

ATTACHMENT A

**CITY OF SYDNEY INCLUSIVE
PLAY REPORT, PYRMONT AND
SURROUNDING AREAS**



City of Sydney Inclusive Play

Pyrmont and surrounding areas

April 2014

Document Issue:

1st Draft for comment 31.01.14
2nd Draft for comment 14.02.14
3rd Draft for comment 21.02.14
Final issue 08.04.14

Commissioned by: The City of Sydney Council

Prepared by: Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects

© 8th April 2014. Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects. All rights reserved.

Fiona Robbé has prepared this document for the sole use of the Client and for a specific purpose, each as expressly stated in the document. No other party should rely on this document without the prior written consent of FRLA. FRLA undertakes no duty, nor accepts any responsibility, to any third party who may rely upon or use this document. This document has been prepared based on the Client's description of its requirements and FRLA's experience, having regard to assumptions that FRLA can reasonably be expected to make in accordance with sound professional principles. FRLA may also have relied upon information provided by the Client and other third parties to prepare this document, some of which may not have been verified. Subject to the above conditions, this document may be transmitted, reproduced or disseminated only in its entirety.

Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
a. Introduction.....	5
b. Background of Report.....	5
The Context of Inclusive Playground Design	6
a. Definitions	6
b. Demographics Context.....	6
c. Types and Levels of Disabilities (Children).....	7
d. Framework for Inclusive Play Provision.....	8
e. What is Inclusive Design for Children in the Playground Context?	9
f. What is an Accessible Playground?	9
g. Components of the Inclusive Playground.....	10
h. Inclusive Play Adequacy Checklist.....	11
i. Current Provision of Inclusive Play in the City of Sydney Local Government Area	13
Locations for Inclusive Play within the City of Sydney	14
a. Potential Locations for Inclusive Play within the City of Sydney	15
Pirrama Park Playground: Inclusive Play Options	16
a. The Current Situation	16
b. The Liberty Swing Proposal	16
c. Addition of a Wheelchair Accessible Spinner to Pirrama Park Playground	19
Inclusive Playground Options	20
Overall Recommendations	32
Appendices	33

Executive Summary

A group of committed residents and local businesses have approached Council to request and partly fund more Inclusive Play opportunities in Pirrama Park. Specifically they propose the installation of a Liberty Swing adjacent to the playground.

This initiative has resulted in the preparation of this report which:

- Summarises the policy and legal framework supporting Inclusive Play in the Council LGA
- Summarises the best practice design principles underpinning Inclusive Play
- Specifically analyses Pirrama Park for Inclusive Play opportunities
- Identifies overall Inclusive Play strategies across the Council LGA
- Investigates potential sites in the City West and North West districts for Inclusive Play opportunities

This investigation recommends the following measures:

1. The City of Sydney adopts a 'mosaic of Inclusive Play' approach across the nine planning districts, with Local, District and Regional level Inclusive Playgrounds
2. Short, medium and long term outcomes can be commenced, staged over a 10 year period
3. Community consultation should underpin all Inclusive Playground provision

Short Term Recommendations:

- Undertake a feasibility study of both Federal Park and Wentworth Park to investigate constraints and opportunities for Inclusive Playground development.
- Liberty Swing to be installed at Federal Park (following a tree root study)
- Upgrade Federal Park Playground to a District level Inclusive Playground
- Wheelchair accessible spinner to be installed at Pirrama Park Playground (no fence)

Medium Term Recommendations:

- Identify Inclusive Playground opportunities across the Council LGA with clear supportive documents
- Increase Inclusive Play opportunities at Sydney Park for children with severe disabilities.
- Liberty Swing to be installed at Sydney Park Playground
- Provision of an Inclusive Playground at the Bank Street site, Pymont

Long Term Recommendations:

- Continued staged modification of Sydney Park Playground
- Provide a Regional level Inclusive Playground within the northern sector of the Council LGA

Introduction

a. Introduction

This report investigates Inclusive Play opportunities in the City of Sydney local government area. This is the result of a community group from Pymont who have advocated for more Inclusive Play provision in the Pymont area. Background information is provided on children with disabilities, and the overall context of Inclusive Play provision in the Local Government Area is discussed.

Pirrama Park is investigated in the light of community proposals for the installation of a Liberty Swing. Other Inclusive Play ideas for this playground are also explored.

In addition, other parks from the City West and North West districts are analysed in terms of their capacity to incorporate Inclusive Playgrounds. Recommendations are given for short, medium and long term strategies for Inclusive Play within these districts.

b. Background of Report

A community group from Pymont consisting of businesses, residents and friends approached Council in September 2013 to propose the installation of a Liberty Swing at Pirrama Park.

The proposal involved community fundraising for the supply and installation of a Liberty Swing at Pirrama Park, supported by the charity; Variety NSW.

A Notice of Motion was raised at the 9th of December 2013 meeting. Council resolved to:

- A note the City's work to provide All Abilities Playgrounds as part of parks and playground renewals, where possible, with the engagement of access consultants throughout design and construction;
- B note City staff meet with the Variety Club and the local community to consider options for installation of a Liberty Swing in the Pirrama Park playground; and
- C request the Chief Executive Officer work with the fund raising co-ordinator and the local community to consider options for the installation of the Liberty Swing in a park in Pymont.

The Context of Inclusive Playground Design

a. Definitions

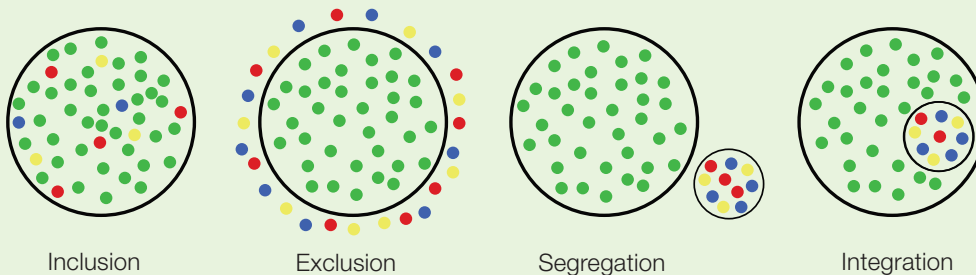
The following definitions underpin this report:

Disability A disability is one or more of many limitations, restrictions or impairments which have lasted or are likely to last, for a period of six months or more, and which restrict a person's everyday activities.

Social Inclusion A socially inclusive society is one where all people feel welcomed and valued, their differences are respected, and their needs are met so they can live in dignity. (Cappo 2002). Quoted in VicHealth Research Summary 2 - Social inclusion as a determinant of mental health & wellbeing (January 2005).

A tenet of inclusive design is: Together we are better - we are not designing environments where everyone is like us - difference is one of our most important renewable resources.

Inclusive Playground An Inclusive Playground welcomes all children and their carers to play together, regardless of their differences in age, ability, culture or gender. The overall message is of equality, choice and dignity, with no obvious awkward add-ons, or ungainly postures required to use the playground, and no barriers to use.



