



**WOOLLAHRA PLAY:**  
Play Space Strategy  
for Woollahra Council



Adopted by Council 24 July 2023

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Woollahra Council acknowledges the Gadigal and Birrabirragal people who are the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



# Contents

---

## Section One: Introduction

1.1	Woollahra Play; Aims and Objectives .....	4
1.2	Within the Planning Context .....	4
1.3	Woollahra demographic .....	7

## Section Two: Understanding Play (Prepared by 180SLS)

2.1	The Benefits of Play .....	8
2.2	Play Theory .....	9
2.3	Planning for Different Needs .....	10
2.4	Play Space Hierarchy .....	11
2.5	Play Space Components .....	13
2.6	Play Space Design .....	14
	2.6.1 Local Play Spaces .....	14
	2.6.2 Neighbourhood Play Space .....	14
	2.6.3 District Play Space .....	15
	2.6.4 Regional Play Spaces .....	15
2.7	Additional Design Elements .....	15
	2.7.1 Shade .....	16
	2.7.2 Fencing .....	16
	2.7.3 Paths .....	16
	2.7.4 Softfall .....	16
	2.7.5 Nature Play .....	17
	2.7.6 Seating and Tables .....	17
	2.7.7 Ancillary Services .....	17
2.8	Play Space Trends .....	17

## Section Three: An Overview of Play in Woollahra (Prepared by 180SLS and Woollahra Council)

3.1	Supply .....	18
	3.1.1 Benchmarking .....	20
	3.1.2 Audit .....	21
3.2	Distribution .....	25

## Four: What the Community Thinks (Prepared by 180SLS)

4.1	Play Space Use .....	31
4.2	Popular Play Spaces .....	31
4.3	Importance Performance Analysis .....	32
4.4	Park User Survey 2017 .....	33

## Section Five: Strategic Response

5.1	Need for Additional Play Spaces .....	35
5.2	Need to Maintain Play Spaces .....	37
5.3	Community Engagement in Play Spaces .....	37
5.4	Action Plan: .....	37

# Section One: Introduction

Woollahra Play, the play strategy for Woollahra Council, is prepared in partnership between Council and consultant 180 Sports Leisure Solutions (180SLS). The strategy is presented through five sections; Setting the scene; Details of Play; An overview of play provision in the local government area (LGA); Review of the community engagement; And a strategic response to delivery of play. 180SLS provided content for chapters two, three and four. This document should be read in conjunction with Council's open space plans of management and Recreation Strategy.

## 1.1 Woollahra Play; Aims and Objectives

The strategy aims to provide strategic direction for Council for the next 10 years in regards to play provision across the LGA. This document will work alongside relevant council, state government, and federal government documents to establish a work plan to meet the needs of the community. This document will replace the 2002 Playground strategy, and will include reference to the Council endorsed Playfix reporting.

This report aims to provide the following:

- An audit of all current playground equipment and relevant outdoor recreation facilities across all Woollahra parks and public open space
- Identification of gaps in the provision of facilities per age group
- Identification of land suitable for siting new playgrounds or play elements if required
- Specific consideration of small-scale play installations particularly in more densely populated suburbs
- A staged process to deliver the strategy

## 1.2 Within the Planning Context

The plan is a supporting document of several strategic local, state and federal planning documents.

This includes the Woollahra Council Community Strategic Plan (Woollahra 2032) as outlined under each relevant theme below:

### Environmental Strategies

- Protecting our environment
- Sustainable use of resources

### Social Strategies

- A connected, harmonious and engaged community for all ages and abilities
- A supported, enabled and resilient community
- A creative and vibrant community
- Well planned neighbourhoods

### Economic Strategies

- Liveable places
- Getting around
- Community focussed economic development

### Civic Leadership Strategies

- Well planned neighbourhoods
- Working together
- A well managed Council

In addition, play spaces make up part of the social and cultural fabric of a community. The play strategy aims to complement the Woollahra Social & Cultural Plan 2018-2030. The plan recognises that parks and community facilities for social activities are important for community gatherings and particularly important in areas with medium to high density (a characteristic of much of the LGA).

Woollahra's network of social infrastructure and services support individuals, groups and families, including vulnerable people, and plays a significant role in encouraging community connectedness and enhancing quality of life for all ages and abilities.

Woollahra Social & Cultural Plan 2018-2030.

Council's Draft Woollahra Play strategy is planned to be publicly exhibited concurrently with the draft Recreation Strategy and the Crown land plans of management.

Council's draft Community lands plans of management are planned to be updated in consultation with the community in future years.

### **Greater Sydney Commission: Eastern City District Plan**

Woollahra LGA, similar to other LGAs in the Eastern City District and Greater Sydney, has a deficiency of open space, from a planning perspective, with relatively few opportunities to increase the quantity. Consistent with the open space vision for the Eastern City District, Council needs to place greater emphasis on improving the quality and distribution of its open space network, recreation and sporting facilities.

Woollahra's highly established neighbourhoods allow limited opportunities to increase the quantity of public open space within the LGA for a number reasons, including: high land values

which make the acquisition of land for open space cost prohibitive; relatively low revenue from development contributions, which is a key source of funding for land acquisitions in other council areas; and the relatively steep topography of the land, making land very expensive to embellish for sizeable, good quality, useful open space. As a result of these significant constraints to the creation of new open space, Council's focus should be on enhancing the quality and usability of the existing open space network.

The Woollahra Play strategy will support the Greater Sydney Commission's Eastern City District Plan, with reference to planning priority E18: Delivering high quality open space.

Objective 31 – public open space is accessible, protected and enhanced.

Public open space is a form of green infrastructure that enhances the character of the Eastern City District's neighbourhoods, supports healthy and active lifestyles and brings communities together. As the District grows, providing open space areas for recreation, sport and social activity, as well as establishing physical links that support social networks and create a sense of community, will become increasingly important.

The key considerations for planning open space within the Eastern City District are quality, quantity and distribution. There will be relatively few opportunities to increase the quantity of public open space, and therefore greater emphasis will be needed on improving the quality and distribution of open space, including sporting facilities

(pg 112 of Eastern City District Plan)

The Premier of NSW has also included reference to public open spaces in the Premier’s Priorities.

### Premier’s Priorities Greener Public Spaces

Goal: Increase the proportion of homes in urban areas within 10 minutes’ walk of quality green, open and public space by 10 per cent by 2023.

The Woollahra Play Strategy will work towards the aim of walkable, connected and accessible public spaces as per the Priorities, acknowledging that they promote healthier lifestyles and bring people together. As per the priorities statement, “network of welcoming and connected public spaces will create communities where people love to live.”

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/premiers-priorities/greener-public-spaces>

### Everyone Can Play

Ensuring that play areas are open and accessible by all members of the community is key to establishing quality community spaces. Woollahra Council supports the use of advice from the NSW Government’s Everyone Can Play guidelines to promote inclusive features across new and existing play spaces.

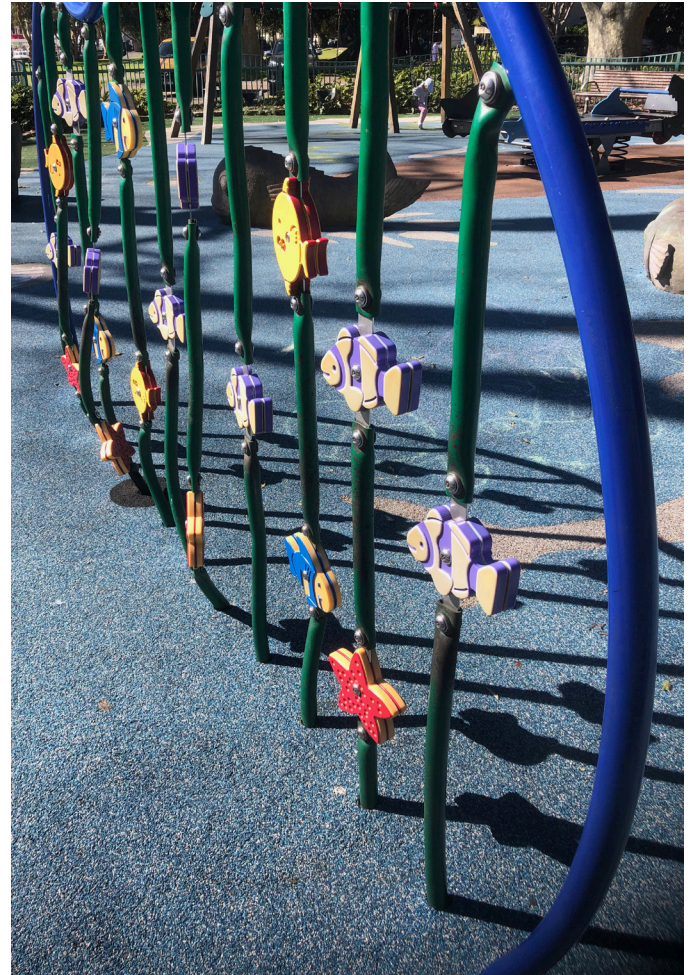
Playspaces exist at the heart of our neighbourhoods and should cater for everyone – young and old, families and carers, and people of all abilities.

Playspaces should be welcoming and comfortable, easy to navigate and interesting.

They should offer a range of physical challenges, a variety of landscape settings and provide opportunities to connect with others.

(Everyone Can Play Guidelines)

These broader planning documents should be considered throughout the delivery of this strategy.



*Rushcutters Bay Park*

### 1.3 Woollahra Demographics

The population of Woollahra Local Government Area is 53,891 (ABS, ERP 2021), across 12sq km, giving a population density of 44.90 people per hectare. Paddington is one of the most densely populated suburbs with 86.2 people per hectare. The number of households with children is 24%.

Within the wider context, neighbouring council of Waverley (75 people per hectare) and City of Sydney (80.4 people per hectare), are two of the highest density local government areas in Australia. This highlights the pressure on open space amongst the Eastern District of Sydney.

Between 2006 and 2011, Woollahra experienced a baby boom, the next 4 years then saw a decline in children aged 0-4 years old. Woollahra LGA has a lower portion of these young people compared to Greater Sydney (3.5% compared to 6%) and a lower portion of primary schoolers aged 5-11years old (7.5% to 8.8%). There is a similar portion of secondary schoolers aged 12-17yrs old. Woollahra has a greater portion of 24-34yr olds and a higher portion of adults aged over 60 years old.

Figure 1 Woollahra Population Overview 2021 (%)

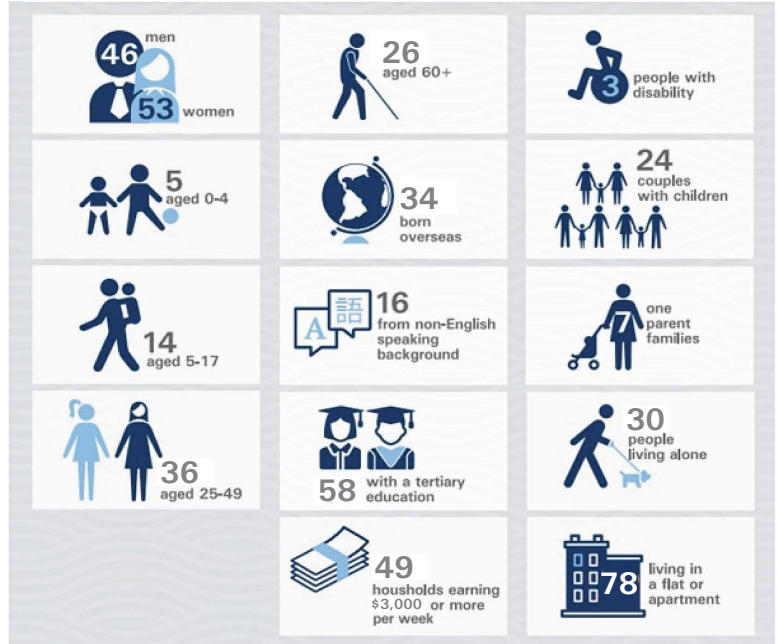
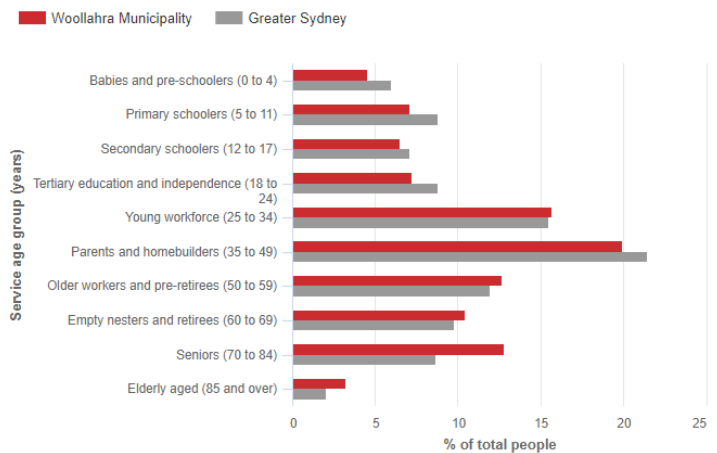


Figure 2 Woollahra Age Profile 2021



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Population and Housing, 2021* (Usual residence data). Compiled and presented in profile id by [id](#) (informed decisions).



