



# Meander Valley Council

EASTERN PLAY SPACE STRATEGY 2024





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Open spaces are key components in urban planning, helping to define the atmosphere and culture of a place. They are key to the health and wellbeing of the community, providing areas for social interaction, the pursuit of healthy activities, connectivity, the beautification of the urban environment, preservation of nature and the management of urban stormwater drainage.

As our townships continue to grow it is vital we prioritise the value of open spaces and recognise the benefits they provide to the community and how they enhance townships and the planning of the Meander Valley Council municipal area.

# Executive Summary

The purpose of the Eastern Play Space Strategy is to provide strategic guidance in the provision of facilities such as playgrounds, exercise equipment sites, skate parks and BMX tracks in the areas of Blackstone Heights, Prospect Vale and Hadspen.

The Strategy reviews Council's current provision and outlines a 10-year plan, considering community needs, demographics, open space and playground trends and safety standards.

As townships have developed, Council has taken on areas of open space from developers as part of land subdivision

works. Playgrounds were installed in some of these areas as a way of defining the space and providing a service to the community. This has resulted in over serviced urban community areas, with underutilised assets that are not being renewed in alignment with the asset life.

Historically play areas have been given a 10-year useful life, contributing to unachievable renewal schedules. Council has reviewed the useful life in line with current practices and determined a 15-year life is more appropriate.

Council has reviewed the current provision of open space in the eastern urban

areas in line with Council Strategies and identified opportunities to more efficiently service our communities. This is to be done by categorising open space, defining the level of service; identifying opportunities for consolidation of services; providing contemporary play spaces; and the purchase and sale of land.

**The value of open space for the health and wellbeing of the community.**

# Introduction

## What is a Play Space Strategy?

A Play Space Strategy expands on township strategies and local planning frameworks to guide Council in the future development of play spaces.

The Strategy focuses on the provision of play spaces rather than playgrounds, acknowledging that spaces should cater for a wider demographic than only children and that these spaces act as social gathering areas, away from the hustle and bustle of our busy lives.

The Strategy will encompass areas that cater for both nature based play and structured or designed areas of play and recreational activities.

## The Importance of Play

Play is an integral part of the health and wellbeing of a community; it is how children learn and develop life skills. Play is not solely synonymous with children, it is an environment where people socialise, develop creativity and respond to challenges.

In addition to the obvious benefits of play, (movement, health and wellbeing, engagement with the environment), it also has an impact on our sensory and spatial development (balance, vision, hearing, perception of distance). It is a complete, all body experience.

Globally studies are indicating that peo-

ple of all ages should have “more green time and less screen time.” The negative impacts of excessive screen time and our increasingly sedentary lifestyles are becoming more apparent as people struggle with health related impacts. Spending time outside helps people build physical and emotional resilience and improves their social and life skills.

The value of healthy and diverse play areas for the wellbeing of the community.

The densification of our urban areas increases competition for space and the complexity of daily living in our towns. This affects the availability and use of space, impacting on the health of the environment which our communities live in. Together, these factors affect the daily pattern of life and how communities play and interact with their environment. Planning for well designed open spaces is key to the health and wellbeing of our community.



## Existing Status

Council has a register of open spaces and associated play spaces which is linked to the ongoing maintenance and capital expenditure of the facilities. The renewal or upgrade of a playground is currently assessed on a as needs basis, rather than being informed by a strategic plan.

Council's current playground assets have a value of \$952,000 for playgrounds only and \$1,008,000 for all play spaces, with an annual operational and maintenance expenditure of \$20,000. The current 10-year capital expenditure budget is \$70,000 for playgrounds only and \$292,000 for all play spaces.

Property values in urban areas have increased considerably within Meander Valley over the last 5 years. Growing community expectation for improved open space and recreational experiences has led to higher annual costs of managing and providing quality open space.

Given these increases, it is essential Council effectively plans for the provision of open space and recreational facilities.

Healthy communities through  
active design.

## What's next?

The Strategy will set out a vision for play spaces by reviewing existing provision and demographic data, identifying opportunities for improvement, defining catchments and outlining priorities.

This Strategy will not prescribe types of play, rather it will identify the locations of play spaces, so that as spaces are developed, they can respond to the current trends and community needs.

Council is committed to providing planned and sustainable infrastructure services throughout the municipal area. The development and implementation of this Strategy is the first of many steps in delivering a sustainable service that responds to community needs, with best practice and inclusive principles.



## Strategy Objectives

The key objectives of this Strategy are:

- Provide equitable distribution of playgrounds across townships and identify gaps and excess supply,
- Classify open space and the level of service to ensure infrastructure and facilities meet the hierarchy and adequately service our communities,
- Ensure play areas meet relevant Standards and best practice design principles, focussing on play value, accessibility, inclusivity and integrated park design and connectivity,
- Ensure playgrounds reflect cultural and/or heritage values to the local area, and,
- Implement community consultation processes to ensure meaningful, creative solutions are developed in the establishment of play areas.

## Vision

Meander Valley Council will provide a diverse range of quality, accessible, challenging, fun, well designed and maintained playgrounds and play areas that assist in people's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, as well as providing community gathering spaces that encourage community health and wellbeing.

## Strategy Context

The recommendations and priorities identified in this Strategy will provide direction for the next 10 years, with actions being included in ongoing Capital Works Programs and Long Term Financial Plans.

A number of actions can be addressed within current budget provisions, with others (such as upgrades, replacements and relocations of some playgrounds) requiring additional capital funding. The Strategy will identify a number of land divestments to better service the community.

It is important to note that the Strategy does not commit Council to implementing all of the recommended actions. The Strategy will be used as a guide to improve the distribution of play areas and to better service the community as resources become available.



# Public Open Space

## Regional Overview – Public Open Space

Meander Valley encompasses 3,821 km<sup>2</sup>, extending from the urban areas of Launceston to the world heritage areas of Cradle Mountain. The 2021 National Census states the population is at 20,709 with 5,864 families choosing to make Meander Valley their home.

The 2021 National Census indicated a 7.4% population increase within Meander Valley since the 2016 census, with demographics indicating an aging population in major townships such as Westbury and Deloraine.

The major population centres are located in the east of the municipality, with natural destinations located within the south and west. This separated distribution across the municipality reinforces the importance of Council providing natural spaces within townships.

## Defining Open Space

The Tasmanian Open Space Policy and Planning Framework (2010) defines open space as: 'Land and water settings maintained ... for a range of environmental and social purposes':

- Conservation of ecological processes;
- Conservation of cultural heritage and aesthetic values;
- Sport, recreation and leisure functions;
- Spaces to enhance the visual qualities and social character...of landscapes;
- Linear Linkages;
- Parks, playgrounds and other public spaces; and
- Hazard management.

## The Role of Open Space

Parks, waterways, streets, squares and trails make for a better quality of life. A network of well-designed and maintained open spaces enhances the character of places where people want to live, work and visit. Open space also provides the vital green corridors and infrastructure that helps manage water flow paths and mitigate climate change, creating liveable green cities that provide wildlife habitats, sports facilities, gathering spaces and parks.


In developing this Strategy, Council intends to create liveable open space that can meet the demands of the growing and changing population. The challenge will be to ensure we get the maximum benefit from our open spaces.




58  
Parks &  
Reserves



Council maintains a variety of open space for public use, including:

 36  
Playgrounds &  
fitness stations


8  
Sporting  
grounds

 4  
Dog parks

2  
Municipal  
swimming pools



 River  
Reserves

 Water-course  
Trails

 7  
Bike &  
skate parks

41  
Sporting  
facilities



**Open Spaces maintained  
by Meander Valley Council**

## Types of Open Space

For the purpose of this Strategy, open space areas have been classified by their hierarchy at a catchment level and based on their function. The terminology used is consistent with the Planning Framework.

