



Playspaces Expected Requirements

maitland
CITY COUNCIL

This document outlines Council's expectations and requirements relating to information required in plans and the standards of design and construction of playspace assets.

It is intended to be used as a high-level summary of Council's requirements and the expectations from the community for the assets they use. It is not to be taken as a technical guide and should not be used as a works specification but rather an overview of the baseline expectations as to what is required to be delivered at these facilities. It does not remove the need for compliance with all relevant statutory requirements. Note that any deviation from this document must be thoroughly justified and is at the discretion of Council.

All designs are to be prepared by a suitably qualified landscape architect or equivalent qualified and experienced industry professional and approved by Council.

The following principles outline Council's requirements and expectations for playspace design and development across the LGA and should be considered when planning and designing playspaces:

PRINCIPLE 1 - Variety of play opportunities and types

PRINCIPLE 2 - Safety - meet current standards and comply with national and state legislation and guidelines

PRINCIPLE 3 - Inclusive – Universal design principles -Inclusive playspaces provide for all abilities, gender, sex, age, or background not just access where feasible.

PRINCIPLE 4 - Intergenerational - Intergenerational playspaces focus on creating spaces that provide common activities for both the young and old to support informal physical activity throughout a lifetime.

PRINCIPLE 5 - Community needs

PRINCIPLE 6 - Robust/sustainable e.g. materials, designed to be low maintenance and economically sustainable

1. Strategic and legislative alignment

1.1 Strategic Framework & Best Practice

This document shall be considered in conjunction with State and local government guidelines, strategies and trends, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Maitland's Future (Maitland's Community Strategic Plan)
- Australian Standards for playspaces
- NSW Government's *'Everyone Can Play Guidelines'*
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Kidsafe Guidelines
- NSW Draft Greener Places Design Guideline
- Maitland's Community Infrastructure Strategy and Playspaces Network Supporting Plan Summary document

1.2 Standards and authorities

Consultants and developers are reminded of the necessity to comply with all relevant standards, codes of practice and guidelines, including, but not limited to:

- Local and State Government legislative requirements
- Statutory Authorities
- Building Codes
- Australian Standards (including AS4685 Playground equipment and surfacing, AS4422 Playground surfacing, AS1428 Design for access and mobility, AS41714 Knitted and woven shade fabrics).

1.3 Certification

For all playspaces, compliance certification with Australian Standards is required to be provided by an independent certifier / auditor prior to handover to Council or public use.

2.0 Site suitability and land requirements

	LOCAL	DISTRICT	CITYWIDE	REGIONAL
Size (land size)	Located within local parks (minimum 0.5 to 2ha of open space)	Larger size with greater capacity (minimum 2 to 5ha of open space) supporting a range of informal play and family uses	Larger size with greater capacity (more than 5ha) supporting multiple informal play and family uses	Larger size with greater capacity
Catchment	Within 400m to 600m radius or a five to 15-minute walk of residences	Within a three-kilometre radius or a 10 to 15-minute drive of most residences	Service across the LGA – or a 30 to 45-minute drive	Key destination spaces – that attract visitors from outside the LGA
Open lawn/ passive green space	Required – a multi-purpose area that allows for passive recreation activities must be provided.			
Frontage	50% of the perimeter to have direct road frontage (preferably 2 active street frontages). Playspaces with residential lots abutting them will typically not be accepted.		Between 30-50% of the perimeter to have direct road frontage. Playspaces with residential lots abutting them will typically not be accepted.	
Gradient	Average grade of 1:50 for 50% of total area, 1:20 orientated footpath throughout the sites will also be provided, where possible. Variable topography is satisfactory for the rest area.		Average grade of 1:20 for main use areas, 1:50 for passive open space	
Flood immunity	15% of total area to be above the 1:100 year flood level and free of hazards	At least 25% of total area to be above 1:50 year flood level with main activity areas above 1:100 year flood level	Preferred: At least 50% of total area to be above 1:50 year flood level with main activity areas above 1:100 year flood level	

