



PLAY

WOLLONGONG

CURRENT SITUATION REPORT

Adopted by Council 23 June 2014

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UNDERSTANDING OUR STRATEGIC BOUNDARIES

To assist with strategically planning and managing play spaces and recreation, Council’s adopted Strategic Framework for Open Space, Recreation Facilities and Community Facilities, *Planning People Places* (2006) divides the our Local Government Area (LGA) into 4 Planning Districts and 10 Planning Areas.

Planning Districts are identified through linking clusters of suburbs based on geography and potential physical and social connections.

Planning Areas are identified as a next layer down from Planning Districts and are based on a more local level that considers supply and demand within clusters of suburbs.

Planning District 4 and Planning Area 10 are located within the Illawarra Escarpment and are not generally considered within this report.



Reference Tool for Our Strategic Planning Boundaries		
Planning District 1	Planning Area 1	Helensburgh, Otford, Stanwell Park, Stanwell Tops
	Planning Area 2	Austinmer, Coalcliff, Coledale, Scarborough, Thirroul, Wombarra
	Planning Area 3	Bulli, Russell Vale, Woonona
Planning District 2	Planning Area 4	Balgownie, Bellambi, Corrimal, Fairy Meadow, Mount Ousley, Mount Pleasant, Tarrawanna, Towradgi
	Planning Area 5	Coniston, Figtree, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mangerton, Mount Keira, Mount Saint Thomas, North Wollongong, West Wollongong, Wollongong
	Planning Area 6	Cordeaux Heights, Farmborough Heights, Kembla Grange, Mount Kembla, Unanderra
Planning District 3	Planning Area 7	Berkeley, Cringila, Lake Heights, Port Kembla, Primbee, Warrawong, Windang
	Planning Area 8	Brownsville, Dapto, Haywards Bay, Kanahooka, Koonawarra
	Planning Area 9	Horsley, Penrose, West Dapto

1 Introduction

1.1 Play Provision Overview

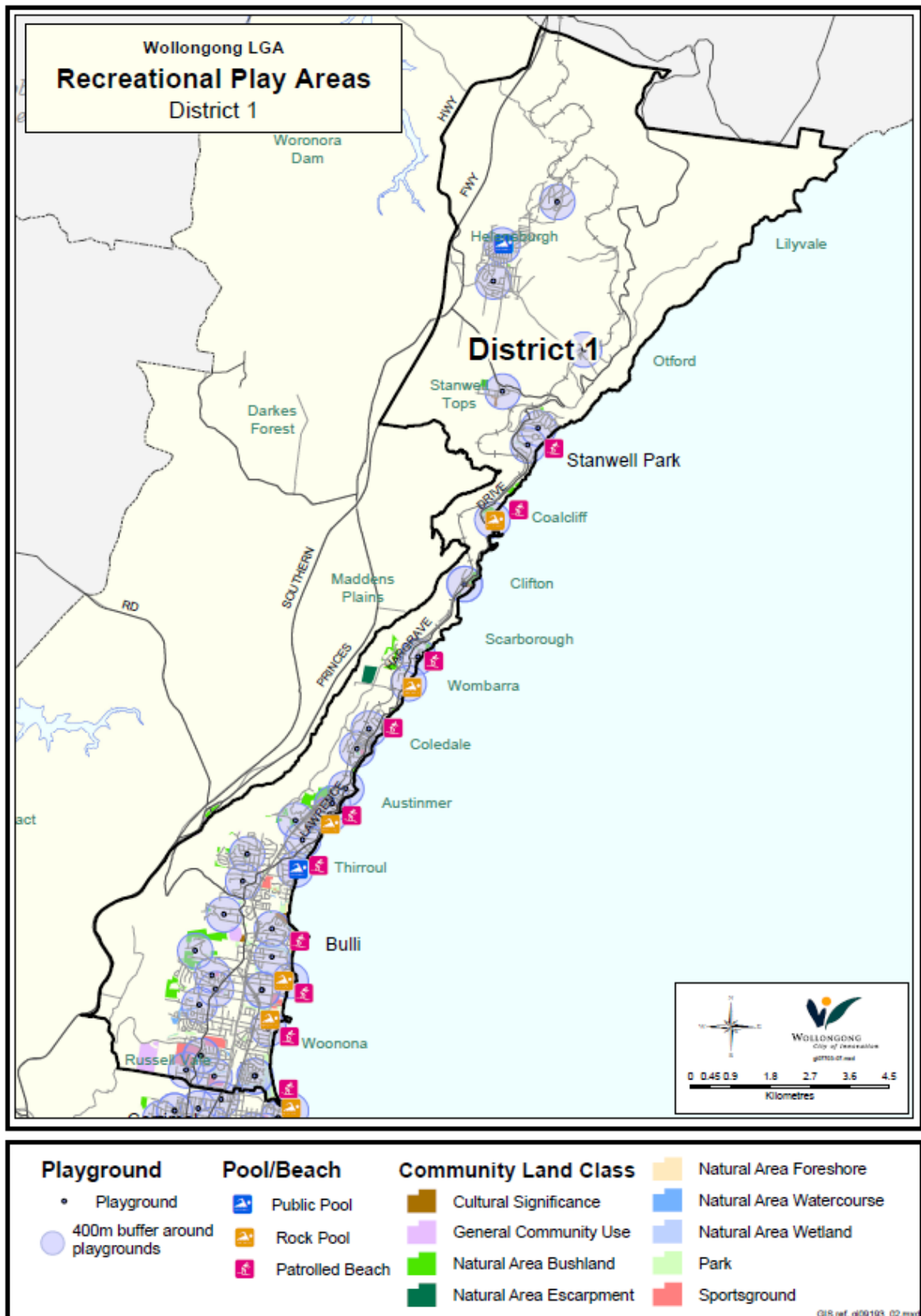
Situated along a narrow coastal strip between the Illawarra Escarpment and the Pacific Ocean, the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA) offers a vibrant and unique natural setting, perfect for the variety of play and recreational opportunities that cater for a population of 204,000 and the many visitors to the region.

