

State of Play 2019

To create a more inclusive world





Welcome

to the State of Play report.



Immense pride mixed in with a quiet sense of achievement pretty much sums up how I feel about this State of Play Report. When our rollercoaster ride into the world of inclusive play began, we immediately knew we were delving into a world that needed our help. With a bucket load of courage to numb our grief, our conviction to bring play back on the table as a fundamental right for all to enjoy never waned.

I'd like to dedicate this report to Rebecca Ho, who for more than a decade has been instrumental in educating, engineering and executing best practice in play across Australia and beyond. I'd also like to acknowledge all the families who have shone a spotlight on our work and who have unconditionally supported our quest to deliver inclusion through play. Thank you for trusting us and for giving us the motivation to drive change despite what challenges lay in the way. Our findings are undeniable proof that play matters and that no-one, no matter their age, ability, culture, race, gender, should ever be excluded from their right to play.

A special mention also is extended to the NSW State Government for playing its part with its recent launch of the "Everyone Can Play Guidelines". Making inclusive playspaces the norm was always in our wildest dreams and we are grateful that we were given the opportunity to be part of this policy change. Because.... in our hearts it was the right thing to do.

We'd also like to thank and formally introduce our new playmate, Variety - The Children's Charity, who will now take the lead and continue in our mission to deliver an inclusive playspace in every community around Australia. We look forward to this friendship founded in play and we are excited about what we can achieve together to positively touch the lives of more Australians.

Finally, a call to action to all our readers. Don't ever stop playing and, as we all know, sharing doubles the fun so remember to invite others along. Read on and you'll know why.

*Yours in play
Justine Perkins*



Why?

Because every child needs to play.

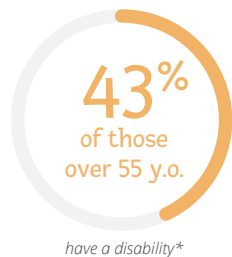
Play is a basic part of every childhood. Unfortunately, not all children and their families can access all playspaces in Australia.

Some families face a range of barriers that prevent them from having the same experiences as other families in these important community hubs.

But there is a solution – inclusive playspaces.

One of the key roles of local government is deciding how to best spend limited ratepayer funds.

Lots of elements go into this process – demand, cost, land availability, grant opportunities and community priorities. An important consideration in this process is how many people in the community will benefit from the new asset. Clearly, the more people who can use it, the better. Building a playspace that the whole community can enjoy is clearly a better decision than building a playspace that automatically excludes 20% to 30% of people.



Why build a playspace that at least 20% of your community can never use?

This is where an inclusive Livvi's Place playspace comes in.

Designing an inclusive playspace involves thinking about a lot of issues – access, facilities, equipment, location and safety all have to be factored in to the project.

Can someone in a wheelchair move about the space? Is parking available? Are paths wide enough? Is there an accessible toilet with facilities for changing older children in? Does the equipment feature ramps, low platforms, swings suitable for all ages and abilities? Is it located near transport options? Is there sufficient fencing? Can children of all abilities play together in the same space?

All of these factors go into designing a playspace for everyone. The benefits of inclusive play go well beyond the families that are directly impacted.

Make your community a place where everyone can play together

A hub that encourages children of all abilities to interact and engage with each other can only lead to a strong, inclusive community that is a great place for everyone to live in.

Organisations like Touched by Olivia and Variety are striving to partner with local Councils and developers to put inclusive playspaces into every community in Australia. We have the expertise to assist you build a healthy and inclusive community.

*We're working together
so communities can play
together!*



Play matters

Child's play is not just about having lots of fun. It is also a key part of the development process.