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Council's Open Space Policy has been used to inform this Strategy in the defining and proposed provision of open spaces and associated assets throughout the municipal area.

The following types of open spaces and their definitions apply to this Strategy, as detailed in *Table 1*.

*Table 1: Types of Open Space*

<i>Type of Open Space</i>	<i>Description</i>
Township (Regional)	Services an entire township and often neighbouring smaller townships, it may also have a catchment that extends beyond Mender Valley Council's municipal boundaries. It is open space that provides a landscaped setting catering for a wide range of activities and demographics, including a variety of play equipment for various ages, fitness equipment and sporting facilities.
Neighbourhood (District)	Services a number of neighbourhoods within a township. It is open space that is landscaped and provides for primarily passive forms of recreation. Depending on the size of the reserve people may be able to partake in informal sessions of active recreation.

<i>Type of Open Space</i>	<i>Description</i>
Local	Services one neighbourhood and is located within walking distance of residential areas. They are small areas of open space that provides natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play. Local parks may have seating and play equipment.
Linear	Often servicing all three above types of open space, linear reserves act as green corridors to connect neighbourhoods and townships. They can be open spaces along water bodies, nature conservation areas, residential streets or other routes that provide opportunities for passive recreation. Linear reserves also facilitate the planning and implementation of green infrastructure – using green corridors to connect communities and manage urban stormwater drainage. Linear reserves may also contain equipment.



## Opportunities

An overview of the demographics from the 2021 census indicates:

- Prospect Vale has a larger proportion of teenagers than young children
- Both Hadspen and Blackstone Heights have an even amount of young children to teenagers.

The provision of open space can be identified by four categories: township, neighbourhood, local and linear. Each category provides a different level of service to the community. Table 2 provides an overview of each category.

Council has identified opportunities to retain, remove equipment, sell land, upgrade and provide new play spaces. This was informed by feedback from the community consultation, reviewing the existing provision of play spaces, their target audience, frequency of use, location and accessibility in conjunction with the proposed open space categories.

In implementing the recommendations for the proposed location of play spaces Council aspires to:

- Improve the quality of open spaces and play areas;
- Improve the provision and variety of play spaces;
- Increase the age range of people that the play areas service;
- Improve access and facilities for all age ranges and abilities;
- Ensure open spaces are safe, implementing best practice design principles;
- Reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour in open spaces; and
- Provide economic benefits to the local community and businesses.



Table 2. Open Space categories overview

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Linear</i>
Budget	\$250,000 +	\$100,000 - \$250,000	>\$65,000	\$55,000 - \$60,000 /500m
Catchment (child's walking time)	>15 minutes	≤ 15 minutes (1.2km)	< 10 minutes (150m – 800m)	Wherever feasible
Play zones	Senior and junior areas separated	Transitional equipment	Integral play for various ages	Connectivity with active features
Recreational facilities (BMX, skate park, basketball, etc)	✓ Where space permits	✓ Where space and budget permits	✗	✗



# Levels of Service

## Background

Prior to the development of this Strategy, Council did not define Levels of Service (LoS) for open spaces. This has resulted in an unstructured provision of equipment, with communities being either over or under serviced. This Strategy intends to define LoS and use this information to inform current and future open spaces.

Council maintains a variety of spaces that have been either acquired through strategic planning or gifted by developers as part of their 5% public open space contribution. Playgrounds have since been installed to define the space and provide the immediate residents with a service.

## Life of a Playground

Playgrounds were historically recorded as having a 10-year useful life (UL), however there is no known substantiation behind this assessment. Reviewing current park usage, equipment wear and tear and taking into consideration that the current equipment has outlasted the predicted UL, Council determined that a 15-year UL is appropriate.

## Park Categories

Historically, Council has not defined park categories and associated facilities. Parks have typically evolved over time to reflect the needs of a community. Park facilities have either been installed by Council or were donated by a local service club, organisation or member of the community.

## Inspections

Council undertakes inspections of open spaces and associated assets, the frequency of which is defined by relevant Standards, combined with the use of the open space. Parks with waterways are currently inspected on a biannual frequency. Parks with equipment are inspected using the frequency outlined in Table 3, defined by the Australian Standards for playgrounds.

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*Table 3. Playground equipment inspection frequencies*

<i>Inspection Type</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Routine	1 - 4 weeks (park maintenance)
Operational	Every 3 – 6 months
Comprehensive	1 per year

## Levels of Service links decision making with what the community experiences.

The purpose of Levels of Service is to transparently define what Council is delivering, enabling the community to know; how many and what types of parks are provided, what standard of park and associated facilities are provided, and what it costs. Levels of Service inform the development of sustainable infrastructure management and associated long term financial planning. Levels of Service influence; land acquisition/disposal, park categories, catchment areas, park management, and park facilities.

## Catchment Areas

Local government studies have shown an industry trend in the provision of playground facilities to be approximately one playground per 300-head of children between the ages of 0 – 17 years.

Typically, benchmarks for playground distribution employed by councils within a built-up urban environment aim to provide playgrounds within a 150 – 800 meter catchment radius of every residential property. Although challenging to achieve in all situations, this provides a guide for appropriately locating play areas.

The initial distribution of playgrounds within Meander Valley was driven by defining the park space, rather than considering the location of playgrounds and how the catchment area may already be serviced. In reviewing the distribution of play areas, Meander Valley Council has allocated a walking time of 5 minutes for local play areas, which encompasses a range of distances (0 – 1.5km) and better reflects the park hierarchy and LoS.

The catchment area was allocated for the following planning consideration:

- visibility of playground
- terrain e.g. hills
- variety of equipment
- travel paths

In addition to the above parameters the catchment area appropriately reflects the current condition of the existing playgrounds:

- Outdated and aging equipment
- Restricted servicing of age ranges
- Limited range of equipment within each playground
- Low usage patterns.

Council has assumed that the outcomes of this Strategy will provide better serviced communities through the provision of upgraded and updated play areas that are compiled a combination of destination (township and neighbourhood categories) and local play areas.

As such, the catchments allocated to the new, renewed and upgraded play areas have been allocated larger walking catchment areas:

- 5 minutes for all categories
- 10 minutes for local and neighbourhood categories
- 15 minutes for township category

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## Levels of Service

Table 4 outlines the LoS for the types of open spaces that Council provides and will guide Council in appropriately servicing the community. It was informed by reviewing comparable strategies.

## Benchmarking

Most local councils have Strategies guiding the provision of playgrounds, with funding varying depending on the nature of the play area from \$35,000 to in excess of \$250,000. Council implements a similar funding range for play equipment. Open space costs and associated Levels of Service are outlined in the table below.

*(On page following) Table 4: Depicting proposed Levels of Service of open spaces*

