

Document Name	Document Version Number	Review Date
Playground Inspection and Maintenance Policy	1.0.1	April 2022
Date Adopted	Minute Number	Status
18 April 2018	4963	Revised

## Purpose

The objective of this document is to develop a Council policy that supports procedures for the inspection and maintenance of Council's playground facilities.

Council has recognised that incidents associated with playground equipment and facilities form a significant percentage of public liability claims received by councils within NSW.

Council must be aware of their legal responsibility in regard to maintaining and repairing playground facilities throughout the shire. Clearly, Council must have in place a system to inspect, schedule, action and report playground hazards and defects. In order to achieve this there needs to be commitment, resources and discipline from Council and its employees.

## Scope

This policy applies to playground equipment and facilities located in parks and gardens, recreation reserves (sporting grounds), swimming pools including stake parks, exercise equipment and walking tracks.

This policy does not apply to swimming pool facilities as a whole.

## Definitions

### Risk Management

The systematic application of management policies, procedures and practices to the tasks of identifying, analysing, assessing, treating and monitoring risks.

### Playgrounds

For the purpose of this policy, playgrounds incorporate the entire park in which it is situated, which includes other facilities such as fences, seating, lighting, bubblers, BBQs, landscaping, signage, irrigation systems, pathways and other structures within the park.

### Policy Content

Council's goal is to provide and maintain a high quality recreational playground facility, which is stimulating, challenging, safe and most importantly fun for children to use.

Playgrounds incorporate the entire park in which it is situated, which includes other facilities such as fences, seating, lighting, bubblers, landscaping, pathways and other structures within the park. Consideration should also be given to providing adequate facilities for people supervising play, and to the aesthetic appearance of play equipment and the playground as a whole.

Council will within its budgetary constraints, endeavour to provide a level of funding each year to meet the maintenance requirements documented in the procedures.

## Inspections

The inspection program identifies all the known risks associated with playgrounds and generally takes one of the following forms.

- Routine (visual) Inspections
- Proactive Periodic Scheduled Inspections
- Reactive Inspections

## Routine (visual) Inspections

Council will conduct routine (visual) inspections when undertaking general maintenance of parks and gardens such as mowing and watering at regular unscheduled intervals.

The routine visual inspection is required to identify obvious hazards that may result from vandalism, use or weather conditions (e.g. damaged parts, broken bottles, and loss of soft surfacing).

Any defaults identified as a result of these inspections should be reported using 'Daily Risk Hazard Inspection Form' and returned to Council's Risk Officer.

## Proactive Periodic Scheduled Inspection

Council conducts proactive inspections of all Playgrounds bi-annually and in accordance with Council's WHS and Insured Risk Management System.

Is a comprehensive inspection to establish, at specified intervals, the overall safety of the equipment, foundations and surfaces. This includes the structural integrity of items subject to the subtle effects of weather, corrosion and rotting. This inspection also assesses any change in the safety of the equipment resulting from repairs made, or added or replaced components.

All scheduled inspections will be documented in a manner consistent with this policy and Council procedures and for scheduled inspections the 'Playground Periodic Maintenance Checklist' should be used and recorded on Reflect.

Inspections will be carried out by a "competent person" and training commensurate to the level of responsibility and necessary skills will be arranged as appropriate.

**Reactive inspections** are undertaken based on complaints, requests and reports received via Council's Customer Action Request system.

## Wear Rating

Rating	Description	Action
1	<b>Very Good Condition</b>	Only normal maintenance required
2	<b>Minor Defects Only</b>	Minor repairs required of a cosmetic nature
3	<b>Significant Maintenance Required</b>	Significant maintenance required to return to acceptable level (10%-20% of the equipment)
4	<b>Requires Renewal</b>	Significant renewal/upgrade required (20%-40% of the equipment)
5	<b>Equipment Unserviceable</b>	Over 50% of the equipment requires replacement

## Controls and Response Times

The control of the risk exposure is a very specific issue. The type and style of control technique adopted will depend on the resources, facilities and expertise available to Council. There are two considerations to be taken into account when deciding on the control measures to be adopted being a) the type of control measure that should be adopted and b) the time in which to respond.

There are three basic control measures that are generally implemented by Council:

- To make the area safe by the erection of temporary barriers or barricades,
- To effect temporary repairs of the damaged area, and
- To effect replacement of the damaged area.

Risk Action Response Times are determined on the basis of priority and Council's ability to respond.

The following table sets out the basic set of response criteria.

Risk Rating	Control Type	Control Mechanism	Response Times
Low	Permanent	Consider whether action needs to be taken	3 Months (if parts and resources available)
Medium	Temporary	Programme if permanent repair not possible immediately	30 Days
Medium	Permanent	Programme if permanent repair not possible immediately	3 months
Make Safe	Temporary	Make safe /isolate to prevent access to damaged components	1 day
High	Temporary	Effect immediate Temporary Repair (programme for permanent repair)	within 7 Days (if parts and resources available)
High	Permanent	Effect immediate Permanent Repair	within 7 Days (if parts and resources available)
Extreme	Temporary	Immediate Action - DO NOT leave site until security of damaged component(s) is established.	Immediate
Extreme	Permanent	Consider removal of defective Component(s) or significant enhancement	7 Days

### Links to Policy

Nil

### Links to Procedure

Reflect Inspection Procedures

### Links to Forms

- Play Equipment Maintenance Checklist
- Daily Risk/Hazard Inspection Form
- Risk Management Action Plan (RMAP)

### References

- WHS and Insured Risk Management System.
- Statewide Mutual Best Practice Manual - Playgrounds

## **Responsibility**

### **Director of Engineering Services**

The Director of Engineering Services has the overall responsibility for the management playgrounds at Greater Hume Shire Council. He is required to authorise the inspection frequency, defect and intervention models to be adopted by his staff.

### **Manager Traffic & Infrastructure**

The Manager Traffic & Infrastructure is responsible for maintaining the Asset Schedule. They are also responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing inspection schedules, Playground classifications, hazard types and their severity and response times. They are also responsible for providing reports to responsible officers.

### **Manager Works**

The Manager Works is responsible for the preparation and implementation of the annual works program. They are also required to provide the necessary resources to enable the Manager Works to undertake works. The Manager is responsible for the scheduling of work and the allocation of resources to the activity. They are responsible for instructing staff on the method of work to be undertaken.

### **Operational Staff**

After receiving a works instruction from the Manager Works the operational staff is to carry out rectification work to an appropriate standard.

### **Parks & Gardens Staff**

Conduct Routine (Visual) Inspections and record defaults on 'Daily Risk Hazard Inspection Form'.

### **Inspectors**

The inspector is to carry out planned inspections as per the inspection calendar. They are also to conduct specific inspections following complaints or instruction from managers. The inspector shall be responsible for seeing that all inspections and defects identified on Reflect.

### **Risk Officer**

They are responsible for conducting specific inspections and reporting following an incident and recording and defaults from Routine (visual) inspections onto Risk Forms Register Risk Management Action Plan – Works for action.

### **Document Author**

Director Engineering

### **Relevant Legislation**

- AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines
- AS/NZS 4422:2016 – Playground surfacing: Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 – Playgrounds and playground equipment, Part 1: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.
- AS4685.1-6:2014 – Playground Equipment and Surfacing

### **Associated Records**

Nil