

## 61 PLAYGROUND MANAGEMENT POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Berrigan Shire Council is committed to managing its risks strategically and systematically in order to benefit the community and manage adverse effects to the Council.

Berrigan Shire Council recognizes that it has a duty of care to ensure the siting, construction and maintenance of all playgrounds under their care, control and management is carried out in a manner that is as safe and sustainable as possible for the users of the playgrounds.

This policy is based on the Best Practice Manual for Playgrounds (Version 1 – August, 2009) produced by Statewide Mutual. It outlines:

- The methodology the Council will use to determine new playgrounds;
- The methodology the Council will use to rate existing playgrounds;
- The risk mitigation measures required; and,
- Playground maintenance and inspection programs.

This policy defines:

“Playground” as *“an area designed for children’s play, including the site, natural features, built landscape and any manufactured equipment. It does not include sites and equipment intended for use in formal sport”*; and “playground equipment” as *“equipment including manufactured structures and impact absorbing surfacing.”*

#### 1.1.1. Purpose of the Policy

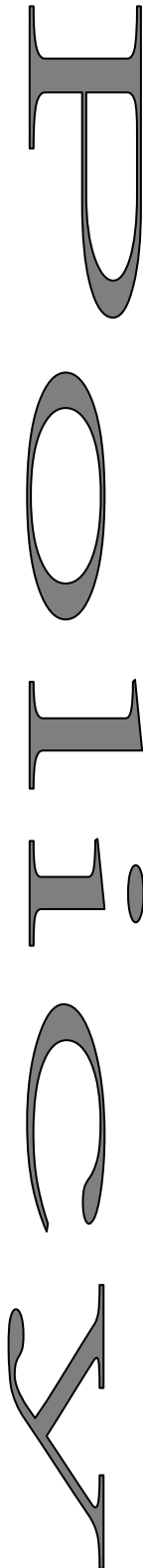
To clearly outline the methodology used when considering provision of a new playground, and measures necessary for the maintenance of existing playgrounds. This systematic process will determine, with regard to new playgrounds, the appropriate equipment with consideration of the need for the facilities, the suitability of the proposed site for the facility and Council’s capacity to suitably maintain the facility over its projected life; and with regards to existing playgrounds, determine the condition of existing playgrounds and develop a rating of that condition to support Council’s maintenance priorities.

#### 1.1.2. Legislative provisions

- Nil

#### 1.1.3. Other policy provisions & standards

- Statewide Mutual, Playgrounds Best Practice Manual, Version 3, August, 2012.



- AS/NZS ISO 31000:2009 – Risk management – Principles and guidelines
- AS/NZS 4422:1996 – Playground surfacing: Specifications, requirements and test method
- AS4685.1:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 1: General safety requirements and test methods
- AS4685.2:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 2: Particular safety requirements and test methods for swings.
- AS4685.3:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 3: Particular safety requirements and test methods for slides.
- AS4685.4:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 4: Particular safety requirements and test methods for runways.
- AS4685.5:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 5: Particular safety requirements and test methods for carousels.
- AS4685.6:2004 – Playground equipment, Part 6: Particular safety requirements and test methods for rocking equipment.
- AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 – Playgrounds and playground equipment, Part 1: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.

#### **1.1.4. Other relevant council documents and policies**

- Berrigan Shire Council Risk Management Policy
- Berrigan Shire Council Risk Management Framework

## **2. Determining New Playgrounds for Council**

Decisions to install new playgrounds can be based on a number of factors. However in deciding upon new playgrounds for the Berrigan Shire Council, Council will apply the risk management principles contained in the Statewide Mutual Best Practice Manual for Playgrounds.

### **2.1 *Determining the need for a playground***

The need for a playground will be determined with consideration of the demographics of the area, the target age group, current use of existing playgrounds, formal requests, logistics and the close proximity of other facilities.

### **2.2 *Appropriate playground type***

Council will consider the appropriate playground type with reference to the target age group and the proposed site.

### **2.3 *Ascertaining funding opportunities***

Funding of the playground will be in accordance with Council's strategic plan and any budget constraints. Any opportunities to obtain funding from other sources will be pursued.

### **2.4 *Identify the Risks associated with the Playground***

In conducting a risk assessment on the proposed playground, Council will consider the risks in accordance with the Risk Management Framework.