Table 4. Depicting proposed Levels of Service of open spaces

<i>Consideration</i>	<i>Township</i>	<i>Neighbourhood</i>	<i>Local</i>	<i>Linear</i>
<b>Estimated budget to develop</b>	\$250,000 +	\$100,000 - \$250,000	> \$65,000	\$55,000 - \$60,000 / 500m
<b>Size</b>	10 ha	0.75 ha - 2 ha	< 0.4 ha	Variable
<b>Area of service (walking time)</b>	> 15 minutes or drivable	≤ 15 minutes (1.2km)	<10 minutes (150m - 800m)	Wherever feasible
<b>Play zones for different ages</b>	Senior and junior areas separated	Transitional equipment	Integral play for various ages	Connectivity with active features
<b>Recreational facilities (BMX, skate park, basketball, tennis table etc.)</b>	✓ where space permits	✓ where space permits	✗	✗
<b>Sporting facilities</b>	✓	✗	✗	✗
<b>Shade - natural</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Fitness equipment</b>	✓	✓	✓ Dependant on location	✓
<b>Shade - structured</b>	✓	Appropriate to park setting	✗	✓ Dependant on location
<b>Shelter</b>	✓	Appropriate to park setting	✗	✗
<b>Landscaping</b>	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting
<b>Picnic tables</b>	May have 4 +	May have 2 - 3	1 only	Appropriate to park setting
<b>Bins</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Public toilets</b>	✓	Appropriate to park setting	✗	✗
<b>BBQ's</b>	✓	✓	✗	✗
<b>Drinking fountain</b>	✓	✓	✗	✗
<b>Pathways</b>	✓	✓	Appropriate to park setting	✓
<b>Car parking</b>	✓	✗	✗	✗
<b>Seating</b>	May have 4 +	May have 2 - 3	1 only	Appropriate to park setting
<b>Accessibility</b>	✓	✓	✓	Terrain appropriate
<b>Lighting</b>	✓	Way finding	Way finding	Way finding
<b>Fencing</b>	If necessary for safety	Specific to location, landscaping preferred	Specific to location, landscaping preferred	Specific to location, landscaping preferred
<b>Signage</b>	✓	✓	✓	Appropriate to park setting
<b>Water Sensitive Urban Design</b>	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting	Appropriate to park setting

## Proposal

Through the review of existing play areas and current strategies, Council officers determined a walking catchment for children of five minutes would be a more appropriate way to determine local play area levels of service, rather than a nominal 400m distance. Some parameters have been applied which has reduced the catchment areas of some play areas.

These parameters include:

- visibility of playground
- terrain e.g. hills
- variety of equipment
- travel paths e.g. walkway links

In addition to reviewing our current provision, allocating open space categories, defining catchments, and taking on board community feedback, Council reviewed township strategies to understand where new developments may occur and where open space will be located within the new developments.

This comprehensive review provides a long-term projection of the future provision of play areas identifying their priority and associated timeframes.





## Eastern Play Space Action Plan

The table following summarises the proposed direction for each play area, creation of new reserves and recreation facilities and the corresponding timing, priority and cost estimate.



Table 5: Action Plan

	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Age (Years)</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Cost (estimate)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Prospect Vale	1	Prospect Vale Park - Nature Play Space	7	Renew and upgrade	2032	Low	\$250,000	
	2	Chris Street (Henry Burrows) Reserve	20	Renew	2025	High	\$75,000	
	3	Bordin Street Reserve	6	Renew	2033	Low	\$75,000	
	4	Bimbimbi Avenue Reserve	3	Renew	2036	Low	\$30,000	
	5	Willow Lane Reserve - Play area	3	Renew	2036	Low	\$100,000	
	6	Waterhouse Court Reserve	20	Remove equipment and sell land	2025	High	\$5,000	
	7	Molecombe Drive Reserve	6	Renew	2033	Low	\$75,000	
	8	Buckingham Place Reserve	28	Remove equipment and create "park land"	2025	High	\$20,000	
	9	Las Vegas Drive Reserve – Play area	2	Renew	2037	Low	\$150,000	
	10	Country Club Avenue Reserve	12	Remove equipment and create "park land"	2025	High	\$10,000	
	11	Prospect Vale Park – Outdoor gym	14	Renew	2026	Medium	\$30,000	
	12	Las Vegas Drive – Outdoor gym	15	Renew	2027	Medium	\$30,000	
	13	Willow Lane – Outdoor gym	15	Renew	2026	Medium	\$30,000	
	14	Lower Chris Street	-	New	2028	Medium	\$75,000	Subject to Community Consultation
	15	Country Club Development	-	New	2028	Medium	150,000	

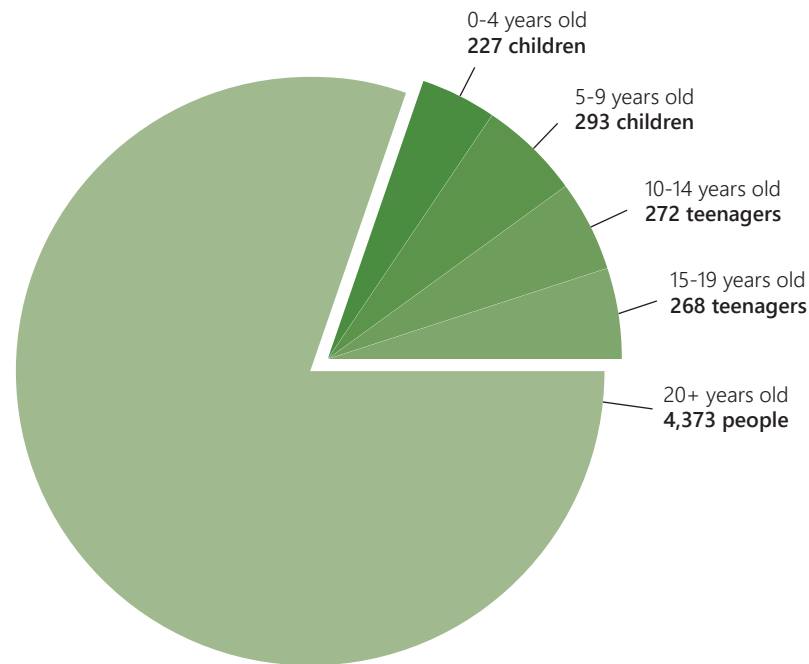
	<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Age (Years)</i>	<i>Proposal</i>	<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Cost (estimate)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Blackstone Heights	16	Blackstone Park – Car Park	14	Renew	2028	Low	\$50,000	
	17	Blackstone Park - Wetlands	5	Renew	2034	Low	\$150,000	
	18	Blackstone Park – Outdoor gym	13	Renew	2026	Medium	\$30,000	
	19	Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Linear	-	New	TBC	Low	\$150,000	New play area and reserve subject to subdivisions
	20	Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Linear	-	New	TBC	Low	\$60,000	New Outdoor gym and re-serve subject to subdivisions
Hadspen	21	Coronea Court Reserve	5	Renew	2034	Low	\$75,000	
	22	Poet's Place Reserve	12	Remove equipment and sell land	2024	High	\$5,000	
	23	Winifred Jane Reserve	12	Remove equipment and sell land	2025	High	\$5,000	
	24	Hadspen Recreation Ground	9	Renew	2031	Low	\$250,000	
	25	Hadspen Bull Run Reserve	3	Renew	2036	Low	\$250,000	
	26	Lions Park	17	Upgrade	2026	Medium	\$100,000	
	27	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve – play area	-	New	TBC	Low	\$150,000	New play area subject to subdivisions
	28	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve – outdoor gym	-	New	TBC	Low	\$30,000	New gym area subject to subdivisions
	29	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve – play area	-	New	TBC	Low	\$60,000	New play area subject to subdivisions

## Prospect Vale

Council's largest population centre with 5,433 people and 1,536 families making Prospect Vale their home. It has 9 play areas servicing the community. The average target age range of playgrounds is 2 – 14-years old.

Prospect Vale has no informal sporting spaces such as half basketball courts or skate parks. There are four gym sites located along the fitness trail that runs throughout Prospect Vale, connecting the parks and reserves with residential areas.

