



Member news

promoting the value of play

Autumn Edition 2015 • Issue 7



As they say, there is no such thing as bad weather, just inappropriate clothing! So get out there and have some winter fun



A message from the Executive Director, Barbara Champion

This edition is dedicated to our dear friend and colleague Pattie Morgan

Members were shocked to learn of the death of our beloved Pattie Morgan recently. This edition of the newsletter is attributed to Pattie, as a colleague, former Board member, friend of many, and Early Years trainer and educator over many decades. Please go to page 4 to read our tribute to this wonderful woman who will be truly missed.

Playground Standards

Currently work is underway on a new Standard, Part 0 of AS4685-2014 which will replace AS/NZS4486. This Standard will focus on the development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playspaces in Australia. Members will have an opportunity to be briefed on this Standard as soon as it is published. It will also be featured in our Training programs to be held in August and October this year.

Upcoming events – Enriching Childhood

Play Australia in partnership with Community Childcare Victoria and Network of Community Activities is delighted to present a unique

opportunity to hear from two of the world's leading researchers on play at two very special events to be held on Thursday May 28 and Friday May 29. This is an opportunity not to be missed by anybody with an interest in play, play spaces or children's development. For booking details see www.playaustralia.org.au under Training and Events.

Play Australia South Australia – PASA

The Interim Committee continues its splendid work in South Australia with its first state based newsletter published recently, and its first Play Network meeting, hosted by the City of Marion, involving site visits to Kenton Reserve and Suneden Special School. Special thanks to Brett Grimm (Marion Council) and Warwick Keates of WAX Design for their generosity in sharing their fantastic work with us. (See page 3 for this playground in profile.) The Interim Committee is committed to working with Nature Play SA, PLA and AILA in bringing networking, forums and the provision of up to date information to the play community throughout SA. Watch this space for further details.

So until next edition, best wishes.

Barb

Welcome to our new Board members

Play Australia welcomes Clare Major, Stephen Bendle and Mark Chatman to the Board.



Mark Chatman is the Director of Ikonik Playgrounds and he continues the important relationship between Play Australia and the playground industry. Mark has experience in the education sector as well as the commercial world, and will make a most valuable contribution to the team.



Clare Major is a former schools leader having held a number of senior leadership roles over recent years. Given the importance of schools in supporting play, we are delighted to have access to someone of her experience and expertise.



Stephen Bendle comes to us with extensive experience in senior management both within the YMCA and the health sector. He is currently the Executive Manager, Advocacy, YMCA Australia. The connections between play and health are fundamental to our work, and Play Australia will benefit hugely from Stephen's membership of the Board.

The new board members have been co-opted to the Board due to the recent resignations of Jeff Speake, Harri Makela and Geraldine Naughton, who we thank for their great contributions to the running of Play Australia.

We are delighted that Jeff Speake has agreed to be our guest speaker at the 2015 AGM.

This edition of Member News is proudly sponsored by Imagination Play

play AUSTRALIA training 2015

Upcoming Play Australia training and professional development



Our Training Development Coordinator Ellen Regos has left Play Australia, but all training programs will continue in Victoria whilst commitments in South Australia are currently being renegotiated. We thank Ellen for her brief but adventurous time with us.

We have enjoyed significant success in our service-based negotiated training this year so far. If this is something you are thinking about please contact Barb Champion at barb@playaustralia.org.au for further details and we can develop a targeted training program to meet your specific service needs.

Also, due to the death of Pattie Morgan, and the retirement of Kerry Rogers, the leadership of our Early Years programs will also change. Enormous thanks are due to Kerry (and Pattie) for their leadership of our program including many other sessions conducted throughout Victoria over the last 15 years in particular.

The quality of our Early Years training has been heralded nationally for many years, and thus we have a strong legacy to continue, and therefore we are delighted to announce that Bronwyn Joslyn of Learning Happens will be heading up our program development for the remainder of 2015 and 2016. We are thrilled that Bronwyn has been able to accept this role, and we look forward to a very successful partnership in the future.

