

Playspace Strategy

Planning for Play in the Rural City of Murray Bridge

2017 - 2027



The Rural City of
**MURRAY
BRIDGE**



May 2017

Final Report

Preamble

The Rural City Council of Murray Bridge has commissioned a strategy to better understand the current and future use, design and management of playspaces across the City. This will assist Council in its day to day asset management of these important pieces of community infrastructure and will ensure a wide and varied range of opportunities are available for children of all ages and their families.

The report identifies current trends in playspace provision and provides Council with a framework to strategically guide the provision of playspace across the City in the coming years. It is a long term strategy based on areas of perceived importance and priority, but carries with it no financial obligation from Council or other identified stakeholders at this stage.

For further information regarding the project, its findings or recommendations, kindly contact:

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Section One: Introduction

1.1 Project Background

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is located approximately 80 km south east of the Adelaide CBD (Figure 1) with a population of approximately 20,971.¹ It was formed in 1977 by amalgamation of the District Council of Mobilong and the Corporation of Murray Bridge and has a land mass of 1832km² incorporating the areas of Callington, Jervois, Mypolonga, Wellington and Woods Point.

A prosperous growing region of primary and secondary industry the city is the centre of a major agricultural district with tourism also being a key economic driver for the region. An estimated 1.1 million people visit every year with the Murray River being a major destination for houseboat holiday makers as well as for a number of leisure water based activities.

Murray Bridge also has many on-land attractions including an open-range zoo and breeding ground for arid and grassland animals at Monarto Zoological Park as well as:

- Sturt Reserve
- River Cruises - Captain Proud, Murray Expedition, MV Barrangul
- Captain's Cottage Museum
- Golf Course
- Ten Pin Bowling
- Battle arena Laser Tag
- Cameo Cinema
- Speedway and Horse racing

Council also has 19 playspaces which predominantly cater to the local community although there is an opportunity to expand some of these to meet the growing needs of local and regional tourists. The purpose of this strategy therefore, is to identify current and future needs for play in the City and provide Council with a prioritised plan of action for the development of play areas, locations and asset management for the next 10 years.

¹ Source; <http://profile.id.com.au/murray-bridge>

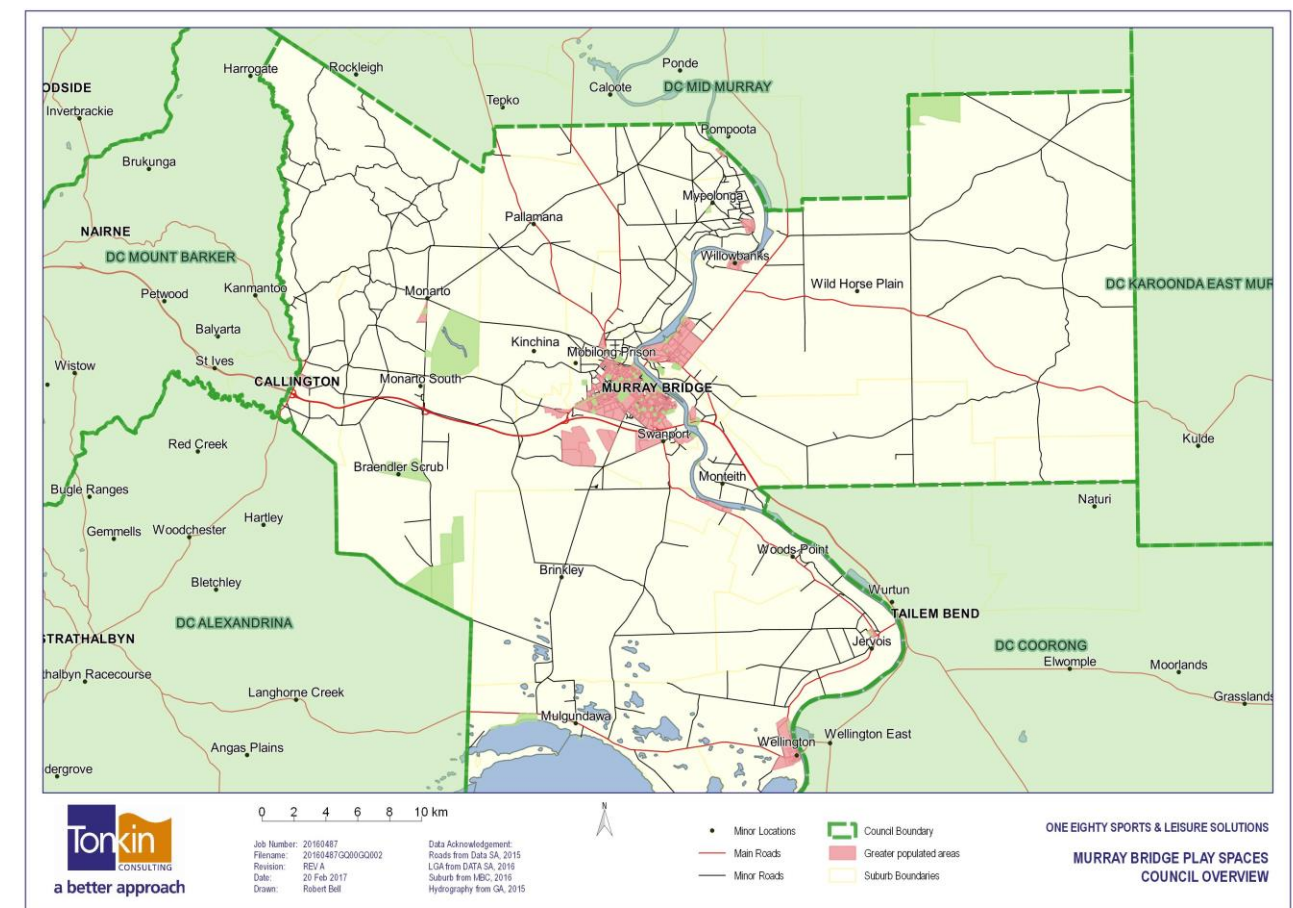


Figure 1: Location

1.2 Project Objectives

The strategy will provide Council with a better understanding of the current and likely future play needs of the Rural City of Murray Bridge. It provides a framework for the effective provision, management and development of play facilities within the Rural City and aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify the current and projected play needs of the Rural City of Murray Bridge residents and visitors
- Recommend approaches for Council in response to relevant play trends
- Provide a 10 year planned and costed approach for the future provision, management and development of play facilities that meet the future needs of residents
- Determine the role of Council and other stakeholders (e.g. local schools) with the provision of play facilities
- Determine a hierarchy of play provision and maintenance/ service provisions and
- Examining whether existing playspaces are surplus to the future needs of the community

1.3 Project Methodology

One Eighty Sport and Leisure Solutions (One Eighty) was contracted to undertake the study on behalf of council and proposed a three staged process to include a Review of playspaces, Research trends and existing supply and providing Recommendations to Council regarding future priorities (Figure 2)

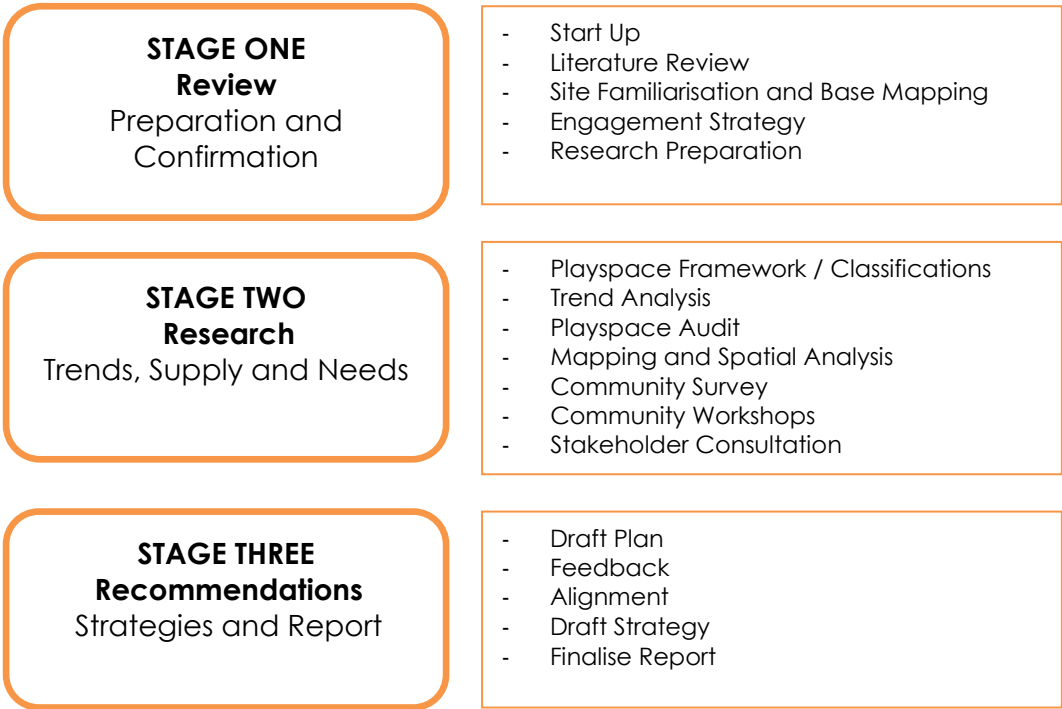


Figure 2: Project Staging

This report is a culmination of the above and is set out in a format that:

- Explains the benefits of play
- Discusses play theory and target age cohorts which will assist in designing and locating playspaces throughout the City
- Proposes a framework for current and future classifications including design elements
- highlights trends in planning for play
- Assesses the current 'state of play' in the Rural City of Murray Bridge
- summarises the communities thoughts and perceptions regarding play and
- Proposes a series of recommendations for current and future provision including prioritised works, actions and indicative budgets.

Section Two: Understanding Play

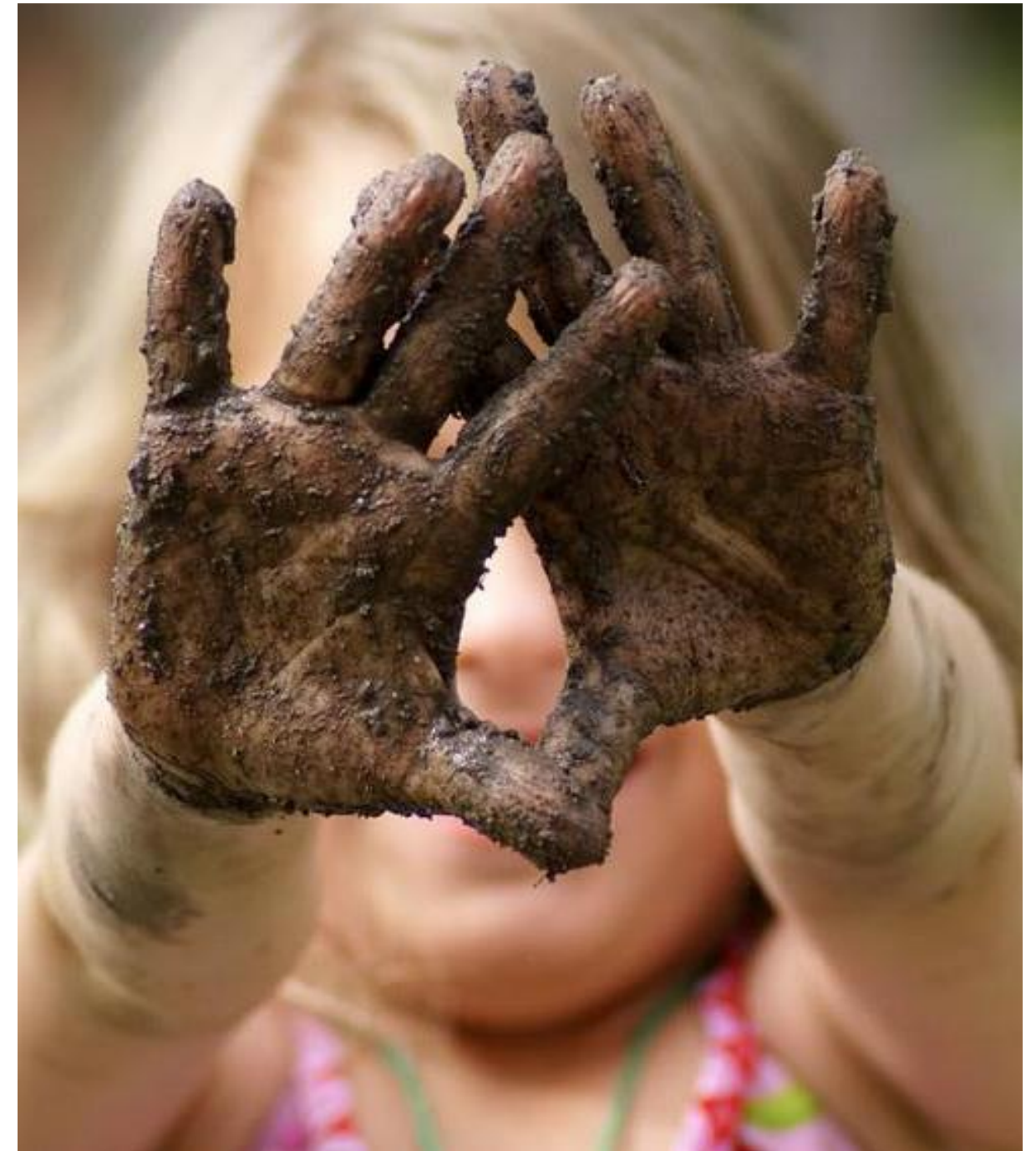
2.1 The Benefits of Play

Research shows that play has many benefits for children, families and the wider community as well as improving health and quality of life and suggests that children's access to good play provision can:

- increase their self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-respect
- improve and maintain their physical and mental health
- give them the opportunity to mix with other children
- allow them to increase their confidence through developing new skills
- promote their imagination, independence and creativity
- offer opportunities for children of all abilities and backgrounds to play together
- provide opportunities for developing social skills and learning
- build resilience through risk taking and challenge, problem solving, and dealing with new and novel situations
- provide opportunities to learn about the environment and wider community.

