

# 1 Introduction



## 1.1 Background to this Study

Waverley Council adopted the Waverley Play Space Strategy 2014-2029 in November 2014. This 15-year strategy guides the ongoing development of the forty (40) play spaces in the Waverley LGA. The vision for play spaces includes principles and strategies to guide play space development, sets the hierarchy for play space provision, nominates a priority listing for play space upgrades, and provides an Action Plan to guide specific upgrades in identified play spaces.

The Play Space Strategy establishes that principles of universal design, accessibility, socially inclusive play and best practice design for play are all considered in the development of Council's play spaces. However, the Strategy and Action Plan lacks detail on how the principles of accessible and inclusive play are to be achieved in Waverley LGA. This lack of clarity led to approaches from the community requesting that Council integrate inclusive play principles into existing and future play spaces in the Waverley LGA. The community perceived that:

- > There was a lack of accessible play spaces in the Waverley LGA; and
- > That the Play Space Strategy did not adequately address inclusive play provision.

Council's open space network needs to respond to changing trends in the use of parks and play spaces, and ensure "best practice" planning and development of these spaces. There has been increasing interest in the concept of inclusive play spaces which has become recognised as a valuable design endeavour, adopted by most public play space providers in NSW and playground designers and equipment suppliers in Australia and internationally.

In response the Inclusive Play Space Study has been developed to provide a blueprint to direct the future provision, planning, design and development of public inclusive play spaces across the Waverley Local Government Area (LGA).

## 1.2 Purpose and Objectives of this Study

The key objectives of the Inclusive Play Space Study are to:

- > Provide strategic direction to Waverley Council regarding how existing play spaces in the LGA can be developed to provide a network of equitable, inclusive, accessible and engaging play spaces to meet the needs of a broader spectrum of residents and visitors including people with disabilities.
- > Develop Inclusive Play Space design principles that can be selectively applied to match the hierarchy of play spaces in the Waverley LGA (pocket, neighbourhood, district and regional play spaces);
- > Develop a planning and design tool in the form of an inclusive play space evaluation criteria checklist for each play space hierarchy (pocket, neighbourhood, district and regional play spaces);
- > Provide a supporting document to the adopted Waverley Play Space Strategy 2014-2029; and
- > Align Council Play Space Strategy with the NSW State Governments guidelines 'Everyone Can Play'.

## 1.3 Scope and Methodology

The scope of this Inclusive Play Space Study is to identify how play spaces within the Waverley LGA can be developed to be more inclusive.

The study primarily focuses on play spaces for which Waverley Council has ownership and/or management responsibility. Queens Park, which is managed by the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (CPMPT) has been included in the study's assessment of potential inclusive play spaces across the LGA.

It is anticipated that many of the play spaces in the LGA are able to be developed in accordance with the study's inclusive design principles. However, some play spaces will not be able to achieve the goal of inclusive play as they are inherently compromised by site factors such as being too steep for access (see Section 8 for details).

It is proposed to develop a greater level of inclusive play incrementally across the LGA. Fourteen (14) play spaces have been identified as highly suited for redevelopment as inclusive play spaces. These play spaces are well suited to applying the Inclusive Play Design Principles and were selected as they already display some inclusive features (e.g. an accessible path of travel, flat topography, sense of protection, or existing supportive facilities).

These play spaces provide an initial short to medium term focus for a higher level of inclusion. The intention is to provide a network of inclusive play spaces, providing residents and visitors with the choice to access a variety of inclusive play space experiences across the LGA.

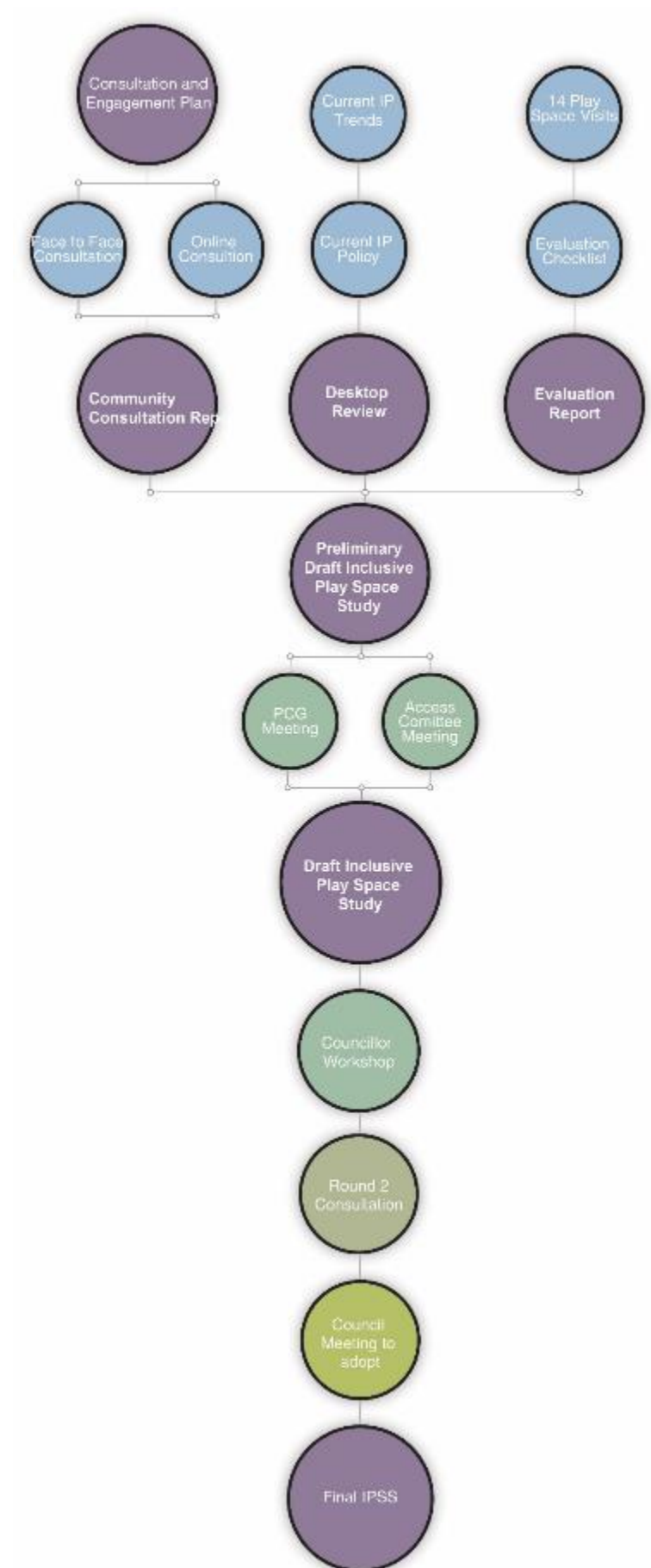
To inform the development of Design Principles and Action Plan recommendations for inclusive play, the following process was followed:

- > Community consultation: diverse community and stakeholder inputs identify inclusive play needs;
- > Assess current inclusive play space trends, policies and best practice principles, and establish implications to the Waverley LGA; and
- > Assess Waverley Council's play spaces, reviewing current inclusive play provision, distribution, and quality and provide an assessment on gaps and opportunities.

