

Item 12.10

Notices of Motion

Access to All Ability Playgrounds in the Inner City

By Councillor Ellsmore

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) playgrounds play a vital role in the wellbeing of children and communities. They are a vital support for children's development, social interaction, creativity and imagination, emotional and cognitive growth, and the development of risk-taking and problem-solving skills. They also provide opportunities for intergenerational play and offer adults stress relief, improved brain function and physical health, stronger social bonds and enhanced creativity;
- (ii) many standard playgrounds include equipment and design features that are not suitable or safe for people with disability;
- (iii) the City of Sydney is committed to ensuring playgrounds and public spaces are accessible for everyone. The City of Sydney is increasingly including inclusive design features and play equipment in council playgrounds, recreation areas and other public spaces;
- (iv) playgrounds which are designed as "all-abilities playgrounds" are purposefully designed so that people with a wide range of needs can play together, with minimal barriers. Well-designed "all ability playgrounds" are developed with feedback from local families and disability support organisations, and prioritise meeting the diversity need of people living with a disability;
- (v) all-abilities playgrounds prioritise disability inclusion and the inclusion of diverse spaces that might not otherwise be available in smaller playgrounds. This can include: diverse equipment at different levels for a range of age, size and challenge levels, swings and other play equipment that can accommodate a wheelchair or participation of a person and their carer together; step free entry to equipment, gentle ramps, ground-level platforms and wheelchair-friendly carousels; sensory-rich zones and safe retreat spaces; clear lighting and accessible pathways between transport to the park and the playgrounds to encourage people from across the Local Government Area (LGA) or the region to visit; and
- (vi) several other councils across NSW - including the Inner West, Sutherland Shire, and Wollongong - have recently adopted strategies to prioritise delivering, or have delivered, all abilities" playgrounds which is designed to be fully inclusive, ensuring people of all abilities can play, learn and participate equally;

(B) Council further note:

- (i) with 5,812 residents living with a disability in the City of Sydney, and 1.3 million people with disability across NSW, ensuring play spaces reflect this diversity and are accessible to everyone is a priority for the community;
- (ii) the City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025–2029 commits the City to “continue to improve the accessibility of streets, footpaths, parks and open places through renewal programs, upgrades and new capital works projects, in line with the inclusive and accessible public domain policy and guidelines” and to “explore opportunities to provide designated quiet spaces and quiet times, places for sensory seeking and places for respite in City of Sydney facilities, including parks and playgrounds”; and
- (iii) Council is currently updating its Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study, which will help identify and guide the development of future playgrounds, parks and other public spaces in the City of Sydney LGA. The study will consider accessibility, and is likely to be tabled at the March 2026 Council meeting; and

(C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:

- (i) assess and consider the inclusion of all-abilities spaces or playgrounds in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Study 2026; and
- (ii) include consideration of:
 - (a) existing and planned accessible playgrounds in the City of Sydney LGA and nearby LGAs;
 - (b) accessible transport connections to and from play spaces, including continuous accessible paths of travel and appropriate parking;
 - (c) best-practice models from other NSW councils, including Wollongong City Council, which have delivered high-quality all-abilities playgrounds or otherwise expanded recreational opportunities for children with disabilities; and
 - (d) feedback from local families about the need for accessible play spaces for people living with disability.

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