

NILLUMBIK planning for play



Nillumbik Shire Council Lifetime play strategy All ages play framework

DRAFT MAY 2017

PLACE



Acknowledgments

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introduction

This planning for play framework has been prepared to guide the provision of strategically considered play including active and passive informal recreation spaces and informal opportunities to incorporate play into daily life.

Council has identified the need to upgrade, redevelop, rationalize and redefine existing play spaces. This plan establishes a strategic direction for the provision of a diverse range of accessible, attractive, challenging and complementary playspaces offering experiences for all ages and abilities within a natural setting as well as in the urban public realm for all ages.

To achieve this, the framework outlines what play is, its importance and explains in more detail what all ages play is and how we need to be more holistic when planning for play.

Following this, is the introduction of the four key pillars of play. These four principles capture what a playspace or playful opportunity should contain. They are the Art, Nature, Health and Connection of Play.

Finally the framework presents a model for the provision of both designated play spaces which primarily focus on children's play from 0-14, and playful opportunities which, whilst still considering the needs of children, focuses also on the needs of play for adults.

These are outlined to give Council a benchmark tool in which to assess both existing playspace provision and future play opportunities across the shire. This will include a detailed assessment of all playspaces and their distribution so that a strategic plan can be developed moving forward. This forms the next phase of this study.

This initial framework has been informed by a very successful community engagement process undertaken in 2016 and all the good ideas and responses people of all ages put forward regarding play. Essentially validating the planning frameworks four key pillars of which all four are a re-occurring theme throughout.



Re-imagining play

What is play?

Play is described by some as the universal language of childhood though not only children play¹. No matter our age, we all play: in different ways, at different times, in different places and with different people.

But what is play? It is variously described and no matter how defined, enjoyment is the common thread:

To play is to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose².

The focus of play is on the actual experience, not on accomplishing any goal. There doesn't need to be any point to the activity beyond having fun and enjoying yourself³.

What people most enjoy, want and need from play varies along developmental and age spectrums, and is underpinned by five types of play:

- **Physical (or active) play:** opportunity for walking, running, balance, coordination, jumping, skipping, hanging, climbing, sliding, rocking and swinging;
- **Cognitive play:** opportunity for exploration, manipulating objects, problem solving, imaginative play and building on what already known to interpret new experiences;
- **Sensory play:** opportunity for sensory stimulation through sound, sight, touch and smell;
- **Emotional play:** opportunity for appropriate risk taking, self-direction and self-regulation; and
- **Social play:** opportunity for sharing, teamwork, communication, building friendships and support⁴.

Providing play opportunities for people of all ages means acknowledging that everyone can, and should play. Most importantly, providing play opportunities is not just about providing play equipment and facilities: play can include public place pop-ups, performance, programs and events, or artworks and sculptures that foster fun, inspire imagination or evoke senses and memories. Play is not just physical or active.



1 Play Scotland. What is play? <http://www.playscotland.org/what-is-play-playwork/what-is-play>.
2 Oxford Dictionary. www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/play.
3 Helpguide.org. The benefits of play for adults. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>: n.d.
4 Carter, M., Wood, L., Martin, K., Hollins, A., Seymour, W. and Wallis, A. City of Subiaco Playspace Strategy. Perth, WA: City of Subiaco, 2013.

Why is play important for all ages?

The many benefits of play include stimulating the mind and boosting creativity, relieving stress, improving relationships and connection to others, and perhaps most importantly, enhancing feelings of being young and energetic.

The opposite of play isn't work. It's depression. To play is to act out and be wilful, exultant and committed, as if one is assured of one's prospects⁵.

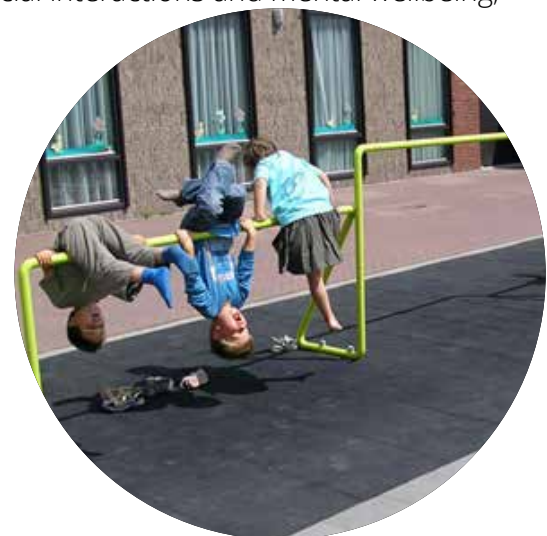
Engaging in play is often described as the work of children as it enables them to develop friendships and social skills, and to learn empathy and reciprocity⁶. Free play assists children to develop skills in exploring other's perspectives, independence, cooperation, helping, and solving problems⁷, and children learn social competencies such as sharing, turn-taking and interaction during play⁸. Furthermore, play promotes mental health, with research indicating that a decline in children's free play time is correlated with increased anxiety and depression⁹. Play also enables children to develop strategies and skills to cope with challenges they encounter¹⁰.

While these developmental opportunities are important for children, it is equally important to consider how play can cater to different needs across the lifespan. This has implications for the design and provision of playspaces and other opportunities to play, as what may meet the developmental needs of one age group (e.g. for younger children, cognitive and sensory play is vital) will differ from the most prominent needs of another age cohort (e.g. for teenagers, physical and social play are essential and their needs are often not met). At the other end of the age spectrum, activity and cognitive play is vital for older people to retain physical function and mental acuity¹¹. Social play is important for people of all ages, and play has an important role in fostering inter-generational interaction within a community.

While our understanding of play may change as we get older, it is imperative that we all continue to play as we age. Not enabling people of all ages to play can be damaging to our health.

We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing¹²

Young people and adults continue to learn through play. For young people, play can provide the means to test new skills, explore new relationships and discover their place in the world¹³. For adults, opportunities to play can benefit creativity, problem-solving, imagination, stress reduction, social interactions and mental wellbeing, as well as providing a source of relaxation, fun and spontaneity¹⁴.



5 Kane, P. The Play Ethic (blog), Available at <http://www.theplayethic.com/what-is-the-play-ethic.html>, (n.d).

6 Play England. A world without play: An expert view. Available from: www.playengland.org.uk, 2011.

7 Gleave, J and I Cole-Hamilton, A world without play: A literature review, Play England, 2012.

8 Uren, N and K Stagnitti, Pretend play, social competence and involvement in children aged 5–7 years: The concurrent validity of the Child-Initiated Pretend Play Assessment. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, 56(1): p. 33-40, 2008.

9 Gray, P, The decline in play and the rise in psychopathology in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Play*, 2011. 3(4): p. 443-464.

10 National Playing Fields Association (NFPA) and PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council (CPC), Best Play: What play provision should do for children, 2000.

11 Yarnal, C. and Qian, X. Older-Adult Playfulness: An Innovative Construct and Measurement for Healthy Aging Research. *American Journal of Play*, (4), 1, available from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ985548.pdf>.

12 George Bernard Shaw, Irish author and playwright, 1856-1950

13 Boston College. Free play for children, teens is vital to social development. *ScienceDaily*. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/04/090415102211.htm; 15 April 2009.