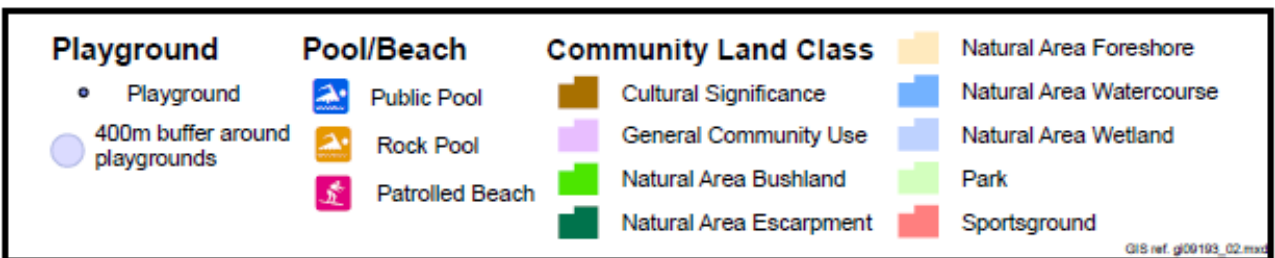
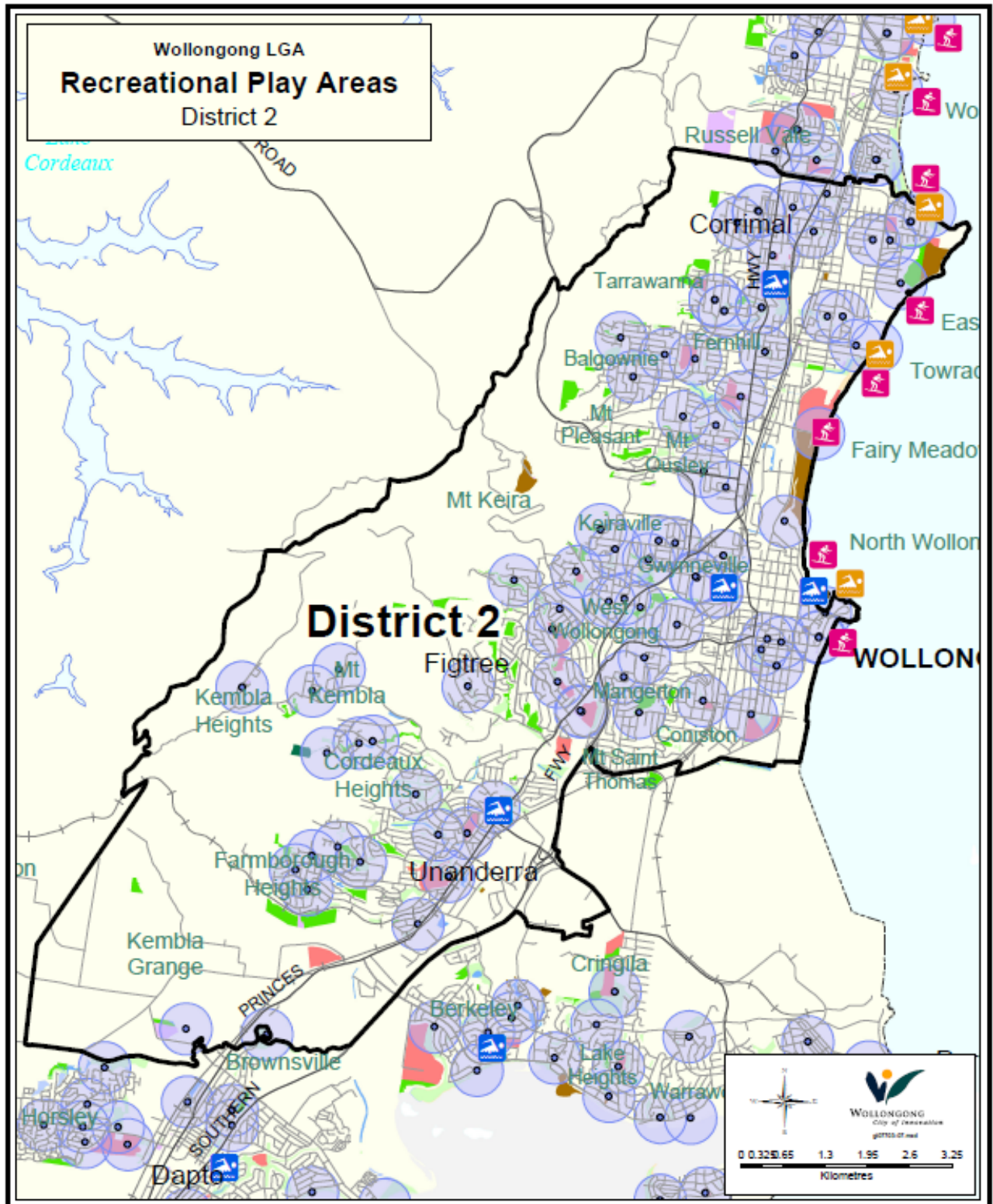
Central to the opportunities for play, Wollongong City Council currently manages 155 public play spaces featuring designated play equipment, including three (3) play spaces located within Council managed Tourist Parks at Bulli, Corrimal and Windang. There are an additional 427 parks (covering 1,531 hectares), 65 sports fields and 220 playing fields, 1 public golf course, 9 public swimming pools (including 3 heated, 2 solar heated, 1 indoor), 8 tidal rock pools, 17 patrolled beaches and 2 leisure centres that offer opportunities for play but which may not have play equipment.

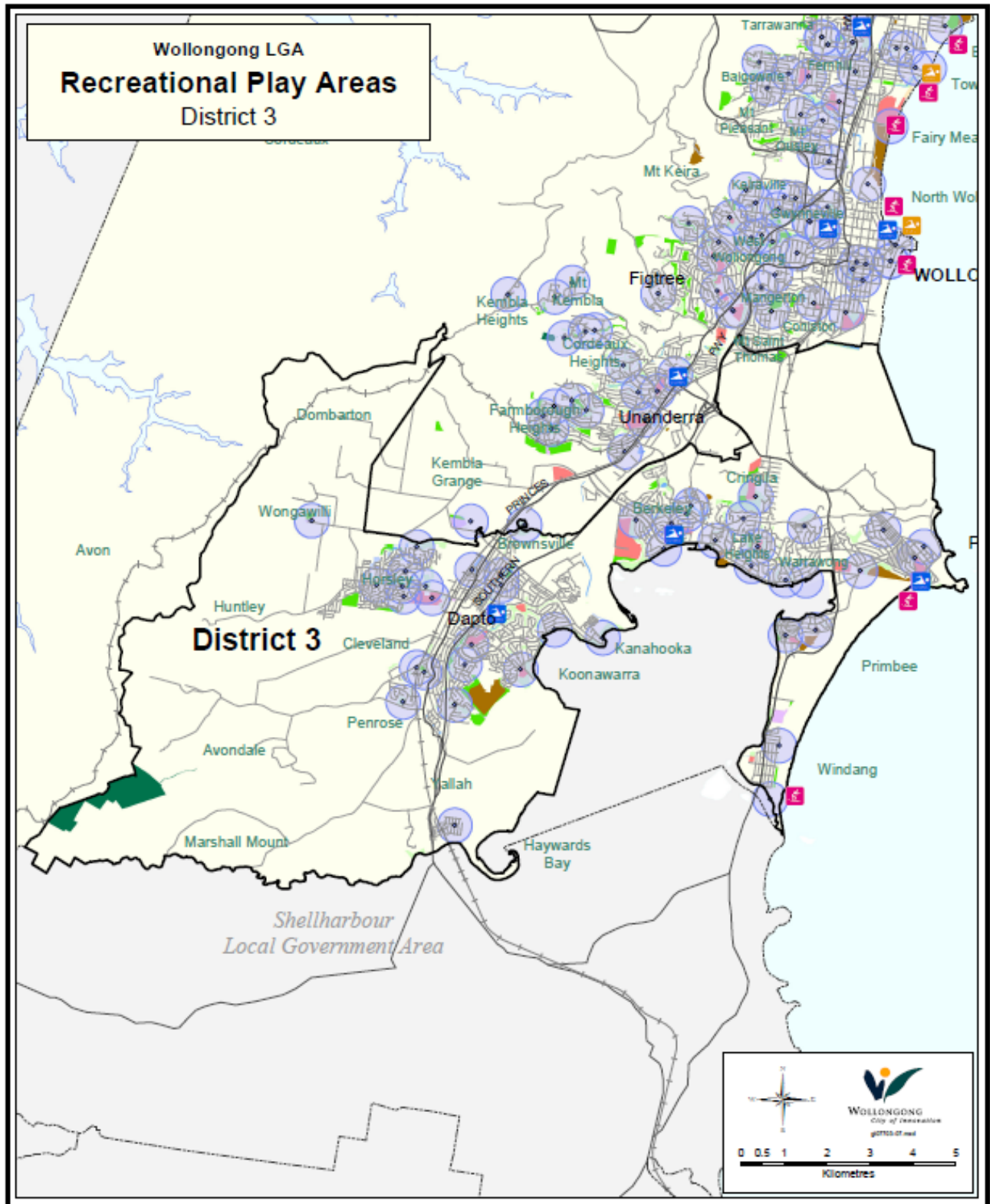
The primary feature of Wollongong's current play spaces is off-the-shelf type equipment that largely caters for 3-12 year olds. However Council's recent play space renewals have seen a shift from modular bright coloured equipment to unique play items, purpose built for the site and complemented by landscaping and more subtle natural play elements.

2 Our Current Play Space Provision

The following maps identify available spaces for recreation and play across the three Planning Districts.