Special Event! Day 1 Enriching Childhood Through Play

May 28, 2015 at Manningham City Council, Doncaster, 9.30am – 1.30pm
See www.playaustralia.org.au for registration

Special Event! Day 2 - Enriching Childhood Through Play

May 29, 2015 at Yarra City Council, Richmond Town Hall, 9.30am – 1.30pm
See www.playaustralia.org.au for registration

Outdoor Play in the Early Years

Victoria - Friday August 21, 2015
Victoria - Friday August 28, 2015

Playspace development, design, management and maintenance 2 Day program

Victoria - Wednesday August 19 & Thursday August 20, 2015

Outdoor Play in the Early Years

Victoria - Friday October 23, 2015
Victoria - Monday October 26, 2015

Playspace development, design, management and maintenance 2 Day program

Victoria - Wednesday October 28 & Thursday October 29, 2015

Check our website (under training) for further details on Special Events and the Local Government Play Network details. playaustralia.org.au

Other events around and about

Melbourne – ELAA, Early Childhood Education Conference

Together we grow, Investing in our future
29–30 May 2015
www.togetherwegrow.com.au

Sydney - PLA National Conference

25–28 October 2015
www.parksleisure.com.au



Innovative, Fun, Accessible, Diverse

Introducing the Kenton Reserve, Oaklands Park SA Play Space

Fast facts

Project Management: City of Marion open space recreation planning team

Design & Contract management: City of Marion landscape architect

Play Equipment: Kaiser & Kuhne, Moduplay, Corocord, Lappset

Budget: \$240,000

Time Frame: 12 months

Kenton Reserve provides an innovative, fun, accessible and diverse play space that encourages interaction and interpretation of the natural environment, whilst enhancing community wellbeing.

Kenton Reserve Play Space is defined within the City of Marion's Play Space Strategy (2009) as a neighborhood level reserve, which prescribes the following indicative methods of community engagement and design objectives:

- community site walks and surveys
- integration of nature based play and typical play elements i.e. swings
- landscape interpretation of natural features for environmental education
- interactive play structures
- shelter and picnic facilities
- CPTED principles
- connectivity with surrounding open space and sturt river linear trail
- responsive to environmental context and water sensitive urban design techniques

The project was managed by council's internal open space and recreation planning team with concept design, design development and construction contract management being undertaken by council's landscape architect.

The planning process incorporated collaboration with numerous departments within council namely the biodiversity officer, arborist and field operations staff, arts and cultural development

and civil storm water engineers. During the concept development phase council's landscape architect also worked closely with several residents to enhance accessibility of play for some local children with mobility issues.

Kenton Reserve provides play value targeted at a number of different areas of children development. The play space provides challenging and fun physical and cognitive play through:

- climbing structures
- swings
- interactive water based play
- stimulating cognitive play through integrated landscape features
- adventure trails and textual materials and forms
- talking tubes
- social play through the provision of open space for ball games as well as interactive elements within the landscape.

The play space is sympathetic to the surrounding context by sensitively introducing the play structures into the Sturt River oxbow providing spaces of prospect and refuge in addition to a sense of intrigue and exploration. Existing mature trees have been used to frame the site and provide amenity. The selection of materials has also been responsive to the context with different textures and colours mimicking the surroundings.

Play elements include sand, an adventure trail through a vegetated rock lined swale, talking tubes, water play and typical play structures such as swings, rocker and climbing net structure which enhance the diversity of play. Fitness equipment has also been incorporated at a node where the Sturt River Linear Trail intersects with access paths.

Upon completion councils open space recreation planning team conduct site visits to evaluate and develop strategies to analyze what works and methods of improvement. In addition since completion council's landscape architect has engaged with a local kindergarten to evaluate the space through a play space excursion. This event incorporated site drawing, photography and collage exercises.

By Brett Grimm City of Marion Landscape Architect





We remember Pattie Morgan

Our friend and colleague of many years passed away in April 2015 after a brief illness.

