



Playground Strategy

2009-2014

Corporate Planning & Strategy

Adopted 1st December 2008

Document reference: MC/12/30042



Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Background
3. Playground development 2001-2008
4. Planning issues
 - 4.1 Consultation
 - 4.2 Age of Children
 - 4.3 Shade
 - 4.4 Fencing
 - 4.5 Ground Surface Material
 - 4.6 Associated Features
 - 4.7 Tourism
 - 4.8 Landscape Design
 - 4.9 Signage
5. Playground Safety
 - 5.1 Playground Equipment Inventory
 - 5.2 Inspections
 - 5.3 Reporting
 - 5.4 Maintenance
 - 5.5 Incident Reporting Procedure
 - 5.6 Maintenance Budget
6. Five year expenditure Program
 - 6.1 Playground Categories
 - 6.2 Playground Rating
 - 6.3 Implementation of Playground Strategy
 - 6.4 Funding implications
7. Recommendations

Appendices – ABS Census Maps

- | | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Appendix A | Playground Catchment Areas |
| Appendix B | Children 0 – 4 Years |
| Appendix C | Children 5 – 9 Years |
| Appendix D | Children 10 – 14 Years |

1. Introduction

This strategy has been developed to guide the development and management of Manly Council's playgrounds for the next five years (2009 – 2014).

This document will review what has been achieved over the past 8 years in terms of creation of new playgrounds and refurbishment of existing ones. Recommendations will be made on future works and the associated funding required to maintain these playgrounds to the highest standard.

Manly has 30 playground sites ranging from large multi-use playgrounds to small pocket playgrounds that may only have a swing. This document focuses only on playgrounds within managed public space such as parks, reserves, and sports fields, but does not deal with playgrounds or play facilities located in other Council buildings such as in a child care centres or the swim centre.

Recently a complete audit was made of all playgrounds. The playground strategy aims to provide direction for future playground improvements and development for the Manly community.



2. Background

Playgrounds are one of the most valued facilities in our community, providing a place for parents and children to have fun, relax, enjoy a chat, keep fit, and explore. They are often the first place a family becomes connected to their local community.

In 2001 Council adopted a recommendation to establish the Playground Management Committee to oversee the development of both existing playgrounds and plan for new works. The committee has representation from local parents, child development worker, Councillors and Council staff.

Playground Management Objectives:-

- To provide Manly residents and visitors with safe age appropriate playgrounds, that meet or exceed the relevant Australian Standards.
- To plan, design and develop both new and existing playgrounds to meet future needs of the community.
- To provide children with recreational facilities that will improve physical fitness and provide high play value.
- To provide parents and carers with amenities that will improve their leisure time spent at the playground.

Council supported the Committee's recommendations by allocating Budget increases to provide substantial improvements to playgrounds and maintenance. Additionally funding was gained from the NSW Department of Sports and Recreation, Capital Assistance Grants to complete works proposed.

Manly Council in the last 8 years has achieved significant results in playground management, and during this time 18 playgrounds have been refurbished or redeveloped. Maintenance programs have also resulted in reduced risk to users, resulting in Council having no claims during that time.

Every aspect of community need has been taken into consideration when planning these facilities. Manly has, over the last 8 years experienced an increase in the number of families settling in its higher density areas. Many families have young children who choose to use the many open space facilities on offer here.

3. Playground Development 2001-2008

Manly has thirty (30) playgrounds ranging from large multiage ranging to pocket parks that may only have a swing. In 2001 a comprehensive audit was taken of the condition of playgrounds throughout Manly to assess which playgrounds required full or part refurbishment, or general maintenance. Steps were taken to raise all playgrounds to meet the Australian Standards requirements immediately.

The Playground Committee in conjunction with Council staff has assessed those requiring the most urgent attention based on safety inspections, community feedback, and with a prioritizing of available funding.

