

Playful Perth



**CITY OF
PERTH**
City of Light

**Planning and Design Guidelines
for Play!**





**CITY OF
PERTH**
City of Light

PLA'CE

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The City of Perth acknowledges the Whadjuk Nyoongar people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waters where Perth city is situated, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

Introduction

This document guides the provision of strategically considered play spaces across the City of Perth. This includes informal opportunities to incorporate play into daily life to create a more playful city for people of all ages and all abilities.

It outlines;

- What play is, explores the different ways we play and how important play is for people of all ages.
- Current world's best practice and benchmarking with other states and within WA to help shape four key ambitions for a playful Perth. A Perth that is fun, dynamic, meaningful and welcoming.
- A model for provision including formal play spaces focusing on children's play and a range of informal play opportunities for people of all ages.
- Guidelines that will provide the City with a framework for the sustainable provision of playful places across all neighbourhoods and through the CBD.

Why do we need planning and design guidelines for Play?

These guidelines are presented to help inform and assist the City of Perth in delivering and maintaining appropriate, well considered playspaces for their community in line with current best practice and latest research on the importance of all ages play.



The City of Perth strives to...

1. Create a **LIVEABLE** city of neighbourhoods where people love to live, work and play.
2. Build a **SUSTAINABLE** city that can meet growing economic, social and environmental challenges.
3. Strengthen Perth city as a **PROSPEROUS** globally competitive economic, social, cultural and civic centre.

(Local Planning Strategy, Part One, 2023, pii)

Strategic Context

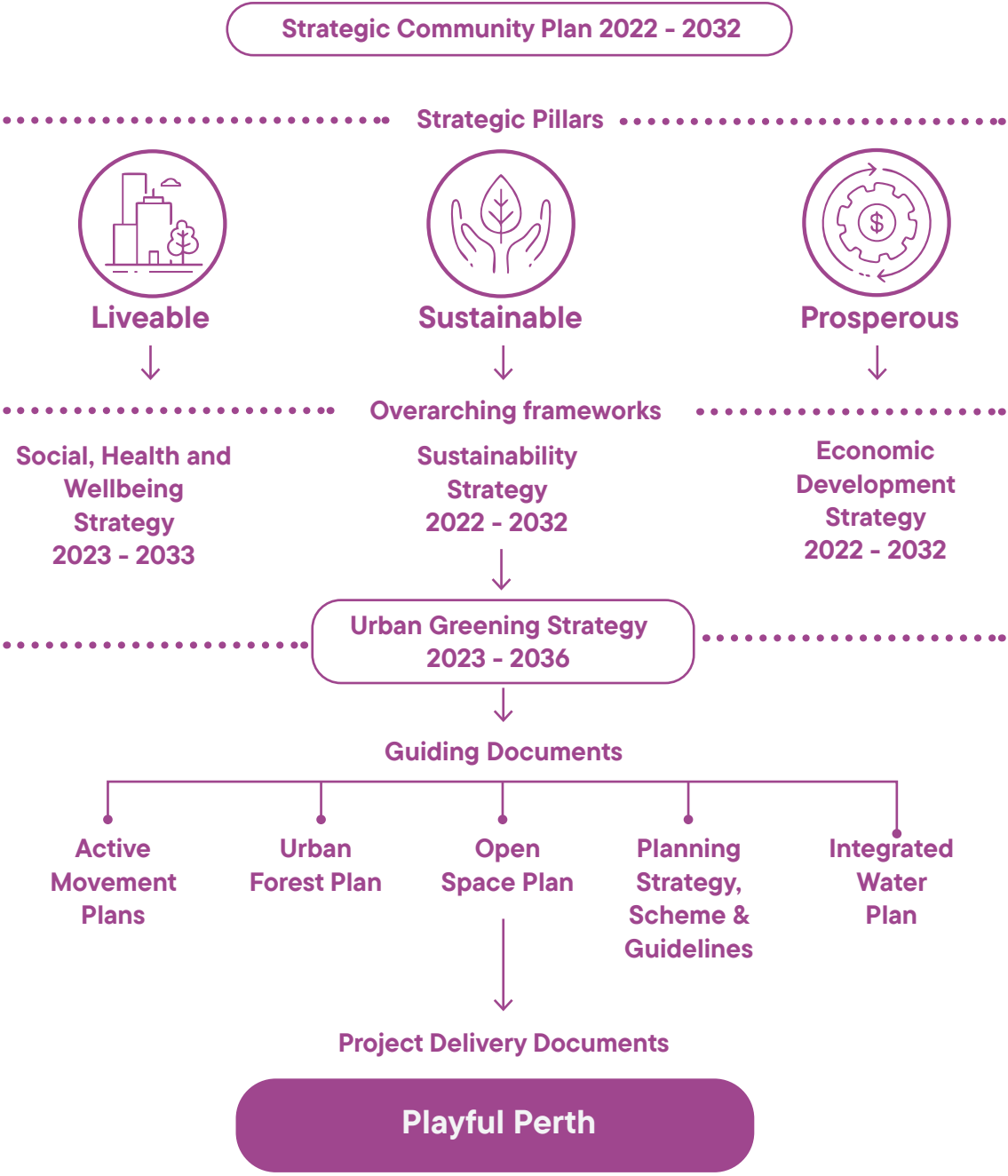
Playful Perth is a project delivery document born from the Open Space Plan to ensure good outcomes from the City’s investment in play projects. Play projects are delivered by the City via the Open Space Plan and the Playground Replacement Program. Both of these require careful planning, design and investment.

The guide is aligned with the City of Perth Strategic Community Plan 2022–2032, supporting all three pillars by providing amenity, activation, robust planning, design and sustainability.

Playful Perth supports the City’s population growth target of 55,000 by 2036 (Local Planning Strategy, 2023/24). Achieving this target requires the enhancement of community infrastructure and public amenities to create vibrant, high-quality neighbourhoods that attract both visitors and new residents, including families.

These strategic documents provide a framework for shaping the goals and principles that underpin these guidelines.

Play provision extends beyond designated play spaces within neighbourhood parks. Given Perth’s status as the state’s primary cultural, social, civic, and economic centre, a broader, more integrated approach to play is required. The Playful Perth Guidelines provide a framework for the strategic planning and design of engaging and interactive public spaces, ensuring play is embedded throughout the public realm, in alignment with the City’s broader urban development objectives.



Our audience

This Guide is intended for a wide audience, including:

- City employees and contractors – involved in the planning, design and delivery of new play infrastructure
- Design professionals, artists and developers – working in the public or private realm
- Our community – to raise awareness of modern approaches to play and improve community engagement for each new project

Note: This guide considers play spaces and playful elements owned and controlled by others in our assessment of provision only.

It does not propose any upgrades or new play elements on land owned and controlled by others.

The City encourages the state government and private developers to use these guidelines where appropriate, contributing playful elements to our city and supporting a more Playful Perth!

What is Play?

Play is one of the most common recreation activities we participate in. It is freely chosen, spontaneous and self-directed. It is immersive and emotive.

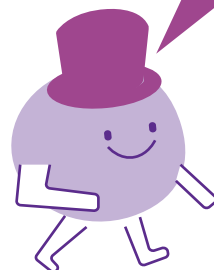
Whilst play is the language of childhood, everyone can and should play no matter how old or able you are.

It has great benefits.

When you play, you move and are physical. You can socialise when you play, connecting with other people. It also allows you to be creative, to reinterpret your environment to play games and explore ideas and re-imagine your world.

Ultimately play is about feeling joy and improving our wellbeing.

While our understanding of play may change as we get older, it is imperative that we all continue to play as we age.



*“ We don’t stop playing
because we grow old; we grow
old because we stop playing “*

George Bernard Shaw





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

“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 yourself.”

Oxford Dictionary

“Play is a generic term applied to a wide range of activities and behaviours that are satisfying to the child, created for the child, and freely chosen by the child. ”

“As children grow older they are more likely to describe these informal recreational activities in ways other than ‘playing’. ”

AILA Urban Play Policy 2011

“Every child (up to age 18) has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.”

Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Why is play important?

42% of children are not involved in sport

Up to 30% of a child’s waking time is spent in front of a screen.

50% drop in children playing in their local neighborhoods within the last generation

Participating in a creative activity fell 4% in children in last 5 years.

Obesity increased from 20.1% (1995) to 27.7% (2022–23) among Australians aged 5 to 17 years

Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing 2020 Report &ABS

When children play they are not just filling in time, they are learning to make sense of their world. Through play, children develop qualities necessary in adulthood, including problem solving, independence, self awareness, creativity, resilience and spatial knowledge. It is equally important to consider how play can be considered for all ages.

This has implications for the design and provision of playspaces and other opportunities to play in our public domain. What may meet the developmental needs of one age group such as young children will differ greatly from the needs of another age group.

The next section outlines types of play in more detail across lifespan.

Types of play

As we grow up we improve our skills and develop in a range of important areas. Play has a significant role in this development as it allows us to explore and learn about the world in a positive way.

The following is a snapshot of the types of play and how they contribute to human development over our lifespan.

Physical play

Play that involves being active and moving your body. This includes walking, running, jumping, skipping, hanging, climbing, sliding, rocking and swinging to learn and improve balance, speed, coordination, gross motor skills, body and spatial awareness.

Emotional play

Play that helps build confidence and self discovery. Emotional play creates opportunities for appropriate risk taking, self-direction and self-regulation.