Pattie's professional interests spanned mobile preschool services, special education, outdoor playspaces and sustainability. In all of these spheres Pattie demonstrated strong advocacy for children and play, a creative and inspired approach and sensitively given wisdom to others. At Pattie's funeral her own children fondly recalled how everything was a learning experience and how their mother's natural sense of curiosity and wonder pervaded their lives. All of these attributes, along with her infectious laugh and work ethic, contributed to Pattie being an inspiring early childhood professional over many years.

She began her teaching career in NSW, but later moved to Victoria where she is best known for her varied roles. In relation to the Victorian mobile preschool services she is the acknowledged pioneer as Michelle Hocking recalls:

In the early 1990's I worked on the North West Mobile Pre-School and this was my first introduction to Pattie's work as the archives revealed her to be the program pioneer and her work served as a template for other Victorian Mobile services. Minimalist approaches were critical on the Mobile "truck" and Pattie's notes and diagrams on how the vehicle might be organised and prepared, with meticulous attention to detail and obvious dedication to the task were evident. This valuable and (considered by some) controversial program would simply not have run as effectively without Pattie's pioneering work at the inception stage.

Pattie also undertook further studies in special education at the Institute of Early Childhood Development, Melbourne and she had a particular interest in working with children and families in this area. She was an educator with the City of Knox taking a leadership and teaching role in a unique program for children needing a second year of four-year old preschool. It was also in this setting that her passion for designing outdoor playspaces came to the fore. Deb Moore first met Pattie in this context and as her Preschool Field Officer recalls:

I will never forget Pattie's insistence in providing challenging places, equipment and materials for her children and their program. Not for these children was a 500mm board off the ground going to be enough; no, it needed to be a flying fox; a rope up a tree; and, a rocky outcrop to scramble over. Not for these children would a few odd wooden blocks be enough; they had a shed full of blocks of wood, pipes, ropes, pulleys, and materials to put together in a way only Pattie would have condoned. And, not for these children a sedate 'lawn' to play on; no, they had to 'work' on their own meaningful inventions and create their own dry creek bed, digging out the dirt for months before its completion so they could traverse the ravine they had constructed. At times,

Pattie had to argue her case to 'allow' her children these 'privileges' rather than revert to a program deemed 'safe' by government officials. But, she was always able to offer her pedagogical reasoning and inevitably convince them of the error of their thinking.

Pattie was a Play Australia Board Member for 10 years and after finishing her work at the Knoxfield Preschool she continued her advocacy for outdoor play through her role as a consultant and trainer. She worked for many years with Kerry Rogers, and they made the perfect team, complementing each other's skills and experiences. Pattie promoted significant change in outdoor playspaces. Her easy ability to connect with educators and children and to 'read' play as well as the outdoor landscape and vegetation were invaluable in her design work. She was a very talented designer, and produced in collaboration with her clients, and in particular with her colleague Justin Staggard, many beautiful concept plans for outdoor play which were then used to guide the development in services throughout Victoria, as well as in the ACT, SA and NSW.

In more recent years Pattie was an active participant in the group of Australians who travelled to Hong Kong, Cardiff and most recently Istanbul to attend IPA Conferences.

Pattie's Poster Presentation at the Hong Kong Conference is remembered most fondly, as well as our efforts to keep up with her as we climbed Hong Kong Island! Pattie and Cathy Kiss travelled together in Wales in 2011 and most recently in Greece, exploring the history and terrain, enjoying extensive walks and visiting playspaces along the way.

Pattie lived sustainably before it was fashionable and she practised sustainability in early childhood settings well before the National Quality Standards were implemented. She was also an active member of Environmental Education in Early Childhood Vic. Inc. over many years.

Our sincere thanks Pattie for your insights, wisdom and dedication, and know that your legacy lives on through children's play in many natural and challenging outdoor playspaces.

She was a magnificent friend to us all, we loved her, and we shall never forget her.

Pattie, we salute you for a life of outstanding service to your family, your community, and the children of Australia.

Thanks to Barbara Chancellor, Sue Elliott, Anne Houghton, Michelle Hocking, Deb Moore, Kerry Rogers, Barbara Champion and Stephanie Ralton for their contribution to this tribute.