These assessments then identify:

- > Principles for inclusive play provision with reference to the current play space hierarchy and distribution; and
- > Opportunities for improving fourteen (14) targeted play spaces to improve their offer of inclusive play.

The process of preparing this study is shown in Figure 1.1 below.

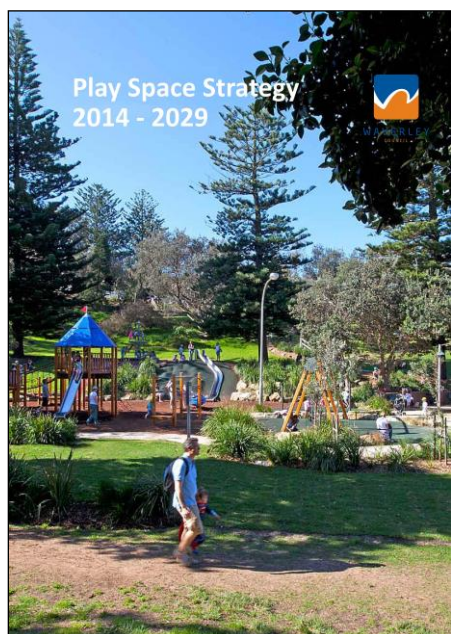


**Figure 1.1: Study Methodology**

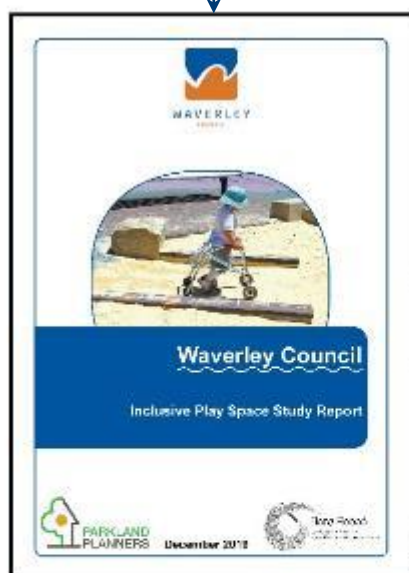
## 1.4 Document Structure and Hierarchy

This Study sits under and supports the adopted Play Space Strategy 2014 – 2029. Both documents will be referenced when planning and designing Waverley's play spaces.

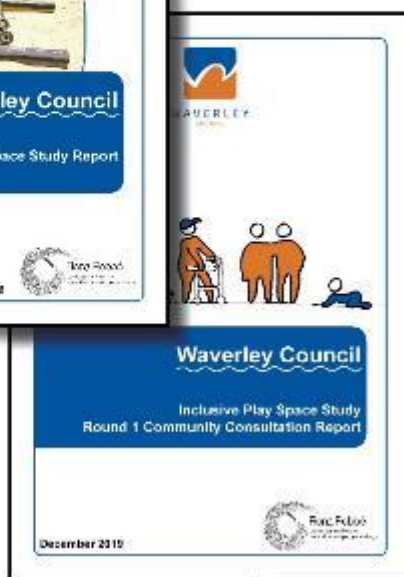
This Study comprises Volume 1 Waverley Inclusive Play Space Study, supported by Volume 2 Community Consultation Report, which summarises the community consultation process and findings that have underpinned the main Study.



**Play Space Strategy 2014 – 2029**



**The Inclusive Play Space Study**



**Community Consultation Report**



## 2 Inclusive Play Context



## KEY FINDINGS

Play is a human need and a child's right. An inclusive play space offers robust recreational and social opportunities for all people regardless of differences in abilities, age, culture or gender. An inclusive play space accommodates everyone allowing them to be included in the play experience, play socially, choose from a range of activities, and challenge themselves at their own level.

Providing public play spaces for children with and without disabilities to play together has been of interest in NSW, especially Sydney, since the 1980s. Existing inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA are located at Bondi Park and Queens Park, while numerous other play spaces exist in the LGA that offer some aspects of inclusive play, but do not meet enough criteria to be described as "inclusive".

The key population and density characteristics that will impact planning and play provision in Waverley are:

- > More residents;
- > Increasing density;
- > Lifestyle changes;
- > Ageing population;
- > Children;
- > People with a disability, additional needs or sickness; and
- > Tourists/visitors.

## 2.1 What is Inclusive Play?

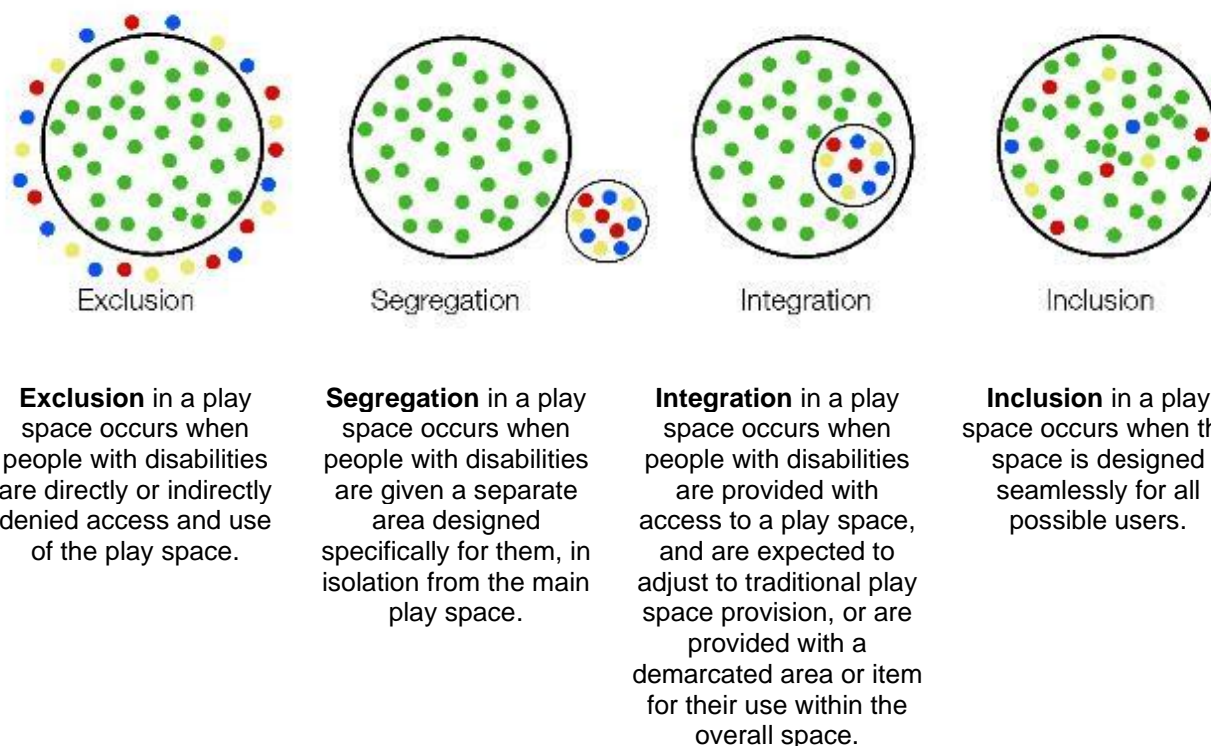
An **inclusive play space** offers robust recreational and social opportunities for all people regardless of differences in abilities, age, culture or gender. An inclusive play space accommodates everyone allowing them to be included in the play experience, play socially, choose from a range of activities, and challenge themselves at their own level.