Evidence also supports wider benefits of play to include:

- parents feeling secure knowing their children are happy, safe and enjoying themselves
- families benefit from healthier, happier children
- play services are frequently seen as a focal point for communities
- offers opportunities for social interaction for the wider community and supports the development of a greater sense of community spirit and cohesion
- public outside spaces have an important role in the everyday lives of children and young people, especially as a place for meeting friends
- parks and other green spaces are popular with adults taking young children out to play and for older children to spend time together.



2.2 Play Theory

It is widely acknowledged and researched that play has a significant impact on the social, physical and mental development of the child. Play theory in general identifies three broad categories of play behaviour that apply across all ages but the way they are interpreted by each age group varies with some type of play assuming greater importance at particular stages of child development.

- **Cognitive Play** includes those activities that challenge the intellect of the child and can include games of strategy, exploration, observation or those that use and develop language. Council playgrounds can develop cognitive behaviour through natural areas for exploration and observation of living things; spaces and materials for outdoor games such as hopscotch and hide and seek and materials and tools for use in sand and water settings. Other concepts can include spaces for quiet activities such as reading, contemplation and nature observation of complex spaces or structures, which challenge the user's perceptual skills.
- **Social Play** can be found both by using existing physical equipment and through learning and exploring with friends in the natural environment. Whilst the latter have not been traditionally provided for in the public domain, councils are beginning to design playspaces through appropriate landscaping including sand, water, plants, trees and sculptures etc. to enhance natural play. Some small-group activities such as hopscotch, some ball games and the traditional rhyming and running games require small spaces, changes in level, possibly firm surfaces, semi-enclosure, objects as targets and focal points, and durable planting or other elements, which may be used in the course of a game.
- **Physical Play** is also often referred to as gross motor activity and can include running, hanging, climbing, experiencing height, agility/gymnastic activities, sliding, jumping, balancing, swinging, crawling, bouncing, spinning, rocking, ball games, skipping etc. These activities are generally more 'active' and therefore adequate space is required in a suitable environment where other users will not be disturbed. Some of these activities are well provided for by traditional play equipment although others are more dependent upon the size and particular qualities of spaces or other elements.

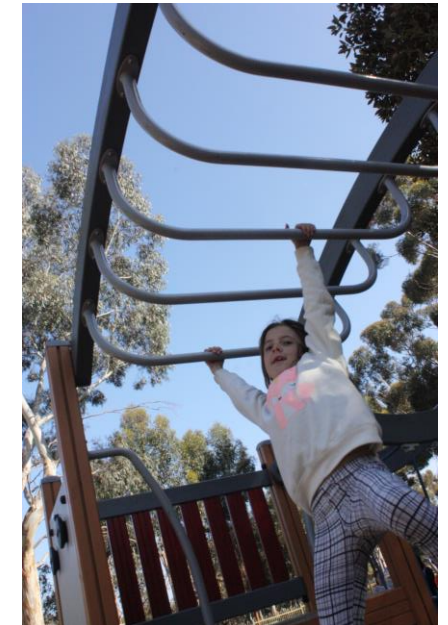


Figure 3: Examples of Play Theory

Above: Cognitive play

Below: Social Play

Right: Physical Play



2.3 Planning for Different Needs

Given the broad categories of play theory, playspaces need to include a number of components that encourage cognitive, social, and physical elements. However, not all playspaces will include all of these elements as the classification (to be discussed in the following section) will offer differing play experiences and target different users. That is, playspaces can and should be designed for a number of ages to include:

- **Toddlers (ages 1-3):** Simple settings and small scaled and detailed environments with friendly surfaces and a familiar adult close by. These age groups cannot perceive danger and must be protected from hazards. Play areas for young children must be sited away from traffic.
- **Juniors (ages 3-6):** The ages from three to six years cover a wide range of development in children. Co-ordination and physical skill development is relatively proficient by the age of 5 years and children of this age need to practice and hone skills such as climbing, running, agility skills, skipping, and ball play.
- **Seniors (ages 6-12):** Older children may use play equipment as incidental props in their group games. For example play structures may be used as part of obstacle courses, part of chasing and hiding games, as a lookout or a refuge; as a meeting and socialising place for after school activities or as a 'base' for group activities.



Figure 4: Planning for Play

It's important to understand the differing play needs of various age groups when designing playspaces

Top: Toddler
Middle: Junior
Bottom: Senior

- **Teenagers (ages 13 +):** Areas for 'play' for teenagers needs to be carefully managed and monitored and in some instances youth recreation requires a separate study to determine the broader needs of this group in general. While it is acknowledged young people will use open space for a number of uses including skateboarding, bike riding, unstructured sport or just 'hanging out' with friends etc., the location areas needs to be carefully managed to avoid potential conflicts of use with younger children and their carers while ensuring a sense of ownership by the group in question.
- **Adults:** Adults should not be excluded from using playgrounds, and equipment needs to be designed and developed for use by this group, i.e. the provision of swing seats and rockers designed for use by adults is a way of encouraging adults to use park facilities with their children.

Naturally, provision for adults at the exclusion of children is not the intention, but design standards now consider loadings and structural requirements to withstand use by adults.

- **Accessibility:** An accessible playspace is one without barriers but is commonly associated with children and a range of disabilities. This is not to say that every item of play equipment needs to be designed for wheelchair access, but that consideration should be given to access and inclusion in a number of playspaces across a Local Government Authority (LGA).



Figure 5: Planning for All Users

Playspaces need to consider a wider range of users.

Top: Youth play

Middle: Planning equipment for adults

Bottom: Access and disability

2.4 Playspace Hierarchy

The Rural City of Murray Bridge categorises its open spaces into three classifications of Local, District and Regional and whilst these are generally consistent with sector terminology, the classification of a playspace quite often does not match that of the open space. That is a Regional parcel of open space for example may only have a small 'local' playspace or alternatively a larger playspace may be evident on a lower land classification. In order to understand the varying levels of playspaces therefore; the following classifications are discussed which should ideally, match the classification of land on which it sits.

Local: Normally small in size (approx 0.1 – 0.2ha) and offering passive and low key recreation opportunities such as seating and landscaping, local playspaces would be small in nature and would target toddlers and/or juniors (0-3 and 3-6 year olds). Equipment would normally include basic swing and slide aspects and minor landscaping.

Neighbourhood: Targeting a broader demographic catchment and therefore (normally) located on larger parcels of land, neighbourhood playspaces would include equipment for toddlers to seniors and may include assets such as seating, shade, bins and picnic tables.

District: Usually attracting a wider catchment and located on larger parcels of land also used for other activities such as sport or other forms of recreation, these playgrounds offer a wider variety of play 'choice' from toddler – senior and in some instances youth. District level facilities normally include seating, shading, shelter and end of trip facilities such as water fountains and bicycle racks for example. Accessible playgrounds and playspaces are often considered in District level classifications or higher.

Regional: These types of facilities attract visitation from outside of a councils' boundary and are generally those places where people tend to stay longer and would therefore require facilities and services such as toilets, water, shelter and shade. The playgrounds themselves often offer a unique aspect or feature which encourages use, whether this be a special feature, larger open spaces, or just the range of play opportunities.

2.5 The Playspace Development Model

To better understand the hierarchy of playspaces, a 'playspace development model' (PDM) has been developed that can be adopted as a guide for councils when planning and developing playspaces²

Whilst developed in South Australia, the concept (Figure 6) is widely recognised as a model to illustrate the elementary factors required to establish an area specifically for play and includes five aspects to include:

1. Play Equipment

Play equipment has historically been the dominant factor in playground provision. However, play equipment should complement rather than replace the 'playspace' and should align with the intended user and classification of the park. Equipment suitable and interesting to a toddler will be vastly different from equipment for a 'senior' child and generally speaking the more opportunities provided tends to increase the 'classification' of the playspace itself.

2. Imaginative and Creative Area

This is often the most neglected aspect of play provision and it requires sensitivity to develop possibilities. Some areas however, simply need to be left in their natural state whereby others can be designed using the natural environment to encourage exploration and imagination.

Nature play is also becoming popular across Australia with many councils understanding and realising its importance and investing in 'nature play' initiatives, branding and programming. In turn this encourages more children into the outdoors and away from some forms of technology that has negative impact on a child's physical development. As such, many local authorities are designing playspaces to encourage the use and exploration of the natural environment and promoting nature play to enhance cognitive, social and physical development.

² South Australian Office for Recreation and Sport: Playground Manual Guidelines; March 1998 revised June 2007

3. Unstructured Area

This is an open space area that should not be confused with formal sport requirements and in essence will encourage and allow activities to develop spontaneously among children present at the time. Traditionally these areas appeal to older children and are often used as a meeting place/socialising area or for informal ball games such as kick to kick, basketball, netball rings etc.

4. Adult/Family Area

Adults accompanying children to play areas require a comfortable area where they can passively monitor children whilst socialising with other carers or parents. The inclusion of items such as seating, shading, BBQ's, shelters, water etc., all of which may result in longer periods of use by families and increased presence increasing passive surveillance and safety.

5. Special Feature

This is an optional component which may be included in the playspace and although these are not essential, could include open air theatres, rotundas, water features, artwork or other natural or built features which would attract greater use, visitation and general interest.

Generally speaking, the more components of the PDM a playspace has, the higher its classification. A local playspace for example may be situated on a small block of land and include only a swing and a slide for example, whereby a regional playspace would generally include all components of the PDM.



Figure 6: Playspace Development Model Components

2.6 Playspace Trends

Play and understanding its importance has come a long way in recent years with many local authorities now developing strategies that not only assess playspaces as assets that need to be managed, but also their relevance in design and the changing needs of a child as they grow and develop. To this end, the traditional playspace equipment by way of slide, swings, and rockers whilst still important, are today being considered as only one component of the play spectrum. Other design elements are therefore being introduced to encourage an array of learning and development opportunities including the use of the natural environment (nature play), creative landscaping, and additional features that promote a sense of belonging and place to a park.

Playspaces are also considered not only as areas for children, but also the whole family and therefore now include aspects for adults and carers such as barbeques, shade and shelter and end of trip facilities such as water, bike racks, paths and trails, carparks and in some instances fencing to offer a sense of security for children and families in larger parks near to main roads or traffic.

Play standards have also come a long way with equipment now designed and developed to include and consider adult use and weight bearing to enable social interaction and play with and between children. Additionally, the introduction of fitness equipment is also becoming increasingly popular with both adults and children and offers a unique element to many parks and playspaces. They are often standalone areas separate from children's playspaces.

From a planning perspective, the notion of playspaces being developed in areas where young families are prevalent is now an outdated planning method as the needs of a child (and demographics generally) will change in relative short periods of time (2-3 years) whereas a playspace as an asset may last in excess of twenty years.

Modern trends in planning for playspaces are therefore now based on an even distribution of facilities to ensure access for all including grandparents, aunts and uncles, people with disabilities and carers and families. It also considers the playspace hierarchy as discussed earlier and design and distribution based on local through to regional each offering their own unique experiences.

Liability and risk is always a key factor in the provision of any service or facility that is available to the public, and whilst councils' have an obligation and duty of care, aspects such as the promotion of nature play has caused some concern in recent years due to the absence of standards for 'nature'. However, more innovative and proactive councils' are working with their respective insurers to ensure a range of opportunities can be provided and children and their parents protected from perceived risks whilst still enjoying and benefiting from the experience of play in a natural setting.

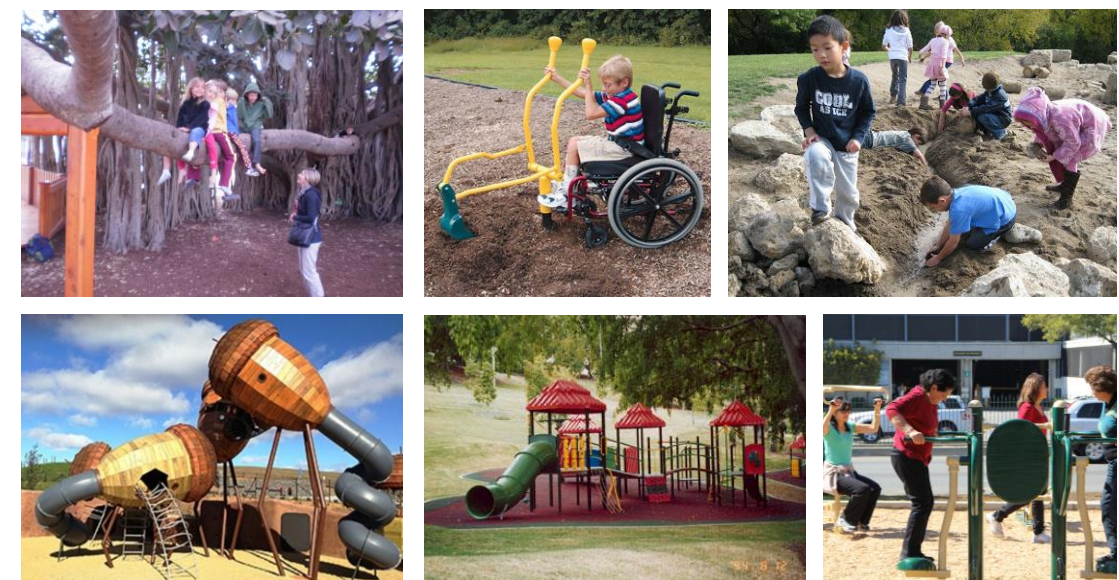


Figure 6: Playspace Trends include design and use of the natural environment, special features, hierarchical planning, promoting adult fitness and managing risk through nature play.

Section Three: Play in Murray Bridge

3.1 Overview

The Rural City of Murray Bridge has 19 public playspaces (Map 1), 2 of which are located within a sports clubs leased land and therefore technically the responsibility of the club. In both of these instances however, Council has erected the playspace and as the landlord of the site has a duty to maintain and replace the equipment when it reaches its useable life.

