every playground needs to have the same level of facilities, but within an area or catchment, there needs to be a range of playgrounds."

- Resident, public submission



"...Many families are not able to use their closest playground as it is not suitable to the age of their children or their needs (such as fenced/open, facilities, equipment, size and amenities)."

- Resident, public submission



Emerging trends

City of Parramatta's continued transformation and change will have a significant impact on the future of our play space network. The importance of access to play spaces for informal recreation uses will only increase in City of Parramatta's increasingly urbanised environment.

Council considers the following issues as critical to the future of our play space network:

Play spaces as a network.

In order to serve the growing and diverse needs of our community, play spaces must be managed and planned for as a network. Pocket, local, district and regional play spaces must work together to deliver a range of opportunities for recreation throughout the LGA that cater for varied ages, skill levels and needs.

Local vs district vs regional facilities.

There is an increasing need to provide a range of quality local facilities as well as regional and district open spaces and facilities that are destinational. Play spaces must be located on land suitable for the intended use and must incorporate appropriate amenity facilities.

Growing demand and diverse interests.

The way people use play spaces across the LGA is changing and population growth and development are putting pressure on our play spaces. Coupled with increasing cultural diversity, this means that play spaces need to accommodate diverse activities to meet a variety of needs.

Where appropriate, we must protect existing play space provision and advocate for increased infrastructure to accompany population growth. We must also improve playground infrastructure quality and the diversity of play offerings that employ universal design principles to ensure access to all members of the community.

Housing density.

Smaller backyards and higher density development around transport nodes means that there will be an increased need for public spaces close to where people live. These public spaces will need to support day-to-day recreation as well as provide facilities for people to play.

What does future best practice look like?

We need to prioritise the equitable distribution of our play spaces and plan for play provision differently in high density areas compared to medium and low density areas.

Inclusive play.

The critical nature of play for all children is increasingly understood. More and more play spaces are being developed to enable children of all abilities to engage with play and with other children in the process. Play space designs that enable children with physical, sensory, intellectual and emotional challenges to be active participants are essential to supporting their wellbeing as well as that of their family and carers. Play spaces and associated amenities must employ universal design principles and be accessible to all members of the community.

Physical activity and obesity.

We know that our communities' health behaviours and health outcomes are poorer than for people living in Greater Western Sydney. Increasing obesity rates are evident within Australia due to poor diet and lack of exercise. There is a need to ensure that play spaces can support and encourage physical activity for all ages, genders, cultural and socio-economic groups. This includes providing opportunities for play in spaces that are safe and accessible and delivering diverse play spaces that encourage outdoor play, imagination, interaction with nature and social connectedness.

Increased maintenance and renewal impacts.

Play spaces are experiencing an accelerated life cycle due to extended use. Play spaces need to be developed to withstand increased wear and tear, especially in the context of changing climatic conditions, for example, the impact of the sun increasing the temperature of play surfaces. The cost of maintenance will increase in order to maintain a high quality standard.

Centenary Lakes Nature Play, Cairns

Nature play and consultation with children in design

A children's playground with a difference, the Nature Play space in Cairns encourages children to interact with nature, to explore and learn about their surroundings.

The play space integrates creative play elements with the natural lakeside environment.


The playground uses the nature based play concept and includes:

- Balance logs.
- Rocks for climbing, jumping and hopping.
- A "dinosaur" skeleton hiding in a sand pit.
- A fairy garden.
- Rope climb, tunnels and a digging patch.
- Plants known for their bright colours, smells and textures to encourage sensory play.
- Cubby building.

The nature play concept supports unstructured outdoor play, which has been shown to have a positive impact on children's cognitive and physical development. It focuses on enjoying the outdoors and exploring the simple wonders of the surroundings.

The concept was developed after consultation with Botanic Gardens staff, the Friends of the Botanic Gardens, children, parents and educators at local daycare centres and play groups, and the broader community.