14 Brown, S, *Play: how it shapes the brain, opens the imagination, and invigorates the soul*. Penguin; 2009.

Table 1: Lifespan development needs

The above summary that shows how the principles are relevant for all ages. This is further expressed in the table below which highlights a snapshot of some of the different areas of lifespan development for various age groups. This assists in starting to establish some of the key factors that should be considered when designing for lifetime play.

| Area of lifespan development | Babies/toddlers | Lower primary | Secondary schoolers | Tertiary education & independence | Young workforce | Parents and homebuilders | Older adults and pre-retirees | Empty nesters and retirees, seniors, elderly |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|---|
| cognitive involves changes in an individual's mental abilities, such as perception, thinking, learning, memory, language, moral reasoning, problem solving and decision making. | opportunity for exploration, manipulating objects, problem solving, imaginative play | problem solving, imaginative play, challenges | testing, puzzles, games | debating, politics, university | technology, politics, community consciousness, children, work | technology, politics, community consciousness, children, work | problem solving, grandparents | problem solving, grandparents |
| sensory involves process through which the five human senses develop. they include the sight and sound senses, touch and texture, smell and taste and also body position sense. | opportunity for sensory stimulation (sounds, sight, touch, smell) such as music, noise, texture | outdoors, textures | music, artistic expression, bands | gardens, music, food | food, music, outdoors, community garden | food, music, gardens | smell, hearing, sight, touch, memory, gardens, food, music | smell, hearing, sight, touch, memory, music, gardens |
| physical involves changes in the body and its various systems, such as the development of the brain and nervous system, bones and muscles, motor skills(movement) and the hormonal changes of puberty and menopause. | movement, balance, coordination | jumping, hanging, climbing, sliding, rocking, swinging, pushing, pulling | climbing, balance, coordination, faster and bigger kids, adventurous, peer pressure, team sport | kick to kick, jogging, cycling, social games, dance, adventure pursuits | jogging, personal training, fun runs, social sport, fitness groups, social walking | cycling, dog walking, golf, social walking, | golf, walking, passive sports, cycling, bushwalking | stretching, walking, passive sports, maintaining strength, cycling |
| social involves changes in an individual's relationships with other people and their skills in interacting with others. | communication | teamwork, friendships | discos, dancing, music, hanging out in groups, shopping, cinema, flirting | cafes, gardens, festivals, bbqs, picnics, art, bars | dinner parties, bbqs, markets, family focused, festivals, friend groups, community groups, school committees | community groups, art, markets, community events, family focussed | community classes, rotary club, lions club, friends gathering, RSL, art, USA | community groups, rotary club, lions club, friends gathering, RSL, art, USA |
| emotional involves changes in how an individual experiences different feelings and how these feelings are expressed, interpreted and dealt with. | learning right and wrong, risk | opportunity for appropriate risk taking, self-direction and self-regulation | challenging, adventurous, risks, challenge, society, sexuality, peer pressure, support, independence, access | maturity, relationships, coupled activities, sexuality, fun, seriousness | children, parenthood, work, financially secure, mortality, work balance, stress | children, work, balance | Health, illness, positive aging | positive aging, isolation, loneliness, illness, mortality |

Planning for play



In recent times, playspace design and planning has focused on provision of safe playground equipment (along with associated maintenance and timely replacement), rather than provision of creative, challenging and exciting play environments. The traditional image of a playground as simply including a swing, slide and sandpit is no longer sustainable in contemporary communities. We need to re-imagine our approach to play to ensure the needs of people of all ages and abilities are met.

One of the critical components in re-imagining play is to understand that while adults may be arbiters of providing playspaces, the people who use playspaces are rarely the designers – and very few people, especially children and young people, have a voice in determining what their play opportunities might look like. If we are to change the status quo, we need to rethink traditional images of play.

While the swing, sandpit and slide still have their place, much current play provision focuses on physical play, with fewer play opportunities for cognitive, sensory, emotional and social play. We need to re-invent the rules of the game. In too many cases, play is managed and controlled; often simply by the structure of standardised play equipment. The rules of using a slide usually include going only in one direction. There are no rules about how to climb a tree. And when the game involves pretending that the corner of the park is a faraway land, imagination rules.

Unless challenge is offered, people will find it. Once a physical apparatus has been mastered, people become bored and will create challenge by using play equipment in unexpected and sometimes dangerous ways. There are numerous examples of people climbing higher, swinging further or spinning faster on equipment intended for more sedate use. If we consider other forms of play that encourage exploration, inspire creativity and offer varying levels of challenge, each time a player returns they can find new ways to engage in play, to use their imagination or stretch their boundaries through adventure and discovery.

Other traditional approaches to play have been to create age-specific spaces: the little slide into the sand pit for tiny tots, the bigger slide and climbing frame for ten-year-olds, the skate park and basketball hoop for teenagers, and the fitness equipment for adults. This approach has unwittingly created age-exclusive facilities and circumstances where a teenager playing on a climbing frame may be asked to leave “as it’s only for the little kids” or asked not to use the fitness equipment as an obstacle course as it’s only meant for people who want to exercise in a particular way. This approach is counter-productive as it creates segmented playspaces, rather than places for play that are flexible, meet the needs of different people at different times, and can be adapted to meet changing community expectations over time.

We need to be imaginative in thinking about how to design play places for people of all ages that provide opportunity for physical challenge, exploration and social interaction. It is becoming increasingly clear that people seek vibrant, playful places where they can interact as a whole family, socialise with friends or simply watch other people play. The challenge that now faces us is to incorporate playfulness into all aspects of the public realm, not just parks and playgrounds, to build in flexibility and provide play opportunities that can adapt as community preferences and expectations change. Our re-imagined places for play need to enable people of all ages and abilities to play independently as much as they need to enable people of all ages and abilities to play together.

A snapshot of Nillumbik

Introduction

This section provides a demographic snapshot of the Shire of Nillumbik to show age and community profile in the context of play provision moving forward.

Population

The Nillumbik Shire Estimated Resident Population for 2015 is 62,602, with an average population density of 1.45 persons per hectare. The population is 49.5% male & 50.5% female. Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people make up 0.3% of the population. The shire has a low population density because it is largely rural. Density by smaller area is shown below.

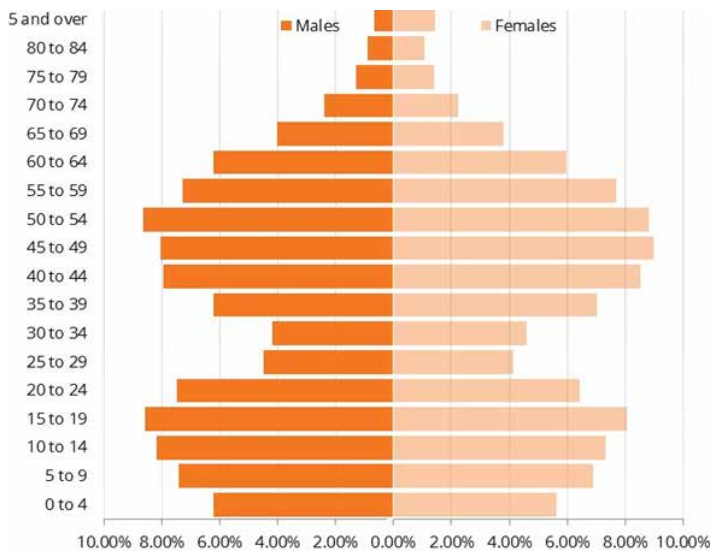


Table 1 Nillumbik Population Density by Area, 2011

| Area | Pop. | Pop per Hectare |
|--------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Diamond Creek | 11,212 | 6.28 |
| Eltham | 18,151 | 10.97 |
| Eltham North | 4,629 | 15.78 |
| Greensborough | 5,336 | 19.38 |
| Hurstbridge | 3,498 | 2.39 |
| Kangaroo Ground | 1,032 | 0.32 |
| North Warrandyte | 2,976 | 3.27 |
| Plenty - Yarrambat | 3,618 | 1.37 |
| Research | 2,615 | 2.93 |
| Rural East | 3,458 | 0.18 |
| Rural North West | 1,573 | 0.16 |
| Wattle Glen | 2,260 | 2.51 |
| Yarrambat | 1,512 | 0.98 |

Figure 2. Nillumbik Population by Age by Sex (%), 2011

Population diversity

Overall in 2011, 14.9% of the Nillumbik population was born overseas, and 7.2% were from a non-English speaking background, compared with 31.4% and 24.2% respectively for metropolitan Melbourne.

The largest group from a non-English speaking country of birth in Nillumbik was from Italy, where 1.2% of the population, or 703 people, were born.

Language statistics are a good indicator of the cultural diversity of a population. Between 2006 and 2011, the number of people who spoke a language other than English at home increased by 449 or 10.1%, and the number of people who spoke English only increased by 424 or 0.8%.

