



Play Australia

“Establishing a national organisation to promote play”

The final report looking at structure, governance and change

June 2013

Report prepared by Play Australia Project Steering Committee. The report incorporates material also prepared by The Hunter Consulting Group. The Board of Play Australia acknowledges the excellent work to guide and facilitate the review by John Crofts and Peter Dorrell from the Hunter Consulting Group.

Introduction:

Play Australia is a not for profit organisation that has been working in the interests of children's play since 1915. The organisation has been steadily growing over many years and is now operating on a national scale. Together with the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation the Board now wants to consolidate this position and look to future growth.

The purpose of Play Australia is to promote the value of play and inspire active healthy outdoor play opportunities. The organisation has been in operation for 98 years, responding to changing needs within the many industry sectors involved in children's play. The role that Play Australia provides to these sectors is highly valued throughout Australia.

Intent of the Project:

For a number of years, the Committee of PRAV (the Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria Incorporated) had, through its strategic plan, identified the need for a national organisation. The Committee was of the view that this would be more reflective of the current activities of the organisation, and part of a strategic decision to seek ways to better service a national market.

In October 2010, PRAV formerly changed its name to **Play Australia**. Since then, the Committee of PRAV has become the Board of Play Australia. This was the first step in transforming an organisation from one that was State based, to one more reflective of its national membership base.

This led to the need to identify the most effective and achievable structure for the national organisation, the governance model to adopt, and the steps required to facilitate the transformation to a national organisation to promote the value of play. This project has been implemented to assist Play Australia review its existing operations, conduct research into possible structures, and engage in a consultation process with its members.

This report presents proposed governance and organisational models, identifies the challenges and opportunities reliant on potential funding sources and begins a transformation plan to guide the Board of Play Australia in the evolution of the national organisation.

Methodology:

A detailed brief for the project was finalised in September 2011. The Hunter Consulting Group was engaged to facilitate the project.

Project aim:

Through consultation and a sound strategic basis, to determine the most effective organisational structure for Play Australia, as the national peak body for the promotion of children's play.

The primary project tasks included:

- understanding the history and existing business of Play Australia, and its core values;
- identifying existing programs, services and gaps in promoting and providing for play at a strategic level, and the future directions and growth in the sectors;
- exploring potential business models, options for structure of the organisation, and within this clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the national office, and state and regional branches;
- understand the possible range of partnerships with other agencies;
- examining funding options, including the opportunities or limitations these created for the achievable organisational structures;
- examining what membership means to the organisation, and the opportunity for different types of membership;
- researching options for governance models within the International Play Association (IPA) membership;
- engaging with members to invite their input to the national model, in addition to building ownership in the organisation;
- reaffirming the purpose of the organisation, and
- identifying some of the steps required to guide the transition to a national organisation.

The project involved considerable discussion with the Play Australia Board.

The project culminated in the preparation of a discussion paper which was circulated to members across Australia. Their feedback was invited and is attached (Attachment 3).

Feedback from members

Written feedback was received from 11 members and many email messages indicating support for the proposal. The discussion points raised included:

- supporting the advocacy role of the organisation (at both State and Federal levels);
- supporting a member organisation;

- roles to include advocacy on issues that impact on children’s play, building infrastructure to support play, and development of play work sector;
- the potential for other branches to look at the Victorian model when establishing their branches;
- the need to clarify further how funding at the State level works;
- the opportunity to identify key partnerships to work with;
- ideas and suggestions for programs and services to further promote play and information sharing, and
- the stronger voice of a national organisation.

Further opportunity exists to continue to work with Parks and Leisure Australia (PLA), which is a national peak body for the parks industry with many common members. Play Australia has been working with PLA for many years now and recognises the value of this strategic relationship and the importance of this alliance – in particular for advocacy – as well as through training of members.

PLA has considered if Play Australia would become a ‘special interest group’ of PLA. While there is a strong overlap in provision of public play settings and Local Government membership, the membership of Play Australia is significantly broader across the early childhood sector, schools, academics, and more. The primary purpose of promoting the importance of play goes beyond facilities or environments. Indeed many future challenges for Play Australia members are societal, such as the lack of understanding by adults of the importance of play.

However, the Play Australia Board is keen to continue to build a strong partnership with PLA for common goals from advocacy through to delivery of programs and services. As both organisations are striving to become more financially sustainable, opportunities to work collaboratively must continue to be a priority.

The Report

This final report comprises the:

- vision, purpose and benefits of a national organisation;
- the services to be provided through a national office and state / regional branches;
- proposed governance and constitution;
- organisational structure including national board, state / regional branches;
- membership categories;
- IPA directions;

- funding sources;
- partnerships;
- transition and growth; and,
- priorities for Play Australia.