3.2 Audit

An audit of the playspaces was undertaken to assist Council in determining the objectives of the project with an overview of supply highlighted in Map 1. For the purpose of the audit, playspace locations are discussed in 7 areas of Murray Bridge North, North East, South East and South West; with Monarto, Mypolonga and Wellington also highlighted as ‘study’ areas (Map 1) and a key to the audit being as follows:

Key	Description
Park #	Map 1 Reference number
Area / Site	Study area and physical location of the playspace
Age	Grouped according to when developed or last upgraded
Current Classification	L = Local N = Neighbourhood D = District R = Regional
Condition Rating	Subjective assessment based on physical appearance and general asset condition with a ranking of: E = Excellent condition / Almost New G = Good condition with no major signs of wear and tear F = Fair condition with some signs of ageing/wear and tear P = Poor condition with some or equipment heavily damaged or worn
	Community accessible playgrounds not owned by Council

Table 1: Audit Key

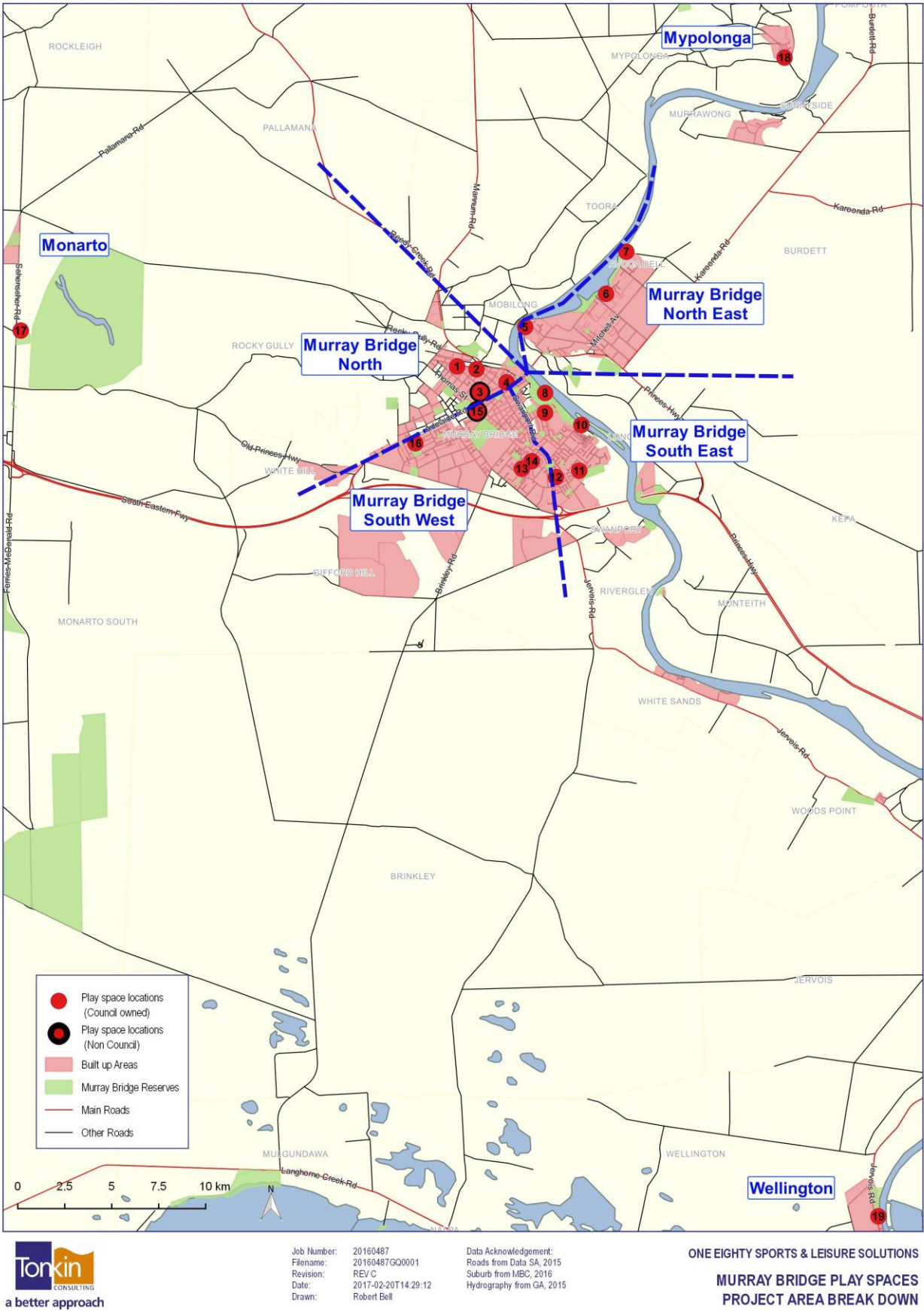





















Table 2: Playspace Audit

#	Site	Location	Image	Overview	Age (Years)					Current Classification				Condition Rating			
Murray Bridge North					<5Yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	L	N	D	R	E	G	F	P
1	Oak Avenue Reserve	Lot 222 Oak Avenue		New toddler / junior swing set and half court basketball area showing signs of age													
2	McNamara Park	80-84 McHenry St		Open space with old toddler / junior swing set. Reserve provides opportunity for enhancement													
3	LeMessurier Oval	Lot 491 Hannaford Street		Sports precinct / oval with new junior playspace located adjacent to the club room and fenced. installed by Council but owned by the club													
4	War Memorial Park	Lot 52 West Terrace		Civic park developed with a new nature play area and sited adjacent to main roads without fencing													

#	Site	Location	Image	Overview	Age (Years)					Current Classification				Condition Rating			
Murray Bridge North East					<5Yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	L	N	D	R	E	G	F	P
5	Thiele Reserve	Lot 189 575 Thiele Road		Riverside reserve with ramp, shelter, BBQ/shelter and basic junior climbing frame													
6	Torrens Road Reserve	Lot 30 Clipsal Road		Located in a small gully with adjacent open space with toddler and junior equipment													
7	Avoca Dell	Avoca Dell Drive		New playspace constructed and opened in late 2016													

#	Site	Location	Image	Overview	Age (Years)					Current Classification				Condition Rating			
Murray Bridge South East					<5Yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	L	N	D	R	E	G	F	P
8	Sturt Reserve	Charles Sturt Drive		Riverfront reserve with a sheltered toddler and junior playspace located on a large open parcel of land and adjacent to, BXX track, rage cage and skate park													
9	Rollond Reserve	Lot 158 Leslie Street		Large reserve with an old toddler/junior swing and small concrete cricket pitch in the middle of the reserve													
10	Long Island Reserve	Section 1184 Long Island Road		Riverfront reserve with a toddler – junior equipment, shelters, BBQ and toilets													
11	Parkview Reserve	32-36 Parkview Drive		Developer park located in a new development with toddler and minor junior equipment, shelter and BBQ. Park also has bike racks and a large parcel of open space adjoining it													
12	Owl Drive Reserve	Lot 194 Owl Drive		Open reserve with junior – toddler equipment, the park has a shelter, bins and rubberised softfall													

#	Site	Location	Image	Overview	Age (Years)					Current Classification				Condition Rating			
Murray Bridge South West					<5Yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	L	N	D	R	E	G	F	P
13	Schubert Street Reserve	Schubert Street		Very old and obsolete play equipment on a large parcel of land including old seesaw, metal slide, half court basketball area and bench under trees													
14	Homburg Park	Lot 101 Homburg Drive		Fully covered junior-senior playspace adjacent to BXX club. site has toilets and picnic facilities													
15	Johnstone Park	Thomas Street		Playground located within a sports facility. Toddler and junior playground constructed by Council but owned by the club													
16	Christian Reserve	Lots 170 and 336 Christian Road		Located adjacent to a sports ground (tennis/netball) the playspace is a toddler and junior level with rubberised softfall.													

#	Site	Location	Image	Overview	Age (Years)					Current Classification				Condition Rating			
Monarto					<5Yrs	5-10	10-15	15-20	>20	L	N	D	R	E	G	F	P
17	Monarto Recreation Centre	Schenscher Road		Located on a sports reserve adjacent to a community hall and clubrooms, the playspace is a junior-senior climbing frame on a rubberised softfall													
Mypolonga																	
18	Irene Hughes Park	Lots 1-4 Green Street		Large parcel of land with shelter and special feature water pump, the playspace comprises an obsolete junior and toddler swing.													
Wellington																	
19	Baker Reserve	Jervois Road		Riverside reserve with a boat ramp and associated facilities, including toilets, BBQ, shelters and picnic facilities, the playspace is elevated on a hillside and comprises toddler equipment and a rubberised softfall													

3.3 Supply Benchmarking

Whilst there is no universally accepted ratio of playspaces per population as this invariably changes from urban to rural communities, industry studies have shown a distribution of between 1:1000 to 1:2000 is considered the 'norm'³.

For the purpose of this report, an assessment of five municipalities that adjoin the Regional City of Murray Bridge was undertaken. Each Council's total number of playspaces was assessed against its population providing a mean number per 1000 people. The same principle was then applied to the 0-14 age cohort to determine a benchmark for children as the target users of playspaces (Table 3).

Council	Residential Population	Play Spaces	Playspaces per 000 Population	Total Population of Children 0-14	Playspaces per 000 Population of Children 0-14
Adelaide Hills	40,031	35	1144	7,577	216
Alexandrina	25,449	15	1697	3,991	266
Coorong	5,598	10	560	530	53
Mid Murray	8,243	18	458	1,239	69
Mount Barker	32,558	34	958	6,514	192
Mean	111879	112	999	19851	177
2015 ERP Data			2011 Census		
Murray Bridge	20,971	19	1104	1,296	68

Table 3: Playspace Benchmarking

Findings from this exercise found that the mean (average) number of playspace was 1 for every 999 people with 1 for every 177 children aged 0-14. The Regional City of Murray Bridge was slightly lower in its provision of playspaces with 1 for every 1104 people, but better in its provision for children aged 0-14 with 1 for every 68 children.

The best supplied Councils by way of provision were the smaller communities of the Mid Murray and the Coorong which had a total provision of 1 for every 458 and 560 residents and 69 and 53 playspaces per child aged 0-14 respectively.

In order for the Rural City of Murray Bridge to be on par with the regional average, it would be required to develop an additional 2 playspaces to reach the 1 for every 999 residents.

Also, and given its relative remoteness especially in many of its smaller townships; Council needs to consider at what 'tipping' point it would establish a playspace for any given community. That is, whilst the argument for benchmarking would suggest 1 playspace for every 1000 residents; in smaller more rural areas this may not be sufficient and Council may therefore consider a tipping point of 500 people being appropriate for the development and provision of playspaces. Again, this is not a standard, but more so a guide for Council to consider when developing leisure and recreation services for its community and ratepayers.

3.4 Access Assessment

Whilst establishing the overall number of playspaces in any given region is a useful benchmarking for provision, this does not identify where gaps may exist. To assist in assessing this, a notion of a 'Pedestrian Shed' (Ped Shed) is considered which is the basic building block of 'walkable neighbourhoods'.

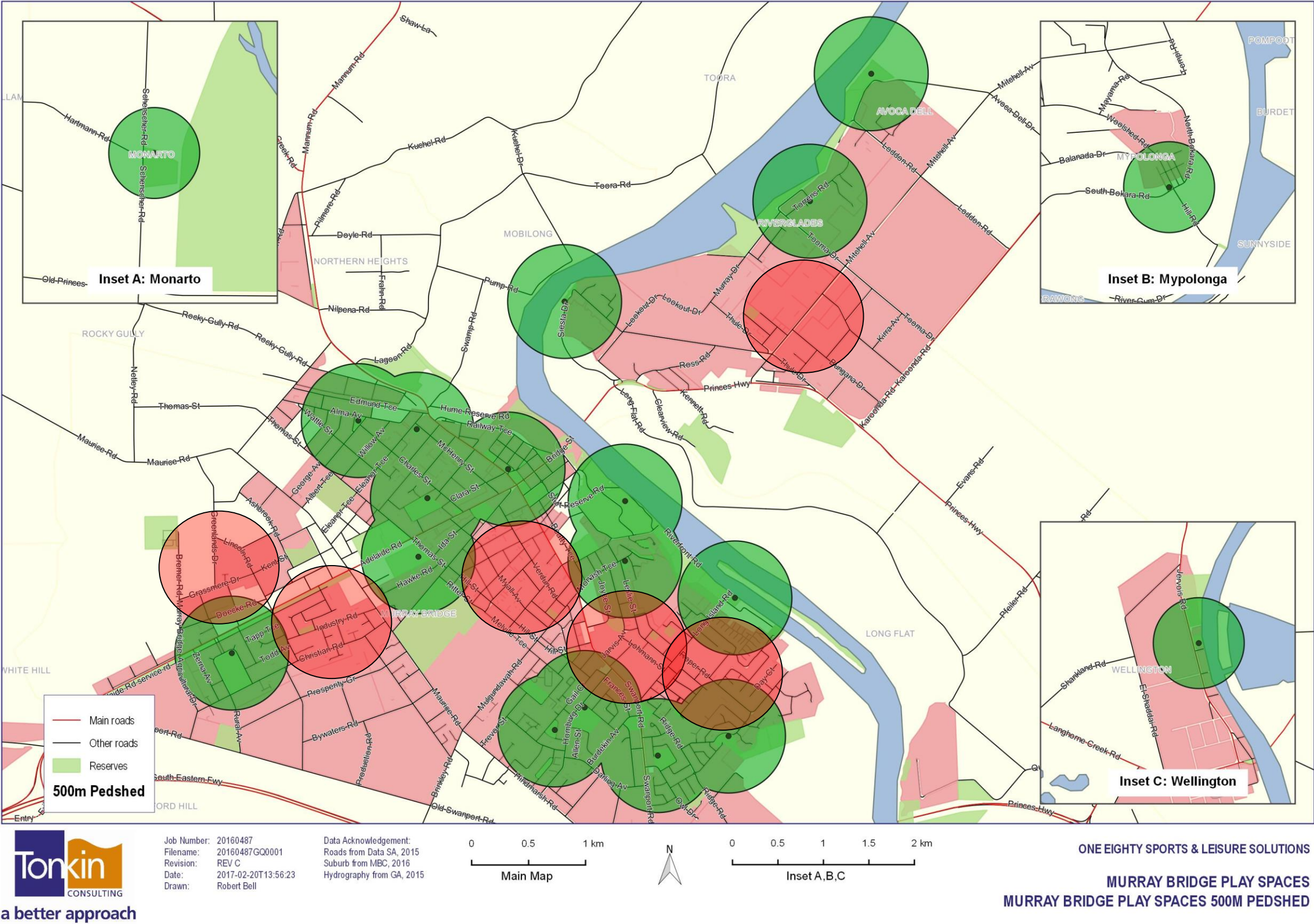
Walkable neighbourhoods are encompassed by an appropriate walking distance or a 5-minute walk (approximately 400 - 500 metres) to services and facilities.⁴ This considers the slowest or least able person such as very young children with their parents or older adults and those with access barriers due to age, health or ability.