Regular active play helps children not only develop a lifelong habit of daily exercise, it also assists in developing life skills such as:

- *communication and social skills*
- *an understanding of social rules*
- *friendships and acceptance*
- *a sense of 'give and take'*
- *patience and perseverance*
- *an understanding and tolerance of others*
- *teamwork and a sense of belonging.**

Active outdoor play delivers additional benefits to children, such as developing physical skills and co-ordination. According to the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, there is increasing evidence to suggest that children who have access to wild nature play will gain innumerable cognitive,

problem solving, emotional and physical benefits.**

Given the emerging obesity challenge with 25% of Australian children overweight or obese***, encouraging children to be active is becoming increasingly important. Weight is also a problem for their parents – with 63% of Australian adults overweight or obese.

The importance of inclusive play for every child has also been recognised in the Federal Government's National Disability Strategy. A key policy issue identified in the strategy is:

« **Inclusive and accessible communities—the physical environment including public transport; parks, buildings and housing; digital information and communications technologies; civic life including social, sporting, recreational and cultural life.^** »

^ COAG (2011) National Disability Strategy 20102020 p.10

Who are we?

A new friendship

This report has been created by Touched by Olivia.

In 2018, Touched by Olivia and Variety - The Childrens Charity have embarked on an adventure together, to ensure that every child can play in their own communities.

Touched by Olivia is internationally recognised as inclusive play experts. They partner with communities, councils and corporations to deliver inclusive playspaces across Australia.

Variety is an international charity that believes every child deserves a fair go. Variety has built a couple of playspaces and funded a lot of play equipment. Variety has a desire to expand their offering and in 2017, entered a partnership with Touched by Olivia to deliver two projects - Variety Livvi's Place Bankstown and Variety Livvi's Place Taree.

This successful collaboration has encouraged a more permanent partnership, with Touched by Olivia agreeing to share the brand Livvi's Place and all of their IP and experience with Variety. The new adventure kicked off from October 2018 and is already creating an impact on the built environment of Australia.



eeee



"...to ensure that every child can play in their own communities"

What did they say?



Touched by Olivia conducted an online survey between August 2018 and January 2019. The survey questions were developed by The Right Research, based on the responses from the 2016 survey, and distributed and collected by

Touched by Olivia. The survey received 482 responses. This report presents a summary of the responses to each question.

What makes a great playspace?

People visit playgrounds for many reasons – most commonly so that their children can play (91%), to get outdoors and enjoy the fresh air (88%), and to have a change of scenery and get out of the house (77%).



So that children can play



To get outdoors and enjoy the fresh air



To have a change of scenery and get out of the house



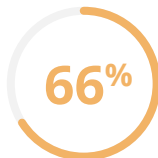
To play on equipment and in space that isn't available at home



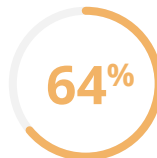
To have fun



The social benefits for both parents and children



To access a free activity

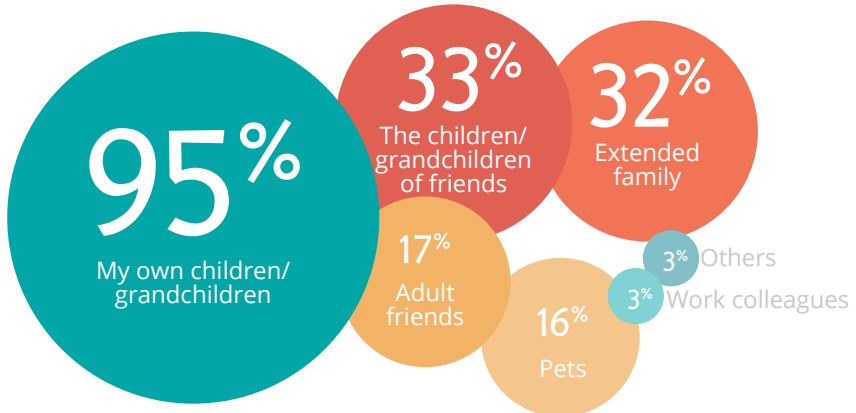


To get some exercise and/or develop motor skills



For family/friends events picnics and celebrations

Who do you usually go to playgrounds with?