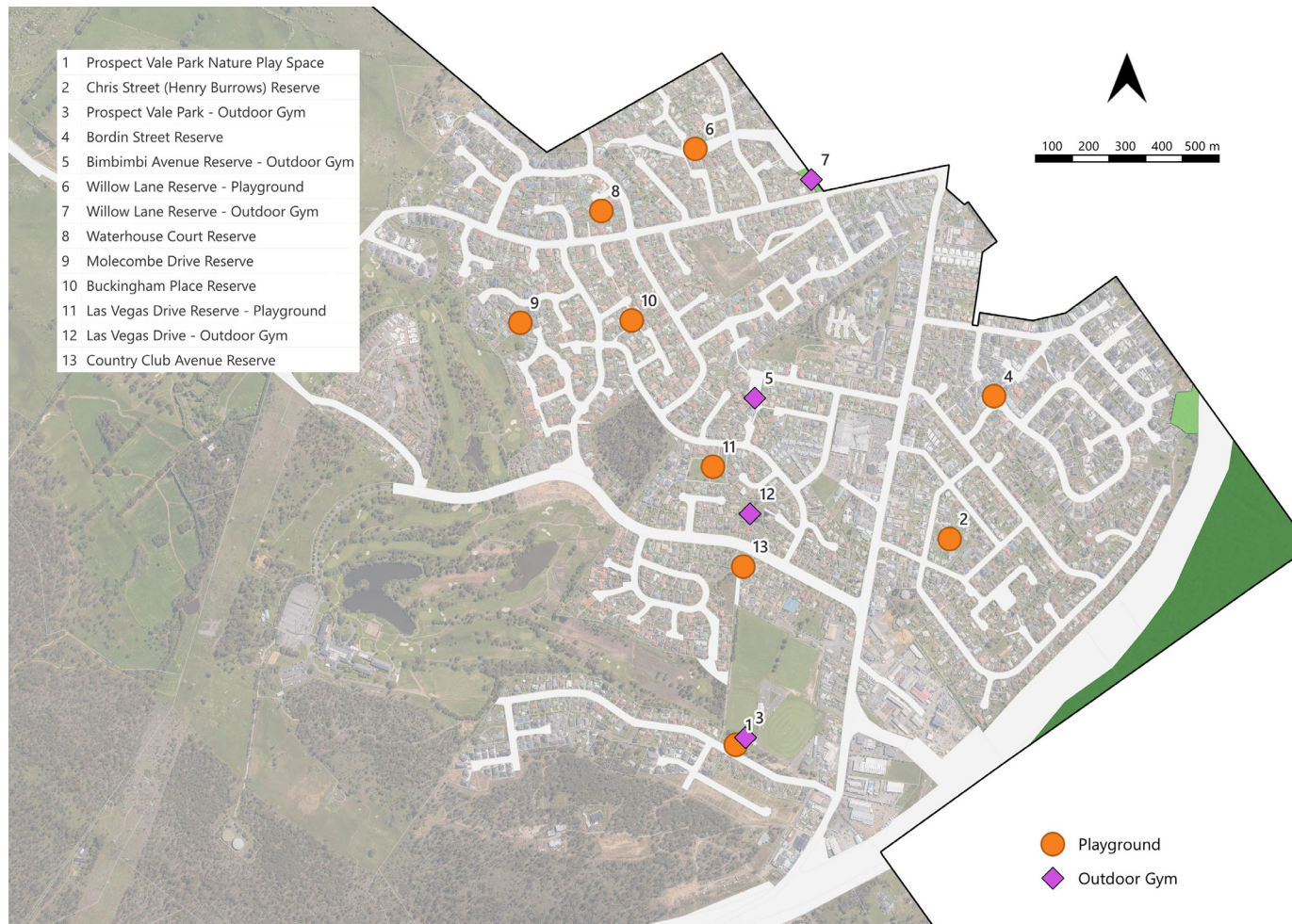
*The map following shows the distribution of existing play areas.*



5,433 people call Prospect Vale home.  
The adjacent chart shows the number of young people living in Prospect Vale (2021 census data)

**Distribution:** typically 400m radius for playground frequency and catchment

**Pattern of play:** primarily playground equipment aimed at 2 – 14 year olds, minimal inclusive play equipment, minor/insignificant skate ramps and four outdoor gym sites.



## Prospect Vale Existing Play Areas

Table 6.

<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Year built</i>
1	Prospect Vale Park Nature Play Space	2 Harley Parade	2017
2	Chris Street (Henry Burrows) Reserve	Chris Street	2012
3	Prospect Vale Park – Outdoor Gym	2 Harley Parade	2010
4	Bordin Street Reserve	Bordin Street	2018
5	Bimbimbi Avenue Reserve – Outdoor Gym	Bimbimbi Avenue	2021
6	Willow Lane Reserve - Playground	20 Willow Lane	2021
7	Willow Lane Reserve – Outdoor Gym	20 Willow Lane	2009
8	Waterhouse Court Reserve	Waterhouse Court	2004
9	Molecombe Drive Reserve	11 Molecombe Drive	2018
10	Buckingham Place Reserve	Buckingham Place	1996
11	Las Vegas Drive Reserve - Playground	Las Vegas Drive	2022
12	Las Vegas Drive Reserve – Outdoor Gym	Las Vegas Drive	2009
13	Country Club Avenue Reserve	31 Country Club Avenue	2012



**01.** Prospect Vale Park  
- Playground



**02.** Prospect Vale Park  
- Outdoor Gym



**03.** Henry Burrows  
Reserve - Playground



**04.** Bordin Street Reserve-  
Playground



**05.** Bimbimbi Avenue Reserve  
- Outdoor Gym



**06.** Willow Lane - Playground





**07.** Willow Lane Reserve  
- Outdoor Gym



**08.** Waterhouse Court  
Reserve - Playground



**09.** Molecombe Drive Reserve  
- Playground



**10.** Las Vegas Drive Reserve  
- Playground



**11.** Las Vegas Drive Reserve  
- Outdoor Gym



**12.** Buckingham Place  
Reserve - Playground



**13. Country Club Avenue Reserve - Playground**

**Prospect Vale Play Spaces Action Plan and Key Table**

The Action Plan includes a new playground at lower Chris Street (subject to community consultation) and at the Country Club development.

# Prospect Vale Play Spaces Action Plan

Table 7.