Return to Royal Park

The City of Melbourne has worked in partnership with the Victorian Government to establish parkland on the site of the former Royal Children's Hospital and return this to Royal Park.

The 'Return to Royal Park' project commenced in 2011, and the project's name reflected both the reinstatement of parkland and Council's aim to encourage people to rediscover Royal Park.

The community contributed to the design of the park through an extensive engagement process in 2012 and 2013. Construction commenced in late 2013.

Opened in March 2015, Play Australia members were invited to a Professional Development Seminar and visit to the site to hear from the team involved in the planning, community engagement, design, construction, maintenance and management of this major project. It was a memorable launch and a great day seeing this park return to life.

The reinstated parkland reflects the broader landscape of Royal Park, with gullies, grasslands and woodlands. The features of the new park, such as plants and play elements, represent the seven Wurunjderi seasons, as a way to encourage discovery and understanding of indigenous Melbourne.

There are 4.1 hectares of parkland that have been returned in this major project. The new parkland is situated on the 3+ hectares of land where the former hospital was demolished.

We would encourage all members to visit this terrific example of reinstated parkland when you are next in the area! It will be well worth your time.





Give childhood back to children

This article is made up of excerpts taken from a paper written by Dr Peter Gray in January 2014. It is a great read, written passionately and in layman's terms with a genuine plea to 'give childhood back to children'. In this day and age when a child's academic success is paramount for many parents we need to listen and take action in our own way to allow our children to have "happy, productive and moral lives".

For the full article go to playaustralia.org.au/

Dr Peter Gray is a research professor of psychology at Boston College and author of the acclaimed textbook 'Psychology' (Worth Publishers).

Give childhood back to children: if we want our offspring to have happy, productive and moral lives, we must allow more time for play, not less. Because students spend nearly all of their time studying, they have little opportunity to be creative or discover their own passions.

I'm a research bio-psychologist with a PhD, so I've done lots of school. I'm a pretty good problem-solver, in my work and in the rest of my life, but that has little to do with the schooling I've had. I studied algebra, trig, calculus and various other maths in school, but I can't recall ever facing a problem – even in my scientific research – that required those skills. What maths I've used was highly specialised and, as with most scientists, I learnt it on the job.

The real problems I've faced in life include physical ones (such as how to operate a newfangled machine at work or unblock the toilet at home), social ones (how to get that perfect woman to be interested in me), moral ones (whether to give a passing grade to a student, for effort, though he failed all the tests), and emotional ones (coping with grief when my first wife died or keeping my head when I fell through the ice while pond skating).

Most problems in life cannot be solved with formulae or memorised answers of the type learnt in school. They require the judgement, wisdom and creative ability that come from life experiences.

For children, those experiences are embedded in play.

This dramatic decline in children's opportunities to play has been accompanied by an equally dramatic increase in childhood mental disorders. It's not just that we are detecting such disorders where we failed to look before; the increase is real. Clinical assessment questionnaires, which have been administered to normative groups in unchanged form over the years, show that rates of clinically significant depression and anxiety in US schoolchildren are now five to eight times what they were in the 1950s.

Other research indicates that empathy has been declining and narcissism increasing, ever since valid measures of these were first developed in the late 1970s. There are even well-validated ways of assessing creative thinking, and research using these tools suggests that such thinking has been decreasing among schoolchildren at all grade levels over the past 30 years. All of these deleterious changes, accompanying the decline of play, are exactly what we would predict from our knowledge of play's purposes.

No, our children don't need more school. They need more play. If we care about our children and future generations, we must reverse the horrid trend that has been occurring over the past half century. We must give childhood back to children. Children must be allowed to follow their inborn drives to play and explore, so that they can grow into intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically strong and resilient adults.



Play Charter

The Play Australia Play Charter is underpinned by the actions and vision of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Article 31 (General Comment 2013): The right to play and informal recreation, for all children and young people up to 18 years of age is contained in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 31 includes a number of related, but distinct, rights: rest, recreation, leisure, play, participation in cultural life and the arts.

