

Playground hierarchy and classifications

A playground hierarchy is used to classify the scale and primary design focus for each playground. A playground's classification directly informs its scope and size and it also guides the level of service and infrastructure provision.

Monash has five (5) playground classifications that range from small pocket parks through to large regional destination playgrounds :

- Pocket
- Local
- Neighbourhood
- District
- Municipal/Regional.

The design focus of the playspace should reflect:

- The anticipated target group(s) who will primarily use the playground
- The extent of play elements and experiences to be provided
- The indicative duration of stay and mode of travel to the playground
- The distinctive features of the park and/or reserve.

Hierarchy considerations

If a district- or regional-scale playground is located in a neighbourhood, a series of smaller pocket or local playgrounds for toddlers should also be provided in the local area. This will enable small children to have a place to play without potentially feeling intimidated by older children rushing about them.

The nature of the suburb may influence the type of playground developed. If the house blocks are small or if the 'backyards' are small, there is a greater need for access to a quality playspace in a local park.

Other factors which should be considered include:

- Site suitability
- Existing gaps in provision i.e. where residents have to travel more than 400 metres to access a playground
- Current and future demand – using demographic data to identify the current and projected number of children living in a precinct
- The number, variety, quality and classification of nearby playspaces
- Strategic fit and alignment with relevant Council strategies and plans.

Service levels

For each classification level, Monash has established minimum service levels and provision standards for playspaces. These include:

- Primary design focus and target group
- Indicative catchment area
- Indicative duration of stay (visit time)
- Indicative number of play pieces including nature play elements
- Recommended inspection/maintenance check schedule.

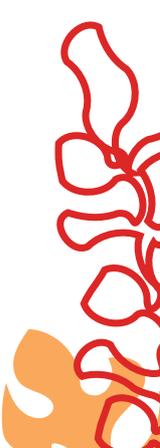
TABLE 1: Monash playground classifications and inspection program

Playspace classification	Primary design focus and target group	Indicative catchment area	Indicative duration of stay	Indicative no. of play pieces (incl. nature play)	Recommended inspection/maintenance check schedule
Regional	Intergenerational*	10km	2+ hours	15+ pieces	2 inspections per week
District	Intergenerational*	2.5km	1+ hours	8-12 pieces	1 inspection per week
Neighbourhood	Preschool - secondary school	1km	Up to 2 hours	8-12 pieces	1 inspection per week
Local	Preschool - primary school	500m	Up to 1 hour	5-8 pieces	1-2 inspections per fortnight
Pocket	Toddlers - preschool	400m	Up to 30 mins	3-5 pieces	1 inspection per fortnight

***NOTE:** In the intermediate and teenage age groups there is a shift away from playgrounds to other active recreational facilities that allow for sport and active recreation. The *Monash Active Recreation Opportunities Strategy*¹ identifies strategic priorities for the planning and delivery of outdoor active recreation infrastructure such as fitness stations, basketball half courts, skate parks etc.

Intergenerational play also supports the active participation of adults accompanying or supervising children at playgrounds.

¹ www.monash.vic.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/edms/things-to-do/sport-recreation/active-recreation-opportunities-strategy.pdf



Minimum infrastructure provision standards

Minimum playground infrastructure provision standards for each playground classification also apply as outlined in Table 2. These minimum standards may be exceeded at certain sites where a legitimate need for additional infrastructure can be demonstrated.

TABLE 2: Minimum playground infrastructure provision standards

Playspace classification	Double BBQ (incl. paving and shelter)	Shade sail (over play area)	Public toilets (within 250m of playspace)	Accessible picnic table	Water fountain	Rubbish bins	Bike rack	Accessible features	Bench seating
Regional	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
District	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neighbourhood				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local								Yes	Yes
Pocket								Yes	Yes

The playground classifications, service levels and provision standards inform the design brief, project scope and budget for playspaces and enable Council to deliver a sustainable, equitable and feasible playground program. They also:

- Provide clarity and consistency around playground provision levels
- Provide a variety of play experiences for the community i.e. from larger regional destination playspaces to smaller local playspaces
- Ensure our playspaces offer the community with a broad range of high quality, creative play opportunities for different ages and abilities
- Prioritise the development of new playspaces in gap areas to enhance equity of access
- Demonstrate responsible asset management, based on an understanding of future asset renewal costs and obligations based on existing provision standards
- Ensure consistent quality playground design by embedding Monash's Playspace Design Principles and Considerations in playspace design briefs.

Aspirational minimum playground provision standard

Monash Council aspires to meet a minimum provision standard of having a playground within a 400 metre radius (as the crow flies) of 95% of all residential dwellings.

The level of playground provision varies from precinct to precinct and is directly affected by the amount of public open space available. Large areas of land in Monash are utilised by industry and technology, private golf courses and tertiary institutions (e.g. Monash University Clayton Campus) and this directly affects playground provision in parts of Monash.