Figure 7 on the following page highlights the PedShed for each playspace but assesses only a 500m radius and does not take into account physical or psychological barriers such as main roads, creek lines, train tracks etc. which would pose obvious barriers regardless of direct line of access.

Plotting these PedSheds highlights a number of gaps in areas of residential development. That is those areas whereby a 'gap' may be evident but are zoned industry, semi rural or have less than the 500 residents as discussed previously, have not been considered.

³ Parks and Leisure Australia WA community Facility Guidelines: Draft 2016

⁴ Walkable Urban Design and Sustainable Placemaking; Extracted from http://pedshed.net/?page_id=2



Map 2: Playspace Catchment

500m PedShed



Identified Gap



3.5 Classifications

Almost half of Councils playspaces (47%) are classified as local or playspaces that predominantly target toddler 0-3. These types of playspaces are traditional in nature and tend to have no more than three pieces of equipment and comprise a swing, slide and often rockers or see saws.

Over a third of playspaces are classified as Neighbourhood and include local components as well as equipment for juniors (3-6) whereby more physical ability is required such as climbing frames and bridges etc.

An additional 3 playspaces (16%) are classified as District whereby additional equipment is introduced for older children and often have associated facilities for youth such as skate parks, BMX areas, open space etc.

Whilst it may be argued that Sturt Reserve should be considered Regional due to its size; this is true for the land parcel but not the playspace itself which only has equipment targeting toddler – juniors. That is it is unlikely that people will travel from outside the Rural City of Murray Bridge to specifically use the playspace at Sturt Reserve, although the open space and the river front would have a regional draw. To this end, there are no Regional playspaces in the City at this time.

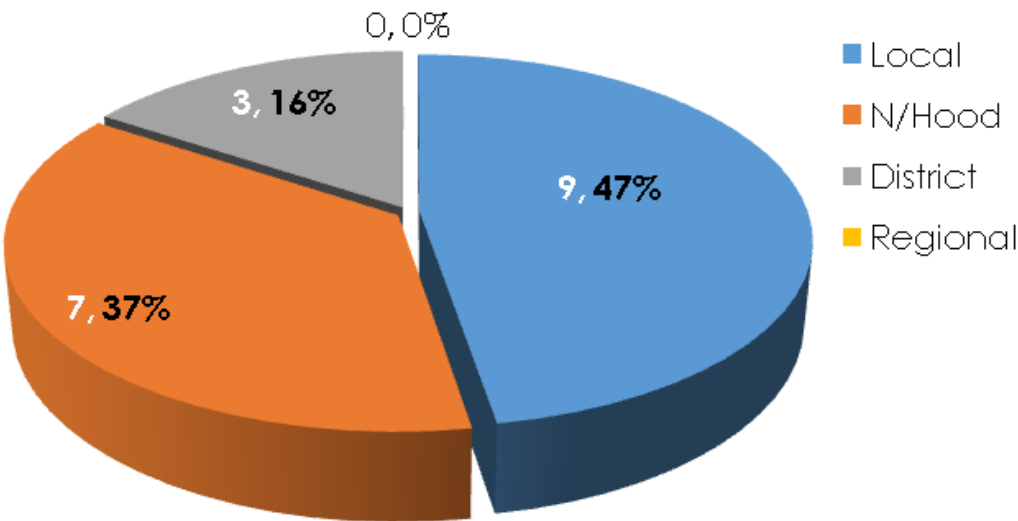
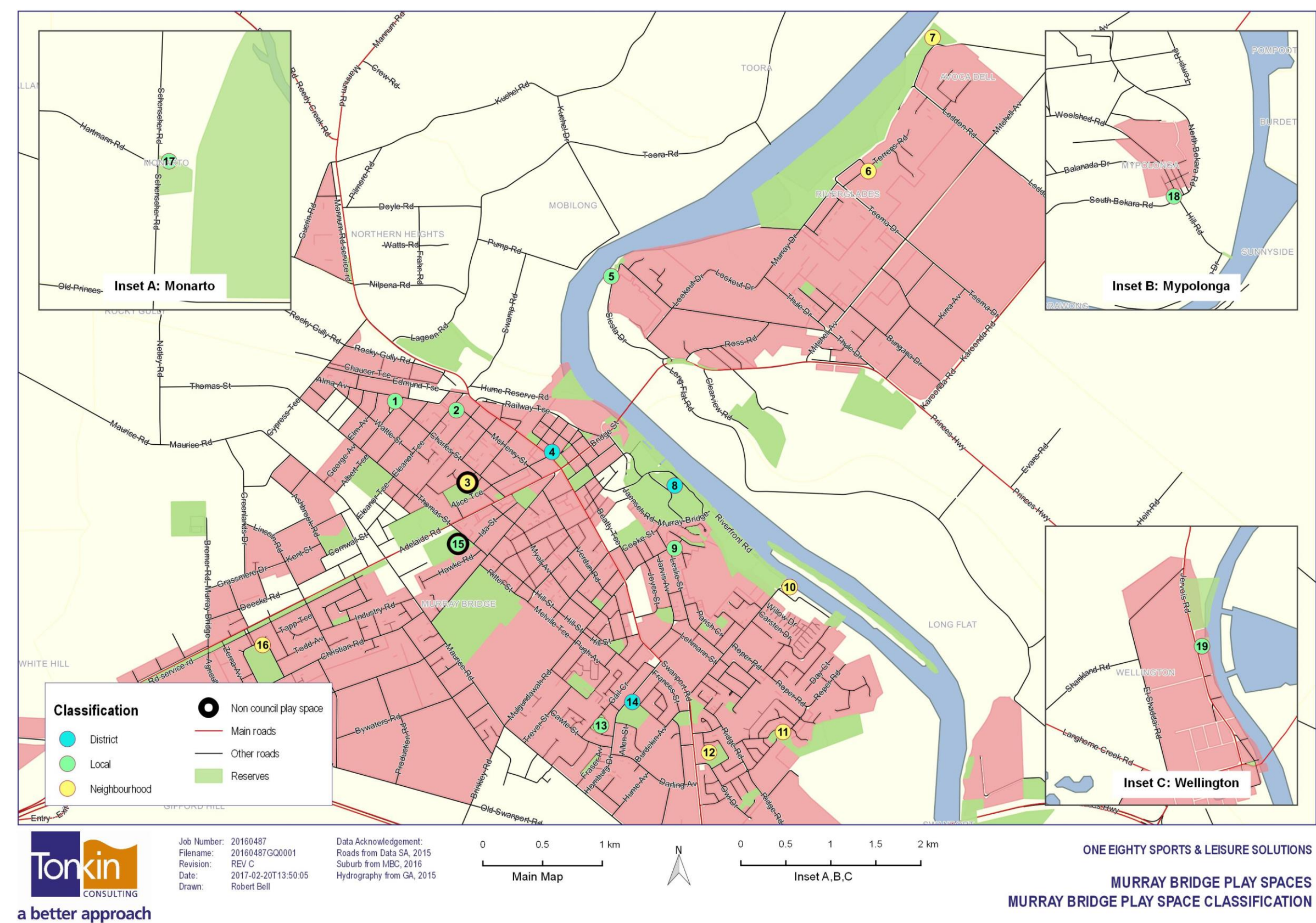


Figure 7: Existing Classifications
Top: Local Playspaces target toddlers (0-3)
Left: Neighbourhood playspaces also include components for Juniors (3-6)
Right: District playspaces include all age groups as well as areas for youth (12+)



3.6 Age

Playspaces as assets have an approximate useable life of around 20years. After this time the equipment will, regardless of maintenance regimes, begin to show the signs of age and will more than likely not meet modern needs, demands and standards. Indeed, many playspaces developed pre 2000 or over 16 years in age, are more than likely not meeting modern standards but these are not retrospective and Councils are not obliged to replace playspaces unless they have reached their useable life.

Given that over a third of Councils playspaces are over 20 years old (7 or 37%), it is highly recommended that a removal or replacement strategy is considered. Likewise, and whilst Council has no playspace assets that are currently between 15 and 20 years of age; the four playspaces currently between 5 and 10 years old should be monitored and a strategy identified for removal or replacement in the coming 5-10 years.

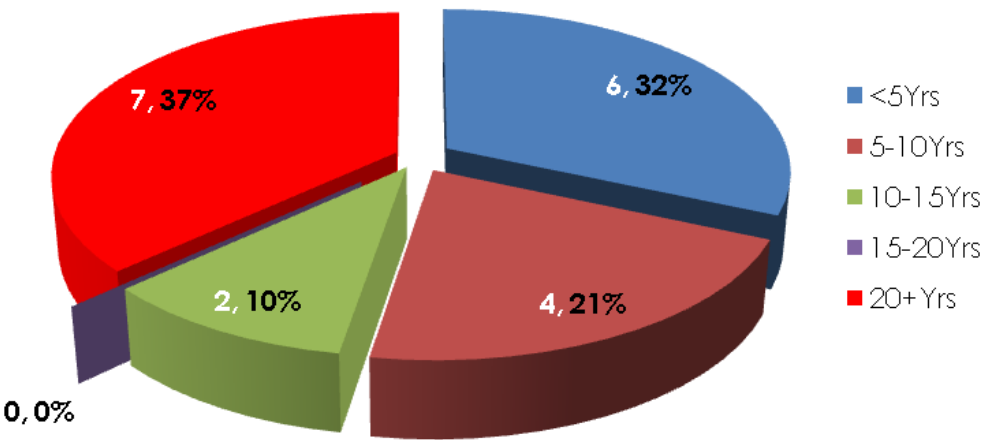
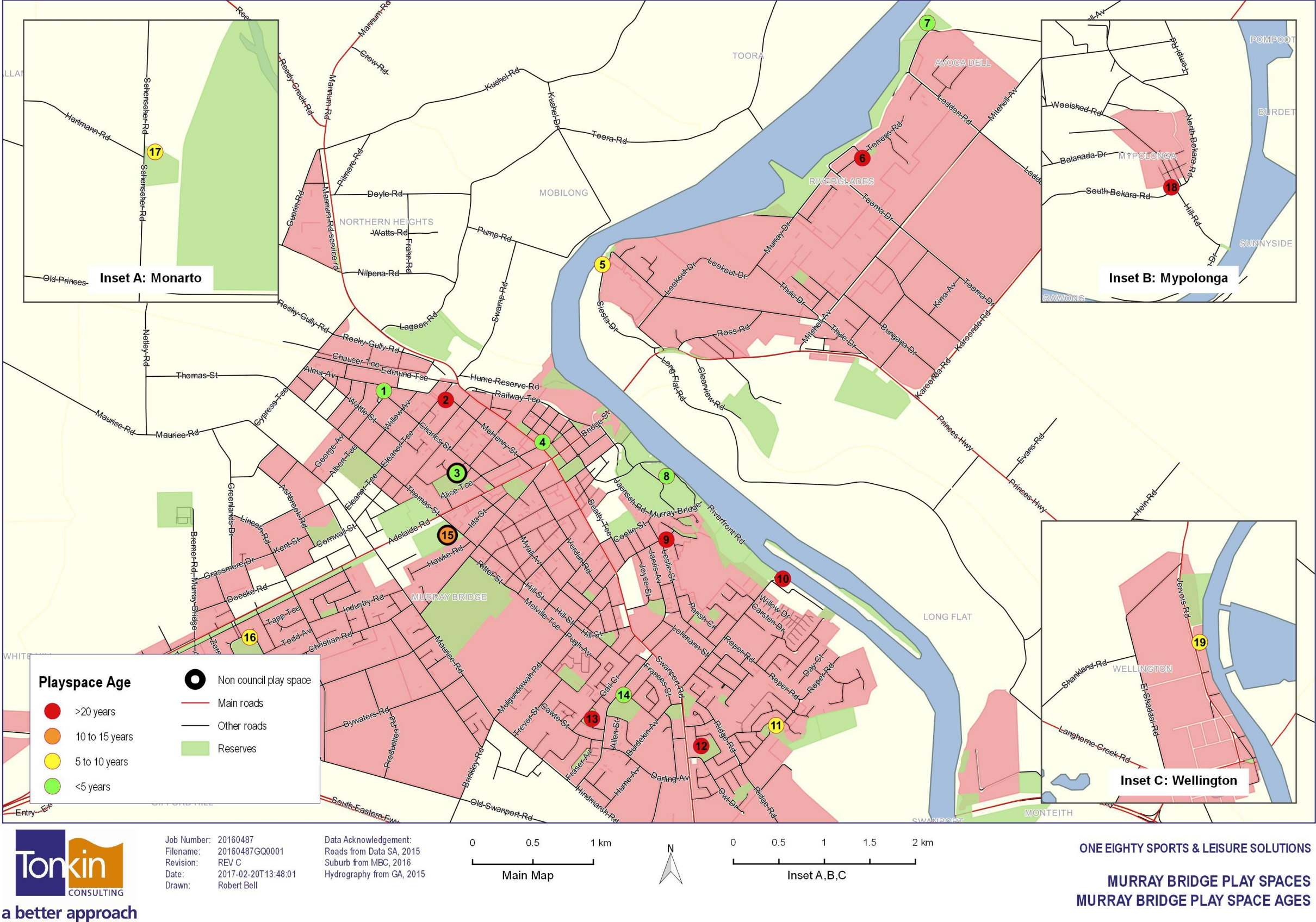


Figure 9: Playspace Ages
Councils newest playspace is at Avoca Del having been developed in late 2016 (top left) with the Memorial Park Nature Play also being under 2 years old (top right). Older playspaces over 20 years include Schubert Reserve (bottom left) and Irene Hughes Park in Mypolonga (bottom right)



Section Four: Community Perceptions

To support and clarify the overview of playspaces and their relevance in the community, a survey was developed to solicit feedback from playspace users to determine thoughts, views and aspirations for playspaces in the Rural City of Murray Bridge. The survey was made available for a period of approximately four weeks from the 21st November - 23rd December 2016 and yielded 85 responses with findings summarised as follows:

4.1 Playspace Use

The ages of children using playspaces was very evenly spread with almost a third in each category of 0-3 (33%), 3-6 (29%) and 6-12 (29%). Only 9% of respondents stated they took their 12 year plus children to playspaces which may reflect an element of independence by this age cohort, an interest in other leisure time activities or alternatively a lack of offerings in existing playspaces for this age group.

