

Play Australia Strategic Plan – Member survey results

The Board with the assistance of Vicki Davidson of Quest Consulting has been engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan 2014-2019. As a membership organisation our commitment is to listen to you and act on your behalf. The response to our latest membership survey was fantastic, and thank you to all of the members who responded. Nearly 50%! A great result in itself. This demonstrates significant commitment of our members to the organisation, which is vital. With your involvement Play Australia can effectively represent the play sector, your needs and importantly, to lead change and innovation to support quality play experiences for our children.

See page 3 for the Top Ten responses.



Message from the Executive Director, Barbara Champion

Well there is no such thing as a slow day in the Australian play sector. Over the past few months

I have had the privilege to meet and network with many passionate people involved in children's play within Victoria, South Australia and NSW. I am continually inspired by our members' commitment to improving children's lives through play. Here's a snapshot of what's been happening.

Whittlesea launch

I was delighted to attend the launch by Craig Ondarchie MP on behalf of the Victorian Government of the Playspace Planning Framework and Policy 2013 - 2016 at the Whittlesea City Council. Congratulations to Patricia Hale for this excellent work, [available online] which

will provide the pathway for playspace development in the City of Whittlesea for many years to come.

Play Australia in SA

Earlier this year Play Australia met with South Australian members and others working in the sector with an interest in play. The program included a presentation from Jane Webb-Williams of UniSA on the Importance of Outdoor Play, and Maria Zotti of DEWNR on the plans for Nature Play SA.

There was considerable networking, and sharing of information, and discussion about the best way to work together to further the interests of play in South Australia. All present indicated strong interest and support for an ongoing Play Network in South Australia. Thanks to Ray Scheuboeck of the Adelaide City Council for providing the venue and hosting the meeting.

A new Playground Standard to be published shortly

Play Australia will host briefing meetings on the new Standard in Melbourne on Tuesday 6 May at the Richmond Town

Hall and in Sydney on Wednesday 7 May at the North Sydney Council. Meetings in Adelaide and Brisbane are being planned, and a similar meeting was held in Perth recently, organised by KidSafe. Details will follow.

Play Australia will publish the Risk Benefit Assessment Guide, currently being developed for members, in addition to a key document which will outline clearly and coherently the details of the new Standard.

IPA Conference

Play Australia members are currently preparing for the IPA Conference to be held in Istanbul in May 20 - 23 this year. Play Australia is the Secretariat for the IPA, the International Play Association in Australia, and through Robyn Monro Miller, the Vice President of the IPA and the Executive Director of Network of Community Activities, Australia has played an active role in the development of Article 31, now policy of the United Nations.

Until next time....

Barbara Champion,
Executive Director,



Play Australia Vice President Paul Grover with Patricia Hale from Whittlesea City Council



Kids@Play – a sign of things to come

This is the story of an amazing young boy who lives in Frankston, Victoria. His name is Matthew and when he started this project he was only 10 years old.

Matthew was concerned about the safety of kids playing outside on the street and decided to do something about it. This inspiring story is remarkable and one that serves to remind us of how one person, even at 10 years old, can start a chain reaction. Matthew is now going to tell his story on the world's stage at the International Play Conference in Turkey in May. I don't think we could ask for a better ambassador for outside play.

Hi, My name is Matthew, I am 10 years old and live in a quiet street in Frankston.



My friends and I play outside a lot on the nature-strips and footpaths. We play after school and on the weekends. Sometimes the ball we are playing with gets stuck in a tree and we have to climb it to get it down. One day when we were fetching a stuck ball, a car came around the corner of our street really fast. We all thought that he was not driving carefully and he should watch out for us kids playing.

My friends and I talked about the signs to protect 'animals' in a nearby street in our town. In many parts of Australia, they have these signs to warn drivers to be careful of kangaroos and emus when driving.

My mates and I decided that it would be a good idea to have a sign to warn cars that they are driving where kids live and play, because we are important too.

So my mum helped us look on the internet to find one we could put up.

We found one in America....but it wasn't quite right, because it looks like kids just play on their scooters outside.

We also found one in Quebec.....but it isn't quite right either as it looks like kids just play ball games outside.

My Nana found one in Balnarring....but it isn't right either as we want to play outside our homes, not just cross the road.

We found one in a Queensland local street....but it isn't right either, because these signs are usually found near parks, schools and on buses.

So my friends and I decided to have a go at drawing our own designs.