Steyne Park

# Section Two: Understanding Play

(Prepared by 180SLS)

In order to develop a playspace strategy, it is important to understand the benefits and role play has in the lives of children, their families and the broader community. Not only will this assist Council in understanding the role it could and should play, but the design and placement of assets will be guided through a range of opportunities rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

## 2.1 The Benefits of Play

Research<sup>1</sup> shows that play has many benefits for children, including:

- increasing their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect
- improving and maintain their physical and mental health
- giving them the opportunity to socialise with other children
- allowing them to increase their confidence through developing new skills
- promoting their imagination, independence and creativity
- offering opportunities for all abilities and backgrounds to play together
- providing opportunities for developing social skills and learning
- building resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations
- providing opportunities to learn about the environment and wider community.

<sup>1</sup> Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria (Now Play Australia) Play area development policy for local government in Victoria

Evidence also supports wider benefits of play to include:

- parents feeling secure knowing their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves
- families benefit from healthier, happier children
- play services are frequently seen as a focal point for communities
- offers opportunities for social interaction for the wider community and supports the development of a greater sense of community spirit and cohesion
- public outside spaces have an important role in the everyday lives of children and young people, especially as a place for meeting friends
- parks and other green spaces are popular with adults taking young children out to play and for older children to spend time together.



*Parsley Bay Reserve*



## 2.2 Play Theory

It is also widely acknowledged and researched that play has a significant impact on the social, physical and mental development of the child. Play theory in general identifies three broad categories of play behaviour that apply across all ages but the way they are interpreted by each age group varies with some type of play assuming greater importance at particular stages of child development.

- **Cognitive Play** includes those activities that challenge the intellect of the child and can include games of strategy, exploration, observation or those that use and develop language. Council playgrounds can develop cognitive behaviour through natural areas for exploration and observation of living things; spaces and materials for outdoor games such as hopscotch and hide and seek and materials and tools for use in sand and water settings. Other concepts can include spaces for quiet activities such as reading, contemplation and nature observation of complex spaces or structures, which challenge the user's perceptual skills.



Parsley Bay Reserve

- **Social Play** can be found both by using existing physical equipment and through learning and exploring with friends in the natural environment. Whilst the latter have not been traditionally provided for in the public domain, councils are beginning to design play spaces through appropriate landscaping including sand, water, plants, trees and sculptures etc. to enhance natural play. Some small-group activities such as hopscotch, some ball games and the traditional rhyming and running games require small spaces, changes in level, possibly firm surfaces, semi-enclosure, objects as targets and focal points, and durable planting or other elements, which may be used in the course of a game.
- **Physical Play** is also often referred to as gross motor activity and can include running, hanging, climbing, experiencing height, agility/gymnastic activities, sliding, jumping, balancing, swinging, crawling, bouncing, spinning, rocking, ball games, skipping etc.

These activities are generally more 'active' and therefore adequate space is required in a suitable environment where other users will not be disturbed. Some of these activities are well provided for by traditional play equipment although others are more dependent upon the size and particular qualities of spaces or other elements.

## 2.3 Planning for Different Needs

- Given the broad categories of play theory, play spaces need to include a number of components that encourage cognitive, social, and physical elements. However, not all play spaces will include all of these elements as the classification (to be discussed in the following section) will offer differing play experiences and target different users. That is, play spaces can and should be designed for a number of ages to include:
- **Toddlers (ages 0-3):** Simple settings and small scaled and detailed environments with friendly surfaces and a familiar adult close by. These age groups cannot perceive danger and must be protected from hazards. Play areas for young children must be sited away from traffic.
- **Pre-Schoolers (ages 4-6):** The ages from three to six years cover a wide range of development in children. Co-ordination and physical skill development is relatively proficient by the age of 5 years and children of this age need to practice and hone skills such as climbing, running, agility skills, skipping, and ball play.
- **Juniors (ages 7-11):** Older children may use play equipment as incidental props in their group games. For example, play structures may be used as part of obstacle courses, part of chasing and hiding games, as a lookout or a refuge; as a meeting and socialising place for after school activities or as a 'base' for group activities.
- **Teenagers (ages 12 +):** Areas for 'play' for teenagers needs to be carefully planned and designed to meet the broader needs of this group. It also requires extensive community consultation to determine the right location and facilities for this play. While it is acknowledged young people will use open space for a number of uses including scootering/skating and bike riding, unstructured sport or just 'hanging out' with friends etc., the location areas needs to be carefully managed to avoid potential conflicts of use with younger children and their carers while ensuring a sense of ownership by young people.
- **Adults:** Adults should not be excluded from using playgrounds, and equipment needs to be designed and developed for use by this group, i.e. the provision of swing seats and rockers designed with enough space for use by adults is a way of encouraging adults to use park facilities with their children. Naturally, provision for adults at the exclusion of children is not the intention, but design standards now consider loadings and structural requirements to withstand use by adults.
- **Inclusivity:** An inclusive play space provides access to a variety of play experiences where everyone can engage and play together. This is not to say that every item of play equipment needs to be fully inclusive, but consideration should be given to access and inclusion in a number of play spaces across a Local Government Authority (LGA).

The NSW Governments 'Everyone can Play' guide<sup>2</sup> provides a comprehensive overview of its commitment to planning and providing such facilities and includes tools for Councils to consider when planning and developing inclusive play spaces in the municipalities. The resource should be used globally when planning all play spaces

<sup>2</sup> Everyone Can Play; Lets Create Inclusive Play spaces; Department of Planning and Environment; NSW Government NSW; July 2018.

## 2.4 Play Space Hierarchy

Play spaces generally have a classification which aligns with national approaches to open space to include:

**Local:** Normally small in size (approx 0.1 – 0.2ha) and offering passive and low-key recreation opportunities such as seating and landscaping, local play spaces would be small in nature and would target toddlers and/or pre-schoolers (0-3 and 4-6-year olds). Equipment would normally include basic swing and slide aspects and minor landscaping.

**Neighbourhood:** Targeting a broader demographic catchment and therefore (normally) located on larger parcels of land, neighbourhood play spaces would include equipment for toddlers to juniors and may include assets such as seating, shade, bins and picnic tables.

**District:** Usually attracting a wider catchment and located on larger parcels of land also used for other activities such as sport or other forms of recreation, these play spaces offer a wider variety of play 'choice' from toddler – senior and in some instance's youth. District level facilities normally include seating, shading, shelter and end of trip facilities such as water fountains and bicycle racks for example. Accessible play spaces are often considered in District level classifications or higher.

**Regional:** These types of facilities attract visitation from outside of a councils' boundary and are generally those places where people tend to stay longer and would therefore require facilities and services such as toilets, water, shelter and shade. The play spaces themselves often offer a unique aspect or feature which encourages use, whether this be a special feature, larger open spaces, or just the range of play opportunities.

**Definition of Play space:** Definition of Play space: A playspace is more than just equipment. It is the entire setting used and enjoyed as part of the play experience (from *Everyone Can Play*, Department of Planning and Environment, 2019).



Rushcutters Bay Park



**Figure 3:** Play space Development Model (Reference 180SLS)

## 2.5 Play Space Components

To better understand the hierarchy of play spaces, a 'play space development model' (PDM) has been developed that can be adopted as a guide for councils when planning and developing play spaces<sup>3</sup>.

The concept (Figure 3) is widely recognised as a model to illustrate the elementary factors required to establish an area specifically for play and includes five aspects of:

### 1. Play Equipment

Play equipment has historically been the dominant factor in playground provision. However, play equipment should complement rather than replace the 'play space' and should align with the intended user and classification of the park. Equipment suitable and interesting to a toddler will be vastly different from equipment for a 'senior' child and generally speaking the more opportunities provided tends to increase the 'classification' of the play space itself.

### 2. Imaginative and Creative Area

This is often the most neglected aspect of play provision and it requires sensitivity to develop possibilities. Some areas however, simply need to be left in their natural state whereby others can be designed using the natural environment to encourage exploration and imagination.

Nature play is becoming popular across Australia with many councils understanding and realising its importance and investing in 'nature play' initiatives, branding and programming. In turn this encourages more children into the outdoors and away from some forms of technology that has negative impact on a child's physical development.

As such, many local authorities are designing play spaces to encourage the use and exploration of the natural environment and promoting nature play to enhance cognitive, social and physical development.

### 3. Unstructured Area

This is an open space area that should not be confused with formal sport requirements and in essence will encourage and allow activities to develop spontaneously among children present at the time. Traditionally these areas appeal to older children and are often used as a meeting place/ socialising area or for informal ball games such as kick to kick, basketball, netball rings, scooter and skate, etc.

### 4. Adult/Family Area

Adults accompanying children to play areas require a comfortable area where they can passively monitor children whilst socialising with other carers or parents. The inclusion of items such as seating, shading, BBQ's, shelters, water etc., all of which may result in longer periods of use by families and increased presence increasing passive surveillance and safety.

### 5. Special Features

This is an optional component which may be included in the play space and although these are not essential, could include open air theatres, rotundas, water features, artwork or other natural or built features which would attract greater use, visitation and general interest.

Generally speaking, the more components of the PDM a play space has, the higher its classification. A local play space for example may be situated on a small block of land and include only a swing and a slide, whereby a regional play space would generally include all components of the PDM and include bespoke play areas and unique opportunities that would attract visitation from far and wide.

---

<sup>3</sup> South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport: Playground Manual Guidelines; March 1998 revised June 2007

---

## 2.6 Play Space Design

Play space design is largely reflected in their hierarchy in that the higher the level, the more components a space would have by way of equipment and complementary design elements. Whilst not prescriptive, the following provides an overview and the common elements within each.

### 2.6.1 Local Play Spaces

This level of play space is ideally located within a collector district area whereby walking to a destination up to 500 metres would be acceptable for most if not all ages and abilities. Local play space boundaries are within physical barriers (such as busy roads, railway lines etc) which can prevent easy access to parks and reserves outside of this area for carers and their children. Therefore, such parks should primarily cater for younger children's needs (toddlers and juniors) and may also be used incidentally i.e. en-route to or from a destination such as shops, schools, or from public transport and in some instances as physical links to other open space systems. Alternatively, such play spaces may be used deliberately as a need for low impact play and exploration for young children under the guidance of adult supervision.

#### Local Play Space Components

Play spaces in a local setting will primarily be targeted at younger children (0-6) due to the proximity to the home and the understanding that older children (7-12) can and may travel greater distances either on foot or bike with their parents or carers. However, play opportunities should include aspects of cognitive, social and physical play and include approximately 3-5 pieces of play equipment as a suggestion. With this, not all local play spaces need to comprise formal play equipment

areas and could include an imaginative (natural) play area to ensure provision is complemented and not duplicated within short distances of each play space i.e. each should (where possible) offer its own setting with a different set of opportunities from the parks nearby. It is such that local play spaces include complementary components of:

- Play Equipment Area (3-5 pieces)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)

It must be noted that not all Local play spaces would include both of the above, but these elements developed in conjunction with similar parks nearby, i.e. planning should ensure play spaces are complemented and not duplicated within a close proximity to each other.

### 2.6.2 Neighbourhood Play Space

Neighbourhood play spaces consider broader 'suburbs' and thus the need to provide for a more diverse range of opportunities and offer a wider range of opportunity for children primarily in the 4-12 age groups (pre-schoolers and juniors) but should also include equipment for toddlers. When discussing neighbourhood play spaces, it is assumed that:

- People will travel further to use the park and therefore tend to do so deliberately rather than incidentally.
- Generally located within each suburb and therefore facilities such as toilets may not be required.
- Would be no more than approximately 1-2 kilometres from homes.