Most adults were parents with 76.5% highlighting this and a further 10.6% stating they were grandparents taking their grandchildren to playspaces. Most people said they visited playspaces more than once a month (33.3%) with an additional 32.1% stating they used playspaces weekly

Figure 10: Frequency of Use

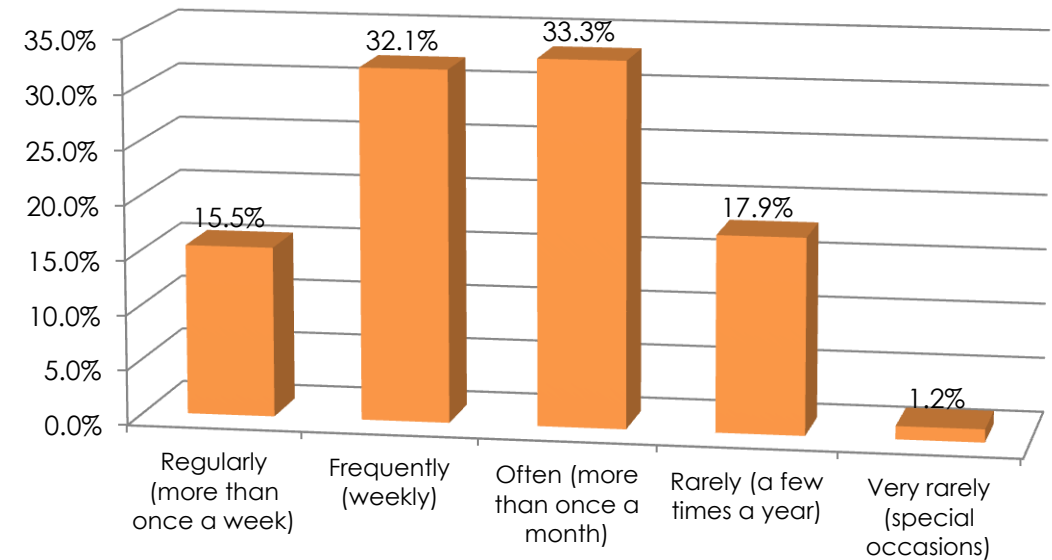


Figure 11: Capacity of Use

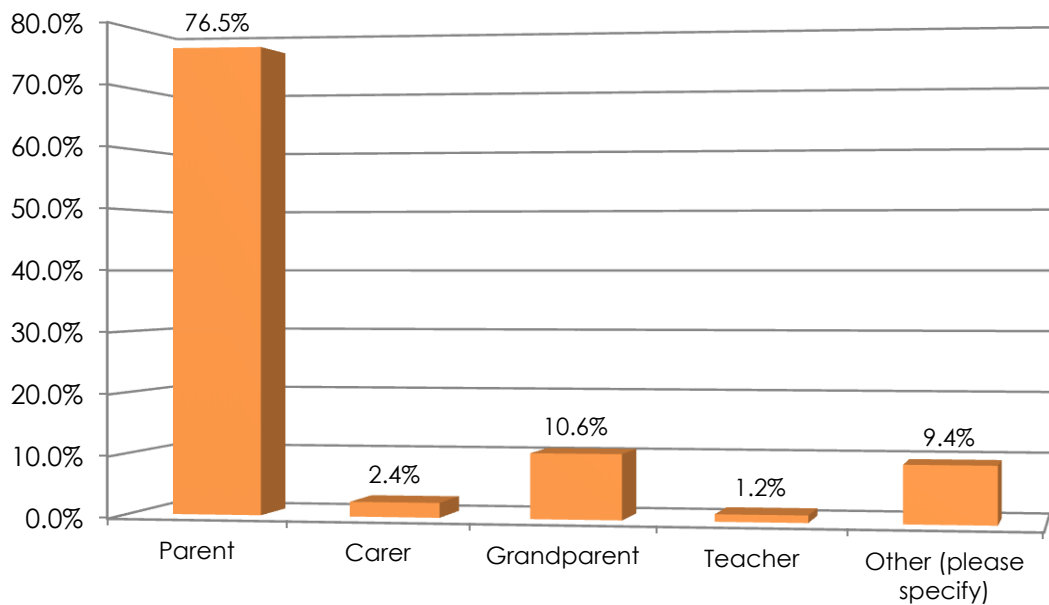
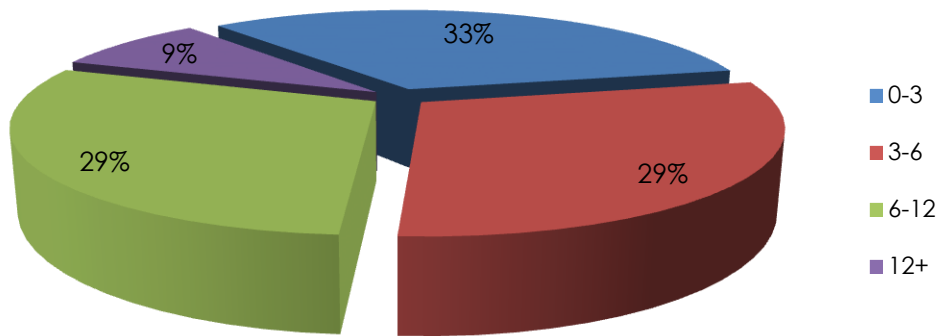


Figure 12: Ages of Children



4.2 Playspace Perceptions

When asked to consider on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being low and 5 high, elements that were important for playspaces compared with what was being received or perceived in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, the top five areas of perceived importance were for playspaces to be:

- 1. clean and welcoming (4.56)
- 2. safe (4.56)
- 3. have plenty of shade (4.45)
- 4. fenced or away from roads (4.38)
- 5. have toilets nearby (4.21)

The largest areas of concern whereby the gap between importance and perception was greater than 1 whole point is seen in Table 4 with the areas the community consider playspaces well in with regards to playspace provision can be seen in Table 5

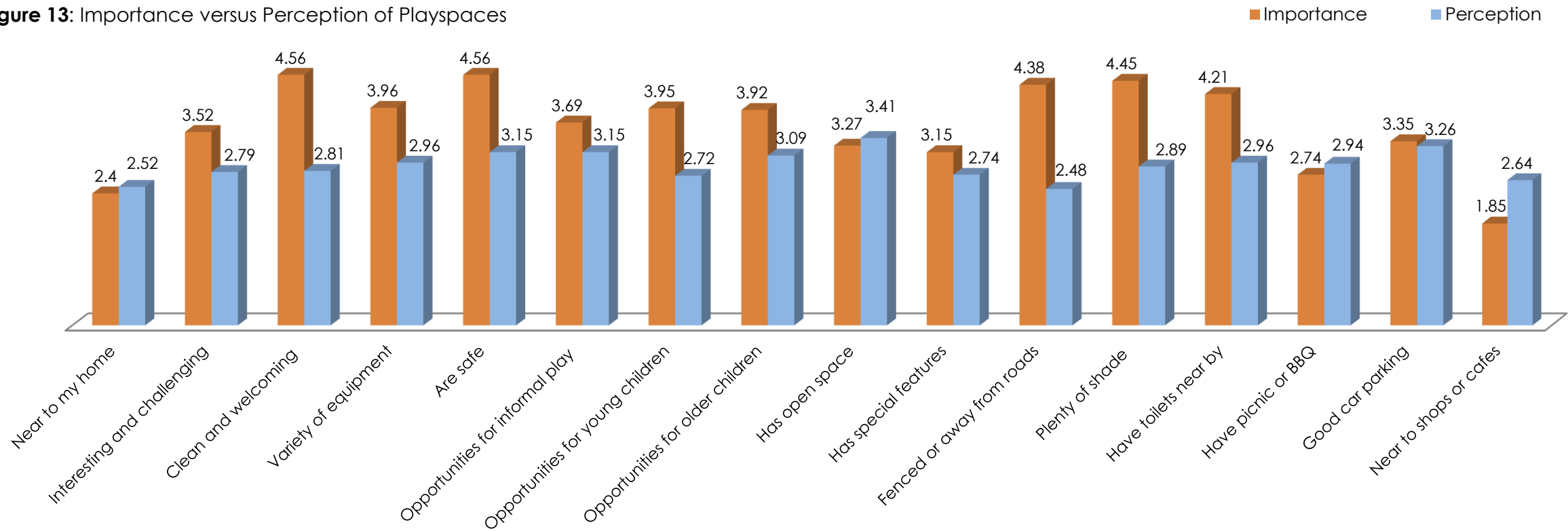
Rank	Area of Concern	Gap
1	Fenced or away from roads	-1.9
2	Clean and welcoming	-1.75
3	Shade	-1.56
4	Safety	-1.41
5	Have toilets	-1.25

Table 4: Main Perceived Gaps in Provision

Rank	Areas of Need Being Met	Gap
1	Near to shops or cafes	+0.79
2	Has picnic and BBQ's	+0.20
3	Has open space	+0.14
4	Near to my home	+0.12

Table 5: Perceived Areas Being Catered For

Figure 13: Importance versus Perception of Playspaces



4.3 Popular Playspaces

Respondent's favourite playspace by far was the Sturt Reserve play area with this being mentioned 41 times followed by the new Memorial Park Nature Playspace with 23 and Homburg with 6.

The main reasons people preferred these playspaces were largely due to their 'unique' nature or offering a variety of opportunities for all age groups. Fencing was also considered to be important or at least feeling 'safe' although this was not the case for Memorial Park whereby many respondents stated they wanted it fenced away from the main road.

Shade and shelter was also considered important and to a lesser extent the nature play element, ease of access and having toilets nearby were also seen as reasons why people chose or preferred a particular playspace.

Figure 14: Favourite Playgrounds

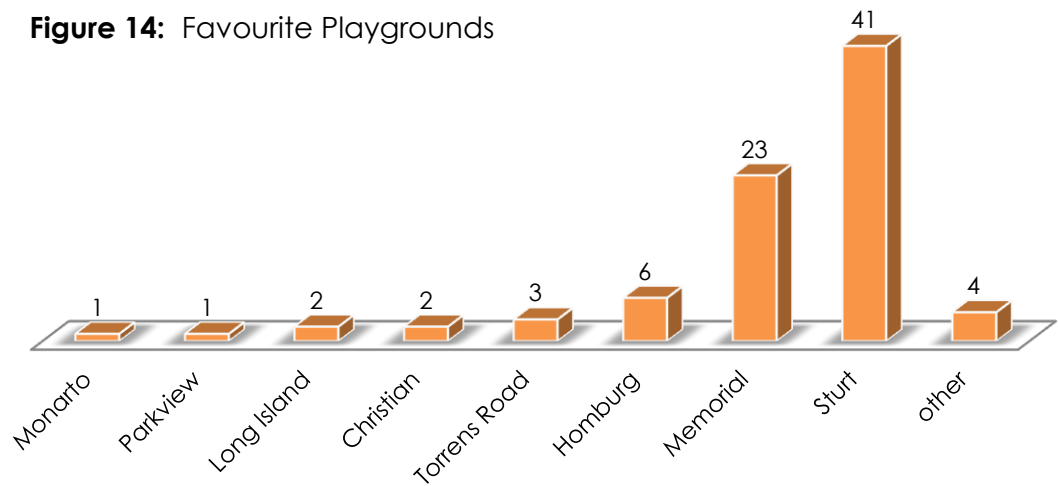
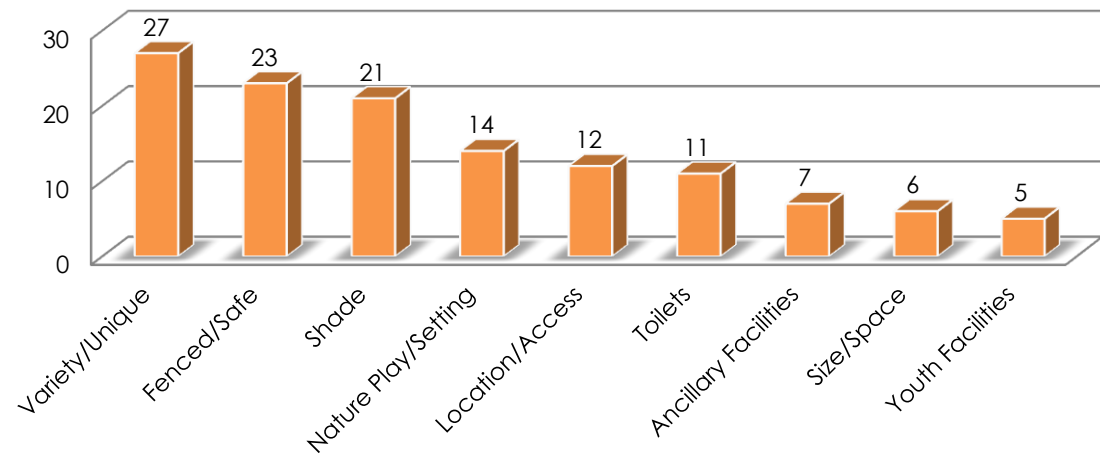


