

Bland Shire Council

Playground Management Strategy

March 2009

Council recognises that parks and playgrounds can represent a high level of risk to members of the public, especially children. All hazards should be dealt with immediately



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1 Introduction

Bland Shire Council currently manages 14 playgrounds.

Council has a duty of care to satisfactorily construct and maintain all Playgrounds under its care, control and management, to enhance the safety of all users. Playgrounds should encourage development of gross and fine motor skills, and also present a stimulating play environment, which presents children with manageable challenges, through which children can find and test their limits.

In order to provide these challenges, a balance must be found between risk and safety. It is also imperative that Council put in place planning measures to ensure that the current and future recreation needs of our community are adequately catered for and that the statutory reporting requirements of Council are met.

This document applies to unsupervised playgrounds in parks. It does not apply to playgrounds in supervised areas such as preschools and playgroups.

1.1 Aim

The aim of the Playground Management Strategy is to enhance the safety of, and put in place, management practices that minimise potential for injury to all users of Council's Playgrounds. This will require Council to meet reporting requirements and the programming of repair or replacement works.

This will enable Council to:

- Direct the limited funds to the areas of most need.
- Provide a Playground network that as far as fiscally possible meets the current and future needs of the community.
- Comply with relevant standards such as the Australian/New Zealand Standards and any other statutory requirements.
- Monitor and review the control measures put in place, to ensure a continued high level of safety in playgrounds and for playground equipment, in order to keep up to date with current Standards and recommendations from organisations such as NSW Playground Safety Network and Kidsafe NSW.

1.2 Statement of Intention

Bland Shire Council will endeavour to exercise its duty of care in relation to playgrounds by taking all reasonable steps to enhance the safety of users, with due regard being given to the nature of the defect, the level of risk, the level of use of the playground, funding constraints, competing priorities and minimum standards.

Past playgrounds have been unplanned with a shotgun approach producing a lot of small play equipment with limited play value scattered around various parks. Over the past four years Bland Shire Council rationalised much of its playground equipment, removing unsafe equipment from parks and in some areas a number of old, poor quality, poor play value, small playgrounds have been removed and strategically placed facilities have been upgraded.