The report concludes with some of the next steps to be taken.

The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) circulated to members with the discussion paper have been attached in Appendix 1. A summary of key directions is included in Appendix 2. Feedback from members is attached in Appendix 3 and the Project Brief is Appendix 4.

Play Australia - Establishing a national organisation to promote play

Background:

In October 2010, the Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria (PRAV), an incorporated body that had been in operation for 95 years, formally adopted the name of *Play Australia*. This was the first step in transforming the organisation from one that was largely Victorian to one more reflective of its member representation in every state and territory in Australia.

Play Australia's purpose is to promote play and support those involved in play. Its primary role is advocacy and its main activities include connecting people involved in all areas of play, facilitating networks of specific expertise in the provision of play, promoting play and providing services to members, including information, advice and comprehensive training. *Play Australia* aims to promote quality design of play spaces and outdoor natural environments and encourage better planning, design and development of play opportunities for all children. *Play Australia* promotes research into the use of play spaces and their value. Through a strong advocacy role, *Play Australia* always seeks to focus attention on the benefits of play.

Play Australia is the national organisational member of the International Play Association (IPA) and is strengthening its role of communication between the international play community and Australian members. *Play Australia* represents the play industry on the Australian Standards Committee on Playgrounds.

There is currently much activity promoting play at local and state levels across Australia. There are numerous professional state and national bodies that are committed to play and

support elements of play within their sectors. However, there is limited connection between these bodies/organisations (and individuals) and activities conducted at a national and state level. *Play Australia* sees both a need and an opportunity to get everyone involved in play working together to advocate for play nationally.

In February 2012, having long recognised the need for an effective national organisation advocating for play¹, *Play Australia* began a project to identify the most effective structure for a truly national organisation and to examine ways to add value to the provision of play in Australia. A proposed structure was circulated to members in April – June 2013.

This final report sets out a proposal for the vision, purpose, benefits, services, governance structure, transition and growth strategy to guide the establishment of Play Australia as a national body advocating for play.

The Vision:

Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child “recognises the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.

We envisage upholding this convention through:

- a high profile for play in Australia with stronger advocacy;
- an organisation, *Play Australia* that will be appropriately resourced to support advocacy for play;
- developing *Play Australia* as a not-for-profit, membership based organisation governed by a voluntary national board that provides the strategic direction for enhancing quality play opportunities across the country;
- *Play Australia*'s National Board members being representative of semi-autonomous state and territory play associations established under the rules of *Play Australia* with shared values;
- *Play Australia* becoming an effective national body that has credence because of the breadth and quality of its members;
- *Play Australia* becoming the national organisation providing leadership, development and advocacy of play in Australia.

¹ 1993 Resolution at IPA conference in Melbourne committed to the establishment of a national organisation.

Purpose:

Play Australia will be the peak national organisation that promotes the value of play and advocates for healthy play opportunities for children and the wider community. ***Play Australia*** will develop a consistent national narrative and conversation about play, its benefits and its importance in developing healthy and resilient individuals and communities.

The benefits of being national:

A national organisation has the ability to bring together play communities and stakeholders throughout Australia in order to achieve their agreed vision and purpose. Members and interested parties can be reached more effectively with established points of contact in each state and territory. A well organised and effective national organisation can:

- strengthen the ability of the play community to advocate for and raise the profile of play at a national, state and local level;
- enhance the advocacy role by having one body to represent the play community to government, stakeholders and potential donors;
- build a philanthropic base through greater capacity and clarity of purpose;
- expand the provision of excellent training and promote forum and conference opportunities;
- develop synergies between national, state based and local groups;
- build momentum and capacity for significant partnerships;
- coordinate the provision of national and common services across Australia to maximise the impact of limited resources;
- boost the quality of services and networks for members;
- Increase access between important key networks in all states and territories;
- build partnerships with existing individuals and key agencies already committed to children's play;
- enhance the advisory services that draw on experts and expertise nationally and internationally;
- identify specific research needs that can be better designed and coordinated through a national association;
- demonstrate a national commitment to play in international forums, and
- link more people around Australia with membership and activities of the International Play Association (IPA).

Services: What Play Australia will do:

Play Australia will provide services through a national office and local branches (this is what is envisaged over the longer term). Local branches may be recognised at either state, territory or (in the interim) at regional level.

National responsibilities – advocacy, coordination and constitution:

(Note: The role of the National Office is to work with a national and international focus and to undertake those functions that can be more effectively done at this level than at state, territory or local levels.)