Figure 15: Aspects of Favourite Playspace

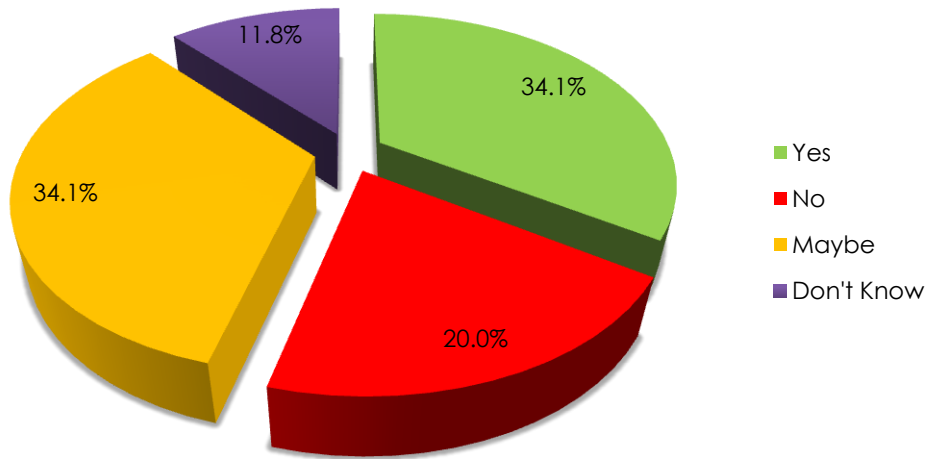


4.4 Quantity versus Quality

When asked whether they supported the consolidation of playspaces whereby fewer but better quality assets were provided, 34.1% said yes with 20% saying no. A further 34.1% and an additional 11.8% (45.9%) were either unsure or didn't know.

Should Council pursue this as a strategy therefore, additional information, rationale and involvement of and with the community will be required to ensure the benefits are explained and provision evenly distributed across the municipality.

Figure 16: Support for the Consolidation of Playspaces

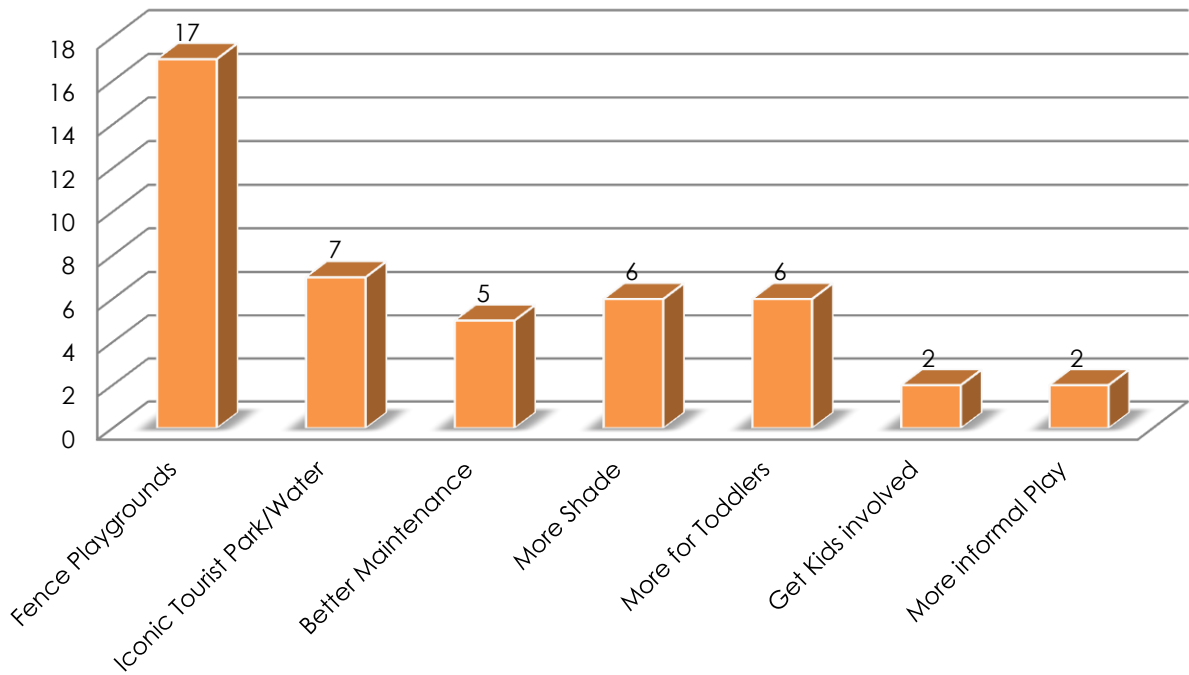


4.5 Thoughts and Perceptions

The community were invited to provide any further comments or concerns regarding the development of playspaces and the playspace strategy. Seventeen (17) people mentioned the need to fence or make playspaces safe with an additional seven (7) stating that the Rural City of Murray Bridge needed an iconic playspace or water park to attract and retain tourists for longer to the City.

Six (6) people mentioned playspaces required more shade as did the need for playspaces to be better designed for toddlers. Maintenance of playspaces was also a concern with five (5) people stating that this should be improved across parks and playspaces. To a lesser degree was a concern that children should be involved with planning and more informal play is required to encourage natural play.

Figure 17: Other Comments



4.6 Respondent Profile

The majority of those people completing the survey were female aged between the ages of 19-34 with 88.2% being female and 52.9% being in this age group. This suggests that young mothers were the main respondents to the survey with an additional 34.1% being in the age group 35-49.

Figure 18: Gender

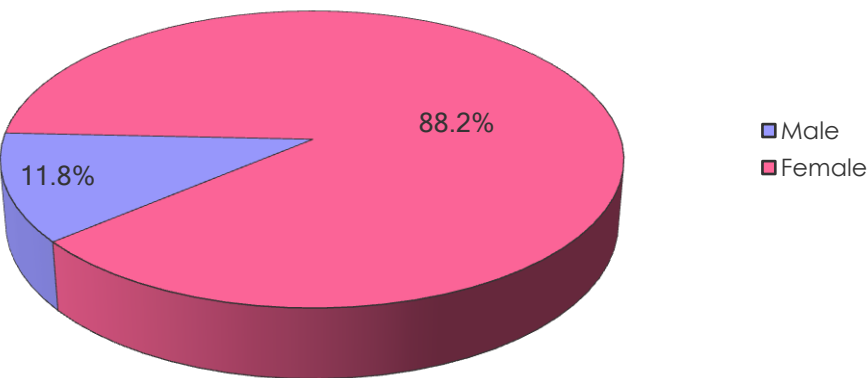
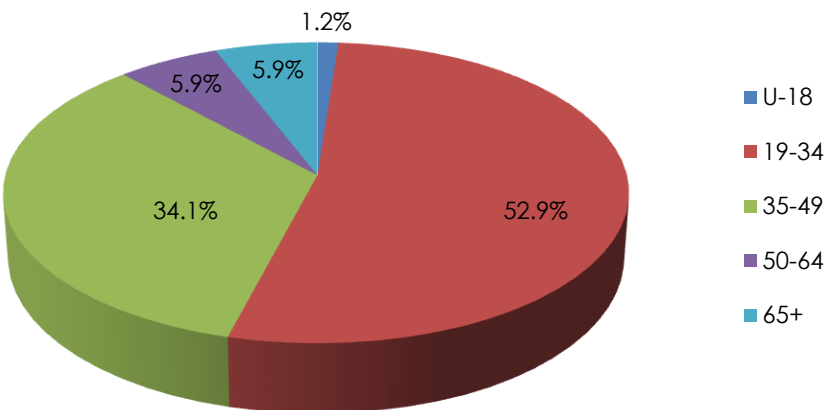


Figure 19: Age



Section Five: Playspace Design

This section briefly looks at the components of design for all levels of playspaces and considers what is deemed to be core and complementary design elements for each classification.

5.1 Core Playspace Components

Core playspace components consider the play equipment aspect only of the playspace development model noting that the 'complementary components' will add to the experience and 'uniqueness' of a playspace.

5.1.1 Local Playspaces

This level of playspace is ideally located within a collector district area whereby walking to a destination up to 500 metres would be acceptable for most if not all ages and abilities. Local playspace boundaries are within physical barriers (such as busy roads, railway lines etc) which can prevent easy access to parks and reserves outside of this area for carers and their children. Therefore, such parks should primarily cater for younger children's needs (toddlers and juniors). Local playspaces may also be used incidentally i.e. en route to or from a destination such as shops, schools, or from public transport and in some instances as physical links to other open space systems. Alternatively, such playspaces may be used deliberately as a need for low impact play and exploration for young children under the guidance of adult supervision.

• Local Playspace Components

While playspaces in a local setting will primarily be targeted at younger children (1-6) due to the proximity to the home and the understanding that older children (6-12) can and may travel greater distances either on foot or bike with their parents or carers; play opportunities should include aspects of cognitive, social and physical play and include approximately 3-5 pieces of play equipment as a suggestion. However not all local playspaces need to comprise formal play equipment areas and could include an imaginative (natural) play area to ensure provision is complemented and not duplicated within short distances of each playspace i.e. each should (where possible) offer its own setting with a different set of opportunities from the parks nearby. It is such that local playspaces include complementary components of:

- Play Equipment Area (3-5 pieces)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)

It must be noted that not all Local play spaces would include both of the above, but these elements developed in conjunction with similar parks nearby, i.e. planning should ensure playspaces are complemented and not duplicated within a close proximity to each other. Specific areas set aside for adults are not necessarily developed in local playspaces due to the age of the child requiring constant surveillance by the carer. However, playspaces and seating should have natural or formalised shading with the latter situated to ensure both active and passive surveillance by carers.



Figure 20: Local Playspace

Local playspaces are well maintained areas offering passive open space and equipment targeting toddler and juniors. Examples in the Rural City of Murray Bridge include Monarto (top left) and Baker Reserve in Wellington

5.1.2 Neighbourhood Playspace

Neighbourhood playspaces consider broader catchments and thus the need to provide for a more diverse range of opportunities and offer a wider range of opportunity for children to the age of 12 (toddler, Junior and seniors). When discussing neighbourhood playspaces, it is assumed that:

- People will travel further to use the park and therefore tend to do so deliberately rather than incidentally.
- Generally located within each suburb and therefore facilities such as toilets may not be required.
- Would be no more than approximately 1-2 kilometres from homes.

▪ Neighbourhood Playspace Components

Neighbourhood playspaces are designed to cater for the needs of more than one user group, and for more than one type of activity. Toddler, junior and senior play areas will be provided and sited around a picnic areas/shelters and tables. Neighbourhood playspaces might be set along an urban waterway or natural settings and key components can therefore include:

- Play Equipment Area (5 pieces +) for age groups 1-12 in secured areas and where possible away from main roads and
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area
- Bins



Figure 21: Neighbourhood Playspaces

Include all components of play opportunity for toddlers through to seniors and are often located on larger parcels of land with elements of natural shade and open space. Examples include Torrens Road (above left) and Avoca Dell (Top Right)

5.1.3 District Playspace

The third level in the hierarchy is the District Playspace. District Parks tend to serve wider catchments and sited where special features (natural or manmade) such as a water body, a cluster of sporting facilities, civic areas, or historic site are located. In discussing this classification, it is assumed that visitors are offered greater recreation opportunities and therefore stay longer at the 'park'. As such, amenities such as water, car parking, toilets, barbecues and rubbish bins etc may all be warranted.

Other key aspects of District playspaces include a safe (normally fenced) play area for young children and areas where parents and carers can meet and socialise in a safe environment. Children's birthday parties are common occurrences in such parks and parents can prepare barbecues in areas with good surveillance of play equipment which has an additional safeguard of fencing to prevent children from leaving the playspace.

District level open space can also be used for specific activities such as youth recreation, sporting facilities, dog parks or adult exercise areas whereby the land parcel is designed to be used for a number of 'specific' activities normally identified in a separate recreation, leisure or open space strategy.

▪ District Playspace Components

When discussing the playspace component of District level parks, it is assumed that the following components would be provided:

- Play Equipment Area for all age groups (often fenced or secured in areas of high safety concern such as main roads)
- Imaginative Creative Area (natural settings)
- Non Structured Play Area
- Adult / Carer Area



Figure 22: District Playspaces

Sturt Reserve Playspace (Top Left) as a parcel of open space is classified as Regional although the playspace equipment focussed more on toddlers and juniors making it a small district. The Memorial Park playspace (top right) is also of a District classification, but consideration is needed with regards to fencing or natural buffers between roads and play areas.

5.1.4 Regional Playspaces

Regional playspaces are similar to the District classification but with additional components that would attract both local and regional visitors. This may be in the form of an adventure playground, water park, or unique aspect such as additional space for larger community events such as carnivals and concerts.

Regional playspaces are often well landscaped and/or use the natural landscape to offer a unique experience. There are currently no playspaces of regional classification in the Rural City of Murray Bridge, but given its unique riverfront aspect, there is opportunity to enhance and further develop one of the existing riverfront spaces into a playspace of regional importance.



Figure 31 Regional Playspace Opportunities

Whilst there are currently no playspaces of regional significance in the Rural City of Murray Bridge; its riverfront open spaces provide a good opportunity for further enhancement to attract and retain tourists to the City.

