



COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY:
PLAYGROUPS



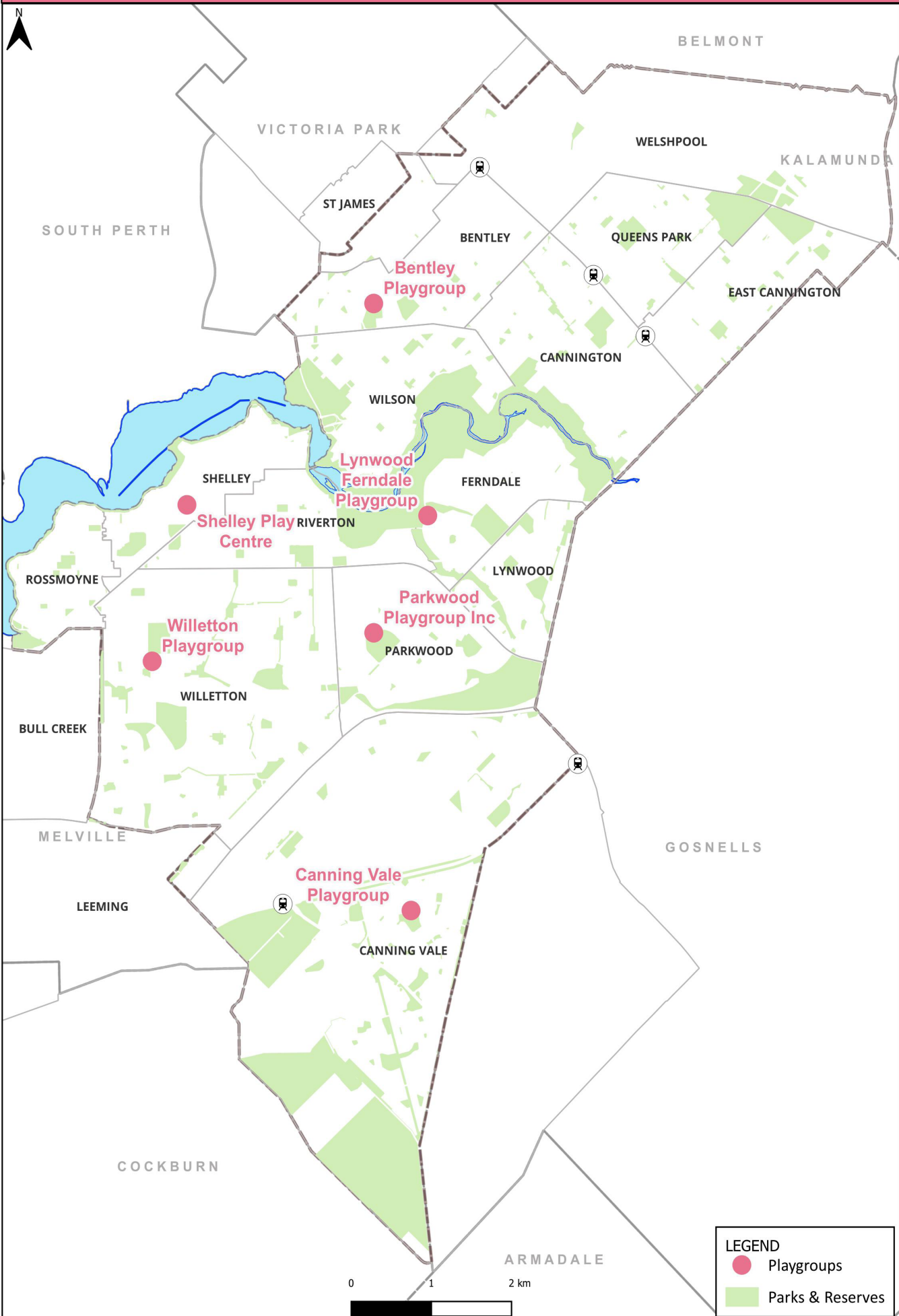
PLAYGROUPS

Playgroups Infrastructure are facilities and spaces designed to cater to young children, typically from infancy to around eight years old under adult supervision. These facilities play an important role in providing a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate environment for young people and their caregivers. They provide diverse opportunities for young children that are crucial for their development and contribute to building a sense of community.