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### 3. Rating Existing Playgrounds

In determining the condition of existing playgrounds and developing a rating of that condition to support maintenance priorities, Council will apply the principles contained in the Statewide Mutual Best Practice Manual for Playgrounds. The Best Practice Manual describes the process as follow:

- a) Identify all Council playgrounds;
- b) Determine the level of development at the playground site including hazards located in the vicinity of the playground;
- c) Determine the number of people that use the playground;
- d) Determine the frequency of use of the playground including seasonal fluctuations;
- e) Calculate the facility risk rating;
- f) Select, arrange and install appropriate measures.

#### 3.1 Identify Facilities

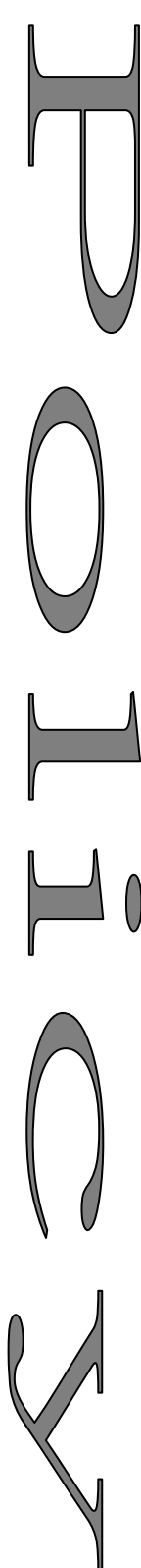
A full and detailed inventory of all playgrounds Council owns or operates and those that have been trusted to Council to care for and manage will be established.

#### 3.2 Level of Development/Adjacent Hazards

##### 3.2.1 Level of Development – Playground

The list of playgrounds should also contain the level of development or improvement that has taken place within the site, either by, or for Council. Development and improvement includes the infrastructure provided for use by the public such as the scale and scope of the playground equipment itself, and other facilities at the site that may add to the attractiveness for use, including tables, barbecue equipment, tennis courts, etc.

Rating	Development – Playground
0	No playground equipment
1	Site with basic playground equipment, no picnic facilities
2	Playground equipment for immediate local catchment only (the playground is generally located in a small neighbourhood park and is used by the residents nearby), few seats, no picnic facilities, minor landscaping.
3	Playground equipment for district use (the playground is generally used by residents of the local government area (Shire/City/Municipality) when using adjacent facilities for such things as sports for the local sports clubs and schools). Residents travel from other parts of the LGA to use the playground, and other adjacent facilities including sports field(s), leash free dog areas, some picnic tables and chairs, small toilet block. Locations that have a high degree of seasonality in their use.
4	Playground equipment for regional use (the playground generally attracts a wide range of users from beyond the boundaries of the Council area (e.g. in tourist areas, major





	sporting facilities and other large gatherings, or where the facility itself is the attraction)), football field, recreational ground, picnic facilities, amenities.
5	As for 4, but with highly sophisticated playground equipment and supporting infrastructure.

### 3.2.2 Natural/Drainage Hazards in the Vicinity

The list will identify the existence of any potentially hazardous natural or drainage-related features in the vicinity of the playground. These features may be natural features such as steep slopes, stepped ground, cliffs, creeks, etc, or constructed facilities that could be hazardous including water bodies/drainage structures within or about the playground.

Rating	Natural / Drainage Hazard
1	No hazardous features within 30m of playground equipment (direct line of sight, any form of hazard)
2	Hazardous features within 30m of playground equipment (may include steep sloping ground, walking track around reserve)
3	Hazardous features within 30m of playground equipment (may include open drainage facility that runs during wet weather, or drops less than 1 metre)
4	Hazardous features within 30m of playground equipment (may include open drainage facilities permanently holding water, or drop between 1 metre and 3 metres)
5	Hazardous features within 30m of playground equipment (may include open drainage facilities permanently holding water, or drop greater than 3 metres (cliff/lookout))

### 3.2.3 Road Hazards in the Vicinity

The list will reflect the presence of any road or other vehicular traffic paths in the vicinity of the playground, including accessways or car parks.

