



Access 4 all 2 Play

2006



Project & Working Group

Thank you to the following contributors

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Project Partners:

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Leisure Action Scope Vic
Eastern Recreation & Leisure Services (ERLS)
Access Audits Australia (AAA)

This project has been a partnership initiative in conjunction with Maroondah City Council and the Department for Victorian Communities through the Access for All Abilities Initiative Fund



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Access 4 All 2 Play project overview

In 2005 Maroondah City Council received funding from the Department for Victorian Communities Access for All Abilities Initiative Fund for the Project titled 'Access 4 All 2 Play.'

This project brought together local people of all abilities to actively participate and work collectively to bring long term improvements to the community. The project is unique in that the working group has had the opportunity to have direct input into Maroondah City Council's planning process, in relation to the future redevelopment of Council's Playground Development Plan and the potential to address opportunities identified in Council's Open Space Strategy.

Aims of the project include:

- People of all abilities being involved in Council's planning processes
- The development of a resource tool/checklist regarding factors to consider when planning for accessible play spaces
- Assessing play spaces in relation to their accessibility and suitability for use
- Building capacity/strengthening skills and empowering the members of the working group

A steering group was established that comprised of Council officers and community organisations. A working group that reflected cross representation of the community was formed and their findings reported back to the steering group.





Journey of the working group

Process of forming the group

Advertisements were placed in local papers at various disability networks and on community Internet networks. Interested participants were required to fill out an Expression of Interest form. Interested participants were then contacted by phone or emailed to talk about their interest/experience and the skills they felt could contribute to the project. This process gave each person time with the Project Officer to ask questions and find out more about the project. Twelve participants were selected including staff from disability organisations, people with an intellectual or physical disability, carers and people utilising motorised wheelchairs.

Training

Access Audits Australia (AAA) were engaged to develop a resource tool/checklist in conjunction with Council officers and the working group that could be used to assess play spaces for their accessibility. A training session with the working group, conducted by AAA, explained the checklist and issues surrounding accessibility. The session culminated in a practical application of the checklist/ tool to two Maroondah play spaces.

Assessment of play spaces/using checklist

Assessing the play spaces was an interesting, enjoyable and empowering component of the project for the working group. Some of the sites were assessed from a vehicle due to lack of safe parking or any continuous accessible paths of travel.

Experience of working in a group

The working group benefited from participating in the project on a number of levels. The groups awareness of access issues was increased and new skills were developed that can be transferred to other areas of life experience. A comment from a group member was “If I wasn’t on the working group I wouldn’t be on the Glen Park Committee of Management Board.” Other benefits included the forging of friendships and development of networks. Relationships with Maroondah City Council were strengthened and group participants gained increased knowledge of Maroondah’s play spaces and other Council initiatives.

What to consider when planning an accessible play space

Developing the reports & recommendations

After each site was visited and the checklist applied, a report was developed. The checklist was useful to use but perhaps would have been even more effective if it was grouped under thematic areas for example: Continuous Accessible Path of Travel to toilet, playground, drinking fountain etc.

This report used in conjunction with the checklist, identifies broad access issues relating to playgrounds within the municipality. The report pro forma however does not identify all access issues nor does it fully comply with the Building Code of Australia or the Australian Standards for Access and Mobility. The development of each report formulated recommendations after each assessment visit and was further developed over lunch which the group enjoyed together. This was an effective process, however it was soon realised it was more effective to do the reports on site at each play space.

From the working groups experience of assessing various play spaces within Maroondah the following broad headings were identified as issues to be addressed:

Continuous accessible path of travel (CAPT)

- Should be of an adequate width to allow two wheelchairs/prams to pass one another easily
- The softfall surface must be sealed, ideally with a rubber matting surface
- The gradient must be flat
- Should ensure there is a smooth transition from one surface to another
- Ensure there is a CAPT to toilets/playgrounds/drinking fountain/seats and tables
- It must have smooth flat edges and no gutters or rims on the edges

Car parking

- Have designated accessible parking bays
- Ensure the parking is close to the play space location
- There must be a Continuous Accessible Path of Travel from the carpark to the play space with a sealed surface, no gutters or barriers
- The gradient must be flat
- If parking on the road there must be safe access to the footpath