Inclusion

Exclusion

Segregation

Integration

b. Demographics Context

Australian Context In 2009, four million people in Australia were reported as having a disability- 1 in 5 people. Of all Australians with a disability in 2009, 290,000 (7.2%) were children aged 0-14 years. Of all children with a disability, over half (57%) had a profound or severe disability and one fifth (18%) had a moderate or mild disability. A further 11% of children with a disability were not limited in core activities, but restricted in schooling, with the remaining 14% neither limited in core activities or schooling,

Source(s): ABS 2003 and 2009 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers

The City of Sydney In 2011, more than 4,000 residents of the City of Sydney reported needing help with day-to-day activities including self-care, body movement and communication due to disabilities. By interpolating from the Survey of Disability 1998, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated that Sydney City had about 592 children under 15 years with a disability, or 4.7% of child residents.

Disability rates rose with age, from 3.9% of 0-4 year olds to 5.8% of 5-9 year olds and 5.2% of 10-14 year olds. The NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) reported that the City of Sydney served some 445 children with a disability in 2000.

Source: DRAFT Open Space & Recreation Needs Study City of Sydney 2006

c. Types & Levels of Disabilities (Children)

There are countless forms and classifications of disability with no one agreed overall classification. For the sake of simplicity, types of disability can be viewed as:

- intellectual disabilities
- physical disabilities
- sensory disabilities (e.g. deafness)
- autism spectrum disorders
- acquired brain injury

It is common for disabilities to overlap (dual diagnosis).

There are also levels of disability in children:

- mild
- moderate
- severe
- profound

Children with a disability are different to adults with a disability, and should not be seen in the same way. e.g. 18.7% of adults with a disability use a wheelchair, and 3.8% of children with a disability use a wheelchair. The graph below also shows the high incidence of intellectual disabilities in the population of children and the elderly, as opposed to the adult population.

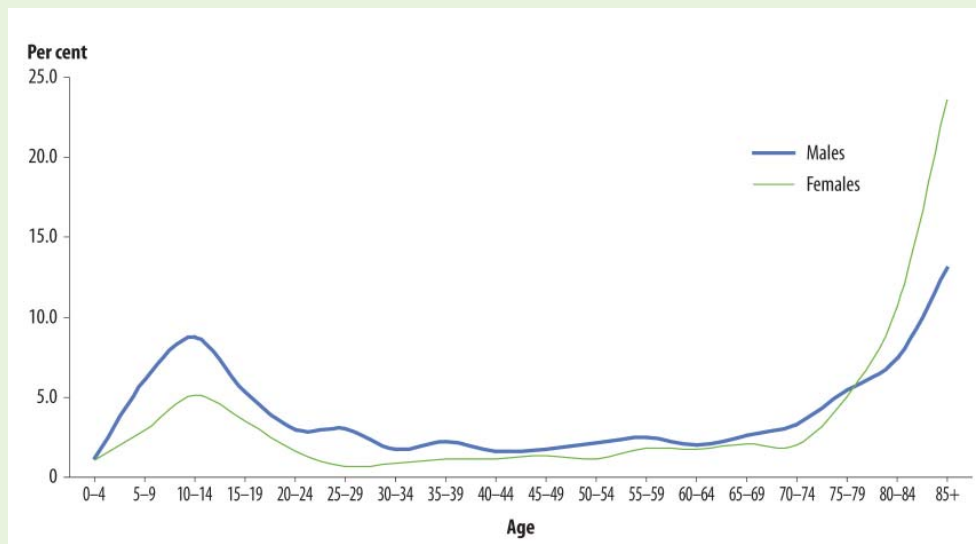


Figure 1: Age and Gender Specific Prevalence Rates of Intellectual Disability, 2003

Source: Disability in Australia: Intellectual Disability. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2003

d. Framework for Inclusive Play Provision

The following conventions, strategies, Acts and plans have been endorsed by the City of Sydney, and form the framework for Inclusive Playground provision.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

In 1990, Australia became a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. By ratifying the Convention, the Australian government committed to protecting and ensuring children's rights and is obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies in the light of the best interests of the child.

Article 23 "Children who have any kind of disability have the right to special care and support, as well as all the rights in the Convention, so that they can live full and independent lives".

Article 31 of the convention states; "Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities".

United Nations General Comment no. 17 on Article 31 2013 General Comment No 17 was adopted by the UN and its signatory countries in February 2013, following international concern over poor recognition given by governments of Article 31.

The General Comment outlines Government obligations to respect, protect and fulfill Article 31 rights through legislation, regulation (including development proposals) and review of policies.

The Comment identifies that there are children who require particular attention to realise their rights under Article 31. Children with disabilities face multiple barriers which impede their Article 31 rights. These barriers generate exclusions from social arenas where friendships are formed and where play and recreation take place.

Governments are empowered to invest in universal design to promote inclusion and to protect children with disabilities from discrimination. This includes the municipal planning of environments which promote inclusive parks and playgrounds, in full consultation with children.

Source: International Play Association- Issue 1:13 September 2013

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006

Australia ratified the convention in 2008. The purpose of the convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people with disability, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

The Australian National Disability Strategy (2010-2020) and NSW Implementation Plan (2012-2014) endorsed by all Governments, outlines the vision of an inclusive Australian society that enables people with disability to fulfil their potential as equal citizens. The Strategy is aligned to principles underpinning the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. Discrimination on the basis of disability is unlawful. Complaints made under the DDA are made to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

The City of Sydney: Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-2017

The City of Sydney is committed to being an inclusive and accessible city for people with a disability, now and in the future. The City seeks to meet and exceed its legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and become a leader in relation to these issues. The City seeks to implement best practice in relation to access and inclusion issues wherever possible.

City Of Sydney Position regarding Design for all Children

The framework for inclusive play provision is clear: the City of Sydney has committed to the delivery of public domain outcomes for all children, which includes inclusive playgrounds.

e. What is Inclusive Design for Children in the Playground Context?

Approach - “Something for everyone” principle, not “everything for everybody”

It is broadly agreed in the playground industry that an Inclusive Playground should offer at least one play activity for a child with any level and type of disability. i.e. something, somewhere in the playground that they can play on or with. Not all play activities need to be used by everyone, but it is appreciated if and when this can take place. Diversity of approach is recommended, with choice, many options and degrees of complexity for playing and socialising.

Philosophy of Universal Design

Universal design allows everyone, to the greatest extent possible, and regardless of age or disability, to use buildings, transport, products and services without the need for specialised or adapted features.

Source: National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

Philosophy of “whole space approach”

Design and layout of an Inclusive Playground requires holistic thinking from the outset for the entire playground curtilage: the overall space and its components follow a universal design approach, which starts broadly and follows through to detail resolution. Inclusion is rarely possible as “add-on” thinking to one part of the playground only and usually results in unintended cycles of exclusion or segregation, as opposed to true inclusion.

f. What is an Accessible Playground?

An Accessible Playground is one which is designed to AS 1428: Design for Access & Mobility and provides people with compliant access into and around the playground. The hallmark of an Accessible Playground is a path system which connects all items in the playground. Accessibility starts at the point of arrival (e.g. bus stop or carparking space) and continues into and around the playground. Accessibility also includes being able to access play experiences and items, which may take the form of transfer platforms, ramps, handholds etc.