Rating	Road Hazard
1	No road within 30m of playground equipment (direct line of sight, any classification)
2	Road within 30m of playground equipment: <b>Local Access</b>  Urban Street with <200 vehicles per day (vpd) or Rural Road/Village Street with <20 vpd, or car park.
3	Road within 30m of playground equipment: <b>Collector</b>  Urban Street with 200 – 400 vpd or Rural Road/Village Street with 20 – 50 vpd.
4	Road within 30m of playground equipment: <b>Distributor</b>  Urban Street with 400 – 2000 vpd or Rural Road/Village Street with 50 – 100 vpd.
5	Road within 30m of playground equipment: <b>Sub Arterial</b>  Urban street with >2000 vpd or Rural Road/Village Street with >100 vpd.

## 3.3 Population Use



Population use evaluates the usage of the site where population refers to the average number of people that use the playground equipment at any given point in time during an organized or impromptu function, and includes those using the playground equipment, waiting in close proximity to use the equipment and those supervising in close proximity to the equipment.

Rating	Population Use for Playground Equipment
1	Less than 5 people at a time
2	5 to 20 people at a time
3	20 to 50 people at a time
4	50 to 100 people at a time
5	Greater than 100 people at a time

### 3.4 Frequency of Use

Frequency of use evaluates the number of times the playground is used by patrons. In some cases playgrounds may be used so infrequently that it is considered to be zero. At the other end of the scale, facilities may be used constantly by large numbers.

Rating	Frequency of Use
1	Playground rarely used
2	Playground used mainly on weekends
3	Playground used mainly on a daily basis
4	Playground in continuous use for the majority of the day

In the event that the playground use is highly variable throughout different seasons of the year (e.g. in tourist areas or for special events), the process for determining the most appropriate management of the site should be revisited before the season begins. If the new FRR requires a change in management, then these would be classified as temporary measures.

### 3.4 Facility Risk Rating

The Facility Risk Rating (FRR) provides a numerical value used in the decision making process to determine the most appropriate risk mitigation measures for the playground. The FRR is a calculation based on the data collected during the evaluation process. It includes the amount of development of the playground, the population use of the playground, the frequency of use of the playground, any natural or drainage hazards in proximity to the playground, and any road hazards in proximity to the playground.

<p><b>Facility Risk Rating =</b>  <b>[(Development x Population) + Frequency] + (Natural x Road Hazard Factors)</b></p>
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The value of the FRR is an indication of the risk that Council is exposed to related to the activities that occur in each playground and the hazardous

features that are in proximity of each playground. This value guides Council in deciding on the most appropriate risk mitigation measures to be provided for the playground. It also provides Council with a simple way of prioritizing the playgrounds for attention. The higher the FRR, the higher the need for attention.

### **3.5 Selection and Implementation of Appropriate Mitigation/Control Measures.**

After establishing the FRR, Council is now in a position to determine the most appropriate risk mitigation measures for the playground.

<b>FRR</b>	<b>General Measures</b>
<b>1 – 5</b>	Signage relevant to site, indicating importance of parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>6 – 13</b>	Signage relevant to site, depicting top rated hazard and information indicating importance of parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>14 – 20</b>	Provide a barrier between playground equipment and major hazard/screen hazard from playground equipment (type variable, may include dense vegetation or mounding) to increase distance between hazard and playground equipment to be greater than 30m; signage warning of the two highest rated hazards and information indicating importance of parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>21 - 28</b>	Densely planted barrier or partial fence separating playground equipment from major hazard/separating hazard from playground equipment to increase distance between hazard and playground equipment to be greater than 30m; signage warning of all hazards rated HIGH and information indicating importance of parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>29 – 26</b>	Fully fence to separate playground equipment from major hazard, including provision of gate(s); signage warning of all hazards rated HIGH and information indicating importance of parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>37 – 44</b>	Enclose area containing playground equipment and seating structures to create a family friendly area and separate playground equipment from hazard, including provision of gate (s); Signage warning of all hazards rated HIGH and recommending parental/carer supervision at all times.
<b>&gt;45</b>	Site is considered unsuitable for a playground structure – remove existing/do not construct new facility; In interim, provide signage warning of all hazards rated HIGH and recommending parental/carer supervision at all times.

## **4. Playground Inspection and Maintenance Program**

### **4.1 Inspections**

Berrigan Shire Council will undertake routine inspections of its playgrounds based on the recommendations outlined in AS/NZS 4486.1:1997, manufacturer instructions (where available), and local risk factors. The program of inspections will be undertaken at three levels, namely:

- **Routine visual inspections** – 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).