An inclusive play space can't provide every experience for everyone, but should provide something that each person can access and enjoy.

Figure 2.1 offers a graphical representation of the principle of inclusion, as opposed to integration, segregation and exclusion. This diagram represents the various ways that people with disabilities are provided for in play spaces. Traditionally play space design has unintentionally excluded or segregated people with disabilities from play spaces and experiences. The best practice approach to play space design is inclusion.

For the purposes of this Study, "**inclusive play**" means the need of people to play throughout their life, irrespective of their age, ability or cultural background.

**Accessibility** is the ability for users of all capacities to access, use and enjoy play spaces and play equipment as required by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and relevant Australian Standards and Codes.



**Figure 2.1: The Principle of Inclusion**

## 2.2 Why Inclusive Play?

Play is a human need and a child's right, as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). We remain playful all of our lives, and for this reason, play spaces have a special role in the public realm: they are uniquely designed to welcome people to an environment where they can be active, social and have fun.

This positive experience needs to extend to people of all ages and cultures, including those with disabilities, infirmities, illnesses or additional needs, in order to provide equitable recreational facilities to all members of society. Inclusive design is often confused with designing for physical disability, however true inclusive design is much more than this<sup>1</sup>. Inclusive design principles are synonymous with Universal Design and encourage designers to consider how factors such as age, culture, gender, ethnicity and ability shape the way we interact with the world.

Capabilities are often thought of in binary terms – you can either see or you can't, you can either walk or you can't. In reality, sensory, cognitive and physical capabilities all sit on a spectrum. Without careful design some people on this spectrum are unintentionally excluded altogether, while a large portion are inconvenienced<sup>1</sup>. Designing for the portion of people on this spectrum who are typically excluded is often an effective way of ensuring the design is suitable for a much wider group of people.

## 2.3 Universal Design

What is Universal Design?

The design of all products and environments is to be usable by people of all ages and abilities, to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation (Centre for Universal Design, 1997).

<sup>1</sup> 'Designing for Diversity', Dan Jenkins, LinkedIn, 2019



The seven *Principles of Universal Design* were developed in 1997 by a working group of architects, product designers, engineers and environmental design researchers, led by Ronald Mace (Design Pioneer, internationally recognised Architect) in North Carolina State University. The seven principles are:

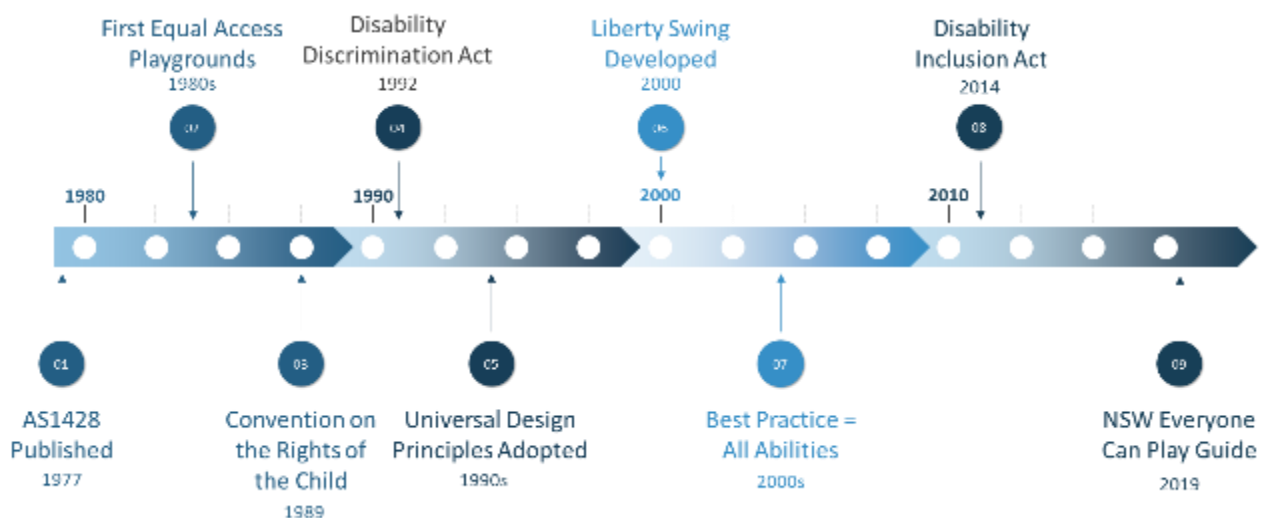
1. **Principle 1: Equitable Use**  
The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Principle 2: Flexibility in Use**  
The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use**  
Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
4. **Principle 4: Perceptible Information**  
The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. **Principle 5: Tolerance**  
The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Principle 6: Low Physical Effort**  
The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use**  
Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

When executed skilfully, universal design in play spaces is an ideology that applies to all design decisions from the broad to the detail. It requires constant vigilance on the part of designers to assess every decision throughout the process in relation to its impact on the final usability of the play space. The express goal is that the play space is usable to the widest range of people, and that every person can choose how they want to engage in the play space.

## 2.4 Inclusive Play Spaces in Sydney

Providing public play spaces for children with and without disabilities to play together has been of interest in NSW, especially Sydney, since the 1980s. One of the first dedicated public play spaces to be built was the Equal Access Playground in the Auburn Botanic Gardens (1980s). The play space's initial focus was on more accessible play, with ramps leading up to play platforms. A sensory garden was built in Yurong Street in the 1980s and provided a natural space full of sensory stimulation.

By the 2000s, Local and State Governments recognised that all abilities play spaces were the new best practice standard for Regional and District play spaces. Penrith, Sutherland, Waverley and Willoughby Councils, as well as Centennial Parklands and Sydney Olympic Park, provided leadership in this endeavour in the period of 2000-2010



**Figure 2.2: History of Inclusive Play in Sydney**

The genre has developed further in the 2010-2020 period in that the title has changed to inclusive play spaces, and the context of inclusive play has broadened to include people of a greater age range (0 to 80s+). The concept of Intergenerational Play was established (play between the generations) and Councils grappled with having more than one inclusive Regional play space in the LGA. More awareness of inclusive play needs saw a range of well-designed, off-the-shelf equipment also becoming available.

The advent of the NSW Everyone Can Play Guide 2019 has provided the first Government guidelines on inclusive play, along with Government grants to assist in the provision of public inclusive play provision. Simultaneously this period saw the requirement of Disability Inclusion Action Plans to be developed by NSW Government Departments, some government agencies, and all Local Councils under the Disability Inclusion Act 2014. Disability Inclusion Planning is about making a plan that outlines the intentions and actions that agencies will take to remove barriers in access, and to foster the promotion of the rights of people with disability<sup>2</sup>.

