

# Playground Strategy

# Playground Strategy

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**Responsible Officer:** Manager Parks and Streetscapes

## Introduction

Woollahra Council has 23 playgrounds, ranging from 4 to over 20 years old in 2002. Recent consultant reports have indicated issues that need to be addressed to ensure the safety of children utilising these playgrounds.

As a step in the ongoing management of playgrounds, Council has completed an audit of its playgrounds. The audit included inspection, completion of minor repairs and monthly reports itemising safety and maintenance issues requiring and is completed by a playground specialist, Kico Australia. The audit has identified the issues affecting the quality and safety of playgrounds.

## Scope

Woollahra Council's 23 playgrounds are located within the suburbs of Paddington, Woollahra, Double Bay, Darling Point, Bellevue Hill, Rose Bay, Vaucluse and Watson Bay. These playgrounds are in various states of dilapidation and require review so they can conform to Australian Standards for playgrounds and Council's Playground Policy.

## Purpose









This strategy will review all Council's playgrounds and develop an approach that will, in a staged manner, achieve total compliance with Australian Standards for Playgrounds and Council's Playground Policy. The Strategy defines the program for correction, up grading, replacement and removal of playground throughout the municipality. This document will provide the basis for funds allocation, resource allocation and to provide the background for decisions based on playground opportunities and constraints. Further management of the playgrounds and future risk identification will be determined in the Playground Plan of Management.

## Australian Standards for Playgrounds

Australian Standards are developed to provide an aid in decision making relating to playground

planning, installation, construction and maintenance. These Standards act as a benchmark of what is considered reasonable within the boundaries of playground planning, construction, installation and maintenance.

Generally, the role of the Australian Standards for playgrounds is to;

- Provide general guidelines for playgrounds in relation to their
  -  Siting
  -  Design
  -  Installation and
  -  Maintenance
- Provide specific answers for issues such as
  -  Surfacing
  -  Equipment features
- Provide indicators of good practice on issues such as
  -  Maximum heights of playground equipment
  -  Undersurface materials

There are three Australian Standards developed specifically for the management of the installation and maintenance of children’s playgrounds. Australian Standards act as a national benchmark for all playground products and services so as to enhance quality of life and to provide a safe environment for children’s play. Council must comply with these Standards to ensure playground safety and quality.

## Woollahra Council’s Playgrounds

### Playground categorisation

Four categories have been identified to define Woollahra Council’s playgrounds. These categories have been defined by assessing the playground’s location, access, visibility and current playground equipment.

The aim of defining these categories is to allow for the development of standardised maintenance regimes. These categories are flexible and can be altered with playground developments. These maintenance standards will be used to ensure Council’s playgrounds receive appropriate and timely maintenance and scheduled equipment review. These categories will be used in the Playground Plan of Management to determine standards of maintenance.

It must be noted it is not essential for a suburb to have one of each of these playground categories as they do not imply or determine where funding or resources are allocated.

### Category A Playgrounds

Category A Playgrounds are those playgrounds that are situated in a harbourside setting or are within a Community Centre or Kindergarten. The playgrounds located along the Sydney Harbour foreshore have a very high visitation rate and are in highly exposed positions, to both the local community and to visitors to the municipality.

These playgrounds are quite large, have very complex units of play equipment and have a high level of usage.

Category A Playground	Suburb
Holdsworth Community Centre	Woollahra

Lyne Park	Rose Bay
Parsley Bay Reserve	Vaucluse
Robertson Park	Watsons Bay
Steyne Park	Double Bay
Woollahra Kindergarten	Double Bay
Yarranabee Park	Darling Point

It is proposed that these playgrounds will be developed to sustain a very high frequency of use. This will include wet pour rubber or synthetic grass softfall and larger units of equipment to cater for their high frequency use.

### Category B Playgrounds

All playgrounds that are located within larger parkland settings with other recreation facilities or are considered a larger playground are defined as a Category B Playground. The playground generally consists of up to 5 pieces of play equipment whilst having a high to moderate usage by the public. The playgrounds in this category are listed below

<b>Category B Playground</b>	<b>Suburb</b>
Cooper Park	Bellevue Hill
Rose Bay Park	Rose Bay
Samuel Park	Vaucluse
Thornton Reserve	Rose Bay
Trumper Park	Paddington

### Category C Playgrounds

Category C Playgrounds are those playgrounds that have good access, limited exposure and are medium in size, that is, containing 3-5 pieces of playground equipment. Generally, these playgrounds are situated within a park setting that is large enough to accommodate other recreation activities in addition to the playground. Category C playgrounds are listed below.