High Priority

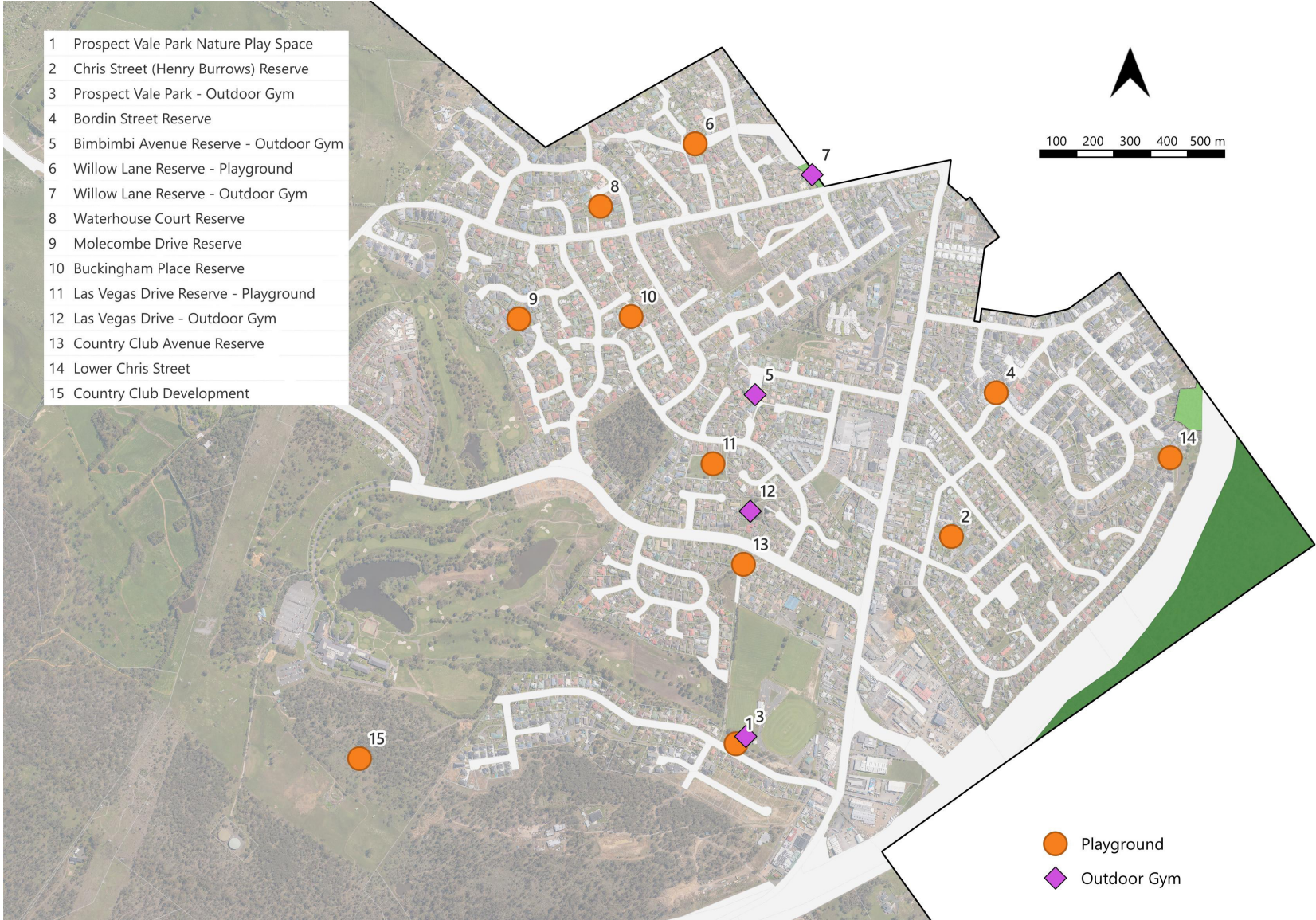


Medium Priority



Low Priority

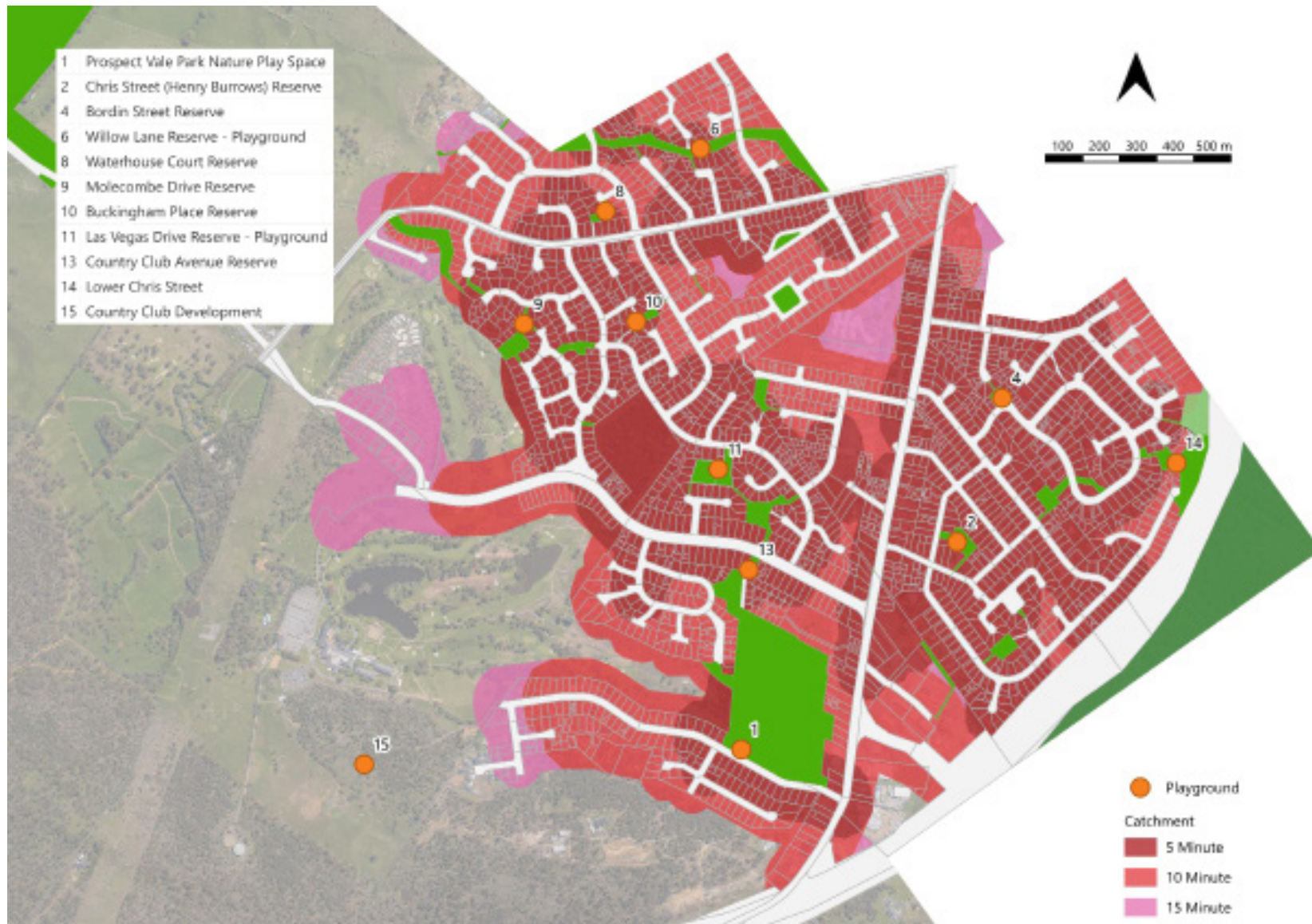
#	Location	Proposal	Category & Priority	Year
1	Prospect Vale Park Nature Play Space	Renew & upgrade	Township	2032
2	Chris Street (Henry Burrows) Reserve	Renew	Local	2025
3	Prospect Vale Park – Outdoor Gym	Renew	Township	2025
4	Bordin Street Reserve	Renew	Local	2033
5	Bimbimbi Avenue Reserve – Outdoor Gym	Renew	Local	2036
6	Willow Lane Reserve - Playground	Renew	Neighbourhood	2036
7	Willow Lane Reserve – Outdoor Gym	Renew	Neighbourhood	2025
8	Waterhouse Court Reserve	Remove equipment and sell land	Not applicable	2025
9	Molecombe Drive Reserve	Renew	Local	2033
10	Buckingham Place Reserve	Remove equipment, create 'park land'	Local	2025
11	Las Vegas Drive Reserve - Playground	Renew	Neighbourhood	2037
12	Las Vegas Drive Reserve – Outdoor Gym	Renew	Neighbourhood	2026
13	Country Club Avenue Reserve	Remove equipment, create 'park land'	Local	2025
14	Lower Chris	New playground	Local	2028
15	Country Club Development	New playground	Neighbourhood	2028





## Playground Catchment Area

The following map is of Prospect Vale and shows the proposed configuration of play areas with associated 5, 10 and 15-minute walking catchment areas. The proposed final location of play areas advises the installation of two new play areas to better service the broader community. Once implemented there will be nine play areas throughout Prospect Vale, five of which will be categorised as neighbourhood or township reserves and play areas.