Many playgrounds have been improved through the following treatment:

- Painting
- new softfall (ground surface material)
- Shade structure installation
- New or rejuvenated fencing
- New / additional equipment added to increase play value
- New picnic seating / table for parents and carers needs
- Bubblers installed
- Bike racks installed

- *Playground Upgrades 2001-2008*
 - Manly Lagoon-New and refurbished equipment and components
 - North Steyne Playground-New Structure/equipment
 - Clontarf Reserve- New Structure / equipment
 - Weeroona Playground- New Structure / equipment
 - Little Manly Point-Refurbished equipment and components
 - Tania Park- Refurbished equipment and components
 - North Harbour Reserve-New and refurbished equipment and components
 - Ivanhoe Park-Refurbished equipment and components
 - Ross Street-new and refurbished equipment and components
 - Cross Street-new and refurbished equipment and components
 - Corso – new playground replacing old

- *Bower Street – new playground*
- *Dally Park – New equipment and or ground treatment*
- *East Esplanade - New equipment and or ground treatment*
- *Griffiths Street- New equipment and or ground treatment Little Manly Cove-new*
- *Nanbaree swing only – New equipment and or ground treatment Little Manly Cove-new*
- **New Playgrounds**
 - JAF Fenwick
 - Baranbali
 - Seaforth Oval (To be constructed – Design signed off)
 - Corso Playground

4. Planning issues

While play is a fun activity, it is also a primary way in which children learn about themselves, others and their surroundings. Through play (and especially with other children), children develop physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative skills they need.

Playgrounds need to stimulate children to explore, interact, rest and think. They also need to be physically challenging. Playgrounds are equally important for carers. They must be accessible, relaxing and safe. This requirement for playgrounds is becoming more important with many grandparents taking on a child minding role.

4.1 Consultation

All playground planning is done in conjunction with Residents, Precincts, and user groups such as playgroups, and local schools. There is a process by which playground works are initiated including the following steps. Residents are advised of the proposal to redevelop or alter an existing playground. Consultation is usually held on site at a time that is convenient for families and children to attend. Once a design is prepared, a 6 week public exhibition is held to allow further comments to be made prior to a final decision being made by Council.

4.2 Age of Children

To provide playgrounds that encourage high play value, The Playground Management Committee recommended that Manly develop playgrounds based on specific age groupings in order to encourage safer play and social interaction.

Indicators from the ABS Census for age of children in each suburb (and catchment area) and surrounding regional areas is included in planning decisions and is used to assess the demand and supply of playgrounds. The **Appendices** contain ABS 2006 Census maps of various children's age groups (0-4 years, 5-9 years, 10-14 years) and are used by the Committee and Council to plan for future upgrades, as well as demand and supply of playgrounds.

The majority of playgrounds in Manly cater for specific age groups, for example Manly Lagoon is aimed at children 0-4. By creating playgrounds with equipment which is appropriate to a specific age group, children can freely use and explore with children their own age, not being disturbed by older or younger children, as the case may be. Lagoon Playground also features a large 'free run' space that allows children to run, play ball, roll down the hill all in the safety of an enclosed fenced area. From a carer's perspective, having children of a similar age playing together provides a great opportunity to socialize with like-minded parents or grandparents.

4.3 Shade

The community is increasingly concerned about exposure to the sun. While children and carers are using the playgrounds this is an issue. To address this concern Council has installed shade structures in 11 playgrounds over the last 8 years.

All shade sails however, have been subject to various levels of vandalism, which is ongoing and significant. Due to this vandalism however, the height of the shade sails needs to be raised so they are 2 metres above the highest point of the playground. This however will reduce the level of shade on the playground cast by these structures.

As a result of this, options for maintaining an appropriate level of shade will need to be investigated and incorporated where the raising of sails needs to be carried out. These ideas may include additional planting of trees which once established would compensate for the loss of lower level sun penetration (due to the raising of sail structure) and would improve the natural look of the playground setting. Another option would be to build solid shade structures, as has been done in The Corso. In this regard however, consideration has to be given to what is the appropriate treatment of new specific location.

4.4 Fencing

Manly currently has 7 fenced playgrounds. These are located where the playground is for younger children ie Lagoon Playground, Tania Park and Ross Street.

The installation of fencing can help restrict (in a controlled manner) the ease of access to and from the playgrounds. But it is obviously very important that children are not left unsupervised in fenced playgrounds.