5.2 Complementary Design Components

While the highlighted playspace classifications align themselves with the Playspace Development Model, this does not consider other design concepts which should and could be included within all playspaces and parks. These will obviously vary from classification to classification and in some instances park to park, but could include some or all of the following additional design elements which have been referenced from a number of industry sources.⁵

5.2.1 Shade

Shade, particularly during the hotter summer months is vital. Natural shade through trees is highly desirable but due to the time it takes for growth in 'new' playspaces, built shade in the form of pergolas or shelters may be appropriate for parents and carers whereas shade over play equipment may not be feasible for all 'playgrounds' but would be warranted in those parks which encourage longer visitation (district or higher classifications). Should natural shading be available, tree management and maintenance need to be well considered due to the potential for falling limbs and branches, but in some instances built structures such as sail shades may be more favourable.

5.2.2 Fencing

Fencing is often highly desirable in areas where adults use open space with children especially for children's parties, barbecues and social gatherings. While fencing should not be a complete safeguard to children's safety and the ultimate onus on the parent or carer to ensure the safety of the child, fences do provide an additional safeguard in relation to forming a major barrier between the child and physical dangers such as main roads, major waterways or steep embankments in natural settings. However, it is not recommended that all playspaces be fenced but rather those which are used for larger social gatherings such as District level facilities, or those that have obvious physical dangers to children or other park users.

⁵ Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria (Now Play Australia); July 2001 Promoting the Value of Play; Play Area Development Policy for Local Government.

5.2.3 Paths

Paths within playspaces and parks should be sited carefully to minimise their impact upon other uses of a park. For example, two paths criss-crossing a reserve will break it into four small spaces which may each be too small to be useful.

Busy paths, especially cycle paths, may intrude upon quiet spaces and disturb users. Paths open up otherwise inaccessible places, and the desirability of a path cutting through an area must first be carefully assessed. All path surfaces should be selected to blend visually into the surrounds. Path systems need to be considered for at least two purposes:

- **'Functional' paths**

These have a main purpose of efficient circulation of people between two or more points and also address 'accessibility' to and from playspaces that are often sited deep within reserves away from 'normal' pedestrian links. Such paths may have 'functional' convenience as their primary purpose and consider access for people with disabilities and those with mobility challenges, but also add to visual landscape of the park.

Paths also need to be well sited to ensure users are not forced out of their way and sometimes it may be valuable for Council to monitor patterns of use ('desire lines') before constructing a 'formal' route.

- **Recreational paths**

These are not necessarily the quickest way between points, but may be sited to pass through attractive or interesting areas, simply for the pleasure of the journey. They may be intended for walking or cycling and the surfaces should be considered for their contribution to the recreation experiences of users. For example, rough or bumpy dirt paths are increasingly rare in the suburban landscape but children derive great pleasure from walking or riding along such paths, especially if they pass through varied terrain, over puddles, bridges and other features, and at times pass through overhanging vegetation or long grass. These opportunities are important as part of the recreation spectrum, but should not be confused with the need to provide convenient access ways through the neighbourhoods.

5.2.4 Softfall

Kidsafe NSW has developed a series of information sheets pertaining to play design and management one of which pertains specifically to softfall⁶. All playground equipment with a fall height 600mm or more must have an 'impact attenuating' surface beneath to minimise serious head or other injuries in the event of falls.

Whilst no one material has proven to be the best product for impact attenuating surfacing, consideration of factors such as environmental conditions, cost and personal preference may be applied when selecting a material. The two main types of playground surfacing products are loose fill and solid materials

- **Loose Fill**

Loose fill includes products such as bark mulch, wood chips, wood fibre, rubber mulch, grape seed and sand and these products are generally less expensive than solid materials upon installation but require regular maintenance and top ups. Considering the cost of ongoing maintenance, solid materials may compare favourably over the lifespan of the surfacing.

- **Solid Fill**

Solid Materials include products such as synthetic grass, rubber tiles and wet pour rubber. The impact attenuating qualities of solid materials varies according to the thickness of the layer and the composition of the material. Solid materials can work well in combination with loose fill products providing a fixed surface beneath heavy traffic areas such as under swings and at the run-out (base) of slides. This reduces both the ongoing costs and labour to replenish the loose fill, as required.

Whilst some studies support loose fill over solid with regards to safety when falling from height, the aesthetics of solid over loose combined with a perception of foreign objects finding their way into loose fill softfall, has led to an increased demand from the community to construct more playspaces with solid fill.

⁶ Playground Surfacing Information Sheet; June 2015 extracted from <http://www.kidsafensw.org/imagesDB/wysiwyg/PlaygroundSurfacing2015.pdf>

As stated however, there is no one answer for this and each playspace must be considered in isolation, but the more natural areas such as local playspaces and potentially components of nature play in larger developments may not warrant the cost or design impact of solid fill. Each will be unique and ultimately the choice of Council must be put down to a number of factors to include budget, aesthetics, playspace type and ultimately and foremost, safety and adhering to standards.

5.2.5 Nature Play

Nature play is making a resurgence as local authorities are recognising the importance of promoting play and offering children an opportunity to learn and grow through interaction with their natural environments. Traditionally this has been difficult for some councils' to embrace given the 'lack of standards for nature', but increasingly many are now introducing natural areas into playground designs to encourage cognitive, social and physical development of the child.

Many good examples are now emerging across Australia whereby the use of the landscape is enhanced to create natural areas such as creek beds, sand pits, tree logs and areas for exploration. Normally these are included in higher level playspace developments, but consideration should be given to lower, less well developed areas and the notion that a child will play where equipment is not present and therefore a local open space that is well designed and managed, can in itself be an excellent opportunity to promote and develop nature play.

5.2.6 Barbecues

Generally, barbecues are not considered appropriate for local playspaces but may be considered for neighbourhood if warranted through demand and certainly district and regional parks if the conditions are suitable. However, the installation of barbecues requires a level of facility provision (tables, toilets, water, shelter, lighting, electricity supply, car parking etc.) and a commitment to maintenance and therefore it is recommended that these be supplied only in District or higher level parks.

5.2.7 Seating and Tables

Seating is an important way of encouraging adults to accompany their children to play, as well as providing for the elderly and others. Seating should be available in winter sun and under summer shade. More than one configuration of seating is valuable, to cater for more than one group at a time and to facilitate either solitude or interaction, depending upon the users wishes.

A variety of styles of seating is important:

- Formal seats with back and arm rests are valued by many older people;
- Care-givers need to be able to sit close to playing children and
- Edges to 'perch' on and to adapt to more than one purpose (such as walking and balancing on, as a table for sand play, as a marker or boundary in games etc) will be valued by both children and teenagers.

A diverse range of seating is thus more likely to satisfy the needs of a diverse range of users and should be available in all parks and playspaces (natural or manmade)

Picnic tables are not always necessary in a reserve and are recommended to be developed only in Neighbourhood playgrounds or higher classifications. They may however be useful if sited so adults can supervise children while seated and the shape and orientation considered both for the comfort of users and for ease of supervision. Hexagonal or octagonal shaped tables allow parents to change their position and to monitor children in any direction.

5.2.8 Toilets

Toilets are often requested in and around parks but the cost to do so in every park is not viable. Toilets are however normally warranted in larger parks which are a destination in their own right and where people would travel to for a specific reason. These could include sports precincts, youth parks, dog parks and larger playspaces of at least a district level. It is therefore recommended that toilets only be considered in these classifications if warranted and no other public conveniences are located close by.

5.2.9 Ancillary Services

As with toilets, ancillary services such as water, bike racks and formalised car parking for example may all be considered important in destinations where people travel further to and therefore tend to stay longer at. Given this rationale, these facilities would certainly be warranted in District or Regional playspaces with consideration given to inclusion in larger well sited neighbourhood areas where parents or carers may walk or cycle to with their children.

Section Six: The Strategic Response

Given the findings and the opportunities identified in this report, the following forms the basis of a strategic response for the provision and management of playspaces across the Rural City of Murray Bridge for the next 10 years.

6.1 A Vision for Play

Play is considered a valuable social asset for the community and Council recognises that it has a duty to provide opportunities for children to play freely in safe open space areas and manage assets accordingly. The vision for playspace management and provision is therefore:

'A wide range of play opportunities which promote the social, physical and cognitive development of children, Councils playspaces are recognised as being unique, safe and innovative and will promote both local and regional tourism to the Rural City of Murray Bridge'

6.2 Guiding Principles

A number of Guiding Principles are suggested to assist in the ongoing management and supply of playspaces across the City and include the following:

GP1: Understanding Play

The importance of play is recognised by Council and it will strive to provide opportunities for children of all ages and abilities to develop the cognitive, social and physical skills and abilities.

GP2: Recognising Play

Council acknowledges that children will have different needs at various stages of their development and will generally refer to demographic groups as:

- Toddlers 1-3 years of age
- Juniors 3 -6 years of age
- Seniors 6 -12 years of age
- Teenagers 13+

GP3: Access to Play (500 for 500)

The whole community should have access to playspaces regardless of demographic profiling and location. This principle is based on the notion that where possible, practical and feasible, a playspace will be accessible within walking distance (500m) of all homes in residential areas and townships with over 500 people

GP4: Classifying Play

Playspaces will be classified according to their intended catchment with higher classifications including more components of the Playspace Development Model. Classifications are therefore discussed by Council in terms of local, neighbourhood, district and regional

GP5: Quality Play

Council will endeavour to provide more quality playspaces over smaller pocket parks. This principle may mean a justification in fewer smaller local parks, and the development of larger neighbourhood and district parks noting the 500 for 500 principle.

GP6: Designing Play

Design of playspaces will be in line with the intended classification and in accordance with national standards that guide their construction and installation⁷. Risk management should also be considered and whilst this must be mitigated, managing and balancing it against encouraging learning and development needs to be considered. Play Australia have developed a management guide that aims to balance risk with encouraging play and should be referred to as a source of reference for this design principle⁸.

Playspaces are broader than play equipment however and should offer a range of experiences and opportunities to complement rather than duplicate provision. Additional features should be in line with the playspace development model with ancillary services recommended as follows:

⁷ AS 4685, AS 1428, AS/NZS 4422 and AS/NZS 4486.1

⁸ Play Australia and Cummins E; Getting the Balance Right 2015

Seating

All playspaces will offer either natural or purpose built seating

Shade and Shelter

Where feasible and practical, play equipment and play areas should take advantage of natural shade from trees although should not necessarily be sited directly under them due to risks associated with falling limbs. District and regional classification playspaces, i.e. those attracting longer visitation, should however offer both natural and built shade structures to protect children and their families from harmful UV Rays.

Fencing

Playspaces of a District or Regional classification may be considered appropriate to fence with local and neighbourhood only warranting fencing should they be sited adjacent to hazards such as car parks or main roads. In all instances however, fencing should not be considered as a failsafe protection for children and ultimately the onus of their safety should be on the parent or carer regardless of whether playspaces are fenced or not.

Toilets

Given their catchment, local and neighbourhood playspaces do not warrant toilets but district and regional should be located close to, or have purpose built on site facilities.

GP7: Iconic Play

Murray Bridge's unique riverfront landscape provides an ideal opportunity to develop iconic District and Regional playspaces for locals and tourists alike and will be capitalised upon accordingly.

GP8: Managing Play

Unless identified as a strategic priority in an area of under supply, the management of existing playspaces will take precedence over developing new playspaces.

Priority development will be given to those areas where a gap has been identified and those with ageing infrastructure.

GP9: Partnerships and Stakeholder Relationships

Council will identify and work with a number of partners and stakeholders including developers to ensure a full range of accessible playspaces are provided in the community.

GP10: Monitoring Play

Council will monitor its playspaces to ensure they continue to meet current and future generations' needs. All playspaces over 15yrs will be assessed for removal, replacement or enhancement and an appropriate budget applied.

6.3 Recommendations

The following provides an overview of the existing playspaces with Table 7 below summarising the proposed actions to playspaces noting that further community consultation will be required.

Table 8 on the following page provides a snapshot of recommendations along with priorities which are based on the life stage of the asset combined with identified areas of need (gaps) or those that are deemed oversupplied and therefore justified for enhancement or removal. Priorities are discussed in terms of:

- High: 1-3 years
- Medium: 3-5 years
- Low: 5-10years

Costs for each action are based on 2016 market estimates and make an assumption (where relevant) that to enhance a playspace or include additional equipment, a figure of between \$5k - \$10k per piece (swing, slide, rocker etc) is reasonable.

This can of course vary depending on the type of upgrade, the amount of equipment being erected, and landscaping and furniture, but the rationale behind this includes the notion that existing playspaces are already established and enhancement includes upgrades and improvements to the equipment.