2 List of Bland Shire Council Playgrounds



Playground Inventory

Thursday, 5 March 2009
11:41:34 AM

	Installer	Vendor	Date Acquired	Insurance Value	Warranty Details on File	Certificate of Compliance on File	Operating Instructions on file
Barmedman Park			Shire - Medium Use			<i>Queen Street</i>	<i>Barmedman</i>
Close to southern boundary and toilet block				\$58,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flying Fox				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber Edged Chip Softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/08/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small play gym with slide			1/01/1999	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Barnado Park Land			Regional - High Use			<i>Barnado Street</i>	<i>West Wyalong</i>
Close to southern bounday and toilet block				\$104,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity Net 6 meter	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber Sofffall	Reclaim	Reclaim	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior double swing	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greenline Shade Structure	Greenline	Greenline	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Double Swing	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Firetruck	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Two spring rocker toys	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Activity Gym including climbing apparatus	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Four person spinner	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Junior Play Gym including 2 slides and climbing apparatus	Playspace	Playspace	1/12/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bing Walder Park Front Portion						<i>27 Woolongough Street</i>	<i>Ungarie</i>
Eastern edge of park				\$49,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/06/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Installer	Vendor	Date Acquired	Insurance Value	Warranty Details on File	Certificate of Compliance on File	Operating Instructions on file	
Rubber edged chip softfall				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Scale Swing		Ausplay	1/01/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Playgym including slide, climbing apparatus		Ausplay	1/01/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Swing See Saw		Ausplay	1/01/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Herridge Park		Regional - High Use					<i>Need Street</i>	<i>Wyalong</i>
Eastern Edge				\$58,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Digger toy	Reclaim	Playspace	1/05/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spring See Saw	Reclaim	Playspace	1/05/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Spring Rocker	Reclaim	Playspace	1/05/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Play gym including slide, flying fox and climbing apparatus		Ausplay		\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Double Swing		Ausplay	1/11/2006	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Rubberised Softfall Surface		Reclaim	1/05/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Kikoira Park		Local - Low Use					<i>Bradburys Lane</i>	<i>Kikoira</i>
Two swing sets				\$13,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
No softfall				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
McCann Park Land		Regional - High Use					<i>Main Street</i>	<i>West Wyalong</i>
Southwest Corner				\$40,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wave Rider	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Sand Softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/02/2009	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Whirly Gig Spinner 4 - S Shape F	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Spring Rocker Fish	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Swing set with baby capsule, senior junior swin	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Whirly Gig Spinner 4 - S Shape F	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Play Gym including slide and climbing apparatus		Playspace	1/04/1994	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Installer	Vendor	Date Acquired	Insurance Value	Warranty Details on File	Certificate of Compliance on File	Operating Instructions on file
Two Seat Rocker	Bland Shire Cou	Playspace	5/03/2009	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Memorial Park Mirrool			Local - Low Use			<i>Ariah Street</i>	<i>Mirrool</i>
Southeast Corner				\$23,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/08/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play gym including slide, climbing apparatus		Ausplay	1/07/1995	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double swing		Playspace		\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monash Street Park			Local - Low Use			<i>Monash Street</i>	<i>West Wyalong</i>
Northern Edge				\$29,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber edged chip softfall			1/01/1997	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgym including slide, flying fox and climbing apparatus		Forpark	24/06/1997	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Naradhan Public Park			Local - Low Use				<i>Naradhan</i>
One swing				\$6,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Activity Gym				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No Softfall in place				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Northcott Park			Local - Low Use			<i>Northcott Street</i>	<i>West Wyalong</i>
Centrally				\$29,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/06/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double swing	Megatoy		1/01/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Park Street Recreation Ground			Shire - Medium Use			<i>73 Park Street</i>	<i>West Wyalong</i>
Corner of Creswell and Park Streets				\$17,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double Swing		Forpark	1/01/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play gym including slide, climbing apparatus		Ausplay		\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber Edged Chip Softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/05/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Installer	Vendor	Date Acquired	Insurance Value	Warranty Details on File	Certificate of Compliance on File	Operating Instructions on file
Pioneer Park Weethalle			Shire - Medium Use			<i>Mid Western Highway</i>	<i>Weethalle</i>
Eastern edge				\$23,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plastic edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/06/2000	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small Play Gym including slide, climbing apparatus	Ausplay			\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tallimba Park Land			Local - Low Use			<i>51 Tallimba Street</i>	<i>Tallimba</i>
North east corner				\$35,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spring animal		Ausplay	1/01/1995	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scale swing		Ausplay	1/07/1995	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Play gym including slide, climbing apparatus		Ausplay	1/07/1995	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rubber edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/08/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double swing		Playspace	1/05/2007	\$0	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ungarie Pool						<i>37 Ethel Street</i>	<i>Ungarie</i>
Playground equipment part removed				\$14,000	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No softfall in place				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weethalle Recreation Ground & Showground			Shire - Medium Use			<i>4 Teamster Drive</i>	<i>Weethalle</i>
Rubber edged chip softfall	Bland Shire Cou		1/05/2007	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgym including slide and climbing apparatus	Forpark		5/08/1999	\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Behind bowling club				\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double swing	Forpark			\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Establishment of New Playgrounds

Playground rationalisation has taken place over the last five years with a number of small, isolated playgrounds removed. Following this review, Bland Shire Council has no plans to establish new playground areas. Limited funds will be focused toward the upgrade and continual maintenance of existing playground equipment.

Prior to the development of any new playground areas, adequate consideration must be given to expected playground usage, whole of life asset costs and the standard of playground equipment required.

4 Standards for Existing Playgrounds

4.1 Compliance with S standards

All Bland Shire Council parks will comply with Australian Standards.

Playgrounds were inspected in 2006 and all permanent structures comply with Australian Standards

4.2 Softfall and edging

Softfall prevents major injuries that may occur as a result of falls. Edging is necessary to keep loose softfall in place.