**This information has been sourced from <http://www.cairns.qld.gov.au/region/things-to-do/natureplay>*



**CASE
STUDY**

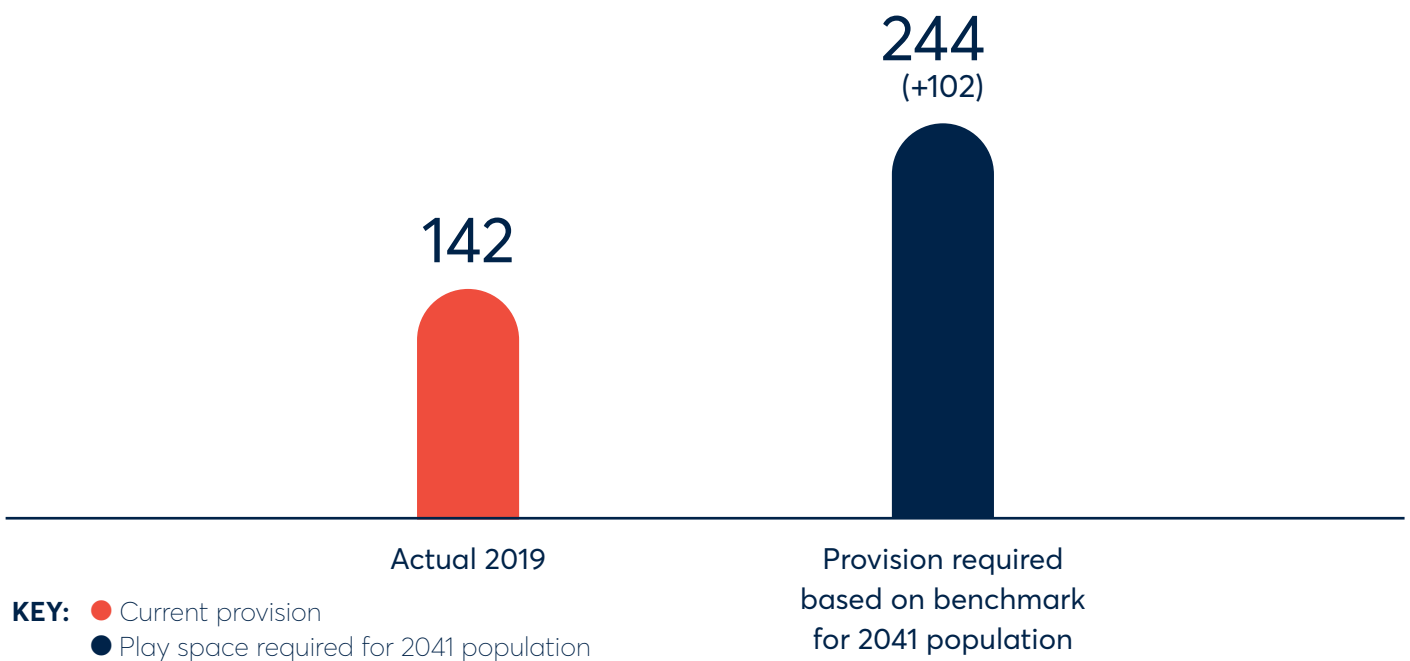


PLAY SPACE NETWORK

Future needs

What are the gaps and challenges we face?

