

PUBLIC OPEN SPACE GENERAL POLICY

Intent To establish a policy that articulates Council's overarching position, vision and objectives for the provision of and improvements to Public Open Space.

Scope This policy applies to all current and proposed Public Open Spaces across the Local Government Area that are, or are proposed to be, owned or controlled by Council.

Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Ensure there is sufficient supply of functional and accessible open space to meet the sport and recreation needs of current and future communities;
- Establish a network of public open space that is efficient to manage and maintain;
- Ensure effective utilisation of existing open space resources enabling a range of uses and maintaining equity of access;
- Ensure that an appropriate level of development and protection of natural areas and landscapes is achieved;
- Enable Multiple Use of Open Space where appropriate;
- Set minimum embellishment standards within public parks to ensure that the passive and active recreation needs of the community are met; and
- Allow for the rationalisation and consolidation of open space where appropriate.

Provisions

The provisions which are required to be met to satisfy the objectives of this policy are detailed in the attached document *Cairns Public Open Space Policy Guidelines*.

Implementation

The attached *Cairns Public Open Space Policy Guidelines* have been developed to facilitate the implementation of this policy and is the primary document to be referred to with respect to the provision of and improvements to public open space.

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This policy is to remain in force until otherwise determined by Council.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

General Manager Community Sport and Cultural Services

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PUBLIC OPEN SPACES



Cairns Public Open Space Guidelines

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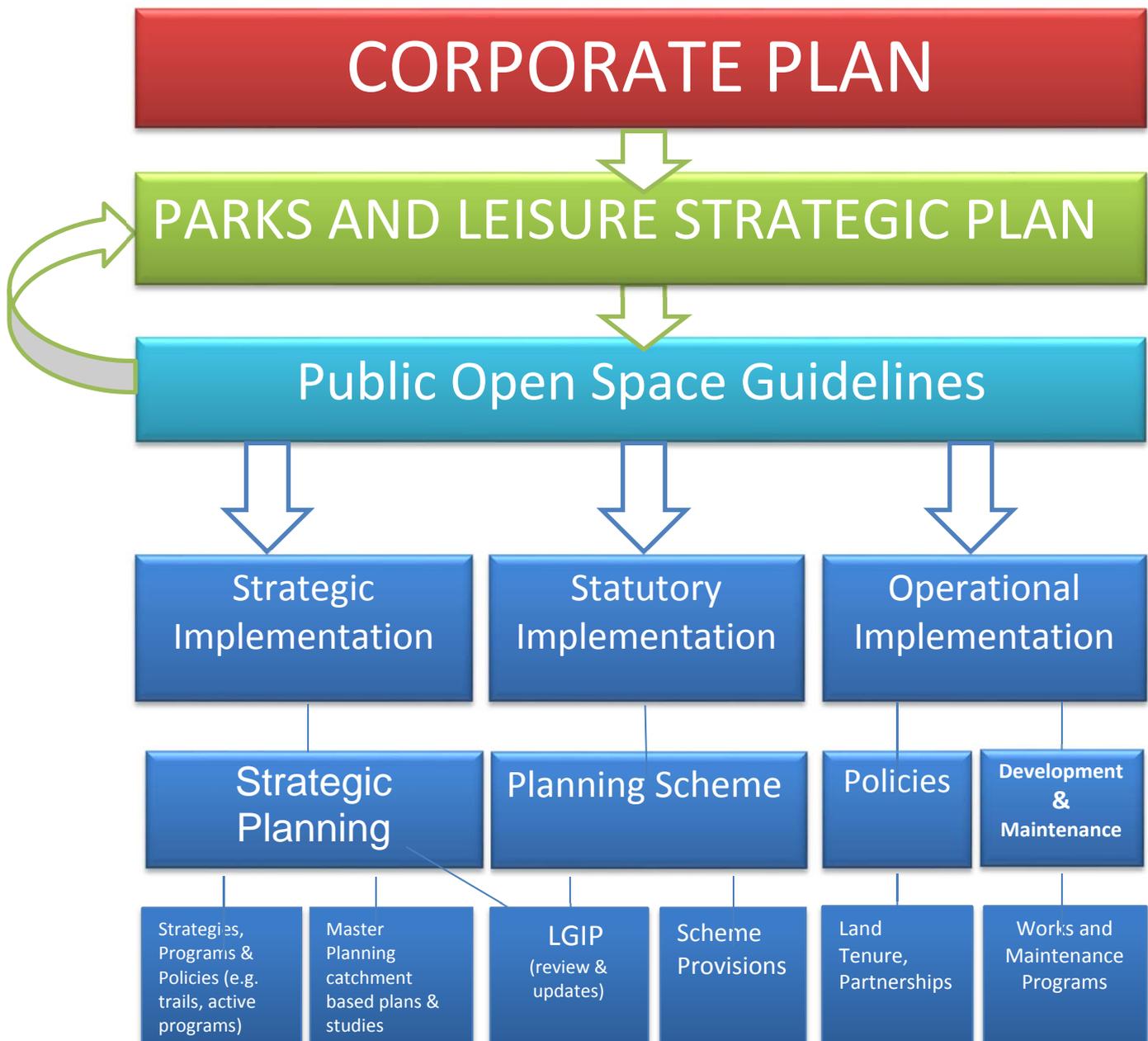
1. Overview

This Guideline articulates Council's vision and goals for the provision of a Public Open Space Network. The Guidelines also details the policy objectives which guide Council's planning and management of public open space and provides guidance on the implementation of those objectives. The policy has been developed with regard to Council's adopted Corporate Plan which articulates an overall policy vision for sport and recreation as well as the desired standards of provision for Recreation Opportunity Provision.

Definitions and terminology used throughout this document are explained in the section on Definitions and Terminology at the end of this document.

The policy and guideline are linked to and informs other Council plans, policies and provisions as shown below.

Figure 1 Indicative Policy Context



2. Vision and Outcomes

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan articulates Council's vision for Parks and Recreation:

- Cairns Regional Council recognises that parks, sport and recreation opportunities are essential for the physical, social and economic health of the Cairns region's communities.

Council's role is defined as:

- Ensuring that residents and visitors to the region have access to a range of recreation and sport opportunities that support our diverse communities, celebrate our natural environment and encourage an active and healthy community.