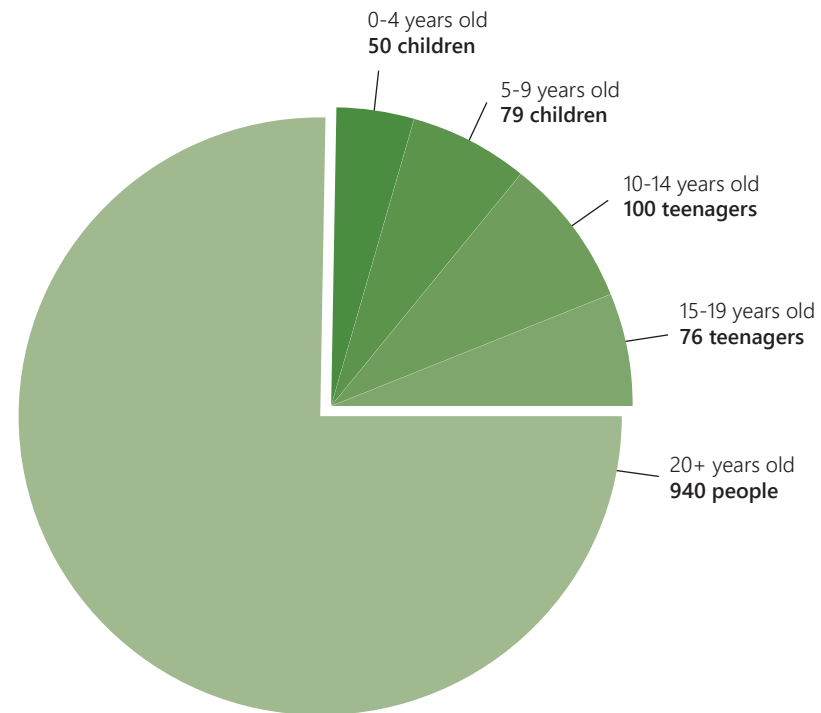


## Blackstone Heights

Offers a rural lifestyle five minutes from Prospect Vale. 1,245 people and 387 families live in Blackstone Heights. There is one reserve which borders the Trevallyn Dam and provides two play areas with a combined target age range of 2 – 14 years old, a public toilet facility, BBQ area and a half basketball court and the wetlands play area which provides equipment for children and teenagers.

Council is in the process of creating a footpath network that will create a loop around Blackstone Heights, connecting people to the park and river walks that border the South Esk River

*The map following shows the location of the existing play areas within Blackstone Heights.*



Blackstone Heights is home to 1,245 people. The adjacent chart shows the number of young people living in Blackstone Heights (2021 census data).





### Blackstone Heights Existing Play Areas

Table 8.

<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Year built</i>
1	Blackstone Park	Blackstone Park Drive (car park)	2010
2	Blackstone Park	Blackstone Park Drive (wetlands)	2013/2019

**Distribution:** one park for suburb ~ 1km radius

**Pattern of play:** playground equipment target audience is 2-14 years of age.



**01.** Blackstone Park  
Carpark - Playground



**02.** Blackstone Park  
Wetlands - Playground



**03.** Blackstone Park  
Wetlands - Playground

## Blackstone Heights Play Spaces Action Plan and Key Table

Table 9.

 High Priority    
  Medium Priority    
  Low Priority

#	Location	Proposal	Category & Priority	Year
1	Blackstone Park – car park	Renew	Neighbourhood	2028
2	Blackstone Park - wetlands	Renew	Neighbourhood	2034
3	Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Reserve	New play area and gym	Linear	TBC
4	Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Reserve	New gym	Linear	TBC

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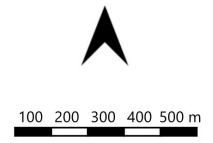
The Action Plan includes two new playgrounds as per the Outline Development Plan. The location of these playgrounds are indicative.





## Playground Catchment Area

The image below is of Blackstone Heights and shows the establishment of two centralised play areas which cater for broad age ranges through the provision of a variety of equipment. Note the catchment area for the new play area in Blackstone Heights has not been modelled as the new road layouts and walkways are unknown. The new road and pathway layouts will most likely extend the catchment of the existing play area.



- 1 Blackstone Park (Car Park)
- 2 Blackstone Park (Wetlands)
- 3 Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Reserve
- 4 Blackstone Heights Outline Development Plan Reserve

- Playground
  - Playground Indicative Location
- Catchment
- 5 Minute
  - 10 Minute
  - 15 Minute

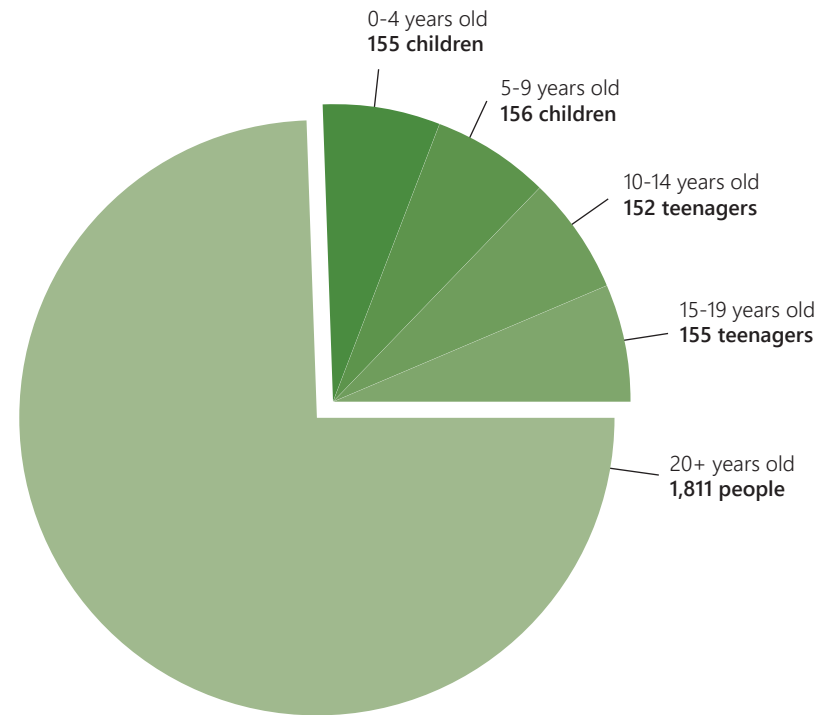
# Hadspen

The town is within a five-minute drive from Prospect Vale and is called home by 2,429 people and 696 families. There are six play areas distributed throughout Hadspen with a target age range of 2 – 14.

Hadspen has a recreation ground with practice cricket nets and a gym site. The town also has some informal sporting spaces including a skate park and BMX Track that service both the younger and adolescent age groups.

*The map following shows the distribution of play areas within Haspen.*

*\*Council undertook consolidation and investment in the Bull Run playground on the basis that the nearby Winifred Jane playground would have equipment removed and prepared for sale.*



Hadspen is home to 2429 people. The adjacent chart shows the number of young people living in Hadspen (2021 census data)





## Hadpsen Existing Play Areas

Table 10.

<i>#</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Year built</i>
1	Coronea Court Reserve	Coronea Court	2019
2	Poets Place Reserve	Poets Place	2012
3	Winifred Jane Reserve	Winifred Jane Crescent	2012
4	Bull Run Reserve – Skate Park	Main Street	2011
5	Recreation Ground - Playground	Recreation Ground	2016
6	Recreation Ground - Outdoor Gym	Recreation Ground	2015
7	Recreation Ground – BMX Track	Recreation Ground	2010
8	Lions Park	Main Street	2007
9	Bull Run Reserve - Playground	Main Street	2021

**Distribution:** typically 400m radius

**Pattern of play:** playground equipment target audience is 2-14 years of age, central skate park, BMX track, public netball/tennis court.

A black and white photograph of a person's feet on a swing. The person is wearing dark pants and white sneakers with a distinctive grid pattern on the soles. The swing is suspended by chains from a wooden frame. The background is blurred, showing more of the swing set and possibly other people. A semi-transparent black text box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing white text.

Council endorsed an Outline Development Plan in 2012 which identified the opportunity to double the size of the township, creating a fully serviced town centre which would support a range of urban and rural lifestyle blocks. Public open space would be expanded to include a network of corridor green spaces that would employ Water Sensitive Urban Design best practice principals and offer well connected public reserves and play areas.