City of Parramatta: 2041 play space provision against benchmark



Benchmark analysis

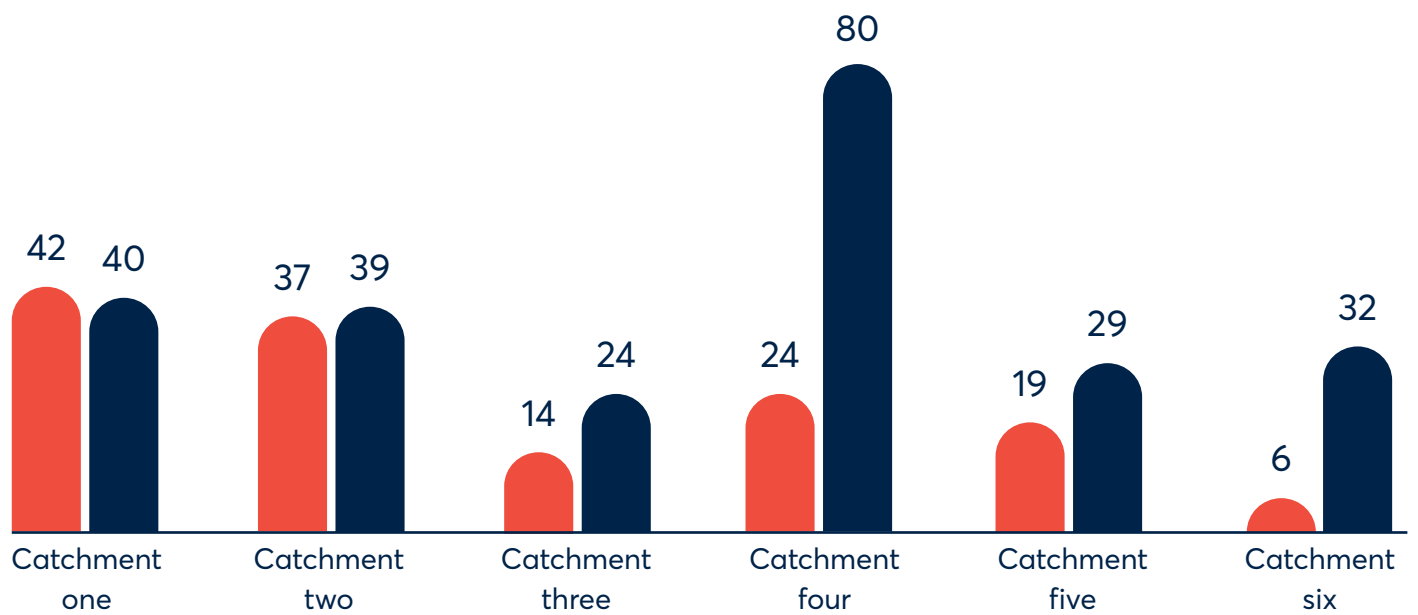
City of Parramatta's current provision of play spaces is fragmented, with areas of under and over provision throughout the LGA. Benchmarking analysis predicts the shortfall in play spaces for our community to be equivalent to 102 additional play spaces, by 2041.

While quantum of play spaces is important, ensuring equitable distribution and quality of play spaces across our LGA is key to achieving optimal outcomes for our community.

Benchmark analysis by catchment indicates under provision of play spaces by 2041 in catchments three, four, five and six.



City of Parramatta by catchment: 2041 play space provision against benchmark



KEY: ● Provision in 2019
 ● Play space required for 2041 population

Tumbling Bay Playground, London

Adventure play and universal design

Tumbling Bay Playground in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park was completed as part of the legacy works to convert the London 2012 Olympics venue into a new metropolitan centre for London where people can live, work and visit.

The regional playground is co-located with a café, community spaces, and park facilities, close by to new residential development.

The play opportunities are diverse, challenging, and collaborative. Extensive sand and water play references many different types of waterways. The benefits of this kind of provision is they appeal to a wide age range and nurture communication between children, as they work together to move the sand or pump and transport the water. The playground is embedded in the landscape of the park which also provides play opportunities such as creating dens with willow sticks.

The challenging Scots Pine Play area provides scope to test limits of courage and ability, with natural and adventurous play elements including the climbing nets, and hanging rubber swings. Artworks and artist-led initiatives were integrated into the design process creating opportunities for participation in the arts and skills development, as well as expanding experiences and understanding of what is local.