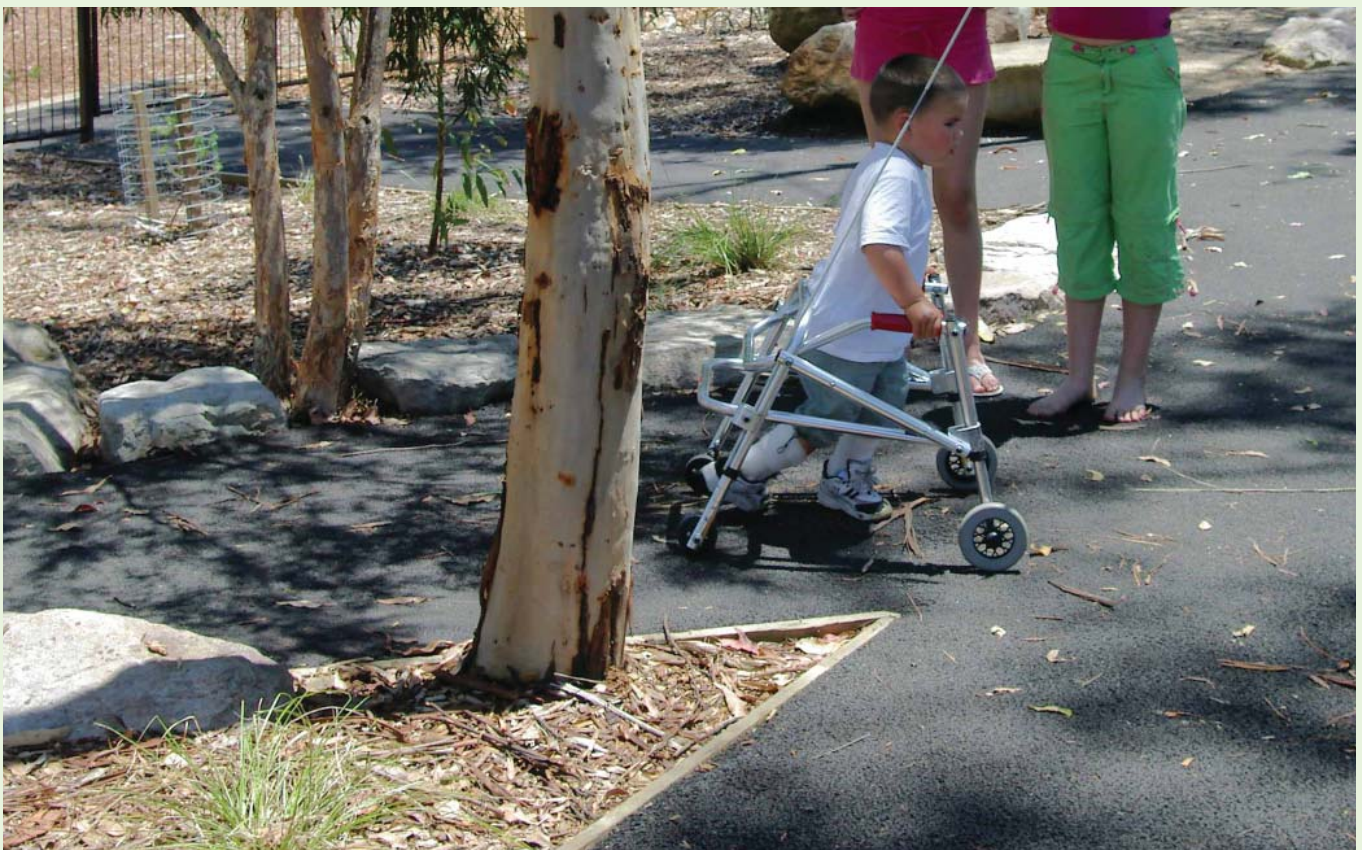


Figure 2: Accessible Path System



g. Components of the Inclusive Playground

The following elements make up a best practice Inclusive Playground:

Play activities

Numerous varied play activities are offered, thereby providing choice. All types of play should be provided, namely physical, intellectual, social, imaginative and constructive play activities, offered at differing levels of difficulty or complexity – “graduated challenges”. Graduated play activities are offered in a side-by-side spatial arrangement e.g. all kinds of swings in one space, not necessarily on one piece of equipment. Differing play activities are separated into pods of activity i.e. in a separate and identifiable space. Play activities are offered equally, at much the same scale, so that one type of play does not dominate over the others.

Socially supportive features

An Inclusive Play environment supports a visit to the playground and includes generous shade provision, an entire fenced boundary with entry gates, accessible toilets (within 50m), accessible carparking (within 50m), bus drop off bay, accessible bubblers, bins, bbqs, accessible picnic tables and shelters, varied seating options (with back and arm supports).

Wayfinding

An Inclusive Play environment includes a predictable, accessible simple path structure, a tall, identifiable entry structure, signs, visual cues and markers to orient the visitor, luminance contrast and overall unified colour scheme to assist usage and help with the legibility of the environment.

Accessibility

An Inclusive Play environment contains a legibly laid out, wide, accessible path of travel to and around the playground, linking all play activities. In addition pause points are provided. All supportive features are designed to be accessible. Play activities are thoughtfully designed to include physical supports to facilitate use.

Natural setting

An Inclusive Play environment includes generous areas of lawn, as well as garden beds with trees and shrubs to provide a sense of naturalness, and respite. Garden beds and boulders are usually used to separate pods of play. Lawn is provided to take a break from playing (respite).

Proximity

An Inclusive Play environment has its component parts arranged in such a way that all elements are in close proximity to each other, without having to cross streets, or open gates etc. There are few guidelines on this, but 50m is a good rule of thumb. Many people with disabilities have low levels of energy.

h. Playground Adequacy Checklist: Inclusive Play

Playground Adequacy Checklist: Inclusive Play		✓
1) Play Activities		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variety of options (no dominance of one over another)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Varying intellectual levels within one activity	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Graduated challenges	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory richness	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ground level challenges	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delight and humour	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Places for socialisation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Places to watch and be separate	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Games provision	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variety of postural support	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Socially inclusive play options: side by side play	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separation of activities into 'pods'	
2) Socially Supportive Features		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Carpark including bus bays	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilet Block	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bubbler	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nearby public transport	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pathways	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shade provision (trees and structures)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	BBQ's	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bins	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Seats	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bike Racks	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fenced boundary to playground	
3) Way-finding		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear path hierarchy	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Linked play activities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear entry structure	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Luminance contrast and visual cues	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Co-ordinated colour scheme	
4) Accessibility		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wide, continuous path of accessible travel	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pause points	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible parking in close proximity	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible amenities (toilets, bubblers, picnic tables, BBQ)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible play activities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Micro level: getting onto play activities (handholds, handrails, handles)	
5) Natural Setting		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trees	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden beds	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lawn	
6) Proximity		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Close proximity arrangements of component parts ($\leq 50m$)	
Playground Hierarchy:		
Neighbourhood:	Continuous accessible path of travel – minimum provision	
Local:	Continuous accessible path of travel, plus four items of 1)	
District:	At least half of 1), half of 2) and all of 3) to 6) boxes ticked	
Regional:	All boxes to be ticked	

© 2014 Fiona Robbé Landscape Architects

Table 1: Playground Adequacy Checklist for Inclusive Play

Figure 3: Inclusive Playground Model



i. Current Provision of Inclusive Play in the City of Sydney Local Government Area

The City of Sydney has 90 playgrounds under its care, control and management. (Open Space & Recreation Needs Study. Volume 1- The Strategy, 2006)

Many of the City's playgrounds are inclusive for children with mild to moderate levels of disabilities. This is mainly because they are fenced, have accessible paths, and rubberised surfacing, shade and ample seating. However, few playgrounds cater for severe to profound disability.