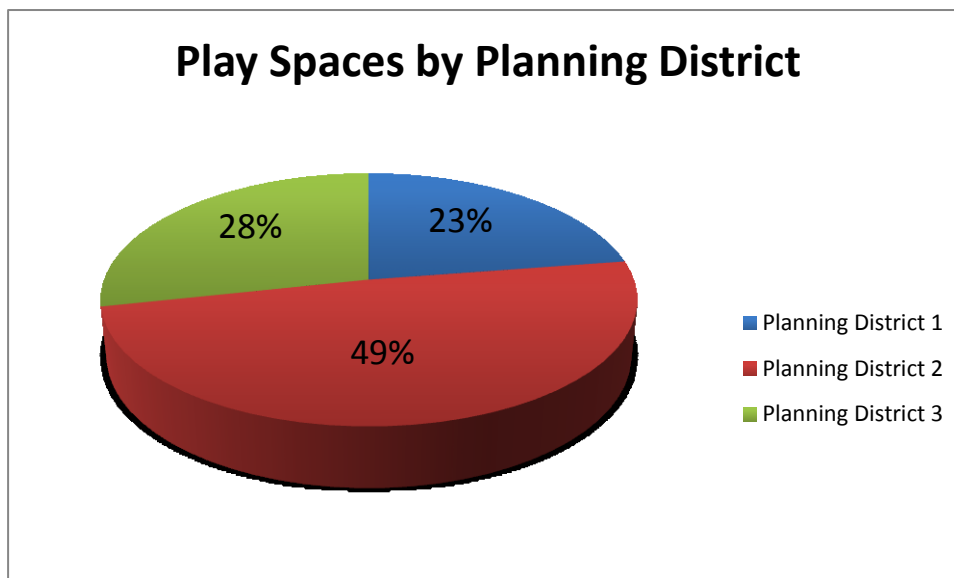




Playground	Pool/Beach	Community Land Class	Natural Area
• Playground	Public Pool	Cultural Significance	Natural Area Foreshore
400m buffer around playgrounds	Rock Pool	General Community Use	Natural Area Watercourse
	Patrolled Beach	Natural Area Bushland	Natural Area Wetland
		Natural Area Escarpment	Park
			Sportsground

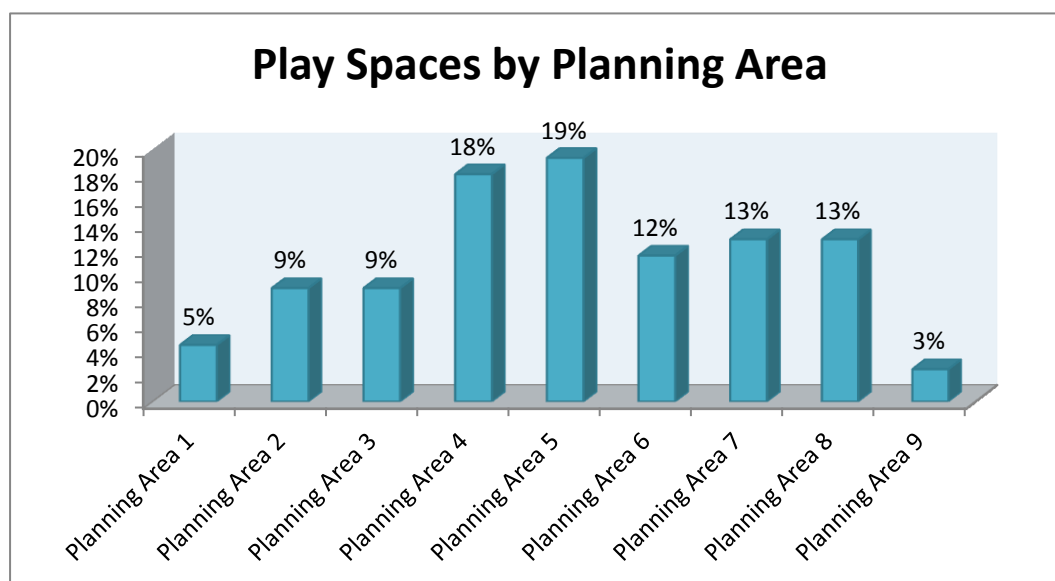
GIS ref. g00193_02.mxd

Play spaces featuring designated play equipment are distributed across the Wollongong LGA in a variety of settings such as small stand-alone parks through to large foreshore reserves, adjacent to community halls, sports fields, schools and other multi-use recreational areas. There are currently 35 play spaces located within Planning District 1, a total of 76 play spaces located within Planning District 2 and a further 44 play spaces located within Planning District 3.



The highest number of play spaces currently occurs within Planning Area 5 (*Coniston, Mount Saint Thomas, Figtree, West Wollongong, Wollongong, North Wollongong, Mangerton, Gwynneville, Keiraville, Mount Keira*). The lowest number of play spaces occurs within Planning Area 9 (*Horsley, West Dapto*) which is largely the West Dapto land release area.

Planning Area	Number of Play Spaces
Planning Area 1	7
Planning Area 2	14
Planning Area 3	14
Planning Area 4	28
Planning Area 5	30
Planning Area 6	18
Planning Area 7	20
Planning Area 8	20
Planning Area 9	4



The Wollongong LGA is essentially developed with West Dapto being the last remaining Greenfields site. The West Dapto release area covers 4,700 hectares between Kembla Grange and Marshall Mount. Only 1,246 hectares are capable of urban development, the remainder is flood plain, bushland conservation areas, foothills of the Illawarra Escarpment or rural land. The release area is planned to accommodate an additional 17,000 dwellings and 55,000 persons.

2.1 The Play Space Hierarchy

Existing play spaces are categorised according to the play space hierarchy identified within the 2008 Council adopted Playground Provision, Development and Management Policy.

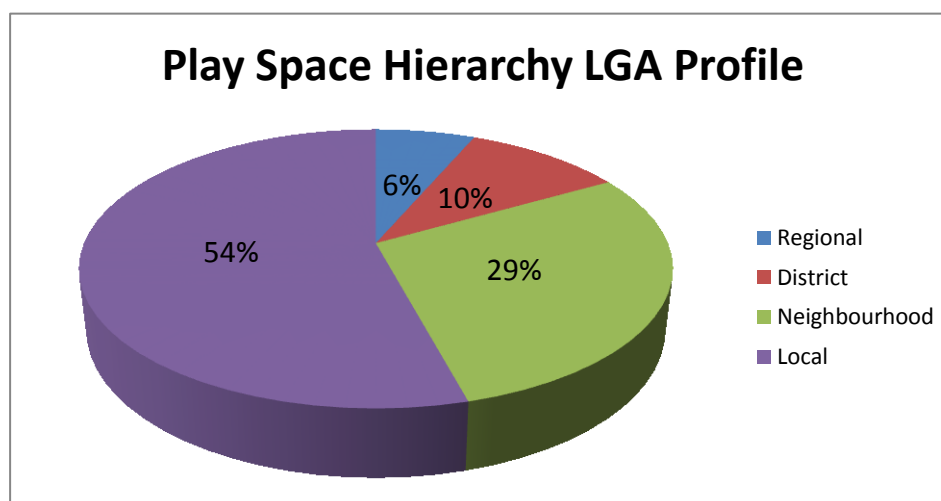
Hierarchy	Time/ Travel Distance	Features	Indicative Funding Allocation
Local	Walkable: 5 minutes/ 400 metres	A local play space should be safe and appealing but is generally a small play space that may only cater for one age group (eg toddlers 2-4 years or 5-8 year olds). The play space may include standard play equipment however the natural landscape will be maximised for play.	Up to \$50,000
Neighbourhood	Walkable: 15 minutes/ 1000 metres	A neighbourhood play space should be good quality and could include a number of pieces of equipment that cater for more than one age group. The play space will generally include standard rather than unique equipment and surrounds and an emphasis will be on utilising the natural landscape elements.	\$50,000 - \$150,000
District	Car Journey: Up to 15 minutes car travel	A district play space should be high quality and include unique features and landscaping. The quality and uniqueness of the play space could be significant as a regional play space, however, a district play space is generally smaller in size.	\$150,000 - \$300,000