---

## Neighbourhood Play Space Components

Neighbourhood play spaces are designed to cater for the needs of more than one user group, and for more than one type of activity. Toddler, junior and senior play areas will be provided and sited around picnic areas/shelters and tables. Neighbourhood play spaces might be set along an urban waterway or natural settings and key components can therefore include:

- Play Equipment Area (5 pieces +) for age groups 0-12 in secured areas and where possible away from main roads and
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non-Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area
- Bins

### 2.6.3 District Play Space

The third level in the hierarchy is the District play space. District Parks tend to serve wider catchments and sited where special features (natural or manmade) such as a water body, a cluster of sporting facilities, civic areas, or historic site are located. In discussing this classification, it is assumed that visitors are offered greater recreation opportunities and therefore stay longer at the 'park'. As such, amenities such as water, car parking, shade, toilets, BBQ's and rubbish bins etc may all be warranted.

Other key aspects of District play spaces include a safe (often fenced) play area for young children and areas where parents and carers can meet and socialise in a safe environment. Children's birthday parties are common occurrences in such parks and parents can prepare BBQ's in areas with good surveillance of play equipment which can have an additional safeguard of fencing to prevent children from leaving the play space.

District level open space can also be used for specific activities such as youth recreation, sporting

facilities, dog parks or adult exercise areas whereby the land parcel is designed to be used for a number of 'specific' activities normally identified in a separate recreation, leisure or open space strategy.

## District Play Space Components

When discussing the play space component of District level parks, it is assumed that the following components would be provided:

- Play Equipment Area for all age groups (often fenced or secured in areas of high safety concern such as main roads)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non-Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area

### 2.6.4 Regional Play Spaces

Regional play spaces are similar to the District classification but with additional components that would attract both local and regional visitors. This may be in the form of an adventure playground, water park, or unique aspect such as additional space for larger community events such as carnivals and concerts.

Regional play spaces are often well landscaped, have larger areas of green space for informal play and/or use the natural landscape to offer a unique experience and are often bespoke in design and aligned with a theme or an array of experiences and opportunities for the whole family.

## 2.7 Additional Design Elements

While the highlighted play space classifications align themselves with the Play space Development Model, this does not consider other design concepts which could be included within all play spaces and parks. These will obviously vary between parks but could include some or all of the following additional design elements.

### 2.7.1 Shade

Shade, particularly during summer months is vital. Natural shade from tree canopy is highly desirable however, built shade in the form of pergolas or shelters may be more appropriate at times. Should natural shading be available, tree management and maintenance need to be carried out regularly to reduce the potential for falling limbs and branches.

### 2.7.2 Fencing

Fencing is often highly desirable in areas where adults use open space with young children. Fencing should not be a complete safeguard to children's safety and the ultimate onus is always on the parent or carer to ensure the safety of the child. In some instances, a barrier between the play area and potential dangers offer a sense of security when play is located to areas such as main roads, traffic, waterways or dog exercise areas. Consideration for fencing should be given to those play spaces that are used for larger social gatherings, or those that have obvious physical dangers to children or other park users.

### 2.7.3 Paths

Paths open up otherwise inaccessible places, and the desirability of a path cutting through an area must be carefully assessed and considered for two purposes of:

#### Functional Paths

Paths with a main purpose of efficient circulation of people between two or more points. These paths may also accommodate vehicles for park maintenance.

#### Recreational Paths

These are not necessarily the quickest way between points but may be sited to pass through attractive or interesting areas, simply for the pleasure of the journey.

### 2.7.4 Softfall

There are Australian Standards for play design and management, one of which relates specifically to softfall<sup>4</sup>. All playground equipment with a fall height 600mm or more must have an 'impact attenuating' surface beneath to minimise serious head or other injuries in the event of falls.

Whilst no one material has proven to be the best product for impact attenuating surfacing, consideration of factors such as environmental conditions, cost and community preference may be applied when selecting a material. The two main types of playground surfacing products are loose fill and solid materials.

#### Loose Fill

Loose fill includes products such as bark mulch, wood chips, wood fibre, rubber mulch, grape seed and sand and these products are generally less expensive than solid materials to install but require regular maintenance and top ups. This surface can also be less inclusive in regards to those requiring mobility aids.

#### Solid Fill

Solid Materials include products such as synthetic grass, rubber tiles and wet pour rubber. The impact attenuating qualities of solid materials varies according to the thickness of the layer and the composition of the material.

Solid materials can work well in combination with loose fill products providing a fixed surface beneath heavy traffic areas such as under swings and at the run-out (base) of slides.

This reduces both the ongoing costs and labour to replenish the loose fill, as required. This surface is more inclusive than loose fill in regards to access with mobility aid and defining areas through different colours.

---

<sup>4</sup> AS 4422/2016 – Playground surfacing, Statewide Best Practice Manual for Playgrounds



## 2.7.5 Nature Play

Nature play is making a resurgence as local authorities are recognising the importance of promoting play through interaction with the natural environment. Traditionally this has been difficult given the 'lack of standards for 'nature', but increasingly many are now introducing natural areas into playground designs to encourage cognitive, social and physical development of the child.

Many good examples are now emerging across Australia whereby the use of the landscape is enhanced to create natural areas such as creek beds, sand pits, tree logs and areas for exploration. Consideration should be given to smaller local, less well developed areas and the notion that a child will play where equipment is not present and therefore a local open space that is well designed and managed, can in itself be an excellent opportunity to promote and develop nature play.

## 2.7.6 Seating and Tables

Seating is an important way of encouraging adults to stay while their children play, as well as providing for the elderly and less mobile. Seating should be available in winter sun and summer shade. A range of seating options are available to cater for more than one group at a time and to facilitate either solitude or interaction, depending upon the users wishes.

A diverse range of seating is thus more likely to satisfy the needs of a diverse range of users and should be available in all parks and play spaces (natural or manmade). Accessible park furniture should always be considered, where feasible.

## 2.7.7 Ancillary Services

Ancillary services such as toilets, barbeques, drinking water, lighting, bike racks and formalised car parking for example may all be considered important in destinations where people travel further to and therefore tend to stay longer.

## 2.8 Play Space Trends

Play and understanding its importance has come a long way in recent years with many local authorities now developing strategies that not only assess play spaces as assets that need to be managed, but also their relevance in design and the changing needs of a child as they grow and develop.

To this end, the traditional play space equipment by way of slide, swings, and rockers whilst still important and valued by the community, are considered as only one component of the play spectrum.

Other design elements are therefore being introduced to encourage an array of learning and development opportunities including the use of the natural environment (nature play), creative landscaping, and additional features that promote a sense of belonging and place to a park.

Play spaces are also considered as not only areas for children, but also the whole community and therefore now include aspects for adults and carers such as picnic areas, shade and shelter and end of trip facilities such as drinking fountains, bike racks, paths and trails, carparks.

Play standards have allowed equipment to be designed and developed to include and consider adult use and weight bearing to enable social interaction and play between children.

Additionally, the introduction of fitness equipment and casual sports play is also becoming increasingly popular and offers a unique element to many parks and play spaces. These are often located as standalone areas separate from children's play spaces.



# Section Three: An Overview of Play in Woollahra

(Prepared by 180SLS and Woollahra Council)

The following provides an overview of play spaces in Woollahra and assesses in terms of the overall supply, access and distribution

## 3.1 Supply

In 2021 there were 24 Council owned play spaces and 1 park (Christison Park) with unstructured and active play opportunities in Woollahra (Fig 4).

A clustering of play is predominantly in the Woollahra and Paddington areas (Fig 5) highlighting a high supply of play spaces in these areas. However, whilst provision may be good, the standard and experience should also be considered, and this is discussed further in the following pages.