A summary of strategies and plans that Waverley Council has adopted to reflect the requirements of the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 can be found in Section 3.

## 2.5 Australia – Leading the Way on Inclusive Play

There are a number of countries and governments globally which show commitment to inclusive play provision, including America, Hong Kong and New Zealand. The approach to inclusive play provision in Australia shows leadership and a commitment to 'best practice' design principles.

What makes Australia unique is that the inclusive play environment is approached holistically, and is seen as an integrated setting for play.

By 'integrated', the following points of difference are significant:

<b>Australian Provision: Inclusive Play Spaces</b>	<b>International Provision: Inclusive Play Spaces</b>
All people are considered as the user group.	Children are usually the main user group.
A natural setting is included throughout the play space, with trees, shrubs, boulders and some natural surfaces.	Natural settings are less common in play spaces with the emphasis being on equipment.
The social aspect of inclusive play is emphasised in design, i.e. gathering spaces, furniture, BBQs, toilet provision and carparking.	Social design is considered but is less prevalent in the design solutions.
Different play types are offered individually in well-defined 'pods' of space.	Different play types are offered together on large integrated structures with ramps, along with separate individual ground level challenges.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Disability Inclusion Action Plans', NSW Government Communities and Justice, Online, 2019

# 3 Strategic Planning Framework



## KEY FINDINGS

The Inclusive Play Space Study sits within a broad context of reports, Acts, guidelines, Standards, notes, studies, projects, plans and strategies. The findings and recommendations from these documents have been endorsed by Waverley LGA, and will be further solidified in this Study.

Australia has shown a commitment to inclusive play provision, and leadership in best practice design principles. This Study will further this leadership by outlining best practice inclusive design principles.

## 3.1 Planning Context

This study sits within a broad policy framework that includes international treaties, national Acts and Standards, state Guidelines, Acts and Plans – all of which pertain to Waverley Council. In addition, there are Plans, Strategies and other documents adopted by Waverley Council which all influence the context of inclusive play provision in the LGA. Figure 3.1 shows the key Waverley Council Planning and Policy documents relating to Waverley play spaces.



**Figure 3.1: Waverley Council Policy Context**

**Table 3.1: Broad Strategic Framework**

	LEGISLATION	STRATEGIC/ LAND USE PLANNING	OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	CHILDREN	PLAY	INCLUSION / DISABILITY	TRANSPORT / ACCESS
INTERNATIONAL				United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989		United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006	
						Hong Kong Playright – <i>Inclusive Play Space Guide 2018</i>  Playworld – <i>Inclusive Play Design Guide 2008</i>	USA Access Board A <i>Summary of Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas 2007</i>
NATIONAL	Disability Discrimination Act 1992				Australian Standards for Play Spaces 2017	Australian National Disability Strategy 2010-2020	Australian Human Rights Commission <i>Advisory Note on streetscape, public outdoor areas, fixtures, fittings and furniture 2013</i>  Australian Standards for Access
					Sport and Recreation Victoria – <i>Good Play Space Guide 2011</i>  Accessible Inclusive Playgrou	Sport and Recreation Victoria – <i>Design for Everyone Guide 2017</i>	
INTERSTATE							



	LEGISLATION	STRATEGIC/ LAND USE PLANNING	OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	CHILDREN	PLAY	INCLUSION / DISABILITY	TRANSPORT / ACCESS
	nds in the ACT						
NSW	NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014  Local Government Act 1993  Crown Land Management Act 2016  Environmenta l Planning and Assessment Act 1979  SEPP (Infrastructure ) 2007		Greener Places  Draft Open Space for Recreation Guidelines	NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016	Everyone Can Play: A Guideline to Create Inclusive Play Spaces 2019	NSW Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2015-2019	
SYDNEY		A Metropolis of Three Cities: The Greater Sydney Regional Plan 2018	Sydney Green Grid 2019  Greater Sydney Outdoors Study 2019				
DISTRICT / REGIONAL		Eastern City District Plan 2018		Centennial Park Masterplan 2040  Moore Park Masterplan 2040  Moore Park South Masterplan 2020  Queens Park Masterplan 2005		Randwick and Waverley Disability Inclusion Framework and Action Plan 2017- 2021	

	LEGISLATION	STRATEGIC/ LAND USE PLANNING	OPEN SPACE / RECREATION	CHILDREN	PLAY	INCLUSION / DISABILITY	TRANSPORT / ACCESS
WAVERLEY		Draft Waverley Local Strategic Planning Statement  Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018- 2029	Waverley Recreation Needs Study 2008 /  Draft Waverley Council Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2019- 2029		Waverley Council Play Space Strategy 2014- 2029	Waverley Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021  DIAP Planning Consultation Report 2014-2029	Waverley People, Movement and Places Strategy 2017
		Waverley Local Environment al Plan 2012  Waverley Developmen t Control Plan 2012			Waverley Inclusive Play Space Strategy 2014- 2029		
	Landscape Concept/ Master Plans  e.g. Marks Park, Clarke Reserve	Plans of Managemen t	Strategic Asset Management Plans  Play space inspections	Play space upgrade and improvement schedule / Capital Works Program	Play Space Strategy – Site Audit Results 2014		
		Accessibility and Universal Access Reports  Bondi Park Bronte Park  Access Bondi Project					

Key messages from the strategic context review include:

- > There is no Act or policy which *requires* the provision of inclusive play spaces in the public realm. However, the Australian Playground Standards (AS4685) recommend that:
  - AS4685.0 (Forward) states that, "Provision should also be made to cater for the needs and interests of users of all abilities";
  - AS4685.1 (Preface) states that, "Designers and providers must note the importance of providing inclusive play and recreation settings for children and adults with disabilities";
  - AS4685.0 Clause 6.3.3 states that, "Design for access and inclusion – Playgrounds should be designed so that people with disabilities and those using mobility aids can enter the playground, participate in a choice of play activities, and use the amenities and facilities on site. Inclusive design makes it easier for all users including carers with prams, the elderly, children with wheeled toys, and staff and maintenance workers"; and
  - The Playground Standards are cross-referenced by Council's adopted Play Strategy.
- > Waverley Council has a responsibility under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to provide equitable access to public premises, spaces, programs and events (including play spaces);
- > The NSW State Government 'Greener Places' policy guides the planning, design and delivery of green infrastructure in NSW, with the aim to create a healthier, more liveable and sustainable urban environment by improving community access to recreation and exercise;
- > The NSW State Government 'Open Space for Recreation' Guide provides a framework to encourage improved planning of public open spaces for recreation, and offers detailed planning consideration for play spaces. Inclusive play is cross referenced to the Everyone Can Play Guide;
- > The NSW State Government 'Everyone Can Play' Guideline (2019) is advisory and provides guidance on inclusive play, but has no formal requirements or metrics on inclusive play provision. It encourages designers and Councils to ask three central questions to achieve inclusive play outcomes: Can I get there? Can I play? Can I stay?
- > Under the Local Government Act 1993, it is Waverley Council's responsibility to ensure the provision of play opportunities to accurately reflect the current and predicted community needs;
- > Waverley Council has adopted several strategies that offer a more intentional, action-based focus on play provision and inclusivity:
  - The Waverley Community Strategic Plan 2018-2029 (Together 3) outlines Council's commitment to ensuring a healthy environment and quality of life through a range of recreation and leisure opportunities;
  - The Waverley Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 outlines the intentions and actions that Waverley Council will take to remove barriers in access to facilities, amenities, parks and beaches, and to foster the promotion of the rights of people with disability;
  - The Draft Waverley Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 guides Council in managing open spaces for recreation, aligning with the vision that Waverley's parks and reserves are available to everyone, they support healthy and active lifestyles, and that they are welcoming, safe and well-cared for. The priority for future play space provision is on universal access and embracing diversity; and
  - The Waverley Play Space Strategy 2014-2029 describes how to deliver Council's vision for play spaces by means of a detailed action plan.