The playground won the 2014 Civic Trust Award for Universal Design and was built in accordance with the local planning authority's Inclusive Design Strategy and Standards. The Sand and Water area is particularly accessible for wheelchair users and people with mobility impairment.

In the Succession Garden children can explore the different plant groups, colours, smells, sounds, scale and varying forms. The Scots Pine Play area, includes sensory play (musical instruments), and a gently inclined pathway giving access to the valley underneath the climbing net and bridge. Landscaping includes wheelchair friendly resin bonded mulch.

**This information has been sourced from <http://www.erecarchitecture.co.uk/projects/play/146-p-qeop-tumbling-bay-and-timber-lodge.html>*





The strategic challenges we face together

Our play space network can contribute to strengthening the development of our children and improving access to informal recreation opportunities for children, their families and the broader community.

We will need to plan and use our resources to find solutions to the following critical strategic challenges:

Q. How can we increase the quality and offerings within our existing play spaces to meet the needs of our growing, diverse and changing communities?

Q. How can we embed the principles of access and inclusion appropriately in our play space network to support all of our community?

Q. How can we increase access to play spaces that are within a walkable catchment of all resident's homes?

Q. What funding strategies will be most successful for delivering best practice play spaces and supporting infrastructure in both the short and long term?

Q. How can we best manage increasing maintenance costs and asset renewal to meet increasing community expectations for a higher quantity and quality of play spaces?



PLAY SPACE NETWORK

Future directions



Strategic directions

To meet the needs of City of Parramatta's growing and increasingly diverse community, Council will seek to realise quality play spaces in the right locations in each catchment. This will enable the delivery of essential play spaces to meet the needs of residents and others who come to City of Parramatta.

It is appropriate for Council to continue to work in this area, as this provision is often not met by the private market and demand is growing.

Council will aim to plan its play space network to achieve walkable catchments of 250-400m depending on dwelling density.

To do this, City of Parramatta Council will focus on the following strategic directions:

- Increase play value of current play spaces:
 - No net loss of play spaces.
 - Increase local level play spaces through upgrade and redesign of existing pocket play spaces.
 - Increase district level play spaces through upgrade and redesign of existing local play spaces.
 - Upgrade and redesign pocket, local and district play spaces to:
 - Improve quality.
 - Expand play types to meet the following targets:
 - Nature play - 25% of all play spaces.
 - Sensory play - 75% of all play spaces.
 - Imaginative play - 50% of all play spaces.
 - Expand age range offerings for 0-17 year olds with a focus on:
 - Pocket play spaces targeting 0-5 years.
 - Local play spaces targeting 0-2 years.
 - District play spaces targeting 0-13+ years.
 - Increase all abilities play offerings.
 - Enhance the pedestrian and cycle connections between play spaces.
- Deliver new play spaces using the following approaches:**
- Develop shared and joint use arrangements with schools for community access to school play spaces.
 - Advocate for new play space provision in all urban renewal areas, and undertake joint planning with stakeholders to determine ownership, use, renewal and maintenance matters.
 - Increase the respectful use of natural areas for play
 - Scope options for public play spaces in non-traditional sites throughout the LGA.
 - Support the delivery of play spaces within new private development for resident use.
 - Acquire additional open space for play spaces, where required.

City of Parramatta play space network: 20 YEAR PROVISION TARGETS

Through collaboration, partnerships and the resources of many, we seek to achieve the following targets for our community.

Local play spaces



2019 current supply



Future supply based on population growth

District play spaces



2019 current supply



Future supply based on population growth

Key recommendations

Realising open space needs for the current and future community has many challenges. With high land costs and rapid urbanisation, Council needs to be innovative in drawing upon a range of approaches in order to provide open space.