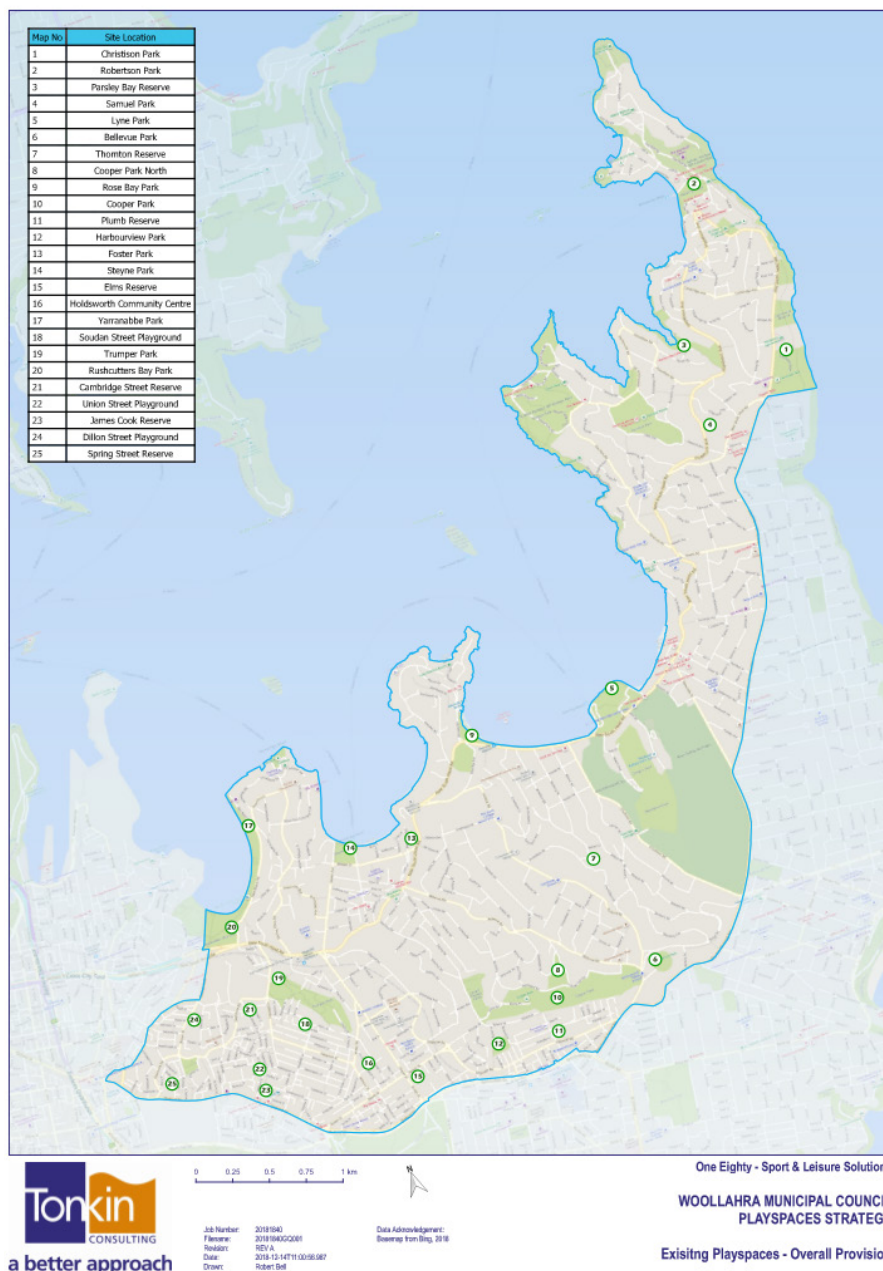


Figure 4 - Play spaces in Woollahra LGA

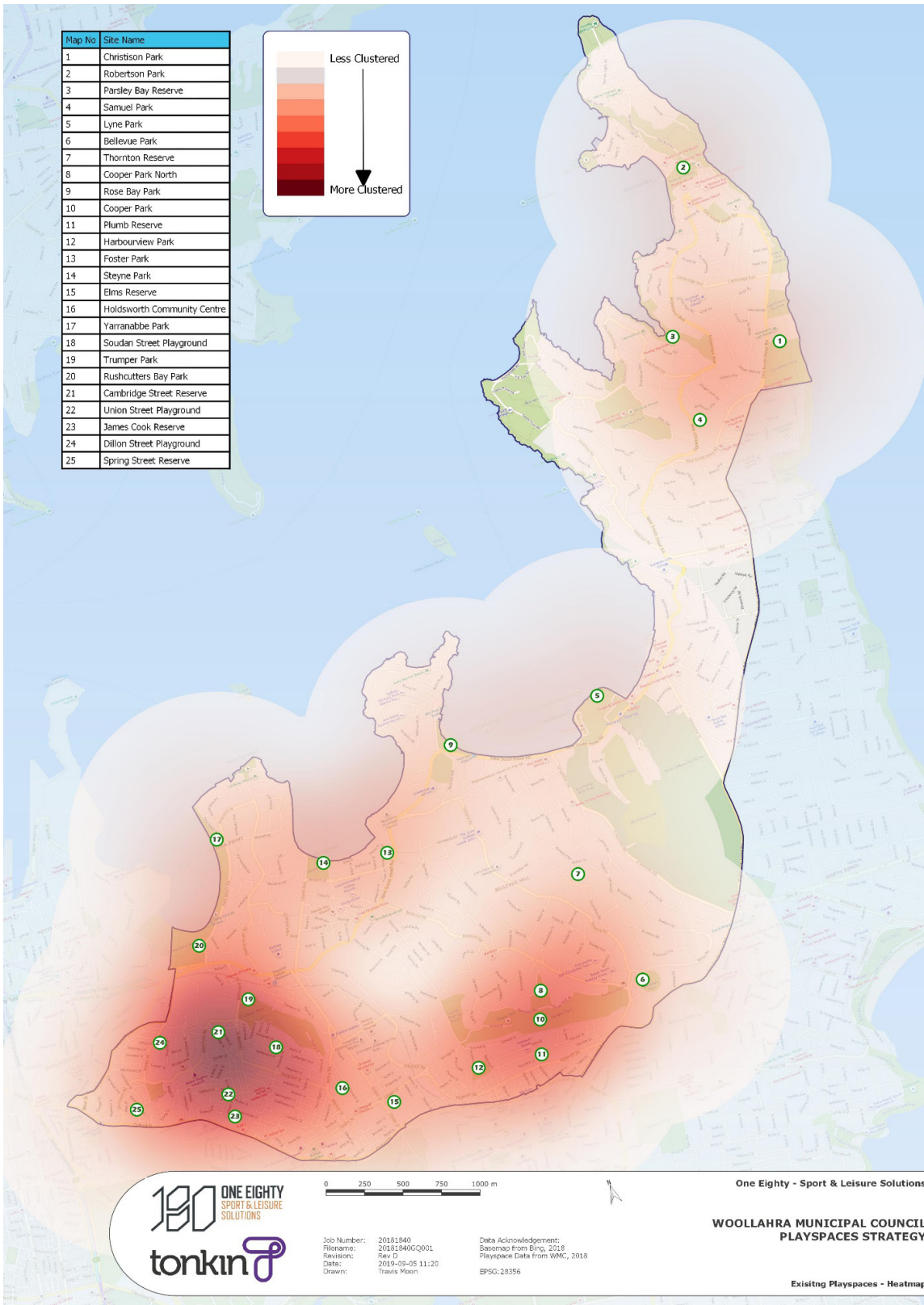


Figure 5 - Density of play spaces in Woollahra LGA

### 3.1.1 Benchmarking

For the purpose of this report, an assessment of five inner city neighbouring municipalities of Sydney, Waverley, Randwick, Bayside and the Inner West was undertaken with each Council's total number of play spaces assessed against its population<sup>5</sup>. The population and play spaces of Woollahra was then added to provide a mean number (benchmark) of play spaces per 1000 people. The same principle was then applied to the 0-14 age cohort as this group is the primary target users of play spaces (Table 1).

Whilst there is no one universally agreed standard for the provision of play spaces, a ratio of approximately 1-1500 people is suggested. As can be seen from the table, the mean in the region is 1-896 people or 1 play space for every 244 children aged between 0 and 14. Woollahra is second poorest by way of supply per child, with Randwick the worst and the City of Sydney the best.

In order for Woollahra to be on par with the regional average, it would be required to develop approximately 8 additional play spaces to reach the benchmark.

<sup>5</sup> ABS Census of Housing and Population 2021, extracted from Profile ID

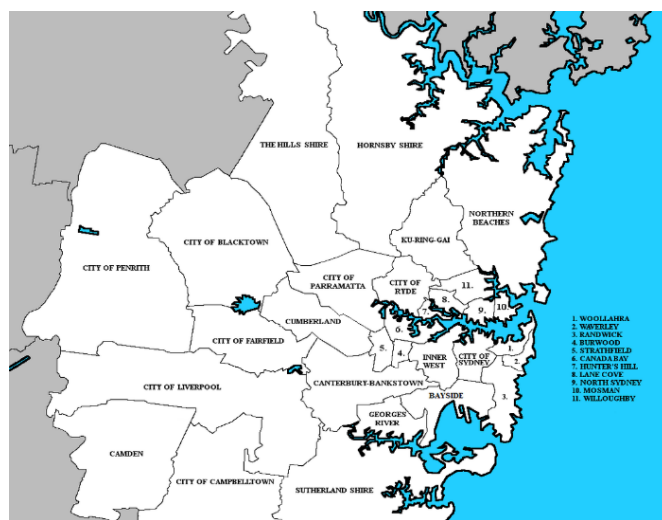


Figure 6

Council	Total Population	Play spaces	Number of people per play space	Total Population of Children 0-14	Number of children 0-14 yrs per play space
City of Sydney	214,851	100	2148	16,132	161
Waverley	69,388	40	1734	10,823	271
Randwick	135,275	63	2147	20,665	328
Bayside	176,061	130	1354	26,487	204
InnerWest Council	183,772	100	1837	26,705	267
<b>Woollahra</b>	<b>53,891</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2155</b>	<b>7,953</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>138,873</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>1,896</b>	<b>18,128</b>	<b>239</b>

Table 1: Play space Benchmarking Profile ID 2021 Census

### 3.1.2 Audit

The 25 play spaces have been ‘audited’ to assess their condition and classification with the following being a summary of the audit.

The following Audit will outline the classification of the play space, the current age of the play space, the amenities, and current brief description.

L = Local (target 0-6); N = Neighbourhood (target 0-12); D = District (target all ages); R = Regional (target all ages).  
 Toddlers = 0-3, Pre-schoolers = 4-6, Juniors = 7-11, Teenagers = 12+.

#### Audit table (prepared by Woollahra Council)

Play Space	Classification in hierarchy and age catering for	Amenities	Current	Year of Construction
1. Christison Park (Vaucluse)	District - (Juniors, Teenagers)	Toilets, drinking fountain, seating, lighting for multi courts and 1 sportsfield.	No play equipment (Clarke Reserve playground, within Waverley Council area, is adjacent to the southern end of the park). Unstructured play opportunities i.e. two new multi-purpose hard courts. Fitness equipment both static and dynamic, allowing casual play and workouts. Fitness station with dynamic equipment will be replaced with new equipment in June 2021.	Hard courts – 2020 Fitness stations – between 1991-2021
2. Robertson Park (Watsons Bay)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Toilets, seating, shade, next to large open park and good public transport options (ferry and bus), play space is fenced.	Neighbourhood play space, with both playground and softfall in good condition. Most equipment designed for young children with limited opportunity for older childrens play. Good access to public toilets and proximity to public transport including ferry.	2006
3. Parsley Bay Reserve (Vaucluse)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Toilets, bubbler, seating, natural shade, Café within park	Newly designed play space that has inclusive elements for a range of abilities and ages. The space acknowledges historical value through play elements (explorer boat) and several sculpture elements across the reserve. The play space is within bushland and close to beach, this site provides iconic setting. Limited Parking. Requires relocation of existing toilet block to better service the park and playground.	2019
4. Samuel Park (Vaucluse)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Seating	Relatively isolated parcel of land located to the rear of the bowls club, this site has access challenges due to its elevated location, with access and site lines.	2000

5. Lyne Park (Rose Bay)	Regional - (Toddlers, Pre-Schooler, Juniors, Teenagers)	Toilets within the park, bubbler, seating, natural shade, Café, sports fields, basketball court	One of the larger play spaces in LGA located near the harbour, fully fenced to provide safety. New inclusive design to commence construction in 2023.	2002
6. Bellevue Park (Bellevue Hill)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Picnic table, seating	Located at the rear of a school and landlocked by residential dwelling, the play space may have a perception of belonging to the school. Relatively new equipment and recent landscaping, the facility predominantly targets younger children.	2010
7. Thornton Reserve (Bellevue Hill)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Drinking fountain, seating, picnic tables	Located in a gully and surrounded by residential properties. Slide element built into hill creating good use of natural land form. Access to the play space can be a challenge, with staircase the only option.	2005
8. Cooper Park North (Bellevue Hill)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Seating, next to Community Hall	Old play space located next to community hall, limited access and no formalised paths. This play space is popular for booked birthday parties that use the hall. No access to community hall toilets.	2000
9. Rose Bay Park (Rose Bay)	Neighbourhood - (Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Natural Shade, seating	Harbourside play space with climbing frame and limited equipment. Challenging elements of play makes it more suitable for older children. Smallest playground in terms of equipment in the LGA.	2010
10. Cooper Park (Double Bay)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	water bubbler, seating, picnic table, toilet facility, shelter. Kiosk nearby	Good natural setting within the larger historic Cooper Park, with creek running through. Potential to enhance due to size and nature of site.	2000
11. Plumb Reserve (Woollahra)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Drinking fountain, seating	Popular space that has equipment that is old and needing replacing. Natural Shade and proximity to open space. Upgraded in 2021 with inclusive design.	2021



Robertson Park Playground,



Christison Park Fitness



Samuel Park



Lyne Park

12. Harbourview Park (Woollahra)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors, Teenagers)	Seating, picnic table	Good open space and natural setting, located in a gully. This park is where Bushcare in the area began. Popular for children's parties. Casual basketball ring.	2015
13. Foster Park (Double Bay)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Fenced (next to community childcare centre)	Several upgrades & improvements have been instigated in the last 5 years based on Preschool initiative & parental financial support. Its status as a Public playground despite its close association with the Woollahra preschool could be promoted to the wider community.  The site is only example within LGA (apart from a few small elements at Steyne Park playground) of attempt at the installation of non-standard ecoplay structures.	2010
14. Steyne Park (Double Bay)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Water fountain, picnic seating, fenced, shade, close to ferry wharf.	Fenced play space at the corner of large open space, located next to the water. Good natural shade.	2014
15. Elms Reserve (Woollahra)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Seating	Spacious park within Woollahra with older equipment and furniture needing refurbishment or replacement, fenced.	2010
16. Holdsworth Community Centre (Woollahra)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Drinking fountain, seating, shelter, shade structure, fencing, toilet facility	Recent upgrade of playground received well in terms of functionality & capacity. Similar issues to Foster Park in terms of ambivalence of public/preschool play space. Shade poles were not replaced & may need refurbishment or replacement.	2017
17. Yarranabbe Park (Darling Point)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Drinking fountain, seating, shade structure, fencing, fitness station	Safety measures required for this space as close to risks (harbour, traffic, dogs). Opportunity to recognise local culture and history.  Enhancement opportunity with additional equipment as well as opportunity for improved landscaping to improve maintenance efficiency and sight lines into the playspace.  Fitness equipment nearby.	2006
18. Soudan Street (Paddington)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Seating	Simple play structure catering for smaller children, on a thoroughfare open space with no visual line of site.	2005
19. Trumper Park (Paddington)	District - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Next to sporting oval, public toilets in area, drinking fountain, seating, shade, majority of play space is fenced.	Located adjacent to the oval, some of the play space is fenced. Practice netball post and long jump pit outside fenced playground. Softfall under swings, with bark and sand under remainder of equipment. Bush setting from Trumper Park.	2014-2016

20. Rushcutters Bay Park (Darling Point)	District - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Drinking fountain, seating, toilet facility, fenced, next to café	Fenced play space adjacent to café. A large open space and on harbour. Equipment predominantly toddler with some art features. New Youth Recreation Area planned within the park. Existing fitness station and two sportsgrounds. Large mature trees provide shade.	2008
21. Cambridge street Reserve (Paddington)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Seating, fenced	Play space on a small piece of land (equivalent to surrounding house blocks). Limited seating and site lines. No thoroughfare.	2010
22. Union Street (Paddington)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers)	Seating, fenced	Located in a corner block alongside a thoroughfare. Fully fenced, the equipment caters for young children. The monkey bars are a more difficult element catering for older children, however all other play elements are for younger children.	2010
23. James Cook Reserve (also known as Cook's Paddock) (Paddington)	Local - (Pre-Schoolers)	Seating	A good size area that is fully fenced. Upgraded in 2021.	2021
24. Dillon Street (Paddington)	Neighbourhood - (Toddlers, Pre-schoolers, Juniors)	Seating, fenced	This play space has been expanded after additional community land was acquired through a Voluntary Planning Agreement which has increased the size of the park by approx 1300m <sup>2</sup> . Community consultation for the redesign of this area is complete and new playground was constructed in 2021. The park is fenced.	2021
25. Spring Street Reserve (Paddington)	Local - (Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers)	Seating, shade structure, fenced	Local playground on a small site, with limited access. The space is fenced and well shaded from natural trees and shade cloth.	2004





*Bellevue Hill Park*



*Thornton Park*



*North Cooper Park*



*Parsley Bay Reserve*

### 3.2 Distribution

Walkable neighbourhoods are defined by a 5-10 minute walk (approximately 400- 500 metres) to services and facilities<sup>6</sup>. This considers the slowest or least able person such as very young children with their parents, or seniors and those with access and mobility limitations due to age, health or ability.