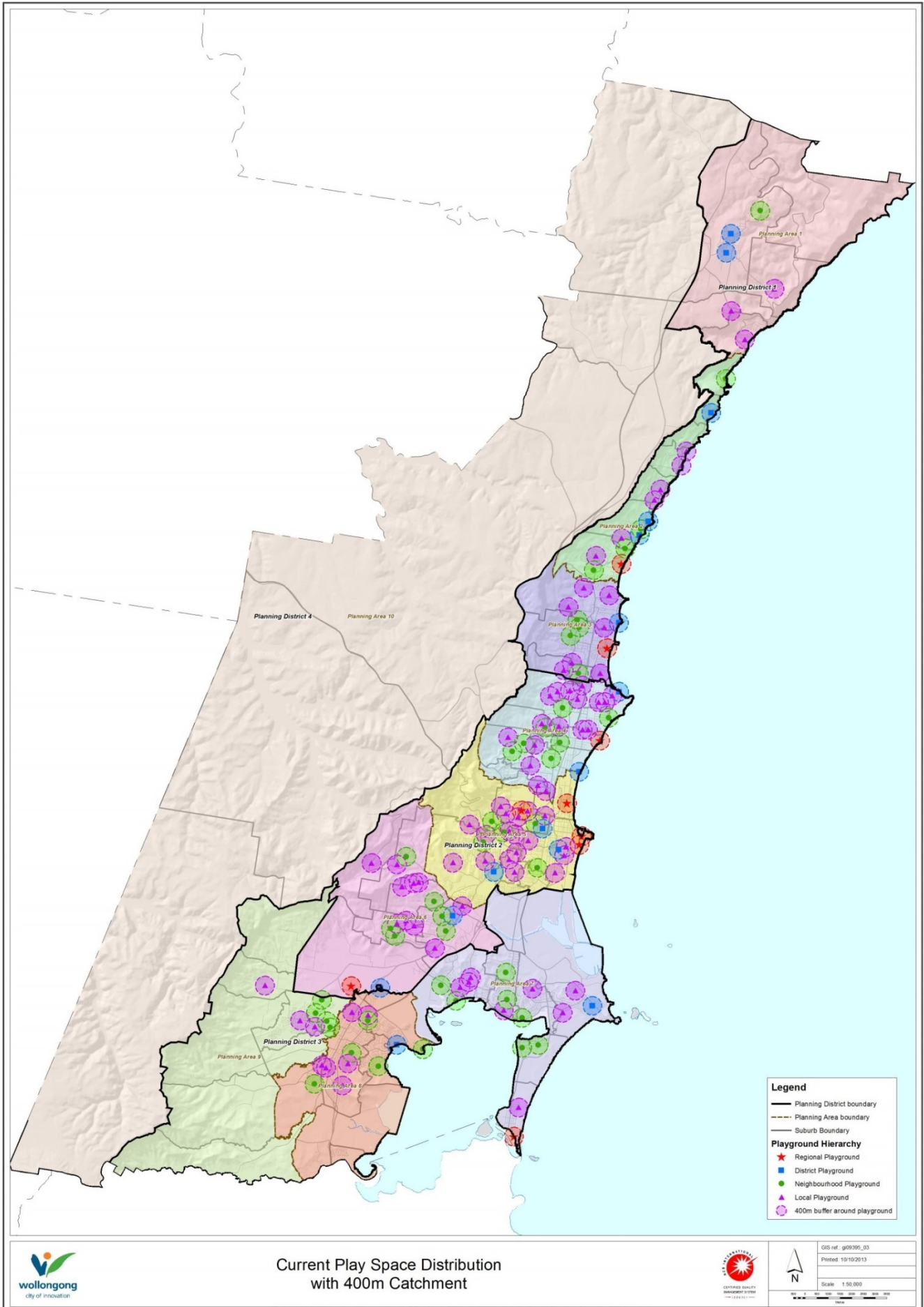
Regional	Destination: Up to 1 hour car travel	A regional play space should be substantial quality and will generally be larger than other play spaces. It will include unique and innovative features, and provide a range of equipment and activity opportunities. Features could include innovative equipment and design, adventure components, accessible design and equipment for children with a disability (ie catering for all levels of ability), fencing of some play areas to create unique enclosed areas, integrated landscaping and art features.	\$300,000 - \$600,000
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Within the LGA, the Local level play spaces make up the majority of the current play space provision and approximately 53% of the total Local level play spaces are located within Planning District 2.

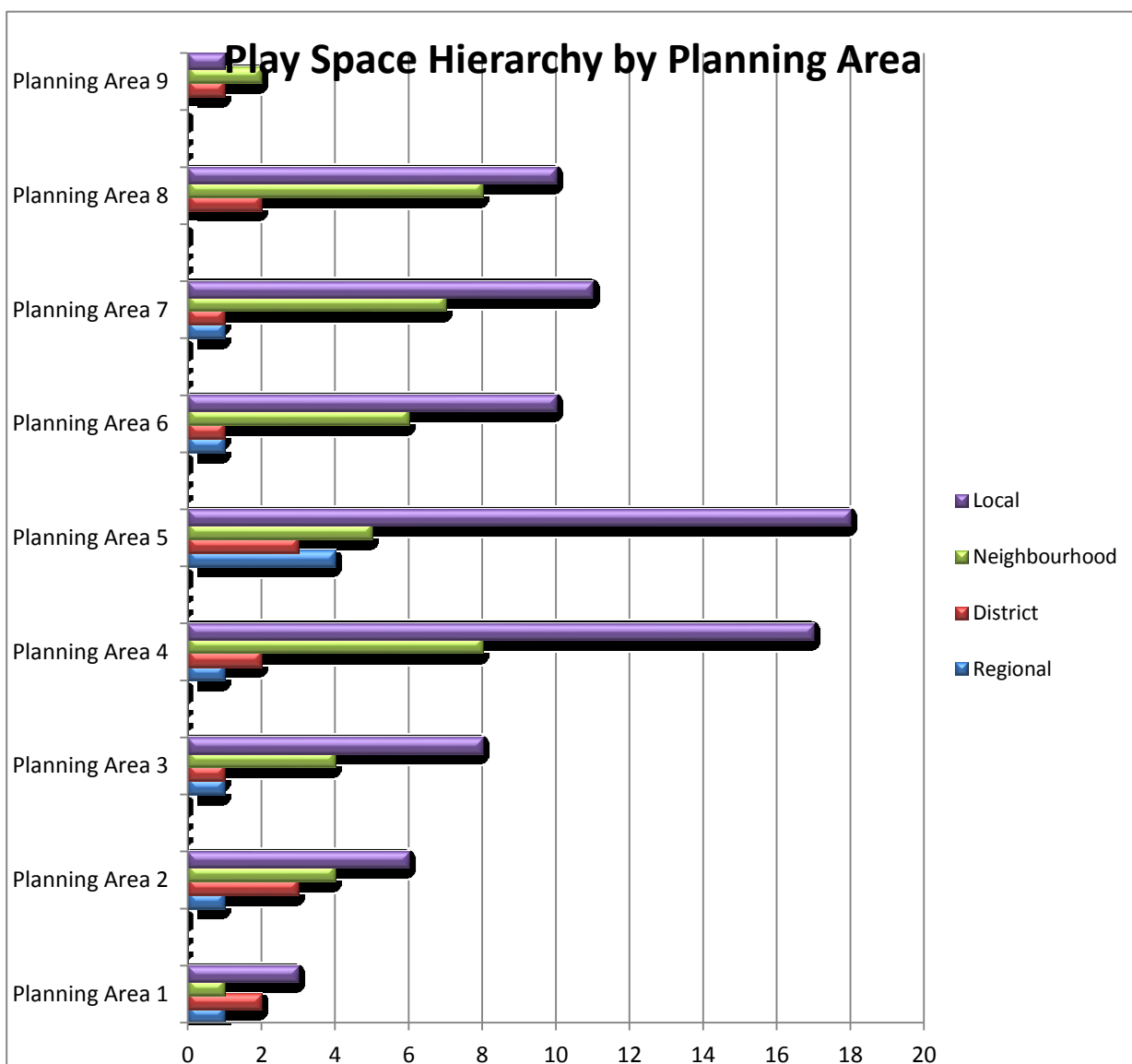
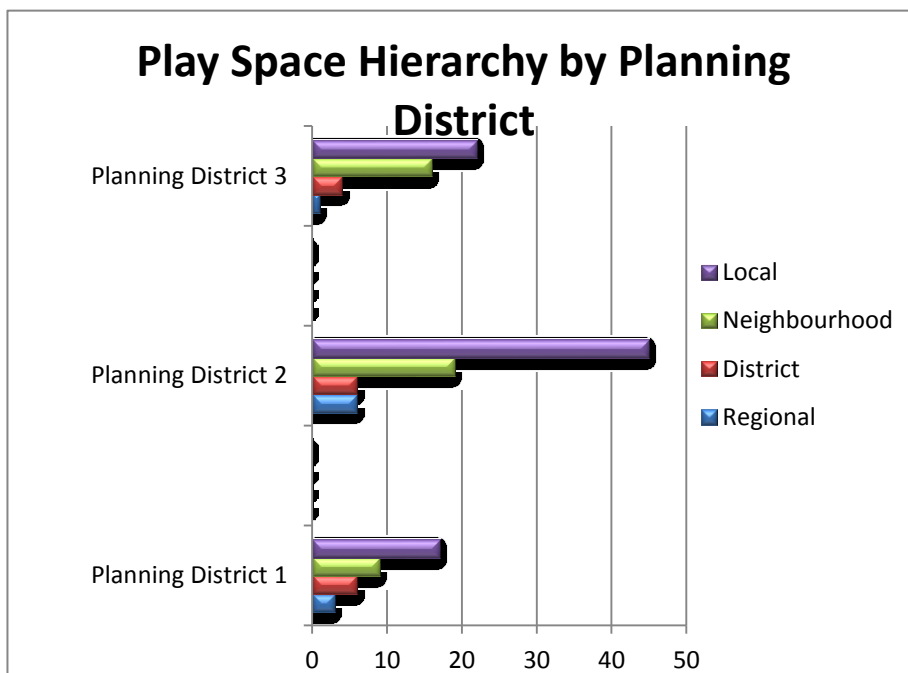
	Regional	District	Neighbourhood	Local
LGA	10	16	44	84
Planning District 1	3	6	9	17
Planning Area 1	1	2	1	3
Planning Area 2	1	3	4	6
Planning Area 3	1	1	4	8
Planning District 2	6	6	19	45
Planning Area 4	1	2	8	17
Planning Area 5	4	3	5	18
Planning Area 6	1	1	6	10
Planning District 3	1	4	16	22
Planning Area 7	1	1	7	11
Planning Area 8	0	2	8	10
Planning Area 9	0	1	2	1