Signage

- It should be of a clear and large font size
- The location of the signage is crucial to its accessibility. Relevant information should be available eg distance to toilets, facilities eg play space, tables, seats etc
- Signage should be interpretive. The format should be a combination of compic/easy english, pictorial formats/tactile
- There is potential for signage to advertise other playgrounds that are accessible. Always include Melway reference

Play/sensory equipment for all abilities

- Sandpits were not considered a priority in the selection of equipment
- A variety of equipment including, but not limited to Totem Poles, abacus, swing, noughts and crosses should be considered
- Use equipment that can work via the wind or by themselves, ie mobiles, windsocks, movement activated sensors

Shelter/shade/seating

- Reduce table size to ensure more room in the shelter
- Increase the size of the shelter
- The concrete base of shelter needs to be flush to the ground, no gutters or rims on the edges
- Provide other forms of shade
- Ensure tables are inclusive
- Have adjustable seats that can move out from the table
- Have seating with arms and backrest close to the play space. Ensure that any additional seating has arms and backrest



Photo provided by Access Audits Australia

Toilets

- Have maximum number of toilets that are accessible
- Design facilities to the relevant standards at the time and in consultation with a user group/working group
- Have toilet seats as well as stainless steel bowls
- Ensure a soap dispenser is installed
- Make sure it is unlocked during daylight hours, seven days a week
- Place in close proximity to play space
- Ensure the door is easy to open. If possible, operated by a sensor or button

Drinking fountains

- Ensure there is adequate space to place legs underneath
- Have a basin underneath so user does not get wet
- Have a lever or button to operate the fountain
- Spray/flow of fountain should be straight up and with sufficient pressure
- Should be visually appealing
- Ensure Continuous Accessible Path of Travel to fountain
- Ensure the gradient is appropriate



Photo provided by Access Audits Australia



**“I can tap into
other working groups
and action groups”**

Play spaces assessed

PLAY SPACE	LOCATION	MELWAY REF
AMazing Space @ Federation Estate	Ringwood	49 H10
Ringwood Lake	Ringwood	49 K8
Jubilee Park South	Ringwood	49 J11
Mullum Mullum Reserve	Ringwood	49 K5
McAlpin Reserve	Ringwood	50 A2
Quambee Reserve	Ringwood North	36 A11
Gracedale Park	Ringwood East	50 E10
Eastfield Park Reserve	Croydon	50 J7
Silcock Reserve	Croydon	51 A1
Cheong Park Reserve	Croydon	50 G7
Wyreena Community Arts Centre	Croydon	51 B3
Yarrunga Reserve	Croydon Hills	36 G9
Warrien Reserve	Croydon North	36 K11
Hughes Park	Croydon North	37 C7
Barngeong Reserve	Croydon	37 E 10
Croydon Park	Croydon	50K 4
HE Parker	Heathmont	64 C2
Arrabri Reserve	Bayswater North	65 B1
Glen Park	Bayswater North	64 G2
Grayswood Reserve	Kilsyth South	65 E2

Maroondah play space location Map



Evaluation

Evaluation occurred after each assessment, using the same format each time, making it easy to track progress, skill development and participant satisfaction.

The method used symbols of three faces and one star,

☹ ☺ ☻ ★. Each symbol represented the participant's degree of satisfaction and ranged from not good to OK, good and excellent.

One of the two group's circled the symbols to represent the group's experience as a whole and the other group circled the symbols individually. There was also provision for comments to be included on each evaluation sheet.

Conclusion of project

This booklet was launched at the 2006 Maroondah Festival. The working group had a site within the Council Under Canvas area where festival visitors could find out about the many initiatives and facilities available throughout the municipality. Working group members were available on the day to talk to festival visitors about the project and distribute the booklet.

The working group presented the Access 4 All 2 Play Project to key stakeholders via a DVD presentation, pictures of various stages of the project and discussion of their involvement and experience of the project. Maroondah City Council will continue to engage the working group to further inform Council and will support the group in other areas of interest.

We welcome your comments

If you have any comment or suggestion regarding this publication please contact Maroondah City Council's MetroAccess Co-ordinator, 03 9298 4559

Further Information

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“Good checklist”
“enlightening”
“Get real”



Access 4 all 2 Play: Project & Working Group