<b>Category C Playgrounds</b>	<b>Suburb</b>
Dillon St Park	Paddington
Elms Reserve	Woollahra
Harbour View Park	Woollahra
Plumb Reserve	Woollahra

### Category D Playgrounds

Category D Playgrounds are small to very small playgrounds that have very little exposure, thus visitation would primarily consist of neighbouring residents. Additionally, this category includes those playgrounds that have a small amount of equipment, up to 3 pieces. These playgrounds are listed below.

<b>Category D Playgrounds</b>	<b>Suburb</b>
Bellevue Park	Bellevue Hill
Bradley Ave Reserve	Bellevue Hill
Cambridge St Reserve	Paddington
Cooks Paddock Reserve	Paddington
Soudan St Reserve	Paddington
Spring St Reserve	Paddington
Union St Playground	Paddington

# Development of a Strategy to improve Existing Playgrounds

In order to develop a program to improve the existing playgrounds within the municipality, a priority list is required and thus, a methodology determination of this list is required.

To develop this program each playground was assessed based on the following elements.

<u>Category</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Score</u>
Kico's Playground Rating	Extent of repairs required	Out of 20
Equipment and facilities within the playground	Poor to excellent	Out of 10
Surrounding landuses	Significance of surrounding uses and likeness to attract use	Out of 10
Demographic of the surrounding area	Age and number of children	Out of 10
Access to the playground	Accessibility to the playground, including parking, public transport etc	Out of 10
Visual assessment of the playground.	Assessment of the lo	Out of 12

Each element holds a series of scores that will combine to produce a total score for each playground. This score will become the basis for the priority listing for the development of a program for correction and update of the playgrounds. The aggregate score is formulated from adding the scores for each category to get a final score. This score then determines the playgrounds ranking.

The methodology for this assessment is located in Appendix 1.

## Results

The results of the above assessment produced the following priority list. A full breakdown of the result is located in Appendix 2. These rankings are used in the development of the program on page 6 and 7.

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Playground</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Playground</b>
<b>1</b>	Bellevue Park	<b>13</b>	Elms Reserve
<b>2</b>	Cooper Park	<b>14</b>	Union St Playground
<b>3</b>	Parsley Bay Reserve	<b>15</b>	Rose Bay Park
<b>4</b>	Lyne Park	<b>16</b>	Cambridge St Reserve
<b>5</b>	Robertson Park	<b>17</b>	Cooks Paddock Reserve
<b>6</b>	Plumb Reserve	<b>18</b>	Harbour View Park
<b>7</b>	Bradley Ave Reserve	<b>19</b>	Samuel Park
<b>8</b>	Steyne Park	<b>20</b>	Thornton Reserve
<b>9</b>	Holdsworth Community Centre	<b>21</b>	Dillon St Park
<b>10</b>	Yarranabee Park	<b>22</b>	Spring St Reserve
<b>11</b>	Woollahra Kindergarten	<b>23</b>	Soudan St Reserve
<b>12</b>	Trumper Park		

## Program

Three classifications of works have been developed to provide a schedule for all future works to all playgrounds across the municipality. The three classifications are as follows.

- Permanent Closure

- Temporary Closure for Major Repairs
- Repairs Required

Each playground is defined within one of these classifications. These classifications determine the scale of works that need to be completed to bring the playground up to a standard the will achieve compliance with Australian Standards and ensure child safety when utilising the play equipment.

Once placed within one of these classifications, the Playground Priority Listing, places in order the playground works schedule.

### Permanent Closure

This classification defines those playgrounds that are unable to sustain playground equipment within their boundaries without the design and or purchase of new equipment. These playgrounds are unable to continue to operate as they are unable to meet with Australian Standards for safety clearances and or have playground equipment deemed unsafe to continued use. This classification has the following playgrounds identified.