We have 1000's of designs because lots of local kids got excited about this idea of a sign to put up in quiet streets, where kids live and play, to remind drivers to slow down. The sign designs came from my Scout group, my sporting groups, my Primary school, my big brothers high school, some other Frankston Primary and Secondary schools.

All kids who play in the street where they live were asked to have a go at helping us with some sign ideas. We had a display at the Mornington Peninsula Health and Family Expo in 2011.

Lots of other families thought it was a good idea, they all want one in their street too. The kids at the expo had a go at designing a sign.

My mum has helped us by taking our ideas to VicRoads, to get them to listen to what us kids want. We hope they will use our ideas to make a trial sign to put up in a quiet street where kids play, somewhere in Frankston.

It is now 2014, we are still playing in our street, the cars are still going fast and there is no trial sign. I hope there will be a sign one day soon, to help keep us safe. I hope it goes up in my street first, but there are many other streets wanting one too.

Lots of other important people from all around the world have sent letters to VicRoads and my local Council to support us kids with our play sign idea. We just want drivers that drive where we play to be careful. If drivers look out for ducks, kangaroos and emus, they should look out for kids playing too!

I am going to the International Play Conference in Turkey in May, to share our idea and get some more sign designs from kids in Turkey.



If you have an idea about what the kids@play sign design could be, or you might like to write a letter to help me get a trial sign up, please mail to:

Attention: Matthew, kids@play signs to playfolklore@museum.vic.gov.au

Thank you.

MATT :)

For the full pictorial story please go to the Play Australia website playaustralia.org.au/play-australia-enews



Here's what you said ... Member survey results

Q: In a few words, please describe an ideal future for Play Australia over a five year time frame

Your TOP TEN answers

1. Be the lead organisation in Australia for play advice and best practice.
2. Proactive role in informing stakeholders about current trends, changes to standards, information sharing and provision.
3. A peak body to advocate to government, both local and federal, on the importance of PLAY and its necessity for the healthy development of children and young people. To advocate to local community including schools about the need for active, free play and the importance of this for the healthy development of the child. To lead the way for an accredited play training program for Australia. To continue the fine work on playground design and safety and public space and environment needs for kids to play and hang out.
4. A nationally recognised clearinghouse for play resources/publications, a strong advocacy organisation with government and the wider community and a reputed training organisation. An organisation which works collaboratively and fosters networking and partnerships to promote play in all respects.
5. Where all states have the opportunity to receive support and training from Play Australia as Victoria does and members from other states are involved in networking to share information from an even broader network group.
6. Annual conference, annual play space awards, active and well represented state branches, quarterly newsletter showcasing new playgrounds & latest international trends/research etc.
7. More involved in advocating the availability of finances to build and maintain high quality play spaces to meet appropriate safety standards. To provide more online information to the community, and members, as well as expanding advisory services.
8. To be a key driver in informing professionals involved in the design and delivery of quality playgrounds, sharing of information from Local Government to private industry and providing quality research data on children's play.
9. Advise government and community leaders of the increasing importance of outdoor play with the intention of getting them to invest more finances and resources. Finding a forum which presents a greater opportunity to educate the community on matters about play, especially accepting minor injury as normal and inevitable.
10. I know that resources are very limited, but it would be great to see more of Play Australia working with park and education agencies, local governments, early childhood sector representatives, health bodies etc to do more lobbying of governments, philanthropic organisations etc to make more funding available for quality play spaces in public places, schools, early childhood centres etc. Given that children are playing outdoors less and less, I believe that school grounds are becoming increasingly important places for children to play and connect with nature. It would be great to see the range and quality of play opportunities in school grounds significantly improved. This would require training of staff to appreciate the play needs of children and lobbying of governments to provide additional funding to implement changes.

WHAT'S COMING UP



New Play Equipment Standard Briefings

	Richmond	North Sydney
Date:	Tue 6 May 2014	Wed 7 May 2014
Time:	10.30am – 1.00pm	10.30 – 1.00pm
Location:	Richmond Town Hall, Bridge Road, Richmond	North Sydney Council, 200 Miller Street, North Sydney

Meetings are planned for Adelaide and Brisbane.