- advocacy nationally and internationally, particularly to the Federal Government;
- networking and coordination: bringing people together for a common purpose across Australia;
- working with strategic partners to develop innovative approaches and initiatives to promote play across Australia;
- maintaining links with the International Play Association (*Play Australia* is Australia's national member of IPA);
- facilitating IPA advocacy and, membership communication responsibilities (including input to the General Comment on the child's right to play);
- represent the play community on national bodies;
- support national governance arrangements and the constitution;
- establishing partnerships with key stakeholders in the play community at the national level;
- obtaining national funding;
- research facilitation and support;
- undertaking national projects for clients and partners;
- information gathering and dissemination;
- promoting information on training, forums and conference opportunities around the country and overseas;
- ensure a strong relationship with local government across Australia is achieved and maintained;
- providing services to members online and in person where appropriate; and
- managing the national website.

Local branch responsibilities:

(Note: The role of local branches is to work with a local focus and to undertake those functions that can be more effectively done at state, territory or regional level than at a national level.)

- advocacy locally, including to State Governments;
- networking and coordination: bringing people together for a common purpose within states and territories;
- representing the play community on state and territory bodies;
- provide representatives to national bodies;
- supporting and managing local governance arrangements; establishing policy and strategic direction with appropriate representation;
- establishing partnerships with key stakeholders in the play community;
- access funding resources locally;
- initiating, facilitating and supporting research in consultation with the National Office;
- information gathering and dissemination; providing opportunities to collaborate and share information - 'cross pollination' of sectors;
- provision of training, forums and conferences;
- providing sector specific support;
- undertaking projects for clients and partners locally; and
- providing services and programs to members within their jurisdiction.

Governance:

In this proposal *Play Australia* would be:

- one national organisation, *Play Australia* (IPA Australia), that is the legal entity and registered as an incorporated body;
- governed by a voluntary national board and local branch committees; and,
- membership based.

Constitution:

The current constitution of *Play Australia* will be revised to reflect the changes outlined in this proposal.

National Board:

The National Board will:

- uphold the constitution;
- be voluntary in nature;
- have 7 – 9 elected members that will be representative of local branches;
- include a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer among their number;
- be able to conscript additional members to the board for their skill base;
- establish voluntary standing committees as required;
- appoint a national CEO who will be a member ex-officio; and,
- establish a national secretariat.

Local Branch Committees: (state, territory or regional)

It is envisaged that local branch committees will oversee the development of play in their own jurisdiction and will be bound by the objectives of the *Play Australia* constitution, its statutes and regulations. It is anticipated that most activity will happen at a branch level.

Local branch committees will:

- uphold the constitution;
- represent and support their play constituency;
- advise the National Board of *Play Australia*;
- be recognised and have their powers set out within the constitution;
- be voluntary in nature;
- have up to 12 members representative of the broad array of sectors involved in play (e.g. local government, early childhood, play space design, education sectors, manufacturers, risk assessors, health and policy);
- include a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer among their number;
- be able to conscript additional members to the committee for their skill base; and,
- establish voluntary standing committees as required.

The present board of *Play Australia* believes that the current model of operation in Victoria and applicable to PRAV for 97 years has worked well and could be applied in local committees throughout Australia.

Once changes to the current constitution are adopted a *Play Australia* (Victoria Branch) will be formed which will run in a similar manner to the current operation, though it like the other

branches, will not be a legal entity. The Victoria Branch Committee will undertake the responsibilities outlined above.

Membership Categories:

In this model all members will be members of *Play Australia* and there will be four categories of membership:

- organisational members;
- individual members;
- life members;
- affiliated members.

All members and affiliated members will be subject to the provisions of the *Play Australia* Constitution.

International Play Association (IPA):

Play Australia (IPA Australia) is recognised by the IPA as its representative branch in Australia.

The role of *Play Australia* (IPA Australia) is to:

- provide opportunities to input to IPA initiatives and policy direction as required;
- contribute to and support the development and running of a sustainable effective international association;
- facilitate communication between the international play community and Australian members;
- facilitate communication between the IPA and Australian members;
- disseminate information from IPA and on matters of play in the international arena to members;
- facilitate international networks and contacts; and,
- facilitate opportunities for Australian members to meet (or hear present) visiting international colleagues.

(Note: It is timely to formalise the two way relationship with the IPA. This includes clarifying how we represent Australia, how we communicate between the organisations and our commitment to delivering this to the Australian members, how we elect representatives, how we collect information from the membership and communicate it back to the IPA. Clarifying

these governance systems will strengthen our capacity to get the best from the relationship for Australian members and for play.)

Funding:

It is recognised that securing adequate funding to support a national body will be a significant challenge for the new organisation and that new funding sources will be required in order to develop and sustain it.

Funding will primarily be sourced from the following:

- membership and affiliated membership;
- philanthropy (*Play Australia* has, and will continue to use its Deductible Gift Recipient [DGR] status);
- projects undertaken for clients and partners;
- training;
- forums and conferences; and,
- federal and State/Territory Government support.