Figure 7 highlights the 500m radius for each play space which, given Woollahra is an inner-suburban area, is considered appropriate and will be adopted for the play space strategy. This does not take into consideration physical or psychological barriers such as main roads, creeks, rivers, train tracks etc. which pose obvious barriers to direct line of access. Topography also poses a challenge, particularly in parts of Woollahra with steep ridgelines to the foreshores as well as steep hills throughout the council area.

Plotting this radius highlights a number of gaps areas across the municipality, although it is noted that some play spaces within neighbouring council boundaries and Centennial Park (includes Moore Park and Queens Park) are within a 500 metre radius of some Woollahra residents, as indicated in Figures 8, 9 and 10. The main current gaps are in:

1. West Vaucluse
2. Rose Bay
3. Double Bay/Edgecliff

<sup>6</sup>Walkable Urban Design and Sustainable Placemaking; Extracted from [http://pedshed.net/?page\\_id=2](http://pedshed.net/?page_id=2)

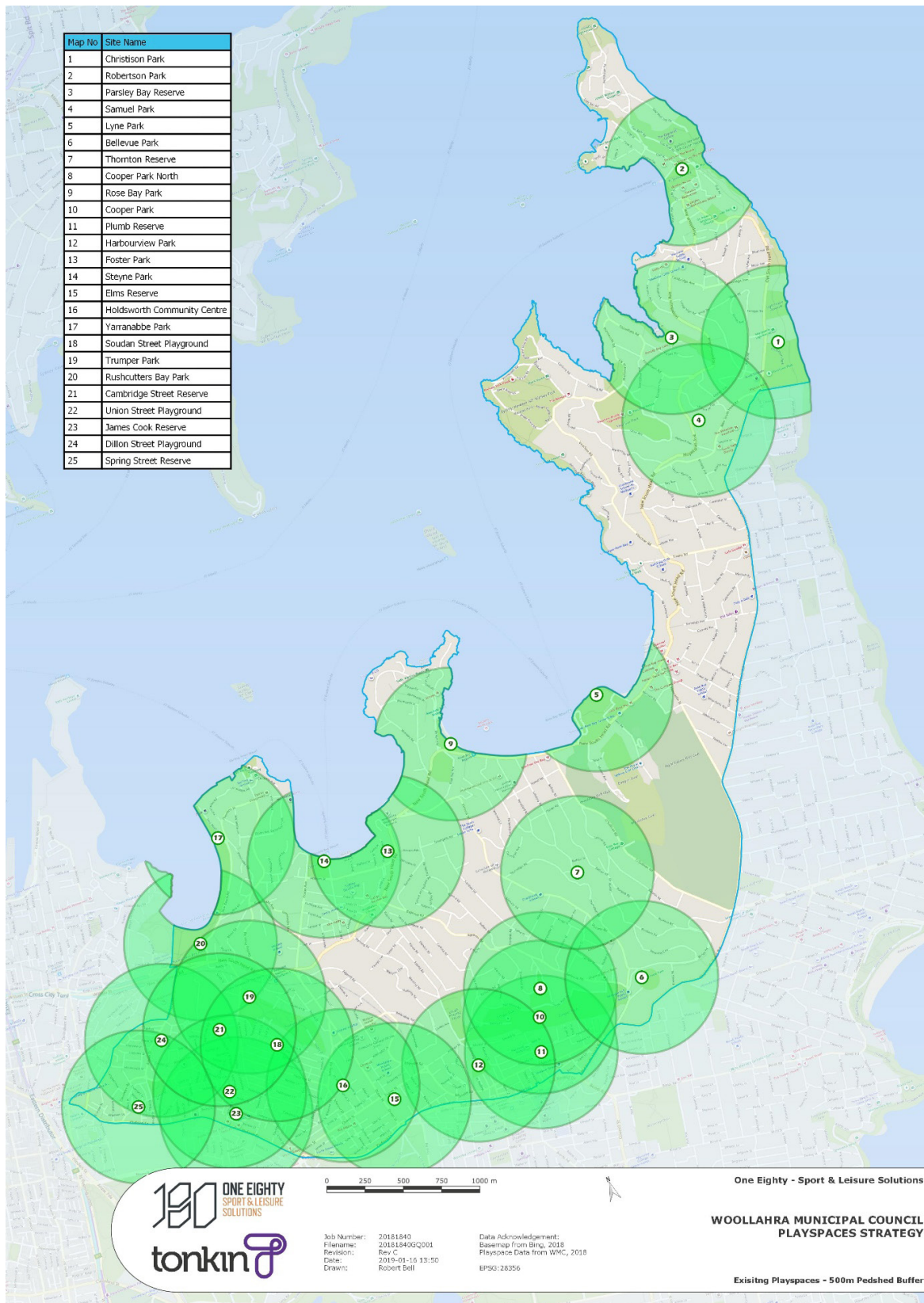
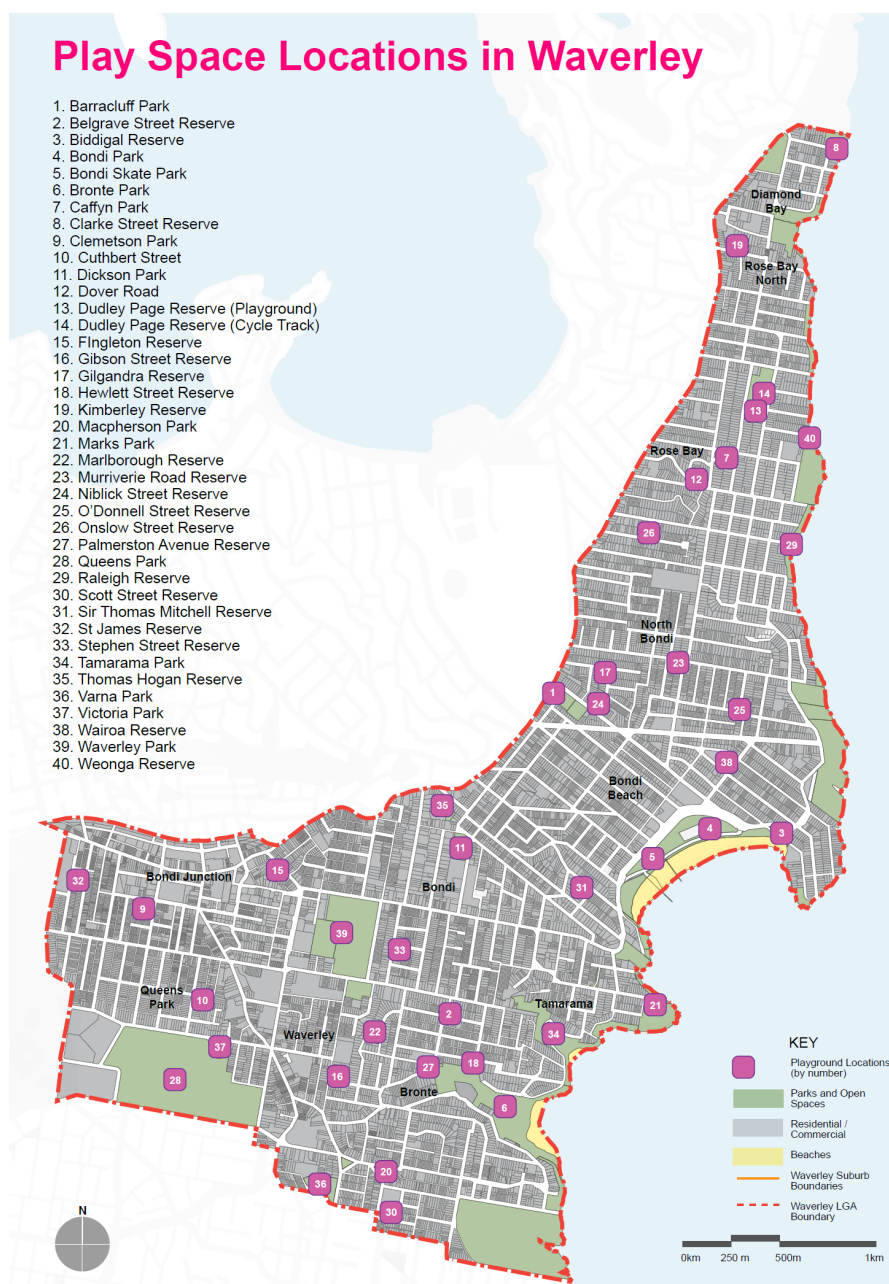


Figure 7: Play spaces marked up with 500m buffer marked out.

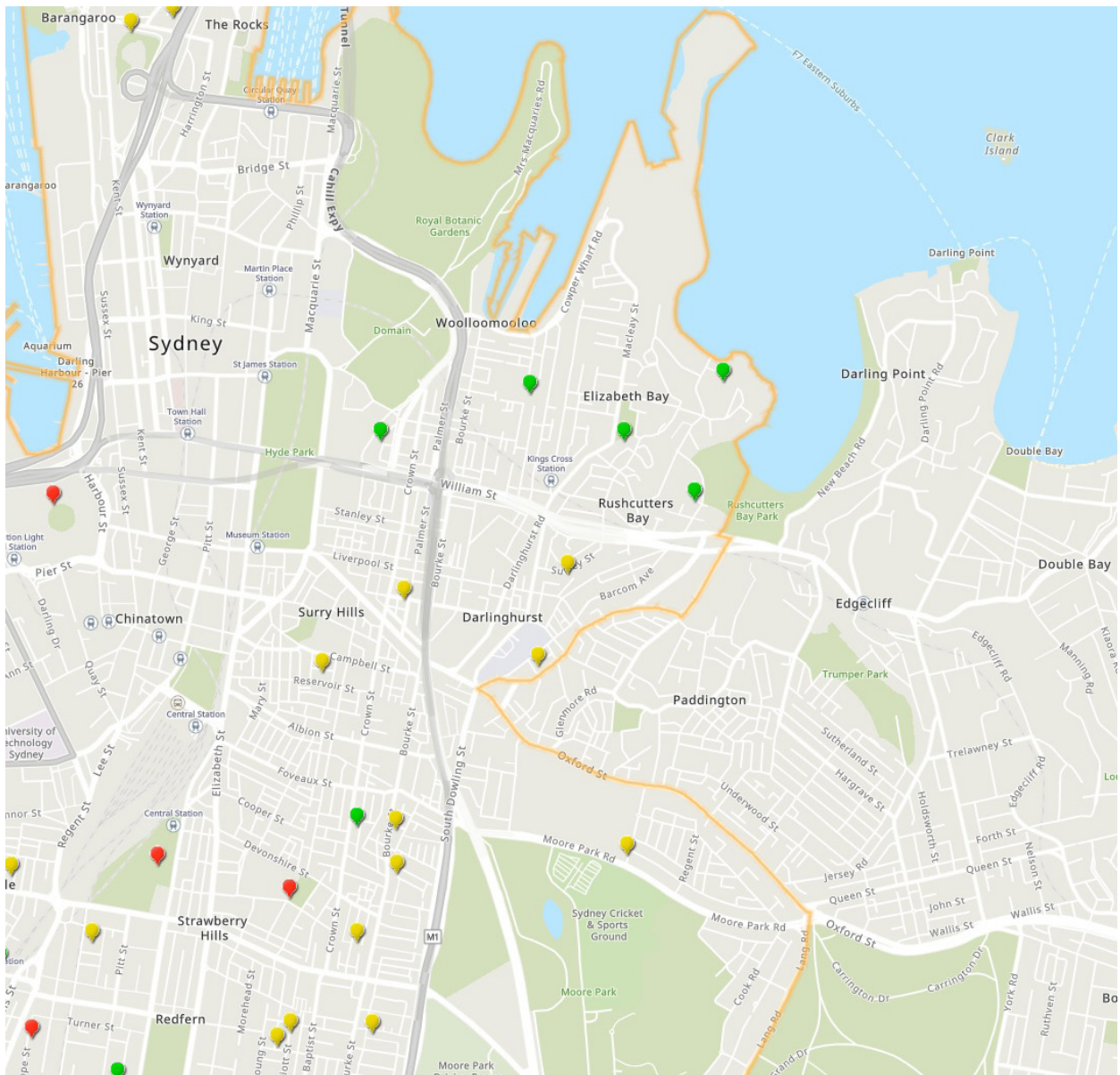
Consideration should be given to play spaces within the neighbouring Councils, as many residents would be unaware of local government boundaries and access facilities across boundaries (Figure 8). Where gaps exist within Woollahra for example, residents may have access to facilities in Waverley, City of Sydney or Centennial Parklands and vice versa.