Four key outcomes were identified:

- Outcome 1: Planning to meet current and future recreation needs
- Outcome 2: Sustainable and diverse provision of recreation opportunities
- Outcome 3: Supporting nature based recreation
- Outcome 4: Contributing to the social, physical and economic health of our communities

The planning, provision and management of Public Open Space is central to achieving Council's vision. The following table outlines the guidance provided in regard to these four outcomes.

Table 1: How this provides guidance in regard to the Parks and Recreation Strategy

Outcome	Policy Guidance
Outcome 1: Planning to meet current and future recreation needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defining standards of service for the provision of land for public parks and sporting fields. ▪ Defining preferred levels of development/embellishment for public parks and sporting fields. ▪ Identifying processes for the preparation and implementation of catchment based plans to provide more detailed guidance on provision and development of public open space.
Outcome 2: Sustainable and diverse provision of recreation opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing guidance on establishing efficient and sustainable local open space networks. ▪ Identifying processes for partnerships and innovation in the provision of public open space.
Outcome 3: Supporting nature based recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defining opportunities for multiple use of open space. ▪ Providing guidance on infrastructure and facilities needed to encourage outdoor recreation.
Outcome 4: Contributing to the social, physical and economic health of our communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring the provision of public open space provides for a diverse range of activities. ▪ Providing guidance on master planning and development of public open space. ▪ Identifying processes for partnerships and innovation in managing parks and sporting fields. ▪ Providing guidance on community use of public open space. ▪ Articulating how local and district parks can contribute to local activity centres and provide a focal point for diverse community activity.

3. Context

These guidelines provide the strategic framework for Council's planning and management of public open space. It guides the review of statutory tools such as Council's Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP). It also guides operational policy and management planning.

3.1. Council's Role in regard to Sport, Recreation and Public Open Space

1. Council is responsible for ensuring the provision of sport and recreation opportunities for its communities. Opportunities are provided through:
 - a. Ensuring sufficient land is made available for the development of parks, sporting facilities and recreation facilities.
 - b. Ensuring the community has sustainable long term access to parks, sporting facilities and recreation facilities.
 - c. Ensuring that all residents receive a minimum level of service in regard to access to opportunities although service levels should be defined for different urban settings or community types.
 - d. Ensuring that a broad range of activities are available to all residents.
2. Provision of sport and recreation opportunities is essential for the physical, social and economic health of the Cairns region. This means that Council should recognise and "value" these benefits as a major return to the community for investment in sport and recreation opportunity. The operation and support costs of facilities and activities should be measured against the benefits returned via:
 - a. Health and Physical Activity Opportunity.
 - b. Social cohesion and community integration.
 - c. Economic activity and support of local economies.
3. Investment in sport and recreation needs to consider the issue of limited resources and should therefore seek to use a range of resourcing options to maximise the sport and recreation "opportunity return". This can be done by:
 - a. Establishing strategic partnerships to maximise return on existing land and facility resources already existing in the community.
 - b. Facilitating the development of new opportunities and activities through programs which create a sense of "place" encouraging increased community use of existing or new public open space areas. This could also include specific structures to support groups and individuals wanting create new opportunities.
 - c. Ensuring that existing land and facility resources are managed so as to return maximum benefits to the community across the three areas (physical activity, social cohesion and economic benefit).
 - d. Creating an information rich environment to ensure community groups, residents and visitors are aware of resource sharing opportunities.
4. The provision of Public Open Space is an essential role for Council. The public open space network is critical infrastructure that supports the development of a sustainable region through:
 - a. Provision of public parks and sporting fields that support outdoor and active recreation which leads to healthier more socially integrated communities.

- b. Protection and restoration of natural waterways which assist in managing the regions stormwater and provide local habitats and linkages between natural areas.
- c. Provision of a network of linear open space that protects waterways and provides active transport linkages.
- d. Protection and restoration of natural areas and local landscapes which will contribute to maintaining biodiversity, the tropical character of the region and a sense of local character within the regional suburbs.

3.2. Public Open Space and Recreation Opportunity

The planning and provision of public open space is guided by the following Desired Outcomes for sport and recreation which have been adapted from the recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Strategy.

Desired outcomes for urban and rural areas are described below:

3.2.1. Desired Public Open Space Outcomes for Urban Areas: (residential areas in cities and towns)

The following outcomes are desirable in Urban areas:

1. Most residents and employees will have safe walking and cycling access to **local parks** and informal outdoor recreation and physical activity opportunities. These opportunities should be provided at local or neighbourhood levels with travel times of less than 10 minutes walking and generally within 400 to 500 metre distance from a residence or workplace.
2. Most residents will have access to **district or destination level parks and outdoor sporting facilities** within 5 to 15 minutes via private vehicle and generally within 2 to 15 kilometre distance or up to 20 minutes via public transport.
3. **City-wide or regional level parks, recreation and sporting facilities** are provided for the community as precincts or recreation destinations at locations that maximise access for residents and are within 10 minutes safe walking or cycling from main transport routes and public transport routes.
4. **All public parks and community sport and recreation facilities** are located and designed so as to maximise visual and physical access and to allow for a wide range of potential uses and user groups.
5. **All public parks** should provide opportunities for physical activity, social inclusiveness, interaction and participation in outdoor recreation. The size and capacity of each park must be suitable for the catchment being serviced and the population densities anticipated.
6. **Public parks should play an integral role in improving the visual amenity** of the locale for both residential and non-residential areas. To achieve this it is desirable that a diversity of landscape settings are provided across the network and that opportunities to define character through the inclusion of unique or notable landscape features (such as elevated features, mature trees, view scapes, riparian areas) be taken where possible.
7. **Public parks should be provided in an efficient manner**, this means that operation and function over the life of the park must be considered. The

land must be suitable for the intended purpose and future maintenance of the network should be considered along with the ability of specific sites to be reconfigured over time as community preferences change.

8. The public parks network should be complemented by a **walk and ride pathway network** which adds value to the accessibility of parks and contributes to the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities available to a community.
9. Public parks should contribute to the **strengthening of community** by providing spaces and places for social interaction, expression of community culture (including youth) and the activities of community based groups.
10. Public parks can act as **economic and community hubs** providing a focal point for integration of retail, community, and recreation opportunities.
11. Public parks should contribute to the public's appreciation of the **natural environment and encourage biodiversity** by retaining existing intact vegetation communities and wildlife corridors.