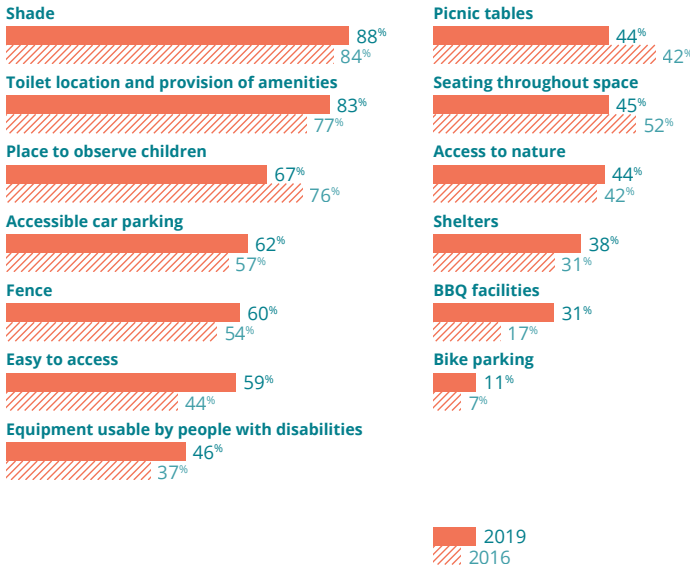
Children or grandchildren are by far the most common people respondents took to a playground (95%). Although around a third also go with the children/grandchildren of friends and their extended family.

Amongst the survey respondents, almost half (46%) said they took a child with a disability and 14% said that they both took a child with a disability and had mobility issues themselves. This finding highlights the need to consider mobility challenges faced by carers as well as playground equipment users when designing playgrounds.

When you go out to play, what facilities are important to make your visit fun?

Different people want to have different facilities when they go to a park. For this survey group, the most important feature was to have access to shade – which was also the most important feature when the survey was done in 2016.

Compared to the 2016 survey, the biggest shifts in views on key features where: easy of access to the playground (increased 15% points), BBQ facilities (increased 14% points), picnic tables (fell 12% points)



What activities do you like to do or play on when you visit the playground?

Swinging equipment (e.g. toddler swings, traditional swing, basket swings, rope swings and flying foxes)

89%



78%

Climbing equipment (e.g. nets, monkey bars)



76%

Traditional slides, see-saws and roundabouts

68%

Sensory play (e.g. sand, water, dirt, grass, sticks)



65%

Balance equipment (e.g. beams)



59%

Nature space to observe animals, birds, trees, plants, flowers, ducks

61%

Bike/scooter paths



53%

Open space for games & running around

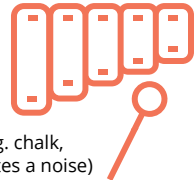


Make-believe/imagination equipment (e.g. shops, houses, tunnels)

50%

47%

Musical and art play (e.g. chalk, equipment that generates a noise)



32%

Walking/running tracks



Which features of an inclusive playspace would deliver the biggest improvement to a trip to a playground for you and your family?

Almost three-quarters of respondents identified inclusive toilets as a feature that would deliver the biggest improvement to their playground experiences.



Inclusive toilet facilities, including nappy changing & lifting assistance for older children



Swings that can cater for all abilities



More shade, trees and nature incorporated



Fencing around the playground



Equipment that doesn't rely on ladders to access but also includes ramps and rails



Climbing platforms, tunnels, cubby houses that are lower to the ground or accessed via a wide ramp



Equipment layout that does not separate children with a disability



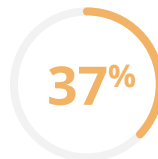
Sensory play areas



To access a free activity




To access a free activity




To get some exercise and/or develop motor skills



For family/friends events picnics and celebrations



Seven Principles of Universal Design

1. Equitable use
 2. Flexibility in use
 3. Simple and intuitive to use
 4. Perceptible information
 5. Tolerance for error
 6. Low physical effort
 7. Size and space for approach and use
- 

Jerome Laxale Mayor of City of Ryde

Champion of inclusion

How did you become aware of the need for inclusive playspaces?