Partnership opportunities between Councils could develop and manage facilities where gaps are in evidence.

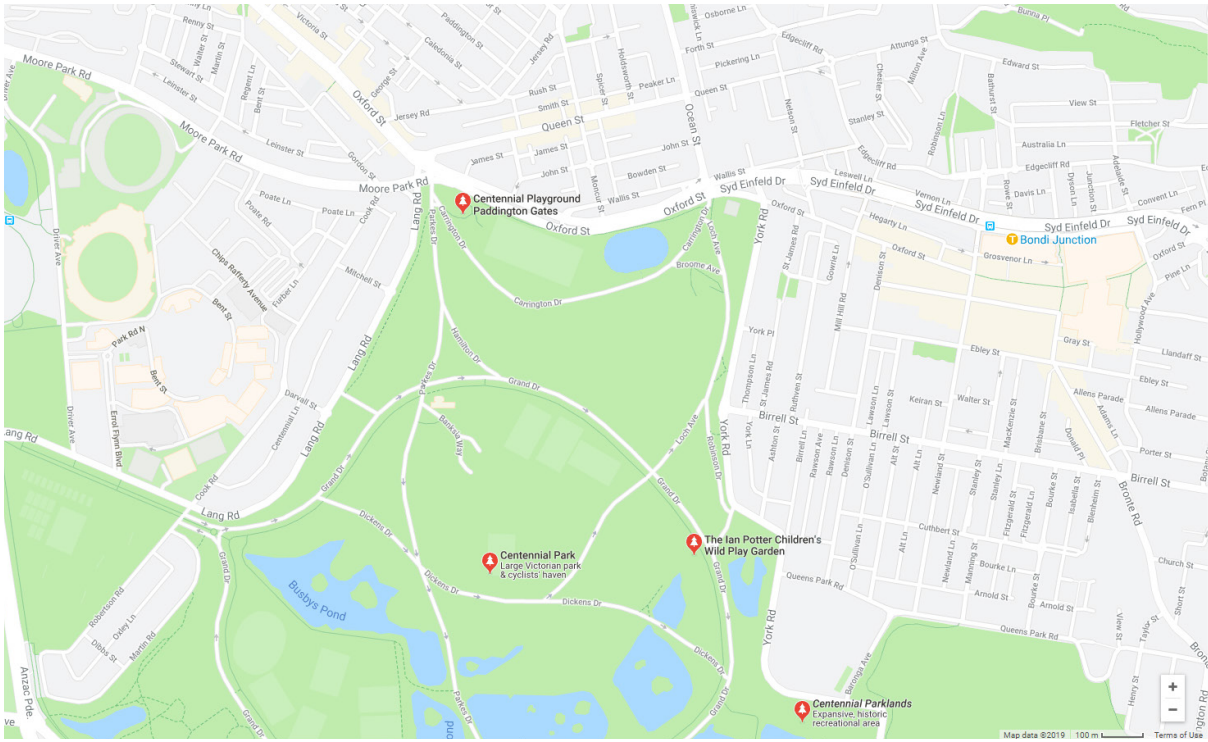
Figures 8,9,and 10 highlight neighbouring play spaces which are located within the 500m catchment of Woollahra and further afield in neighbouring councils and Centennial Park.



**Figure 8:** Neighbouring Playspaces in Waverley Council. Reference, Waverley Council Play strategy 2014- 2029.



**Figure 9:** Playgrounds in City of Sydney (Yellow – Local Park; Green – Neighbourhood; Red – Regional).



**Figure 10:** Playgrounds in Centennial Parklands. Reference: centennialparklands.com.au

### 3.3 Classifications

As stated in the general observations section of the report, play spaces in Woollahra are 'unique' in that there is a relatively even distribution of both local and neighbourhood level play areas and four district level parks. There is no strong evidence of any area, that by definition, offer all aspects of the play space development model.

Lyne Park is the only space that potentially meets this requirement, with a play space, open space, picnic tables, basketball court, and access to the water.

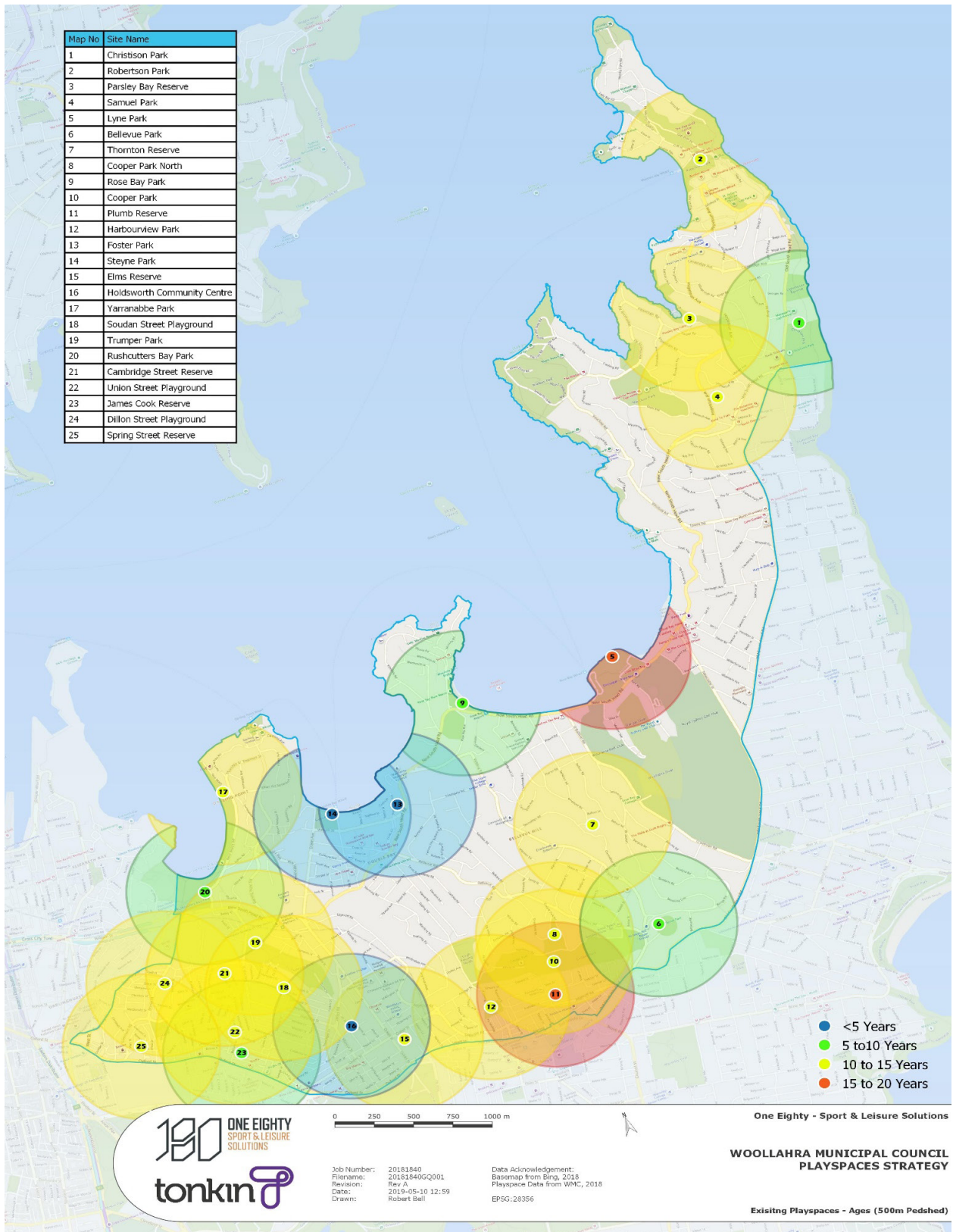
### 3.4 Age

Play spaces as assets have an approximate usable life of approximate 20 years. After this time the equipment will, regardless of maintenance regimes, begin to show the signs of age and will more than likely not meet modern needs, demands and standards.

Play space strategies for Councils should however be focused on three 'grouped' age groups of:

- Under 10 years: no action other than potential enhancement to meet an identified gap in classifications.
- 10- 15 years: monitor and consider removal or replacement within five years.
- 15- 20 years plus: immediate strategy identified to include removal or replacement

The majority of Council's play spaces (64%) are older than 10 years and will therefore require replacing or removing in the next 10 years. This may apply to all or just a few individual pieces within each play space, but this strategy will provide Council with an overarching plan of action in relation to the categories and they should be designed and located to ensure optimal use and access by the community.



**Figure 11:** Age of play spaces across Woollahra LGA.

# Section Four: What the Community Thinks

(Prepared by 180SLS)

Consultation and understanding the community's perception of play spaces is important in their development on ongoing management. A survey and two 'drop in' sessions were offered to the community to provide feedback in relation to their needs, views and perceptions of play in Woollahra. A total of 68 people completed the survey, with the following being a summary of their thoughts.

## 4.1 Play Space Use

The vast majority of respondents (89.5%) stated they were a parent of children that used play spaces with approximately 50% stating their children were under the ages of 3 and a further 35% between the ages of 4-6. This highlights a young family cohort in the Municipality and the need to plan for older children and teenagers in the coming 5-10 years.

## 4.2 Popular Play Spaces

The most popular play space in Woollahra was Lyne Park with 35% of respondents stating this as their

favourite. A further 10% stated Rushcutters Bay Park and Cooper Park as being their preferred play space and 7% stating Steyne Park and Holdsworth Community Centre playground.

As indicated in Figure 13, the reasons for the preference included:

- Variety of equipment
- Shade
- Location
- Being fenced

To a lesser degree the following were also considered reasons:

- Open space
- Being safe
- Cafes near by
- Being fun and challenging
- Having access to toilets

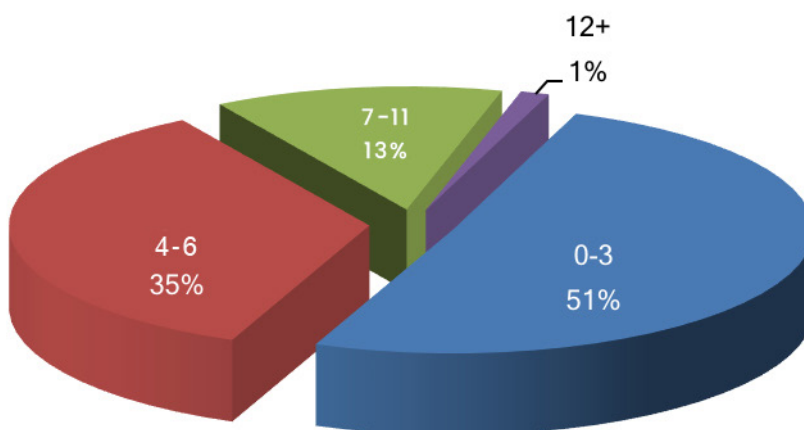
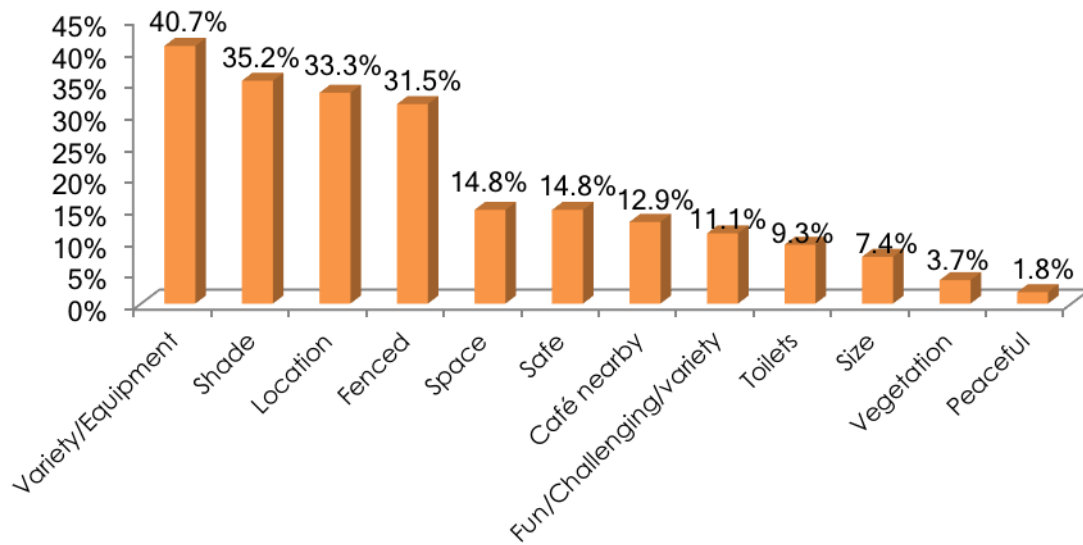


Figure 12: Age play space users.