Babies/Toddlers

Play for this age group is all about fundamental development

crawling, sliding

Young Children

Younger children are starting to test themselves physically whilst focusing on creative & cognitive play

jumping, climbing

reaching the top

jumping from a log

see saw

Teenagers

Teen play focuses on risk taking and strong social connections

parkour, dancing

skateboarding

Adults

Play for adults is undertaking more active recreation & social events

bouldering, jogging

mountain biking

Older adults

Older adults play focusses on passive recreation, art and community connection

walking the dog

yoga, tai chi



Social Play

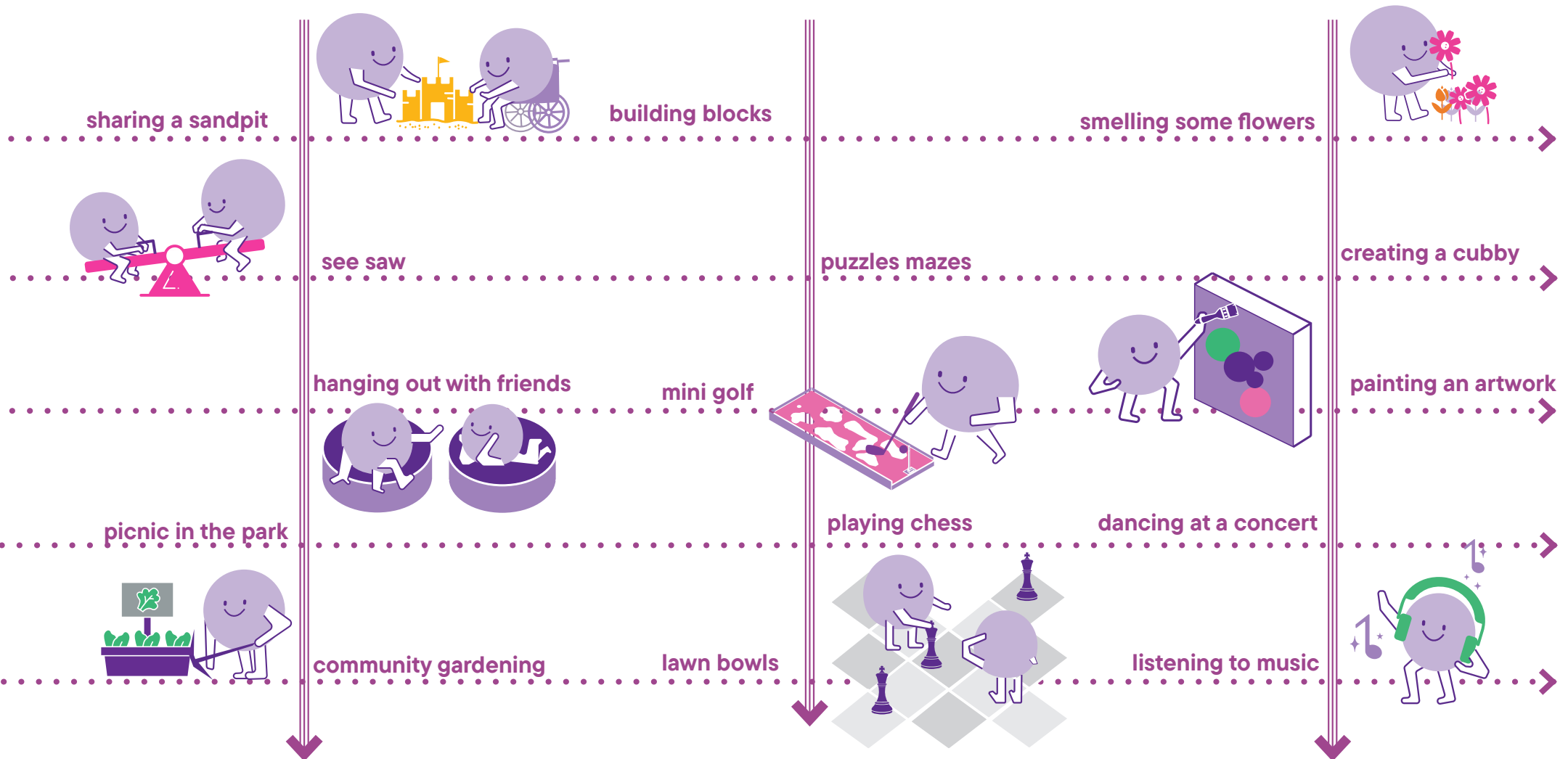
Social play fosters skills such as sharing and collaboration, rules and boundaries, negotiation and conflict resolution, leadership, and empathy.

Cognitive Play

Cognitive play provides opportunities for problem solving, memory use and testing learnt skills.

Creative play

Creative play is about using your imagination, developing ideas, expressing them and transforming them into real experiences.



Modern approaches to play provision

Diversity

If play can take so many different forms across lifespan, the spaces and places we provide for them needs to reflect this diversity.

Until recently Australian playspaces had focused primarily on provision of 'safe' playground equipment rather than creative, inclusive, challenging and exciting play environments.

The traditional notion of a playground as simply including a swing and a slide is now no longer meeting the current needs of a much more informed community.

We are now re-imagining our approach to children's play provision to ensure the needs of people of all ages and abilities are met.

If we consider a combination of inclusive and accessible creative, cognitive, emotional, social and physical play that encourages exploration, inspires creativity and offers varying levels of challenge, children can find new ways to engage in play, to use their imagination or stretch their boundaries through adventure and discovery.

All ages

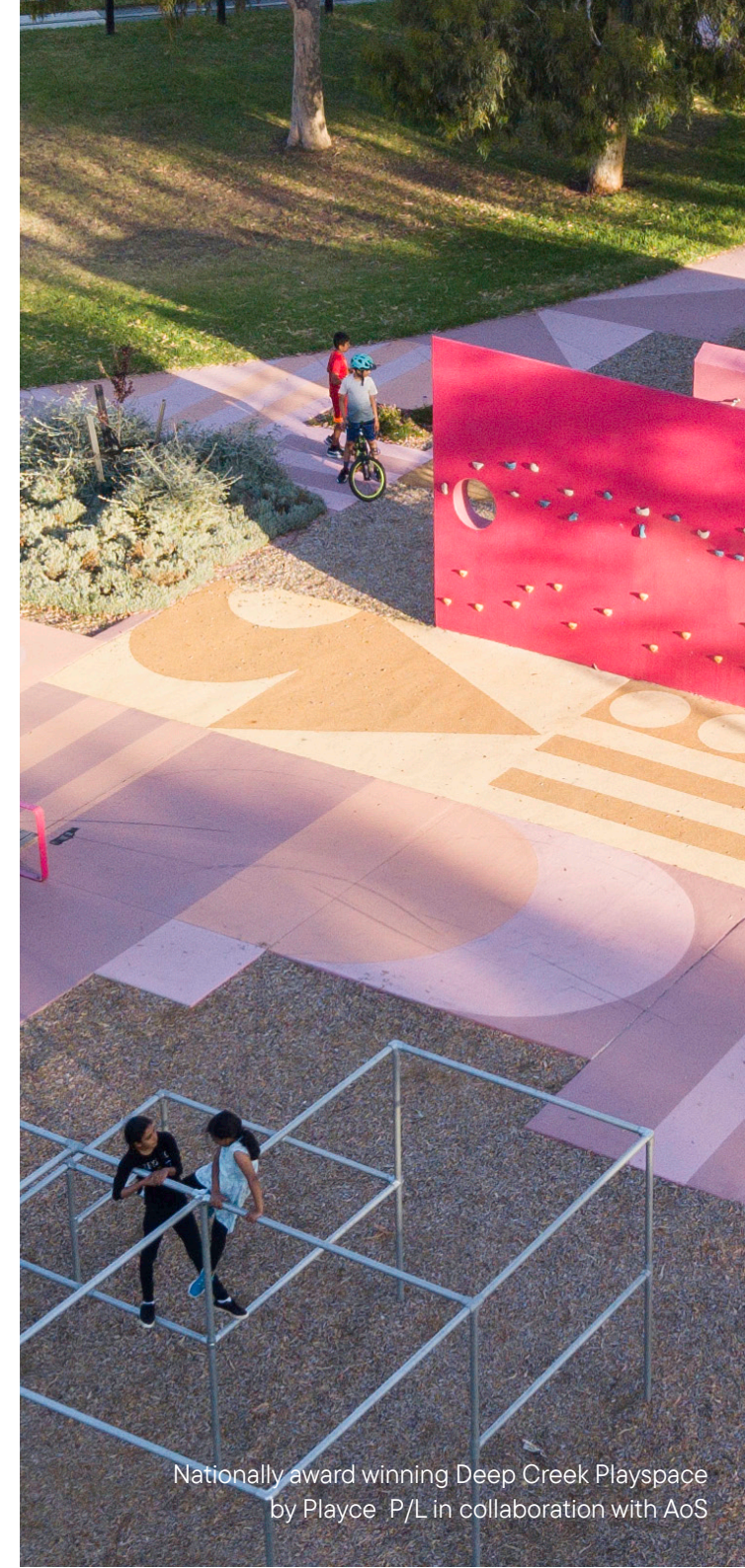
We also need to be imaginative in thinking about how to design playful places for people of all ages.

Whilst playgrounds cover play for younger children, as they grow up, play changes and becomes more about social connection and recreation.

Inclusive spaces that provide options for unstructured social recreation are particularly important for pre-teenagers and teenagers.

Parkour, mini golf, monkey bars, fitness, ball courts, scooter and skate loops for example are all recreation pursuits that are enjoyed by older children. Interactive art opportunities and organised events such as music or dance are also popular.

Adults of all ages also participate in many of the activities outlined above. They too need vibrant, inclusive welcoming playful spaces that they can either enjoy with their children, grand children or with peers.



Nationally award winning Deep Creek Playspace
by Playce P/L in collaboration with AoS



'Grown Up Playground' by Imaginary Objects



'Paint Drop' in Shanghai, by 100 Architects



La Musa Dora @ Denver Art Museum



Gosnells 'YES - Youth Entertainment Space', by Playce

Integrate in the urban fabric

The key is to incorporate playfulness into all aspects of the public realm, not just parks, ovals and playgrounds to allow everyone in our community to access play.

Given many playful elements are not a significant scale, they can be added to urban spaces which are popular for teenagers and adults. Transport nodes, commercial precincts and public plazas can accommodate opportunities for play for youth and adults of all abilities to participate in and have fun accordingly.

Active play

Some social recreation pursuits such as skateboarding, bouldering and BMX are now Olympic sports and require larger facilities to cater for growing demand. In these instances, a two-pronged approach is required.

