

# Playground Policy

December 2018

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## 1. POLICY

The Playground Policy is to support the Council's vision and strategic objectives of appropriately managing assets and to provide the community with guidelines for the provision, maintenance and renewal of playground equipment within Central Coast.

The Central Coast Council is committed to improving the value and use of open space that provides for a range of recreation opportunities. Such open space, where applicable, will provided a variety of playground equipment that provides for engaging, exciting and interactive and play experiences.

## 2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of this Policy is to set out guidelines for the provision, maintenance and renewal of playground equipment in all Council playgrounds.

## 3. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all playgrounds owned by the Council. Any reference to 'playgrounds' includes, but is not restricted to all play equipment, softfall areas, grounds, shade structures, associated garden beds and perimeter fencing.

## 4. OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the Policy are to:

- . Assist the Council to fulfil its corporate and legislative objectives in the provision of accessible, suitable and contemporary community recreational opportunities;
- . Provide and develop playgrounds that align with the open space hierarchy, including higher level regional and district playgrounds as a key focus, with provision for local open space playgrounds within the urban areas as determined through the Planning Scheme and the Central Coast Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012–2022;
- . Ensure the appropriate allocation of resources and strategically review the locations of existing playgrounds to ensure there is provision for play is generally located within a 400m radius of 90–95% of households in urban centres;
- . Allow for the provision of a district open space playgrounds to be generally located within an 800m radius of 90–95% of households in urban centres and within 10–20 minutes' drive for most Central Coast residents;
- . Ensure Council Asset Management responsibilities are met.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

To asset in interpretation of this Policy the following definition applies:

"Playground" means an area established for the opportunity for children of all ages and abilities to interact, learn, be physically challenged and to have fun. The Council supports the provision of playgrounds that meet or exceed the requirements for unsupervised play.

## 6. PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

### 1.1 Existing Equipment

All existing playground equipment shall comply with all Australian Standards relevant at the date of installation.

### 1.2 Installation of New Equipment

All new playground equipment purchased and/or constructed shall comply with all current relevant Australian Standards and shall be installed in accordance with those standards and any applicable manufacturer's instructions.

## 7. PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT INVENTORY AND INSPECTIONS

The Council will maintain a Playground Equipment and Softfall register. This information is to be stored in the Council's Asset Management System (Conquest) and is administered by the Parks/Recreation Officer.

The Council will undertake monthly inspections of the playground equipment and softfall to determine any defects and ascertain the safety of the equipment.

An annual inspection will be undertaken by an external auditor to check against Australian Standards.

## 8. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PLAYGROUNDS

The Council may resolve, additional to any Planning Scheme requirements, to make budgetary provision for the establishment of a new playground.

All new playgrounds shall be assessed for suitability of location based upon the hierarchy of open space and the Central Coast Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012–2022.

When residential subdivisions are undertaken the Council may require the provision of land or cash-in-lieu in accordance with the Public Open Space Contributions Policy.

If land is required, the Council will provide funds in the budget to provide playground equipment on the land once 50% has been developed.

Playgrounds will also be assessed against the Playground Renewal Program schedule that has been developed to enable scheduled replacement of equipment based upon known life in various environmental locations.

## 9. RENEWAL, RELOCATION AND REMOVALS OF PLAYGROUNDS

The Council will establish a renewal, relocation and removal schedule that will ensure the playgrounds remain in a safe, usable condition and provided relevant play experiences that meets the needs of the local community.

The Council will provide funding in the annual estimates for the renewal, relocation and removal of play equipment.

When required due to safety issues playgrounds may require to be closed and/or removed at short notice. The Council will be advised as soon as possible of the circumstance and outcome if this was to occur.

## 10. TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF PLAYGROUNDS

The Council may temporarily close a playground for the purposes of carry out works of any kind.

## 11. ANNUAL BUDGETARY PROVISIONS

The Council will make provision in the annual Estimates and 10-year plans for the progressive renewal and/or upgrading of playground equipment as identified in the Asset Management Plans.

The Council collects funds from developers in accordance with the Public Open Space Contributions policy. Funds from this reserve will be used in accordance with the Public Open Space contributions policy.

## 12. INCIDENTS

The Council will maintain records for playground related incidents that it receives from the staff and public.

## 13. RESALE OF PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Items of playground equipment are generally removed because they do not meet the current Australian Standard or they have major defect.

The Council will not sell or donate any playground equipment that has been removed from service for re-use in any location. Items of equipment will be disposed of appropriately.

## 14. SHADE

The Council will provide natural shade wherever possible in preference to built shade structures. Built shade structures will only be considered where the establishment of trees is considered detrimental to other surrounding infrastructure, or trees have failed to thrive after repeated attempted planting has failed or will not provide the shade required.

## 15. FENCING

The Council will not be required to fence playground areas. If necessary, a risk assessment will be undertaken to determine the need for a fence.

## 16. SITING OF PLAYGROUNDS

The Council will locate playgrounds in accordance with the Central Coast Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012–2022 and after consideration of existing site conditions and design criteria to ensure safety and security of the community and users.

## 17. AUDITING OF PLAYGROUNDS

To mitigate risk the Council undertakes a monthly inspection of all playground equipment to identify any safety issues or defects. An annual audit is to be undertaken by an accredited external auditor to ensure compliance to the relevant standard/s.

## 18. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Council's Playground Policy complements and builds upon the Council's Strategic Plan 2014–2024 as follows:

Strategic Direction 1.1

- Improve the value and use of open space.

Strategic Direction 4.3

- Develop and manage sustainable built infrastructure.

As well as:

- meeting community needs and expectations;
- management of the Council's risk;
- achievement of better resource efficiency using integrated systems; and
- compliance with State and Federal legislation.

## 19. STANDARD (INCLUDING RELEVANT LEGISLATION)

This Playground Policy has been developed in accordance with the:

- Disability Discrimination Act
- Local Government Act 1993
- Central Coast Interim Planning Scheme 2013
- Central Coast Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012–2022
- Councils Long-term Financial Plan

## 20. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every five (5) years, unless organisational and legislative changes require more frequent modification.

## 21. APPENDICES

The following appendices are attached to this Policy.

- Nil

## 22. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Central Coast Council Strategic Plan 2014–2024
- Corporate Folder
- Risk Management Policy
- Central Coast Open Space and Recreation Plan 2012–2022
- Public Open Space Contributions Policy

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November 2018