3.2.2. [Desired Public Open Space Outcomes for Rural Areas: \(villages, small townships and other small communities which are predominantly rural and service a dispersed community surrounding them\)](#)

The following outcomes are desirable in rural areas:

1. Most residents and employees in villages and small townships will have safe walking and cycling access to **local recreation parks and informal outdoor recreation** and physical activity opportunities. These opportunities should be provided at village/ township levels with travel times of less than 15 minutes walking and within 500 to 1000 metres distance from a village residence or workplace.
2. Most residents will have access to **district or destination level outdoor recreation and formal sport** opportunities within 20 to 30 minutes via car or public transport.
3. **City-wide or regional level opportunities** are provided for the Community as precincts or recreation destinations at locations that maximise access for residents and are within 10 minutes safe walking or cycling from main transport routes and public transport interchanges.
4. All public parks and community facilities are **located and designed so as to maximise visual and physical access** and to allow for a wide range of potential uses and user groups.
5. **All public parks should provide opportunities for physical activity, social inclusiveness, interaction and participation in outdoor recreation.** The size and capacity of each park must be suitable for the catchment being serviced and the population densities anticipated.
6. Public parks should play an integral role in **improving the visual amenity of the locale** for both residential and non-residential areas.
7. **Public parks should be provided in an efficient manner**, this means that operation and function over the life of the park or facility must be considered. The land must be suitable for the intended purpose and future maintenance of the network should be considered along with the

ability of specific sites to be reconfigured over time as community preferences change.

8. Public parks within rural towns and villages should be **complemented by a walk and ride pathway network** which adds value to the accessibility of parks and contributes to the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities available to a community.
9. **Public parks should contribute to the strengthening of community** by providing spaces and places for social interaction, expression of community culture (including youth) and the activities of community based groups.
10. Public parks should contribute to the public's appreciation of the **natural environment and encourage biodiversity** by retaining existing intact vegetation communities and wildlife corridors.

4. Objectives and Rationale

4.1. Ensuring there is an adequate supply of Public Open Space

Planning for the future provision and management of open space needs to consider the following issues:

1. Ensuring there is sufficient supply of functional and accessible open space to meet the needs of current and future communities.
2. Developing open space in a way that provides for current needs and allows flexibility in meeting future needs.
3. Establishing a network of public open space that is efficient to manage and maintain.
4. Ensuring effective utilisation of existing open space resources enables a range of uses and maintains equity of access.

4.1.1. Ensuring sufficient supply of land

Ensuring a sufficient supply of land for public open space is critical to providing an effective network that meets current community needs and is able to adapt to changing needs in the future. There are some basic principles that apply to defining what is sufficient:

5. **Minimum areas are required to accommodate sport.** Different sports require different field configurations. An efficient and sustainable area can accommodate a range of configurations.
6. **Land parcels acquired are very rarely “perfect”.** Marginal land (land which is not prime residential land) is often selected for public parks and sporting fields. However these parcels will have constraints to functionality such as shape, topography, drainage and other issues. It is very rare that any parcel would be 100% usable for any intended purpose. However, suitable and functional land should be sought and additional area may be necessary to compensate for spatial inefficiency due to less optimal land.
7. **Shape is as important as size.** Particular minimum dimensions apply to sporting uses and can be defined for general park uses. These dimensions mean the land can be used effectively for the intended purpose.
8. **All land has a “carrying capacity”.** A given park or sports field can only accommodate a certain level of use before it becomes dysfunctional or degrades to unsafe conditions. Consideration of carrying capacity must be in the context of time and demand. Demand occurs at certain times and these peaks are what defines the supply needed.

For example: peak times for a sports field are usually 4-7 pm week days and 9 am -5 pm weekends. This means around 31 hours of peak use. If the current participation statistics for a particular sport indicate the city has 2500 participants who train for 1 hour a week and play for 1 hour week then there are 5000 participant hours/ week to be accommodated. If a game takes 30 participants (2 teams of 15) and training use can accommodate the same then the weekly carrying capacity of the field is 30 people/ hour by 31 hours- 930 participants/ week. To accommodate this sport, approximately 5.4 fields are required (5000 / 930).

There are no Australia wide industry standards on provision of Public Open Space. Different approaches have applied to defining a provision standard and they have generally been based on one (or a combination of) the following:

- An assessment of the area needed to accommodate active recreation/ sport and an allowance for land for general parkland
- An assessment of the current levels of supply and an assessment of adequacy based on current unmet demands and other issues. The current supply (e.g. Ha/ 1000 people) is then used as the basis for defining desired future supply (having regard to shortcomings or indicated oversupply).
- Adoption of a published standard or suggested standard used in state guidelines or neighbouring councils.
- Planned “outcome –to- standards”, approach. This uses a master planned approach to defining the actual park and sporting field areas required for a new community or large planned area and then converting the outcome back to a per capita supply rate as a mechanism for distributing costs across the whole community.

4.1.2. Legislative Controls

Local Government in Queensland is responsible for delivering a public open space network as part of the urban infrastructure needed to support communities. The operations of local government and their management of development are governed by a number of acts and state planning policies including the Planning Act 2016, The Land Act 1994 and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999.

Developer funded infrastructure and facilities

The Planning Act 2016 provides the legislative basis enabling regulated charging of developers by Council for trunk infrastructure including: public parks and land for community purposes.

Council’s Infrastructure Charges Resolution details the charge rates and charging methodology for levying infrastructure charges with development. Charges paid contribute to the provision of Council’s trunk infrastructure networks as contained in the LGIP and include: public parks and land for community purposes.

4.1.3. Recommended Rates for Land Supply

Sport:

When providing land for sport, the current evidence suggests that a reasonable rate of supply is around 2 hectares of sporting land (land for all sports such as courts, fields, pools, indoor facilities) per 1,000 people (pp).

This is based on:

- Analysis of current participation rates¹ for Queensland and an estimate of the carrying capacities of fields, courts and facilities identified around 1.64 Ha/ 1000pp would be required (excludes golf) to meet current

¹ ERASS 2010 Qld data for adults and Children’s Participation National Data 2012 report
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participation if all fields and facilities ran at optimum use rates. (*This analysis did not allow for spatial inefficiency of land and assumes land has a high rate of functionality*)

- Comparisons with other approaches and standards proposed in published guidelines (*2012 State of the sector report identified that the median for sports fields in regional coastal areas across Australia was 1.9 Ha/ 1000pp and the average was 3 Ha/ 1000²pp*). Qld Government publication “Open Space for Sport and Recreation- Planning Principles and Implementation Notes” recommends 2 ha/ 1000pp for sporting land³. Recently published guidelines in Western Australia suggest rates of around 1.5 Ha/ 1000pp for sporting fields and courts.⁴
- Current levels of supply in Cairns are below 2 Ha/ 1000pp and there are reported shortages of land and unmet demand for access to sporting fields.