At this point further fencing of any further existing playgrounds is not proposed.

4.5 Ground Surface

Council playgrounds incorporate a variety of different ground surface material treatments. This ground finish, while aesthetically important, is primarily used to reduce possible injury from falls. These materials include rubber, sand, mulch and synthetic grass. All playgrounds presently comply with the relevant Australian Standard 4685.1:2004 Parts 1-6 with regard to ground surface treatment.

Each surface treatment has its positive and negative features:

- Rubber is very durable and can be brightly coloured. It can however heat up to a point where shading is required.
- Sand is soft and provides an excellent 'fall zone'. It does however require daily cleaning to remove foreign objects such as needles, possible broken glass, rubbish, dog droppings etc.
- Mulch is naturalist in appearance, and provides good safety, but similar to sand, cleaning is required. Also, in areas of heavy wear such as at swings, impact protection may be reduced to unsafe levels when it thins out.
- Synthetic Grass provides good safety, but can be easily vandalized. Tree roots can also lift this material creating trip hazards.

The design and location of the playground determines what type of ground surface treatment will be most appropriate. For example there was strong community support for sand to be retained at Clontarf Playground as it is located next to the harbor pool and sandy beach. It was decided that sand was seen as the most appropriate material to use as the ground treatment at this playground. It also had the necessary safety features of being a good 'fall zone' material.

4.6 Associated Features

Playgrounds should encourage a fun relaxed environment for both children and carers alike to enjoy. In this regard, apart from appropriate play equipment, it is also important to provide, seating, bubblers and bike racks.

To encourage a healthy lifestyle, playgrounds have been incorporated into the Manly Bike Path Plan. This allows families to access playgrounds, without having to use a car.

4.7 Tourism

Manly attracts over six (6) million visitors per year. This creates some unique problems for Manly playgrounds. Heavily used tourist locations such as The Corso, Beachfront and Clontarf attract heavy playground use in comparison with normal levels of use of equipment in playgrounds elsewhere. Heavy use at playgrounds will result in equipment having higher than usual maintenance, and replacement requirements.

4.8 Landscape Design

Landscaping in playgrounds is not limited to shade trees. The natural environment is incorporated into all playgrounds designed by Manly Council as a matter of course.

4.9 Signage

In 2006 Manly Council implemented a program of safety signage at all Major playgrounds. Signage provides information regarding:-

- The prohibition of dogs
- No Smoking requirements
- The reporting of damage, vandalism and the like
- The supervision of children as a requirement
- The prohibition of the use of glass in playgrounds

5. Playground Safety

It is important that all playgrounds in the Manly Council area are regularly and properly maintained to ensure that playgrounds are safe to use, and comply with the relevant Australian Standard, ie AS4685.6-2004 Parts 1-6.

Manly's playgrounds are currently inspected by Council staff on a weekly, fortnightly and monthly basis. This high level of inspection is necessary given the generally high number of users of playgrounds due to tourism, and a growing younger population.

The key components of the inspection process include:

1. Playground equipment Inventory.
2. Inspection of all playground components.
3. Incident Procedures.
4. Maintenance / repair procedures.
5. Reporting (on all above components as required).

5.1 Playground Equipment inventory

A comprehensive inventory of all playgrounds has been developed, and includes the following:-

- Site information and location maps.
- Full list of equipment, ground surface material type, shade and fencing types (including manufacturers details, certifications and relevant warranties), and date of installation.
- Photographs of the site and equipment.
- Identification of other amenity provided at each playground, including toilets, bubblers, bike racks, seating, BBQ etc.

This inventory is up-dated annually.

When selecting equipment for new playgrounds, replacement or maintenance, emphasis be placed on:

- a) Durability of equipment;
- b) Environmentally sustainable materials.

5.2 Inspections

Manly Council has developed an inspection program for all playgrounds. These inspections are carried out by qualified staff and comply with ratified procedures.

Inspections are undertaken on 3 levels:

1. Routine Inspections

Council's Park and Cleansing Teams make inspections on a daily or weekly basis, using a check sheet to list any damage caused by use, weather or vandalism. This includes inspection to identify damaged parts to equipment, the existence of broken glass, ripped or damaged shade cloth or structure and rubbish left.