Softfall and edging will be in compliance with the Australian Standard. Rubberised softfall will be installed in regional parks to minimise maintenance requirements.

Bland Shire playgrounds will be maintained or improved to the following standard

Regional	Rubberised softfall
Shire	Loose softfall with rubberised edging
Local	Loose softfall with rubberised edging

4.3 Shade/Sun Protection

Provision should be made in each playground for areas of sun protection and shade, both for the children using the playground as well as for any caregivers present. Shade protection can also extend the life of any playground equipment.

Bland Shire playgrounds will be maintained or improved to the following standard

Regional	Shade sails
Shire	Trees selected from list of approved species or Shade Structure
Local	Trees selected from list of approved species or Shade Structure

4.4 Review of Existing Playgrounds

Naradhan - The park is of limited play value. Following the removal of unsafe play equipment only a single swing remains. There is no softfall. The community have requested that the swing be removed and relocated to the Naradhan Hall area (Crown Lands) and softfall and edging be installed. Council are currently in consultation with the community.

Kikiora – The park is of limited play value. Following the removal of unsafe play equipment only a double swing remains. Softfall comprises of sand. Council are currently in consultation with the community.

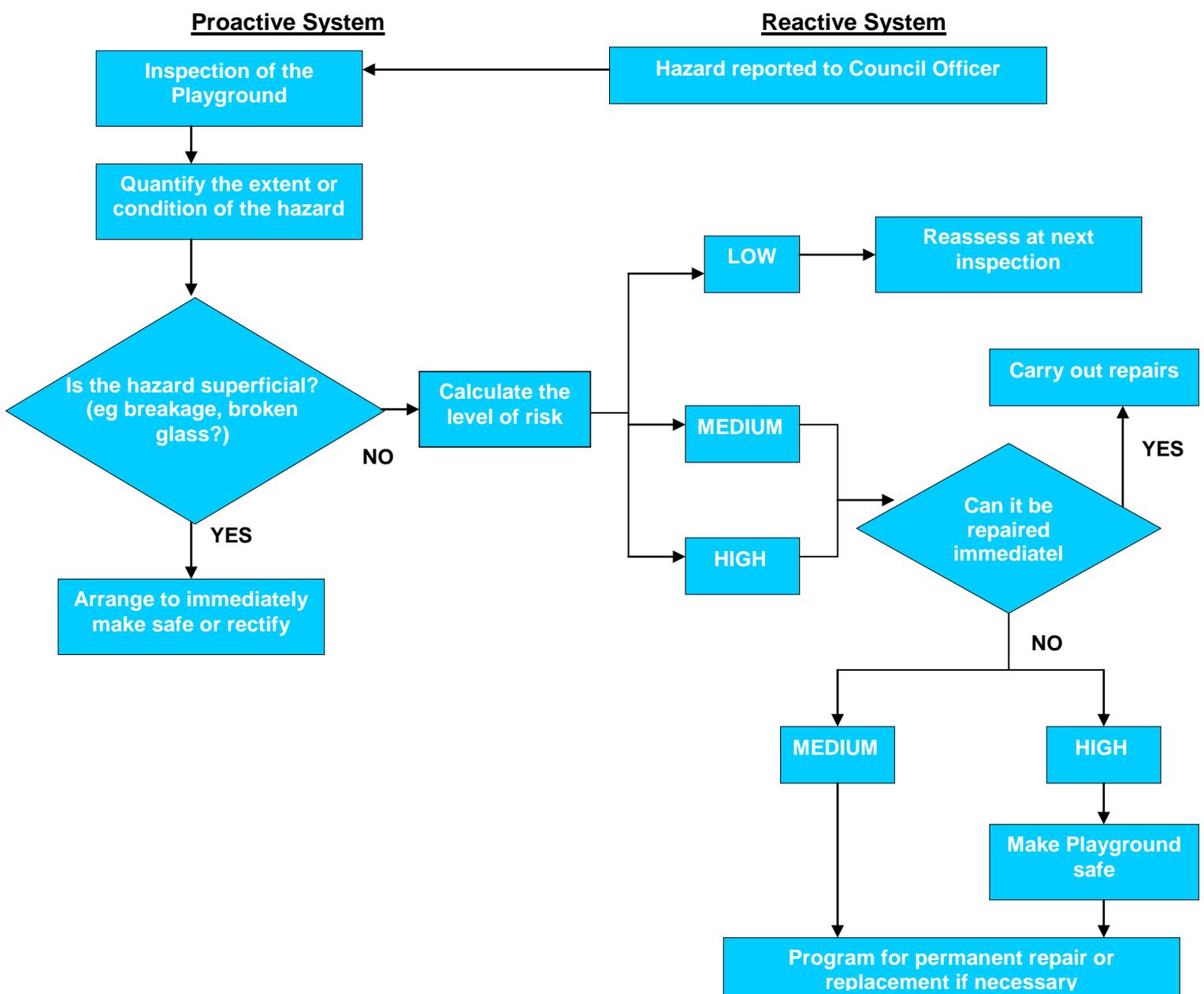
5 Risk Management

Council needs to have in place a system for maintaining and repairing Playgrounds that reduces the possibility of hazards in a Playground not being identified, thus enhancing the safety of all users.

Risk Management is the system used by Council to address this issue by identifying a hazard, either proactively (primary method) or reactively (secondary method), evaluating the hazard, and taking the appropriate action (Control Measure).

5.1 The Process

The Risk Management process used by Council is an integration of both a reactive and proactive system. The process is displayed graphically below, in its simplest form:



5.2 Identification

The primary method of identifying Playground hazards is a proactive approach based on a series of programmed inspections by a competent officer. The secondary method is a reactive method, which is based on hazards being brought to Council's attention by means of complaints taken by Council's Customer Service Officers.

Playground Safety Emergency Contact stickers shall be placed in parks with Council's office/after hours telephone number to assist users of the facility to contact and notify Council of any potential hazard or problem.