The following playgrounds have specifically been provided to cater for Inclusion:

Sydney Park Regional Playground, St. Peters

This playground has been sensitively designed to be Inclusive, and offers many opportunities for children with a disability that other playgrounds do not offer (e.g. sensory maze). However, not having the playground fenced excludes many families and groups from visiting the playground. There are few play offers within Sydney Park for children with severe to profound disabilities, e.g. while play experiences are offered for wheelchair users, they do not cater well for the main type of disability in this group of users (Cerebral Palsy).

Paddington Gates Playground, Centennial Park

This district sized fenced playground has specifically been designed for Inclusion, and contains offers of play for mild to profound levels of disability. A Liberty Swing is included but its location means it adds to the offer of Inclusive Play in the overall region.

Pirrama Park, Pyrmont

Pirrama Park Playground is a District level playground, and was designed to be Accessible, and provide some Inclusive Play opportunities for children with mild to moderate disabilities (but does not cater to all types of disabilities)

Figure 4: Sydney Park Swing Area



Figure 5: Paddington Gates Playground

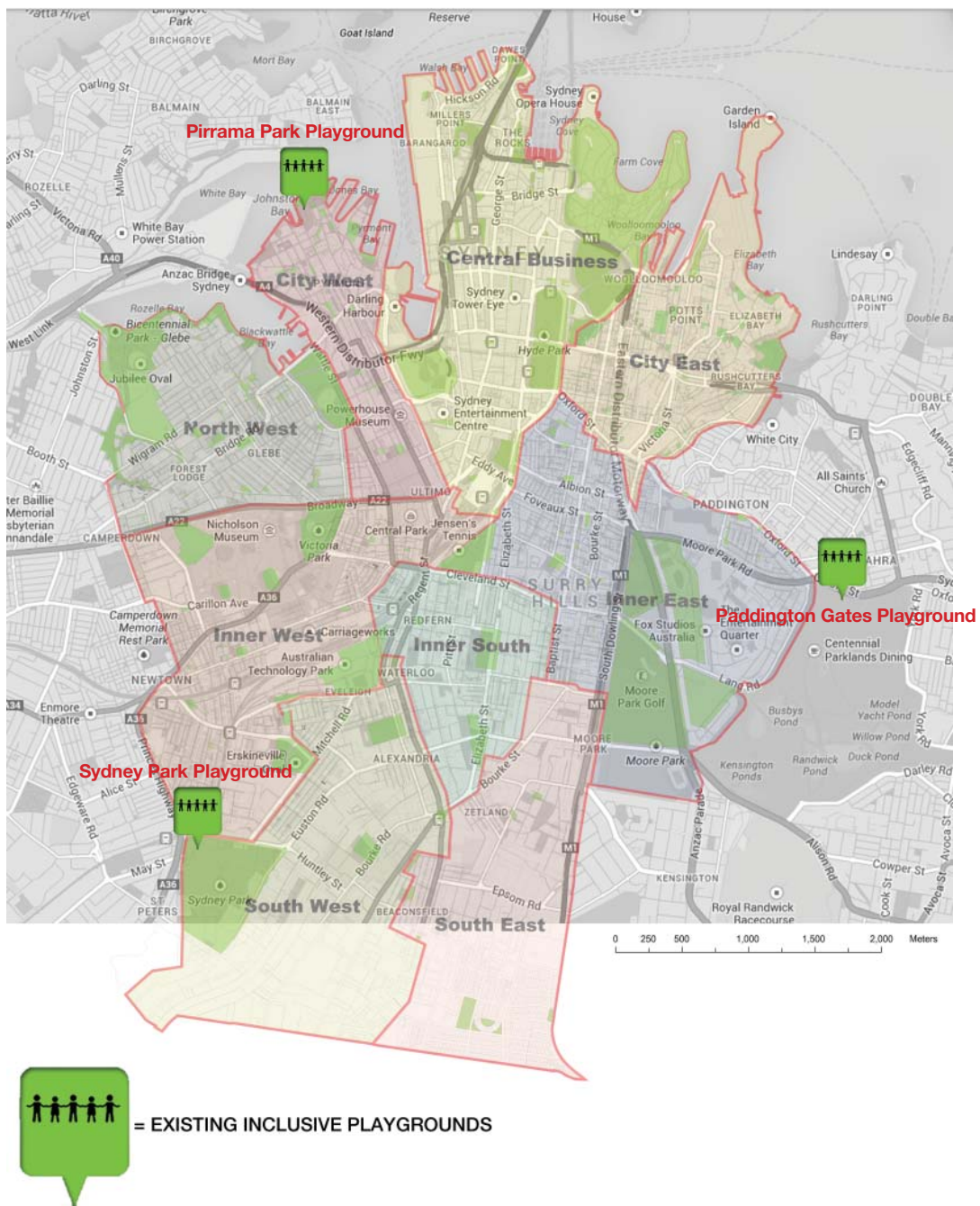


Locations for Inclusive Play within the City of Sydney

The following map indicates some major locations within, and in close proximity to, the City of Sydney's Local Government Area that have been specifically designed for Inclusive Play.