The city should provide both informal or social recreation opportunities at a local level. But also more formal provision of regionally significant facilities. This may be further informed by the City's Community Infrastructure Plan (in progress).

What do we have?

Where are we sitting?



20 Play spaces



5 Basketball Courts



1 Pump Track



1 Tennis Court



5 Interactive Artwork



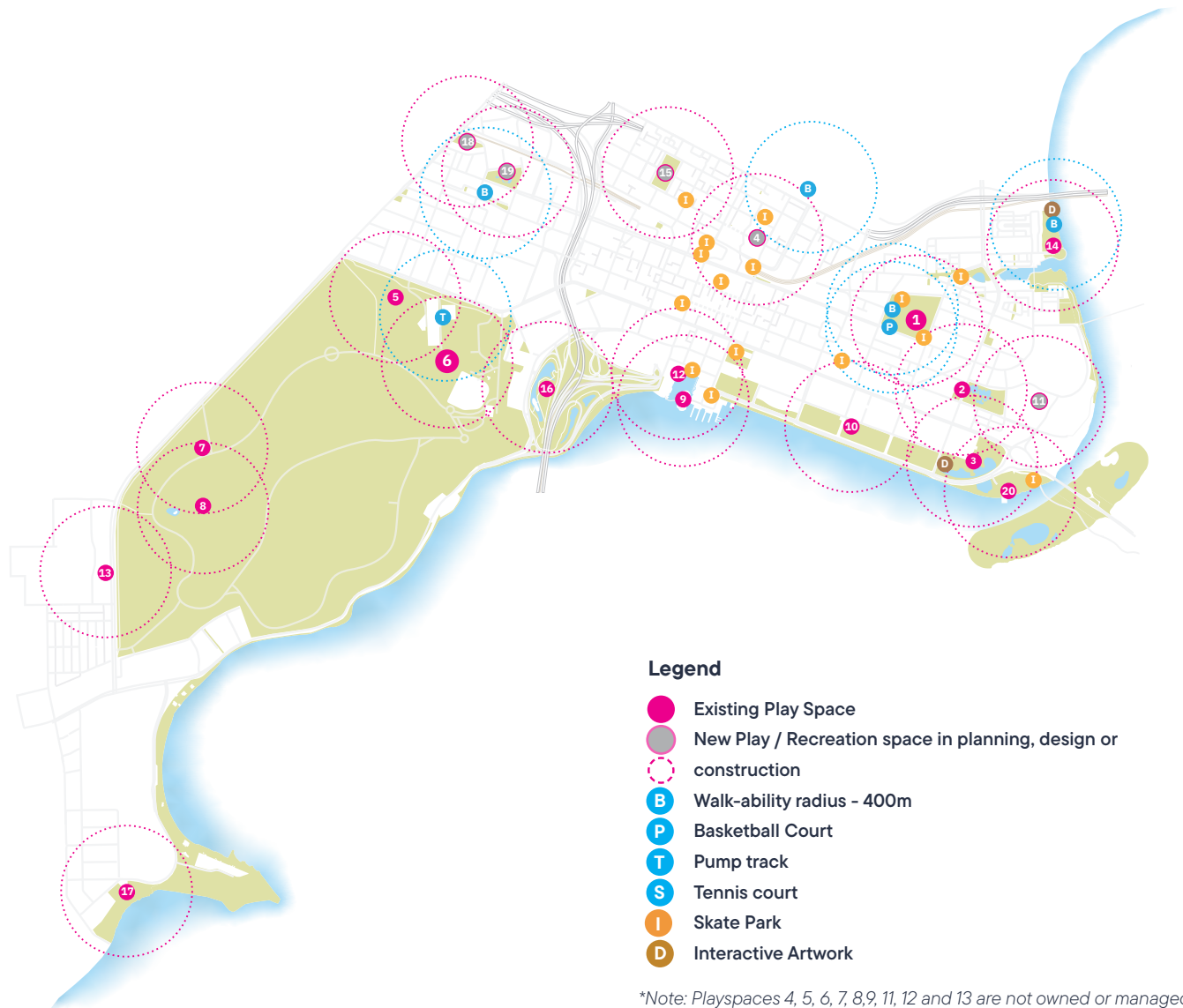
2 Dog Park

The City currently has 20 existing play spaces - 12 small, 7 medium and 2 large play spaces including Naturescape in Kings Park.

In addition to traditional play spaces there other key recreational facilities, such as basketball courts, multi-use courts, and pump tracks. These active play spaces play a vital role in supporting play, particularly for older children, teenagers, and young adults. Beyond their recreational function, they serve as important social hubs, providing spaces for connection, interaction, and community engagement.

Highlights

The City of Perth has two major destination playspaces. Kings Park's Naturescape in the west & Wellington square in the east, provide great long stay play provision. Naturescape provides a nature experience for primarily younger children, Wellington includes recreation opportunities for intergenerational play.



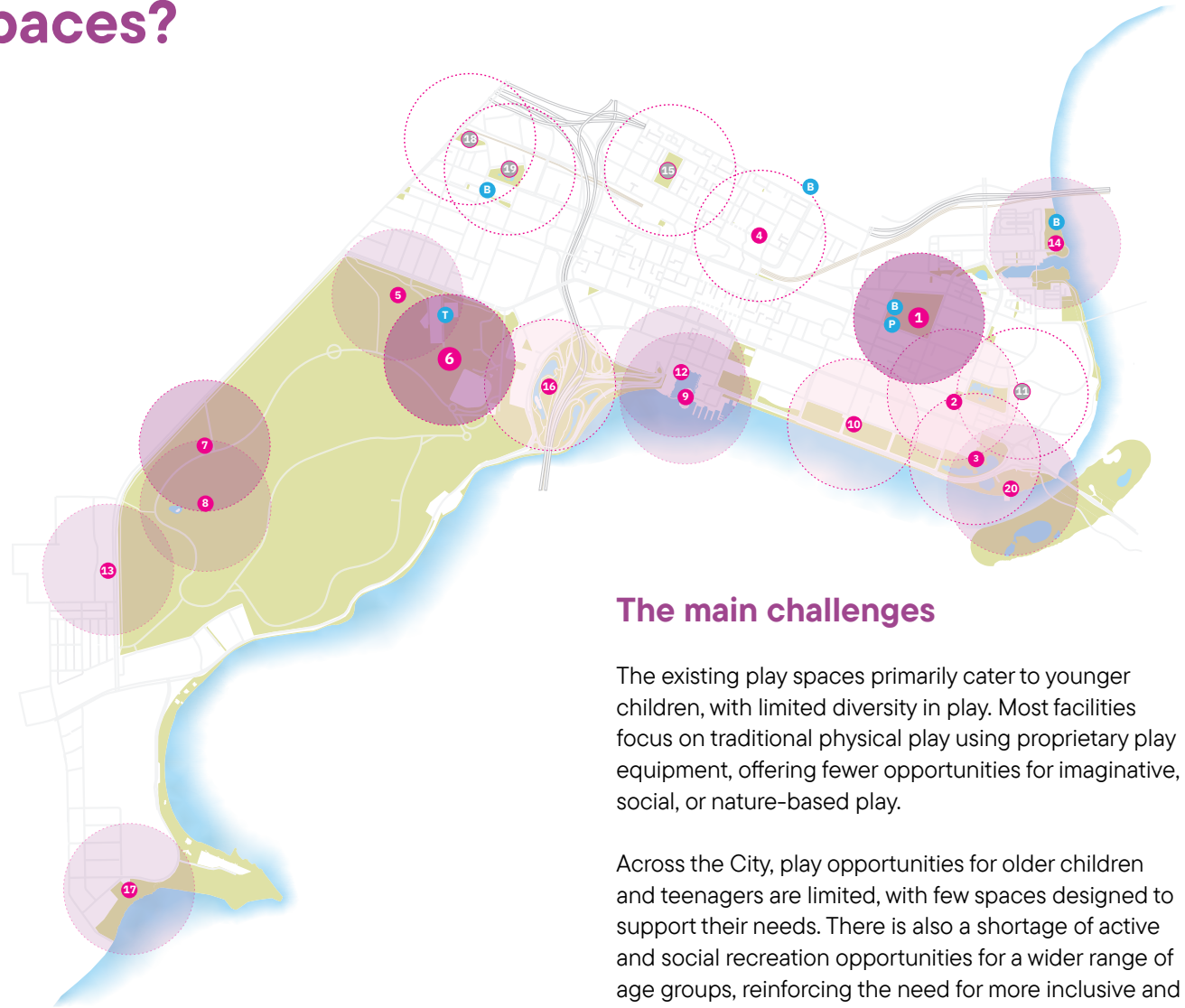
How good are our playspaces?

Missing the mark

As the following assessment outlines, whilst there are a number of excellent playspaces within the City of Perth, the majority have been assessed as either poor or fair. This assessment focussed on diversity of play opportunities, age range and associated amenity.

	Name of playspace	Diversity of age ranges	Diversity of play value	Appropriate amenity	Overall existing assessment
1	Wellington Square Playground	✓	✓	✓	EXCELLENT
2	Rod Evans Community Centre Playground	✗	✗	✗	POOR
3	Ozone Reserve Playground	✗	✗	✓	POOR
4	Perth Cultural Centre Play Space	N/A. UNDER CONSTRUCTION			
5	Ivey Watson Playground	✗	✗	✓	FAIR
6	Rio Tinto Naturescape Kings Park	✓	✓	✓	EXCELLENT
7	Variety Place	✓	✓	✓	GOOD
8	Arthur Fairall Playground	✓	✗	✗	FAIR
9	Island Playground/Elizabeth Quay Play	✓	✓	✓	GOOD
10	Langley Park Playground	✗	✗	✗	POOR
11	WACA	N/A. UNDER CONSTRUCTION			
12	BHP Water Park Splashpad	✓	✗	✗	FAIR
13	Perth Children's Hospital Green Space	✓	✓	✓	GOOD
14	Mardalup park	✗	✗	✓	FAIR
15	Russell Square	✗	✗	✗	POOR
16	John Oldham	✗	✗	✗	POOR
17	JH Abrahams	✓	✓	✓	GOOD
18	Totterdell Park	✗	✗	✗	POOR
19	Harold Boas	N/A. UNDER CONSTRUCTION			
20	Point Fraser Playground	✓	✓	✓	GOOD

*Note: Playspaces 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 are not owned or managed by the City of Perth.