If the quality of land acquired for sport is managed in a way that ensures “fit for purpose” land is acquired then a rate of around 2 Ha/ 1000pp would be sufficient.

Parkland:

The supply of land for general parkland is more difficult to quantify. It is desirable to provide a range of park settings and a hierarchy of destinations. Parkland, like sports fields, is more efficiently provided and managed when it does not become too small or too constrained to be functional for recreation. The primary purpose of parkland is to enable outdoor recreation and to do this it must be accessible, safe, functional for a range of uses and able to be maintained efficiently. Parkland is best supplied as a network of parks linked with pathways and an open space network that includes waterways and natural areas. Community use of parkland is increasing particularly for active recreation. Participation trends for physical activity are showing increased use of pathways for running and cycling and local and district parks are increasingly the venue for exercise related recreation, personal trainer programs and informal active recreation.

Achieving a parks network that provides locally accessible opportunities, diversity of settings and a hierarchy of destinations is more important than achieving an overall supply ratio of X Ha /1000pp. However parkland has a carrying capacity in the same ways that sports fields or roads do and residents anticipate a certain level of openness and a less developed environment to feel that they are in a park. To provide for small children’s play, some quiet spaces, areas for exercise and informal active recreation a local park needs to be a minimum size. Parks that are less than 0.5 Ha become inefficient to maintain as the benefit offered to the local residents reduces. Numerous very small parks providing limited opportunity are more expensive to maintain than fewer larger more diverse parks.

² 2012 State of the sector report, Parks Base, based on data from 84 KGAs across Australia including 14 from Qld.- data was for sports fields only and did not include facilities land.

³ Department of Communities (now National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing)

⁴ Department of Sport and Recreation and PLA WA August 2012.

To enable parks to be provided at local, district/destination and city-wide/regional levels a supply of 2.5- 3 Ha/ 1000pp of functional and accessible land is likely to be the minimum required. This would be supplemented with other open space provided along waterways, foreshores and natural areas protected for their conservation values (as opposed to a primary purpose of recreation).

This is based on:

- For regional coastal areas the State of the Sector Report⁵ identified a median supply of 5 Ha/ 1000pp and an average of 6 ha/ 1000pp for passive developed parkland.
- Analysis of current supply of informal park (not including highly constrained drainage corridors and other non-usable land) undertaken for the Public Parks and Land for Community Purposes Trunk Infrastructure Study⁶, identified the current supply for recreational parks was around 2.95 ha / 1000pp and within urban areas this rate increased to 3.49 ha/1000pp.

4.1.4. The Importance of Performance Criteria

To ensure there is an adequate supply of open space means that there needs to be enough land and it needs to be suitable for the purpose intended. To ensure that land is functional (i.e. suited for its intended purpose) and that it has the capacity to be reconfigured as needs change over time, a range of performance criteria are applied to the selection of land and the provision of parks.

- Land selection criteria ensure the land is functional and safe and that the cost of developing the land for public parks or sporting fields will not be excessive.
- Park planning criteria ensure that parks are located appropriately for community use, that they are accessible and appealing and they can provide for the desired range of settings and activity.

The Desired Standards of Provision (DSP) (Page 23) detail the performance criteria. The key elements and rationale are:

Table 2 – Summary of Performance Criteria

Criteria	Purpose	Rationale
Size and Shape	Ensures a parcel of land is able to be used for intended purpose and is not too small to efficiently provide the desired range of opportunities	Size is important to enable formal uses such as sport as there are minimum dimensions which must be met. Shape impacts on what can be accommodated as well as the potential for access, and development as a public space.
Proximity Radius	Ensures that residents can access a park opportunity within a reasonable walking (or travel) distance	400-500 m walking distance to local parks has been identified in several guidelines as the preferred proximity standard. Studies have shown that having parks close encourages use ⁷ and increases levels of physical activity.
Flooding and Hazards	Ensures that flooding and stormwater management do not reduce the functionality of the	If flooding is too frequent and too intense it constrains usability of parkland and increases maintenance loads making the resource

⁵ Parks Base 2012

⁶ Sept 2010 Trunk Infrastructure Planning Study

⁷ A study in Western Australia found that residents moving to suburbs with easy access to a beach, sports field or a park increase their walking by 21 minutes for each. This has a major health benefit for the community. (UWA, Giles Corti 2013)

	park. Ensures that environmental or adjacent hazards do not place users at risk or force areas of parkland to be restricted from public use	inefficient to provide. Hazards such as contamination, slope, utility corridors (such as high voltage lines), major transport corridors can create unsafe environments for public use
Access and Visibility	Ensures that parks have easy access from surrounding residences and that high visibility provides passive surveillance and increased safety for users.	Minimum road frontage requirements such as 50% will mean that the park can be accessed easily and that high visibility will make the space safer. In addition highly visible public spaces are less likely to suffer vandalism and inappropriate behaviour.
Flood Free Areas and Minimum Functional Space	Ensures that parks can adequately accommodate proposed uses and activities. Also recognises that a range of land quality can comprise a park , although some minimum areas of flood free land are needed.	While generally parks do not require ARI 100 flood immunity they do require some areas which are suitable for built facilities. Similarly specific uses will require minimum spaces able to accommodate particular activities without significant development cost.

4.2. Appropriate level of development

The overall public open space network is comprised of a number of elements:

- Protection and enhancement of waterways which assists in managing the city's stormwater and provides local habitats and linkages between natural areas.
- Provision of a network of linear open space that protects waterways and provides active transport linkages for local neighbourhoods.
- Provision of public parks and sporting fields that support active recreation and lead to healthier more socially integrated community.
- Protection and enhancement of natural areas and local landscapes which contribute to the tropical character of the city and a sense of local character within the city's suburbs.