Figure 6: Altered City of Sydney Planning Districts

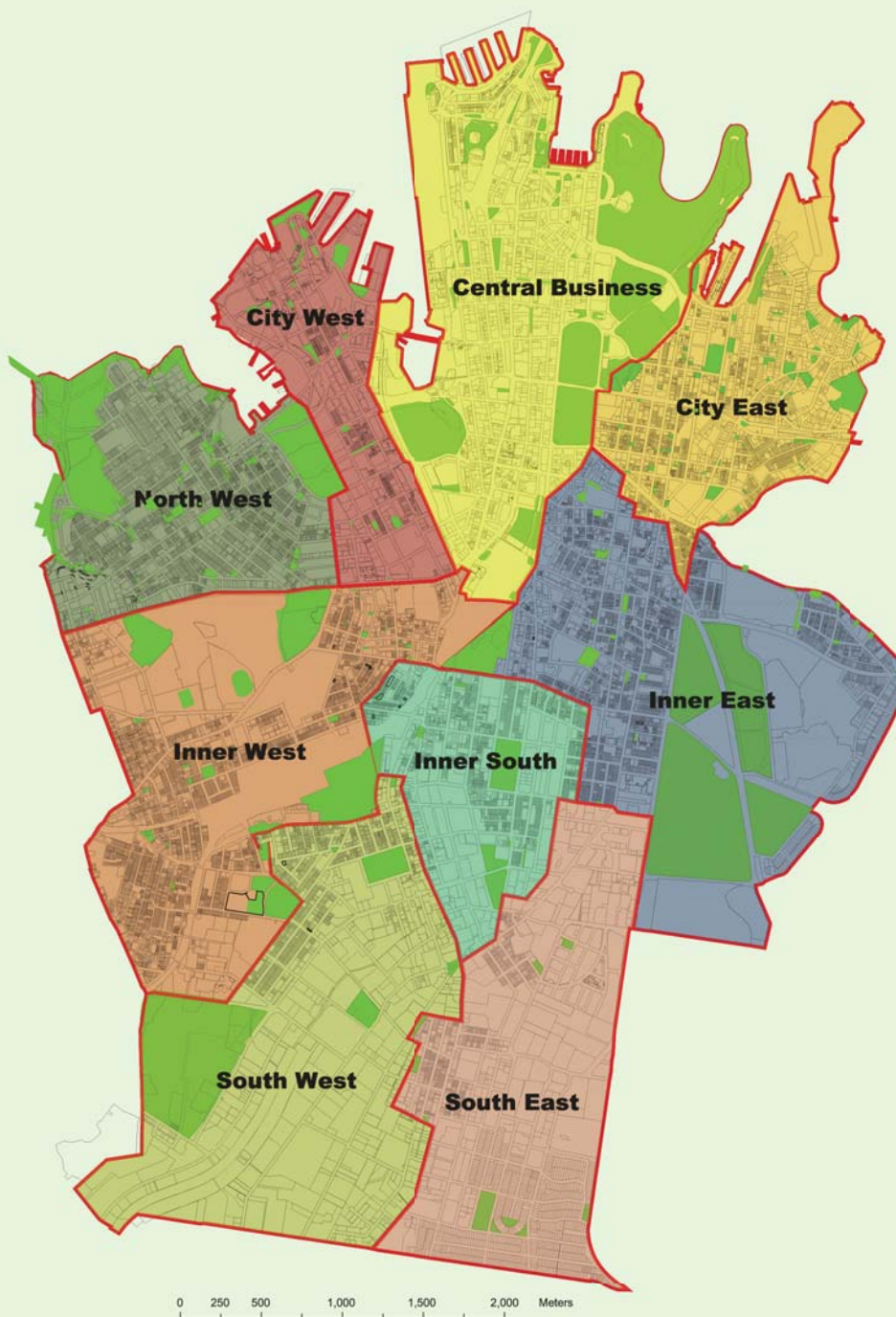
(Open Space & Recreation Needs Study. Amended Volume 1- The Strategy. 2007) & Google Maps



a. Potential Locations for Inclusive Playgrounds within the City of Sydney

Figure 7: City of Sydney Planning Districts

(Open Space & Recreation Needs Study. Amended Volume 1- The Strategy. 2007)



It is recommended that Inclusive Play opportunities be provided across the 9 districts in the City of Sydney's jurisdiction. Ideally, Inclusive Playgrounds would be offered at different sizes with varied play options, according to their designation of Regional, District and Local, to suit individual needs (not all children can cope with large crowded playgrounds).

This variety of provision means that Inclusive Play opportunities are within at least 2 km reach of most families and community groups. A mosaic of inclusive play approach could include: 2 or 3 Regional Playgrounds, 3 District Playgrounds and 5 or 6 Local Playgrounds.

Provision at this level means that the City of Sydney exceeds at its obligations to people (especially children) with disabilities.

Pirrama Park Playground: Inclusive Play options

a. The Current Situation

Pirrama Park playground was designed to be accessible and provide some inclusive play opportunities for children with mild to moderate disabilities (but not catering to all types of disability). Supportive facilities are all in place: There is a legible, accessible path of travel to and around the playground, linking all play activities. Accessible parking, accessible toilets, shade, seating, barbecues, bins and picnic shelters are all provided.

Play items which are inclusive include:

- side-by-side placement of swings with varying seats
- the arch net has additional rope climbing items which allow children with certain disabilities to join in play under the arch. Graduated climbing challenges are provided
- the slide has handrails which provide support to children accessing the slide
- the sandpit has a transfer platform (deck) which allows a child in a wheelchair to be transferred into the sandpit via a deck
- the whale waterplay feature allows seamless use by all
- spinners allow vestibular play for children with autism
- strappy plants and sandstone blocks separate each play offer into individual pods
- waterplay, musical instruments and generous use of plants provide sensory play opportunities
- differing natural materials are used as visual clues (e.g. timber, mulch), and illuminance contrast in colour selections highlight legibility of use of the play environment.

Observable results: the playground is used by children and adults alike, some of whom have mild to moderate levels of disability. The playground is visited by adults who use wheelchairs and mobility devices.

b. The Liberty Swing Proposal

There has been public interest in the installation of a Liberty Swing in Pirrama Park playground, in order to provide a more inclusive play environment.

The Liberty Swing and its practical requirements

A Liberty Swing offers adults and children with a wheelchair accessible swinging opportunity. Refer to Figure 8. It caters to a wide range of users; in fact, anyone can use the swing if they can sit down.

The swing can be used in two modes: with and without a wheelchair (small adjustments are made by the carer). The swing is set up by people who have an MLAK key. The swing is manually operated by a carer standing to the side of the swing. The user should be protected from the sun – this usually requires a shade structure. The swing must be fenced (min 1200mm high), with a gate and magna latch. A minimal internal circulation area is advisable to dissuade other users from waiting their turn inside the swing enclosure.



Siting of the Liberty Swing

Two fence layouts are shown in the diagrams in Figure 18- (Appendices) developed by Clive Dodd (of Consulting Co-ordination) and Wayne Devine (of Devine Industries). An accessible waiting area is required near the swing, preferably with seating. This allows people to wait their turn on the swing, especially when groups visit the playground e.g. special school outing.

Ideally the whole playground requires fencing as well as the Liberty Swing, as the carers of children with disabilities waiting their turn on the swing often need the assurance that the playground has a defined, safe unclimbable boundary.

A Liberty Swing spatially 'fits' in 3 locations in or around the current playground, as shown in Figure 11. All positions can be accessed by wheelchair.

Location A is the best of the three locations, as it is within the playground curtilage, hence is more inclusive. The other two positions are adjacent to the playground, and as such are "add ons", and do not follow best practice inclusive design principles (i.e. the swing becomes a "them and us" solution).

Does a Liberty Swing contribute to Pirrama Park Playground being Inclusive?

The Liberty Swing contributes to the playground being usable by people with certain disabilities, but does not in itself mean that the playground can be labelled "Inclusive". This is because it is being offered in isolation to the rest of the playground elements. Apart from swinging, there would be few elements which cater for many kinds of disabilities, especially moderate to severe disabilities. In itself the swing provides a message of segregation of people with disabilities, as it is fenced, has a "different look", is locked and requires a MLAK key to operate it. Families and schools will only tend to visit the swing if it is in an overall fenced playground, which is not appropriate in this context: the playground relates seamlessly to the surrounding spaces.

Figure 8: Liberty Swing



Advantages of Location A

- wheelchair users can access and use a swing in the playground (adults & children alike)
- accessible path of travel is available up to swing
- accessible toilets & parking are available
- is suitable for some people with severe disabilities

Disadvantages of Location A

- only one user at a time can use equipment
- MLAK key requirement- visual message of exclusivity
- the required fence is a message of physical separation
- waiting area to be added nearby (thereby impacting the surrounding areas)
- the entire playground curtilage ideally should be fenced (which restricts the flow of other playground users to surrounding facilities)
- the addition of a Liberty Swing in isolation to other Inclusive Play offers and items may not be enough in itself to entice families and groups with disabilities to visit the playground
- the swing must be shaded
- not all electric wheelchairs can access the Liberty Swing

Locations B & C should be discounted due to the overall message of segregation and exclusion as a result of their proximity to the existing playground location.