Community acceptance of diverse cultures

In 2011, 52.3% of people in Nillumbik agreed that multiculturalism made life better in their area, compared to 54% of people in Greater Melbourne.

| Summary | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population | 62,716 | 62,882 | 63,418 | 64,390 | 65,641 | 67,304 |
| Change in population (5yrs) | -- | 166 | 536 | 972 | 1,251 | 1,664 |
| Average annual change | -- | 0.05% | 0.17% | 0.30% | 0.39% | 0.50% |
| Households | 20,578 | 21,358 | 22,063 | 22,712 | 23,311 | 23,896 |
| Average household size | 3.03 | 2.92 | 2.85 | 2.81 | 2.79 | 2.79 |
| Population in non-private dwellings | 385 | 554 | 590 | 590 | 620 | 620 |
| Dwellings | 21,291 | 22,095 | 22,828 | 23,495 | 24,109 | 24,714 |
| Dwelling occupancy rate | 96.65 | 96.66 | 96.65 | 96.67 | 96.69 | 96.69 |

Table 4. Forecast population, households and dwellings

| Forecast year | 2011 | 2016 | 2021 | 2026 | 2031 | 2036 | Population Change (2016-2036) Number | Population Change (2016-2036) Percent |
|-------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Diamond Creek | 11598 | 11667 | 12246 | 12932 | 13467 | 13997 | 2330 | 20.0% |
| Eltham Central | 8073 | 8302 | 8427 | 8582 | 8822 | 9094 | 792 | 9.5% |
| Eltham East | 3914 | 3682 | 3610 | 3623 | 3726 | 3921 | 239 | 6.5% |
| Eltham Edendale | 3502 | 3477 | 3503 | 3556 | 3610 | 3679 | 202 | 5.8% |
| Eltham South | 3347 | 3277 | 3264 | 3300 | 3350 | 3416 | 139 | 4.2% |
| Eltham North | 4815 | 4759 | 4774 | 4884 | 5073 | 5289 | 530 | 11.1% |
| Greensborough | 5603 | 5610 | 5549 | 5503 | 5477 | 5513 | -97 | -1.7% |
| Hurstbridge | 3646 | 3616 | 3535 | 3494 | 3477 | 3504 | -112 | -3.1% |
| Kangaroo Ground - Wattle Glen | 3403 | 3329 | 3294 | 3293 | 3321 | 3368 | 39 | 1.2% |
| North Warrandyte | 3077 | 2986 | 2905 | 2892 | 2896 | 2914 | -72 | -2.4% |
| Plenty - Yarrambat | 3802 | 4379 | 4559 | 4538 | 4554 | 4595 | 216 | 4.9% |
| Research | 2716 | 2643 | 2623 | 2643 | 2685 | 2760 | 117 | 4.4% |
| Rural East | 3438 | 3365 | 3325 | 3332 | 3350 | 3392 | 27 | 0.8% |

Table 5. Population forecast by small area

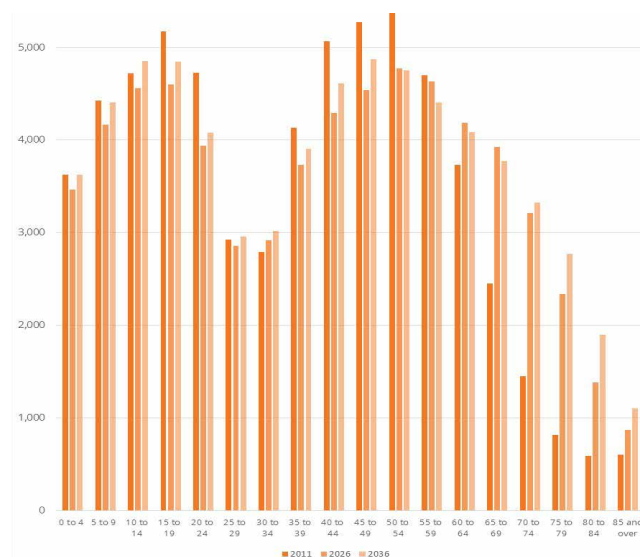


Table 6. Forecast of population change

Population forecast

In 2011, the total population of Nillumbik Shire was estimated to be 62,716 people. It is expected to increase by over 1,600 people to 64,390 by 2026, at an average annual growth rate of 0.18%. There are two ways in which populations can change, through net migration and/or through natural increase (births minus deaths). Some areas are more driven by one or other of these factors. Migration is largely driven by housing development, whereas natural increase is a function of the age of the population. Over the next 10 years, it is anticipated that more people will move out of shire than move in. The forecast age groups in Nillumbik is a function of the current age of the population (people aging each year, being born and dying) as well as the age of people migrating into and out of the area. This in turn is driven by the location the existing housing stock, the amount and type of new residential development (same as existing stock, or diversifying) and where the area is in a cycle of change. The forecast population by age group is shown in the graph to the right.

In 2011, the dominant age structure for people in Nillumbik Shire was ages 50 to 54, which accounted for 8.8% of the total persons. The largest increase in people between 2011 and 2026 is forecast to be in ages 70 to 74, which is expected to increase by 1,761 and account for 5.0% of the total people. The largest 5 year age group in 2026 is 50 to 54 years, with a total of 4,777 people.

Discussion

Nillumbik contains an ageing population that is relatively stable. It has a low density of housing and relative high income in comparison with broader Melbourne. From a play perspective, the creation of life time play opportunities for all residents but focusing on older residents is therefore a critical consideration in local areas that they can access readily. A diverse range of play opportunities is critical given the diverse age distribution within the shire, which aligns with the framework.

Consultation summary

Who we spoke to...

Total number of people engaged

277

This section is a brief summary of the Nillumbik "Planning for Play" consultation. This gives a broader understanding of what the community sees important for play provision for all ages across the shire. It took place in mid 2016 and included five drop-in sessions held in different locations throughout Nillumbik in conjunction with an on-line survey and forum where community members shared their ideas for play in Nillumbik and voted for their favorite suggestions. This has informed this framework including the key pillars of play and model of provision outlined later within this report.

5 Drop-in sessions

Diamond Creek

23 participants

Alistair Knox Park, Eltham

39 participants

Hurstbridge

25 participants

Diamond Valley Sports & Fitness Centre

12 participants

Eltham Lower Park

63 participants

162

people engaged



young people
(up to 18 years)

60%



adults
(19 years +)

40%



Alistair Knox Park Eltham drop-in session



Diamond Valley Sports & Fitness Centre drop-in session



Diamond Creek drop-in session

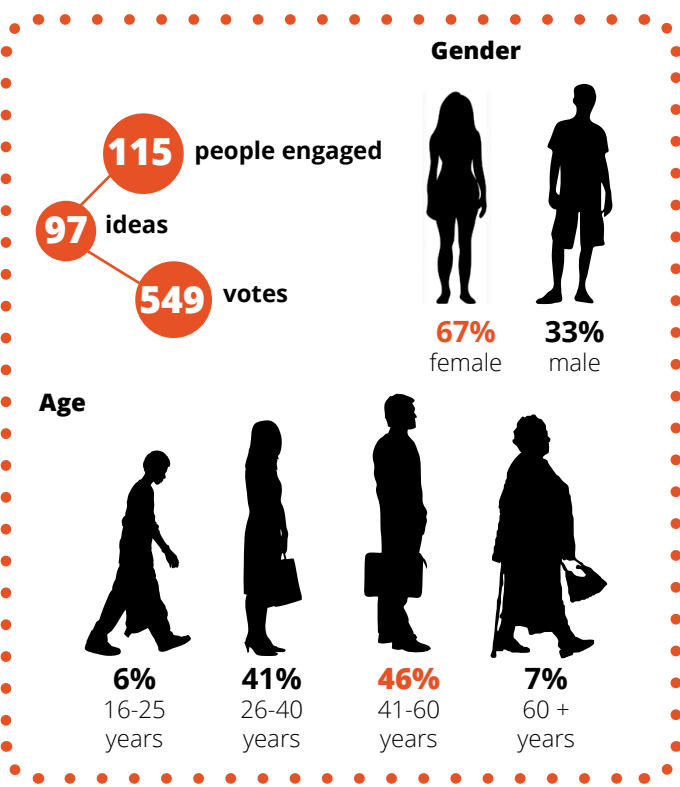


Eltham Lower Park drop-in session



Hurstbridge drop-in session

Online survey



What is play for you?