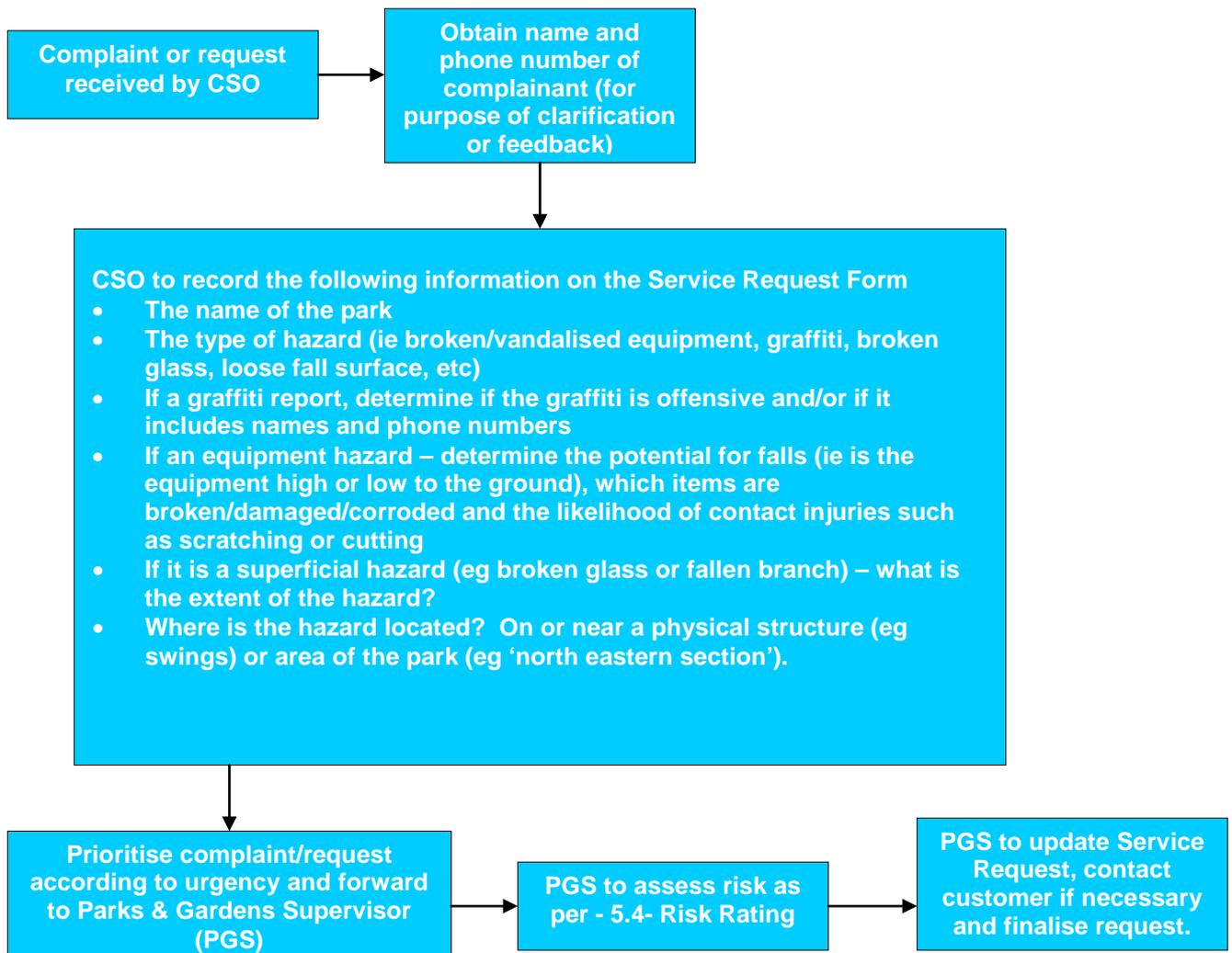
5.2.1 Reactive Approach

Council's Customer Service Officers collect the relevant information from the complainant electronically on a "Customer Service Request" (see example in Appendix – Customer Service Action Request) and email a notification of the request to the appropriate Competent Officer.

The subject area is then inspected as soon as possible in the same manner as that undertaken in the Proactive Approach.

The urgency of the inspection is determined by the type and severity of the hazard reported. The reactive process is detailed in the following flow chart.

Decision flowchart to be used by Customer Service Officers (CSO):



5.2.3 Proactive Approach

The basis of the proactive approach for Risk Management is a programmed inspection system. In terms of reducing the risk of injury to the general public using our playgrounds, a proactive system of inspection, identification and repair (if necessary) is superior to a reactive system.

The formal inspection system has been modelled on the Australian/New Zealand Standards 4486.1:1997 and works by dividing Council's playground inspections into 2 categories. Frequency of inspections has been based on the generally low usage rates of Bland Shire Council's playground equipment, low vandalism rates, installation of high quality play equipment and increased use of permanent soft fall.

The categories and frequencies of inspection are:

Inspection Category	Inspection Type	Inspection Frequency & Documentation
Category 1 - Routine Visual Inspection	The observations made by parks staff during their day to day duties in parks and playgrounds which may identify obvious hazards as a result of vandalism, level of use or weather conditions (eg. damaged parts, broken bottles, and loss of soft surfacing)	Weekly Inspection Documented on inspection sheet
Category 2 – Comprehensive Operational Inspection	A more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of the equipment, especially for any wear (eg. components where wear could be expected such as bearings and moving joints) This includes the structural integrity of items subject to the subtle effects of weather, corrosion and rotting. This inspection also assesses any change in the safety of the equipment resulting from repairs made, or added or replaced components.	6 monthly Inspection – May and November Information is documented on safety inspection sheet. Inspections shall be conducted by a competent officer, and in relation to equipment, in strict accordance to the manufacturer's instructions. At least once per year a member of the OHS committee member will be invited to participate in the inspection.

5.3 Evaluation

The two main factors in evaluating whether a hazard presents a significant risk of causing an accident are the type of hazard and the level of use of the facility.

5.3.1 Types of Hazards

The 3 most common types of hazards in Playgrounds are surface hazards, playground equipment and equipment height.

