



# Playgrounds

## Community Assets – At the Core of Your Neighbourhood

### What are the community assets?

The City of Willoughby boasts a large range of services which contribute to our quality of life. Most of these services rely on a pool of assets with a combined replacement value of more than \$760M.

Assets in Willoughby include all buildings, footpaths, roads, stormwater infrastructure, parks, bushland, sportsgrounds and playgrounds. Without these assets Council could not provide its present array of services. These assets are located on Council-owned land as well as land under Council's care and control.

Asset Management has been identified as a federal priority for local government across Australia, as all councils begin to face the issue of aging infrastructure.

Strategic management of these assets, guided by an asset management policy and plans, will ensure the needs of communities are being determined and met, and funding sources for asset renewal are secured for the future.

### Managing our assets

Much of the city's infrastructure was built in the first half of the 20th century and an intense period of construction of community buildings took place in the 1970s and again in the 1990s. Many of these assets are already due for replacement, and Council has been undertaking a continual replacement and upgrade program to meet the needs of a growing city. Planning has now begun for the large number of these assets that will be due for replacement around the same time, particularly over the next two decades.

Willoughby City Council has collected the vast majority of data required to produce its Asset Management Plans. They can be accessed from Council's website. These 20 year strategic plans provide scenario-based expenditure projections for nine classes of assets.

The next step for Willoughby is to ascertain the community's priorities and determine the acceptable condition, capacity, functionality, location and quantity of our assets.

## Have Your Say

Willoughby Council is seeking feedback from the community to determine the acceptable level of service provision.

We need to know how you use community assets, whether they meet your expectations and how we should prioritise future works so we can develop strategies for their management.

Consultation will seek your opinions about community assets in terms of physical condition and appearance, capacity, fitness for purpose and whether there are enough of them in the right places.

Visit [www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au](http://www.haveyoursaywilloughby.com.au) to be involved in the online forum and to receive project updates. Council will also hold community workshops, public meetings and information stalls through 2013.



# Playgrounds

Replacement value: \$1.9M

- 39 playgrounds within public parks
- 11 playgrounds within council-owned child care centres and buildings

Playgrounds are provided for the enjoyment and benefit of both residents and visitors. Play spaces include individual items of play equipment – swings, slides, spinners, rockers, climbers – as well as under-surfacing or soft-fall, sand pits, landscaped play areas, artworks and safety fencing.

Playgrounds encourage social interaction amongst both children and carers. Creative play spaces are provided by using planting, sand-pits, mounding, rock features, textured and patterned pathways and surfaces, and sound sculptures, and by incorporating artwork into new and existing play environments in varied ways such as pathway mosaics, climbing sculptures and cubbyhouses.

Associated assets such as seating and picnic facilities make the area suitable for family celebrations, Council events and meeting of parents' groups. These are not strictly playground assets so are accounted for under parks assets.

## Physical condition

The expected life of playground equipment is 15 years. Council programs playground upgrades every 15 years, on average, to ensure equipment is not aging beyond its expected life.

Weekly inspections and quarterly detailed inspections by a third party provide comprehensive information about asset condition and a detailed report of works to be undertaken. Changes in legislation or safety standards that may have happened since the previous report are taken into account.

### Average condition of assets within playgrounds:



Playground assets are rated on a scale of zero to five, where zero means the asset is in brand new or excellent condition and five means the asset is at the end of its life and no longer able to provide service.

## Operations and maintenance

As well as completing any repairs or upgrades identified in weekly and quarterly inspections, regular maintenance carried out within playgrounds includes:

- Top up sandpits
- Aerate and replenish soft-fall
- Fence and gate repairs
- Litter pick-up

During the 2011/12 financial year, approximately \$170,000 was spent on maintenance of playgrounds.

## Planning for the future

Playgrounds within open space are divided into two hierarchical categories to assist with determining levels of service and to assist with programming of future works: district (14 playgrounds) and local (25 playgrounds).

The target demographic group for playground assets is children aged between zero and 11 years. The expected changes in this target demographic are as follows:

Age range	2010	2030	% change
0 to 4 years	4,878	5,055	+ 3.6
5 to 11 years	5,519	6,010	+ 8.9

Provision of services with playgrounds could also target other specific demographic groups, including (but not limited to):

- Young people aged 12-17 years
- Parents and primary carers
- Grandparents and secondary carers

Council is considering a number of alternatives to meet the projected increase in demand on playgrounds, including:

- Providing new playgrounds
- Upgrading and managing existing playgrounds
- Supporting the establishment of private indoor children's play centres in Chatswood CBD retail, commercial and industrial areas.
- Pursuing partnerships and joint ventures with schools and other providers to allow public access to playgrounds on non-public land.



■ Location of playgrounds

## City of Willoughby