Bradley Street Reserve  
Cambridge Street Reserve

### Temporary Closure for Major Works.

All playgrounds that have been identified as requiring major works to ensure their compliance with Australian Standards are defined within this classification. Commonly, these playgrounds require installation of softfall, removal of damaged and non-compliant equipment and or the re-positioning of pieces of playground equipment. It is essential that a process of community consultation will be conducted to determine future usage of the playground. Identified in this classification area the following playgrounds.

Bellevue Park	Rose Bay Park
Plumb Reserve	Cooks Paddock
Elms Reserve	Spring Street Reserve
Union Street Reserve	

### Repairs Required

The final classification for works scheduling are those playgrounds identified with repairs required. These playgrounds generally have less major works required to ensure their compliance with Australian Standards. For example, these playgrounds have softfall however the current depth of softfall does not meet with the Australian Standard for maintenance of softfall levels. The playgrounds in this classification are as follows.

Cooper Park	Woollahra Kindergarten
Parsley Bay Reserve	Trumper Park
Lyne Park	Harbourview Park
Robertson Park	Thornton Playground
Steyne Park	Samuel Park
Yarranabee Park	Soudan Street Reserve
Holdsworth Community Centre	Dillon Street Reserve

A process of community consultation will be conducted to determine usage of the playground prior to any works commencing.

## Discussion of works required at each playground

The following section describes each playground with specific reference to the works that area required to ensure the playgrounds will comply with AS. These works are then identified within the Works Time Line.

PLAY-GROUND	RANK	Short Term (2002-2004)	Medium Term (2005-2007)	Long Term (2008 onwards)
Bellevue Park	1	Removal of the timber V walker and the 2 slide unit. Conduct consultation to determine community demand on playground facilities at this park. Develop concept following this consultation.		
Cooper Park	2	Redesign playground to accommodate current and possibly new equipment.		
Parsley Bay Reserve	3	Review softfall and ensure all repairs are completed. If deemed necessary replace the sand with wetpour rubber softfall.		
Lyne Park	4	Identify possible redevelopment of the playground to accommodate a larger playground. This will include a design, community consultation and development of a work plan.	Implementation of the design.	
Robertson Park	5	Redesign of the playground in conjunction with major works planned for the park.		
Plumb Reserve	6	Removal of the large swing set and rubber surface matting. Develop concept for the re-development of the playground, including replacement equipment, softfall etc.		
Bradley Ave Reserve	7	Removal of the timber unit. Conduct consultation to confirm community suggestions for the redevelopment of the park.		
Steyne Park	8		Redesign of the playground to ensure compliance with AS (this will include equipment repositioning, wetpour softfall and possibly new equipment). If possible, installation of new equipment to enlarge the playground.	
Yarranabee Park	9		Ensure all identified repairs are completed. Review the opportunity to replace the softfall with wet pour rubber.	
Holdsworth Community Centre	10		In liaison with Centre, develop project plan for the upgrade of the playground.	
Woollahra Kindy	11	Redesign of playground to be completed by Woollahra Kindergarten		
Trumper Park	12		Review the softfall and the position of the equipment to ensure AS compliance.	
Elms Reserve	13		Prepare design for installation of softfall, including possible relocation of equipment. Project to be completed 2003/4	
Union St Playground	14			Remove existing equipment (re AS). Redesign play including equipment type and positioning, softfall and surrounding landscape.
Rose Bay Park	15			Review existing equipment. Redesign play area including softfall and surrounding landscape.
Cambridge St Reserve	16	Removal of the swing, unit and rocker. Develop concept on the other possible uses for community comment. Implementation of new concept without playground equipment..		
Cooks Paddock Reserve	17			Review community usage of the playground. Upon this, develop as concept for upgrade of the park.
Harbour View Park	18			Review status of the playground and redesign if deemed necessary. Review the softfall sand and replace with softfall mulch.
Thornton Reserve	19	Correction of the border distances to the play equipment to ensure AS compliance. Replace sand softfall with the correct depth of playground mulch. Completing of all identified repairs.		
Samuel Park	20	Review community response regarding playground and develop a concept for redevelopment based on this.		
Soudan St Reserve	21			Review softfall and location of playground equipment. Redesign if deemed necessary.