As identified in the previous section the "formal" provision of public parks and sporting fields is also complemented by opportunities provided in other open space areas. For example; while natural areas may be managed to protect conservation values, development within these areas that includes walking tracks and picnic facilities may not threaten these values and will provide a valuable contribution to the diversity of recreation opportunities in the city. These natural opportunities can also contribute to tourism by providing additional incentive for visitors to stay in the region.

Similarly, linear systems associated with waterways may complement adjacent parkland and can provide linkages for pathways enhancing the open space network and increasing active recreation opportunities.

However, all investment in infrastructure that makes public open space useful for recreation needs to be undertaken in a considered way that balances the community return (in terms of recreation opportunity and landscape enhancement) against the ongoing cost of maintenance and management.

The DSP (Page 23) describes the Embellishment Standards for public parks and sporting fields. These have been developed to ensure functionality while considering effective maintenance and cost management. Developers may find it desirable from an aesthetic sense and for estate marketing, to have a very high standard of development of a park or other open space with an extensive landscape treatment (for example small parks developed as entry statements for subdivisions or "centre piece" parks). For Council, who will inherit the maintenance of these parks, the higher level of maintenance required by the higher standard of landscape development cannot be justified as it represents an inequitable approach to provision across the city.

The setting of preferred levels of development for parks and the establishment of development standards or guides for parks and other public open space is a critical tool in ensuring that a range of opportunities are provided in a way that is equitable across the city and sustainable within the resources of the community.

4.3. Sustainable Management and Cost Effectiveness

Providing public parks and land for sporting facilities is one of the essential services delivered by local government. As with any infrastructure there are constraints on both capital and recurrent resources available for development and maintenance.

Community expectations (as identified in the Parks and Recreation Strategy) have matured in Cairns with residents expecting that public open space is available at local, district and city wide levels and is developed with a range of features including pathways and facilities for recreation and sport. They also anticipate that areas will be well maintained and managed to ensure all users feel safe and welcome.

Residents also expect Council to manage these spaces cost effectively and for parks and other public open space to enhance the image of Cairns as a green tropical city which celebrates an outdoor lifestyle and the natural assets of the region.

This means that there will be "showcase" areas with a high profile (e.g. The Esplanade) which will warrant a higher standard of maintenance than other areas. It also means that different levels of service will apply to the maintenance and management of parks and other public open space.

The service levels for different types of parks and other public open space are set by Council having regard to community preferences for the presentation standard, ensuring public spaces are safe and maintaining assets efficiently. Key considerations are:

- The need to balance the level of development and amount of public open space land with the ability to maintain within budget capabilities.
- Ensuring timely development of public parks and sporting areas. This means parks and sporting areas are developed as need reaches a certain threshold (most commonly defined as a minimum population or % of total development completed). To develop a park in advance of these demand thresholds results in an increased maintenance burden which is not justified by the community benefit. To delay development of the park well after the demand threshold is reached means that there is inequity in provision and the local community will suffer negative social and health outcomes.

- Transitional planning for public open space offers a longer view of the use and management of land. Acquiring land at a very early stage of urban development (in advance of demand) can offer savings in the capital cost of the land. However this saving must be considered against the cost of managing / maintaining the land until it is required. Applying a transitional strategy will use the land for an alternate purpose until it is required. This purpose may be revenue generating (such as lease for cane farming) or it may simply remove any maintenance burden (such as an agistment lease) while the land is “banked” for future need. Conversely there may be opportunities to temporarily use land designated for an alternative purpose as public park, while more permanent solutions are being developed.
- The cost of development of a park and the ongoing maintenance burden can be significantly influenced by the land selected for the park. If very poor quality land is selected with numerous constraints, then the cost of development (to meet minimum standards) is likely to be far higher than that of a more suitable parcel of land. However, in some cases the reduced acquisition cost of the land parcel may justify the increased development cost.
- Forward consideration of maintenance costs is also critical and the selection of land and the development strategy used must also consider the ongoing costs to maintain the asset. In some cases, “marginal” parcels of land may not be suited for development as park and ongoing maintenance as public park. In some situations a revision of the asset purpose may enable a conversion to a naturally vegetated block or other purpose that minimises maintenance costs and maintenance resources can be applied in a location where the use benefit for the community is higher.
- The potential for partnerships and collaboration with other agencies and community groups should also be explored and pursued where possible. Pooling public agency and community resources such as land, capital and maintenance budgets offers an effective way to develop and maintain public infrastructure. This is particularly relevant with sporting precincts and the potential to share the development and management of precincts with other agencies (such as schools) and community sport groups. The pooling of resources can mean a more rapid development of the precinct and greater standard of diversity and development. In addition the partnership with other groups increases the sustainability of the precinct by having several stakeholders resourcing and planning for the precinct.

4.4. Protection of Open Space Values

Public Open Space is valued by the community for a range of reasons:

- Providing public parks for recreation and enjoyment,
- Providing sporting areas,
- Protecting natural areas and waterways,
- Contributing to local and regional landscapes and providing relief from development and building,
- Contributing to the local economy through provision of places that add to our tourism product and appeal as a destination, and
- Providing focal points for neighbourhoods and communities to interact and engage in community life.

Protecting these values can become a challenge in an environment where land resources are diminishing and other demands are placing pressure on existing public

open space. Where parks and sporting areas are concerned there are two major concerns:

1. Increasing demand for multiple use of parks or excision of portions for alternative uses which sees public parks as a good location for other infrastructure which may not be compatible with public use (e.g. transport corridors being planned over existing parkland as a cheaper alternative to resumption of residential land, or proposals to locate all stormwater treatments in parkland). There also increased proposals for a broadening of uses in public parks that allows increased diversity of activity complementary to its function as a public space (e.g. adding small commercial elements to parks such as cafes or allowing formal uses such as group exercise or commercial recreation).
2. Multiple small decisions with minor impacts on existing parks which gradually diminish the space available and functionality of the site. Excision of small portions to assist growth needs of adjacent community uses such as schools, churches, community centre parking or awarding sole use rights to a group via lease or other instrument, are relevant examples.
3. Displacement pressure caused by residential or other development occurring adjacent to an existing park or sporting area and then finding the pre-existing use incompatible with the new use. (e.g. residential growth approaching a motor sports facility and then resident complaints about the noise creating pressure for relocation of the use).