Outdoor play in early childhood services 0-8 years seminars

Dates of the Outdoor Play in Early Years seminars for the remainder of 2014 are (as listed currently):

Dates: **Fri 13 & 20 June 2014**
Fri 1 & 8 August 2014
Fri 5 & 12 September 2014

Time: **8.45am – 3.30pm**
Location: Conference Room, Westerfolds Park,
Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe 3106

For details go to www.playaustralia.org.au



Two Day Training Program

This program will provide an overview of play and playspace development, management and design, including details of the new Standard for play equipment, and current best practice applicable in Australia.

Dates: **Wed 30 & Thur 31 July 2014**
Wed 10 & Thur 11 September 2014
Wed 19 & Thur 20 November 2014

Time: **9.00am – 4.00pm**
Location: Conference Room, Westerfolds Park
Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe 3106



Local Government Play Network Brimbank Park

The first meeting of the Local Government Play Network will be held at Brimbank Park, a Parks Victoria park, in Melbourne's west.

Date & time: **Wed 9 April 2014 10.30am – 1.00pm**
Location: Brimbank Park Playscape, Brimbank
Road (off Keilor Park Drive), Keilor
East. Mel.Ref. 15 A10

Register online at www.playaustralia.org.au
for any of these events

Playground rules abandoned!

This is a story that has come out of New Zealand about a Primary School that has all but abandoned playground rules and teachers doing yard duty! And guess what? It seems to be working. Here is an excerpt from a recent news article telling this motivating story.

Ripping up the playground rulebook is having incredible effects on children at an Auckland school. Chaos may reign at Swanson Primary School with children climbing trees, riding skateboards and playing bullrush during playtime, but surprisingly the students don't cause bedlam, the principal says.

The school is actually seeing a drop in bullying, serious injuries and vandalism, while concentration levels in class are increasing. Principal Bruce McLachlan rid the school of playtime rules as part of a successful university experiment.

"We want kids to be safe and to look after them, but we end up wrapping them in cotton wool when in fact they should be able to fall over. Letting children test themselves on a scooter during playtime could make them more aware of the dangers when getting behind the wheel of a car in high school", he said. Swanson School signed up to the study by AUT and Otago University just over two years ago, with the aim of

encouraging active play. However, the school took the experiment a step further by abandoning the rules completely, much to the horror of some teachers at the time, he said.

When the university study wrapped up at the end of last year the school and researchers were amazed by the results. AUT professor of public health Grant Schofield, who worked on the research project, said there are too many rules in modern playgrounds.

"The great paradox of cotton-woolling children is it's more dangerous in the long-run."

Society's obsession with protecting children ignores the benefits of risk-taking, he said.

Children develop the frontal lobe of their brain when taking risks, meaning they work out consequences. "You can't teach them that. They have to learn risk on their own terms. It doesn't develop by watching TV, they have to get out there."



The research project morphed into something bigger when plans to upgrade playgrounds were stopped due to over-zealous safety regulations and costly play equipment.

When researchers - inspired by their own risk-taking childhoods - decided to give children the freedom to create their own play, principals shook their heads but eventually four Dunedin schools and four West Auckland schools agreed to take on the challenge, including Swanson Primary School.

It was expected the children would be more active, but researchers were amazed by all the behavioural pay-offs. The final results of the study will be collated this year.

To see more on this story, go to <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/education/9692464/This-playgrounds-law-less-and-kids-love-it>.

Who are you? A Play Australia Member Profile



Introducing Bec Ho

Executive Officer - Touched by Olivia Foundation

The Foundation works with local councils, communities and corporations to upgrade or build inclusive playspaces, giving children regardless of ability, the opportunity to play side by side.

<http://touchedbyolivia.com.au/what-we-do/>

Why are you a member of Play Australia?

I believe in the power of play and I am committed to working (and playing) with likeminded people across Australia. I love the support that membership gives me - the knowledge base, skills and opportunity to meet, network and learn from some of the best play people in the world.

Why is outdoor play important to you and the Touched by Olivia Foundation?

I am a mum to young children, and for us there is nothing better than being able to get outside and just play... no rushing off to swimming lessons, footy training or whatever. I'm so fortunate to be able to dedicate my days to helping more families have that same joy by working with communities and councils to build inclusive play spaces. We want to promote the benefits of an inclusive society from the ground up, and there is no better place to start including people than in the playground.

How would you like to see play supported in NSW?

I would love to see more free time in school, less rules in school playgrounds, for the regional local governments to prioritise the needs of the children and people with disabilities living in their communities. Oh, and of course I wouldn't mind seeing more funding allocated to play programs and infrastructure!



MARKETPLACE

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

where
children
ARE
where
they
play