Discussion

There is little to be gained from adding a Liberty Swing and fence to the Pirrama Park Playground in isolation to the rest of the playground. Add-on solutions often result in low levels of usage, and can fail the very user group they are aimed at including, and can create cycles of unintended exclusion and complaint.

The question thus far has been: Can a Liberty Swing be placed in Pirrama Park Playground? (and if so, where?)

The question could instead be: how can Pirrama Park Playground become more Inclusive to a broader range of users?

There are two possible avenues to address this:

- a Redesign of the entire playground to become a District level Inclusive Playground (long term solution)
- b Addition of a wheelchair accessible spinner to the playground

Redesign of the Entire Playground

The entire playground curtilage would need to be considered in the context of inclusion, which would mean designed adjustments to the overall space. Each element would require re-design or amendment to cater for a broader range of users e.g. the arch net could have a lower membrane added into it for easy transfer/lifting from a wheelchair or walker, the sandpit would need an accessible ramp leading into it etc. The addition of a perimeter fence and gates are the most taxing of the design challenges and would impede the current free-flowing movement of people from the playground to the surrounding park. This is likely to be a fundamental philosophical design issue, as the original design response is that of a seamless park and playground experience.

c. Addition of a Wheelchair Accessible Spinner to Pirrama Park Playground

Addition of a Wheelchair Accessible Spinner to Pirrama Park Playground

The accessible group spinner (Figure 18- Appendices) provides an alternative to the Liberty Swing. The spinner can be used by both adults and children, with and without disabilities. The Kinderland Spinner can accommodate 3 wheelchair users, as well as offering 3 seats, and standing room. The brake system allows for predictability when needing to stop. The liftable bars mean that wheelchair users can feel secure once they are ready to spin. The item can be manually spun from the middle or turned from the edge. Small children can operate it. It requires a shade structure over it, as the steel can burn hands in the sun. It can be enjoyed by one person or up to about 12 people simultaneously. It also requires a nearby waiting area with accessible seating. Ideally the entire playground will be fenced, as carers bringing children or adults with disabilities to this space would like the assurance that the playground is secure.

As with the installation of a Liberty Swing, simply adding the Kinderland Spinner does not mean that the playground can be labelled as “Inclusive”, but makes it more appealing to a broader range of users, both with and without disabilities. It is equally enjoyed by everyone, and being a group spinner, is often a social hub. There are no keys required, and no message of difference. The spinner will fit into the aesthetic of Pirrama without being an obvious add-on. However, people with severe to profound disabilities, or people who have autistic children, would still find a visit to the playground frustrating without more supportive elements being provided, and in all likelihood this makes a visit tenuous for these groups.

Advantages

- many people can use item simultaneously
- can be used sitting or standing
- easy to turn
- easy to stop (has brakes)
- very social item due to number of possible users
- suited to a range of disabilities
- suited to a range of wheelchair styles and sizes
- no clear ‘disabled’ message

Disadvantages

- must be shaded (metal heats up)
- can only be installed in level areas
- requires a substantial cavity to be dug below the chequerplate base
- the cavity below should be drained



Figure 9: Kinderland Spinner



Recommendation

If the Pyrmont community are looking for an immediate solution to additional inclusive play provision in Pirrama Park, the addition of a wheelchair accessible spinner is recommended. It has substantial advantages over the Liberty Swing option. The spinner suits the playground aesthetic, will extend current play options positively. The addition of a Liberty Swing is not recommended as it will not create a positive message of inclusion in this context.

The long term strategy of Pirrama Park playground being redesigned as a District Inclusive Playground can be analysed in the broader context of the City of Sydney's citywide 'mosaic of Inclusive Play'. The essential question becomes: is Pirrama Park Playground the best location for a District Inclusive Playground in the City West and North West areas.

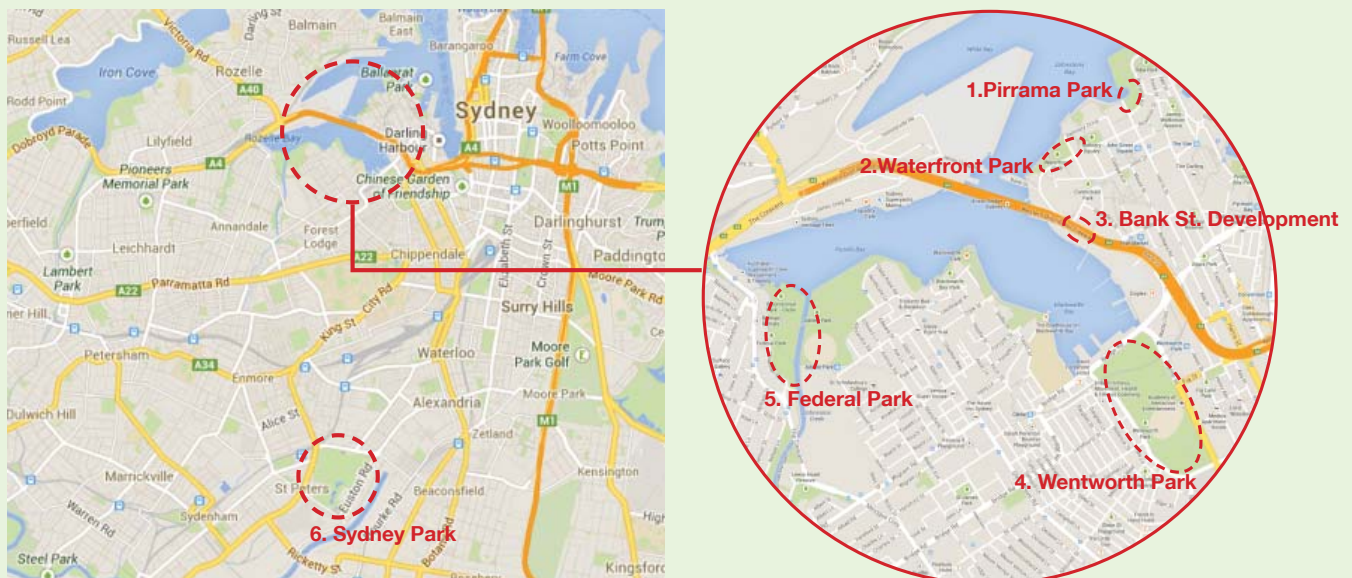
Inclusive Playground Options

In addition to Pirrama Park, five parks have been analysed for their potential suitability for an Inclusive Playground: Waterfront Park, Bank Street Development, Wentworth Park, Federal Park and Sydney Park.

All of these parks have the potential to progress in stages, and undergo adjustments to become a District or Regional level Inclusive Playspace.

Figure 10: Inner City Sydney Context Plan

Source: Google Maps



Pirrama Park, Pyrmont

Figure 11: Possible Liberty Swing Locations



Waterfront Park, Pyrmont



This park could be upgraded to a district level Inclusive Playground, or be retrofitted to include a local inclusive playground.

The following areas could be staged:

- Retrofitting a Liberty Swing or Kinderland Spinner to the existing playground, including a fence
- Provision of a larger Inclusive Playground and amenities near the carpark.