One of the first events I attended as a Councilor was the opening of Livvi's Place in Ryde. This was the first inclusive playground in Ryde, and I was blown away by it and how an inclusive playground could make someone's life better.

What does inclusion mean to you?

Inclusion to me means removing barriers to participation.

Do you have an example of a time when you saw the benefit first hand?

At the Livvi's Place opening I saw young children with disabilities playing along side able bodied children. It was heartening to see children of all abilities laughing and playing together.

What is your commitment to making inclusion the norm?

In 2018, I set up the Mayor's Play Panel for playground upgrades in Ryde. I specifically chose community members who had expertise in inclusive play so that the City's playgrounds would be designed and upgraded in a way that would make them more inclusive.



Snezana Nikolovski + Christian Nikolovski

Bankstown Community Drivers

I am a parent of a teen son with a severe intellectual and physical disability so I know how needed an inclusive playspace was for my community.

Our School Council decided to advocate for change by working with council and the media. We were lucky to meet the Mayor of Bankstown Khal Asfour and Emily Forrest who understood what a great asset an inclusive asset would be for our community.

We needed help with the design and founding so we reached out to Touched by Olivia who helped with their extensive experience and knowledge on how to plan, fundraise and build the inclusive playground and appropriate toileting facility.

Lots of meetings were held to talk about design and budget needs. Consultation was held with students, as well as parents

and carers of children who have disabilities. The local community got an insight as to what is needed to make a playground inclusive to all. Variety generously funded the remainder of the project and it was able to be completed.

The Changing Places was the first of its kind in the state. It includes an adult size change table, toilet with grip handles, overhead gantry and hoist system and shower facility. The toileting facility is the most important as it caters for a person of any disability, age or size and without it we cannot stay at a playground as there is nowhere to change your child with dignity.

The Variety Liwi's Place is amazing as it is fully fenced so absconding children remain safe, and has equipment that allows direct access for children in wheelchairs. The pictorial signage helps with communication and the sensory zone helps children with

behaviours. The barbeque facilities are located within the fencing and allows everyone to be in the same space to socialise.

It would be great to have the all inclusive playground and especially the Changing Places toileting facility in every playground in the future as it makes a big impact to families who have a person in their family with a disability. It has allowed my daughters to play with their brother in the playground as he now has somewhere he is safe and has equipment that caters for him as well. It also allows us to socialise

with other families as we are all in the same space and The Changing Places toilet amenity makes our life so much easier as we now have a toilet amenity that has equipment to fit our teen son.

We were fortunate that the Canterbury Bankstown Council took the time to listen to our community about what we really needed for the space to be inclusive and successful and I advise other councils to do the same as the best input is from the people who have first hand experience in caring for a person with special needs.



Everyone Can Play Program

In 2017, the NSW Government's Minister for Planning, Anthony Roberts MP, announced a commitment to creating a program that would see playspaces in communities across NSW be inclusive.

Everyone Can Play is a best practice resource for councils, community leaders, landscape architects and passionate local residents.

It is a reference guide for creating world-class playspaces, designed to include everyone in the community.

At the heart of Everyone Can Play is the declaration that play is for everyone – regardless of age, ability or cultural background.

everyonecanplay.nsw.gov.au





Variety Livvi's Place Grant Program

The Variety Livvi's Place Grant Program has been created to support the development of inclusive playspaces in communities. The program will support new and upgraded projects to be developed because every kid deserves a fair go, including those with disabilities that have previously been excluded from the built environment.

The objective of the Variety Livvi's Place Grant Program is to support and guide the design of inclusive playspaces through funding design, equipment and experiences.

Find out more by visiting www.variety.org.au/nsw/variety-livvis-place

State of Play 2019

To create a more inclusive world