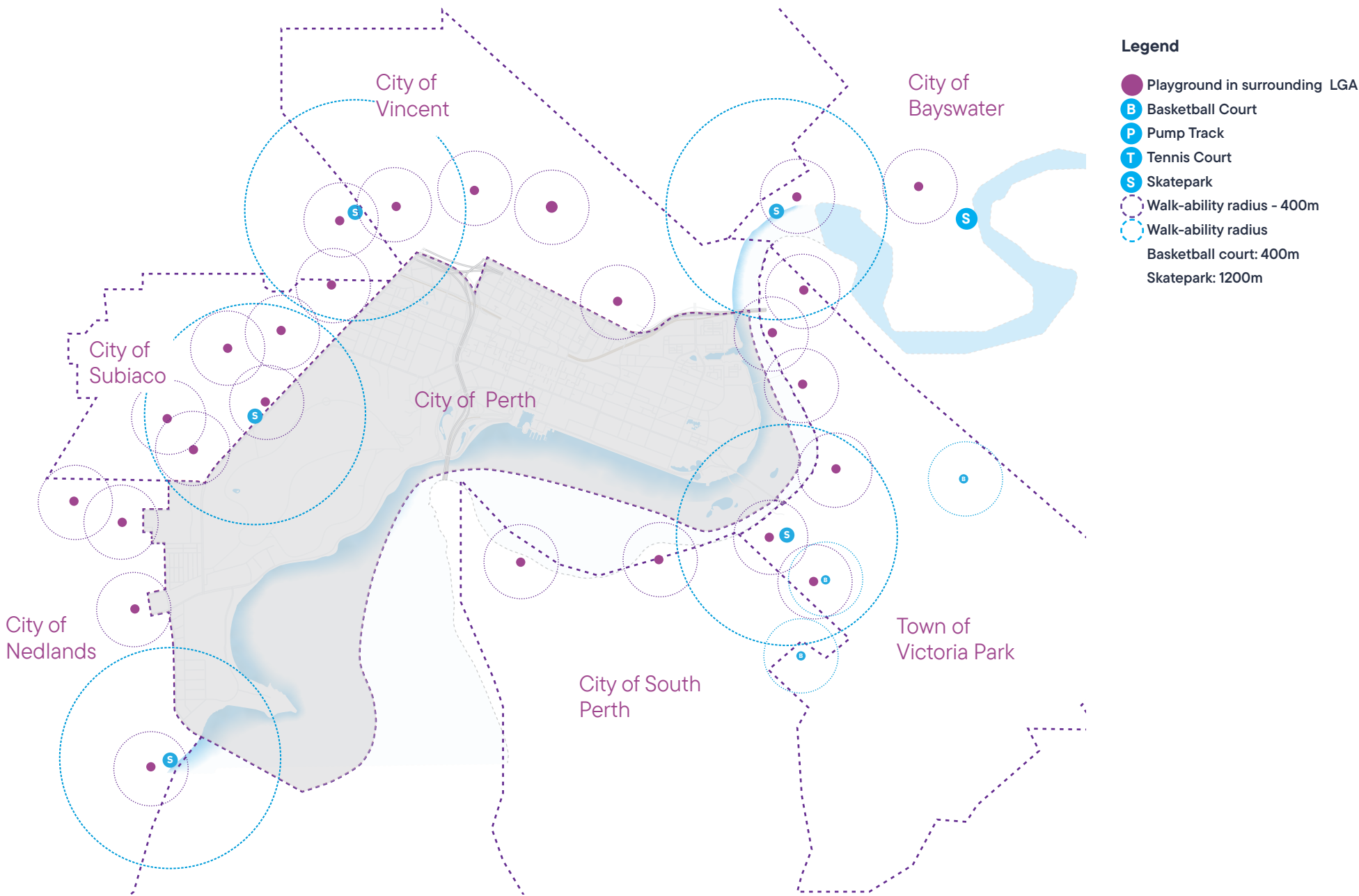
The main challenges

The existing play spaces primarily cater to younger children, with limited diversity in play. Most facilities focus on traditional physical play using proprietary play equipment, offering fewer opportunities for imaginative, social, or nature-based play.

Across the City, play opportunities for older children and teenagers are limited, with few spaces designed to support their needs. There is also a shortage of active and social recreation opportunities for a wider range of age groups, reinforcing the need for more inclusive and diverse play spaces.

From a distribution perspective, there are large gaps in Central Perth and Crawley Nedlands.

Play in surrounding suburbs



What surrounding suburbs are providing?

This section review the play and recreational facilities offered by neighbouring Local Government Areas (LGAs) and how they may influence play opportunities for City of Perth residents.

Many neighbouring LGAs provide large playgrounds situated within natural reserves or larger parks. These spaces often connect with additional facilities such as sports ground and walking trails, creating family friendly destinations for longer dwell imes.

The City of Perth, with less available open space, needs to lean on its attraction as a tourist destination and look at innovative bespoke play opportunities in its urban setting. It can become a destination for visitors seeking unique play options in the heart of the CBD for people of all ages to complement the larger traditional play provided by in surrounding suburbs.

Although the City of Perth currently lacks skate parks, the surrounding LGAs offer a range of district-level skate facilities, with five notable options available. Consequently, residents can choose to travel either east or west to access these facilities. Given their district-level appeal, skate parks typically attract users willing to travel further for specialized facilities. Again, the City of Perth can leverage off it's unique urban identity to create unique offerings to skaters.



What does it means for Perth

Unlike its suburban neighbours, the City of Perth has a highly urbanized context, with limited large reserves or open land. Neighbouring LGAs offer larger, more spread-out recreational spaces, whereas the City of Perth must maximize play within a compact environment.

The City should leverage its unique urban character by:

- Integrating playfulness into existing high pedestrian traffic areas.
- Activating underutilized urban spaces with multi-functional and adaptable play elements.
- Ensuring play and recreation opportunities are seamlessly woven into the city's public realm, catering to both residents and visitors.
- Intergate art and play into the public realm to provide a variety of experiences for different ages and abilities.



Some fun precedents from other cities

Introduction

Many of Australia's larger cities face the challenge of limited urban space, requiring innovative solutions to activate left-over and in-between spaces for play and recreation. Many cities have successfully transformed compact or underutilized areas into vibrant, multifunctional, and engaging play environments.

Some interesting examples

Adelaide has introduced a series of playful sculptures in its central mall. These installations are not only interactive and visually striking but also contribute to the city's identity, creating a sense of place and meaning within the urban landscape.

Brisbane has developed an inner-city urban parkour space at Carl Street, seamlessly integrating it with the surrounding urban fabric. This space offers multi-functional all ages play opportunities, making use of urban infrastructure in an engaging and dynamic way.

The City of Melbourne has commissioned artist Mike Hewson to create 'risky play' a space that promotes playful risk-taking in an urban setting. Melbourne's Level Crossing Removal Project has also introduced active recreation spaces across the city, transforming previously inaccessible areas into fun active precincts.

In Bunbury, WA, an interactive parkour and mini-golf space has been developed as part of a broader youth precinct. This space is vibrant, dynamic, and multifunctional, offering a flexible play experience.

Peter Newman's Sky Station in London encourages contemplation and social bonding.

Linear playspaces such as Dubai's 'The Dunes' makes a bold statement in a compact and exciting form encouraging interaction by various age groups.





Skystation, London



Carl Street Urban Common, Brisbane, Aus



Hart's Mill Surrounds Adelaide, Aus



Blue Ribbon, Shanghai



Toorak Road Level Crossing Removal Project , Melbourne, Aus



The Shower, Shanghai

International best practice

Introduction

A review of global best practices and strategy documents highlights key opportunities for the City of Perth to enhance its playspace provision by integrating play into urban planning, prioritizing inclusivity, and fostering community-driven approaches.

Documents reviewed:

- Playful Cities Toolkit / reclaiming play in cities – Arup Lego Foundation
- Good Play Space Guide – Sport and Recreation Victoria
- Everyone Can Play – NSW Government
- Playful Paradigm Final Product
- Playful Cities Design Guide Play for Anyone
- Inclusive Spaces and places for girls and young people – Make spaces for girls
- Cities alive/Designing cities that works for women – Arup
- Play in the City – Alex Bonham



The City is For Playing Installation, Sao Paulo, Brasil



Play Beyond Playgrounds

Expanding play beyond traditional playgrounds transforms cities into interactive and engaging environments.

Playfulness should be integrated into streets, plazas, and public spaces:

- Park'N'Play – Rooftop Playground on a Car Park in Copenhagen
- Songzhuang Micro Community Park / Cross boundaries provide unrestricted usage and trigger a variety of activities for all age groups
- Reviving and renovating public stairs affected by the Beirut Port explosion: Memory and space
- Philadelphia's Urban Thinkscape re-imagines bus stops and public seating as playful learning spaces
- Cities that integrate play into transport hubs, commercial zones, and green spaces create vibrant and inclusive public realms.



Park'N'Play – Rooftop Playground on a Car Park in Copenhagen, Denmark



Cross boundaries' vibrant songzhuang micro park, Beijing, China



Beirut's public stairs, Beirut, Lebanon



All Abilities & Neurodiverse Play

A significant focus of new playspace provision globally is ensuring that everyone can play. It is now universally accepted that all children and young people, even those with a physical or intellectual disability should enjoy playgrounds and participate in play.

“Inclusive playspaces consider as many people’s needs as possible. They provide a welcoming place where people feel comfortable yet challenged, while removing the obstacles and barriers that prevent people of all ages, cultural background and abilities (both physical and mental) from being invited to play.”