2. Operational Inspections

The operational inspection is a more detailed inspection to check equipment, shade, surfacing and fencing. Attention is especially paid to wear, damage and maintenance required. These inspections are carried out by Parks Staff every fortnight.

3. Comprehensive inspection

On a bi-monthly basis, a comprehensive inspection is made of every playground to establish the overall safety of the equipment and the site.

5.3 Reporting

All levels of inspection have a corresponding Standard Form and in all cases a photographic record is kept.

Examples of works that require repair can include but are not limited to the following:

- Broken/damaged equipment requiring new parts, or ongoing maintenance of moving parts.
- Shade sail torn by wind, vandals or objects falling on, or through fabric.
- Ground surfacing destruction caused by fire, etc
- Removal of rubbish, broken glass, dog faeces, etc.
- Toddler swing safety belt or chain damage.
- Removal of graffiti on playground equipment.

5.4 Maintenance / repair procedures

If a playground has been identified as a risk the area/equipment is closed as soon as possible with Manly Council warning tape, stickers and signs preventing entrance to the facility or use of damaged play equipment. Photos are taken and sent through to the Open Space Coordinator to assess the problem and organise the repair, either by Council works staff or the relevant manufacturer / supplier.

Purchase Orders are prepared and a time frame for repair is identified. Precincts are then notified as to repair dates (via Council's Precinct Coordinator). A spread sheet is kept of all reports and actions taken.

5.5 Incident Reporting Procedure

Council has procedures to be followed in the event of incidents involving injuries, near misses and equipment damage. Information required to be compiled by Council staff includes the following:-

- Date and time of incident.
- Weather conditions at time of incident.
- Exact location of incident.
- Equipment involved in incident.

- Contributing factors.
- Photographic record of results of incident.

If the incident has involved personal injury, the following information should also be recorded and as urgently as possible reported to Council's Risk Manager.

- The injured person's details, including name, address, age and gender.
- Nature of the Injuries sustained.
- The persons who were notified of the incident and the time and date of this notification.
- If a qualified person is present the nature of any treatment performed by a qualified person and the time Emergency Services were notified.

These incidents are referred in conjunction to Council's Risk Manager and Open Space Coordinator to investigate. Following this process, recommendations for action to ensure the incident does not occur again are made.

5.6 Maintenance Budget

Maintenance of playgrounds is essential and helps to ensure that all measures are taken to meet required standards, thus allowing children to play in safety. Continual rises in playground maintenance costs due to vandalism, increased risk management, legislative safety requirements, and repair, need to be addressed as part of the strategy and ongoing budget allocation in this regard are critical.

Some examples of damage that require spending as ongoing maintenance include:

- Shade sail damaged.
- Equipment and surface material destroyed by lighting on deliberate fires.
- High winds causing damage to shade sails and associated components.
- General wear and tear of equipment due to higher than usual numbers of users, especially in tourist or heavily populated areas.
- Graffiti on playground equipment, sails and softfall.
- Other general vandalism to all components of playgrounds.

Year One of the Playground Maintenance budget is estimated to be in the vicinity of \$40,000. This allocation is not anticipated to rise by any more than CPI over the next five years.

6. Five Year Expenditure Program

The five year expenditure Program has been proposed to enable Manly Council to maintain and meet a rating of “1” (see chart below) for all playgrounds within a five year period from adoption of the Strategy. Each site is listed stating its location, classification, existing condition rating, prioritise expenditure program and comments regarding actions required.

	Rating	Description	Budget Expenditure requirements
1	Very Good	No new equipment required Meets all safety requirements	Under warranty/ Maintenance required only
2	Good	Equipment is Satisfactory, 1 or 2 pieces may need to be replaced or refurbished.	\$5000-\$10,000
3	Fair	Existing equipment to be renovated, or replaced with new. Ground surface material may need to be replaced.	\$10,000-\$40,000
4	Poor	New equipment required New ground surface area to be installed. Shade structure to be installed.	\$40,000-\$100,000

6.1 Playground Categories

Playgrounds are categorised as follows:

Major

- Located in commercial/community significant area.
- Range of activities that incorporate more than 8 equipment play areas.
- Has, or is associated with other amenities such as toilets, bike tracks, open space, BBQ and picnic settings.
- Very high number of users.

