

Council Policy

Play Space



COUNCIL POLICY

 <p>Adelaide Hills COUNCIL</p>	PLAY SPACE
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Policy Number:	COM-10
Responsible Department(s):	Engineering and Assets
Other Relevant Policies:	Asset Management Policy
Relevant Procedure(s):	Nil
Relevant Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>
Policies and Procedures Superseded by this policy on its Adoption:	Nil
Adoption Authority:	Council
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Minute Reference for Adoption:	Item 12.4, 69/18
Next Review:	No later than March 2021 or as required by legislation or changed circumstances

PLAY SPACE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The Policy provides Council and its administration with principles and guidelines for how Council will plan, develop and manage play spaces throughout the Adelaide Hills Council. The policy will assist Council to make strategic, sustainable and equitable decisions regarding play space provision in our region, which will ensure that opportunities for participation broadly across the Adelaide Hills Council are enhanced as are the benefits achieved.

This Policy document forms part of a Play Space Framework. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the other Framework components. The Play Space Framework includes the following:

- Play Space Policy
- Play Space Service Levels
- Project Methodology and Upgrade Approach
- Upgrade Program (The upgrade program is a working document that will be updated regularly, based on asset data and usage.)

While Council does not own several of the play spaces within the Council boundary, we rely on these community owned facilities to service the demand from a portion of our population. This Policy addresses the management of play spaces throughout our region, despite ownership.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to ensure that play spaces in the Council area are appropriately planned, developed and managed, and valued by our community. The following statements will support this to occur:

- Play spaces should be thoroughly planned, balanced, functional, and sustainable. Planning should be in consultation with the community, ensure diverse opportunities, accessibility and facilitate participation from a wide variety of users.
- Ensure we have a hierarchy of quality destinations spread across the Council region. Spaces should provide an appropriate level of recreational opportunity and amenity, according to sites classification and reflecting the needs of the community.
- Resourcing and funding for play spaces must be delivered with equity and transparency, based on asset management data and contribute to sustainability. Resourcing and funding processes must be clear and transparent, and focus given to worthwhile partnerships and collaboration.
- The asset management and maintenance of all sites must be planned and programmed, with obligations reflected in management agreements, leases or licences where applicable. There must transparency in resource allocation, and support for those groups managing facilities. Spaces should be developed so they can be managed by Council in an appropriate manner.
- Spaces should be attractive, well-maintained, inviting spaces that the community are connected too and feel proud of.

3. DEFINITIONS

“Play space” refers to a space that can be utilised for the purposes of formal, informal, active and passive play as well as the provision of any associated facilities and amenities.

“Nature Play” provides opportunities for unstructured, open ended and self-directed play. Freedom to roam, seeking adventure and exploration which encourages creativity and imagination, inspired by nature.

“Classification” and “Hierarchy” categorises open spaces from local to state levels to indicate user catchments, guide equitable distribution and standards for the provision of facilities such as play spaces, public amenities, pathways, public toilets, etc.

“Community owned” refers to land and assets on said land that is not owned by Council.

“Council owned” refers to land and assets on said land that is owned or under the care and control and management of Council. This land may also be under a lease / licence arrangement.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

The Policy provides principles that guide the Adelaide Hills Council’s planning, development and management of play spaces in our Council region. Fulfilment of the outlined principles will contribute to the Council delivering a hierarchy of quality destinations throughout the region.

A Play Space in the Adelaide Hills Council is a space that can be utilised for the purposes of formal, informal, active and passive play as well as the provision of any associated facilities and amenities. The space could include elements like skate and bike facilities, fitness equipment, hard courts and nature play elements, as well as traditional playground equipment. Linkages to a community or sport facility, bike path or walking trail should also be considered.

The overarching Framework approach ensures that planning, budgeting, design, procurement and maintenance processes are aligned with Council’s Strategic Objectives and that the community and relevant stakeholders are engaged in the process along the way.

Play Space Classification

To assist in the planning of our play spaces, it is common practice to define the reserves under a play space classification hierarchy. This practice is particularly important when assessing service levels for each class of play space; it also identifies the recommended equipment and associated facilities within a space. This approach ensures diversity of play spaces and experiences throughout the region, assists with allocation of resources and can be used as a tool when reviewing the locations of play spaces to ensure that there is an appropriate provision.

The table below outlines the minimum provisions and design considerations for each classification. Further detail regarding service levels for each classification can be found in the Framework document.

Classification	Definition	General Characteristics
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large, well developed space with a diversity of play opportunities. The space should be large enough to enable different activities and users to occur simultaneously. • Attracts users from a substantial part of the Council area and beyond. • Located central to the catchment to maximise accessibility, in a location that has a natural, social or cultural feature. • A destination where visits are usually planned in advance and users stay for a long period of time. • The site should consider accessibility for all. • Be responsive to natural site features and assist to preserve local biodiversity and natural area values. • Be serviced by public transport routes. • The catchment zone of a regional play space site in the Adelaide Hills Council should be based on a radius of approximately 20 kilometres. Considering that radius and the large scale size of the play space, it is likely that there would only be three regionally classified play spaces in the Council region. 	<p><i>All characteristics from a local and neighbourhood play space plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking • Toilet • BBQ • Art & cultural elements • Hard court surface and associated equipment if space permits
Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive play opportunities with a number of play elements. • Visited by people from a larger town catchment. • A site where users can stay for a median length of time. • Potentially linked to an adjacent sport, recreation, community or cultural facility. • The catchment zone of a neighbourhood play space site in the Adelaide Hills Council should be based upon a radius of approximately 10-15 kilometres. Considering the radius, and the medium scale size of the play space, it is likely that there would be five neighbourhood classified play spaces in the Council region. 	<p><i>All characteristics from a local play space plus:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing toilet and BBQ • Shelter • Picnic settings • Drinking water • Mounded grass • Bike racks

