

Responsible Directorate	Community Development
Responsible Business Unit/s	Recreation and Leisure Services
Responsible Officer	Manager Recreation and Leisure Services
Affected Business Unit/s	Recreation and Leisure Services Parks and Sustainability

Objective

- The playground policy has been developed by the City of Stirling to help manage playgrounds and provide for current and future community needs in an equitable and sustainable manner.
- The City is focused on providing high quality, well maintained equipment that complies with current Australian Standards.

Scope

This policy applies to playgrounds within the City with play equipment specifically designed for use by children between 3 and 12 years (inclusive) to:

- Address the importance of accessibility and walkability to playgrounds, particularly within a local context using the principles of the City's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, to maximise ease of access and promote inclusion within the community.
- Recognise and provide for a range of playgrounds with a variety of play opportunities.
- Provide an equitable distribution of playgrounds to residents across the City.
- Promote safe use and enjoyment of public open space and amenities through appropriate siting and design.
- Provide clear guidance on the standards of provision, future direction and management for playgrounds.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to constraints on the City's resources (environmental, social and economic).
- Ensure the community's needs are addressed through appropriate community engagement.

Policy

1. Safety and Compliance

- Playgrounds are highly used and valued which are predominantly provided for children. The City has a regular maintenance schedule to ensure safe and high quality playgrounds are provided. All playground inspections are completed by accredited playground inspectors. Regular maintenance is carried out, as required, as part of these inspections.
- The City has a long term refurbishment program which is reviewed annually. This program has been developed to ensure that playgrounds are safe and compliant with the relevant Australian Standards, and are in accordance with the City's adopted POS Strategy.
- The City will consider installing fencing around playgrounds where, in the City's opinion, they are considered to be in an unsafe location for example adjacent to major roads or water bodies.
- The City will remove all unsafe playground equipment immediately. Unsafe play equipment is deemed unsafe/dangerous by an accredited playground inspector if it does not comply with

Australian Standards. The play equipment may contain head and neck entrapments, lack of compliant soft fall and/or other major potential injury risks which can cause serious injury such as death or life altering injury. Once removed, the site will be assessed in line with the POS Strategy to determine if a new playground will be recommended for installation.

- That Council only install shade structures over regional and major playgrounds across the City.
- That additional shade structures, other than major and regional playgrounds, are considered only in accordance with the criteria outlined below:
 - Where practicable and cost effective, temporary artificial shade structures may be utilized to supplement the planting of trees until such time that those trees provide adequate natural shade coverage.

2. Playground Hierarchy

There are four (4) classifications of playgrounds/play equipment within the City. These include Regional, Major, Local and Centre playgrounds. The number and configurations of playgrounds/play equipment within each classification vary across the City. All of the City's playground/play equipment categories have been designed to cater for children between the ages of 3 to 12 years.

- a) **Regional:** The regional playground serves all of the City residents and the wider community. It is the largest of the categories with more than ten (10) different play elements. In time, there will be one regional playground per ward. These playgrounds are generally located on a Regional Open Space, or on a reserve which serves a regional purpose where a regional reserve does not exist.

Elements:

- Large combination structure
- Three or more over head activities
- Lower body activities
- 2 or 3 slide activities
- See-saw, bounce-about and/or activity board
- Double swing and/or swing item
- Rubber and/or sand softfall with limestone retaining wall

- b) **Major:** These playgrounds are more evenly distributed across the City and are generally located in district and community public open spaces or significant key community parks. There are 5-10 play elements in each playground. There will be a minimum of four (4) major playgrounds in each ward.

Elements:

- Medium combination structure
- 2 slide activities
- 2 or 3 over head activities
- Lower body activities
- See-saw, bounce about, or activity board
- Double swing or swing item
- Sand softfall with limestone retaining wall (there may be one major playground per ward with rubber softfall)

- c) **Local:** Local playgrounds primary role is to cater for the residents living in close proximity to the playground, generally within a 400-500 metre catchment.

Elements:

- Small combination structure
- See-saw, bounce about or activity board.
- One slide activity with deck (large enough to sit on) and static access,
- One or 2 over head activities
- Lower body activities
- Double swing or swing item
- Sand pit with limestone retaining wall

- d) **Centre:** These playgrounds are usually attached to buildings and access to the community is usually restricted. These playgrounds are generally fenced. Provision standards are usually to a local playground level.

3. Natural Play

Natural play elements will be incorporated in playground designs, where possible, in line with the Public Open Space Strategy, budget restrictions and Australian Standards for playgrounds.

4. Community Consultation

The City will consult with the community with regards to the installation, refurbishment or removal of playgrounds/play equipment.

5. Requests for Playgrounds

Each new request for a playground, irrespective of the classification, will be assessed utilising the Public Open Space Strategy. All requests regarding playgrounds must be submitted to the City in writing.

Definitions

Playground means a set of play elements including infrastructure, landscape, built play equipment and when required, consolidated in a softfall area which is sufficiently retained.

POS Strategy means the City of Stirling Public Open Space Strategy endorsed by Council in December 2008. The POS Strategy is the guiding document for the planning and management for all public open space and associated amenities and infrastructure for the City.

Compliant playground means playgrounds which comply with Australian Standards and provide valuable play opportunities to challenge children. All Compliant playground classifications (regional, major, local and centre) cater for children within the ages of three (3) to twelve (12) years. In most cases these playgrounds fall in line with the POS Strategy.

Softfall means the surface under a playground which complies with playground Australian Standards. Softfall aims to reduce injuries obtained in the playground. There are different forms of softfall. The City of Stirling predominantly utilises sand, with rubber services generally being utilised in regional playgrounds.

Nature Play means playgrounds or spaces that incorporate designated play elements from the natural environment such as tree planting, mulching, creative landscaping and the use of naturally occurring elements and materials like logs and boulders to enhance the connection with nature, encourage outdoor play and foster healthier more sustainable communities. Nature play elements provide different play experiences for children and provide opportunities to enhance exploration, imagination and creativity. These elements do not have to be large, intricate or expensive but instead look at different strategies to incorporate natural elements into playgrounds.

Unsafe play equipment means play equipment which is deemed unsafe/dangerous by an accredited playground inspector and does not comply with Australian Standards. The play equipment may contain head and neck entrapments, lack of compliant soft fall and/or other major potential injury risks which can cause serious injury. This play equipment will be removed immediately and the site will be assessed in line with the POS Strategy to determine if a new playground will be installed unless directed otherwise by Council.

Relevant management practices/documents

City of Stirling Public Open Space Strategy
 Australian Standards for Playgrounds
 Playground Management Practice

Legislation/local law requirements

Occupiers Liability Act 1995
City of Stirling Dogs Local Law 2008

Office use only				
Relevant delegations	Not applicable			
Initial Council adoption	Date	15 July 1997	Resolution #	Item 10.1/LS14
Last reviewed	Date	26 May 2020	Resolution #	0520/027
Next review due	Date	2021		