Land shape	The preferred shape is square to rectangular with slope no greater than 2:1.
Accessibility and Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site location has no potential safety concerns - Site must be free of hazards e.g. must not be on a contaminated land register or have known contamination concerns, must not have significant conservation value - Access point easily found with the safe crossing point - Primary entry point accessible by wheelchair (without stair-only access) - Clear legible route of travel from car park to play space - Play spaces close to public transport (bus stop / train station) and active transport networks - Layout of playspace and broader site should be easily understood by a first time user - Natural and aesthetic setting
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Must be clear and visible signage at entry points and junctions - Required to meet Maitland City Council standards - Regional playspace to provide wayfinding and map of site - Signage easily understood and located at an appropriate height for all users
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing trees and vegetation shall be retained appropriately - Proposed planting with low maintenance and water tolerant - Canopy trees preferred in the playspaces - Low shrub and mass planting in playspaces (less than 0.5m high) for surveillance - Indigenous native plants preferred (species list input) - No batter steeper than 1 in 4 for turf area - 300mm wide mowing strip for any fencing and walls adjacent to turf.

2.1 Playspace design and supporting infrastructure

	LOCAL	DISTRICT	CITYWIDE	REGIONAL
Play value	Contains traditional play equipment.	Greater variety of play elements and activities for different age groups, accessible, inclusive, all abilities and a wider range of informal play activities.	Large variety and type of play elements and supporting informal play areas/activities for all ages and abilities.	Includes iconic items or unique experiences not found in the local region.
Play age	For ages up to 12 years	Provide play opportunities for all ages and abilities where practical	Provide play opportunities for all ages and abilities and intergenerational	Provide play opportunities for all ages and abilities and intergenerational
Length of stay	Short stay - one to two hours	Stay over two hours	Longer stay – four hours to a day	Allows for a full day stay
Diversity of play elements	Approx. 4-5 play elements per play type. Swings and slides required.	Approx. 6 play elements. Swings and slides required.	Approx. 10+ play elements. Swings and slides required.	Approx 12+ play elements. Swings and slides required.
Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall zones with soft fall surfaces required as per (AS4685) • Enough circulation space (beyond fall zone requirements) around equipment shall be soft fall and should connect with the surrounding footpath • Concrete edging (150x200mm thickness) between soft fall and garden beds/turf • Rubber soft fall required for main equipment, accessible equipment, highly used areas like the base of slide, swings • AS/NZS 4422:2016 certified Mulch soft fall for nature play area 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sand soft fall shall be certified soft fall washed sand and free of pebbles and coarse materials in accordance with AS/NZS 4422:2016 Variety of surfaces or texture features for sensory play area 	
Shade	Shade is required for all playspaces, with a preference for natural shade where possible. If adequate natural shade cannot be achieved, shade structures are to be provided. Shade structures shall meet min requirements of 95-98% UVE rating.	
Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required – formal and informal seating to be provided in appropriate locations, including under shade either via natural shade or shade structure. Preferably seats with backs and armrests. To be located near play equipment, particularly near younger children’s play areas to allow for adult supervision 	
Connecting pathways	Required – must be connected to a street footpath or shared path and pathways throughout the site will be 1.5m wide, 1:20 orientated	
Water bubblers	Required- include wheelchair accessible for larger playspaces	
Picnic table	<p>Required, with solid shade for weather protection</p> <p>Wheelchair accessible picnic table to be included at all district, citywide and regional facilities</p>	
BBQ facilities	Not required	Required, with solid shade for weather protection, wheelchair accessible
Rubbish bins	Required and need to be suitably located	
Lighting and power	Not required unless otherwise specified	
Public toilets (including accessible toilet)	Not required	Required – Refer to public toilets minimum requirements.
Kiosk	Not required	Required
Fencing	Installation of fencing will be determined based on risk assessments and distribution	Required