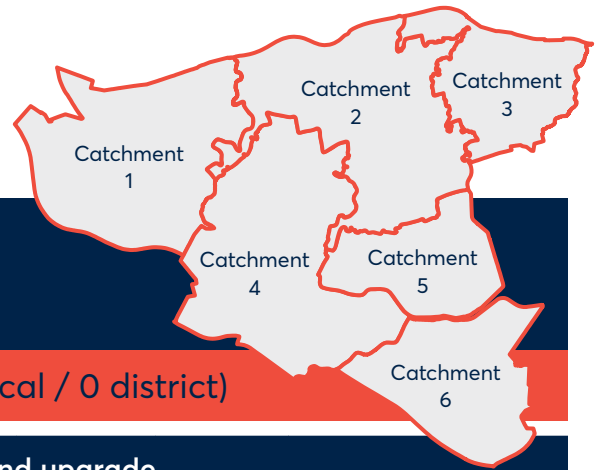
New local parks can be delivered through the following implementation methods:

- **Upgrade** pocket play space to local play space through embellishment and quality improvement.
- **New** play space provided in a location where there is no existing play space.

New district parks can be delivered through the following implementation methods:

- **Upgrade** local play space to district play space through embellishment and quality improvement.
- **New** play space provided in a location where there is no existing play space.

These implementation methods: **upgrade** and **new** are used to described open space recommendations in each catchment across the LGA.



CATCHMENT 1

Winston Hills, Toongabbie, Westmead, Northmead, Old Toongabbie, Pendle Hill, Wentworthville & Constitution Hill

Overall number of play spaces = 42 (4 pocket/ 37 local / 0 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment One should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' age group (where appropriate)
- Providing an increase in sensory, imaginative and natural play types

Recommendations for new or upgraded play spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Northmead	Upgrade from pocket to local play space
			Northmead	Build new local play space
			Westmead	Build new local play space
			Toongabbie	Upgrade from local to district play space
			Westmead	Build new district play space

CATCHMENT 2

Carlingford, North Rocks, Dundas, Dundas Valley & Telopea

Overall number of play spaces = 37 (6 pocket/ 29 local / 2 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment Two should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' (where appropriate) and 'junior' age groups
- Providing an increase in skill based, sensory, imaginative and natural play types

Recommendations for new or upgraded play spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Carlingford	Build new local play space
			Carlingford	Build new local play space
			Carlingford	Build new local play space
			Carlingford	Build new local play space
			Carlingford	Upgrade from pocket to local play space
			Carlingford	Upgrade from pocket to local play space
			Telopea	Upgrade from pocket to local play space
			Carlingford	Build new district play space
			North Rocks	Upgrade from local to district play space
			Telopea	Upgrade from local to district play space

CATCHMENT 3

Epping, Beecroft & Eastwood

Overall number of play spaces = 14 (0 pocket/ 12 local / 2 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment Three should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' (where appropriate) and 'junior' age groups
- Providing an increase in sensory, imaginative and natural play types

Recommendations for New or Upgraded Play Spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Epping	Build new local play space
			Epping	Build new local play space
			Epping	Build new local play space
			Epping	Build new district play space

CATCHMENT 4

Parramatta, Granville, Camellia, North Parramatta, Oatlands, Harris Park, Mays Hill, Rosehill & Clyde

Overall number of play spaces = 24 (1 pocket/ 19 local / 4 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment Four should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' (where appropriate) and 'junior' age groups
- Providing an increase in skill based, sensory, imaginative and natural play types

Recommendations for new or upgraded play spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Granville	Build new local play space
			Harris Park	Build new local play space
			Granville	Upgrade from pocket to local play space
			Parramatta	Build new local play space
			Parramatta	Build new local play space
			Granville	Build new local play space
			Camellia	Build new district play space
			Granville	Upgrade from local to district play space
			North Parramatta	Upgrade from local to district play space

CATCHMENT 5

Melrose Park, Rydalmere & Ermington

Overall number of play spaces = 21 (0 pocket/ 21 local / 0 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment Five should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' age group (where appropriate)
- Providing an increase in sensory, imaginative and natural play types