PLAY-GROUND	RANK	Short Term (2002-2004)	Medium Term (2005-2007)	Long Term (2008 onwards)
Dillon St Park	22			Review softfall and location of equipment within the playground. If necessary, replace softfall with mulch.
Spring St Reserve	23	Removal of the timber unit. Conduct consultation to confirm community suggestions for the redevelopment of the park. Prepare scheme for the redevelopment of the park Implementation of a concept on the park. This concept may include very small playground elements.		

## New Playgrounds

Council will provide an ongoing program to the review and assessment of playground resources throughout the municipality. As a part of this, the assessment of new locations for playgrounds will continue. It is, however important to have a standard method of assessing the suitability of locations for the establishment of new playgrounds.

The suitability of a location will be determined through an assessment of the following.

1. Assessment of the demographic of the population with specific attention to the number of children aged 15 and under.
2. Community demand for playground facilities and type of playground the community wishes.
3. Surrounding playgrounds and other surrounding open space areas and their use.
4. Size of the proposed location and assessment of conflict with any other existing or proposed uses.
5. Characteristics of the location, including drainage, aspect, vegetation etc
6. Access to the location
7. Surrounding facilities, such as shops, schools, public transport etc.
8. Possible dangers with the installation of a playground at the location

Each of these items must be considered to ensure an appropriate playground is installed that will meet community needs and expectations.

### Possible New Playgrounds

There are opportunities with the municipality to develop new locations for playgrounds. This includes

- Christison Park
- North Cooper Park, (the area near the corner of Streatfield and Cooper Park Roads, Bellevue Hill).

Upon assessment of the suitability of any identified location for the installation of a playground, the project can be developed as a Capital Works Project.

# Appendix 1 - Assessment Methodology

## Kico Playground Rating

A part of Kico’s audit of the playgrounds, they issued each playground with rating. This figure is an assessment of the playground with specific attention to the following items.

Equipment Safety	Vandalism on equipment
Softfall	Wear and Tear
Safety Issues	Australian Standard compliance

This rating indicates the how the playground scores against the above six criteria.

## *Element Scoring*

	Score
Near Perfect Condition	2
Very small amount of superficial damage only	4
Minor repairs required that don’t include safety issues	6
Minor repairs required that include safety issues	8
Major repairs required	10
Major repairs that require prompt rectification	12

## Equipment and Facilities within the playground

The amount and quality of playground equipment and associated facilities such as seats, picnic tables and shady areas is the most important factor influencing the amount of use a playground will receive. If the level of equipment and facilities is high, people will overcome constraints such as limited parking and access. However, if the playground has poor facilities and the equipment if of sub-standard it will be unlikely that people from a wider area will utilise the playground.

Assessment in this element includes

Open space for bikes and ball games	Playground equipment variety
Park furniture	Drinking fountain
Toilets	Shade Structures
Picnic areas	

Consideration of the size of the playground is necessary, as the small Category D playgrounds will not have the associated facilities as the larger Category A and B playgrounds. The playground needs to be assessed with reference to the size of the playground.

## *Element Scoring*

	Score
Excellent	2 - 4
Good	5 – 8
Moderate	9 – 12
Basic	13 – 16
Limited / Poor	16 – 20



### Surrounding Land Uses

The use of a playground is likely to be significantly greater if it is located in association with facilities such as sportsfields, bushland areas with walking tracks, foreshore areas or near other facilities that attract adults with children, for example shops, tennis courts, schools etc. Within the municipality, the land uses and their significance is outlined in the table below.

Little Significance -	Primarily surrounded by residential area
Moderate Significance -	Within a residential area, schools near by
Significant -	Larger open space areas, sportsfields, schools
Very Significant -	Harbour foreshore, picnic facilities, shops, kindergartens, sports fields

### Element Scoring

Significant surrounding landuses	Score
None	2
Little significance	4
Moderate significance	6
Significant	8
Very significant	10

### Demographic of the surrounding area

The use and demand on playgrounds is influenced by the number of children and the density of living. The higher the density of living, the more demand placed on public open spaces and park settings. The Woollahra local government has a low percentage of children. In 1996 this number was calculated at 9.9% of the population of the ages between zero and 11. A further breakdown of the children demographic within the municipality is shown in the table below.