Inclusive play space provision is required by inference in many documents, such as the Disability Discrimination Act, whereby this form of play is required in order to meet the Duty of Care framework set up as a result of the Act or Policy document.

# 4 Waverley Demographic Context



## KEY FINDINGS

Predicted increases in the proportion of young people (5 to 24 years) and older people (over 75 years) in Waverley LGA indicates the need for an intergenerational approach to play space design. This is reinforced by the increasing number of older residents with a need for assistance, who would benefit from intergenerational equipment in play spaces.

A predominantly young workforce living in high density housing and with fewer cars require an equitable distribution of quality play spaces and diverse play experiences that can be accessed without a car.

The disability profile for Australian children is different to that of the greater population. Children are 2 – 3 times more likely to have an intellectual or sensory processing disorder than a physical restriction, and are also more likely to have co-morbid conditions along with a primary disability. Designing for children with disabilities means accounting for a whole spectrum of disability groups.

The relatively even distribution of carers in Waverley indicates a universal need for adequate supportive elements. Carers in Waverley would benefit from supportive features such as accessible paths, bathrooms, seating, and equipment.

## 4.1 The Waverley LGA

Waverley LGA is situated in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, 6 to 10 kilometres south-east of the Sydney Central Business District. At only 9km<sup>2</sup> in area, Waverley LGA is predominantly residential, with a significant commercial and retail area at Bondi Junction.

The regional Centennial and Queens Parks form Waverley's western boundary. World-renowned beaches at Bondi, Tamarama and Bronte form the eastern boundary.

Major roads linking Waverley to other areas include Old South Head Road, Bondi Road, and Bronte Road. The Eastern Suburbs rail line and public bus routes connect Waverley to the city and adjoining areas.

Waverley LGA includes all or part of the suburbs of Bondi, Bondi Beach, Bondi Junction, Bronte, Dover Heights, North Bondi, Queens Park, Rose Bay, Tamarama, Vaucluse and Waverley.

## 4.2 Population, Density and Demographics

A full analysis of the population, density and demographic profile of the Waverley LGA can be found in Appendix B. The key messages from this analysis are as follows.

### Population

An increasing population results in increasing pressure on existing play spaces, and demand for additional play spaces. Increases in the proportion of children and young people (5 to 24 years) and older people (over 75 years) indicates the need for an intergenerational approach to play spaces.

### Density

High population and housing densities mean comparatively low access to private or public open space. Adequate and equitable provision of public play spaces are necessary to fill this need. This is particularly important as population densities are set to increase further over the next ten years, especially in the existing high-density areas of Bondi and Bondi Beach.

### Population Characteristics

The Waverley community is made up predominantly of young workforce/parents aged 25 to 49 years, who mostly speak English, are very well educated, and earn above average incomes in white-collar occupations and industries. Residents in Waverley are more likely to live in smaller households, renting in medium to high-density areas, and to own fewer cars.



Play provision in the Waverley LGA should be suited to these characteristics, including accounting for the typical working hours of parents, and the proximity of residents to play spaces. This can be achieved by providing an equitable distribution of quality play spaces and diverse play experiences.

## 4.3 Disability and Carers in Waverley LGA

The profile of disability in Waverley LGA can be analysed with respect to disability type, need for assistance, and distribution of carers. Data for disability types specifically in Waverley LGA is not readily available, however census data can be used to examine the typical trends in disability types, hence giving an indicative picture of the disability profile in Waverley LGA. Data describing need for assistance and distribution of carers in Waverley LGA can be derived from census data.

### Disability in Australia

This section describes disability statistics in Australia derived from the 2016 census, specifically Section 4430.0 – Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings 2018 (ABS).

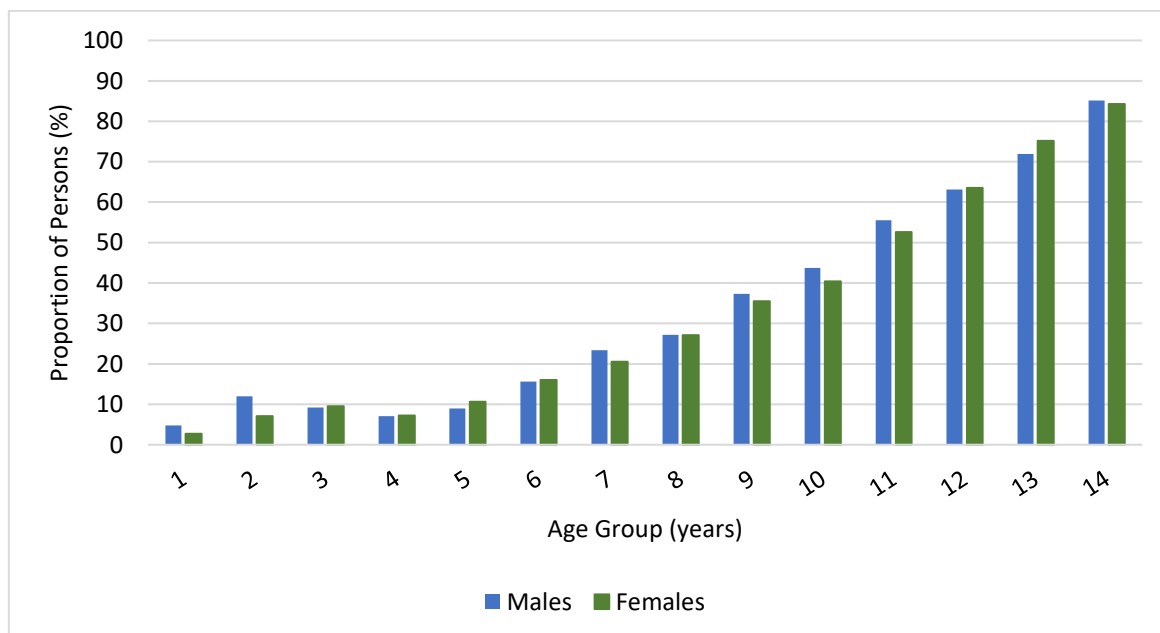
As of the 2016 census, there are 4.4 million Australians with a disability – representing 17.7% of the total population – where disability is defined in the census as “any limitation, restriction or impairment which restricts everyday activities and has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least six months”.