Example: Clontarf Reserve.

Neighbourhood

- Smaller sites within easy walking distance of local community hubs.
- Include a range of activities with over 4 equipment play stations.
- Considered important for fostering a sense of neighbourhood and networking between local parents.

Example: Cross Street Playground.

Pocket

- Located on small parcels of land within easy walking distance of built up areas.
- Reduce range of activities, ie perhaps one swing with a toddler safety seat and child seat.

Example: East Esplanade



6.2 Playground Rating

	Major Type Playground	Location	Condition Rating	Priority	Playground Catchment Age Demographics A. 0-4yrs, B.5-9yrs C.10-14yrs	Proposed Future Works
1	Baranbali 2-10 yrs	Cnr Baranbali and Fromelles St Seaforth	1	Low	A+B = 882 children	10 year refurbishment recently completed
2	Clontarf 0-12 yrs	Sandy Bay Road Clontarf	1	Low	A+B+C = 1195 children	10 year refurbishment recently completed
3	The Corso 3-8 yrs	The Corso Manly	1	Low	B = 379 children	Recently fully replace with new.
4	JAF Fenwick 2-12 yrs	Castle Circuit Seaforth	1	Low	B+C = 812 children	10 year refurbishment Recently completed
5	Lagoon Park 0-5 yrs	Cameron Ave Queenscliff	3	Medium	A = 465 children	Platform Section to be refurbished
6	Little Manly Point 0-12 yrs	Stuart St Manly	3	Medium	A+B = 844 children	Refurbishment of equipment (add new pieces / components)
7	North Harbour 0-8 yrs	Condamine Street Balgowlah	2	Low	A+B = 1346 children	5 year refurbishment due to higher usage
8	North Steyne 3-8 yrs	North Steyne	2	Medium	A+B =844 children	5 year refurbishment due to higher usage
9	Tania Park 0-5 yrs	Dobroyd Scenic Driveways	3	Medium	A+B = 782 children	New equipment including springers, fantasy play are required
10	Weeroona 0-12 yrs	Spriggs St Fairlight Cemetery	1	Low	A+B+C = 2140children	10 year refurbishment Consideration required

No	Neighbourhood Type Playground	Location	Condition Rating	Priority	Playground Catchment Age Demographics A. 0-4yrs, B.5-9yrs C.10-14yrs	Future Works
11	Cross Street 0-6 yrs	Cross St Fairlight	3	Medium	A+B = 1616 children	Refurbishment of equipment & Surface to be replaced.
12	Ivanhoe Park 0-6 yrs	Raglan Street	2	Low	A = 944 children	Possible 10 year refurbishment coming up 2012.
13	Nanbaree Reserve 0-5 yrs	Farrer St Balgowlah	4	High	A = 362 (Total children in catchment = 1195)	New equipment structure, new surface required and access issues.
14	Ross Street 0-5 yrs	Ross Street Seaforth	1	Low	A+B = 1102 (Total children in catchment 1650)	Swing surface required and new shade structure installed.
15	Sangrado reserve 0-8 yrs	Sangrado Street Seaforth	4	High	A+B = 1102	New equipment and new ground surface and fencing.
16	Bligh Park 0-4 yrs	Alto Avenue Seaforth	3	Medium	A = 473 children	Equipment refurbished required and new ground surface, new swing required.