4.4.1. [Multiple Use of Open Space](#)

Multiple use of public open space may be able occur where the proposed use does not impact on the main purpose of the area, does not greatly diminish the landscape quality of the park and does not constitute any threat to park users.

In some cases the proposed use may be complementary to the public space aspects of the park (such as kiosks or discretionary recreation activities) and while it is still alienating some part of the park this may be only at certain times or may provide a greater benefit than the loss.

To assist in defining what constitutes acceptable impact, a maximum allowable % of area to be subverted to alternative use could be defined as an effective measure. While this approach is general only, it provides a benchmark for relatively simple proposals. Any complex proposals would require detailed investigation.

A more detailed policy on multiple use of open space should be developed to address this issue but in the interim the following is suggested.

- No more than 10 % of the total area of a park can be converted or reallocated to alternative uses. This includes cumulative impacts of multiple uses and means that 10 % is a maximum for all alternative uses collectively.
- Any alternative use must not generate any risk for users of the park.
- The alternative use must not create barriers to access or impede access to or use of the main use areas of the park.
- Any proposals for impact beyond the 10 % must include strategies to offset any additional loss with an alternative provision of park area that provides the same or better level of service to local residents.

4.4.2. Encroachment and Displacement of Existing Parks

This is a particular issue with difficult to locate activities such as motor sports, archery and gun sports. It may also affect active recreation uses such as BMX, mountain bike racing and, indoor and aquatic sports centres and field sports (particularly those with lighting). This issue has occurred where new residential areas have emerged nearby established motor sport areas and the incoming residents complain about the noise impacts of the pre-existing use.

Addressing this issue requires consideration of impacts at the development planning/ development assessment stage. The development of local-catchment based plans and preparation of planning schemes can identify existing sporting and outdoor recreation areas in need of protection and recommend suitable buffer distances to apply so that displacement pressure on existing or proposed facilities is minimised.

5. Implementation

The Public Open Space Policy will be implemented through the following mechanisms:

1. **Desired Standards of Provision**

Desired Standards of Provision (DSP) have been developed to ensure adequate provision of public parks and land for sport facilities that meets community needs and is able to be maintained efficiently.
The DSP are detailed on page 18.
2. **Planning Scheme and Development Management**

The planning scheme provides the mechanisms to implement the planned infrastructure network of public parks and land for sport and community facilities. The key mechanisms are:

 - The Local Government Infrastructure Plan, which contains:
 - Priority Infrastructure Area – which identifies an area where Council’s trunk infrastructure provision will be concentrated over the next 10-15 years;
 - Desired Standards of Service - Parks and land for community purposes design standards;
 - Plans for Trunk Infrastructure - existing and future trunk infrastructure schedules for public parks and land for community purposes infrastructure.
 - Planning Scheme provisions which ensure new development complies with requirements for public open space provision.
3. **The Development and Implementation of Subordinate Strategies and Policies.**

Specific strategies and policies may be developed to further the objectives of the Public Open Space Policy. These may include:

 - Outdoor Recreation Strategies involving: trails; natural areas; activity programs and; enabling infrastructure (likely to be developed in conjunction with other agencies).
 - Natural Area Strategies involving: conservation efforts; protection of specific habitats; enhancement of natural area networks such as waterways; and increasing nature based recreation opportunities.
 - Multiple Use of Open Space Policy;
 - Active City or Healthy and Active Strategies;
 - Sports Field Strategies; and
 - Public Art in Parks Policy
4. **Catchment Based Management Planning (CBMP)**

The preparation of more detailed planning at district or catchment level allows the refinement of forward acquisition and development planning as well as reviewing the existing network and identifying opportunities to improve the efficiency of the existing infrastructure. The preparation of these more localised plans can also help with rationalising the current supply and resolving community issues associated with managing existing infrastructure.

Catchment Based Management Planning allows for this policy to be considered in detail and offers a more strategic basis for the development of budgets and management activity. The aim of CBMP is to integrate a number of policy, strategy

and operational issues into a single plan of action for a defined area that addresses current and future issues.

5. Resource Planning and Efficiency

A number of mechanisms will implement the policy objectives for the development and operation of an efficient public open space network:

- a. Master Planning of major parks and sporting precincts,
- b. Review and rationalisation strategies to increase effective provision (primarily through CBMP),
- c. Disposal or reallocation of land that is not required for public parkland (refer to Land Acquisition and Disposal Strategy or LADS - #5385321) , and
- d. Asset Management Plan or AMP for Parks Recreation and Natural Areas (# 4951262)

Guidance on rationalisation and consolidation is provided in “Rationalisation and Consolidation Guidelines” page 37.

6. Desired Standard of Provision for Public Parks

6.1. Overview

The overall Desired Standard of Provision for Public Parks is comprised of two main elements.

1. A preferred **Minimum Level of Supply (MLS)** of various types of land for parks which cater for informal and formal public recreation. This can be described as the “planned provision” of raw land supply that will be embellished (or developed) to provide for a range of public recreation opportunities.
2. A Minimum Level of Development or embellishment for each type of park. This is termed the “**Minimum Level Of Development**” (MLD)

Land for parks, sporting fields and recreation facilities is usually secured through “planned provision” where specific park and facility outcomes are identified as part of a planning scheme or planning strategy such as an Open Space Plan or a Sport and Recreation Plan. In addition this planned provision is complemented by “opportunistic provision” where land acquired for other purposes such as stormwater management, bushland protection or open space buffers can also provide some additional recreation benefit such as recreational trails.

The Desired Standards are mainly concerned with the planned provision of parks, however where opportunistic provision is proposed on land acquired for other open space purposes the Desired Standards can be used to inform requirements to ensure that secondary recreation values can be realised.

6.2. Minimum Level of Land Supply

6.2.1. Summary

In overall terms the anticipated broad outcome of land supply for public recreation is:

- a) 2.5 Ha per 1000 residents for informal parks providing local, district and City Wide level (non-organised) outdoor recreation opportunity.
- b) 2 Ha per 1000 residents for formal sporting and organised public recreation activity.

This definition of broad supply should not be considered in isolation of the detailed performance criteria which guide the size, distribution, primary function and level of development of individual parks (detailed in this section) and the broad use categories for land for Community Purposes.

Parks, sporting fields and land for community purposes can be provided at three levels:

Local	Supplying opportunities to a local neighbourhood
District/Destination ⁸	Supplying opportunities to group of neighbourhoods
City Wide/Regional	Supplying opportunities to the whole city/ whole of local government area or a “sub regional” catchment comprised of multiple district catchments.