- 1** Nature play & getting outside amongst natural environment
The NATURE of Play
- 2** Socialising & hanging out with friends
The CONNECTION of Play
- 3** Being active & fitness
The HEALTH of Play

“Play for me is anything that I enjoy without too much effort that makes me smile”

“Play for me is skating, eating food and relaxing with mates”
“Play for me is playing with my family. Things for all ages”

“Play for me is being in nature outside”

“Play for me is walking my dog.”

“Play is hanging with friends”

“Why not use the Hurstbridge High School site as a destination playground, BBQ area, parkland etc?”

What do you enjoy about the outdoor areas of Nillumbik?



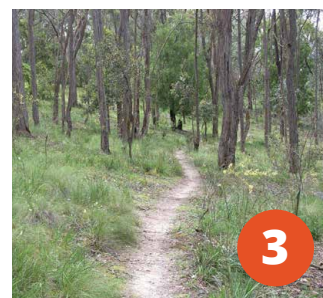
1

The natural setting & bush



2

The playspaces



3

The bike/walking trails

What type of activities are lacking in your community?

“Active senior play”

“Somewhere in which children can explore, use their imaginations, collaborate with others and that looks natural and inviting for all ages.”

“A place for young people to hang out, meet friends, learn new skills and participate in a range of activities.”

“Need more opportunities for the whole family to interact together- tied in with other activities like bike riding”
“Big stuff for 14 year olds.”

“Covered outdoor performance stage: for music, drama, yoga, meditation community performances anytime!”

“Somewhere that allows kids to take risks...”

Some of the key suggestions...

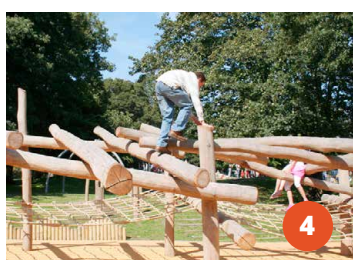
1. **Regional destination playspace** that caters to a range of ages and allows for groups, events and includes social elements
2. **Shared path network** including walking /jogging tracks and bike infrastructure (ie. parking and trails)
3. Social and challenging **adventure play** particularly for older kids
4. More designated **dog off lead areas**
5. **Nature play and nature trails** that get people of all ages to interact and engage with the natural environment
6. **Well maintained and accessible toilets** in high use areas
7. **Multi-courts** including line marking and hoops or goals for different sports
8. **Accessible play and social areas** for different ages and abilities
9. **Free outdoor events** to engage with a range of community members

Vote for your favourite play image?



137 people voted for their top three play images

Images of adventure play in a natural looking setting and wheel sports such as bike riding, scooter and skate were popular images. Nature play for younger kids including bush cubbies and water play were also popular. Images of play that included vegetation and organic materials such as wood received a greater number of votes.



"I enjoy being active outside"

"I enjoy being in nature"

"I like to go skateboarding and seeing my mates"

"I like things to play on and climb with lots of ways to go in and out"

Summary

The level of engagement from the community was high, with 277 people of all ages participating in the drop in sessions and online forum.

Based on the data gathered and comments from community members, there is a great opportunity for Nillumbik to use this to promote lifetime play across the municipality. There is a clear need and desire for nature based play and active spaces for all ages which is consistent with the planning framework direction and gaps in current provision.

Pillars of play

Introduction

The Shire of Nillumbik has recently adopted its new Council Plan with a vision to be Australia's most liveable shire. Key objectives of this plan include;

ENGAGED, CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

a place where communities and ideas thrive, underpinned by trust, confidence and continuous learning

ACTIVE AND CREATIVE PEOPLE

active lifestyles and artistic expression are fostered through participation and innovation

SAFE AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

healthy and safe communities enjoy living in our environment.

A PROSPEROUS ECONOMY

a strong local economy that supports business growth, jobs and community wealth

RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

collaborative and consultative leadership that builds trust and makes the best use of available resources to the benefit of all in the pursuit of excellence

With these objectives in mind and to best achieve appropriate play for everyone within the Nillumbik community four key play principles have been developed. These have been created specifically for Nillumbik in line with community feedback and best practice and council vision. These principles will be the basis upon which the Shire can approach play provision across its municipality in all different types of public spaces and scales so that the community can enjoy playing and having fun.

The four principles are;

The **art** of play

The **nature** of play

The **health** of play

The **connection** of play

These principles are not mutually exclusive or need to occur all together for a space to work. They are flexible approaches to making our public realm more playful for everyone in the community to enjoy. Designing for all ages play for example does not necessarily mean that it is intended that everybody will use the same area at the same time. Good design accommodates various user groups, encourages more people to frequent parks and public places and delivers benefits to communities.

Different people also use parks and public places for different purposes at different times during each day. On any one day, people seen in a neighbourhood park might variously be described as mothers corralling excited toddlers; grandparents with grandchildren in tow; workers catching some sun while they eat their lunch; children playing on their own or with others; people playing sport and exercising; people walking, talking or just relaxing; teenagers hanging out; or couples spending time.

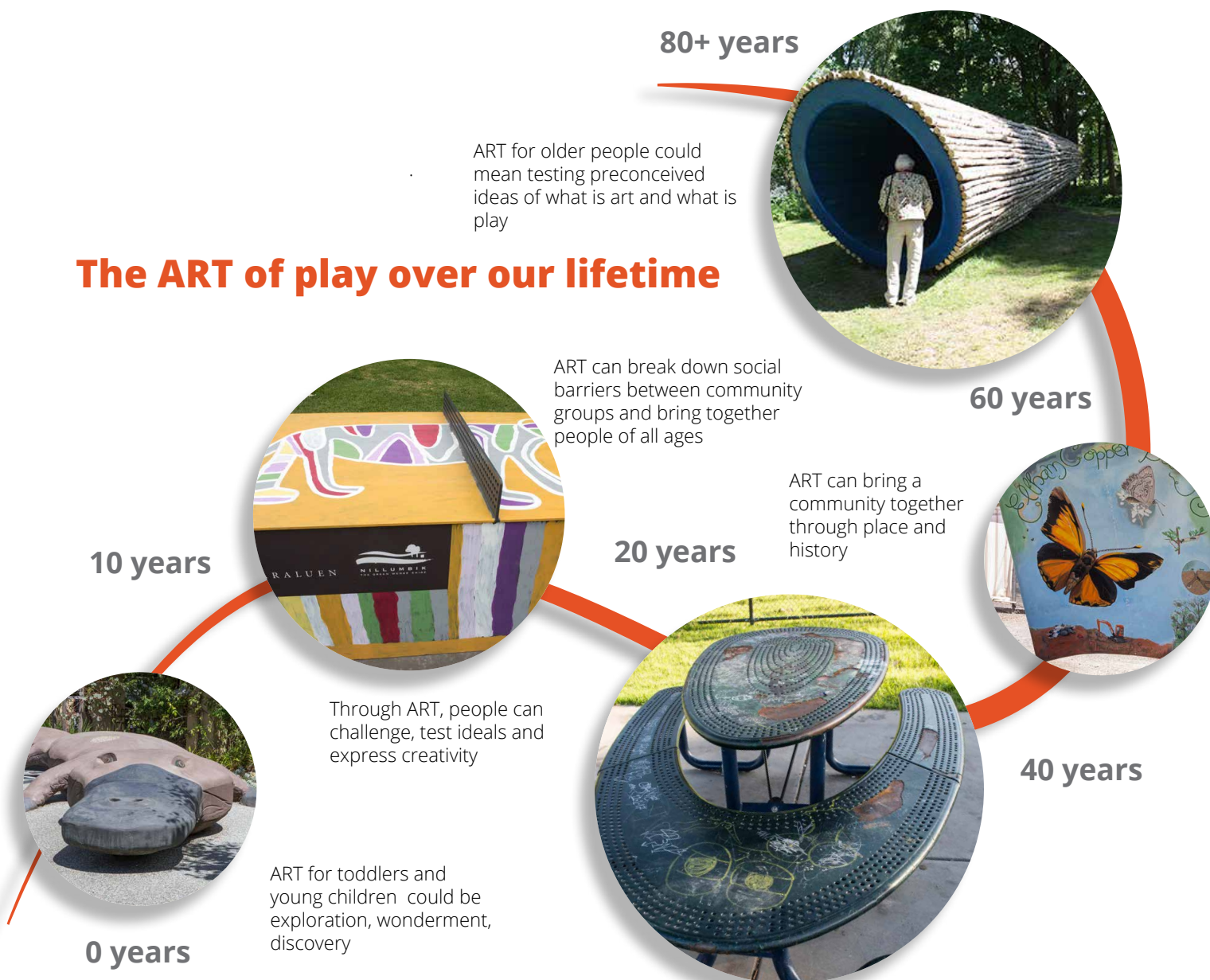
Each of the principles or pillars of play are explained in more detail in the following sections.