- **Operational inspections** – The operational inspection is a more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of the equipment, especially for any wear (e.g. components where wear could be expected such as bearings and moving joints).
- **Comprehensive inspection** – The comprehensive inspection is done 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.
- **Complaints/Incidents** – Following the receipt of a complaint through Council's Complaint and Suggestion system, or following notification of an incident, a comprehensive follow up inspection will be conducted, and if appropriate an Incident Investigation. This will include preparation of a report, photos and recommendations such as playground maintenance or removal.

All inspections will be documented in a manner consistent with this policy.

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.

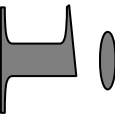
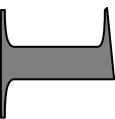
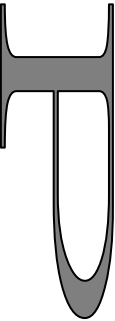
On occasions it may also be appropriate to carry out a comprehensive playground safety audit. This audit, which will be carried out by a competent person, will generally be undertaken when changes to the conditions of the playground occurs. These changes could include the introduction of new Standards or guidelines, and the alteration or construction of new equipment. The purpose of the safety audit is to identify non-conforming conditions, develop a systematic approach to removing dangerous equipment and to make repairs according to the hazard potential of each non-conforming condition.

#### **4.2 Maintenance**

Maintenance requirements will be determined through the inspection program, investigative procedures, and periodic playground safety audits.

Identified hazards will be assessed against the criteria outlined in the Council's risk management framework and corrective actions will be approved by the relevant supervisor in accordance with the available budget. Where maintenance works are undertaken the following principles will apply:

- Equipment assessed against the current standards and found to be non-compliant should be assessed for the safety implications of non-conformance and a priority set for the upgrade. If the non-compliance has serious safety implications, or the equipment is not



worth upgrading (e.g. because of the play value or cost of rectification), the Council should remove it.

- Alterations to part of a structure that could affect the essential safety of the equipment should only be carried out after consultation with the manufacturer. If the manufacturer cannot be contacted within a reasonable timeframe, a competent person (other than the manufacturer) should be used.
- If a piece of equipment is to be temporarily removed from the site (e.g. for maintenance) any anchorages or foundations left in the ground will be safeguarded and the site made safe.
- If a piece of equipment is to be permanently removed, any anchorages or foundations will be removed or otherwise made safe. Any equipment removed because it is hazardous should be disabled or destroyed to prevent its use as playground equipment elsewhere.
- All new equipment and works associated with the construction and installation of play equipment should comply with the requirements of the current Australian Standards.
- Care should be taken that repairs are not carried out in a manner which creates an additional hazard.

#### **4.3 Funding**

Funding for playgrounds will be specified in the Council's Annual Budget and the mitigation of playground hazards will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's risk management policy and framework, and the Facility Risk Rating. Consideration will be given to the capacity for the Council to carry out mitigation works within the context of the Council's overall risk management responsibilities and financial capability.

#### **5. Documentation**

AS/NZS 4486.1:1997 stipulates that it is necessary to maintain records that demonstrate that the procedures outlined in Clauses 9.5.2.1 to 9.5.2.6 have been followed. These procedures cover:

- Information to be recorded in the playground equipment register;
- Inspection records;
- Corrective actions;
- Maintenance procedures; and
- Incident reporting mechanisms.

Inspection checklists and records of corrective actions and maintenance procedures should be signed and dated as soon as practicable after the work has been completed.

In addition, documentation used in risk management processes leading to the assessment and remediation of playground hazards shall be filed in the Council's central filing system. These records are important for a number of reasons as they:

- Demonstrate to stakeholders that the process has been conducted properly;





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- Provide evidence of a systematic approach to risk identification and analysis;
  - Enable the review of decisions or processes;
  - Provide a record of risks;
  - Develop Council's knowledge database;
  - Provide an accountability mechanism and tool;
  - Facilitate continued monitoring and review;
  - Share and communicate information;
  - Provide an audit trail;

At a minimum all assessments should include:

- The assumptions made in the process;
- Who was involved;
- The decisions that were agreed; and
- The information sources on which the outcomes were based.

Where possible, digital images of the Council's playground facilities and potential hazards will be recorded.

All playground records should be permanently retained.

## **6. Monitoring and Review**

The Council will periodically and systematically assess the effectiveness of all safety measures used in the management of its playgrounds. If it is found necessary, these measures will be altered in a way that will maintain or improve safety.

(Adopted by Council 21/11/12)