Play Australia will need to access funds for the National Office to establish, and will need to secure funding particularly from the Federal Government and sponsors with a national profile, in order to conduct its activities. Funding has never been requested or received for the advocacy of play at a national level, and there is significant opportunity for this partnership to develop. The importance of developing key partnerships with strategically important people and organizations will be required in order to establish Play Australia adequately at the national level.

A proportion of all fees from membership will contribute to the running of the national organisation but the majority of this funding will be distributed to local branches.

Local branches will be responsible for establishing any additional funding for their operational activities. All aspects of funding will be consistent with the aims of the national organisation.

Partnerships:

Partnerships and alliances will form a key part in achieving the *Play Australia* vision. *Play Australia* will forge strong formal partnerships with like groups in the play community. It is anticipated that these links will lead to synergies in advocacy, structure and function, joint

fundraising to support specific projects, partnership research activities, forums and conferences.

Transition and growth:

Transition to the full establishment of the national body will take a significant amount of time.

Some of the next steps anticipated include:

- continuing discussion with existing members and stakeholders, particularly those in other states, to encourage establishment of branches;
- re-writing the constitution of *Play Australia* and undertaking the process for its adoption;
- examining in practical detail the steps to establish the new governance structure. It is possible that an Interim National Board would be established until national membership grew and each state had a branch;
- the appointment of a CEO and the establishment of a secretariat;
- formalising partnerships; and,
- operationalizing the constitution, including framing the statutes and regulations.

The growth of *Play Australia* will go hand in hand with growth in local branches. The National Board and secretariat of *Play Australia* will work closely with members and partners to facilitate increased fund raising, member numbers, advocacy, and the other activities.

Priorities for *Play Australia* include:

- developing and executing a national public advocacy strategy to promote the benefits of play and to build the position of *Play Australia* as the national leader on play;
- facilitating significant research that demonstrates the public health benefits associated with quality outdoor play, as well as collecting and disseminating international research;
- the development of innovative customer-focused membership services and benefits;
- the development of a Play Charter (*see note below*) as the tool to engage potential partner advocates for play;
- the provision of excellent training services to meet the various needs of the sectors involved in facilitating play;
- the provision of excellent member services that provide information and advice through a comprehensive web based resource and individual consulting;
- building sufficient resources and infrastructure to sustain a *national* focus on play, whilst attracting resources from within states and territories to support local play based activity and adequately funded operations;
- build Australian support and membership of the International Play Association; and,
- develop a strong relationship and partnership with the Federal Government.

Next steps:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has as Article 31 the rights of the child to play. The UN has recently released a General Comment on this, articulating concerns about children's right to play and constraints to play, and requiring further attention by all signatory Governments to this.

Working with members, Play Australia will identify key priorities for advocacy and attention within the Australian context. These key priorities will form the basis of the play principles (or play charter) which will articulate the common purpose for members and branches.

While this action is one of advocacy and purpose, it is also integral to development of the play charter and the principles members will be aligning to. And as such this important action will run concurrently with all other organisational steps outlined below.

1. The Board will commence development of a new set of Rules in accordance with the proposals outlined in this report;
2. the Board will examine the practical implementation of the rules, in setting the timing for a Special Meeting to adopt the new rules;
3. meetings with members outside Victoria will be planned to begin the establishment of state / regional branches;
4. relationships with the Federal Government will be developed;
5. resources will be identified to support the further development of Play Australia;
6. strategic partnerships will be developed with people and organizations who may become Associate Members of Play Australia;
7. develop a transformation plan; and,
8. develop a communication plan for existing and potential members.

Appendix 1 - Frequently Asked Questions

The following issues/comments were raised during the drafting of the discussion paper.

1. What are you proposing exactly? Why is this happening now?

Play Australia is currently an organisation based in Victoria with national membership. The aim is to evolve into a national organisation with committees and membership in all States and Territories to develop a national voice for play.

2. What are the benefits of developing a national body?

The benefits of a truly national organisation will be a stronger voice for play, the capacity to access federal funds both private and Government and to provide strong representation internationally.

3. How long do you anticipate it will take before the national body is fully in place?

The act of changing the constitution to reflect a truly national body can be completed in 2013. The growth into strong representation from the committees throughout the country could take several years.

4. What if there are members but no Play Australia presence in a state or territory?

The national body will provide umbrella support for all Play Australia members. The formation of local committees will however greatly enhance the ability to support good play and to access funding from State and Territory governments and other potential funding bodies.