**01.** Coronea Court Reserve  
- Playground



**02.** Poet's Place Reserve  
- Playground



**03.** Winifred Jane Crescent  
- Playground



**04.** Hadspen Bull Run Reserve  
- Skate Park



**05.** Hadspen Bull Run Reserve - Playground



**06.** Hadspen Recreation Ground - Outdoor Gym



**07.** Hadspen Recreation Ground - Playground



**08.** Hadspen BMX Track



**09.** Lions Park Reserve - Playground

## Hadspen Play Spaces Action Plan and Key Table

Table 11.



High Priority



Medium Priority



Low Priority

#	Location	Proposal	Category & Priority	Year
1	Coronea Court Reserve	Renew	Local	2034
2	Poet's Place Reserve	Remove equipment and sell land*	Not applicable	2024
3	Winifred Jane Crescent	Remove equipment and sell land*	Not applicable	2024
4	Hadspen Bull Run Reserve – Skate Park	Renew	Township	2071
5	Recreation Ground - Playground	Renew	Neighbourhood	2031
6	Recreation Ground – Outdoor Gym	Renew	Neighbourhood	2031
7	Recreation Ground – BMX Track	Renew	Neighbourhood	2031
8	Lions Park	Upgrade	Neighbourhood	2026
9	Hadspen Bull Run Reserve - Playground	Renew	Township	2036
10	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve	New play area	Neighbourhood	TBC
11	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve	New gym	Linear	TBC
12	Hadspen Outline Development Plan Reserve	New play area	Linear	TBC

\* As per Council decision

The Outline Development Plan's playground locations are indicated on the map as indicative. The Action Plan includes two new playgrounds and a gym for the next fifteen years.







## Playground Catchment Area

The image below shows the proposed final location of play areas in Hadspen, reflecting the opportunities identified in the Strategy; upgrading Lions Park (#5) to provide a broader variety of play equipment and identifying, the construction of two new play areas and a gym site within the major subdivisions happening to the east of Hadspen.



# Playground Safety

## Inspections

Meander Valley Council plans, manages and coordinates the design and construction of play areas. This the ongoing maintenance, repairs and safety inspections of play spaces to ensure they meet the requirements outlined in the Australian Standards. The Standards provide recommendations for the frequency and nature of the safety inspections, providing supporting checklists and inspection guidelines that Council uses to check for hazards and faulty equipment.

The Standards provide guidelines for the design, installation, maintenance and operation of playgrounds, providing guidelines to create environments where people can engage in 'risky play'. The Standards do not have a status in law, but are adopted by Council to form the basis of our risk management procedures and minimum design standards:

8. AS 2155 Siting of playgrounds
9. AS 4685 Playground equipment and surfacing
10. AS 4422 Playground surfacing
11. AS 2555 Supervised adventure playgrounds.

Council's Works Department officers, trained in playground audits, undertake the weekly routine and four monthly operational inspections, whilst an independent auditor conducts the once yearly comprehensive inspections. The defects and recommendations from the audits are registered in Council's asset management systems, creating a register that records all repairs, replacements and upgrades to the equipment throughout its useful life. This information is used by Council to inform operational, maintenance and capital budgets and the long term replacement, upgrade or removal program of play areas.

“Risk is an inherent feature of playtime and there are many acceptable risks as part of a stimulating and challenging learning environment. The solution is not to wrap kids in cotton wool; the standard is all about challenging children and developing important life skills. [The Standards] introduce a risk benefit analysis technique that allows operators and owners of playgrounds to quantify their exposure to hazards using techniques that are simply to apply. Then they can make evidence based decisions with regard to the maintenance, repairs and the timely replacement of their assets.”

*Professor David Eager, Chairperson of the Technical Committee CS-005, Playground Equipment, as quoted by Standards Australia, December 2019, [www.standards.org.au/news/new-australian-standard-for-playground-safety](http://www.standards.org.au/news/new-australian-standard-for-playground-safety)*





# Community Needs

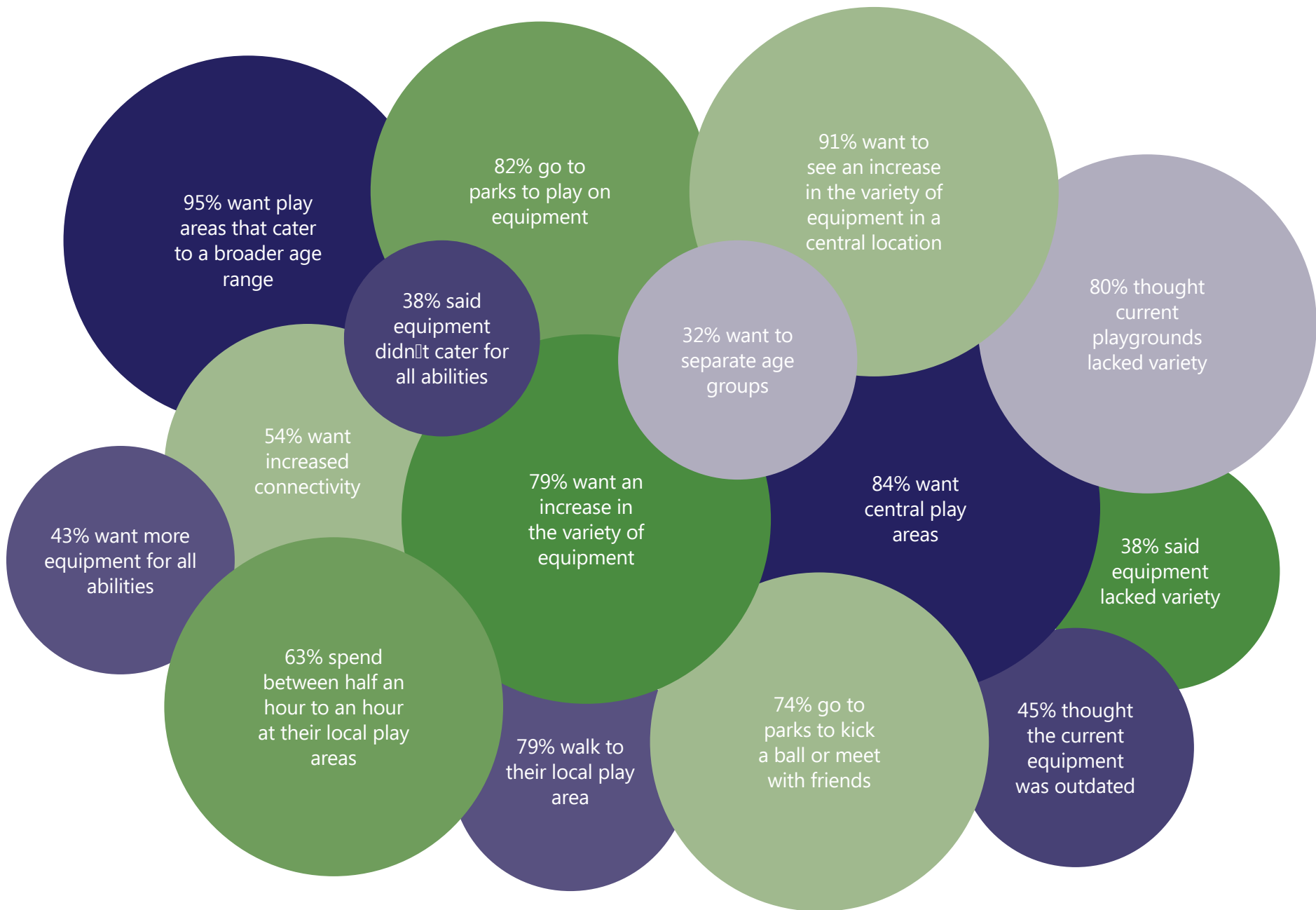
## Survey Outcomes

Council coordinated a community survey in 2017 to inform the future planning of play areas in Hadspen, Blackstone Heights and Prospect Vale. 131 people responded to the survey with the majority of respondents indicating they visited play areas on a weekly basis with children 10 years old or younger. People that didn't use our play areas cited the need to update equipment, a lack of variety, and accessibility as the primary reasons.