- **Surface Hazards** - Uneven surfaces that may cause tripping, slipperiness, offensive or personalised graffiti, broken glass, loss of loose fill – e.g. not at required depth for adequate impact absorption.

- **Playground Equipment** - Damaged/corroded equipment and loose or worn equipment that may cause contact injuries or possible falls or entrapment, undesirable equipment that has high risk injury factors and has not been removed due to historic significance.
- **Equipment Height** - Height of equipment is a major contributing factor in increasing risk of playground injury. The higher the equipment the higher the risk of injury due to falls.

Another common hazard relates directly to the dynamics of children’s play, children may run into each other and often fall over, this also has the potential to cause injury. This hazard relates directly to the nature of children’s play and although it may not be controlled by direct measures it should be recognized as a hazard and considered when designing playgrounds.

5.3.2 Level of Use

The main factor affecting the probability of an accident or injury occurring at a given hazard in a Playground is the level of use of the Playground. The higher the levels of use the greater the probability of an injury or accident occurring.

The level of use of a playground is determined by its location and the facilities provided in that playground. Level of use has been determined following a review by Parks and Gardens staff.

The type of facility that people may access can be categorised as follows:

- Regional** High Use - Playgrounds generally used on a regional level and by all sectors of the community and the travelling public
- Shire** Medium Use - Playgrounds generally used by the community on a shire level (eg. schools).
- Local** Low Use - Playgrounds generally used by local community members (ie. Village parks).

The list of Bland Shire Playgrounds details the usage rates.

The categories of level of use are used to determine level of risk using a rating from high to low.

5.4 Risk Rating

The matrix below is used to assess the risk that a hazard in a Playground presents. This matrix cross-references the type of hazard and the degree of that hazard with the level of use to ascertain a degree of risk from “Low” to “High”.

RISK RATING MATRIX					
Softfall Surface Hazard	Playground Equipment (unsafe)	Equipment Height (m)	Level of Use		
			Playground Category		
			Regional	Shire	Local
Significant	Significant	>2.5	High	High	Medium
Moderate	Moderate	>2	High	Medium	Low
Minor	Minor	>1	Medium	Low	Low

The inspector transfers the risk rating onto the inspection checklists.

5.4.1 Control Measures

The control measures that are generally implemented by Council are:

- make the area safe by the erection of temporary barriers or removal of hazard,
- effect temporary repairs of the damaged area/equipment,
- effect replacement of the damaged area/equipment,
- design of equipment and playground layouts to maximise safety,

The control measure table below sets out which of these control measures are to be used depending on the risk rating, and the response times for each control measure.

CONTROL MEASURES		
Priority	Control Mechanism	Response Time
Low	Consider whether action needs to be taken	As resources permit
Medium	Program if permanent repair not possible immediately	30 Days – if funding permits and availability of parts. If funding doesn't permit, make safe and program for repair as soon as fiscally possible.
High	1. Make safe 2. Effect immediate temporary or permanent repair. (Program for permanent repair if repair temporary)	Within 8 hours 1 week (if parts available)

Priority Definitions: -

- Low** General maintenance not safety related. Item is satisfactory, no immediate action required. For example, graffiti.
- Medium** Damaged equipment requiring routine maintenance that may deteriorate before the next periodic inspection. For example corrosion on bearing of swing brace.
- High** Critical, requiring urgent attention – hazards that would result in serious or permanent injury. For example damaged equipment that could create the potential to fall from a considerable height resulting in serious injury.

If funding or availability of parts precludes repair within the response time the hazard must be made safe by the use of barriers and permanent repairs are to be carried out when funding becomes available.

6 Condition Rating

Condition rating of playgrounds is carried out to enable Council to formulate planning long term replacement, upgrades and safety programs and to carry out statutory reporting requirements such as Section 428 of the Local Government Act – 1993 and “Australian Accounting Standard 27”.

6.1 Playground Softfall Under Surfaces

The Australian/New Zealand Standard 4422:1996: Playground Surfacing – Specifications, Requirements and Test Method, gives general requirements for surfacing to be used in children’s playgrounds and specific requirements for areas where impact energy attenuation is necessary. It suggests the factors

that should be considered when selecting a playground surface and gives a method of test by which the impact energy attenuation can be determined.