5. Why this model and not incorporated bodies in each state and territory that are affiliated to the National Body?

A model with only one legal entity is preferable in that it will have the least financial impost, will have a strong voice as one national organisation and reduce the chances of the organization being used for inappropriate financial gain by commercial interests.

6. Where will the money come from to set up a National Secretariat with a paid CEO?

Whilst some funding will come from membership, funding will need to be sought to assist in the establishment of the national body. Funding will be sought from the Federal Government as well as private sources.

7. How will the National Board be appointed and will the states/territories be represented?

In the model being presented for discussion it is proposed that each State and Territory will elect one of their Committee to be a member of the National Board.

8. What do you mean by an Interim Board?

It is not expected that the organizational structure proposed could be achieved in one step. Therefore a transition will be required, which could include the establishment of an interim Board. The interim Board may also include people with skills in establishing a new organization like Play Australia.

9. Do all of the membership fees go to the National Body? If so what about the states and territories?

Yes all fees will be collected by the National Body as it will provide administration support, and a percentage will be returned to local groups to assist with expenses.

10. What will happen in our state? Do you mean Victoria?

Little change to current activities in Victoria, training, network meetings to continue.

11. What will happen to the current Victorian Committee?

It will form the basis of the local Play Australia Victoria Branch.

12. What will states do and what will the national body do?

State Branches will run the day to day operations of Play Australia and the National Board will **oversee national advocacy, and international responsibilities.**

13. What's the International Play Association got to do with any of this?

Play Australia is the national member of the IPA and has the responsibility of promoting and developing the IPA in Australia and promoting a commitment to the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child throughout Australia. One of the benefits in developing the national organisation will be to build the membership and communication between the international play sector and the Australian play sector.

14. When will we see the new constitution?

The Board will develop a new constitution for discussion with the membership in time for adoption at the Annual General meeting in October 2013

15. What happens next?

When the feedback to this Discussion paper is collated and fed into the process, the Board will revise where necessary and develop a draft constitution. Ideally this draft will be discussed with the membership and finalised for adoption at the AGM in October 2013.

Appendix 2 - Summary of key directions

The Vision:

Driven by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child Play Australia will uphold the convention in a variety of ways.

Purpose:

Play Australia will be the peak national organisation that promotes the value of play and advocates for healthy play opportunities for children and the wider community.

The benefits of being national:

A national organisation has the ability to bring together play communities and stakeholders throughout Australia in order to achieve their agreed vision and purpose.

Services:

Play Australia will provide services through a national office and local branches.

National responsibilities – advocacy, coordination and constitution:

The role of the National Office is to work with a national and international focus and to undertake those functions that can be more effectively done at this level than at state, territory or local levels.

Local branch responsibilities:

The role of local branches is to work with a local focus and to undertake those functions that can be more effectively done at state, territory or regional level than at a national level

Governance:

One national organisation, Play Australia (IPA Australia), that is the legal entity and registered as an incorporated body;

Constitution:

The current constitution of Play Australia will be revised to reflect the changes outlined in this proposal.

National Board:

Details the role of the National Board

Local Branch Committees: (state, territory or regional)

It is envisaged that local branch committees will oversee the development of play in their own jurisdiction and will be bound by the objectives of the Play Australia constitution, its statutes and regulations.

Membership Categories:

In this model all members will be members of Play Australia and there are four categories of membership.

International Play Association (IPA):

Play Australia (IPA Australia) is recognised by the IPA as its representative branch in Australia.

Funding:

It is recognised that securing adequate funding to support a national body will be a significant challenge for the new organisation and that new funding sources will be required in order to develop and sustain it.

Partnerships:

Partnerships and alliances will form a key part in achieving the Play Australia vision

Transition and growth:

Transition to the full establishment of the national body as outlined in this discussion paper will take a significant amount of time.

Priorities for Play Australia:

Nine priorities are identified for the new organisation to become a reality as detailed in the Discussion Paper.

Appendix 3 - Feedback from members

Responses included the following:

- I thought it was an excellent paper that was very considered in how Play Australia should look in the future - for what it is worth I agree with numerous points in the document and I firmly believe that Play Australia should be a member organisation, one that specifically and solely advocates for children's right to play and it should campaign and lobby both State and Federal Government on issues that impact on children's play whilst working towards building an infrastructure that can support play and the future development of playwork. All things that I know you are currently doing!! (Mike Dessington, Play for Life)
- It all looks really good; the Victorian State Branch could be seen as the flagship, for others to model off? And maybe a little more clarity around the state based funding model - what does the funds cover, how is it administered, who is responsible etc. I am sure most of that will come out in the operational stuff you guys have planned... (Bec Ho, Touched By Olivia Foundation)
- Congratulations on the development of the Play Australia Discussion Paper. I know this has been a long time coming and a lot of work has been put into preparing this Paper by you and your Committee... (Simon Bradley, Shire of Murray Bridge)
- The discussion paper and the Play Australia Newsletter you have recently sent through are totally inspiring! Thanks very much. It reaffirms the importance of play and the work we are all doing...(David Kucher, The Venny)
- There is an opportunity to identify key partnerships, Play Australia has an opportunity to be recognized as an industry voice to all levels of government, there is scope to advocate for the health and social benefits of play for all ages and abilities, Play Australia could be a leading voice for the sharing of school play spaces with local communities, opportunity to support quality suppliers via industry exhibitions and sharing of information on products, designs etc. will support play.....(Chris Eddy, City of Hobsons Bay)
- This sounds fantastic. Well done. A national body will have much more oomph!!
(Aaron Wallis, Playce)
- I wanted to touch base and say that I'm certainly willing to 'put in' and be a part of the new phase of Play Australia, particularly as your presence disseminates throughout state and local communities more.....(Kim Stoney, The Farmhouse, Mansfield)

- Congratulations on your Play Australia Discussion Paper! Fantastic initiatives... (Harri Makela, Lappsett)

- I think the discussion paper looks good. I would suggest the best way to gather momentum for this whole process would be for Play Australia to host a national conference ideally with international speakers. The conference would draw a huge crowd of both existing & potential members. It would provide a platform to allow all members to discuss and then adopt the new constitution. Due to the large numbers in attendance from each state, it would allow for the election of 'state boards' if there was enough interest. If there were speakers from IPA in attendance they could promote the value of PA being formed....
(Melissa McManus, City of North Sydney)

- I am keen to try to align both Play Aust and our Playground Advisory Service if we can to build a stronger base for WA...(Tracy Blaszkow, Kidsafe WA)

- The following submission was received from PLA National
 - Play Australia has a similar membership profile to PLA with additional reach into the early years and schools sectors, this membership profile presents an opportunity to both organisations and particularly Play Australia to increase the knowledge and capacity of the sector. PLA being the “people behind the places” draws on the Sport, Recreation, Leisure, Horticulture and Environmental sectors all of which have an interest in play

 - Many of the services of Play Australia are or could be delivered by PLA e.g. training and advocacy. The up skilling of the sector represents a key partnership opportunity both within each region and nationally. An understanding of the national play sector and the focus of the particular agencies within each state will assist PLA in planning and creating new partnership opportunities.

 - PLA national structure should be seen as an opportunity for collaboration, national structures can become a burden for associations and PLA would propose a national collaboration to bypass this as it has in place a national structure with state representation.

 - The Charity status of Play Australia can create a unique opportunity for PLA and signal the intent of the organisation, this status could be explored between the two parties for mutual industry benefit.

- Opportunities exist to add strength to play settings as they relate to urban design and open space planning via PLA membership.
- Varying state structures and state led initiatives may see a level of perceived take over as the organisation expands nationally.
- Noting the high level of aligned memberships it is critical that the two parties work together.
- Structural efficiencies are available via PLA.

Appendix 4 - Project Brief, September 2011



Establishing a national organisation to promote Play

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1. Introduction

This project brief has been developed to facilitate the transformation of a national organisation to promote the value of play.

In March 2011, PRAV (the Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria Incorporated), formerly changed its name to Play Australia. This was the first step in transforming an organisation from one that was State based, to one more reflective of its national membership base.

The purpose of Play Australia is to promote the value of play and inspire active healthy play opportunities. The organisation has been in operation for 95 years, responding to changing needs within the many industry sectors involved in play. The role that Play Australia provides to these sectors is highly valued throughout Australia.

The Victorian State Government has supported PRAV / Play Australia throughout its existence and is actively supporting the growth of this national organisation.

2. Background

There are a broad range of 'sectors' involved in the provision of play. These sectors include providers and managers of play environments – Local Government, schools, early childhood centres, and major parks agencies (such as Parks Victoria). It includes the providers and designers of these settings – play space designers, landscape architects, play equipment manufacturers, suppliers of ground surfacing and shade structures. It includes those involved in management of these areas such as risk assessors, auditors and maintenance staff. It includes those involved in research, health promotion and

funding agencies. People involved in promoting and providing play come from a variety of disciplines.

Play Australia promotes play and supports those involved in play by providing members with information, professional advice and comprehensive training, and facilitating networks of specific expertise in the provision of play. By combining people involved in all the areas of play, improved opportunities for children's play are delivered.