Everyone can play. NSW Government 2023

Inclusive play spaces are much more than providing appropriate access. Only 20% of children with a disability have movement challenges. It is just as important to ensure all children can participate in play. Sensory and tactile experiences are critical for those with Autism as are calm areas and strategic fencing to assist in managing behavioural challenges. Sensory play is also critical for children with visibility and aural disabilities. A playspace can no longer simply be a collection of physical play equipment. Natural elements, accessible social elements, sensory and cognitive play components are all crucial so all children and young people can play together.



Play As An Urban Priority

Many cities worldwide prioritize play in urban design, integrating it into placemaking strategies to enhance inclusivity, health, and sustainability.

- Giant Seesaws Transform New York City's Garment District into Light-Filled Urban Playground
- Canadian design collective Les Astronautes has lined a disused alley in Quebec with hundreds of protruding pool noodles to activate urban space
- The Swing seat in West End Square, US, become a popular space for young adults to hangout and socialise.
- Tetris Square and its multi-purpose nets and play structure became a large public space for everyone in the community.



Illuminated musical seesaws along the street, New York



Les Astronautes / EXMURO arts public's



West End Square, Dallas, TX, US



Tetris Square by Lab D+H, Guangzhou, China



Space for girls

To create inclusive and engaging playful spaces for women and girls, cities must prioritize safety, accessibility, and diverse recreation opportunities.

Successful Strategies & Case Studies:

- Swing Time (Boston, USA) – Features illuminated adult-sized swings, providing a safe, inviting, and aesthetically engaging space for teenage girls to socialize
- Tribute Garden (New York, USA) – A green space designed for reflection and support, particularly benefiting women who have experienced domestic abuse
- Gardens by the Bay (Singapore) – Partnered with Girl Guides Singapore to encourage girls' participation in environmental stewardship

Key Design Approaches:

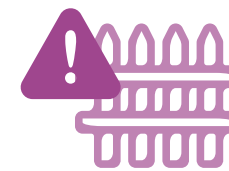
- Create well-lit, adaptable, and social spaces, such as community gathering areas, multi-use sports courts, and creative play zones.
- Ensure spaces foster a sense of belonging and comfort for women and girls.
- Introduce mentorship programs, workshops, and female-focused recreational activities to empower participation.



Swing Time, Boston, USA



Sculptural element for socialising



Fencing & risk in playspaces

Play Australia, the peak national advocacy organisation for PLAY in Australia, generally does not support fencing provision around playgrounds as it limits children's agency and learning. Much is learned exploring the gardens surrounding the playground. Elements such as boulders, logs or planting can be used to create more subtle barriers.

Fencing may be required in limited areas to separate serious risks such as busy roads, watercourses or dog exercise areas.

If designing specifically for neurodiversity or a disability and their carers that may require a manageable enclosed space to maximise play participation.

Ultimately parents are responsible for the supervision of their children at all times, and not government authorities. Fences may create a false sense that there is no risk or supervision required within the fenced area.

Regarding risk the following is an excerpt from the preamble from AS 4685.1:2021 where it states;

“Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. Play provision should aim at managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm.”

Creating great places to play

So to create great places to play, it is not just about installing different types of play for different age groups. We need to ensure that we are designing the spaces to be playful.

To achieve this, there are four aspirations for places that the City of Perth is looking to create when implementing intergenerational play and active/social recreation provision across the City.

They are about creating;

fun, welcoming, dynamic and **meaningful** places in which to play. Spaces that all of the community can enjoy no matter what age, ability, gender or background. So essentially;

Diverse types of play

(social, cognitive, creative, physical & emotional)

+

Consideration of all ages

(young children through to older adults)

+

Creating aspirational spaces

(fun, welcoming, dynamic and meaningful)

=

A Playful Perth

These ambitions are not mutually exclusive. 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.

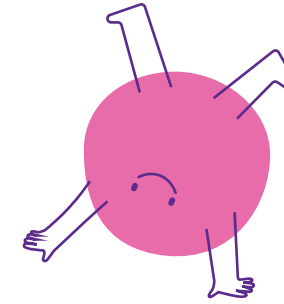
Each of the spatial ambitions of play are now explained in more detail.

Art that infuses personality into locations and makes them into places” can contribute much to enhancing community ownership and use of public spaces.

Sucher DM. City comforts: How to build an urban village: City Comforts Inc.; 2010

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 together

Kelly, Jane-Frances. Social cities, Grattan Institute 2012.



Fun Places

Fun - *Light-hearted pleasure, enjoyment, or amusement; boisterous joviality or merrymaking; entertainment*

A playful Perth is a fun Perth. A place where everyone in the community can enjoy themselves in a range of exciting and dynamic ways.

Sometimes simple items that have interventions that have a versatility of purpose can conjure the most joy. Art in particular can therefore be a valuable mechanism for injecting playfulness and fostering more fun into parks and public places.

Places...

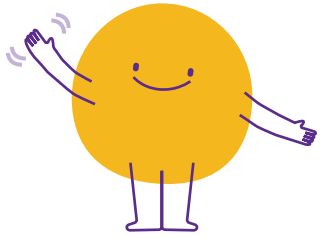
Filled with vibrant, diverse and engaging play opportunities.

that encourages exploration and discovery

offering adventurous and exciting experiences.

where creativity and imagination thrive

that integrate playful elements to invite spontaneous play



Welcoming Places

Welcoming – *Friendly or making you feel welcome:*

A playful Perth is a welcoming city for people of all ages, abilities, and cultural backgrounds. It is inclusive and accessible and creates spaces that encourage social connection and enjoyment at any time throughout the day and early evening.

People having fun together can socialise and connect through play. Creating welcoming spaces ensures the community can access inclusive play no matter gender, age, cultural background or ability.

Places...

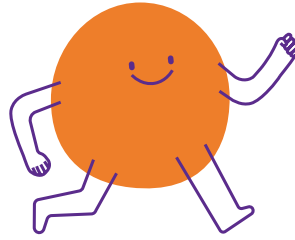
that embrace people from all backgrounds and cultures

designed for all abilities & all ages and prioritize inclusivity

where people feel safe, comfortable, and valued

that encourage multigenerational interaction

that promote social connection through shared play and gathering opportunities.



Dynamic Places

Dynamic – *Positive in attitude, full of energy & new ideas*

A playful Perth is a dynamic city that inspires people to engage in both active and passive play. Dynamic spaces attract people to move where people can be vigorous and expend energy. They are also flexible and adaptable that can evolve to meet the changing needs of the community. Dynamic 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.

Places...

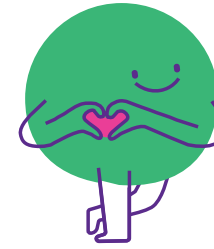
with flexible, multi-use options that adapt to community needs

that evolves with the needs of the community over time

that offers both passive and active experiences

that encourage movement, activity, and engagement through interactive design

that integrate art, technology, and play to create immersive activation



Meaningful Places

Meaningful – *Serious, important, or worthwhile.*

A Playful Perth is a city that offers meaningful and relevant spaces for everyone in the community to enjoy and participate in. Meaningful spaces are designed to capture the needs of the community whilst fostering a sense of belonging and creating a unique identity to build ownership and connection. Meaningful spaces enable different people to do different things and are able to alter and adapt activities to become relevant to people with different interests and needs.

Places...

that foster a strong sense of belonging and connection

that are designed with cultural and community relevance

that reflects the identity and history of its people

that integrate storytelling and local heritage

that create lasting, memorable experiences through thoughtful and purposeful design

A new model for play provision

To create a playful Perth we need to ensure existing traditional play provision is improved and implemented to meet the needs of local residents. And focus how play can be accommodated throughout the urban fabric to enrich and enliven those that work and visit the CBD. We also need to embrace the importance of active play opportunities across the municipality to expand the provision of age relevant play.

Therefore a new hierarchy model for play is presented as follows;

Creative play spaces



Firstly, creative playful elements may be deployed across the city to add informal opportunities to play. These are small interventions that can be added to existing urban spaces and focus on art, music and interaction to enliven and enrich public spaces.

Local play spaces shall be added and enhanced to include all 5 types of play. They should be located to maximise walkability of 400m throughout the City of Perth's residential suburbs.

Perth is fortunate that it already has some great destination playspaces. With the plan for another major playspace as part of the Riverfront Masterplan, there is no need for additional large scale play provision for the foreseeable future.

Active play spaces



Our analysis has shown a serious lack of active play elements and large play spaces.

Different age groups such as teenagers, particularly those who rely on public transport are attracted to urban & transport centres. Therefore opportunities for informal social & active play in these urban precincts is important. Small interventions that promote physical movement and social connection can provide great value for young people and adults.

Designated recreation spaces will be located near or with playspace provision in residential suburbs. This adds recreation and play value for older children and adults.

To complement these localised opportunities, there will also be larger key spaces that may have a specific age focus or to cater for a specific sport or recreation such as fitness/obstacle course, or skate park. The City of Perth has embraced the need for a new major skatepark in their skatepark feasibility report and a site has been proposed as part of the Riverfront Masterplan. Other large scale active amenities may be proposed by the upcoming Community Infrastructure Plan.