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Key survey outcomes are identified on this page and have been used to inform the direction of the Play Spaces Strategy:

- Increase the variety of play
- Service a broader range
- Play areas need to be inclusive and provide all abilities equipment
- Have play areas in more central and visible locations with improved connectivity
- People value a mix of nature play and man-made equipment, toilets, seating and shade
- Update the play equipment to meet current best practice and increase the appeal of the play areas
- Prioritise the provision of play areas for older children and teenagers.





## Financial Implications

The repair and maintenance of play spaces is funded through Council's annual operation budget. Funding for the capital renewal of existing play spaces is managed through Council's Asset Management Plans and Financial planning process. The implementation and funding of new play spaces and major upgrades to existing spaces, follows on from project being identified in Council's strategic plans and are supported by Council.



Table 12: Financial Implications

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Funding</i>
Maintenance and operational – Annual Cost	Ensures play spaces are kept in a safe and serviceable condition for the community, but does not extend the life of the asset. These are ongoing annual costs to Council incurred from time of construction of the asset. The annual costs include depreciation, cleaning, rubbish removal, running repairs and maintenance.	Council’s Long Term Financial Plan and annual operational and maintenance budget.
Asset Renewals – Capital Costs	Maintain the current service provided by the play space to the community by replacing the old or unserviceable equipment. Renewal does not provide and improved level of service for users. Replacement is aimed at a like for like (or similar) basis.	Council’s Long Term Financial Plan and depreciation reserves.
Upgrade/New-Capital Costs	Provides a higher level of service from an existing play space or a new asset where one did not exist previously. Increased operational costs result from upgrading or providing new assets. These costs can be offset by disposing of a play space at another location.	Council’s Long Term Financial Plan, cash reserves, grant funding or revenue from divestment of land.

Council’s AMPs allow for the renewal of Play Space assets as and when they are due. This is not recurring funding but is matched the planned renewal cost for provide an equivalent level of service.

Council's Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) has identified the follow levels of funding for renewal and upgrade/new expenditure. Current planned renewal funding is \$70,000, however it should be noted that no upgrade/new expenditure is identified in the LTFP. Council's annual operational budget is not expected to increase based on this level of project expenditure. The timing of this expenditure is anticipated between the 2026 and 2027 financial years (FY).

As part of the review of the 2024-25 Capital Works Program (CWP) a review of capital expenditure and projects will be undertaken. This planning period is a 10 year period, from the 2025 FY to the 2034 FY. As part of the CWP review, renewal expenditure is forecast to increase to \$1,678,000 for playgrounds only, or \$1,840,000 for all play space assets. Upgrade/new expenditure is expected to increase to \$645,000 for playgrounds only or \$720,000 for all play space assets.

As a result of this level of expenditure, the forecast annual operational budget is expected to increase by \$13,750 for playgrounds only or \$14,700 for all play space assets. Council's annual depreciation is expected to increase by \$74,000 for playgrounds only or \$79,000 for all play space assets over the next 10 years based on this level of project expenditure. These figures are subject to review and possible change as part of the 2024-25 CWP planning process.

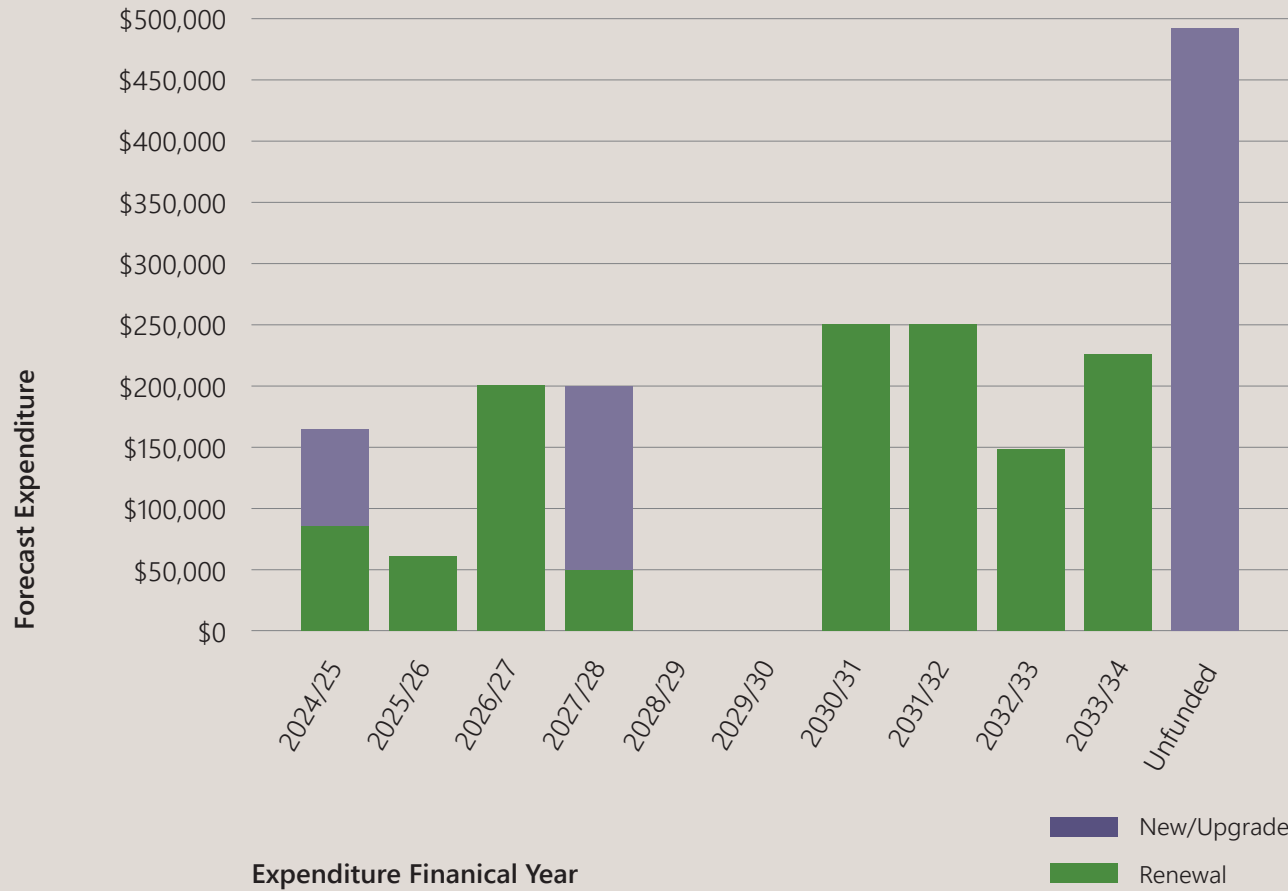
In addition to this Council is forecast to fund an additional \$495,000 in new projects identified as part of future development, this is expected to increase the annual operational budget by \$11,000 per annum and annual depreciation is expected to increase by \$32,000 based on this level of project expenditure.

No renewal projects have been identified as part of future development. Timing or priority of these projects has currently not been determined and Council can chose the timing and level of investment so these figures may be subject to change.

While Council wishes to deliver new or improved play space areas, careful assessment of each project should be carried out on a case by case basis while balancing this against other project priorities and the increase of annual operational costs.

The forecast expenditure for Play Space assets is subject to annual review and update. These details are used to inform Council's AMPs, LTFP and forward works planning processes.

Graph following depicts Meander Valley Council's Play Space Strategy 10 year forecast (playgrounds, skate parks, BMX and out-door gyms), funded and unfunded projects.





Meander Valley Council  
Working Together