	<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Vaucluse Ward	0-4	558	5.3%
	5-11	919	8.7%
Bellevue Hill Ward	0-4	545	4.9%
	5-11	748	6.7%
Double Bay Ward	0-4	242	2.8%
	5-11	286	3.3%
Cooper Ward	0-4	288	3.5%
	5-11	411	4.9%
Paddington Ward	0-4	438	4.1%
	5-11	409	3.8%
<b>Municipal Total</b>		<b>4844</b>	<b>9.9%</b>

### *Element Scoring*

To determine the scoring for the number of children in addition to the density of living, each of these categories were scored out of five. These two scores were then combined to determine the score out of ten.

% Children	Score	Living Density	Score
Very Low	1	Very Low	1
Low	2	Low	2
Moderate	3	Moderate	3
High	4	High	4
Very High	5	Very High	5

*Example: The Paddington Ward has 847 children within its boundaries. When compared to the rest of the municipality, this is the 3<sup>rd</sup> most populated with children, thus was issued with a score of 4 in the age category. The density of living in the Paddington is very high, thus was given a 5 score in this category. These two score combined to produce a score of 9.*

Access to the playground

The access to a playground is a major factor influencing the amount of use the playground receives. A playground in an easily accessible location is more likely to be used than one that has limited exposure and access. Access can be determined in a number of ways, including the assessment of parking, distance from shops / public transport, exposure and physical barriers, such as steps and other pedestrian barriers.

*Element Scoring*

Access	Score
Very Poor	2
Poor	4
Reasonable	6
Good	8
Excellent	10

Visual assessment of the playground

The final criterion for the assessment of the playgrounds is the aesthetic of the location the playground is situated in. High aesthetic appeal comes from landscaped gardens and foreshore locations.

*Element Scoring*

Aesthetic	Score
Little	2
Some	4
Moderate	6
Significant	8
Very Significant	10

## Appendix 2 – Results of Assessment

Playground	Ranking	KICO Rating	Equipment and Facilities	Surrounding Landuses	Demographic	Access	Aesthetic	TOTAL
Bellevue Park	<b>1</b>	10	20	8	7	8	8	<b>61</b>
Cooper Park	<b>2</b>	10	13	10	8	8	8	<b>57</b>
Parsley Bay Reserve	<b>3</b>	8	13	10	7	8	10	<b>56</b>
Lyne Park	<b>4</b>	8	9	10	7	10	10	<b>54</b>
Robertson Park	<b>5</b>	8	8	10	7	10	10	<b>53</b>
Plumb Reserve	<b>6</b>	12	12	6	8	8	6	<b>52</b>
Bradley Ave Reserve	<b>7</b>	12	20	2	7	6	4	<b>51</b>
Steyne Park	<b>8</b>	8	8	10	6	8	10	<b>50</b>
Holdsworth Community Centre	<b>9</b>	8	4	10	8	10	10	<b>50</b>
Yarranabee Park	<b>10</b>	12	2	10	6	8	10	<b>48</b>
Woollahra Kindergarten	<b>11</b>	8	2	10	6	8	10	<b>44</b>
Trumper Park	<b>12</b>	10	3	8	6	8	8	<b>43</b>
Elms Reserve	<b>13</b>	12	12	2	8	2	6	<b>42</b>
Union St Playground	<b>14</b>	12	6	6	9	6	2	<b>41</b>
Rose Bay Park	<b>15</b>	10	5	8	6	4	8	<b>41</b>
Cambridge St Reserve	<b>16</b>	12	10	2	9	4	4	<b>41</b>
Cooks Paddock Reserve	<b>17</b>	10	16	2	9	2	2	<b>41</b>
Harbour View Park	<b>18</b>	8	8	6	8	4	6	<b>40</b>
Samuel Park	<b>19</b>	10	5	6	7	6	6	<b>40</b>
Thornton Reserve	<b>20</b>	8	2	8	7	6	8	<b>39</b>
Dillon St Park	<b>21</b>	8	9	2	7	6	6	<b>38</b>
Spring St Reserve	<b>22</b>	12	4	2	9	2	2	<b>31</b>
Soudan St Reserve	<b>23</b>	8	4	4	9	2	2	<b>29</b>