



Play Space Policy

Reference Number:	5.6
Type:	Council Policy
Category:	Environment and Open Space
Relevant Community Vision Outcome:	<u>Local Neighbourhoods</u> • We create local connection within and between neighbourhoods • Our families, friends and neighbours create memories together <u>Valuing Nature</u> • Our City is cool, green and filled with life <u>Connecting and Belonging</u> • Our community has access to spaces, services and support when needed
Responsible Officer(s):	Manager City Property and Open Space
First Issued/Approved:	3 December 2012
Minutes Reference:	CoS 4/05/2026, Item 4.6
Last Reviewed:	May 2026
Next Review Due:	September 2028
Applicable Legislation:	Local Government Act 1999
Related Policies:	Environmental Sustainability Policy Public Consultation Policy Asset Management Policy Risk Management Policy
Related Procedures:	Open Space Strategy 2025 Risk Management Procedure Hazard Management Procedure
Related Standards	AS 4685 series – Playground equipment and surfacing (latest editions), including AS 4685.0:2017 and AS 4685.1:2021 AS 4422 – Playground surfacing (latest edition) AS 1428 series – Design for access and mobility (latest editions, including AS 1428.1:2021)

1. Purpose

The City of Charles Sturt Play Space Policy has been developed in line with the strategies, actions and objectives of:

- Community Vision 2040
- Open Space Strategy 2025

This Policy articulates Council's commitment to delivering inclusive, safe, and stimulating play spaces that foster children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. It provides a framework for the planning, design, maintenance and renewal of structured and unstructured play environments across the City.

2. Scope

This Policy provides a strategic framework for the provision of play spaces within areas of public open space that are owned, controlled or managed by the City of Charles Sturt.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Vision

Play Spaces within the City of Charles Sturt are inclusive, diverse, and inspiring environments that reflect community values and foster physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural development.

3.2 Goal

To provide a diverse range and experience in both structured and unstructured play environments that allows for participation in play spaces that are safe, accessible and inclusive for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

3.3 Objectives

3.3.1 Primary Objective

To ensure play spaces are designed, installed and maintained to respond to changing community need and aspirations.

3.3.2 Secondary Objectives

To provide quality play spaces that allow for the social, emotional, sensory and physical development of users of the play space.

To provide a range of play spaces across the City that are fun, stimulating and wherever possible and appropriate, allow, users of the space to manipulate and shape their environment encouraging active lifestyles and healthy living behaviours.

Natural elements and loose parts will be incorporated where possible to support child-led, sensory-rich play experiences. To provide play spaces that encourage interaction between the users of the space and their caregiver/s.

To ensure that all play spaces within the City of Charles Sturt are created, maintained and renewed in accordance with the appropriate Asset Management Plans, the directions of the Open Space Strategy and relevant Australian Standards and Legislation.

To provide, where appropriate open space is available, a play space within walking distance of most households.

To provide play spaces that consider heat mitigation measures, use water wisely, and withstand climate extremes. The provision of shade at Council-owned and managed playgrounds via the installation of structures and planting of trees to create natural shade, shall be undertaken in consideration of the Open Space Strategy and relevant Asset Management Plans.

Council will engage with children, caregivers, schools, disability advocates, and the broader community in the planning and design of play spaces in accordance with Council's Public Consultation Policy.

3.4 Risk Management

Play spaces will be managed to provide challenge and excitement while maintaining safety through Council's risk management frameworks. The design, installation and ongoing maintenance of all playgrounds shall comply with relevant Australian Standards including:

- AS 4685 series – Playground equipment and surfacing (latest editions), including AS 4685.0:2017 and AS 4685.1:2021
- AS 4422 – Playground surfacing (latest edition)
- AS 1428 series – Design for access and mobility (latest editions, including AS 1428.1:2021)

3.5 Play Space Planning and Delivery

- A hierarchy of play spaces (neighbourhood, district, regional) will guide investment levels and design approaches in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy.
- Play space provision will be monitored through spatial analysis, condition audits and community satisfaction surveys.
- Play space provision and design will also be guided by the amount of open space available in a suburb and local area.

4. Definitions

Key Term – Acronym	Definition
Play Space	A place that is designated primarily for children's play and may include structured or unstructured play spaces.
Nature play (Unstructured Play space)	Nature play is play that provides children with access to a range of opportunities that reflect the natural world such as loose parts (leaves, twigs and logs), different surfaces and terrains (mounds, slopes),

	plants (sensory), water, mud, construction opportunities with natural elements (sand, stick, fabric), areas for reflection (a rock near a pond or under a tree), areas for hiding (bamboo, sunflowers), areas for imaginative play such as boats, decks, winding pathways, and areas to hide.
Playground (Structured Play space)	Traditional, manufactured playground containing recreational equipment such as climbing equipment, slides and swings.
All Abilities Play Space	A play space that can be accessed and enjoyed by children with varying physical and intellectual abilities.
Risk	Risk is an unintended occurrence resulting from an unplanned event that may positively or negatively impact on Council. Risk is measured in terms of likelihood and consequence.
Hazard	A hazard is any condition or element in the play space that poses a significant and unacceptable risk of injury to users, particularly when that risk is not easily perceived by the user or cannot be mitigated through supervision or design.