**Figure 13: Reasons for Preference**



### 4.3 Importance Performance Analysis

When asked to consider on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being low and 5 high, important aspects for play spaces compared with how they were performing or being perceived across the Municipality, the top areas of perceived importance for play spaces were:

1. Being safe (4.46)
2. Clean and welcoming (4.45)
3. Having shade (4.34)
4. Fenced or away from roads (4.20) and
5. Variety of equipment (4.0)

The areas of greatest concern whereby the gap between importance and perception was the greatest and therefore to be considered as areas of action for Council is seen in Table 4 with those aspects the community considered being well provided for highlighted in Table 5.

Rank	Greatest area of concern not being met	Gap
1	Shade	-0.86
2	Opportunities for children with a disability	-0.58
3	Clean and welcoming	-0.50
4	Opportunities for older children	-0.46
5	Variety of equipment	-0.36

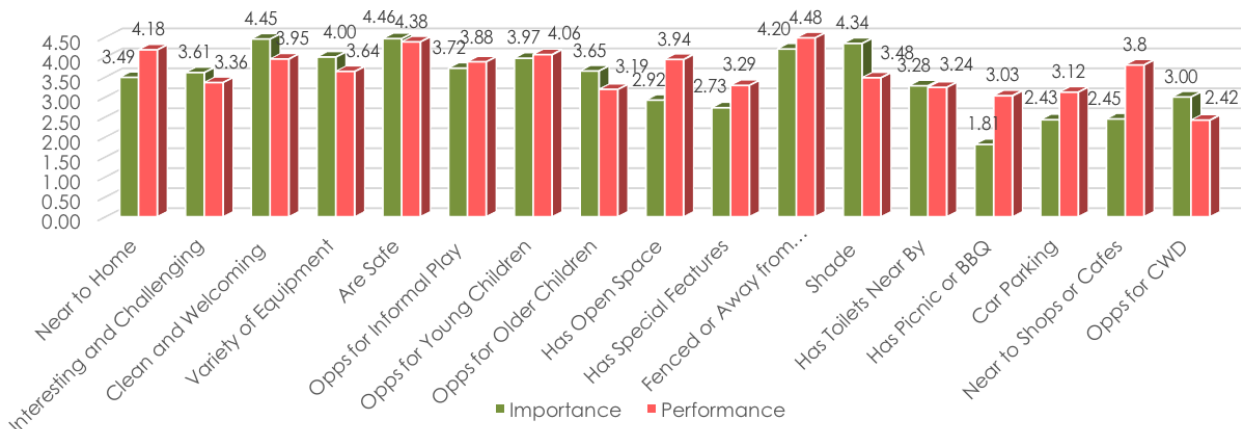
**Table 4:** Areas of greater concern

Rank	Greatest area of concern being met	Gap
1	Near to shops or cafes	+1.35
2	Has picnic facilities	+1.22
3	Has open space	+1.02
4	Near to my home	+0.69
5	Has car parking	+0.69

**Table 5:** Perceived areas being catered for.



**Figure 14: Important Performance Analysis**



CWD = children with disabilities

#### 4.4 Park User Survey 2017

In 2017, Council commissioned research from Playscape<sup>7</sup>. Park-user intercept surveys were conducted across 12 parks with 103 participants. The survey gathered information about the whole park, beyond the play space. Findings indicated that a high volume of visitors also regularly visited other parks within the council area (83% of participants). This gives a good indication that data represents more than just the 12 parks visited.

The parks in the survey were Bellevue Park, Cooper Park, Dillon St Reserve, James Cook Reserve, Lough Playing Fields, Lyne Park, Robertson Park, Royal Hospital for Women Park, Rushcutters Bay Park, Steyne Park, Trumper Park and Union Street Park.

The survey found the overall satisfaction with parklands in Woollahra was high at 7.9/10.

When asked about improvements or additional provisions, Shade & Shelter, Soft Landscape, and Seats/Tables were the most recorded items.

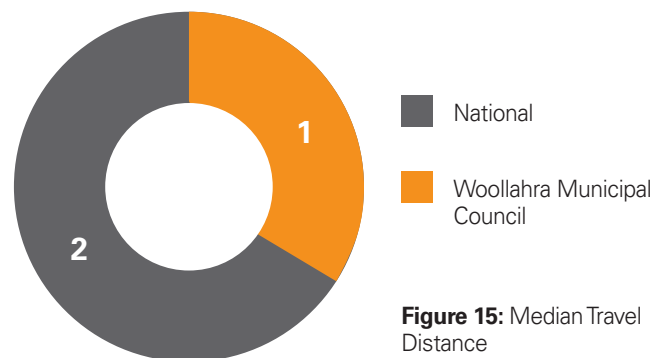
Comments from the community also included:

- Need a better range of facilities including BMX and running tracks
- Need more trees, sheltered areas, tables, seats and the public bathroom hygiene is imperative.
- Need a skatepark at Rushcutters Bay Park

Comments on improvements for individual parks were given, and should be reviewed in any future upgrade of that space.

The median distance traveled to the park was 1km (this is half the National average). The median time to travel to the park was 10 minutes. A majority of the participants were local residents (72% lived within the area), and 80% of the respondents walked to the park.

The report found that in Woollahra LGA only 45% of participants lived or were staying in a dwelling with a private backyard. The survey found 25% of participants were in a dwelling without grounds or communal recreation facilities. This compares to National figures of 66% and 13% respectively.



**Figure 15: Median Travel Distance**

<sup>7</sup> Park User Survey (2017) Playscape

# Section Five: Strategic Response

Prepared by Woollahra Council staff

On review of the play spaces across Woollahra Council, there are gaps in provision across geographic areas. There is also a strong presence of play equipment for younger children.

Suburb	Playgrounds
Bellevue Hill	Bellevue Park Thornton Reserve Cooper Park Cooper Park North
Darling Point	Yarranabbe Park Rushcutters Bay Park
Double Bay	Foster Park Steyne Park
Edgecliff	
Paddington*	Cambridge Street Dillon Street Reserve James Cook Park Spring Street Soudan Street Trumper Park Union Street Ethel Turner Park* (City of Sydney)
Point Piper	
Rose Bay	Lyne Park Rose Bay Park
Vaucluse*	Christison Park Parsley Reserve Samuel Park Clarke Reserve * (Waverley Council) Kimberley Reserve* (Waverley Council)
Watsons Bay	Robertson Park
Woollahra	Elms Reserve Harbour view Park Plumb Reserve Holdsworth Community Centre

The audit demonstrates that a majority of playgrounds have been designed for toddlers and pre-schooler children. Woollahra has recently experienced a baby boom, but as these children age, there are limited opportunities within the current provision for older children to experience play. Consultation indicated that the community are after play spaces that cater for a variety of age groups.

Age Group	Playgrounds
Toddlers (0-3yrs old)	Robertson Park Parsley Bay Reserve Samuel Park Lyne Park Bellevue Park Thornton Reserve Cooper Park North Cooper Park Plumb Reserve Harbourview Park Foster Park Steyne Park Elms Reserve Holdsworth Community Centre Yarranabbe Park Soudan Street Trumper Park Rushcutters Bay Park Cambridge Street Reserve Union Street Dillon Street Reserve Spring Street Reserve
Pre-Schoolers (4-6yrs old)	Robertson Park Parsley Bay Reserve Samuel Park Lyne Park Bellevue Park Thornton Reserve Cooper Park North Rose Bay Park Cooper Park Plumb Reserve Harbourview Park Foster Park Steyne Park Elms Reserve Holdsworth Community Centre Yarranabbe Park Soudan Street Trumper Park Rushcutters Bay Park Cambridge Street Reserve Union Street James Cook Reserve Dillon Street Reserve Spring Street Reserve

Age Group	Playgrounds
Juniors (7-11yrs old)	Parsley Bay Reserve Lyne Park Bellevue Park Thornton Reserve Cooper Park North Rose Bay Park Cooper Park Plumb Reserve Harbourview Park Steyne Park Elms Reserve Trumper Park Dillon Street Reserve
Teenagers (12+yrs old)	Christison Park* Lyne Park** Harbourview Park***  * Multi-purpose hard courts (2) - mainly netball and basketball; also scooters etc **Basketball hard court, also scooters etc ***Basketball half court

Access for a range of abilities and backgrounds should be considered as second nature when considering play spaces and relevant amenities.

While demographics are subject to change over a period of time, there are notably consistently a high portion of older residents within the Local Government Area of Woollahra. This brings a need to ensure play spaces acknowledge the role this group may have with engaging in the spaces (i.e. as carers of grandchildren, etc).

The current provision of play spaces in the LGA does not warrant the removal of any sites. The benchmarking against neighbouring Council suggests that additional play space provision is required.

This is also recognised in the distribution of play spaces, and there are suburbs within the area that justify the addition of a play space due to current provision being outside walkable catchment. These

areas are in West Vaucluse, Rose Bay and Double Bay/Edgecliff.

All play spaces will require continued maintenance and cleaning. This includes the new play spaces, such as Parsley Bay Reserve. COVID 19 social distancing measures in 2020 have provided a unique environment where the need for cleaning was heightened and requirements should be suitably budgeted for into the future.

Some existing play spaces provide opportunities for upgrade or replacement, with more appropriate equipment for the community and site.

Within Woollahra Council there are unique pockets of beauty and history, and these themes should be incorporated into local play elements where possible.

Engaging with the Community is an important part of the process in reviewing and designing play spaces, and is highlighted as a good opportunity to create a sense of community connection to the space.

A general indication from the community indicates a desire for play spaces that focus on clean, welcoming environments, that provide an opportunity for children of all abilities, and have a variety of equipment.

## 5.1 Need for Additional Play Spaces

Benchmarking suggests that Woollahra would need to create an additional eight play spaces to be on par with neighbouring councils. However, within Council managed land, there is limited available open space to create new traditional play spaces. Opportunities through planning agreements to access additional open space should be considered when possible. The focus also should be to improve, enhance and enlarge what already exists.

Alternatively additional play spaces could be addressed through; Play in land not managed by Council; Play in Community Facilities; Temporary Play Elements; Unobtrusive Play Features; and Park Streets. The Park Street concept involves design principles that change the perception of streets “as places for cars” to “streets as places”. Through smart planting, wider footpaths, bench seats, lighting and public art, streets can become an attractive place for people to gather and recreate.

### Play in land not managed by council

A unique feature of Woollahra is the volume of land owned and managed by other bodies, including NSW National Parks and Harbour Trust. This land also creates family friendly environments for social and physical cohesion, and should be considered within the mix of open space play

These include:

- Sydney Harbour National Park
- Green Point Reserve
- Nielson Park
- Vaucluse House and Park
- Strickland House
- Macquarie Lighthouse
- Schools and Private Clubs

### Play in Community Facilities

In addition, a number of Woollahra Council managed community facilities provide an opportunity to provide play, e.g. Double Bay Library. There are opportunities for Council or community groups to address the need in areas such as Rose Bay and Double Bay, and deliver play activity through existing and new community facilities.

### Temporary Play Elements

As there is limited open space managed by Council with the capacity to cater for a new playgrounds, there is scope to review the opportunities for temporary play in non-traditional areas. An example could include a temporary ice rink or ball courts set up in school holidays in Guilfoyle Park. Areas that

have low play provision should be the focus of this type of initiative.