The Board of Play Australia has been working to develop a Play Charter for our organisation. The Play Charter captures key statements of our principles and values, underpinned by the actions and vision of Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 2013 General Comment.

The Play Australia Play Charter provides a framework for members to align with, and a statement for our partners to fully appreciate the views of our organisation and its members. It will also provide a resource for our members in promoting the importance of play.

Here is a snapshot of the Play Charter. For the full version please go to playaustralia.org.au

Play Australia advocates for healthy play opportunities for children, young people and the wider community. The purpose of Play Australia is to promote the value of play and inspire active healthy outdoor play opportunities that are accessible to all.

WE BELIEVE THAT:

- Play is essential to the health, development and well-being of children.
- Play is essential for all ages and intergenerational play is important.
- Time and access to unstructured play must be a priority.
- Unstructured play outdoors is essential to health and well-being.
- Independent mobility is essential as a child grows.
- Embracing young people in public spaces is an important part of valuing them.
- We must plan cities with children and young people in mind.



The Risk Management Guide is on its way

The Risk Management Guide will be the **MUST HAVE** manual for all those involved in playspace planning, design, development, management and well..... anyone really who believes in quality play experiences for children and the community.

The guide is now in the hands of our designer and will be set for distribution before too long.

This guide is not about giving play providers additional layers of process or regulation and paperwork in the already onerous management of playgrounds. Rather it seeks to assist play providers to think differently about managing risk, whom they do it for, and why?

The guide will assist play providers understand what Risk Benefit means, and how to implement a Risk Benefit approach into your day to day practice on the ground.

It is understood that there is already commendable risk management work being undertaken and case studies included in the guide will help to further support and assist this work with practical examples and personal experiences.

More information will be available shortly.

Proludic



Please contact Proludic for further information on:
02 9485 8700 | info@proludic.com.au | www.proludic.com.au



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Keen? email marcus@playgroundideas.org

Welcome to the play industry MarketPlace!

As part of our commitment to develop initiatives supporting quality play opportunities, Play Australia has developed a play focused MarketPlace.

Here you will find a service provider who shares our commitment to accessible and safe outdoor play opportunities for the community and children in particular.

Advertisers are Play Australia members and as such abide by our philosophy to promote the value and importance of children's play activities.

If you would like to advertise in MarketPlace go to PlayAustralia.org.au/marketplace



promoting the value of play

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Please pass this newsletter on to a colleague or a friend who is interested in play!

For more information on membership services, resources, news and events, or to contact Play Australia, please visit PlayAustralia.org.au

Member Profile



Imagination Play

Introducing Imagination Play, a complete supplier of commercial quality indoor and outdoor open space and playground equipment.

Established in 2006, we are a rapidly expanding company servicing every part of Australia. Our growth and success can be attributed to our exciting innovative and inclusive designs, high quality products at competitive prices, combined with an impressive level of customer service and project management.

How does your business improve the play experience for children?

We understand that children need to experience certain types of movement for brain and body development. Our exciting products are complemented by inspirational and beautifully designed play spaces that every child, regardless of ability, can enjoy! Our aim is to create play spaces that help children's development in many ways. Playing gives space to children's imagination and fuels creativity. Through play children get to know their physical possibilities and limitations. Challenges and risks teach them to evaluate situations and find ways to go further than before. Playing together with other children helps to develop important social skills. This is what is important to us.

Can you tell us about a particular playground/ playspace project that was a highlight for you?

A recently installed play space at St Joseph's in Sorrento highlights the importance of including children in the design process. A very exciting thematic play area was created incorporating inclusive junior and senior fitness circuits along with passive play areas. The project included all items the children wished for while keeping in mind all ages and abilities.

Why did you become members of Play Australia?

Play Australia is a major industry representative body that plays an important role in supporting the playground industry and its members. Imagination Play are excited to be part of Play Australia and have the opportunity to show you, the members, our extensive range of both playground and outdoor fitness equipment.

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