A total of 54% of existing play spaces are Local level play spaces.





Current Play Space Distribution
with 400m Catchment



2.2 Condition

Since November 1996, Council has engaged Playfix to undertake independent play space inspections on all of Council's play spaces. The most recent Playfix audit was undertaken in June 2013.

The Playfix audits have highlighted that Wollongong's current play space supply meets the relevant Australian Standards (AS) applicable to the equipment's year of installation (ie AS are not retrospective). According to the last report received in June 2013 the total cost of repairs required are as follows:

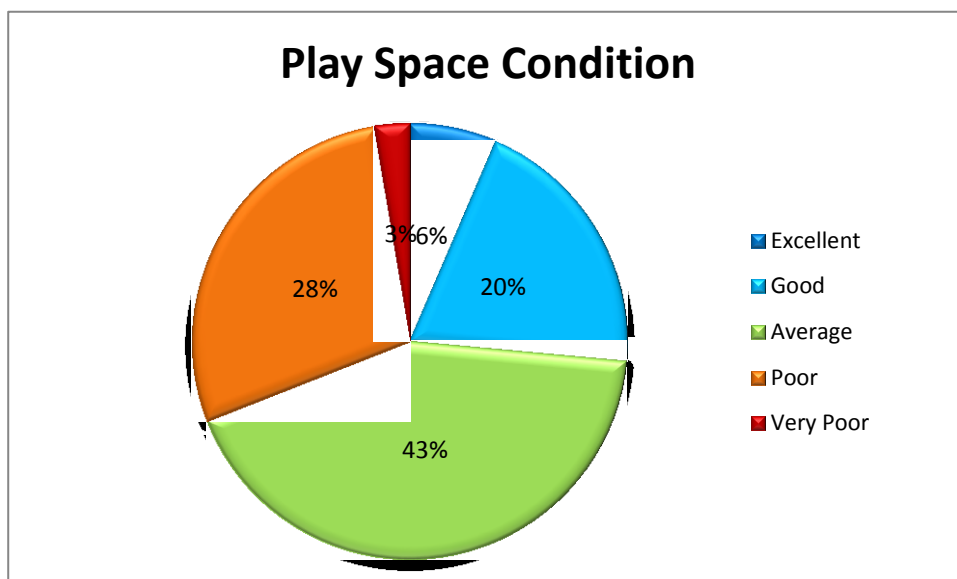
- Parts \$201,278.36
- Labour \$146,719.00 (based on Contractors undertaking all works)
- Total \$347,997.36

From the same report the cost to bring all of our play spaces up to the current Australian Standards is as follows (noting our current supply of play spaces remains compliant with the AS relevant to the date of installation):

- Parts 113,941.22
- Labour \$60,747.32
- Total \$174,688.54 (this is in addition to repair costs listed above, ie Total Cost = \$522,685.90)

In addition to the assessment of Wollongong's play spaces against the relevant AS, Council has identified the overall condition of play spaces based on the following reference sheet. This provides a condition rating for the entire play space, rather than a focus on individual play items.

PLAY SPACE CONDITION RATING REFERENCE SHEET		
<i>CONDITION RATING</i>	<i>LABEL</i>	<i>DEFINITION</i>
1	EXCELLENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As new condition • No signs of wear
2	GOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive play space • Showing some signs of wear • Minor graffiti
3	AVERAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obvious signs of fading • Wear marks obvious • Still quite functional • Some graffiti
4	POOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play space looks drab • High wear • Elements becoming non-functional • Refurbishment required
5	VERY POOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism/decay makes the play space too dangerous for children to visit • Close and remove



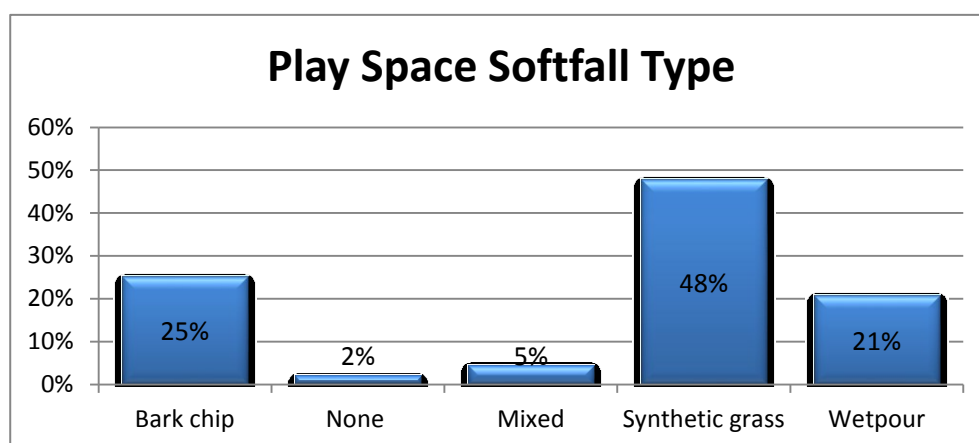
Play spaces that are in Condition 5 as per the Reference Sheet, should be closed and removed to protect public safety. There are currently four (4) play spaces considered to be of Condition 5 rating.

A total of 48 (30%) are in Condition 4 or 5 indicating that action needs to be considered within the next 2-3 years.

2.3 Surfacing

A total of three (3) play spaces do not have sofffall surfacing. Two of these are in Condition 5 and therefore require removal.