The art of play

Children learn through play, while adults play through art¹⁵.

Public art can be a valuable mechanism for injecting playfulness and fostering more vibrant parks and public places¹⁶. Art that infuses personality into locations and makes them into valued places can contribute much community ownership and use of public spaces¹⁷.

Spaces which incorporate play affordances (such as climbable sculptures or artistic surface treatments) that invite play will allow play to happen within the whole of community space rather than just within parks and formal playgrounds¹⁸. Taking a more playful, imaginative approach to the design of public spaces can also help cultivate a sense of place¹⁹. The inclusion of elements of novelty and surprise can enhance people's experience of public places and their likelihood of return or recommending it by word of mouth to others. Sometimes simple items that have versatility of purpose can conjure the most joy. It also creates opportunities for the Shire's strong community based artists to connect and work on a range of fun and exciting programs. "Art that infuses personality into locations and makes them into places" can contribute much to enhancing community ownership and use of public spaces.



15. Brian Eno (British musician). BBC Music: John Peel Lecture, www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/speeches/2015/bbc-music-john-peel-lecture, 28 September 2015.
 16. Percy-Smith B, Carney C. Art installations as action research: engaging children and communities in evaluating and redesigning city centre public spaces. *Educational Action Research Journal*. 2011.
 17. Sucher DM. City comforts: How to build an urban village: City Comforts Inc; 2010.
 18. CABE Space. Public space lessons: Designing and planning for play, in CABE, London; 2008.
 19. CABE Space. Children's Play. Available from: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/public-space/play-space>; 2011.

The nature of play

Across the western world, the last decade has seen exponential recognition of the role that parks and nature-based playspaces can play in redressing what has become known as “nature deficit disorder”: a lack of time spent outdoors and an increasing disconnection between people and nature²⁰.

Places for play that incorporate natural design elements and features which work with the local topography provide the added benefit of increased nature contact for the community²¹. Children will seek out areas of bush, trees or open space for imaginative play. Adults will seek out those same places for recreation, relaxation and reflection. Apart from developing connection to nature, providing opportunities for exploration, adventure and risk-taking is essential to human development. Nature-based and adventurous play provides opportunity for physical, cognitive, emotional, social and sensory development. Perhaps most importantly, experiencing adventure and learning how to manage risk enables children to grow to be competent, confident people who can lead healthy, fulfilled lives²². Natural systems, the environment, local ecology and wildlife can all be a generator of play.

Nature play is not just using natural materials, rather it is immersive, allowing exploration, texture, tactile experiences, and educative opportunities. Given the significance of the Shire of Nillumbik as a green wedge, enabling the community to sensitively and sustainably connect with and enjoy the beauty of the Shire’s natural areas is critically important.

0 years



NATURE for toddlers and young children can be exploratory, educational, and aid healthy development and growth

10 years



The NATURE of play over our lifetime

20 years

NATURE for young adults could mean an escape from working life, camping, trail rides and exercise

NATURE for an older generation could mean bird watching, fostering new community groups and interaction

NATURE for adults might mean gathering family and friends for a bush walk, discovering new areas within their community



80+ years



40 years



60 years

20. Louv R. Last child in the woods: Saving our children from nature-deficit disorder. New York, NY: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill; 2005.

21. Pyle, R. Losers, weepers: The extinction of experience and the diminishing baseline. In Come outside and play: A multi-disciplinary symposium. 2007. University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia

22. Houston, L, R Worthington, and P Harrop. Design guidance for play spaces. Available from www.forestry.gov.uk/england-play; 2006.

The health of play

Active playspaces attract people to exercise, and are important local destinations where people can be vigorous and expend energy. People of all ages need exercise and activity and for children, opportunities to be active and lively are essential to development.

Planning and design of active spaces may focus on offering wide pathways, open areas, and sports fields where users can safely walk, run and play. Quality, attractiveness and size of parks and public places can substantially influence the level of physical activity within a local neighbourhood²³.

Not all activity needs to be focused on sport or physical exercise. Active spaces can be used to hold one-off or temporary or ongoing events, festivals, fairs, exhibitions or performances that interest and engage people of all ages.

Being physical, active and fit is a critical component of play for all ages. As an aging society that is becoming more sedentary, opportunities that improve our health and gets us active is so critical. To make these opportunities fun and engaging is what the health of play is all about, providing access to fitness and physical exercise and movement outside of traditional organised sport or associated activities. This could include 1/2 courts, rebound walls, exercise and fitness stations or wheeled sports such as Skate or BMX.

HEALTH for older adults could mean social gatherings to stay connected with the community



The HEALTH of play over our lifetime

HEALTH for adults might mean fitness trails, boot camps, community fitness events



HEALTH for young children could mean developing physical skills, confidence, motor skills, making new friends



23. Giles-Corti B, Broomhall MH, Knuiiman M, Collins C, Douglas K, Ng K, et al. Increasing walking: how important is distance to, attractiveness, and size of public open space? American Journal of Preventive Medicine. 2005; 28(2): 169-76

The connection of play

If we lack the full range of social connection, then our basic psychological needs are not met, putting us at risk of suffering from loneliness – a condition that is linked to poor health and wellbeing. It's now recognised that loneliness is up there with high blood pressure, lack of exercise, obesity, and smoking as an indicator of shortened life expectancy.²⁴

Social connections across families, neighbours and across the age spectrum are critical in building and sustaining strong communities. People having fun together can socialise and connect through play. Connection is also ensuring the community can access play no matter gender, age, cultural background or ability. This relates to both enabling opportunities for clear and easy physical access to spaces you can play and ensuring those places are universally accessible.

Inclusive play provision is open and accessible to all and takes positive action in removing disabling barriers so that people of all ages and abilities can play together²⁵.

A key part of the connection of play is embracing the importance of access for all. As a starting point AS 1428 Design for Access and Mobility should be Nillumbik's benchmark for as many play environments as possible. Key approaches such as establishing continuous paths of travel from car parking to the play space areas and to and through play components and facilities acknowledged as priority for people with a disability, parents/ carers with prams as well as seniors is important.