Classification	Definition	General Characteristics
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area intended for local play, often equipment based • Visited by people who live nearby, sometimes by foot, for a short period of time. • The catchment zone of a local play space site in the Adelaide Hills Council should be based upon a radius of approximately 5-10 kilometres. Considering the radius and the smaller scale size of the play space, it is likely that there would be a local play space in most medium sized towns in the Council region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play equipment • Shade • Lighting • Seating • Paved path • Rubbish bin • Grassed open space • Vegetation/planting • Accessible, safe pedestrian and cycling connections • Support good passive surveillance

Play Space Management and Responsibilities

Council will assume the responsibility, management, maintenance, upgrade and cost of any associated insurances of all Community owned play spaces. Land owners will be responsible for the day-to day maintenance of the site, and for keeping the site tidy and free from rubbish. Council will enter into a licence agreement with each land owner to enter land and carry out works on the play space.

Council will maintain and contribute to upgrade cost to the value of a locally classified play space on Community owned land.

New play spaces on Community owned land constructed after the endorsement of this policy are not entitled to the above conditions, unless endorsed by Council.

For play spaces located on Council owned land that is under a lease or licence arrangement with a community group, Council will be responsible for the insurances, maintenance, management and upgrade of the play space. Lessee groups will be responsible for day-to day maintenance of the play space, and for keeping the area tidy and free from rubbish.

These conditions do not apply to play spaces on Department for Education and Child Development sites, independent or other education sites, sites owned by other levels of Government, or play spaces that are part of land developments prior to Council assuming responsibility.

Play Space Upgrades

Play space upgrades must plan to meet the changing demographics within an area, and provide sufficient variation in play space provision between sites. Principles outlined in this policy must be considered in upgrade planning phase.

Sites for play space upgrades will be selected based upon asset management data and usage. When considering the specific sites in the upgrade program and schedule, thought will also be given to amalgamation, consolidation or a new site (based on consultation and demographic data, available locations, Council strategic plans, etc.). Please refer to the Play space Framework document for the current upgrade schedule and further detail in how upgrades will be undertaken.

Other play elements (skate and bike facilities, fitness equipment, hard court, nature play elements, etc.) can all be considered at the time of consultation, if appropriate for the site.

Community consultation and engagement plays a significant role in play space development and is crucial in understanding the local community's needs and expectations. Involving the community helps ensure Adelaide Hills play spaces are well used and take pride of place within our community.

Play Space Maintenance and Management

Play spaces will be designed and maintained to achieve or exceed relevant Australian Standards. Sites will be audited by an independent, qualified auditor on installation and bi-annually.

Council inspection and maintenance will be carried out in accordance with the classification and subsequent service level assigned to each individual space. More information on service levels can be found in the Play Space Framework document.

Play Space Principles

The following principles are based upon information included in Council's Sport and Recreation Strategy.

Best practice in play space design says that the following types of play should be incorporated into play space developments.

- **Active Play** - Using fixed play equipment for swinging, sliding, jumping, stepping, balancing and hanging.
- **Imaginative and Creative Play** - Making up games or role playing.
- **Social Play** - Communicating and interacting with other children, practicing cooperation and the use of language.
- **Exploratory and Natural Play** - Using things like rocks, trees, plants and sand to explore. These elements stimulate a child's imagination and provide various shapes, colours, textures and scents to explore. These environments can also encourage bugs, birds and other wildlife, adding to the diversity of the experience.
- **Quiet Play** - Includes reading, talking or participating in a sit down game.
- **Free Play** - Open grass spaces or slopes that can provide an opportunity for activities such as rolling, running, informal ball games, somersaults, handstands or cartwheels. Free play is different to active play as it enables non-prescribed movement in open space.
- **Risk** - Play spaces will be designed with a focus on eliminating hazards rather than risks. Calculated and graduated risks in play spaces are essential for physical and mental development.

Fencing

Fencing should be provided only where absolutely necessary and for safety purposes. A fence could be included when a play space is:

- next to busy roads or carparks
- near water bodies
- there is a need to separate the play space from other activities e.g. sports field
- in close proximity to other physical hazards

Natural barriers, like appropriate plantings can provide a sense of enclosure and containment and should be explored during the planning and design stages. Open Space Management and Dog Management by-laws and documents should also be considered when considering the installation of a fence around a play space.

Shade

Natural (tree) shade is preferred over built shade as it also provides natural cooling, is not as subject to vandalism, and contributes to the overall character and appeal of the open space. Where possible, locating play spaces in the proximity of existing, suitable mature shade trees is preferred. In some instances, large play spaces which experience high use and have little natural shade may require additional built shade. Built shade structures should be robust and designed to complement the character of the open space.

This Policy and associated Framework document should be used as a guide for land developers, so their developments are consistent with our approach to play space provision. This Policy excludes dog parks and general open space.

5. DELEGATION

The Chief Executive Officer has the delegation to:

- Approve, amend and review any procedures that shall be consistent with this Policy; and
- Make any formatting, nomenclature or other minor changes to the Policy during the period of its currency.

6. AVAILABILITY OF THE POLICY

This Policy will be available for inspection at the Council's Offices during ordinary business hours and via the Council's website www.ahc.sa.gov.au. Copies will also be provided to the public upon request, and upon payment of a fee in accordance with the Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.