Model breakdown

Type	Definition	Examples	Ages
Small Interventions			
 Creative Playful element	Single playful element requiring minimal space that can be placed in an existing public space. Focus on art, play, music & performance.	• Water jets in pavement • Art work on wall • Busking event space • Interactive music element • Sound space • Projection on wall	All
 Active play element	Single informal active play element requiring minimal space that can be placed in an existing public. Focus on physical activity & social connection.	• Bouldering wall • Skate ledge • Ball ¼ court • Table tennis table • Futsal table • Parkour frame • Fitness station	All
Local Play Space			
 Creative Playspace	Designated small play areas with focus on 5 types of play that are primarily in parkland spaces to provide for typically 0-10 ages and associated social amenity including access and inclusion	• Nature elements • Set of swings • Climbing element • Tactile panels • Spinning elements • Trampolines • Making space	0-10 focus
 Active Playspace	Designated small local active play space that provides opportunities for social and physical activity. Can be a single use space or combination with associated social amenity, access and inclusion	• Half court ball court • Small skatepark • Small pump track • Parkour space • Scooter loop • Netball ring area • Rebound wall and court • Or combination of above	All
Large Play Space			
 Major Playspace	Primarily covers typical large traditional regional playspace including recreation elements for all ages.	• Major Regional Playground	All
 Major Active Playspace	Primarily covers large single purpose facilities such as a regional skatepark or other wheeled sports facility or large scale combination of recreation/play elements.	• Skatepark • Full Basketball court/s • BMX track • Tennis courts • MTB track	All

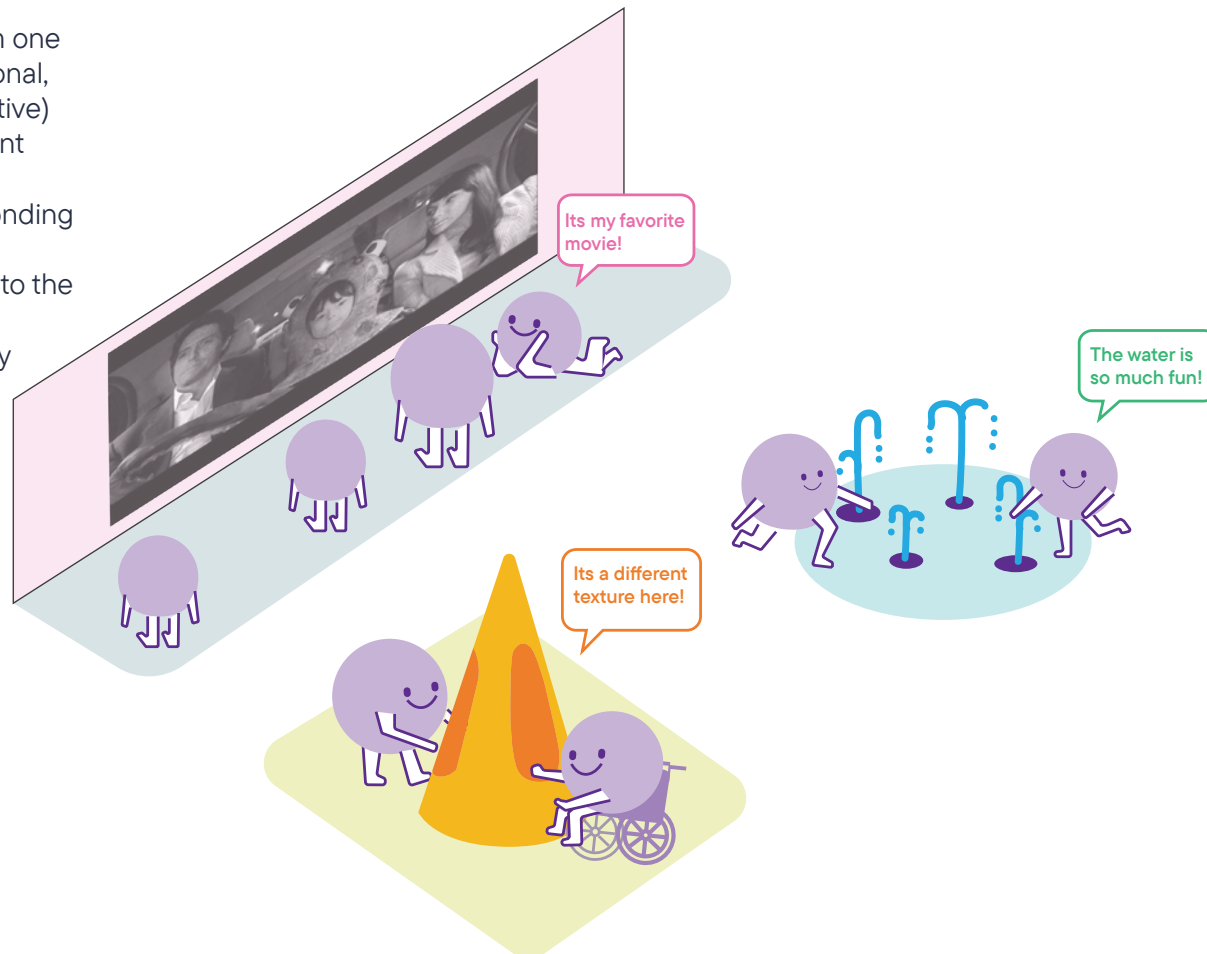
Creative playful element (✿)

Definition

Single playful element requiring minimal space that can be placed in an existing public space. The focus is on art, play, music & performance.

Minimum Requirements:

- Element to support minimum one type of play (physical, emotional, social, cognitive and/or creative)
- Be robust with vandal resistant materials
- Be well integrated and responding to site context
- Consider wheelchair access to the space where possible
- Be age, gender and culturally inclusive
- Be fun and add to the playfulness of the city.



Projection in a city lane facade.



Water jets to provide interactive fun



Sculptural elements that promote discovery and interaction

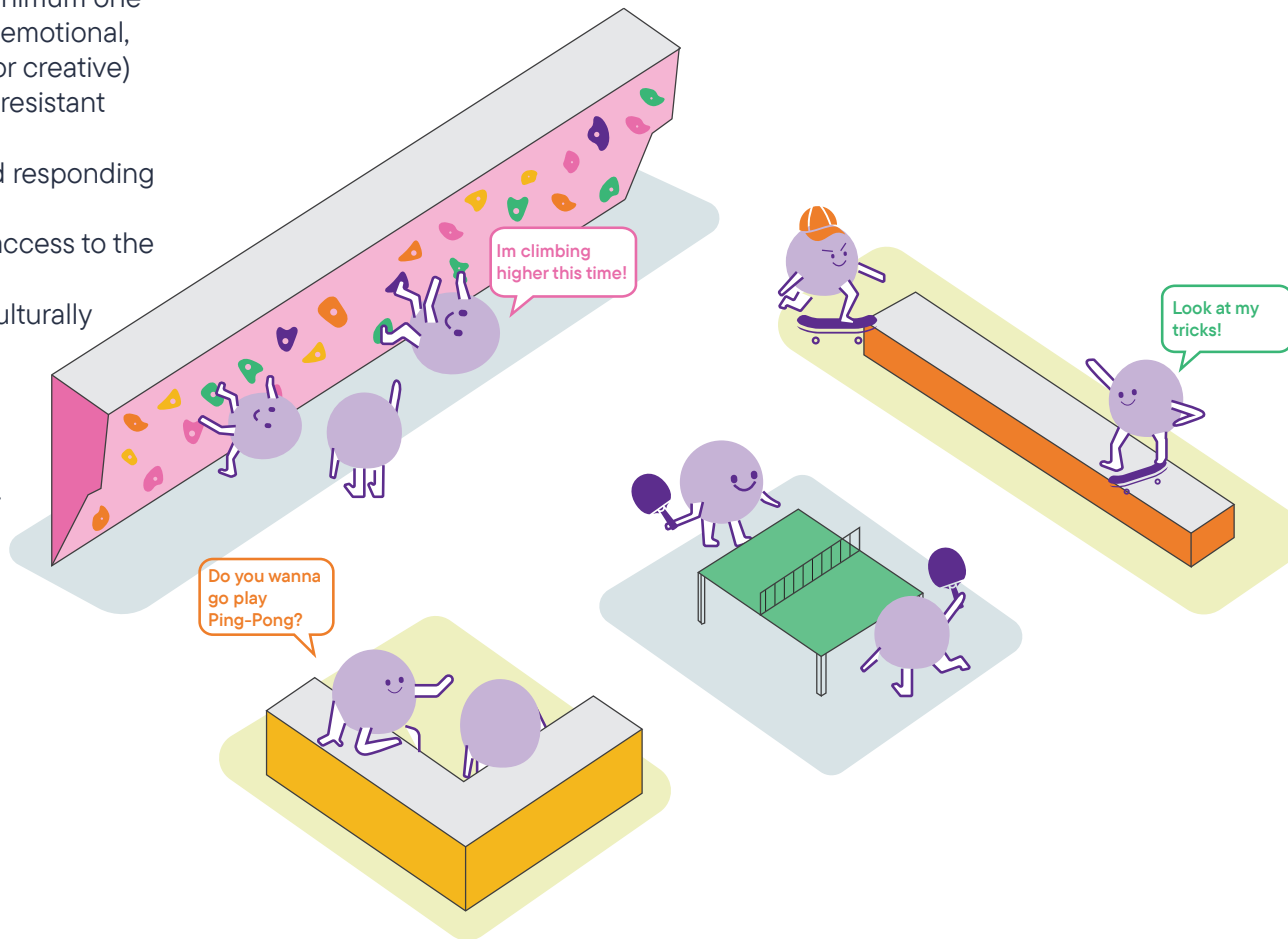
Active playful element (◆)

Definition

Single informal recreation element requiring minimal space that can be placed in an existing public space. Focus on physical activity & social connection.

Minimum Requirements:

- Element to support minimum one type of play (physical, emotional, social, cognitive and/or creative)
- Be robust with vandal resistant materials
- Be well integrated and responding to site context
- Consider wheelchair access to the space where possible
- Be age, gender and culturally inclusive and most important be fun for everyone.
- Be fun and add to the playfulness of the city.