Advantages

- Supportive facilities in place (carpark & toilet)
- Natural setting
- Large grassed areas available

Disadvantages

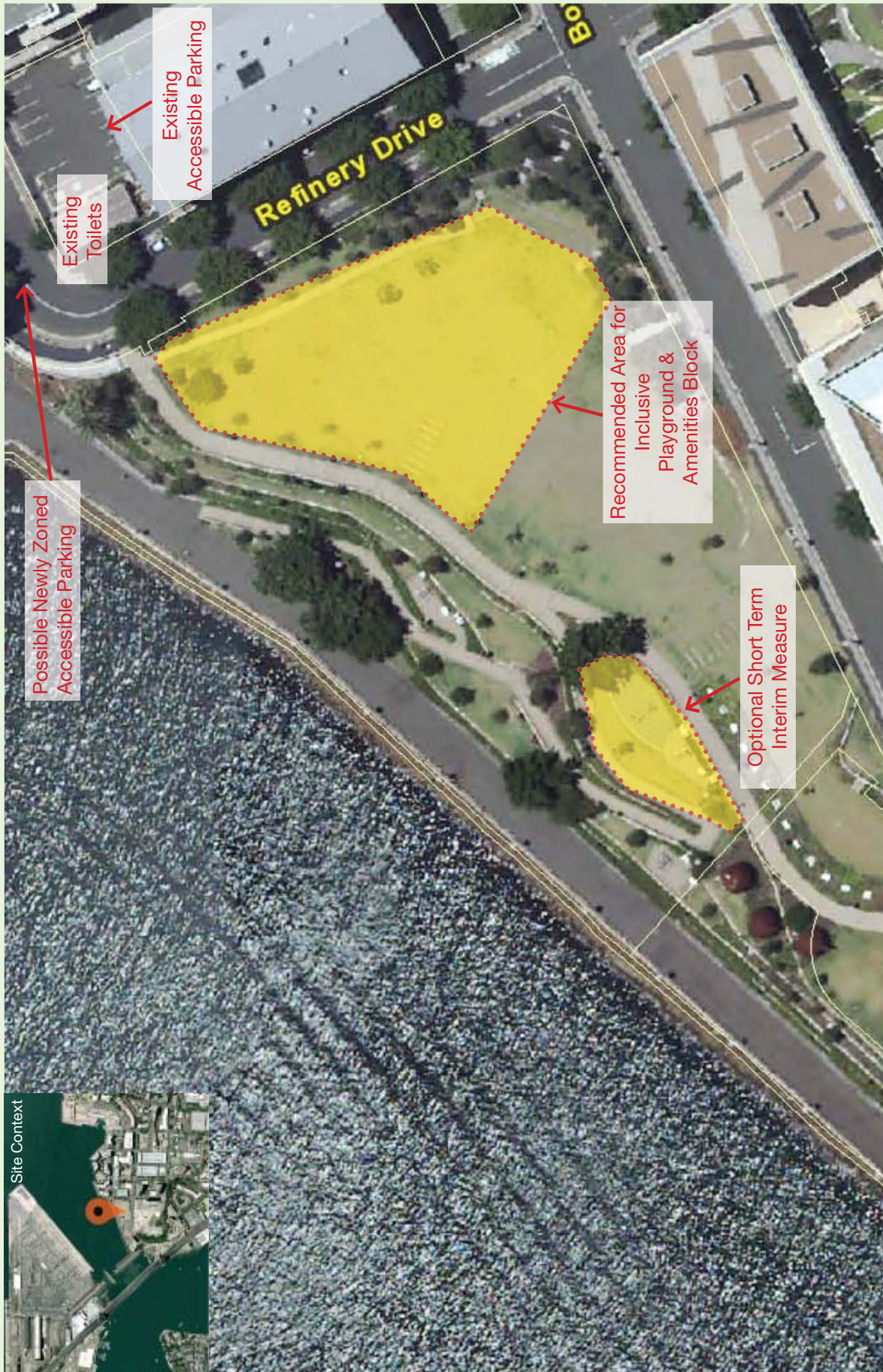
- Difficult & unsafe road crossing from car park
- Existing playground too far from car park for people with a physical disability
- District playground requires significant site development (earthworks)
- Additional amenities block required (if District level)
- Integrity of landscape comprised

Recommendation

Waterfront Park is problematic as an Inclusive Local Playground due to distance from the carpark (not an option).

The larger option of a District level Inclusive Playground is not recommended, as a significant earthworks would be required, and the road crossing remains problematic. Not a recommended solution.

Figure 12: Waterfront Park, Pyrmont



Bank Street Development, Pyrmont



A future park is planned in Bank Street, and could include a District or Regional Inclusive Playground.

Works could include:

- 2500m² playground footprint
- Vehicular access into park with accessible carparking
- Amenities block
- Fencing of playground

Advantages

- 'Unformed' park means there are few limitations & plenty of opportunities
- Generous space

Disadvantages

- The park and playground will take time to design and build – a long wait for the public
- Trees will take some time to establish, hence it will take time to feel like a natural setting (or incur expenses for mature transplanted trees)
- Likely to be noisy (not ideal for inclusive play)
- Scale of overhead highway is overwhelming

Recommendation

Bank Street Park could offer a flexible, large location for an Inclusive Playground, however the noise and the scale of the overhead highway are major drawback and are restrictive to potential users with disabilities.

Figure 13: Bank St Development, Pyrmont



Wentworth Park, Glebe



This park and playground has the potential to be upgraded to a District or Regional level Inclusive Playground, and lends itself to staged development. The following areas could be staged:

- Hardstand area for drop off zone, accessible parking and bus bay
- Accessible amenities block
- Upgraded picnic facilities
- Larger playground footprint
- Perimeter fencing
- Additional planting

The Liberty Swing or Kinderland Spinner can be added to the inclusive play footprint at any stage.

Advantages

- Large un-encumbered open space could easily accommodate a staged playground development
- Existing equipment & shade structure can be kept
- Almost flat site
- Central location

Disadvantages

- 'Open' space - needs planting
- Needs additional infrastructure (expensive)
- Would need additional shade structures
- Hardstand area requires negotiation, & carparking will be at a premium
- Large fig trees are sensitive to pressures the public may put them under

Recommendation

Wentworth Park is an ideal location for an Inclusive Playground upgrade.

Short term works: feasibility study regarding carparking & amenities block, addition of the Kinderland Spinner or Liberty Swing, and hardstand area and linking paths.

Medium term works: amenities block.

Long term works: the larger fenced playground perimeter, shade structures and planting.

Figure 14: Wentworth Park, Glebe



Federal Park, Glebe



This established Playground is due for an upgrade, and could be designated as a District level Inclusive Playground.

The following areas could be staged:

- Addition of Liberty Swing or Kinderland Spinner to empty space in playground, with shade structures
- Upgrade of rest of playground to be inclusive
- Upgrade of picnic facilities and additional fencing

Advantages

- Many inclusive elements are already in place: perimeter fence, accessible parking, picnic facilities, accessible toilets, shade, paths & bus drop off area
- Good natural atmosphere
- Excellent entry structure
- Cost effective solution, with good access
- Central location

Disadvantages

- The playground is quite small
- The toilets are more than 50m away, and not visible from the playground
- Mature trees may pose root issues
- Additional fencing will be required

Recommendation

Federal Park Playground has many items which make it possible to retrofit this site to become an Inclusive Playground.

