



## Accessible play guide

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## Overview

- SRV overview
- How the project was undertaken
- Key messages
- Consultation and findings
- Practical examples
- Questions and discussion



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## The project- Ben Bainbridge SRV

- This project is about play and its benefits.
- We want all children to experience the benefits of play, but some children are not able to participate as much as could be possible.
- The purpose of this project has been to identify how improvements can be made to improve participation by all children in play.



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## Victorian Government's vested interest in play spaces

The Victorian Government invests significant funding into promoting healthy and active lifestyle and in developing sport and recreation programs and infrastructure

- Go For Your Life Campaign
- Access for All Abilities Program
- PRAV Funding
- Community Facility Funding Program

Since 2000, the Victorian Government has contributed:

- over \$4.4 million funding
- 88 play space projects through CFFP
- support to providing accessible environments and opportunities demonstrates its vested interest into how play spaces are planned and constructed.

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## Example: Eco Park play space

Draws together many aspects of the environment that is important to the local community and provides accessible experiences for ages of all abilities. Theme: a frog's life cycle.





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## My experience Eco Park






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## The project in brief -Cathy Kiss PRAV

### Background

- a need for an industry agreed approach

### Purpose

- clarify what benefits and experiences are desirable and achievable
- consider constraints of providing for play and small to large play spaces."

### Management

- Steering Committee
- Reference group
  - Play space manufacturers and designers,
  - Associations representing children with a disability
  - parents with children with disabilities,
  - access consultant,
  - special schools
  - occupational therapists,
  - Local and State Government.

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## The project in brief

- The need for an industry wide understanding as to what is an accessible play space, and an industry wide approach
- Key target local government

- With the starting point of where the industry is now
- To provide a 'toolkit' to help making good decisions
- To give confidence and skills to make improvements and develop new play spaces
- With an understanding of design and management constraints: associated with public play spaces and local government
- With a view that access requires a diversity of approaches and that there is no one right way

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## Key messages

### Principles for provision of quality play spaces do not change

- Improvements will enhance participation opportunities for all children
- **Creative, high quality play spaces can be provided without major additional cost**

### Principles

- understand the needs an developmental progression of children and providing environments that reflect this
- not putting children at risk of injury by being in a setting that is well beyond their abilities
- providing challenge with acceptable risks, where children can socialise, do the same things, have family leisure opportunities
- non threatening spaces where children can explore and extend their skills:
- compliance with risk management practice and Standards, and
- not compromising play for all because of play for a few

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## The importance of play opportunities

- **enables children to develop to fulfil their individual potential**
- **there are a range of benefits to be derived from play**
- **social, intellectual, physical and emotional development, creative and imaginative play are an integral part of growth & learning**
- **that play assists development of future skills, and a positive experience for all ages**

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## Contents of the guide

### Participation, social play and interaction

- Being able to get into the play space, and where other children are
- Opportunities for play with other children
- Things they can do when the are there

### Physical play and movement

- Graded challenges
- Opportunities for mastery
- Risk and challenge
- Experiences such as rocking, spinning, swinging, sliding
- Elements to play with that are designed and located for different abilities

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## Contents cont'd

### Sensory Play

- Interesting and engaging alternatives to physical challenges
- Attention to sound, smell, texture, light – eg through the landscape

### Nature

- Importance of landscape features in the play space
- More experiences with nature
- Physical access into landscaped areas
- Use of plants and nature as play elements



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## Contents of the guide cont'd

### Other major items in the guide include:

- Ramps
- Fences
- Paths
- Getting to the play space
- Amenities



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## Consultation findings- Sally Jeavons

### Parents

- **Social inclusion.** Not feeling welcome, belonging or included
- **Physical accessibility:** to the park and in and around the space, - get underneath and within reach of activities
- **Features /things to do,** and design of those: appropriate, enjoyable things for learning
- **Lack of accessible support facilities;** toilets, change areas, seats, car parking, fencing
- **Facilities for parents and carers**
  - Inappropriate surfaces
  - Poor wayfinding

### Professionals

- **the play value** of spaces need to be addressed
- play needs to be made more accessible to provide children with **greater potential for learning and development**
- **lack of planning** and current **processes & funds**
- people do not know how to **design** accessible play spaces

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## What is an accessible play space

- "it must be seamless right from the car park to the top of the playground. ..."
- Support facilities **accessible change and toilets fencing**
- Everything is accessible for all, **no-one separated**
- Able to meet parents' needs: **they can watch, picnic or BBQ while watching the kids**
- It is **promoted.** People need to know about it in order to have a choice about going there
- **It all comes down to** good design for everyone
- It must be enticing: **the space needs to entice children to play and participate and experience enjoyment**
- "It does not mean that everyone can go everywhere but to just ensure participation"
- **They must be fun** Fun is an essential part of play – it is the power force that drives it

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## What is an accessible play space

"What should we call playgrounds that are accessible?"

Good playgrounds, even great when done well.

Other playgrounds, to the extent that they ignore accessibility issues should be seen as naive, incomplete, maybe even elitist"

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## Design principles

1. Social interaction and inclusion/ participation
2. Accessible path of travel
3. Suitable support facilities
4. Choice
5. Diversity of activities & experiences
6. Universal design
7. Graded challenges
8. Creative & sensory play
9. Access to nature
10. Privacy
11. Learning
12. Independence and way finding
13. Supervision
14. Sociocultural connections

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## Practical examples:

### Access into the park

Wheel out into the traffic first



Wheel directly into the park - options



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### Practical examples:

I can't get close / under



The surface is wheel able but I can't get under

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### Effectiveness?

I could use -this except for the surface



Why this swing if no accessible path of travel to get their?



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### The design not enabling me to reach, front on ..



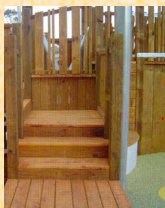
### This is good I can reach!



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### Design Issues- mary Jeavons

Choice:  
Easy stairs



Stairs not rungs to go up  
Accessible path of travel



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### Design Issues: ramps

Access for unintended users

Enhance play value of ramps  
Easy stairs up



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