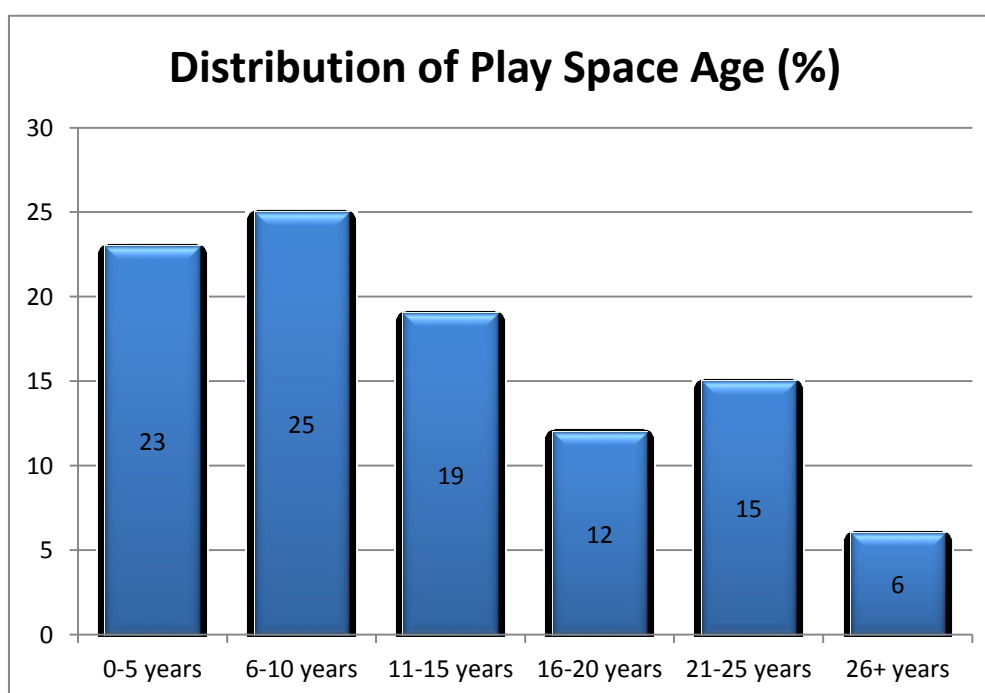
Rubber wetpour is considered to be the most effective sofffall available and Council is working towards ensuring all play spaces contain wetpour sofffall. Currently, 123 play spaces (79% of the total supply) require upgrading to wetpour sofffall.



2.4 Age of Equipment

More than half of Wollongong’s play spaces contain equipment that has reached, and in many cases exceeded, their maximum life span. A review of all existing play spaces undertaken in November 2013 indicates the average age of Wollongong’s play space equipment is 12 years. The mode age of equipment is 9 years, representing 24 play spaces. A total of 81 (52% of the total) play spaces are greater than 10 years old and 51 (33% of the total) play spaces are greater than 15 years old. The general lifespan of play equipment is accepted to be 10-15 years, however play spaces that are situated close to the coastline typically have a lifespan at the lower end of this.

Additionally, play equipment does not appear to be manufactured to the same quality as previous decades and as such, in the future Council will be confronted with equipment no longer experiencing a life span in excess of 15 years, as has been the case.



2.5 Play Value

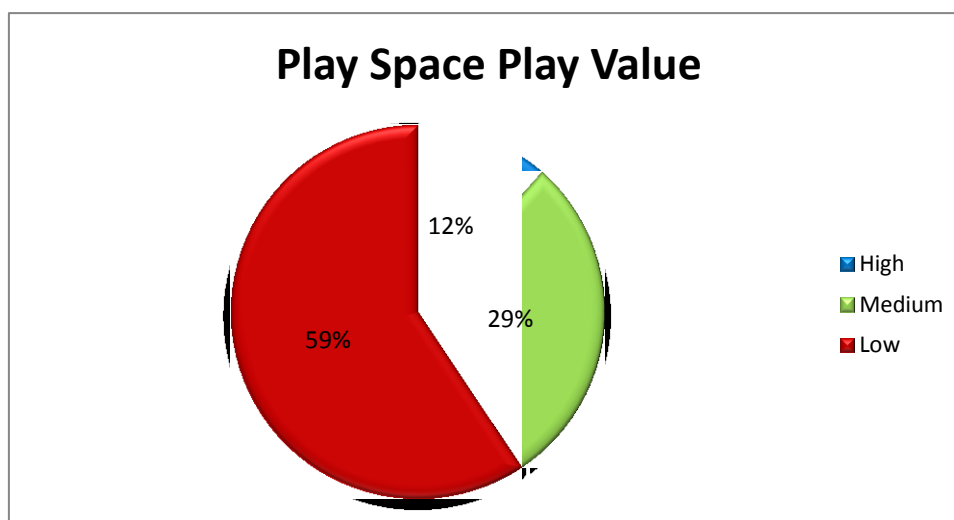
Over half of Wollongong’s play spaces (59%) are considered to be of low play value due to the type of equipment and limited experiences the equipment can facilitate (ie imagination, climbing, swinging etc).

The majority of play spaces feature a ‘combination unit’ which generally includes one or two slides, possibly some balancing apparatus and some climbing apparatus. There may also be a double swing and a few spring rockers. Some of the combination units feature a cubby house and some other equipment designed to encourage role plays or to encourage cognitive skills, features things such as steering wheels, tic tac toe, etc. Most parks have sufficient space for young people to kick a ball around or play running games.

Some notable gaps in the provision of play spaces in the City of Wollongong are:

- Lack of natural features (eg rocks, trees, logs, water, etc) in play spaces to encourage interaction with nature
- Lack of variety in the type of equipment provided in different parks
- Lack of opportunity for people of all abilities to access and utilise play equipment
- Lack of supporting amenities, eg seating, shade, paths, etc
- Lack of opportunity for creative and adventurous activities

An assessment of play value that is based on the number and variety of play experiences offered (eg climbing, swinging, spinning) from our existing play spaces identifies approximately 41% of our existing supply offers medium to high play value.



2.6 Review of Supply Characteristics

Key points indicated from the above graphs show:

- 59% of the play spaces are considered to be of LOW play value
- 12% of the play spaces are considered to be of HIGH play value

Of the 92 LOW play value play spaces:

- 78% (72) are Local level
- 92% (85) receive LOW usage
- 74% (82) are in average to very poor condition (ie condition ratings 3-5)
- 88% (81) are 9 years or older

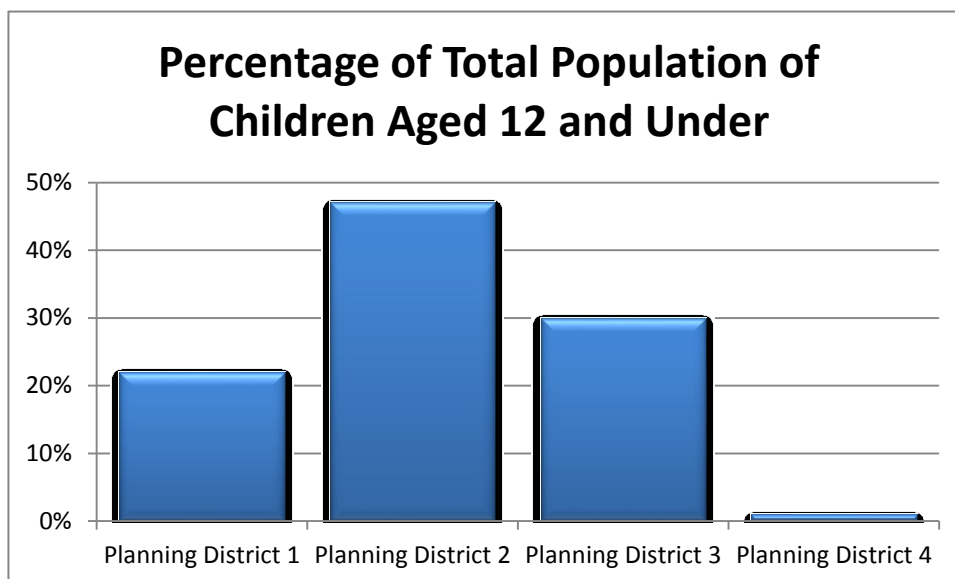
Of the 18 HIGH play value play spaces:

- 72% (13) are District or Regional level
- 83% (15) receive HIGH usage
- 61% (11) are in average to poor condition (ie condition ratings 3-4)
- 72% (13) are less than 9 years old

3 Our Key Community Considerations

3.1 Our Child Population

The total number of children aged 12 and under in the Wollongong local government area is 31,645. This represents a total of approximately 15.7% of the total population. The largest numbers of children aged 0-12 years is found within Planning District 2.