In the City of Canning, there are various options provided by different institutions and organisations, including playgroups, early childcare, outside-of-school-hours care, and occasional care. However, as many of these are commercially operated or offered by educational institutions, they are considered out of scope of this CIS type which focuses on Playgroups as a non-compulsory, community-driven aspect of childcare under the care and control of the City of Canning.



PLAYGROUPS



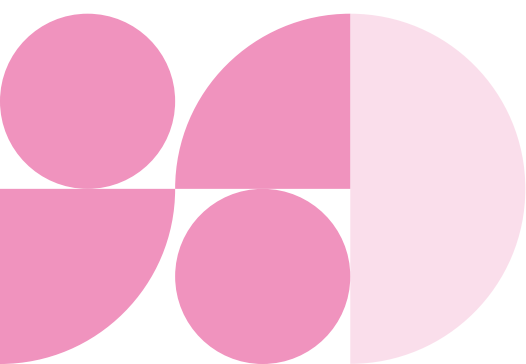
LEGEND
● Playgroups
■ Parks & Reserves

CURRENT DELIVERY

The City of Canning offers six playgroups facilities within its area including Lynwood Ferndale Playgroup, Shelley Play Centre, Canning vale Playgroup, Parkwood Playgroup, Willetton Playgroup and Bentley Playgroup. These playgroups all provide spaces and place for playgroups operations to operate. Some are stand alone facilities and others are within Halls and Centres under a direct hire model.

City of Canning Playgroup Facilities

Facility	Hierarchy	Components	Strengths	Weaknesses
Lynwood Ferndale Playgroup	N/A	Fully equipped kitchen Facility is separated into dining area with chairs and table, mat and books and reading area Art and craft room Playground and cubby house Laundry	Good usage Hired out to externals regularly Great outdoor play area Good website	Aging facility Exclusive use
Parkwood Playgroup Inc	N/A	Fully equipped kitchen One large room with adjoining toilet facility Equipped with play equipment Outdoor fenced playground	Located on Hossack Reserve Some external hire	Limited online presence Low numbers Exclusive Use
Shelley Play Centre	N/A	Kitchen with oven, cooktop, small fridge and microwave Fenced playground Shady outdoor area with sand pit Tables and chair included with the room Kid tables and chairs also equipped Toilets	Good Location near school and local chops Great parking Large outdoor play area	Limited storage Small space with max capacity 50 Ageing Building Disjointed space Playground equipment is limited and ageing



Facility	Hierarchy	Components	Strengths	Weaknesses
Willetton Playgroup		Kitchen Family Friendly	Good location near shops, reserve and primary school Outside play area	Ageing playground area Ageing facility
Canning Vale Playgroup		Equipped with kids tables and chairs Good outside enclosed play area Use of kiosk Accessible car bays	Well used Storage onsite	Limited access for people with disabilities Parking is not immediately adjacent the facility.
Bentley Playgroup		Equipped with kids tables and chairs Small fenced playground Kitchenette	Great parking Easy access to Manning Road Close to Wyong	Aging facility Not currently used

CASE STUDY: LYNWOOD FERNDALE PLAYGROUP

Lynwood Ferndale Playgroup is located at 50 Bursaria Crescent, Ferndale. The centre is highly used and provides a great opportunity for children aged between 0 – 5 years to socialise and learn through play in a relaxed and safe environment. The facility provides playgroups sessions weekdays as well as providing opportunities over the school holiday period. The facility provides an unstructured and informal setting for children to enjoy free play, and for parents and caregivers to socialise and build community.

The facility provides opportunities for structured activities like arts and craft, sensory and water play. It is fully air conditioned with a well equipped kitchen, laundry and dining area with tables and chairs. The space is well equipped with a variety of toys and the spaces are flexible to be able to cater to different needs as needed. Outside is a great play environment with a playgroup, creek with water and wooden fort.