Picture reference: <https://www.bayside.vic.gov.au/news/playground-award-bayside>

### Unobtrusive Play Features

Unobtrusive play features and/or public art are elements added to open space that encourage exploring and experiencing nature and surrounds. This could be considered in smaller pocket parks such as Epping Reserve. Examples include ‘I spy’ activities, hidden gnomes, hop scotch, etc.

This can also include creating play through the use of amenity features, such as seats, as public art.



Picture reference : <https://www.tropicalnorthqueensland.org.au/articles/top-10-spots-street-art-cairns/>



Image: Sculpture/Seat – Merrion Square Garden Playground Dublin

## 5.2 Need to Maintain Play Spaces

In order to create appropriate provision of play, Council needs to ensure the existing play spaces are safe and inviting to use. Each year, Playfix provides detailed information on the required maintenance for play equipment across the LGA. This audit requires annual budgets and prioritisation of work.

The need to clean facilities also need to be considered in work plans and budgets. Cleaning not only makes the equipment more attractive, remove debris, control graffiti, it also helps keep the area safe.

Strategic budgets need to be set for play spaces to ensure Woollahra Council provides premium facilities for the community.

## 5.3 Community Engagement in Play Spaces

In creating premium facilities for the community, there is a need for strong community engagement strategies. This includes working with the local community who will use the space, to ensure the space acknowledges local desires.

There is a need to engage appropriate stakeholders, including heritage and cultural communities and consultants.

Woollahra area has a rich Aboriginal heritage, and there is an opportunity to include elements of this culture within play spaces, subject to detailed design and community consultation.

## 5.4 Action Plan:

An action plan sets out steps required to achieve the strategic goals of the play strategy. It helps clarify the resources and time frames required for specific tasks to be addressed. This helps to set a realistic framework for addressing all the actions required. The Actions proposed in the following sections require careful planning and investigation with the appropriate community engagement with park users and surrounding residents. All Actions should be included in any future master planning for specific parks. Any renewal of playgrounds as per Council's asset register will still proceed and may not be included as an individual action.

Two Action Plans are presented as follows;

Action Plan One: Overall strategy for Play Spaces

Action Plan Two: Actions per suburb

Each project in Action Plan Two has an indicative cost estimate and is prioritised as either high, medium, low or ongoing.

During annual budget deliberations, projects within the action plans will be recommended for funding consideration.



Image: Sharing circle within play space in Canberra.

## Action Plan One: Overall Strategy for Play Spaces

Action	Target
Incorporate inclusive elements within play spaces where appropriate; including play elements, access to play space, and supporting amenities.	Higher number of play spaces that are inclusive, and more inclusive elements within play spaces.
Engage the Community in decision making on play spaces.	All playground upgrades to involve community engagement.
Incorporate opportunities for play elements within non-traditional sites; e.g. small elements within malls and local village centres. (both temporary and permanent).	Sites are identified in consultation with Place Making team.
Continue to replace equipment as required to ensure safe and attractive play spaces.	No outstanding work due on play equipment or playgrounds. Maintain a high standard of play spaces.
Standardise and replace softfall as required and set an annual program of works for softfall replacement.	Annually fund softfall replacement budget to meet requirements.
Address local values of community within play spaces to strengthen sense of space. This includes creating a variety of play spaces, acknowledging different cultural and historic themes including the rich Aboriginal history of the area. Investigate options for community gardens within or close to play spaces.	Unique play spaces that share the values and history of the area.
Aim to incorporate elements of Social, Cognitive and Physical Play within playgrounds.	Play spaces that engage senses and connection.
Investigate better amenity for play areas, such as shade options for playground with high sun exposure and better provision of toilet facilities for playgrounds where appropriate.	Enhance play experience through adequate surrounding amenity. Review appropriate toilet provision in public open spaces.
Better management of dogs within and around playgrounds.	Better educated community on dog regulations around play spaces.
Provide clear wayfinding signage and interpretive signage where appropriate.	Give direction and share the story.
Continue communication with other landholders and neighboring council's on the provision of play opportunities	Share information with adjoining councils and land managers
Investigate further play opportunities within Council's community facilities.	Sites are identified in consultation with Community and Cultural team.
Identify potential sites to cater for temporary play in spaces that do not have existing play equipment.	Sites are identified in consultation with other Council teams.
Investigate opportunity sites to install unobtrusive play features in small local parks, new and existing community facilities.	Sites are identified in consultation with other Council teams.
Explore the inclusion of temporary regular seasonal summer play facilities on the foreshores.	Play spaces that engage senses and connection and involve community consultation.

Priority Table	
High	1-4 years
Medium	5-7 years
Low	8-10 years

## Action Plan Two: A breakdown of actions per Suburb

Bellevue Hill		
Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Continue to work with Bellevue Public School regarding improvements to Bellevue Park and usage.	Nil	On going
Deliver landscape master plan for Bellevue Park including completion of pathway and additional seating (Stage 1 was delivered previously. Stage 2 will be delivered in 2023/24).	\$350,000	High
Provide a design for Thornton Reserve addressing access, seating, shade, broad scope of age appropriate play equipment. Given that this Playspace is isolated to other facilities (refer to Fig 7) an emphasis on enhancement of this Park is proposed. Careful planning is required to address access and visibility issues and using the topography of the land in the design of a new playspace. Ensure appropriate ancillary services are provided for including, water fountain and seating.	\$30,000 - design \$600,000 - implementation	Medium
Improve access to Cooper Park North through appropriate pathways and entrance points.	\$20,000	Medium
Provide additional amenity around Cooper Park North considering water fountain, picnic table, seating, softfall, shelter.	\$25,000	Low
Address Cooper Park Heritage Significance in any changes made to play spaces within Cooper Park.	Nil	On Going

Darling Point		
Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Continue to progress the development of a youth facility (skate park) in Rushcutters Bay Park consistent with that proposed by the draft Recreation Strategy and relevant Council resolutions.	\$1,151,800	High
Enhance Yarranabbe Play space with potential for expanded footprint.	\$500,000	Medium
Investigate McKell Park as a potential site for a temporary play element during school holidays.	\$5,000	Medium
Renew existing fitness station adjacent to playground in Yarranabbe Park (scheduled for renewal with \$67,000 in the 2023/24 Capital Works Budget)	\$67,000	Medium
Renew Rushcutters Bay Park play area space	\$500,000	Medium

## Double Bay

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Investigate opportunity to increase and upgrade play opportunity at Steyne Park (also recognised in Double Bay Public Domain Strategy).	\$500,000	Low
Investigate opportunity for water play in Guilfoyle Park Plaza (also recognised in Double Bay Public Domain Strategy).	\$700,000	Low
Review signage to communicate opportunity for public to access Foster Park Play space.	\$2,000	High
Consider opportunity to enhance temporary play opportunity in Kiaora Mall or Guilfoyle Park/plaza.	\$5,000 per activation	Medium
Look to incorporate non-traditional play elements or sculptures within Epping Reserve and Lough Playing Fields (2022/23 Budget).	\$150,000	High
Investigate the design and construction of additional play opportunities and two multi-purpose hard courts for basketball and netball (including lights on the courts for training) at the site of the existing grass netball court at Lough Playing Fields, subject to detailed design, community consultation, environmental assessment, and Council approval (\$300,000 allocated in 2022/23 Budget and additional \$400,000 allocated in 2023/24 Budget).	\$40,000 planning and design \$700,000 implementation	High
Investigate inclusion of a play space in the Cross Street Car Park.	TBC	High



### Paddington

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Provide softfall at Cambridge Street Reserve and investigate shade.	\$120,000	Medium
Investigate opportunity for additional equipment for Spring Street that meets the needs of community. E.g. additional swings. Include consideration for drinking fountain, wetpour softfall and improved landscaping in review. Potential for a small community garden for children (2023/24 Budget).	\$200,000	High
Involve community to achieve appropriate activation of Soudan Street Park, to avoid site being hidden & isolated. Potential to upgrade landscaping to improve accessibility and user experience.	\$150,000	Medium
Improve experience at Trumper Park by including additional softfall, picnic tables and shelter where appropriate.	\$60,000	Medium
Use themes of natural setting and cultural history with replacement or addition of any equipment at Trumper Park. Look at including additional play elements outside the Trumper Park playground fenced area where appropriate.	\$700,000	Medium
Improve shade and softfall provision at Union street and investigate inclusion of a drinking fountain. Upgrade play equipment and landscaping.	\$200,000	Low
Investigate opportunities for Community gardens within pocket parks of Paddington.	Nil	On Going
Continue discussions with the La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Council regarding their priorities and vision of Paddington Bowling Club as per Council resolution from 14 April 2023.	Nil	N/A

### Point Piper

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
No play spaces		

### Rose Bay

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Upgrades to Lyne Park Playground to create an accessible and inclusive regional play space and intergenerational activity trail. Concept design developed in 2022. Resolution of Council 12 December 2022 to proceed with the project. Construction anticipated to be completed in early 2024. (2023/24 budget).	\$1,260,000	High
Investigate fitness equipment for Lyne Park to complement the playground and casual sports court.	\$80,000	Low
Opportunity for upgrade & expansion of footprint of Rose Bay Park to help activate an underutilised location; consider theme around natural foreshore setting; and consider fencing due to proximity to water.	TBC	Low
Investigate a location for a playspace and/or play elements at Woollahra Oval 2&3 as referenced in the Woollahra Park Plan of Management.	\$20,000 Design \$300,000 Implementation	Medium
Investigate inclusion of a pop-up recreation space from time to time in the Wilberforce Car Park development.	TBC	High

### Vaucluse

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Complete the upgrade of fitness equipment at Christison Park, including renewal of wetpour rubber surface, upgrade of pathway and installation of drinking fountain for the fitness stations, hard courts and off leash dog area (completed 2021/22).	\$90,000	High
Investigate additional play elements at Christison Park as part of a Master plan, e.g. nature elements, rock formations, artistic/ sculptural play installations.	\$20,000 Design \$30,000 Implementation	Medium
Given that the Samuel Park playground is isolated to other facilities (refer to Fig 7) an emphasis on enhancement of this Park is proposed. Careful planning is required to address functional deficiencies of the site. Opportunities to use the topography of the land and nature play elements through the park. Ensure appropriate ancillary services are provided, including, water fountain and seating. Use of nature play would be a possibility.	\$600,000	Medium
Continue to work with Sydney Water on the Refresh Vaucluse project at Parsley Bay Reserve, which includes the relocation of the existing public toilets to better cater for user groups including safety and accessibility. Also consider possible hit up wall.	TBC	High
Investigate as part of a master planning process the feasibility of a playspace in Signal Hill Reserve which would celebrate the cultural and heritage significance of the site	Nil	Medium
Management of Vaucluse Bowling Club site transferred from Crown Lands to Woollahra Council by Gazettal in December 2022. The part of the site which is not leased to Vaucluse Bowling Club is to be subject of a future master plan to determine its future design and priorities for capital improvements, including potential recreation and play elements.	Nil	On Going
Investigate the land owned by Sydney Water surrounding the Vaucluse Reservoir (Clairvaux Rd) for future public recreation uses.	TBD	High

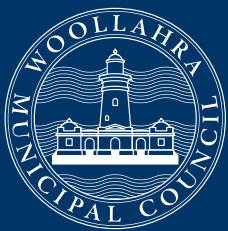
### Watsons Bay

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Enhance the Robertson Park play space to be district level and capture the culture and history of the area.	\$700,000	Low
Include signage and props within Gap Park to engage children in the bush setting.	\$15,000	Medium
Include interactive signage and props within Camp Cove Reserve to engage children. Consider nature play elements within the park.	\$15,000	Medium

### Woollahra

Action	Approx Cost	Priority
Acknowledge Harbourview Park as the start of the Bushcare program in Woollahra with appropriate signage and recognition in play elements, e.g. Nature play.	\$80,000	Medium
Review opportunity for drinking fountain, additional shade and softfall at Harbourview park. Upgrade playground and landscaping.	\$500,000	Low
Provide clarity around the access to Holdsworth Community Centre for community. Upgrade playground and landscaping.	\$500,000	Low
Address landscape at Elms Reserve and enhance equipment.	\$300,000	Medium

Woollahra  
Municipal  
Council



536 New South Head Road,  
Double Bay NSW 2028  
[woollahra.nsw.gov.au](http://woollahra.nsw.gov.au)  
T: 02 9391 7000  
F: 02 9391 7044  
E: [records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au](mailto:records@woollahra.nsw.gov.au)

February 2023