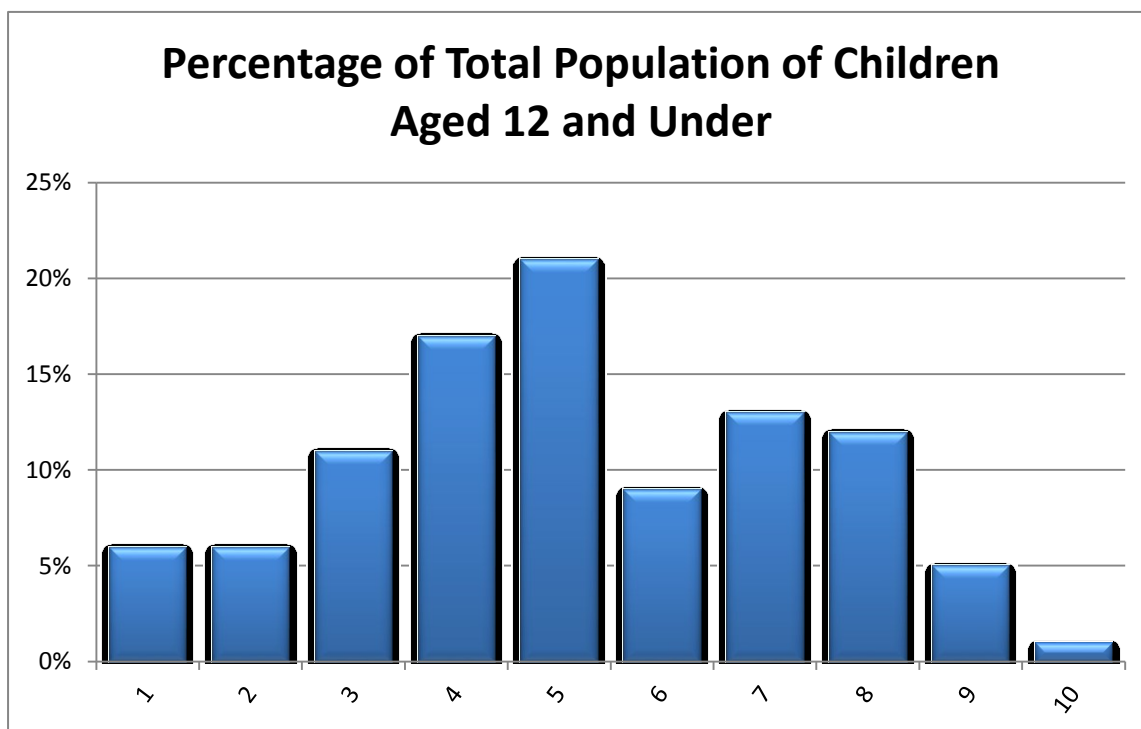
The following table identifies the number of children aged 0-12 years per suburb (as at 2011 ABS Census data), per Planning District and the percentage this amounts to in comparison to the total child population for Wollongong LGA.

Number of Children Aged 12 and Under Per Suburb				
<i>Suburb</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Planning District</i>	<i>District Total</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Children</i>
Austinmer	450	1	7,053	22%
Bulli	1,135			
Helensburgh - Otford	1,346			
Stanwell Park - Coalcliff - Stanwell Tops	403			
Thirroul	966			
Wombarra - Coledale - Scarborough - Clifton	492			
Woonona - Russell Vale	2,261			
Balgownie - Tarrawanna - Fernhill	1,292	2	14,856	47%
Bellambi	698			
Coniston - Mount Saint Thomas	684			
Cordeaux Heights - Mount Kembla - Kembla Heights	1,045			
Corrimal	971			
East Corrimal	489			
Fairy Meadow	1,029			
Farmborough Heights	807			
Figtree	1,942			
Gwynneville	371			
Keiraville - Mount Keira	678			
Mangerton	467			
Mount Ousley - Mount Pleasant	448			
North Wollongong	133			
Towradgi	461			
Unanderra - Kembla Grange	967			
West Wollongong	886			
Wollongong	1,488			
Berkeley	1,178	3	9474	30%
Cringila	393			
Dapto - Penrose - Brownsville	2,239			
Horsley	1,581			
Kanahooka	780			
Koonawarra	688			
Lake Heights	549			
Port Kembla - Spring Hill	676			
Warrawong	802			
Windang - Primbee	588			
Rural Balance	262			

The following table identifies the number of children aged 0-12 years per suburb (as at 2011 ABS Census data), per Planning Area and the percentage this amounts to in comparison to the total child population for Wollongong LGA.

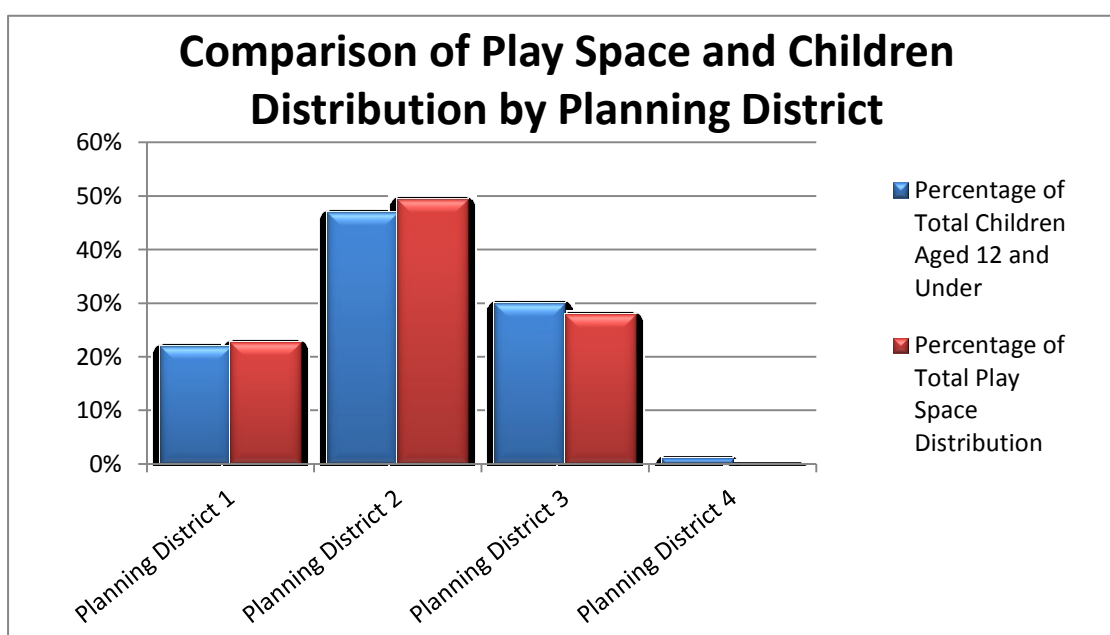
Number of Children Aged 12 and Under Per Suburb				
<i>Suburb</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Planning Area</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Percentage of Children</i>
Helensburgh - Otford	1,346	1	1,749	6%
Stanwell Park - Coalcliff - Stanwell Tops	403			
Austinmer	450	2	1,908	6%
Thirroul	966			
Wombarra - Coledale - Scarborough - Clifton	492			
Bulli	1,135	3	3,396	11%
Woonona - Russell Vale	2,261			
Balgownie - Tarrawanna - Fernhill	1,292	4	5,388	17%
Bellambi	698			
Corrimal	971			
East Corrimal	489			
Fairy Meadow	1,029			
Mount Ousley - Mount Pleasant	448			
Towradgi	461			
Coniston - Mount Saint Thomas	684			
Figtree	1,942			
Gwynneville	371			
Keiraville - Mount Keira	678	5	6,649	21%
Mangerton	467			
North Wollongong	133			
West Wollongong	886			
Wollongong	1,488			
Cordeaux Heights - Mount Kembla - Kembla Heights	1,045			
Farmborough Heights	807			
Unanderra - Kembla Grange	967			
Berkeley	1,178			
Cringila	393			
Lake Heights	549	7	4,186	13%
Port Kembla - Spring Hill	676			
Warrawong	802			
Windang - Primbee	588			
Dapto - Penrose - Brownsville	2,239			
Kanahooka	780			
Koonawarra	688			
Horsley	1,581	9	1,581	5%
Rural Balance	262	10	262	1%

As shown below, the largest numbers of children are located within Planning Area 5, followed by Planning Area 4 and Planning Area 7.