No	Pocket Park Type Playground	Location	Condition Rating	Priority	Playground Catchment Age Demographics A. 0-4yrs, B.5-9yrs C.10-14yrs	Future Works
17	Bareena Street NOT age specifid (NAS)	Bareena St	3	Medium	A+B+C = 1195	New swing and Surface
18	Bower (NAS)	Bower Rd Manly	1	Low	A+B+C = 1137	10 Year Refurbishment
19	Brimbercome (NAS)	Lower Beach St Balgowlah	4	High	A+B+C = 1825	New swing and other equipment Consultation required
20	Brisbane (NAS)	Brisbane St Fairlight	3	Medium	A+B+C = 2140	New swing and Surface
21	Curba (NAS)	Abbott Street Balgowlah	3	Medium	A+B+C = 1195	New swing and Surface
22	Dally (NAS)	Camera & Upper Gilbert St Manly	1	Low	A+B+C = 1825	10 year refurbishment
23	East Esplanade (NAS)	East Esplanade Manly	1	Low	A+B+C = 1137	10 year refurbishment
24	Gilbert Park (NAS)	Gilbert St Manly	4	High	A+B+C = 1137	New swing and Surface
25	Griffiths Street (NAS)	Griffiths St Fairlight	1	Low	A+B+C = 2140	10 year refurbishment
26	Forty Baskets (NAS)	Forty Baskets Beach	4	High	A+B+C = 1825	New swing and Surface
27	Hope Street (NAS)	Hope St Balgowlah	4	High	A+B+C = 1285	New swing and Surface
28	Lagoon Park (NAS)	Off Pittwater Rd Manly	4	High	A+B+C = 1137	New swing and Surface
29	Little Manly Cove (NAS)	Stuart St Manly at beach	1	Low	A+B+C = 1137	10 year refurbishment
30	North Steyne	North Steyne Beachfront	1	Low	A+B = 844	10 year refurbishment

6.3 Implementation of Playground Strategy

It is important that appropriate Council funding allocations be made each year, in both capital works and maintenance budgets, to sustain improvements and ongoing maintenance of playgrounds, and to ensure asset depreciation is met.

Where appropriate, Council should seek external or partnership funding to supplement existing budget allocations.



6.4 Funding implications

Budget Year	Playground		Cost estimate	Works Required
YEAR 1	Major			
	Neighbourhood	Nanbaree Sangrado	\$60,000 \$70,000	Remove old playground and install new equipment and surface at both sites.
	Pocket	Hope Street	\$5,000	New swing, equipment & resurface
		Gilbert Park	\$5,000	New swing & surface
		Lagoon (Pittwater end) Forty Baskets	\$5,000 \$5,000	New swing & surface New swing & surface
	Total		\$150,000	
YEAR 2	Major	Lagoon Park	\$35,000	Platform / equipment to be refurbished or expanded.
	Neighbourhood	Brimbercome	\$10,000	
		Bligh Park	\$40,000	New equipment and Surface
		Cross Street	\$50,000	Refurbish equipment and resurface.
	Pocket Park	Ross Street	\$5,000	New swing & surface
		Bareena	\$5,000	New swing & surface
		Brisbane	\$5,000	New swing & surface
	Total		\$150,000	
YEAR 3	Major	Tania Park	\$50,000	Refurbish /new equipment & resurface.
		North Harbour Reserve	\$50,000	Refurbish and some new equipment.
	Neighbourhood	Cross Street	\$40,000	New equipment/refurbish & resurface.
	Pocket	Curban	\$5,000	New swing & surface
		Hope Street	\$5,000	New swing & surface
	Total		\$150,000	

YEAR 4	Major	Little Manly North Harbour	\$50,000 \$50,000	New equipment /refurbish & resurface New equipment /refurbish & resurface
	Neighbourhood	Ivanhoe Playground	\$30,000	New equipment /refurbish & resurface
	Pocket	North Steyne	\$20,000	New equipment /refurbish & resurface
	Total		\$150,000	
YEAR 5	Major	North Steyne Clontarf Weeroona	\$50,000 \$50,000 \$30,000	New equipment /refurbish & surface New equipment /refurbish & surface New equipment /refurbish & surface
	Pocket	Little Manly Cove Bower Street	\$5,000 \$5,000	New swing & resurface New swing & resurface
	Total		\$150,000	

7. Recommendations

That Council:-

1. Receive and note the Playground Strategy 2009-2014.

* * *



Appendix – ABS Census Maps

Appendix A Playground Catchment Areas

Appendix B Children 0 – 4 Years

Appendix C Children 5 – 9 Years

Appendix D Children 10 – 14 Years