INDUSTRY PROVISION RATES AND BENCHMARKING

The Parks and Leisure Australia Western Australia (PLA WA) Guidelines articulate a facility hierarchy and provision for playgroups against population catchments. The advice is clear that stand alone facilities are not recommended. These have been applied to the City’s playgroup infrastructure in the table below.

Facility Type	Definition	Population Guidelines	Facility Hierachy
Playgroup	<p>Diverse activities for child carers which include baby groups and first time parents, toddler playgroups, three to four- year old playgroups, fathers groups, children with disabilities, grandparents groups, home playgroups and Supported playgroups.</p> <p>Integrated within schools, neighbourhood, or district community centres</p>	1:4,000 - 6,000	<p>Home based or incorporated with:</p> <p>Neighbourhood community centres</p> <p>District community centre</p>

TRENDS

General trends observed locally and globally for playgroups and childcare more broadly.

There is an increasing trend towards more innovative models of playgroup delivery. Being aware of new delivery approaches can help Local Government to think creatively about how to co-locate playgroups with other community facilities such as schools, sporting clubs and aged care residences, as well as close to where people work, without having to change zoning or development controls.

- **Focus on Outdoor Learning:** Emphasis on outdoor play and learning, recognizing the benefits of nature in children’s development.
- **Holistic Development:** Adoption of approaches that focus on the holistic development of children, addressing not only cognitive but also social, emotional, and physical aspects.
- **Inclusive Practices:** Implementation of inclusive education practices to support children with diverse learning needs and backgrounds.
- **Flexible Learning Environments:** There is a tendency to create flexible learning spaces that allow for varied activities and accommodate different learning styles.
- **Health and Safety Protocols:** Implementation of enhanced health and safety protocols, especially in response to global events like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Cultural Competence:** Recognition of the importance of cultural competence in early childhood education, with efforts to incorporate diverse perspectives and celebrate cultural diversity.

THE FUTURE

The City of Canning currently lacks both volume of, and an equitable distribution of playgroup facilities, with six facilities. The future provision does not however identify a requirement for stand alone playgroups instead provisions for access to spaces and places that playgroups can be collocated with other community infrastructure with compatible uses. Effective planning and integration of playgroups into shared-use facilities will be considered on a case by case basis.

While gaps have been noted in the provision of playgroup infrastructure throughout the City, it should be noted some playgroups are thriving, whilst others have seen a decline in demand, resulting in underutilisation.

Population projections for the City indicate that the young population will continue to grow to 2041 with the largest increases predicted in Cannington/Queens Park/Bentley. Planning will also need to consider the Canning City Centre.

PROVISION STANDARDS

Based on the PLA WA Guidelines, best practice and current provision standards the proposed areas of consideration have been put together for the planning of playgroups across the City of Canning:

Playgroup Provision Standards

Flexible spaces for learning and play. Spaces for learning , play and physical activities that can promote the development of gross and fine motor skills, as well as social interactions.

Rest Areas: Areas where children can rest, nap, or engage in quiet activities to support their physical and emotional well-being.

Health and Sanitation Facilities: Facilities for basic health needs, including clean and well-maintained bathrooms, areas for nappy changing.

Kitchen Facilities



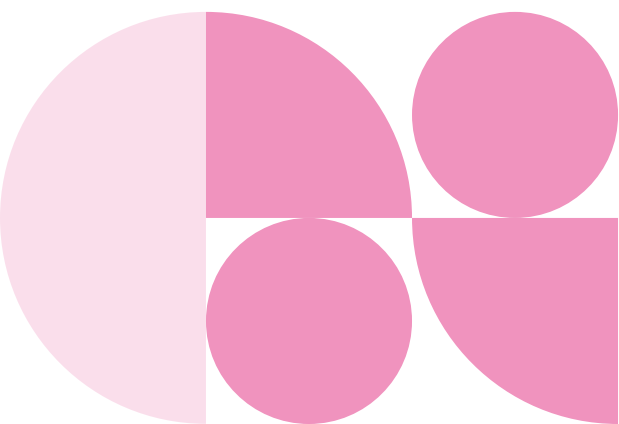
CONSULTATION FINDINGS

This Type received 13 responses, with 12 from a suburb within the City. Of these, 9 are currently using this type of infrastructure. All strategic directions and recommendations proposed were supported.