Short term works: tree root study, addition of Liberty Swing and/or Kinderland Spinner. Upgrade to a District level Inclusive Playground

Medium term works: upgrade of picnic facilities

Figure 15: Federal Park, Glebe



Sydney Park, St Peters



Sydney Park Playground has been designed and built as a Regional All Abilities Playground. Outcomes for children with severe to profound disabilities could be improved with the following additions:

- Addition of a Liberty Swing and shade structure
- Addition of the wheelchair accessible Spinner and shade structure
- Accessible path with musical instruments
- Modification of sandpits
- Retrofit membranes to climbing nets
- Addition of a perimeter fence

Advantages

- Already a large, well known playground, with a great variety of play activities
- Retrofitting new items can be undertaken without shutting the playground
- The playground offers a natural setting for play
- Many supportive elements are already in place (carparks, drop off bays, picnic shelters, toilets, seats etc.)

Disadvantages

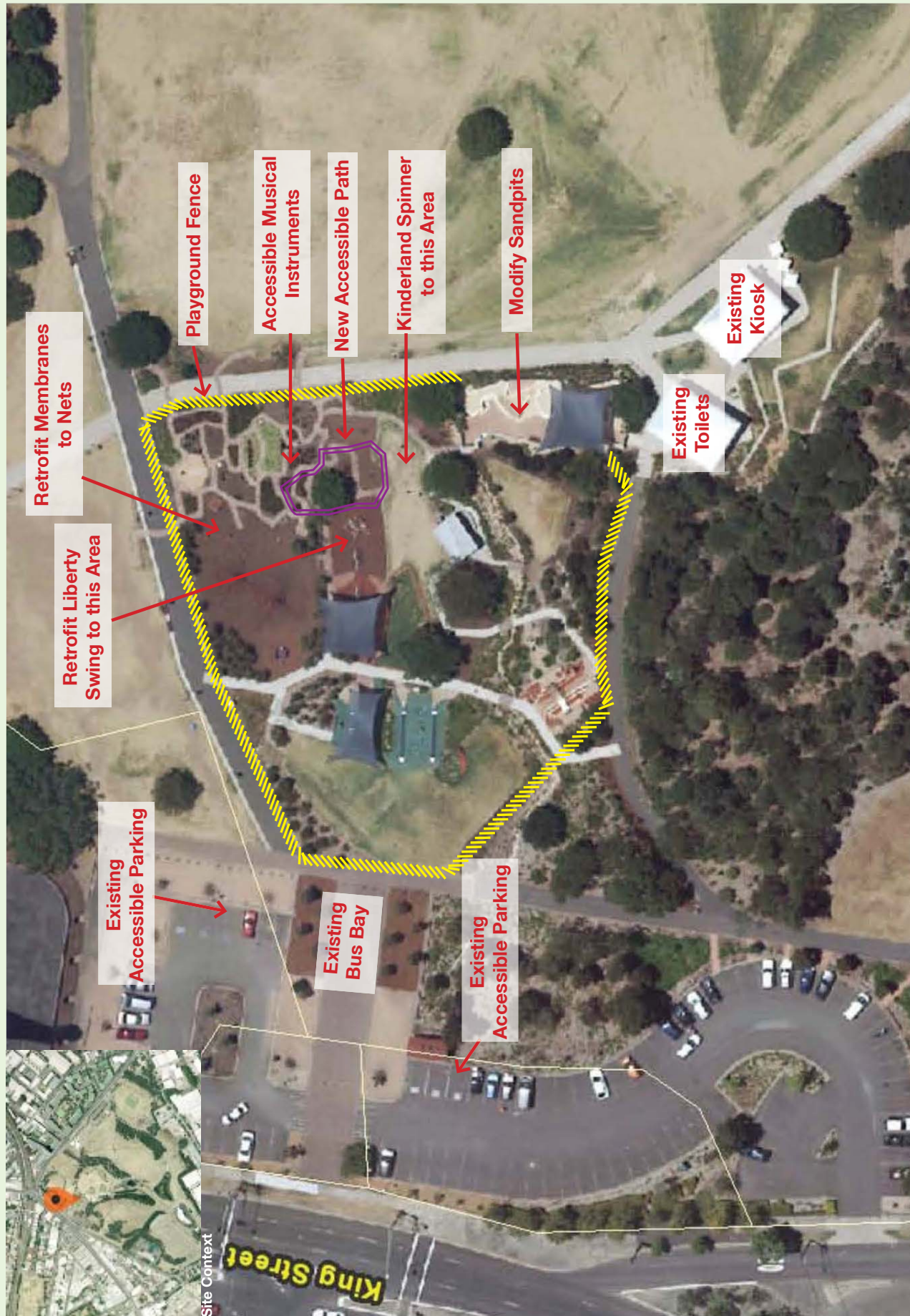
- Integrity of current design is compromised
- Additions are expensive
- Long distance from accessible parking to playground entry

Recommendation

Sydney Park Playground's Inclusive Play opportunities can be extended through staged works.

Medium term works: retrofit Liberty Swing and Kinderland Spinner into playground, and modify paths as required. Fence the playground, modify sandpits, climbing nets and add musical instruments.

Figure 16: Sydney Park, St. Peters



Overall Recommendations

1. The City of Sydney can readily commit to increased play opportunities for children with all levels and types of disabilities across the entire LGA. This will mean that Council can justifiably say that inclusive play facilities are within reach (2 kilometres) of all residents and community groups. This would meet the intent of the DDA.
2. A suggested 'mosaic of Inclusive Play' is recommended, with between one to three Inclusive Playgrounds in each of the nine planning districts.
3. Short, medium, and long term measures can readily be commenced, which means Inclusive Play outcomes can be staged over, say, a ten year period, commensurate with available funding.
4. A Liberty Swing is not recommended for installation in Pirrama Park Playground, but rather, in Federal Park instead
5. A wheelchair accessible spinner is recommended to be installed in Pirrama Park Playground to extend Inclusive Play outcomes (without a message of exclusion or segregation)
6. Short Term Recommendations:
 - Undertake a feasibility study of both Federal Park and Wentworth Park to investigate constraints and opportunities for Inclusive Playground development.
 - Liberty Swing to be installed at Federal Park (following a tree root study)
 - Upgrade Federal Park Playground to a District level Inclusive Playground
 - Wheelchair accessible spinner to be installed at Pirrama Park Playground (no fence)
7. Medium Term Recommendations:
 - Identify Inclusive Playground opportunities across the Council LGA with clear supportive documents
 - Increase Inclusive Play opportunities at Sydney Park for children with severe disabilities.
 - Liberty Swing to be installed at Sydney Park Playground
 - Provision of an Inclusive Playground at the Bank Street site, Pyrmont
8. Long Term Recommendations:
 - Continued staged modification of Sydney Park Playground
 - Provide a Regional level Inclusive Playground within the northern sector of the Council LGA.
9. All Inclusive Playground provision will be underpinned by community consultation to ensure user needs are met.



Figure 17: Federal Park Playground: Suitable location for a Liberty Swing

Appendices

Pirrama Park, Pyrmont

Figure 18: Liberty Swing Arrangement Options



Pirrama Park, Pyrmont

Figure 19: Kinderland Spinner Arrangement Option