	of fenced playspaces across the LGA. Where a playspace is located within 10 metres of a hazard (e.g. roadway, waterway etc.), a partial or full barrier such as fencing is required.	
Car parking	Not required. Bike parking supported where feasible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-street parking required and must be connected to playspace via accessible pathways- minimum 10 car spaces • Canopy trees provided for parking spaces • Provision of accessible parking shall be 2% to 3% of the overall parking requirements in accordance with Development Control Plan (DCP) • Car parking design and dimensions to meet Australian Standards • Bike parking to be provided
Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design	The playspace shall be designed in accordance with CPTED principles and Maitland's DCP.	
Materials	All equipment is to be sustainable and robust. Detailed material requirements to be addressed in detailed design.	

2.2 Further design requirements

Play elements

- Diversity of play opportunities at the site for mixed age groups including adults and people living with disabilities.
- Materials and colours, theming respond to existing site character or history
- Placement of dynamic equipment arranged in line with age-growth / skill development
- Most of the equipment is designed for intergenerational play
- Small boulders / rocks in a playpace cannot be lifted by a child and shall be fixed to the ground
- Free play, quiet play and social play allowed and separated within the play spaces
- Avoid duplication of play spaces and ensure varieties for the community

Furniture and fencing

- Durable, flame retardant and maintenance-free product preferred
- Limited timber use and timber bollards are not supported
- Recommend recycled material for boardwalks
- Physical barriers shall be provided between the road, carpark and playspaces
- All furniture shall be installed on a concrete slab with sufficient accessible area
- Minimise level changes over 600mm

3.0 Quality design

Council requires all new play space design to be prepared by a qualified landscape architect or similar qualified professional.

A successful play space invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures. It's easy and safe to access and move around. It provides a range of play options and challenges with appropriate facilities in a comfortable environment. The inclusive play space encourages everyone to stay as long as they choose.

Design considerations for different age groups in a play space

The following items have shown what requirements are considered for different age groups but not limited. Different ages and abilities have different needs. CPTED principles apply for all ages.

Preschool age (0-5years)

Children achieve development abilities through play at this stage, such as motor skills, problem solving, cooperation and imagination. They investigate surrounding environment like colours, materials and sounds.

Play type: active play / creative & imaginative play / exploratory & nature play

School age / juniors (6-12years)

The growing children enjoy challenging and engaging play. They interact and socialise with other kids, and tend to get involved in activities like informal sports.

Play type: active play / creative & imaginative play / exploratory & nature play / some sports

Key considerations:

- Challenging and engaging play equipment at a larger scale
- Circulated and smooth-surfaced footpath for running / cycling / scootering
- Open space for free play and group games like kickabout
- Vary the topography to enhance the play experience
- Manipulable elements like water and sand
- Take advantage of natural/unconstructed elements as a play possibility

Teenagers (13+years)

This is a time of many physical, mental, emotional, and social changes during adolescence.

Play type: active play / formal sports & exercises / organised programs

Key considerations:

- Youth spaces like skate parks, sports courts
- Co-location with sportsfields or other recreation facilities
- Multi-purpose open space with maximum views and passive surveillance
- Shared pathways or separated cycling trails
- Discourage antisocial behaviors through design

Adults (incl. seniors & people living with a disability)

Other people use the play space for exercise and socialising as well. For example, seniors could use outdoor gym equipment to improve balance, strengthen motor skills and enhance their mental wellbeing. Typical considerations for people living with a disability should be considered in the design, such as vision impairment, hard of hearing, mental health conditions and physical disability.

Play type: fitness & recreation

Activities: exercising / jogging / picnicking / quiet seating / barbecue

Key considerations:

- Layout setting easily understood and functional
- Multi-purpose open space for passive recreation activities
- Accessibility for seniors and people living with disabilities
- Shelters and natural shades, picnic settings, seats with back, bins
- Accessible and inclusive play / motion design
- Consideration of weight requirements for equipment to ensure equipment allows for adult usage

3.0 Document Control

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	August 2026	Developed document