0 years

CONNECTION for children with a disability could be wheelchair accessible play opportunities



The CONNECTION of play over our lifetime

10 years

CONNECTION for children can help develop social skills at a young age



60 years

CONNECTION for older adults might mean events close to public transport or accessible parking for ease of getting there



80+ years



20 years

CONNECTION for young adults might be music events, markets and performances



40 years

Table 2: Key lifetime play principles

In consideration of the above broad lifespan development needs by age now in relation to the new four pillars of play, there are a range of both traditional play and playable opportunities that can be highlighted for all different age groups. These are summarised below to assist in giving clarity of what play means for each principle and age group.

| principle/pillar | Babies/toddlers lower primary | Upper Primary | Secondary schoolers | Tertiary education & independence & Young workforce | Parents and homebuilders | Older adults and pre-retirees | Empty nesters, retirees, seniors & elderly |
|---|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| art of play Focus on creativity and imagination. | Consideration for bright, colourful and vibrant sculptural or painted/drawn elements. Things that delight and engage with the very young. Include sounds and textures. | Consideration of bright, colourful and vibrant sculptural or painted/drawn elements. Things that delight and engage with the young. Include sounds and textures and climbable/movable elements. Opportunities for kids involvement in making the art. | Consideration of age relevant art, music and multimedia to engage with age cohort. May include physically challenging/testing elements with also themes that challenge thinking. Opportunities for involvement in making the art. | Consideration of diverse themes, ideas to cater for people across age spectrum. May include physically challenging/testing elements with also themes that challenge thinking. Opportunities for involvement in making the art. | Consideration of diverse themes, ideas to cater for both parents and children across age spectrum. May include physically challenging/testing elements with also themes that challenge thinking. Opportunities for involvement in making the art. | Consideration of diverse themes, ideas to cater for both grandparents and children across age spectrum. May include physically challenging/testing elements with also themes that challenge thinking. Opportunities for involvement in making the art. May include historical or community based meaning | Consideration of diverse themes, ideas to cater for people across age spectrum. May include physical elements with also themes that challenge thinking. Opportunities for involvement in making the art. May include historical or community based meaning |
| nature of play Focus on the environment & natural systems | Consideration for movable and textural elements such as sand & water. Sensory and textural plants. | Consideration for movable and textural elements such as sand & water. Sensory and textural plants. Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Educational opportunities (highlight environmental principles, wildlife, exploration. Adventurous opportunities including obstacle courses (tough mudder) & hiking mountain biking etc.. | Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Opportunities for trail/bush exploration. Adventurous opportunities including obstacle courses (tough mudder), hiking & mountain biking etc.. Opportunities for environmental support/friends of/ planting days | Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Opportunities for trail/bush exploration including hiking, horse riding, mountain biking etc. Opportunities for environmental support/friends of/ planting days etc | Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Opportunities for trail/bush exploration including walking/hiking, horse riding, mountain biking etc.. Opportunities for environmental support/friends of/ planting days etc | Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Opportunities for trail/bush exploration including walking/hiking, horse riding, mountain biking etc.. Opportunities for environmental support/friends of/ planting days etc | Consideration of natural & recycled materials. Opportunities for trail/bush exploration including walking/hiking, horse riding, mountain biking etc.. Opportunities for environmental support/friends of/ planting days etc |
| health of play Focus on physical movement, exercise and fitness | Consideration for elements that assist with balance, movement, climbing, swinging, sliding and developing motor skills and physical strength | Consideration for elements that assist with balance, movement, climbing, swinging, sliding and developing motor skills and physical strength. Ensure provide appropriate physical challenges such as adventure play or parkour & skate/scooter/BMX areas. | Consideration of unstructured recreation opportunities (climbing, adventurous, parkour focus) open spaces for games & informal ball sports. Skate/scooter or informal ball sport areas | Consideration of unstructured recreation opportunities (fitness focus) open spaces for games & informal ball sports. Skate or informal ball sport areas Running/jogging tracks/fitness circuits | Consideration of unstructured recreation opportunities (fitness focus) open spaces for games & informal ball sports. Running/jogging tracks/fitness circuits | Consideration of unstructured recreation opportunities (fitness focus) open spaces for games & informal ball sports. Running/jogging tracks/fitness circuits | Consideration of unstructured recreation opportunities (fitness focus) open spaces for games & informal ball sports. walking/bike tracks/fitness circuits |
| connection of play Focus on inclusion, access & social connections | Consideration for inclusive play elements and provision for spaces for parents/carers to connect socially as part of play experience | Consideration for inclusive play elements and provision for spaces for parents/carers and children to connect socially as part of play experience. | Close to public transport and commercial areas. Accessible walking/bike tracks & open space. Opportunities for events or activities such as music for social gathering Focus on seating and social gathering spaces in accessible relevant spaces. | Close to public transport and commercial areas. Accessible walking/bike tracks & open space. Opportunities for events or activities such as music for social gathering Focus on seating and social gathering spaces in accessible relevant spaces. | Locally accessible play opportunities accessible walking/bike tracks & open space. Readily available parking at designated major playspaces for children | Close to public transport and commercial areas. Accessible walking/bike tracks & open space. Opportunities for events or activities such as music for social gathering Focus on seating and social gathering spaces in accessible relevant spaces. | Close to public transport and commercial areas. Accessible walking/bike tracks & open space. Opportunities for events or activities such as music for social gathering Focus on seating and social gathering spaces in accessible relevant spaces. |

The current state of play

Introduction

The following section will outline the current state of play provision across Nillumbik. It looks at both how playspaces are currently being implemented within the shire (the existing model) and then reviews a number of typical existing playspaces following on-site assessments. This gives clarity on what is working on the ground, what gaps are there and what needs to be done with regard to a new model for the shire moving forward.

Current provision

The shire currently has 68 playspaces. They are a mix of local playgrounds with a number of larger spaces including Eltham North & Eltham Lower Park.

To determine broadly existing play provision, seven play spaces were chosen by Council officers as examples of different scaled spaces and older and newer play areas. These were assessed and this has given a broad snap shot of existing provision. From this review, there are significant opportunities for improvement in play provision across the Shire. This review is outlined in more detail in the following section.

The right hierarchy?

At present there is no specific hierarchical classification or model of play provision for Nillumbik Shire Council.

A key theme of the community engagement process was the importance of creating larger more interesting and inclusive destination playspaces.

The **“State of the Sector Report – Park Playground Planning & Management, Parks Base May 2014”** also confirms generally that across Australia smaller local playspaces with a focus on “off the shelf” equipment are limited in the play opportunities they provide and generally the community prefer to travel to larger more integrated and socially inclusive spaces with greater play opportunities across the age spectrum. The report also states that a consolidation of funds for establishing larger playspaces may be more economical than the provision of numerous smaller playspaces at a local level.

The Nillumbik Shire Council Recreation Strategy 2011-2019 summarises the need to adopt a model that includes Regional Facilities, Municipal, District and Local Facilities for their open spaces. This is similar to many councils across Australia. Whilst in theory, this model appears appropriate, to ensure there is a range of larger and more localized recreation and play spaces across a municipality, there is generally an issue with their implementation.

Whilst regional playspaces as outlined above generally are a highly sought after option given their capacity for intergenerational play and value as a destination for long stay opportunities and social interaction, the capacity to fund them can be difficult. With 4 separate hierarchical options to implement, opportunities for major playspaces often are never realized.

Nillumbik Shire Council is in a unique position of bucking this trend and establishing a model that can provide great play opportunities at a local level whilst most importantly having the capacity and funding to implement larger regional play spaces in key locations. To achieve this the new model established for Nillumbik will be a much simpler hierarchical model of regional and local spaces only. This ensures play provision can still be accessed locally whilst ensuring there are more destination playspaces in key locations across the Shire. This is explained in more detail in “The new model explained”.

Onsite assessments

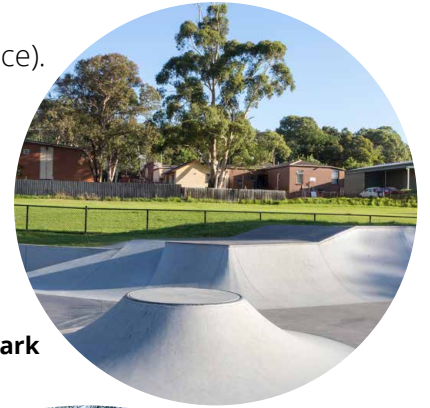
To really get an understanding of existing play provision in Nillumbik, a number of existing playspaces were reviewed. Council staff and Playce visited the following sites;

- Patrick Close Playspace (example of existing local playspace)
- Eltham Lower Park (examples of larger playspaces)
- Plenty War Memorial Park Playspace (example of existing local playspace)
- Hurstbridge Skatepark (Example of existing local playspace)
- Diamond Creek Rotary Park (Example of upgraded local playspace)
- Sheila & Gordon Reserve, Hurstbridge (Example of upgraded local playspace).

The summary of our assessment of the sites is found on the following page.