In the census, disabilities are broken down into six categories, being:

- > Head injury, stroke or acquired brain injury;
- > Intellectual;
- > Physical restriction;
- > Psychosocial;
- > Sensory and speech; and
- > Other.

Of the 4.4 million Australians with a disability, over three-quarters (76.8%) report a physical disorder as their main condition, while one-quarter (23.2%) report a mental or behavioural disorder as their main condition.

Disability is more prevalent with age, as shown in Figure 4.1, and so the overall data tends to be skewed towards older people – for example, the most common physical disorder is musculoskeletal, including arthritis and related disorders (most commonly seen in adults over the age of 65<sup>3</sup>).



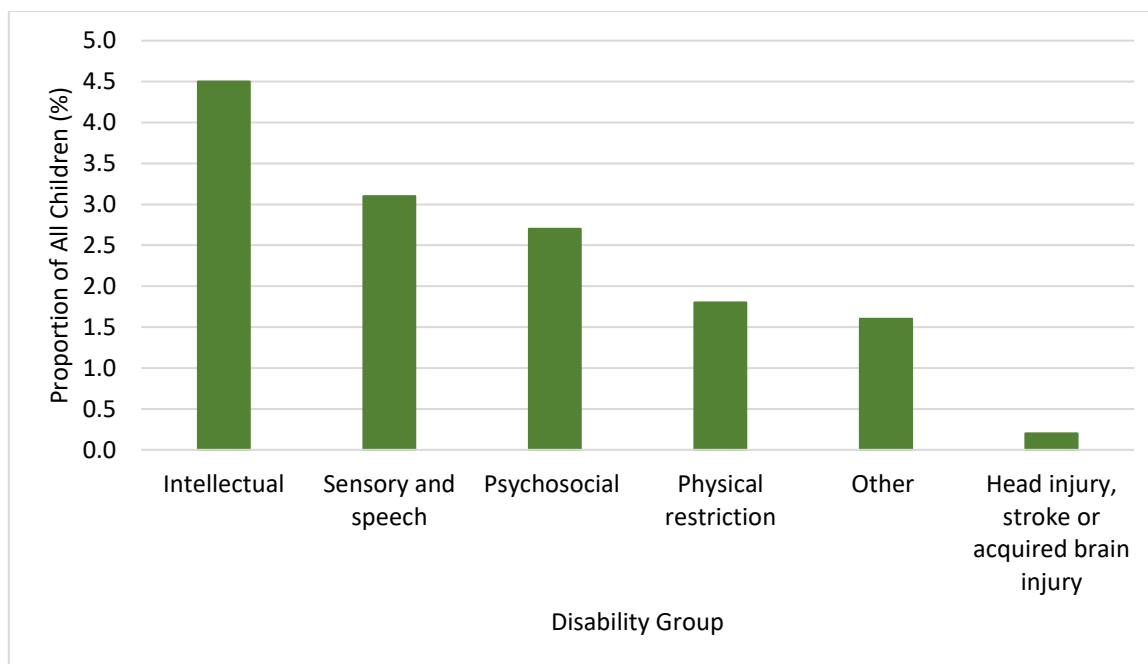
**Figure 4.1: Disability Prevalence by Age [ABS]**

<sup>3</sup> Arthritis, Healthline, 2017

Disability looks different for Australian children (i.e. aged under 15 years). 357,500 Australian children have a disability, representing 7.7% of the population, of which the most common disability type is intellectual (4.5% of children). The disability breakdown for Australian children is shown in Figure 4.2.

Understanding the differences in common disability types for children compared to the overall population is essential for inclusive play space provision and design. Understanding that children with a disability are 2 – 3 times more likely to have intellectual and sensory processing disorders (e.g. autism, ADHD), as opposed to physical restrictions (e.g. cerebral palsy) can be used to inform play space design.

The disability profile for children is typically more complex than the general population, as co-morbidity (i.e. the presence of additional conditions occurring with a primary condition) is more common in children than adults. For example, a child with autism may also have a vision impairment.



**Figure 4.2: Disability Breakdown for Children Under 15 years [ABS]**

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*The disability breakdown for children is vastly different to the greater Australian population. While the most common disability in the general population is a physical disorder, the most common disability amongst children is intellectual.*

*Children are more likely to have co-morbid conditions along with a primary disability, hence designing for children with disabilities means accounting for a whole spectrum of disability groups. This information is essential for inclusive play space design that meets the needs of the community.*

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### **Need for Assistance**

While need for assistance is lower in Waverley than Greater Sydney, the number of residents needing assistance has increased since 2011. In particular, the number of older residents aged 80+ requiring assistance has increased since 2011.

Play space design can assist those in need of assistance by providing opportunities for rehabilitative equipment and opportunities for movement and gentle exercise in a social environment.

### **Carers in Waverley LGA**

A relatively even distribution of unpaid carers across the LGA indicates a universal need for services and amenities, including public play spaces, to assist carers in providing quality care to those needing assistance in Waverley.

# 5 Waverley Play Space Context



## KEY FINDINGS

The hierarchy of play spaces in the Waverley LGA is being upwardly adjusted to accommodate the future population growth of the Waverley LGA, and also to improve distribution of play spaces.

There are 2 whole-heartedly inclusive District play spaces (fenced) in the Waverley LGA, with another 1 under construction. There are 8 whole-heartedly inclusive play spaces in the surrounding LGA's, although they are not all fenced. They are District and Regional in scale.

If Bondi Park play space is upgraded to Regional status, then, in overall terms, Regional inclusive play spaces are well distributed in the Eastern Suburbs. However, there are insufficient inclusive play spaces at the remaining hierarchy levels. It is notable that the Waverley LGA does not currently have many inclusive play spaces within walkable distances of 250m to 1 km of most residents.

It is the aim of this study to address how the provision of inclusive play can be equitably improved across the Waverley LGA.

## 5.1 Geographic Context

Waverley LGA is situated in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, 6 to 10 kilometres south-east of the Sydney Central Business District. At only 9km<sup>2</sup> in area, Waverley LGA is predominantly residential, with a significant commercial and retail area at Bondi Junction.

The regional Centennial and Queens Parks form Waverley's western boundary. World-renowned beaches at Bondi, Tamarama and Bronte, linked by the Eastern Beaches Coastal Walk and the Coastal Cliff Walk, form the eastern boundary.

Major roads linking Waverley to other areas include Old South Head Road, Bondi Road, and Bronte Road. The Eastern Suburbs rail line and public bus routes connect Waverley to the city and adjoining areas.

Waverley LGA includes all or part of the suburbs of Bondi, Bondi Beach, Bondi Junction, Bronte, Dover Heights, North Bondi, Queens Park, Rose Bay, Tamarama, Vaucluse and Waverley.

## 5.2 Demographic Context & Issues Influencing Planning for Play Provision

Changes in the Waverley population and its characteristics will influence inclusive play space provision in the Waverley LGA in the future as outlined below.