	Remove	RM	take out and do not replace
	Replace	RP	remove equipment and replace with same classification
	Remove and Replace	RM&RP	remove equipment and replace with different classification
	Enhance	E	add equipment to meet current or a higher classification
	Maintain	M	keep as is and maintain to the current level

Table 7: Proposed Recommendations

Table 8: Existing Playspace Recommendations

PS #	Suburb and Site	Current Classification				Recommendation					Future Classifications				Comment	Priority and \$ Estimate		
		L	N	D	R	RM	RP	RM&RP	E	M	L	N	D	R		H	M	L
Murray Bridge North																		
1	Oak Avenue Reserve														Add additional equipment and/or landscape but maintain local class.		15k	
2	McNamara Park														New playspace developed as a Neighbourhood to meet a gap.	50k		
3	LeMessurier Oval														Maintain and work with club to ensure open community access			0k
4	War Memorial Park														Fence or make safe areas that are of concern adjacent to main roads and include shade structures.	15k		
Murray Bridge North East																		
5	Thiele Reserve														Enhance with additional equipment to senior level as a riverfront PS		25k	
6	Torrens Road Reserve														Maintain neighbourhood classification and replace in the next 5 years		50k	
7	Avoca Dell														Maintain playspace in its current classification and monitor			0k
Murray Bridge South East																		
8	Sturt Reserve														Master plan the whole site and develop into iconic regional park with water play features		1.5m	
9	Rollond Reserve														Redesign and enhance to neighbourhood using natural landscape and equipment	25k		
10	Long Island Reserve														Redesign to meet riverfront iconic park and include new equipment and shade	100k		
11	Parkview Reserve														Maintain as is with potential to include additional junior and senior equipment in the coming years			25k
12	Owl Drive Reserve														Remove equipment in the next 3 years and replace with local classification	50k		
Murray Bridge South West																		
13	Schubert Street Reserve														Remove equipment and do not replace at this stage. Homburg meeting Ped Shed			
14	Homburg Park														Minor upgrades to include play equipment for seniors and enhancement of areas for young people		50k	
15	Johnstone Park														Maintain and work with club to ensure open community access			0k
16	Christian Reserve														Enhance with additional equipment for older children and shade		50k	

PS #	Suburb and Site	Current Classification				Recommendation					Future Classifications				Comment	Priority and \$ Estimate		
		L	N	D	R	RM	RP	RM&RP	E	M	L	N	D	R		H	M	L
Monarto																		
17	Monarto Rec Centre														Enhance to neighbourhood to meet the needs of the a broader age range and introduce shade		25k	
Mypolonga																		
18	Irene Hughes														The current location offers full access and a District playspace is warranted for the whole community. An additional smaller (neighbourhood) playspace may be justified in conjunction with the school and this should be investigated further	100k		
Wellington																		
19	Baker Reserve														Minor additions to cater for older children and introduce shade structures		25k	
Totals		9	7	3	0	1	3	3	7	5	4	8	5	1		340k	1.74m	250k
		19				19				18				\$2,105,000				

6.4 New Playspace Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on areas of identified gaps in provision based on the 500m ped shed and shown in Map 7

Costs for new playgrounds assume an estimate for both playspace and landscaping with the latter tending to be higher for District and Regional classifications due to their unique aspects and design features. Estimates are therefore put to be in the vicinity of:

- Local: \$50 - \$100k
- Neighbourhood: \$100 - \$150k
- District - \$150 - \$250k
- Regional \$500k +

In all gap areas, Council can only develop playspaces either directly on community land or alternatively in partnership with third party such as a school or private land owner. Such playspaces may not however be fully accessible and it is therefore a preference to construct playspaces on public land where possible.

Gap areas also assume those that are residential and not in areas such as industry, retail or semi rural unless of course the 500 for 500 principle applies.

Priorities in the following table for new playspaces are discussed in terms of High, Medium and Low as per the existing playspaces, which align with the same timeframes of 1-3, 3-5 and 5-10 years. A total of 6 new playspaces are being proposed broken down as 2 Local, 3 Neighbourhood and 1 District (Table 9).

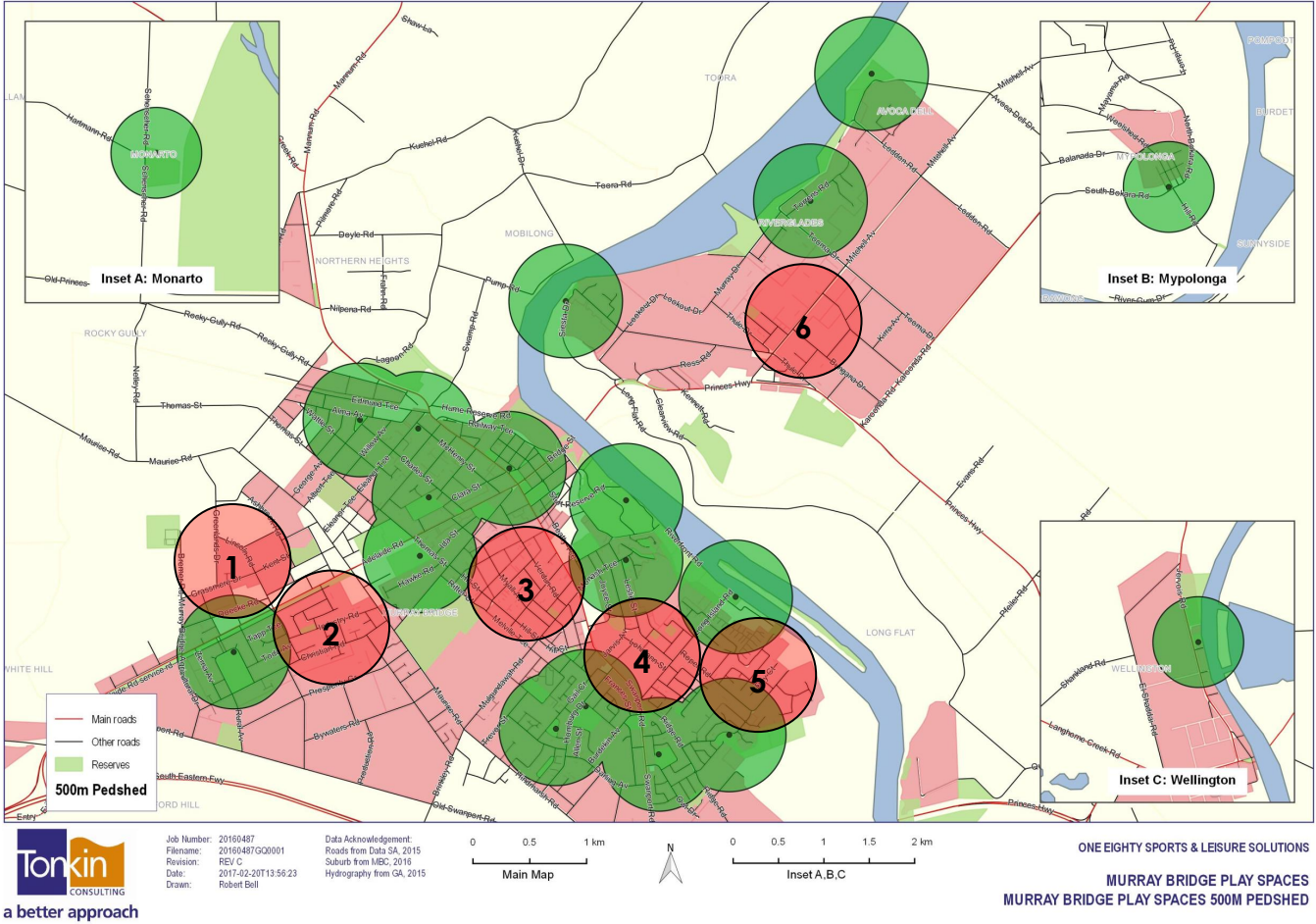


Table 9: Proposed New Playspaces

PS	L	N	D	R	Comment/Location	H	M	L	
1					Adelaide Road a physical barrier to Christian therefore new playspace North of Adelaide Road / South of Grasmere is warranted. No public land in the area and therefore may require developer contribution			\$75,000	
2					Area between Christian Reserve and Johnston Park is residential and in a ped shed gap. Opportunity to develop a neighbourhood playspace on Tim Overall Reserve on Industry Road		\$75,000		
3					Land for local playspace to be identified between the golf course in the west and Swanport Road to the east, Sanden St to the north and Mulgundawah Road to the South.	\$50,000			
4					Investigate Neighbourhood playspace to be developed at either Parish Crescent or Wickens Reserve and include passive elements and open space and picnic / BBQ areas	\$100,000			
5					New district youth recreation park to be investigated / developed on the corner of Long Island and Swanport Roads and designed with CPTED Principles ⁹		\$200,000		
6					Gap east of Thule Drive and north of Mitchell Avenue. Potential to develop playspace on Raymond Road Reserve	\$50,000			
	2	3	1	0		\$200,000	\$275,000	\$75,000	\$600,000

⁹ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

6.5 Summary of Provision

A summary of recommendations for the playspace strategy is as follows:

- 1 playspace being removed
- 3 playspaces being replaced
- 3 playspaces being removed and replaced with a higher classification
- 7 playspaces being enhanced with additional equipment
- 5 being maintained and monitored throughout their lifecycle and
- 6 proposed new playspaces over the next 10 years

As and when these time frames are met, Council will need to undergo a similar strategy to this to determine future provision of its playspaces, but in assessing the current and proposed supply, the following impacts on provision will be realised:

- current provision = 19
- current population supply ratio = 1:1104
- current 0-14 supply ratio = 1:68
- supply in the next 3 years excluding new = 18 playspaces (1:1165 and 1:72) ratio respectively
- With New Playspaces¹⁰:
 - supply in the next 3 years = 21 (1:999 and 1:62 respectively)
 - supply in the next 5 years = 23 (1:912 and 1:56 respectively)
 - supply in the next 10 years = 24 (1:874 and 1:54 respectively)

Costs to implement the playspace strategy are seen in Table 10 and highlight staged options for budgetary purposes for both existing assets and proposed new playspaces.

1-3 Years		
Existing	New	Total
\$340,000	\$200,000	\$540,000
3-5 Years		
Existing	New	Total
\$1,740,000	\$325,000	\$2,065,000
5-10 Years		
Existing	New	Total
\$25,000	\$75,000	\$100,000
Total		
Existing	New	Total
\$2,105,000	\$600,000	\$2,705,000

Table 10: Summarised Costs

These figures are indicative only and include cost estimates for the preparation of master plans for identified sites including the Sturt Reserve as a major tourist destination with an indicative capital budget of \$1.5m.

Such a development would only likely to occur with external funding assistance through grants and the like but should this not proceed, then a realistic budget of approximately \$1,205,000 would apply for the next 10 years for the playspace strategy for the Rural City of Murray Bridge with a an enhanced range playspaces provided whereby Council has less smaller playspaces and more quality areas that meet a wider range of needs as seen below in Table 11

	L	N	D	R
Current Supply	9	7	3	0
Future Supply (with New playspaces)	6	11	6	1

Table 11: Summary of Provision

¹⁰ Supply ratios based on current population without projected increases

6.6 Funding Opportunities

As with many sport and recreation related projects whereby significant capital and operational funds are required, funding may come from a number of sources including Councils own budgetary process as well as from the State and Federal Government by way of grants and in some albeit lesser instances, direct funding support for a particular project.

The State Government of South Australia through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, offer grants for open space and urban design with over \$10m available in for the 2016-17 financial year. Grants within this source of funding include:

Open Space Grants

Aims to assist in the strategic purchase, planning and enhancement of public open space under the following categories:

- Open space planning: concept plans, masterplans, detailed designs, open space and public realm strategies)
- Development and enhancement of open space reserves: To include regional parks, linear parks, reserves and play spaces
- Strategic land purchases: to acquire land for public open space.

Places for People Grants

Places for People grants provide financial assistance for the planning, urban design and development of public spaces to support the well being of our communities. Projects should enhance place activation and improve the connectivity of prominent public spaces through creative design and development.

The Places for People grant program provides funding under the following categories:

- planning and urban design (such as urban design frameworks or masterplans across a council area for places of strategic importance and/or detailed design and contract documentation for key public realm enhancement projects)
- development for prominent public spaces (including foreshore, riverfront, linear park, main street precincts, civic plazas and town squares).

For a project to be eligible it must directly link to the directions and priorities of the Planning Strategy for South Australia (the 30-Year Plan for Greater Adelaide or volumes of the Regional Planning Strategies for South Australia) and

- May only be made by Local Governments or from organisations representing outback communities outside of the Local Government area (not by community groups or private organisations).
- Preference will be given to projects that have at least a 50% funding contribution from council.
- Projects must be carried out on land that is freely accessible to the public.
- Projects must be able to be completed within 18 months of grant funding approval.
- Councils should have successfully completed all contractual obligations for previously funded projects.
- Open Space projects should be of regional significance or contribute to the use and enjoyment of local reserves and play spaces.
- Places for People projects should demonstrate a sequential process of previous strategic design foundations.
- Funding is only available for new works - retrospective funding is not available for projects, studies or land purchases undertaken prior to grant funding approval.

The Office for Recreation and Sport (ORS) also offers assistance to organisations for both minor (\$25,000 - \$200,000) and Major (\$200,000 - \$1,000,000) sport and recreation facility developments with grants available annually. More information about other State grants can be found at the website: **www.grantassist.sa.gov.au**

6.7 Conclusion and Summary

The Rural City of Murray Bridge is well supplied by way of playspaces albeit with a slightly lower number per 1000 population to the region, but a higher ratio for the age cohort 0-14. This is only a benchmark but with the development of 2 additional playspaces, particularly in the gap areas as identified in the study, Council will meet the benchmark and have a good supply of facilities for the whole community.

The challenge however will be to ensure a varied range of opportunity is supplied and whilst the notion of quality over quantity is generally supported, this strategy has identified several gap areas which will increase the number of playspaces should the recommendations be adopted.

The strategy has also focussed on a framework of the playspace development model and the understanding that equipment forms only 1 aspect of a playspace. It is therefore important to realise that whilst the four classifications are discussed in terms of target users and catchments; each should offer a unique element and be designed with the whole spectrum of the playspace development model in mind which may include sensitive and creative landscaping.

This notion should also be applied to the theme or 'feel' of each park/playspace as currently there is a lack of identity with them. Naming of playgrounds could tie with a local historical, cultural or community perspective and the current names associated merely with the reserve or in most instances the street on which it sits provides no sense of identity. A review of names is therefore recommended and further consideration given to theming as and when Council commences the implementation of the strategy.

Additional focus should also be given to the unique aspect that is Murray Bridge and its riverfront setting and its draw on local and regional tourism. Playspaces will play a key component in retaining and attracting tourists to the area and Council has an opportunity to capitalise on the economic impact playspaces have on the City. This will largely be from the development of district and regional facilities on and along the river front which will cater to both locals and tourists alike.

With a staged implementation of this strategy, Council will be in a better position to provide its residents and visitors with a varied range of opportunities but must continue to monitor and manage playspaces in the coming years. It must also continue to acknowledge, recognise and promote the importance of play on both the social and economic impacts on the community, as well as the growth and development of children across the Rural City of Murray Bridge.