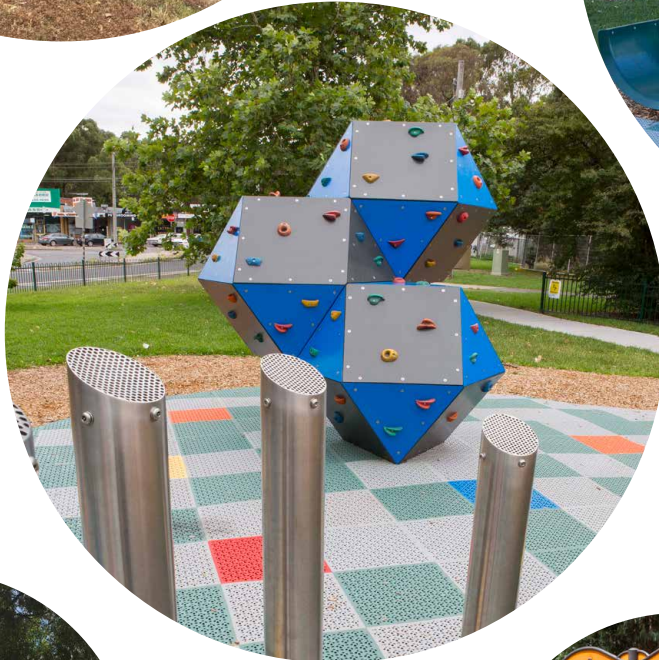
Patrick Close Playspace



Hurstbridge Skatepark



Sheila & Gordon Reserve, Hurstbridge



Diamond Creek Rotary Park



Eltham Lower North Playspace



Plenty War Memorial Park Playspace



Eltham Lower Butterfly Playspace

Table 3: Review of existing sites

| Name | Description of the space | Equipment caters primarily for age group | Child developmental requirements (GOOD, FAIR OR POOR) | | | | | Summary/discussion |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------|--------|-----------|---------|---|
| | | | COGNITIVE | PHYSICAL | SOCIAL | EMOTIONAL | SENSORY | |
| Patrick Close Playspace | Patrick Close appears typical of most local municipal playspaces, both in Nillumbik and in other LGA's across Melbourne. There are a few items of proprietary play equipment placed in a designated mulched area. It also contains a very small basketball area. There is minimal shade, some seating and is for local use only. | Toddlers | P | F | P | P | P | Typical existing local play-space. Contains minimal nature based elements and so only really physical focus. Little sensory or cognitive opportunities. Only caters for very young children. Basketball court has little space to play. |
| Hurstbridge Skatepark | Hurstbridge Skatepark is a typical grey concrete local skatepark that primarily focuses on wheeled sports. It does not contain any other recreation opportunities and has minimal amenity and social spaces. | Lower & upper primary/secondary | P | G | F | F | P | Skate space has very little broader recreation/play value other than wheeled sports. Social areas in particular and more diverse recreation opportunities (incl for females) worth considering. |
| Sheila & Gordon Reserve, Hurstbridge | This larger local playspace contains a mix of physical elements for a greater age range of children with more physically challenging components. It also has some natural elements. | Toddlers/lower primary | P | F | P | F | F | Focus of playspace is on physical play. Whilst there is a dry creek bed in space, additional natural elements could further enhance sensory and cognitive play opportunities. |
| Plenty War Memorial Park Playspace | This current local playspace, like Patrick Close, has a small amount of physically focused proprietary play equipment only. It is surrounded by a nice treed area. It is also fenced along the boundary's of the broader space. There is ample parking and designated BBQ area and sports clubrooms. | Toddlers | P | G | F | F | P | Typical existing local play-space. Contains minimal nature based elements and so only really physical focus. Little sensory or cognitive opportunities. There are however lots of existing native trees that provide shade and a great natural context. Age range again focuses on younger children only. |
| Diamond Creek Playspace | This space currently contains elements for kids from 0-12 with both play elements and some recreation options. The elements are almost all focused on physical play with minimal natural or sensory elements. | Toddlers/lower & upper primary | P | G | F | F | P | Gaps again in nature based play and associated sensory and cognitive development opportunities. Still focus primarily on physical play however caters for greater age range. |
| Eltham Lower Butterfly Playspace | This enclosed nature based playspace has a range of nature based play areas, social seating areas, sculptural elements, physical play elements, is inclusive and has adjacent accessible toilets. | Toddlers/lower primary | G | G | G | G | G | Fantastic playspace that really meets all of children developmental needs (hence its popularity!) However primarily still only caters for younger children. |
| Eltham Lower Northern Playspace | This northern older play area at Eltham Lower contains some older pieces of physically focused play equipment as well as some seating areas, shade sails and some car parking. | Toddlers/lower primary | P | F | P | P | P | Only really some physical play opportunities. Shade and social spaces could be utilised with perhaps more play or different recreation focus (eg: adult fitness) |

Discussion

As outlined in the table above, the Shire of Nillumbik is typical of most LGA's in metro Melbourne over the last 15 years. The playspaces visited are reflective of an now antiquated approach to provide small turn key solutions for play by play manufacturers. These primarily proprietary playspaces focus on traditional physical play only. Whilst they are relatively easy to maintain and replace, they don't provide many opportunities for other important requirements for play such as sensory, cognitive, emotional and social elements. This is highlighted clearly with the Eltham Butterfly playground which does provide these requirements through the creative use of art, natural elements and social gathering spaces. There is good reason why this playspace is so popular with both parents and their children, given the diverse range of different play opportunities it provides.

The other major item in the assessments was the that almost all play is focused for younger children. Therefore there needs a change in both the type of play provided (more than just physical play) and the age range they cater for (more age relevant spaces). Finally the skatepark inspected provides only for wheeled sports, it is not a youth space or place for any other activity or attractive to any other people who don't skate. Consideration for other recreational and play activities for older children in these spaces may enable more use by a greater number of young people, both male and female.

The new model

Based upon the play principles, the broad assessment of existing playspaces and general ideas regarding play from the community, a lifetime play provision model has been developed for the Shire of Nillumbik. This model is based upon the provision of major regional dedicated playspaces in key locations across the shire complemented with diverse walkable local dedicated playspaces. These dedicated playspaces will primarily cater for children from 0-14. New 'playful' opportunities throughout the shire will also be provided to focus on all other ages of community accordingly.

Dedicated Play Space Provision

Dedicated play provision will only be at a regional and local level. District and municipal playspaces will no longer be considered. This will consolidate the operational and capital costs for playspaces to ensure there are adequate funds available for implementing the larger regional playspaces. Local playspaces will have a more specific age focus to ensure kids of different ages are catered for at a local level. They will be sited in a walkable catchment throughout the shire and be broken into 3 main types.

- **Local junior** focuses on the developmental needs of toddlers and preschool children and will include nature based and sensory experiences and smaller physical and emotional play opportunities.
- **Local senior** playspaces will be more for younger primary aged children and generally more physically challenging whilst still providing opportunities for sensory, cognitive and social play.
- **Local recreation** playspaces have a tween focus and will include a mix of more physical play, skate and sporting focus. This could include a ball court, rebound wall, climbing wall or parkour space.

The intention is that there will now be greater choice in play opportunity within a local area so as children grow and play requirements change, they can seek out more age relevant play opportunities. Where possible, some of the playspaces may be combined to **be both local junior and senior or other combinations**. This gives Council flexibility in increasing the scale of some of the local playspaces in more remote locations without needing to install a regional playspace.

Regional playspaces will essentially be a combination of the three smaller local playspaces and be designed to be a destination for families to enjoy. They will be central, accessible, enable community gatherings and be a social hub for long stay visitation.