### 5.2.1 More Residents

Waverley's increasing resident population will result in more use and pressure on parks with inclusive play spaces, as this form of recreation is appealing to a broader user group. Hence even distribution of inclusive play spaces across the LGA is important.

The proportion of overseas born residents is also high, up to 30% of whom have arrived in the last ten years<sup>4</sup>. Well designed and high-quality play spaces support informal social interaction and community involvement, which is vital for new arrivals to a community.

### 5.2.2 Increasing Density

People living in higher density areas typically rely on public open spaces to provide areas for passive and active recreation. Public spaces in high density areas need to be multi-functional and adaptable to cater to the community's diverse recreation needs. Inclusive play spaces fulfil this need, and will therefore be critical to the liveability of higher density urban areas by supporting overall community wellbeing through physical activity, social interaction and having fun together.

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<sup>4</sup> Waverley Council Play Space Strategy, 2014-2029



### 5.2.3 Lifestyle changes

An increase in sedentary habits and scheduled lifestyles means that all residents need access to quality play spaces that encourage physical activity and socialisation. Inclusive play spaces achieve this for more members of the community than traditional play spaces.

### 5.2.4 Ageing Population

As the population ages, more people will require quality open space, including inclusive spaces, for exercise, socialisation, practice of balance, coordination and agility, having fun, and engaging in rehabilitation activities. It is expected that the percentage of adults aged 65-84 years will increase by 22% from 2016-2036, while the percentage of adults aged 85+ will increase by 43%<sup>5</sup>.

### 5.2.5 Children

It is expected that the percentage of children aged 5-19 in the LGA will increase by 2% from 2016-2036<sup>5</sup>, hence the pressure on play spaces will increase. Inclusive play spaces are important in this consideration as they deliver quality play experience to a broader range of children and young people (all ages and all abilities).

Australian children are falling behind compared to other countries on overall physical activity, largely due to low levels of incidental exercise. The Active Healthy Kids Australia – 2018 Report Card recommends creating environments to promote physical activity and limit sedentary behaviour throughout the course of the day<sup>6</sup>. This is particularly relevant in areas of high density living in the Waverley LGA, where private open space to play is not always available. Access to safe spaces for open-ended play is necessary for reaching the goals outlined in the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Early Years for physical activity during the day.

### 5.2.6 People with a Disability, Additional Needs or Sickness

The number of people with a disability, additional needs or dealing with sickness is increasing per capita, and hence the demand for well-designed inclusive play spaces is incrementally increasing as well. Currently 1 in 5 people have some form of disability in Waverley, and there are currently 37,000 people in the greater Eastern City District identified as having a disability.

### 5.2.7 Tourists/Visitors

Waverley LGA attracts tourists and visitors to its beaches, urban centres and natural attractions, placing additional pressure on play spaces. In 2018, 2.6 million visitors visited Bondi, of which 1.7 million were international visitors<sup>7</sup>. This accounts for 38% of all international visitors to NSW in 2018.

Inclusive play spaces are important in this consideration, as they are appealing to a broad age group, and provide a universal activity that crosses boundaries between language and culture.

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<sup>5</sup> 2019 NSW Population Predictions, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, 2019

<sup>6</sup> 'Muscular Fitness: It's Time for a Jump Start! – 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Young People' Active Healthy Kids Australia, 2018

<sup>7</sup> Bondi Tourism Precinct: Visitor Profile, Destination NSW 2019

## 5.3 Current Waverley Play Space Network

In Australia, play spaces are classified within a hierarchical framework. While there is no national or state policy document establishing the basis of the framework, there is universal agreement amongst Councils on the hierarchical system. The Waverley Play Space Strategy 2014-2029 groups play spaces according to a four-tier hierarchy of play provision, including Regional, District, Neighbourhood and Pocket play spaces. A fifth category is included for Special Use play spaces. The categories are defined as follows:

- > **Regional Play Space:** Large, generous scale, serves the whole LGA, people stay for a number of hours;
- > **District Play Space:** Medium size, serves a large district, people stay for up to two hours;
- > **Neighbourhood Play Space:** Small play space, serves local residents who will walk or drive for a short visit (up to an hour);
- > **Pocket Play Space:** Modest play space, serves local residents within walking distance, short stay visit (less than 1hr); and
- > **Special Use Play Space:** Unique play provision e.g. bike track or skate park, not replicated in other play spaces.

The hierarchical framework is a beneficial approach for the Inclusive Play Space Study, as the scale and complexity of inclusive play is proportional to the play space hierarchy and function. The larger the play space, the more inclusive play elements and experiences can be achieved.

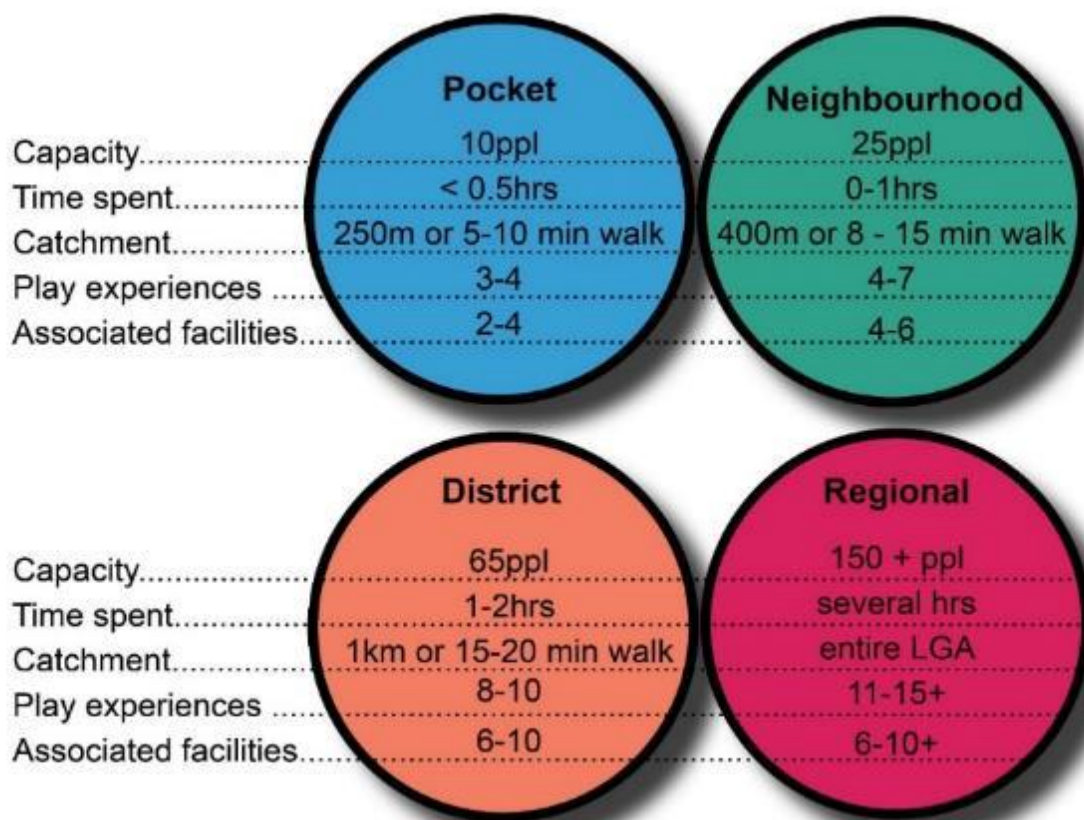


Figure 5.1: Play Space Hierarchy

## 5.4 Proposed Waverley Play Space Network

Figure 5.2 shows the proposed changes to the play space hierarchy in the Waverley LGA as outlined in the adopted Play Space Strategy 2014-2029. The new distribution will see the total number of play spaces increase by one new play space; with six hierarchy upgrades, for instance a pocket play space being enlarged to become a neighbourhood play space.