The objective of this Standard, and subsequent application, is to minimise the severity of head injury resulting from a fall from the play equipment to the ground below by providing surfacing to be used underneath and around playground equipment.

When assessing the condition of a section of Playground surfacing the three aspects taken into account are compliance of material with the Standard (AS/NZ 4422), condition of material and fall zones.

6.1.1 Compliance of Softfall Under Surfaces Material

The material is to have documentation from a supplier or materials testing organisation to determine if it complies with AS/NZ 4422. If the material has satisfactory compliance the condition is rated as excellent, if it does not the condition is rated as poor.

6.1.2 Condition of Softfall Material

Organic softfall materials can rot down, some materials can be wind blown, synthetic mats and carpets can be worn or vandalised. The competent officer makes an assessment of the material's condition as one of the following - excellent, good, fair, poor or broken down.

6.1.3 Fall Zones

A person falling from a piece of playground equipment does not necessarily land directly underneath that equipment. If they jump, or are pushed, they are more likely to fall slightly away from it. If the equipment is moving, they may fall further away still. The area underneath and around the equipment in which they are likely to fall is the fall zone.

The area of the fall zone will depend on the height of the equipment; on whether the equipment is moving or stationary; on the amount of protection afforded by engineering means such as guard railing and infill panels; and on whether or not users of the equipment are likely to be closely supervised.

Fall zones shall not contain items likely to be a hazard in the case of a fall, eg. rocks or other equipment. Fall zones should be determined for equipment by the manufacturer. If the fall zone dimensions are known, those values should be used. In cases where accurate values have not been determined, for equipment in a supervised early childhood setting, the minimum fall zone value is 1.9m. For equipment used in other settings, the minimum fall zone value is 2.5m.

These values apply in all directions around the equipment where a fall is possible. These values have been obtained from the AS/NZ 4422. If the playground fall zones comply it is rated as excellent, if the playground fall zones do not comply it is rated as poor.

6.2 Playground Equipment

The Australian/New Zealand Standard 4486.1:1997: Playgrounds and Playground Equipment – Part 1: Development, Installation, Inspection, Maintenance and Operation, specifies requirements for the development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playgrounds and playground equipment, to ensure a continuing level of function and safety.

The objective of this Standard, and subsequent application, is to minimise the risk of injury to children using playgrounds by providing guidelines for siting and developing playgrounds; product information requirements; instructions and operating procedures intended to support sound playground design; the selection of appropriate equipment; and to minimise operational hazards.

When assessing the condition of Playground equipment the four aspects taken into consideration are undesirable/unsafe equipment, damaged equipment, shade/sun protection and general wear and tear.

6.2.1 Undesirable/Unsafe Equipment

The NSW Department of Health Phase II: Recommended Action Plan Following the NSW Local Government Playground Safety Study, October 1996, lists in Appendix 1 as undesirable equipment: - maypoles, plank swings, roundabouts, rockets, old farm machinery and artillery pieces.

When assessing the condition of the Playground Equipment, in regard to undesirable/unsafe equipment a competent officer takes the rating from an assessment of the safety of the equipment.

The competent officer will assess whether the equipment is acceptable or undesirable/unsafe and recommendations are made for repairs or removal. The following factors are considered: -

- fall heights (equipment with high fall heights e.g. >2.5m)
- sharp and rough edges
- protrusions
- pinch and crush points
- entrapment
- whether equipment meets current Standards
- clearance between items of equipment
- historic significance

All undesirable/unsafe equipment has been removed as at August 2008.

6.2.2 Damaged Equipment

When assessing the condition of the Playground, in regard to damaged equipment a competent officer takes the rating from an assessment of the safety of the equipment. The damage may have occurred either through wear or deterioration of materials or acts of vandalism.

The officer will consider to what extent the damage is affecting the strength of the equipment, assess the risk rating and control measures.