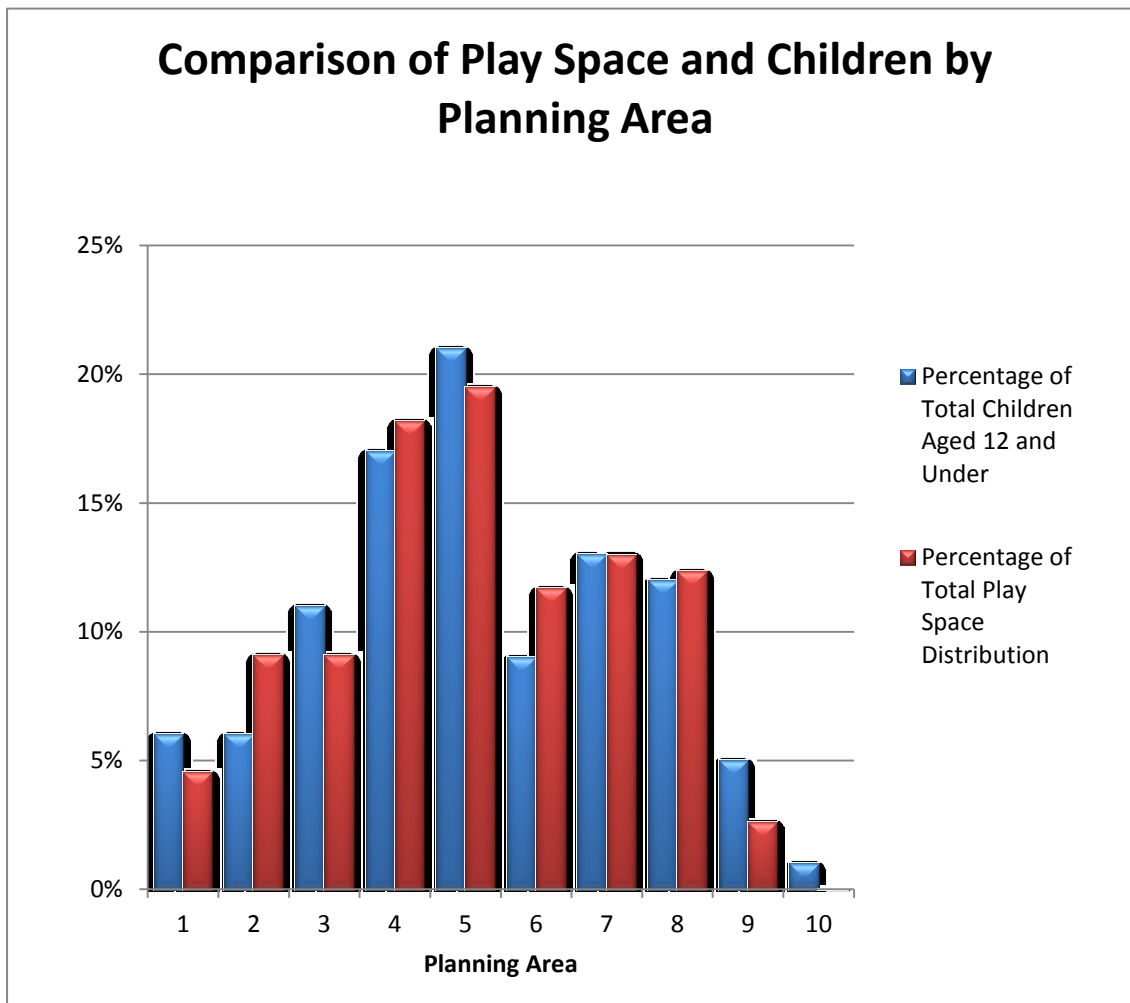


3.2 Play Space Provision against Child Population

A comparison of the existing supply of play spaces against the distribution of children across the 3 Planning Districts is depicted in the following graph.



This is further broken down to the Planning Area level in the below graph.



The above graph indicates the supply of play spaces in Planning Area 2, Planning Area 4 and Planning Area 6 as being greater than the percentage of the total children population in that area. This *may* mean that these Planning Areas can afford to have some of its play spaces rationalised to achieve an equitable spread.

It also shows that the supply of play spaces in Planning Area 1, Planning Area 3, Planning Area 5 and Planning Area 9 is less than the percentage of the total children population in that area. This *may* mean that these Planning Areas could do with additional play spaces to achieve an equitable spread.

3.3 The Australian Early Development Index

The Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is a population measure of how young children are developing in Australian communities. It measures five areas of early childhood development. These areas are closely linked to the predictors of adult health, education and social outcomes, and are:

- physical health and wellbeing;
- social competence;

- emotional maturity;
- language and cognitive skills (school-based); and
- communication skills and general knowledge.

The average AEDI for the Wollongong community is 14.6% for being vulnerable on one or more domains of AEDI. The following table identifies those Wollongong suburbs which experience a higher level of vulnerability on one or more domains of AEDI in comparison to the Wollongong community average.

Suburbs with % above Wollongong community average (14.6%) for vulnerable on one or more domains of AEDI	Planning Area
Otford	1
Stanwell Park	
Coalcliff	2
Woonona	3
Balgownie	4
Bellambi	
Corrimal	
East Corrimal	
Fairy Meadow	
Towradgi	5
Coniston	
Mount Saint Thomas	
Wollongong	7
Berkeley	
Cringila	
Lake Heights	
Port Kembla	
Primbee	
Warrawong	
Windang	8
Kanahooka	
Koonawarra	9
Penrose	

3.4 The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

The Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that ranks areas in Australia according to relative socio-economic advantage and disadvantage. The indexes are based on information from the five-yearly Census. Low Index rankings represent higher levels of social disadvantage.

The following table identifies the SEIFA index for each Wollongong suburb. The suburbs of Warrawong, Cringila and Bellambi currently experience the highest level of social disadvantage.

SEIFA by Suburb	
Suburb	NSW State Decile Index
Warrawong	751.8
Cringila	789.5
Bellambi	813.8
Koonawarra	848.4
Port Kembla - Spring Hill	872.4
Berkeley	882.4
Unanderra - Kembla Grange	885.1
Lake Heights	904.0
Windang - Primbee	925.4
Gwynneville	940.7
Fairy Meadow	949.7
Coniston - Mount Saint Thomas	953.2
Dapto - Penrose - Brownsville	956.9
Wollongong	965.4
East Corrimal	975.2
Corrimal	975.3
Towradgi	978.7
North Wollongong	990.0
West Wollongong	999.8
Balgownie - Tarrawanna - Fernhill	1001.8
Woonona - Russell Vale	1007.2
Kanahooka	1007.6
Mangerton	1015.1
Bulli	1024.5
Keiraville - Mount Keira	1040.9
Figtree	1046.9
Horsley	1048.7
Rural Balance	1052.2
Farmborough Heights	1057.7
Thirroul	1062.4
Helensburgh - Otford	1075.3
Wombarra - Coledale - Scarborough - Clifton	1078.0
Mount Ousley - Mount Pleasant	1085.7
Cordeaux Heights - Mount Kembla - Kembla Heights	1088.8
Austinmer	1095.7
Stanwell Park - Stanwell Tops - Coalcliff	1097.9

4 Our Financial Considerations

As of January 2014, the current replacement cost of our existing play space supply, is valued at \$12.3 million.

Hierarchy	Official Record CRC	Number of Sites	Replacement Cost*	Design Life (Yrs)
Regional	\$3,631,000	10	\$3,430,000	10
District	\$2,508,000	16	\$2,210,000	10
Neighbourhood	\$3,519,337	44	\$3,195,000	12
Local	\$3,335,430	82	\$3,247,000	15
Tourist Park	\$280,000	3	\$305,000	10
Grand Total	\$13,273,767	155	\$12,387,000	

*Revised CRC not official record.

This equates to an annual depreciation cost of \$973,000.