Dedicated Local Play Space Provision

- walkable
- shorter stays
- primarily in residential areas
- limited amenities



Local Junior

- toddler (0-4) focus and their carers
- pram access from footpaths
- at least 1 x seat and/or picnic table where possible
- nature based play focus (rocks, logs, plants)
- cubby play elements
- 1-2 pieces of play equipment such as swings, small slide, motion elements

Local Senior

- suitable for ages 5-10
- focus on primary school children
- access via footpaths for bikes
- at least 1 x seat or picnic table
- more adventurous play equipment (physical and social focus) with some nature play
- climbing structures
- swings, large slide, monkey bars
- Scooter or bike loops

Local Recreation

- suitable for older ages 10-15 years
- more challenging play elements such as climbing walls or parkour elements
- could include skate & BMX elements or obstacles
- hard pave area for informal ball sports
- sheltered space where possible
- social seating areas

Dedicated Regional Play Space Provision

- Parking & Public Transport focus
- Longer stays
- primarily in major parks
- all amenities

Regional

- Generally caters for a range of ages, 0-15+
- Larger spaces with more diverse play opportunities including opportunities for water play, nature play, adventure areas (physical focus) and social play (essentially combination of local playspaces)
- Access to public transport important however car parking critical
- Designated picnic/bbq areas
- Seating throughout the space
- Natural shade and sheltered spaces
- Access to amenities such as toilets critical
- Access to local economy (cafe's etc)

A current gap in Regional play space provision for Nillumbik is Diamond Creek and the associated opportunities for local economic development

Table 4: Dedicated playspace summary

| Type of Space (as per the model) | Age Focus (as a guide only) | Focus of play principles (aligned with developmental needs) | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | | | | |
| Local Junior | toddlers junior primary | Vibrant colours, sounds & textures. (musical elements, sculptures) | Textural natural elements, (rocks, logs, garden beds) | Opportunity to climb, balance, slide, swing and spin (2-3 pieces of physical play equipment) | Ensure at grade pram and wheelchair access to space. Some rubberized areas for universal play |
| Local Senior | junior and senior primary | Not prescriptive (removing set themes). Imaginative. Sculptural play elements, puzzles, games | Textural natural elements, (rocks, logs, garden beds) Educative opportunities Creation of play elements out of natural materials, natural setting (less prescriptive). | elements that assist with more developed motor skills and physical strength such as adventure play, major climbing areas or parkour & skate/scooter areas. (2-3 pieces of physical play equipment) | Ensure at grade pram and wheelchair access to space. Some rubberized areas for universal social play |
| Local Recreation | senior primary, early secondary | Interactive, relevant to age | Educative opportunities Creation of play elements out of natural materials, natural setting (less prescriptive) | Unstructured recreation opportunities (climbing, adventurous, parkour focus) Open spaces for games & informal ball sports. Skate/scooter considerations | Ensure at grade pram and wheelchair access to space. Some rubberized areas for universal social play. Play elements that promote social connection. |
| Regional | 0-14, parents | Iconic, site sensitive, educational, cultural. | Significant natural elements (sensory garden, water play, sand, rocks, logs, landscape focus) | Range of play elements for all different ages and abilities including challenging and socially inclusive elements. | Ensure at grade pram & wheelchair access to space. Ensure significant accessible/inclusive areas for universal play |



Playful opportunity provision

To complement the dedicated local and regional playspaces and provide for other ages (15+), there will be a series of 'playful opportunities.' By that it is important that play is something that can be added into an existing space. This will enable playful moments to be considered in bushland reserves, urban centres, transport nodes, along trail & bike corridors and other public spaces traditionally not the domain of play.

This is primarily to ensure lifetime play is being adopted across the shire. Different age groups, particularly those who rely on public transport (for example elderly and teens) are attracted to urban centres and townships, major transport areas and commercial areas. They are often unable to access regional/municipal destination parks that generally contain major play spaces due to not being able to drive. Therefore providing playful opportunities in these more urban and accessible precincts is important.

Given the limitations in available usable public open space in these urban centres and the competing demands as commercial, transport and civic precincts, playful moments that are of a small scale are both cost effective and don't have significant impact on other uses. Similarly given the Shire of Nillumbik's abundant bushland reserves and corridors, playful opportunities that can allow people of all ages to engage with and enjoy the this amazing natural setting and bushland is critical.

To complement these localised opportunities, there will also be regional playful opportunities to cover those larger recreation hubs and spaces such as skateparks, fitness courses, dog parks, nature reserves or the like that provide a specific requirement and need to be large enough to do so whilst not being a traditional sporting space.



Platypus at Eltham Town Square, VIC
playful for all ages



Fairfield Parkour, NSW
Parkour and fitness bars included within other recreational zones



Fairfield Obstacle Course, NSW
health and fitness, individuals and community groups can use the space



Diamond Creek Dog Park VIC
targets specific user group

Foosball table, Selandra Rise VIC
Recreation opportunities of a small scale that can be included in other spaces



Pantom Hill Bushland Reserve VIC,
Individuals and community groups of all ages can use this beautiful bushland space



Highpoint Plaza, VIC
Skateable plaza allows for skating in urban context adjacent to public transport and shopping precinct



Childrens Spiral Garden at Edendale Farm allows children to enjoy natural elements and plants in a playful environment

Table 5: Playful opportunity summary

| Type of Space (as per the model) | Age Focus (as a guide only) | Focus of play principles (aligned with developmental needs) | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| | | Art of play (Focuses on sensory and cognitive development needs) | Nature of play (Focuses on sensory cognitive, emotional needs) | Health of play (Focuses on physical and emotional needs) | Connection of play (Focuses on social, physical and emotional) |
| Local incidental | pre teens (0-12) | Sculpture or art work in setting with playful focus. (eg: Eltham Town Square platypus) | Gardens or paths that provide informal play (balancing logs) Interpretive signage | sculpture or art work in setting with playful physical focus. (eg: Eltham Town Square Platypus). space to run, jump and be active. | Ensure playful elements considered in town centres, community centres and libraries where young children will be with parents |
| | teens | Aerosol art, performance & music opportunities, exhibition space along urban street, mall | Interpretive signage or information with educative ecological focus | Lateral climbing wall along building facade, skateable ledges, fusbball table, rebound wall. Dance space. | Social seating areas sheltered areas |
| | young adults | Exhibition space in urban or transport setting. Performance opportunities. Multimedia. | Interpretive signage or information with educative ecological focus. Fitness stations along trails with natural focus. | Lateral climbing wall along building facade, skateable ledges, Table tennis Fitness event spaces or stations. | Social seating areas sheltered areas |
| | older adults | as above | as above | Informal fitness stations, games areas, dance spaces | Social seating areas sheltered areas |
| | Elderly | as above | as above | Chess spaces, games areas, dance spaces | Social seating areas sheltered areas |
| Regional | skatepark | Opportunity for furniture with artistic focus. Parts of the park could have aerosol art or other contemporary artistic options. | Planting and trees for shade around park to soften visual impact | Balance of elements to meet the requirements of users. | Ensure accessible viewing areas with social seating and shade. |
| | Fitness area | Opportunity for furniture or elements with artistic focus. | Natural setting and materials for elements | Mix of physically challenging elements | Ensure accessible viewing areas with social seating and shade. Warm up areas |
| | Dog Park | as above | Natural setting and materials for elements | Mix of elements to accommodate different dogs (sizes, breeds etc) | Ensure accessible viewing areas with social seating and shade. |



Next steps

The Lifetime Play Strategy provides a framework for the long term re-imagining of play for Shire of Nillumbik. The Art, Nature, Health and Connection of play principles provide a clear focus on what is really important for play provision across the Shire for everyone in the community to enjoy. These were developed from current best practice in play provision and the outcomes from the community's feedback.

This Planning Framework identifies a vision and principles for the design, provision, engagement, distribution, management of play spaces and facilities and anticipated community outcomes enhanced from future investment.

Following the adoption of this framework all playspaces will be assessed against these guiding principles.

This will be a detailed review of the provision, type, location, condition and maintenance requirements of existing playgrounds and active informal play facilities, inventory of trails, park furniture, amenities, lighting, public art and signage.

This information will inform the implementation plan.

The Implementation Plan will identify gaps or over supply in provision of play spaces and facilities within catchments based on the planning framework principles and current provision. It will include reporting back to Council on any possible changes to playspaces and playful opportunities as per the recommendations of this Planning Framework. The Implementation Plan will include a 10 year rolling plan for the implementation of recommendations, which will need to be revised and updated annually.