Regional, District and Neighbourhood play spaces will hence increase in number, in order to address existing and future population growth and demand for play spaces. The proposed changes improve the distribution of District play spaces, providing a play space within 1 km of most residents in the LGA.

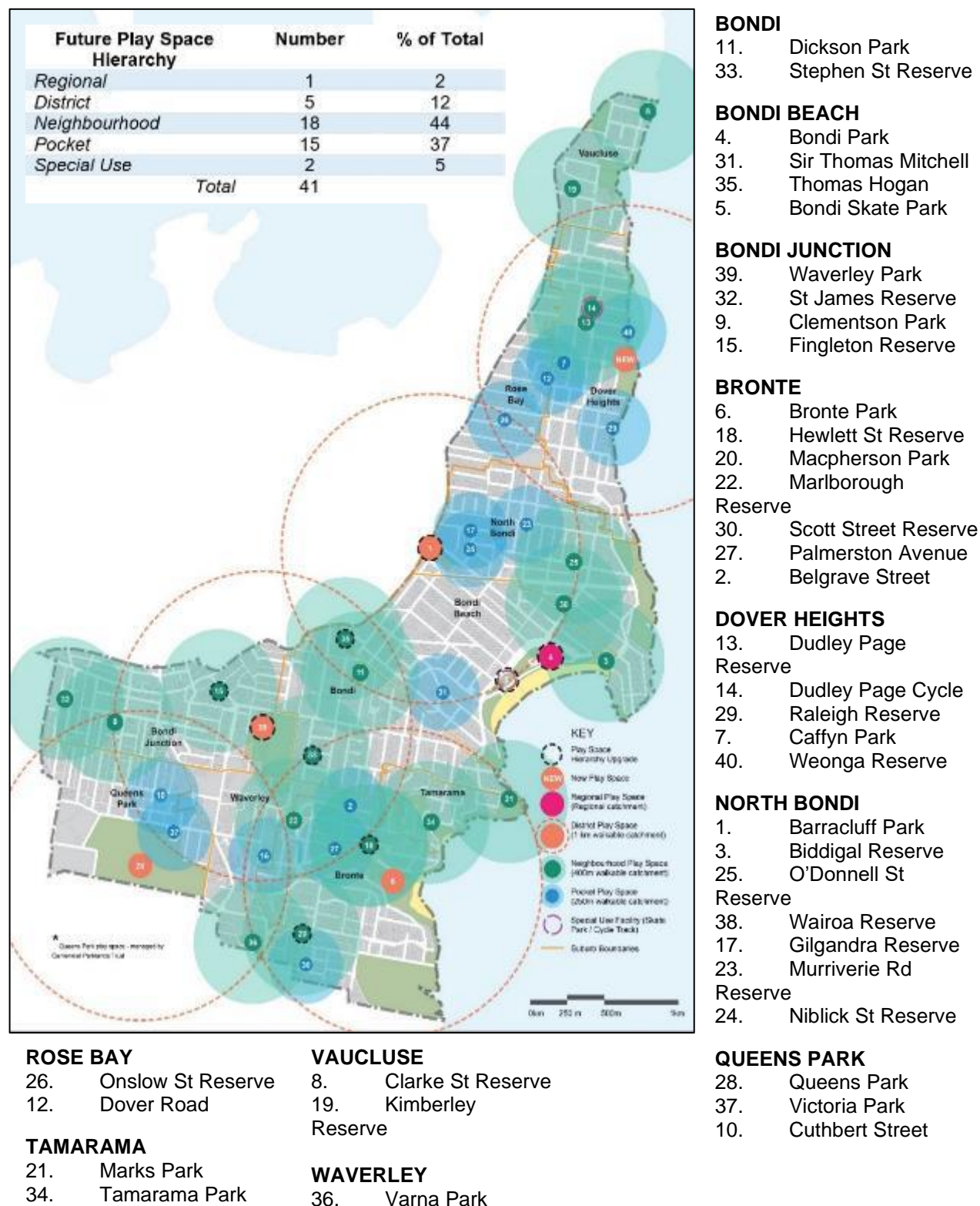


Figure 5.2: Proposed Play Space Network

## 5.5 Broader Context of Inclusive Play Spaces

There are currently 2 District level inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA (in Queens Park and Bondi Park). An additional District inclusive play space is under construction (Barracuff Park). There are additional play spaces which offer elements of inclusive play, but not whole-heartedly so.

The provision of inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA sits within a broader context of inclusive play in the Eastern Suburbs.

Figure 5.3 shows that Waverley LGA is flanked by:

- > Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Parklands;
- > Randwick City Council LGA;
- > Woollahra Municipal Council LGA; and
- > City of Sydney LGA.

Each of these jurisdictions have dedicated inclusive play spaces as follows:

- > Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust:
  - The Ian Potter Children’s Wild Play Garden (Regional);
  - Paddington Gates Playground (District); and
  - Queens Park Playground (District).
- > Randwick City Council:
  - Chifley Reserve Inclusive Playground (Regional).
- > Woollahra Municipal Council:
  - Parsley Bay Reserve Playground (District)\*; and
  - Holdsworth Street Playground (District)\*.
- > City of Sydney:
  - Sydney Park Playground (Regional)\*; and
  - Cook and Phillip Park (proposed) (Regional).

*\*Not fenced.*

Refer Figure 5.3 for location of inclusive playgrounds in the Eastern Suburbs.

Note that there are probably additional play spaces in the Eastern Suburbs which offer some aspect of inclusive play. The above list includes play spaces which are whole-heartedly designed for inclusive play and are identified as inclusive spaces.



**Figure 5.3: Surrounding Context of Inclusive Play**



## 5.6 Inclusive Play Spaces in the Waverley LGA

Existing inclusive play spaces in the Waverley LGA are located at Bondi Park and Queens Park.

These 2 District Level play spaces are inclusive as they are fenced, have shade structures, accessible paths up to and into the play spaces, thoughtful provision of seating, neutral grassed spaces, as well as varied play options. They are sensory-rich (e.g. offer sand play) and both provide some equipment suitable for children with disabilities.

There are numerous play spaces which offer some aspects of inclusive play in the LGA, but do not meet enough criteria to be described as “inclusive”.



**Figure 5.4: Bondi and Queens Park Play Spaces**