The outcomes for these levels of supply are summarised in the following table.

Table 3 Minimum Level of Supply –Hierarchy and Distribution

Setting type/ Broad Supply Rate	Hierarchy	Local	District/Destination	City Wide/Regional
Recreation 2.5 Ha/ 1000		Park (0.5 Ha min 1 Ha max) or node ⁹ (0.2 Ha) within 400 m safe walking distance.	Node or park (2 Ha) within 2- 5 km.	Park/precinct based on specific feature or location
Sport 2.0 Ha/ 1000		No formal provision	Sporting Park 10 Ha within 5 km.	Park/precinct (20 Ha) + within 15 km

⁸ District refers to a discrete area service catchment for planning purposes. . For the purposes of ensuring alignment between this Policy and the LGIP, a destination park in this policy is to be taken as a district park in the LGIP

⁹ A local recreation node is an area within a higher level park (eg. District/Destination or Citywide/Regional) or within other open space (e.g. waterway corridor) that is developed for local play and picnic use.

6.3. Detailed Description of Desired Provision Outcomes for Public Parks

6.3.1. Local Recreation Park or Node

Local Park offering informal recreation and play opportunities.

- A minimum area of 0.5 Ha is required with a maximum area of 1 Ha. If a local recreation node is provided then there should be a minimum of 0.2 Ha developed for informal use and separated (by landscape or other features) from other use areas such as sporting fields.
- At least 95% of residences should have access to a local park or local recreation node within 400- 500m safe walking distance.
- Minimum 50% road frontage.
- Provided as an individual park or as part of a higher level park (eg. district sports park) or as a node in a linear park system.
- Minimal hazards and constraints.
- Developed with local recreation facilities (see Preferred Level of Development).
- Active informal youth facilities (eg: kickabout area) may be provided as well depending on the size and location of the park.

6.3.2. District/Destination Recreational Park / Node

District/Destination level parks offer informal recreation and physical activity opportunities. Usually includes picnic and play facilities, amenities and active elements such as kick about space or youth activity area such as a ½ court.

- Minimum 2 ha of usable area.
- District/Destination Recreation Parks or Nodes should be provided within 2-5 km of 95% of residences.
- Provides range of informal passive and active opportunities (eg. picnic facilities, ½ courts, kick-about areas, teenage activities, bike paths, exercise stations).
- Provided as a stand-alone park, as a node within district/destination or regional linear open space systems or as part of a larger individual park which includes formal sporting opportunities.
- High accessibility (car, bike, foot) multiple access points and accessible for people with mobility challenges.
- Linked to local pathway network.
- Min 50% road frontage.
- Usually requires an improvement plan.

6.3.3. District Sports Park

Formal sporting provision in a single area or “precinct” which provides for organised and programmed sport and recreation activity. May include fields, courts and built facilities supporting community and club use¹⁰.

- Minimum 10 - 15 Ha.
- Provided within 5 km of 95% of residences.

¹⁰ Under the constraints of IPA and the November version of the Standard Infrastructure Charges Schedule the cost of building club houses, indoor sports centers and public pools cannot be included in any infrastructure charge.

- Formal layout for fields and specific use areas.
- Includes club facilities and amenities.
- High accessibility.
- Location should consider buffering of noise and other impacts from residential areas.
- Preferred outcome is for inclusion of local or district level recreation nodes or as part of larger mixed used park.

6.3.4. City Wide/Regional Recreation Park

City Wide/Regional Recreational Parks should be provided to service the whole city and are based on specific or unique features. They are provided on an individually planned basis and should provide a range of use areas for a range of uses and users and include high landscape quality recreational nodes as well as other areas in less developed states. They provide for access by car, foot, bike, public transport. Preferred access for City Wide/Regional level recreation parks is within 10-30 km of 95 % of all residences.

- Usually 5-10 Ha +.
- Planned provision based on identified opportunity.
- Serves whole city.
- Infrastructure based on master plan.
- Could have a major landscape or habitat conservation objective.
- Accessible by all transport modes and should be located on public transport routes.

6.3.5. City Wide Sporting Precinct

City Wide Sporting Precincts are required to service the whole city. Provision should consider city wide and regional level sporting facility development. Preferred access for City Wide Sporting Precincts is within 15-30 km of 95 % of all residences.

- Minimum size dependant on extent and mix of facilities.
- Multiple sports and multiple facilities.
- Serves whole city.
- Provided on a planned basis- usually master planned.
- May also provide local and district level recreation opportunities.
- Accessible by all transport modes and should be located on public transport routes.

6.4. Opportunistic Provision - Other Open Space and Development for Recreational Use

Where other open space areas such as waterway corridors are provided and they have sufficient amounts of usable space which is free from hazards or other major constraints then there are opportunities to develop some basic facilities which can provide some limited recreation opportunity and complement the planned provision of parks and sporting fields.

In terms of infrastructure planning and charging, the land component of “opportunistic provision” is not charged for within the Public Parks and Land for Local Community Purposes Infrastructure Plan as the land component has been acquired for other purposes (such as Waterways) and due to its constraints would not be considered suitable for public park as a primary purpose. However some

embellishment of these “other open space” areas could be included in the Infrastructure Plan as it enables additional recreation opportunity to be provided. The main types of other open space and the opportunity for some complementary recreational use are discussed below.

6.4.1. Local (Linear Open Space and Other Open Space Areas)

1. Other open space/ dual function open space
 - Land provided from other infrastructure networks or development (water cycle management/drainage, bushland protection, road/rail buffers).
 - Pathways developed and access points provided.
 - 50 % road frontage and good visibility.
 - Informal use only.
 - May provide linkages to local recreation nodes.

6.4.2. District/Destination (Linear Open Space and Conservation Areas)

1. Linear systems provided along larger waterways or foreshores.
 - Minimum corridor widths of 15-50 m¹¹ from top of bank or high water mark.
 - Provided opportunistically.
 - 50% or higher road frontage.
 - Bikeway and pathways.
 - Lights and fencing provided.
 - May have local or district recreation nodes developed adjacent.
 - May have conservation objectives.
2. Bushland / conservation areas which can provide some outdoor recreation opportunity through development of picnic areas and trails.