Incidental skate ledge for informal skate use



Interactive furniture to create fun social moments



Table tennis to activate the street

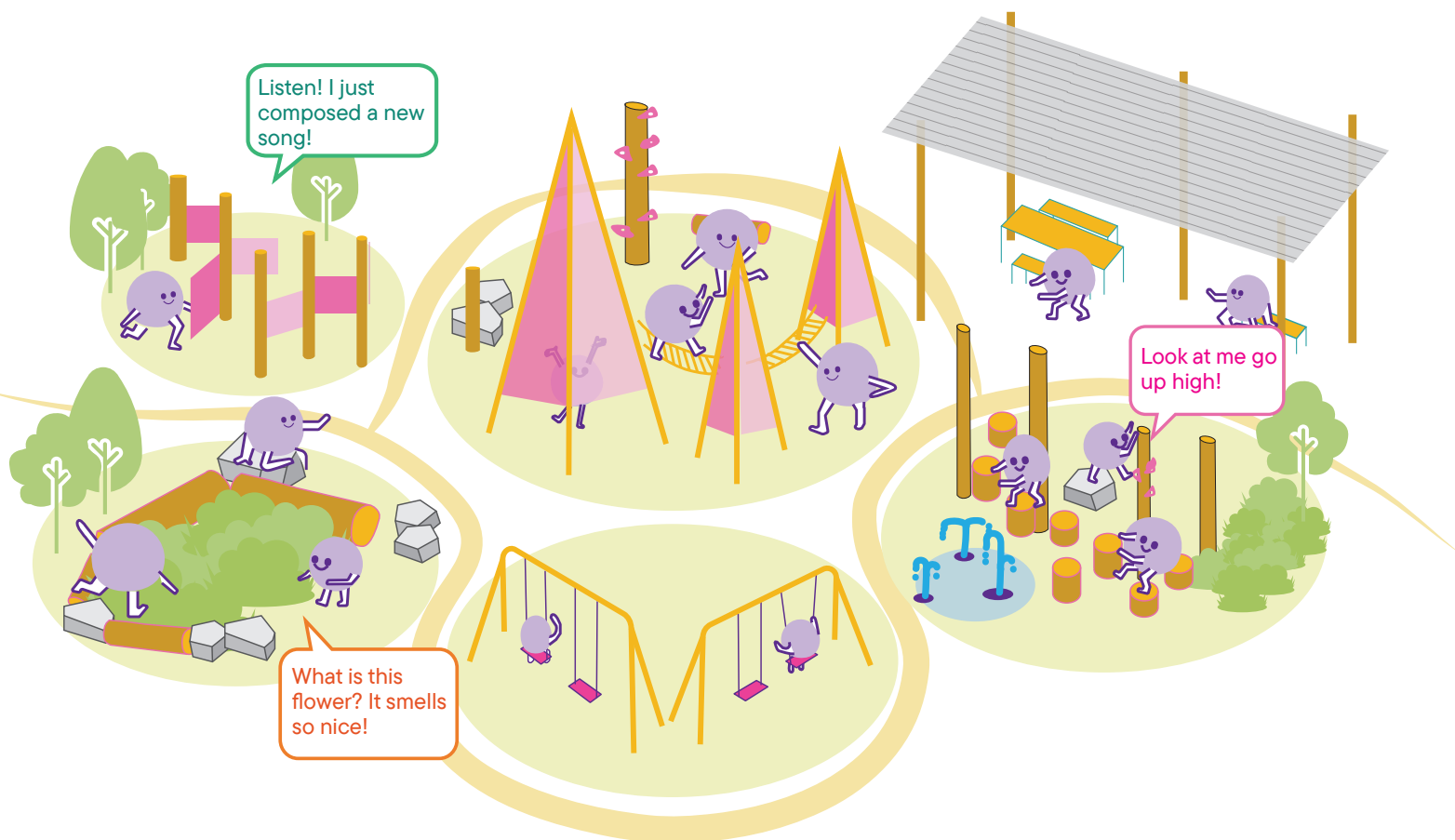
Local playspace (🌸)

Definition

Designated small play areas with focus on 5 key developmental types of play. They are primarily in parkland spaces to provide for typically 0-10 ages and associated social amenity including access and inclusion for all.

Minimum Requirements:

- Connected path network throughout the space
- Natural shade and park shelters
- Picnic tables and a mix of formal seating and informal social spaces
- Robust and durable materials
- Rubbish bin/s
- Drinking fountain/s
- Good natural surveillance
- Textured natural elements & educative opportunities.
- Play components cater for a wide range of age groups from younger children to pre-teenagers.
- Utilise a mix of bespoke, natural and 'off the shelf' elements that provide diverse play experiences including but not limited to nature, sensory, motion, active, adventurous and social play.
- Provide universal access to space with inclusive all ability play elements and surfacing.



Example Images

Physical Play



Rope and net course

Emotional Play



Balancing, traversing

Social Play



Social swings

Cognitive Play



Games and puzzles

Creative Play



Cubby building



Bouldering walls



Lookouts



Playful furniture



Tactile & moveable materials



Opportunity to create music/art



Trampolines



Cubby spaces and passive spaces to retreat and regulate



Play elements that encourage shared experiences



Sensory elements



Sculptural play

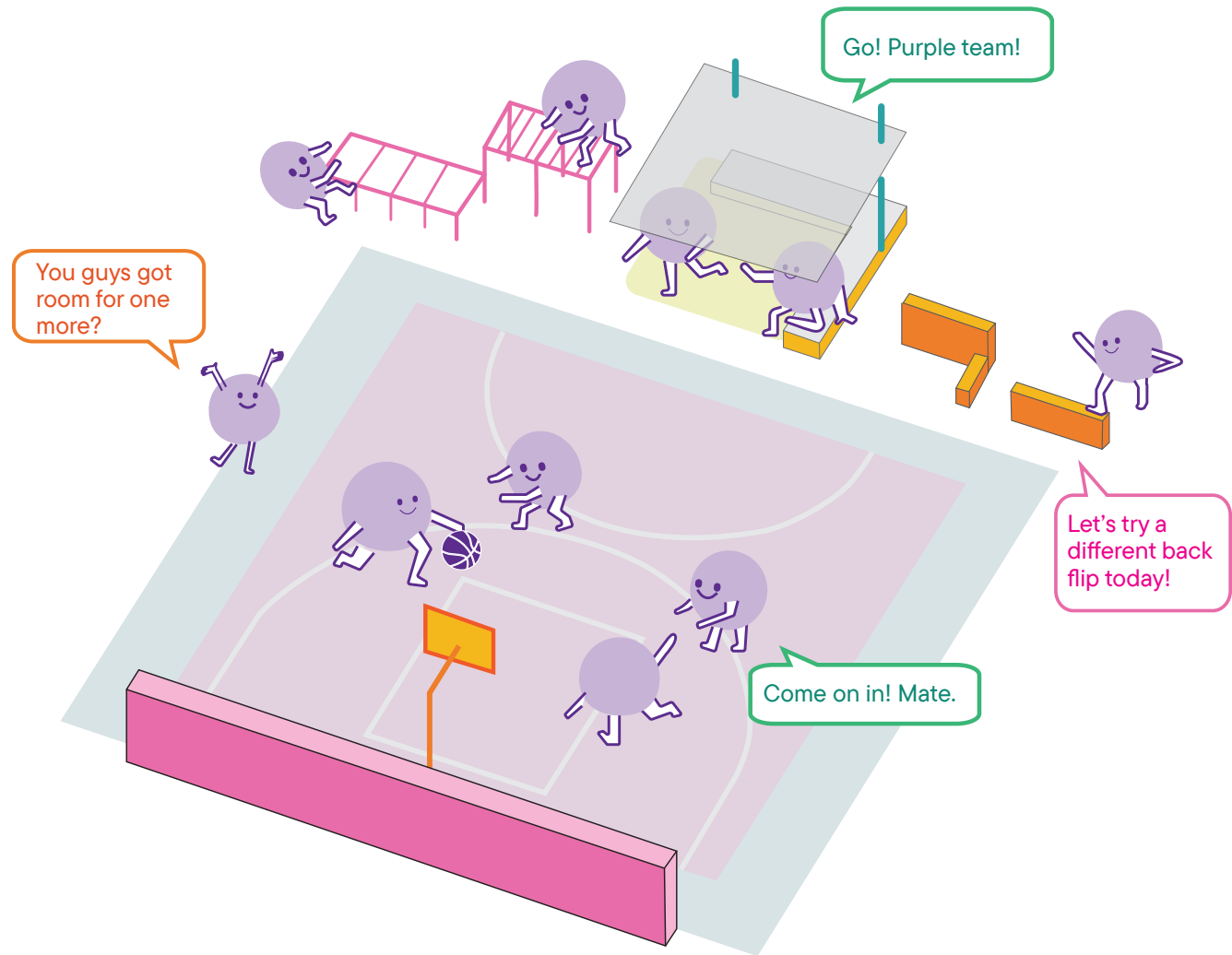
Local active play space (■)

Definition

Designated small local recreation space that provides opportunities for social and physical activity. Can be a single use space or combination with associated social amenity, access and inclusion

Minimum Requirements:

- Access to public transport
- Connected path network throughout
- Mix of formal seating and informal social spaces
- Robust materials
- Rubbish bin/s
- Drinking fountain/s
- Good natural surveillance & lighting as necessary
- Educative opportunities.
- Proximity to youth interest areas (shopping areas, other recreation spaces or schools)
- Proximity to major community centre or centralized location
- Provide social recreation facilities, including but not limiting to social play (swings, hammocks) half court, rebound wall, climbing structures, scooter loop, pump track, skate area, and/or fitness stations
- Provide universal access to space with inclusive all ability elements and surfacing.
- Consider its context and have the necessary landscaping to integrate /complement its surroundings