Summary of Consultation	
Survey Questions	Results
Surveys Completed	15
From a suburb within the City of Canning	15
Already using playgroups in Canning	9
Addition consultation activities specific for this Type	Playgroups WA discussion Cultural Ambassador Huddle Youth Consultants Network workshop

Survey Response Results

	Support	Neutral	Oppose
Strategic Direction 1 - There are gaps in provision for playgroup infrastructure across the City.	8	8	2
Strategic Direction 2 - Stand alone facilities are not preferred, when planning new or upgrading community infrastructure consideration will be given to playgroup provision as components of co-located infrastructure given the increasing population.	1	1	13
Strategic Direction 3 - Advocate and facilitate considerations for playgroup provision in existing child care facilities and spaces within schools, support services, community organisations and government agencies.	1	3	11
Recommendation 1 - Develop needs assessment and business case to address playgroup shortfall. This will consider shared use and integration into future infrastructure projects across the City.	7	2	6
Recommendation 2 - Proactively work with schools, support services, community organisations and government agencies to potential locations for delivery of playgroups across the City.	5	3	7



KEY THEMES

A recurring theme from the respondents was that playgroups are seen as crucial for early childhood development and community integration. That they provide safe, dedicated spaces for young children and their caregivers, which are important for social and mental support.

There is strong opposition to integrating playgroups into schools or other existing facilities. Respondents emphasised the need for standalone sites due to the specific requirements of playgroups and the logistical challenges of sharing spaces.

Many respondents indicated negative impacts of relocating or closing existing facilities, including increased stress on caregivers and potential declines in community engagement and child safety.

There were comments relating to the importance of ongoing engagement with stakeholders such as playgroup associations and local communities to evaluate the needs and impact of playgroup facilities.

KEY FINDINGS

During the consultation information was circulated on social media claiming the City planned to 'close playgroups'. This claim contradicts the outcomes of the Playgroup Type and directly opposes Recommendation 1, *Develop needs assessment and business case to address playgroup shortfall*.

The feedback generally supported maintaining playgroup facilities. However, it has been identified that some of the terminology used within the document has been misunderstood. To address this, a revision has been made to one of the Strategic Directions to better explain the term "co-location" when planning for playgroups.

Though not supported by the respondents advocacy to increase playgroup facilities and spaces remains included in the type as a method to increase provision opportunities in a financially sustainable way. in-line with the principles of the CIS namely;

1. Co-location and Multi-use
2. Maximising Use
3. Partnerships

CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Update Strategic Direction 2 to clarify terminology;
 - FROM: Stand alone facilities are not preferred, when planning new or upgrading community infrastructure consideration will be given to playgroup provision as components of co-located infrastructure given the increasing population.
 - TO: Stand alone facilities are not preferred, but we will deliver fit for purpose spaces when planning new or upgrading community infrastructure consideration will be given to playgroup provision as components of co-located infrastructure given the increasing population.
2. No changes to the Recommendations

STRATEGIC DIRECTION



There are gaps in provision for playgroups infrastructure across the City.

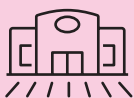


Stand alone facilities are not preferred, but we will deliver fit for purpose spaces when planning new or upgrading community infrastructure consideration will be given to playgroup provision as components of co-located infrastructure given the increasing population.



Advocate and facilitate considerations for playgroup provision in existing child care facilities and spaces within schools, support services, community organisations and government agencies.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Develop needs assessment and business case to address playgroup shortfall. This will consider shared use and integration into future infrastructure projects across the City.



Proactively work with schools, support services, community organisations and government agencies to potential locations for delivery of playgroups across the City.



CITY OF CANNING