6.2.3 Shade/Sun Protection

When assessing an appropriate means for shade/sun protection the rating is taken from a combination of the amount of ultraviolet radiation and heat likely in the area, the nature and location of protective structures (such as canopies), surrounding trees and the type of playground equipment material.

6.2.4 General Wear and Tear

A playground can be safe, unbroken but worn out due to age and years of wear and tear. Playgrounds in this condition can be very expensive to maintain due to constant need for repairs and parts being difficult to obtain. Timber playgrounds start cracking and splitting. Playgrounds lose powder coatings and become susceptible to corrosion.

The competent officer assesses the wear and tear of the playground and it is rated as excellent, good, fair, poor or broken down.

6.3 Condition

Playground checks are conducted weekly and every six months to determine the condition of each type of Playground. The competent officer inspects the playground and records the information in the Weekly Checklist and the Six Monthly Checklist.

7 Incidents

Incidents include injuries, near misses and equipment damage. All information about incidents brought to the attention of Council by members of the public or staff should be recorded Council's incident reporting form which includes at least the following details:

- (a) Date and time of incident.
- (b) Weather conditions.
- (c) Location of incident.
- (d) Description of incident.
- (e) Equipment involved (if any).
- (f) Contributing factors (if known).
- (g) Corrective action recommended.
- (h) Date corrective action completed.

If the incident involved personal injury, the following information should also be recorded:

- (i) The injured person's details, including name, address, age and gender.
- (ii) The injury sustained.
- (iii) The person(s) notified, and the time and date of notification.
- (iv) Treatment (if known).

In order to assist manufacturers in making safety improvements to their equipment, it is recommended that all incidents involving equipment be notified to the manufacturer (if known).

Council's generic Incident reporting form and procedure will be used in the event of an incident.

8 Maintenance Regime

Playgrounds shall be maintained in accordance with manufacturer's standards.

Maintenance instructions for each playground are stored in the Playgrounds folder and form part of the Playground Strategy.

9 Monitor and Review

A Playground Management Strategy is not a static management tool or system. It should be evolving, as new risks appear, legislation changes and the expectations of the community change.

A management program should be viewed as a dynamic program that is subject to change and modification. The outcomes should always be under review and kept up to date.

It is important that ongoing identification of compliance issues is undertaken. Ongoing management supervision of the program and staff practices is essential. This includes: -

- Identifying new or amended legislation of significance.
- Identifying the sections that pose a significant compliance risk.
- Identifying appropriate procedures for securing compliance and, if necessary, updating relevant sections of the Management Strategy.
- Assessing changes in practice or implementation of new innovations.
- Monitoring all stages of the management process to ensure it is working as intended.
- Communicating and consulting with all who maybe affected by the management process and ensure that they are kept fully informed throughout.
- Educating the community in matters of safety to increase their awareness of hazards in the playground and on playground equipment.

10 Definitions

The Australian/New Zealand Standards 4486.1:1997 defines Playgrounds as an area designed for children's play, including the site, natural features, built landscape, and any manufactured equipment. It does not include sites and equipment intended for use in formal sport or exercise.

Competent Officer – An Officer possessed of the appropriate knowledge, skills and level of responsibility for that task. An officer will become competent through on the job training and experience and short training courses from time to time when available.

Hazard – A source of potential harm or a situation with a potential to cause loss.

Impact Attenuation – Properties of playground surfacing, transforming the kinetic energy from falls into controlled deceleration/time behaviour during impact.

Legislative Compliance – The legislation and common law duties that apply to all local authorities. A "breach is likely to give rise to civil or administrative action against a Local Authority rather than prosecution for a criminal act.

Local Authority – The definition of Local Authority is the same as that in the Local Government Act.

Plan of Management – A plan prepared for all Council owned and operated community land which addresses the requirements of the Local Government Act, 1993 and the Crown Lands Act, 1989, as well as providing community input into the management of these facilities.

Risk Management – A system to identify, assess, maintain and, if necessary, to improve the safety of the playground as a whole, including the equipment and impact absorbing surfaces.

APPENDICIES

- 1 Playground Inspection Weekly Procedure and Checklist**

- 2 Playground Inspection 6 Monthly Procedure and Checklist**