Example Images

Physical Play



Multi-purpose fitness bars



Pump track



Climbing nets and walls

Emotional Play



skate elements



Mini ramp



Event space

Social Play



Table tennis



Social seating



Parkour

Cognitive Play



Maze/puzzle space



Foosball Table



Mini golf

Creative Play



Interactive sculpture



Line marking for different games



Space to play music/host events

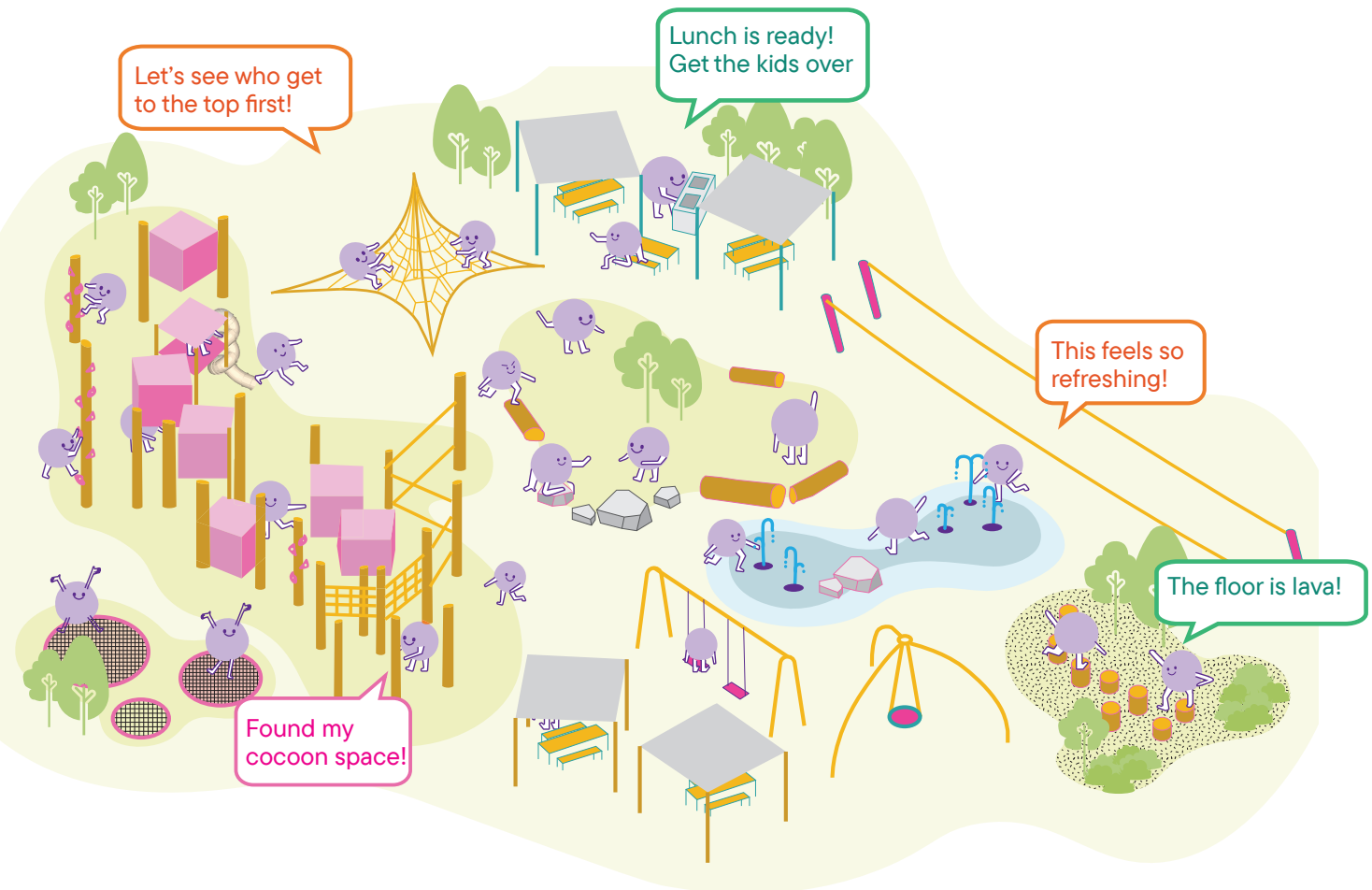
Large Play Space (🌸)

Definition

Primarily covers typical large traditional regional playspace including recreation elements for all ages.

Minimum Requirements:

- Access / close to public transport
- Connected path network throughout the space
- Wheelchair access to space. Ensure significant accessible/inclusive areas for universal play
- Natural shade and built shade
- Toilet, BBQ and picnic tables
- Mix of formal seating and informal social spaces
- Robust materials
- Rubbish bin/s & Drinking fountain/s
- Good natural surveillance & lighting
- Textured natural elements, educative opportunities.
- Proximity to youth interest areas (shopping areas, active recreation, schools)
- Large playspace to be iconic, site sensitive, site specific, educational and culturally relevant
- Play components cater for a wide range of age groups from younger children to pre-teenagers.
- Range of play and social recreation elements for all different age and abilities
- Designated Parking



Example Images

Physical Play



Iconic climbing structure

Emotional Play



Parkour walls/bars

Social Play



Basket swing

Cognitive Play



Water play

Creative Play



Sand and loose materials



Climbing bars



Challenging elements



Play encouraging social connection



Sensory panel/puzzles



Sensory gardens



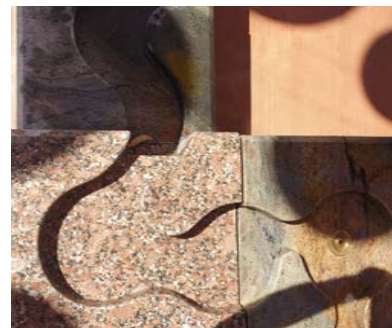
Play opportunities for body strength



Balance and movement



Big mouse wheel



Sensory elements include different materials and colours



Voice tubes

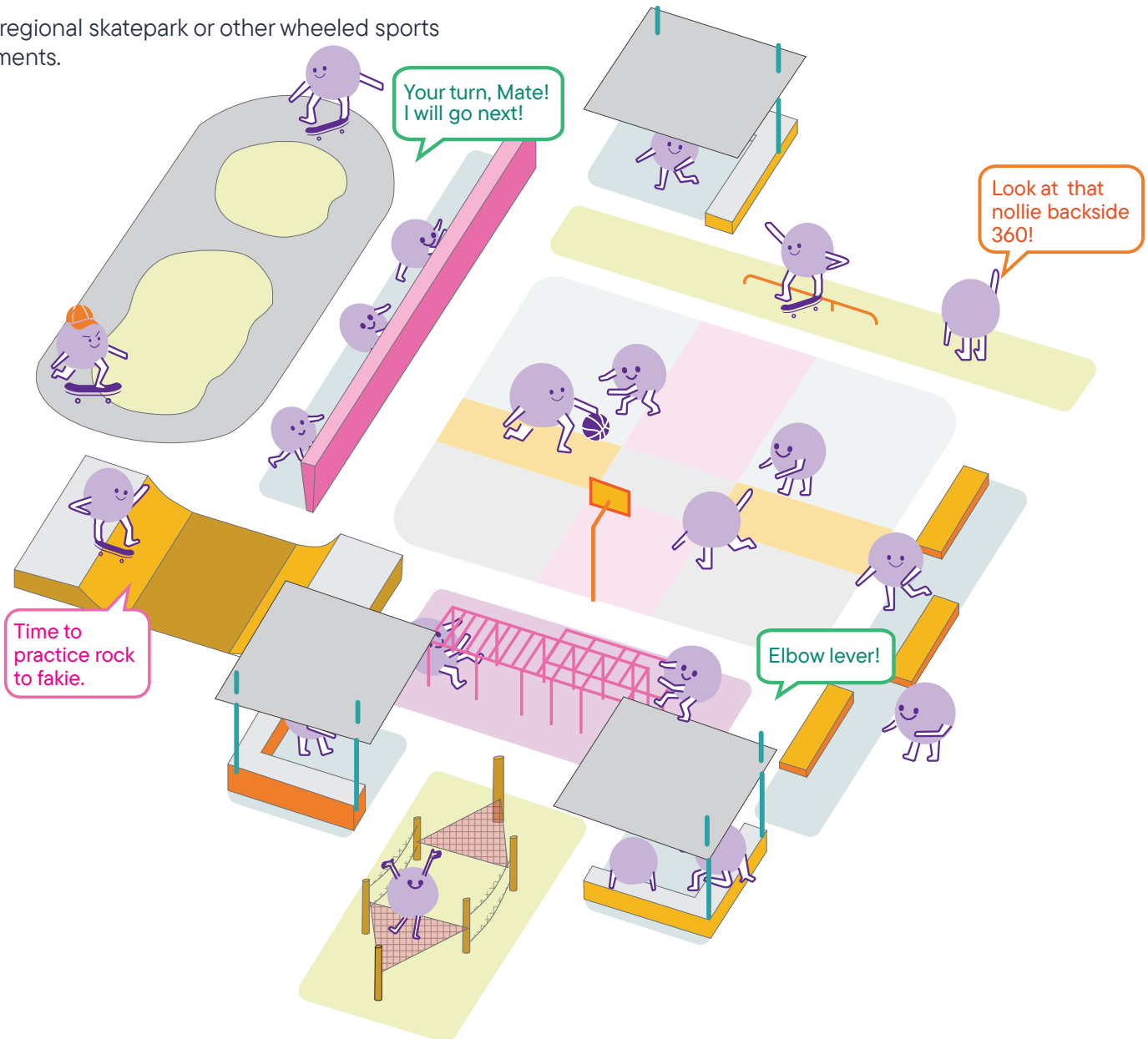
Large Active Play Space (📐)

Definition

Primarily covers large single purpose facilities such as a regional skatepark or other wheeled sports facility or large scale combination of recreation/play elements.

Minimum Requirements:

- Access to / close to public transport
- Connected accessible path network throughout the space
- Significant all abilities/inclusive areas for universal play
- Natural and built shade
- Toilet, BBQ and picnic tables
- Mix of formal seating and informal social spaces
- Robust materials
- Minimum 2-3 different social nodes
- Rubbish bin/s
- Drinking fountain/s
- Good natural surveillance
- Textured natural elements, educative opportunities.
- Proximity to youth interest areas (shopping areas, other recreation spaces, schools)
- Proximity to major community centre or centralized location
- Social recreation elements for all different age and abilities
- Sports level lighting for social/active recreation area, such as skate park, sports court, or pump track
- Designated Parking



Example Images

Physical Play



Bouldering walls



Pump track



Skate plaza

Emotional Play



Range of skill levels



Advanced skate features



Space for a range of activities

Social Play



Spaces to hangout with friends



Multi-sport court



Lawn picnic spaces

Cognitive Play



Outdoor chess



Elements to learn and manipulate



Colourful space integrated with games and varieties of play opportunities

Creative Play



Art murals



Interactive light



Playful seats



PLA'CE

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