Recommendations for new or upgraded play spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Melrose Park	Build new local play space
			Melrose Park	Build new local play space
			Melrose Park	Build new local play space
			Melrose Park	Build new district play space
			Rydalmere	Build new district play space
			Ermington	Build new district play space

CATCHMENT 6

Sydney Olympic Park, Wentworth Point, Lidcombe/Carter Street, Silverwater & Newington

Overall number of play spaces = 4 (1 pocket/ 3 local / 0 district)

Recommendations for existing play space embellishment and upgrade

Expand offering for:			Expand age focus offering for:			Expand play type offering for:			
Pocket	Local	District	Preschool	Junior	Teenagers	Skill based	Natural	Sensory	Imaginative

Any local play space being embellished or upgraded in Catchment Six should have a focus on:

- Targeting the 'teenage' age group (where appropriate)
- Providing an increase in sensory, imaginative and natural play type

Recommendations for new or upgraded play spaces

Pocket	Local	District	Suburb	Comment
			Wentworth Point	Build new local play space
			Carter Street	Build new local play space
			Carter Street	Build new local play space
			Wentworth Point	Build new district play space
			Carter Street	Build new district play space

Criteria to guide decision making for new or upgraded play spaces

The following criteria complement and are to be used in conjunction with City of Parramatta's stated principles for community infrastructure planning found on pages 63-65.

Council will use them to guide decision making and discussion with stakeholders and partners about new play space opportunities.

For all scenarios, will the additional play space:

Align with City of Parramatta Council's play space network strategic direction?

- Provide high quality, meaningful and rewarding play opportunities?
- Allow for enough additional space for supporting infrastructure as relevant (including parking, lighting, toilets, seating)?
- Contribute to and complement the current outdoor recreation network throughout the LGA?

Contribute to and complement the current play space offerings throughout the LGA?

Be designed to align with City of Parramatta's outdoor recreation network and complement overall recreation provision at a site (e.g. at a sportsground or park site)?

Be designed to incorporate various play type elements and activities that cater for a diversity of ages, genders, ethnicities and levels of ability and support inclusive play?

Be within a walkable catchment of residential development?

- Ideally, be within a 250m walk of high density residential development?
- Be within a 400m walk of all other types of residential development?

Be designed to integrate with and incorporate elements of the natural environment and provide opportunities for participants to interact with a diversity of natural features e.g. water, rocks and trees?

Employ universal design principles and safety by design principles and meet Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) requirements?

Have adequate parking provision in the case of district-level play spaces?

Be located in a highly visible location and preferably close by to public transport?

For all scenarios, will the additional play space:
(Continued)

Be innovative in design and incorporate:

- Challenging aspects to encourage managed risk taking for children?
- Elements that maximise the creativity and confidence of children, allowing for the development of analytical and problem solving skills as well as imagination?
- Design that encourages use by other groups e.g. seniors or carers?

Demonstrate financial feasibility through a formal assessment, including construction, ongoing maintenance and renewal costs as well as operational costs?

Incorporate equipment that is durable and sustainable, considerate of climatic conditions and safe for users?

Exceed Australian Standards and provide high play value for users and their families?

For more information:

This Community Infrastructure Strategy draws on the knowledge and experience of many staff from across Council who have a passion for enabling socially sustainable communities. Together with feedback from our community, and our key stakeholders, this document has been a shared effort.

For further information on City of Parramatta's play space network, or Council's key strategic directions, the following resources are available:

- "Sharing the Opportunities of Growth for All – Socially Sustainable Parramatta Framework": <https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/sites/council/files/2018-09/socially-sustainable-parramatta-framework.pdf>
- City of Parramatta Council's website: www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au
- City of Parramatta Customer Contact Centre: **9806 5050**
- For access to demographic data: <http://profile.id.com.au/parramatta>