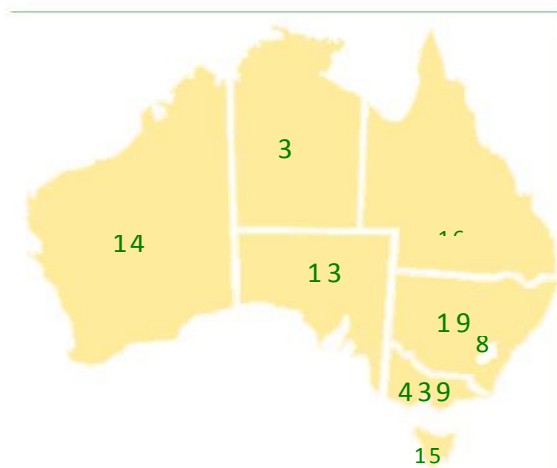
Play Australia aims to promote quality design of playspaces and outdoor natural environments and encourage better planning, design and development of play opportunities for all children. Play Australia promotes research into the use of playgrounds and their value. Through a strong advocacy role, Play Australia always seeks to focus attention on the benefits of play.

Play Australia is the national organisational member of IPA, the International Play Association, and is responsible for IPA's membership and activity within Australia.

Play Australia represents the play community on the Australian Standards Committee on Playgrounds Safety. Play Australia played a key leadership role as Chair of this Committee through the development of the current Australian Playgrounds Standards applicable across the country.

There is no organisation with equivalent objectives operating in any other state or territory.

Membership



8 in New Zealand

(Figures at March 2010)

3. A new national organisation

Over recent years Play Australia has developed a sound internal structure and worked to establish strong governance as a core pillar of the organisation. The constitution was revised and the Committee of Management worked to strengthen the business functioning of the organisation.

For a number of years, the Committee of PRAV had, through its strategic plan, identified the need for a national organisation. The Committee was of the view that this would be more reflective of the current activities of the organisation, and part of a strategic decision to seek ways to better service a national market.

At its AGM in October 2010, the members of PRAV voted to formally change the name of the organisation to Play Australia. These formalities were completed in March 2011. Since then, the Committee of PRAV has become the Board of Play Australia.

The demonstrated need for a national approach to promoting play has prompted this direction. A national organisation can strengthen networks between those involved in play across Australia.

As a national organisation, communities and stakeholders throughout Australia can be reached more effectively, with established points of contact in each state and territory. A well organised and effective national organisation can

- boost the quality of services and networks for members;
- increase access between important key networks in all states and territories;
- build partnerships with existing state based individuals and key agencies already committed to children's play;
- enhance the advisory services that draw on experts and expertise nationally and internationally;
- identify specific research needs that can be better designed and coordinated through a national association;
- expand the provision of quality training;
- effectively advocate for and raise the profile of play in Australia;
- demonstrate a national commitment to play in international forums;
- link more people around Australia with membership and activities of the International Play Association (IPA);
- the Australian Government has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This convention states that every child has the right to engage in play. The national peak organisation promoting play will take a key role toward meeting this commitment;
- the current national membership provides a platform for Play Australia taking a leadership role to drive the development of the national organisation;

- this project has been established to identify the most effective structure for the national organisation, and examine the way to “add value” to the provision of play in Australia. The vision is to establish a national organisation with good governance, strong leadership and sustainable funding;
- this project will include a focus on partnerships. Members and potential members can assist in identifying how representation across Australia can be most effectively be structured, and develop strategies to support all States and Territories; and,
- many key organisations throughout Australia have developed close working connections and relationships with Play Australia. A united approach through this project will further enhance these relationships in building the national organisation.

4. Project Aim

Through consultation and a sound strategic basis, to determine the most effective organisational structure for Play Australia, as the national peak body for the promotion of children’s play.

5. Project Objectives

- To identify the optimum organisational structure for the national organisation;
- to develop a plan to guide the transformation to the new organisational structure; and,
- where possible, to engage and invite agencies and individuals involved in play to be part of the changes to create the new national organisation supporting the promotion and development of play in all States and Territories.

6. Project Tasks

6.1. Core strengths

- Become familiar with the history and existing structure and services of Play Australia, including the current business, financial and strategic plans;
- understand the core strengths and values of Play Australia that the current membership wish to retain as the organisation grows. This may include a need to survey current membership.

6.2. Information gathering, identification of existing programs and services nationwide, audit to identify gaps and engage regarding new options.¹

- Identify existing programs and services, gaps, and desired programs and services through consultation. While a broad analysis is required nationwide, the consultants will be required to provide specific detail for Victoria, especially in the identification of gaps and desired programs and services;
- use the consultation process to engage and invite participation in the growth of the national organisation;
- identify additional services and programs possible and other benefits to Victorian members within Play Australia;
- identify relevant parties in other States and Territories and ascertain their interest and capacity for involvement in the establishment of a national organisation;
- assist in commencing relationships with the Federal Government on matters of resourcing, policy and advocacy at both national and international levels to enable adherence to national and international obligations.

6.3. Business models

- Examine possible business models for the structure of Play Australia. This research will be informed by research already undertaken on other international peak bodies (eg Play England). It could include review of other national organisations in the not for profit and business sectors, other charities, other peak industry bodies.

❖ Examine options for relationships with existing national organisations.

- Make recommendations on possible operational structures and where there is more than one option explain the positives and negatives of each option; and,
- identify potential funding sources for Play Australia, to support the structure of the national organisation and servicing the national membership.

1. The level of detail that can be achieved in each State and Territory will be influenced by any additional funding received during the project.

❖ **Identify legal requirements for Play Australia.**

6.4. *Transitions – processes required to implement recommendations – to transform Play Australia to the new structure.*

As Play Australia will be operating on a “business as usual” basis until decisions are made about the future directions, identify potential funding sources for Play Australia to enhance the services for existing members.

❖ **Develop a transformation plan for Play Australia.**

❖ **Develop a communication plan for existing and potential members.**

6.5. *Operational*

- Recommend appropriate membership categories for Play Australia, IPA and the national organisation and the fee to be paid annually; and,
- establish a protocol for funding support from the play equipment manufacturing sector and other relevant providers of services for Play Australia.

6.6. *Project reporting*

- Provide regular reports on the project development to the Steering Committee during the course of the project, or as requested.

7. *Project Deliverables*

A sound, achievable plan which will guide the evolution of Play Australia.

The project report will include:

- executive summary;
- current situation;
- discussion of business models;
- overview of State and Territory consultation;
- profile of potential funding sources;
- funding protocol;
- transformation plan;
- communications plan;
- member survey results and analysis (if conducted); and,
- recommendations.

It is expected that the Consultants will present on the final report to the Steering Committee and Board.

8. Consultation

Consultation with Play Australia members and others in the play sector in other States and Territories and at the Commonwealth Government level will be required.

In addition to gathering information about programs and services that are desired around Australia, the consultation will aim to inform and engage people in the benefits of the national organisation.

A consultation / engagement plan will be developed by the successful consultant; however an outline of possible approaches could be submitted at the time of application.

9. Project Timeframe

Key Task Summary	Date of Completion	Payment
1. Establish Steering Committee	Done	
2. Advertise and selection process for Consultant	7 November	
3. Appoint Consultant and commence project	28 November	
4. Further development of detailed project plan and timelines with Consultant.	19 December	15%
5. Project development including Consultation	November - Feb/March 2012	35%
6. Regular reporting with Steering Committee	Monthly or more as agreed	
7. Draft report, including presentation to Steering Committee, Play Australia Board and Department representatives	16 March 2012	25%
8. Final report and project completion, including presentation to Play Australia Board and Department representatives.	2 April 2012	25%

10. Project Management

A project manager has been appointed to the project. The consultant will report to and take direction from the project manager.

A project steering committee has been established to support this role. This Steering Committee includes members of the Play Australia Resources and Governance Committee, and a representative of Sport and Recreation Victoria. The project manager will chair the steering committee.

11. Project Budget

The project budget is \$25,000.

It is anticipated that further funding may become available for the project while the project is underway. This funding will be for more detailed consultation within specific States or Territories.

The consultant is required to meet all costs associated with the project, including travel and accommodation.

It should be noted that the Play Australia Board will significantly contribute to the project, in particular through linking the consultant with people in different industry sectors around Australia.

12. Submission requirements

Applicants should submit detailed proposals covering each of the following:

- Research methodologies to be applied to the tasks
- The quantum of work that can be done within the stated budget
- Specific staff who will work on the project and their proposed responsibilities and time allocations.
- Previous experience in undertaking similar projects
- List of recent projects and references
- Developed time lines for each stage of the project based on chart above or revised timelines if needed
- Proposal for regular progress reports and steering committee meetings on the project
- Sample of recent report (preferably in a similar type of project).

- Three suitable referees available to provide information on the abilities and performance of the tenderer.

13. Submission evaluation

A selection committee will review and assess all proposals received. The consultant may be invited to attend an interview.

Criteria that will be considered in evaluating submissions will include:

- Skills, experience and qualifications of the consulting team 30%
- Demonstrated benefit to Play Australia for the given budget 30%
- Demonstrated understanding of the requirements of the brief 20%
- Methodology and reporting systems proposed 10%
- A demonstrated ability to perform projects within the given timelines and start promptly on this project.

APPENDIX 5 – Steering Committee members

Felix Hemingway	Board member and Project Manager
Cormac McCarthy	President
Paul Grover	Vice President
Cathy Kiss	Board member
Barbara Champion	Executive Director