6.4.3. City Wide/Regional (Linear Open Space and Conservation Areas)

1. City Wide/ Regional level Linear Park System based on waterways or foreshores.
 - Linear system with 50m (min) and 100 m (pref) widths¹² from top of bank/ high water mark.
 - Planned provision based on identified opportunity.
 - Serves whole city.
 - May have local and district recreation nodes developed within system.
 - May have conservation objectives/ regional open space values.
2. City Wide or Regional conservation areas which can provide some City Wide or district recreation opportunities if appropriate infrastructure is developed, such as trails and visitor facilities.

¹¹ It is understood that widths of waterway corridors will be reviewed by CRC following advice from EPA/ DNRW. If a minimum “exclusion zone “ is specified by state policy then the additional width needed to allow for paths or recreation nodes may need to be increased.

¹² See previous footnote

6.5. Planning and Performance Criteria/ Preferred Outcomes

The following table details the performance criteria applying to the various Park Types recommended in the Minimum Level of Supply. These are preferred outcomes which in some cases may be varied at Council's discretion subject to individual circumstances and a merit based assessment.

Table 4 Preferred Outcomes for Minimum Level of Supply

Park/ Community Facility Type	Hierarchy Of provision	Preferred min size (stand- alone)	Preferre d min size (rec node) ¹³	Service access radius ¹⁴	Road frontage minimu m	Useable area for main purpose ¹⁵	Slope and Topograph y (Maximum)	Flooding ⁴⁶ and other hazards (see following table)	Paths and access	Other comment s
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¹³ Refers to a local park facility provided as part of a larger open space are such as district sports fields or open space corridor.

¹⁴ Service Access Radius refers to the desirable safe walking or travel distance from any given household. It is noted that in some instances in existing suburbs there are often more than one local park within 500m of residents. Under these circumstances, the largest and most suitably located park is required to be embellished to the minimum standard, whilst the other parks are not required to meet minimum standards.

¹⁵ Useable area refers to the space within the park available for sport or recreation activity and facilities. This therefore excludes creeks, stands of vegetation, water bodies, wetlands, steeply sloping land and other "constrained" land.

⁴⁶ Flooding is expressed as the Average Recurrence Interval. This means the average no of years to exceed a given rainfall total (or in this case level of inundation). However the probability of exceeding this level in any one year (AEP) is a different value. E.g. an ARI 5 means there is an 18% chance of this level being exceeded in any one year.

Park/ Community Facility Type	Hierarchy Of provision	Preferred min size (stand- alone)	Preferre d min size (rec node) ¹³	Service access radius ¹⁴	Road frontage minimu m	Useable area for main purpose ¹⁵	Slope and Topograph y (Maximum)	Flooding ¹⁶ and other hazards (see following table)	Paths and access	Other comment s
Local Recreation Park	Serves local neighbourhood	0.5 Ha min up to 1 Ha	0.2 Ha	400- 500m	50%	0.2 Ha	1: 20 for main use area 1: 6 for remainder	Whole area free of regular flooding (i.e.: above AEP 20%) with the Main Purpose Area or 10 % (whicheve r is the greater) of total area above AEP 2%. Free of hazards	Safe walking access and pathway links to park	Should have good visibility from surroundin g residences . Narrow linear shapes are not preferred.

Park/ Community Facility Type	Hierarchy Of provision	Preferred min size (stand- alone)	Preferre d min size (rec node) ¹³	Service access radius ¹⁴	Road frontage minimu m	Useable area for main purpose ¹⁵	Slope and Topograph y (Maximum)	Flooding ¹⁶ and other hazards (see following table)	Paths and access	Other comment s
District/Destination Recreation Park	Serves several neighbourhoods and may attract use from other Districts. ¹⁷	2-5 Ha	2 Ha	2-10 Km	50%	1-2 Ha	1: 20 for main use area Variable topography for remainder	Whole area free of regular flooding (i.e.: above 20% AEP) with Main Purpose Area or 10 % (whichever is the greater) of total area above AEP 2%. Free of hazards	Safe walking access and pathways into the park and facilities. Car access catered for at destination level	Will also provide local recreation park function for immediate n'hood. Usually master planned

¹⁷ Districts are defined as those identified in the planning scheme.

Park/ Community Facility Type	Hierarchy Of provision	Preferred min size (stand- alone)	Preferre d min size (rec node) ¹³	Service access radius ¹⁴	Road frontage minimu m	Useable area for main purpose ¹⁵	Slope and Topograph y (Maximum)	Flooding ¹⁶ and other hazards (see following table)	Paths and access	Other comment s
District Sport Park	Serves one or more districts.	10 - 15 Ha	NA	5- 15 km	50%	4 Ha (allows for 3 fields and ancillary	1: 50 for field and court areas 1: 10 elsewhere.	Main sporting use areas above AEP 2%. Total area to be above AEP 20%. Built Facilities above AEP 1%. Free of hazards	On site carparkin g. Walking and cycle track links.	Also expected to provide local or district recreation nodes.
City Wide/Regional Recreation Park	Serves whole city or several districts	Not specific Depends on key features	5 Ha	10-20 km	25-50%	Design dependant	Use areas 1: 20	Free of hazards. Facilities above AEP 1% At least 50% of park to be above AEP 2%	Car, foot and bike access. Off-street parking Public Transport network	Usually master planned and located due to key feature.

Park/ Community Facility Type	Hierarchy Of provision	Preferred min size (stand- alone)	Preferre d min size (rec node) ¹³	Service access radius ¹⁴	Road frontage minimu m	Useable area for main purpose ¹⁵	Slope and Topograph y (Maximum)	Flooding ¹⁶ and other hazards (see following table)	Paths and access	Other comment s
City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Serves whole city or several districts	Size dependant on use and ancillary requirement s	n/a	15-30 km	25%- external. Served by internal road network	Dependant on use	1: 50 for all playing surfaces	Free of hazards. Fields/ courts above AEP 2%. Built Facilities above AEP 1%	Car, foot and bike access. Internal road and parking network Public Transport network	Expected to provide local or district recreation nodes as well. Usually Master Planned

Table 5 General Criteria to Apply to all Parks and Land for Community Purposes

All Land free of Hazards and Constraints to Community Use. Unacceptable land includes:	Minimum widths	Safety and Design	Buffers and adjacent land use	Constructed Drains and Flooding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land listed on Contaminated Land Register or Environmental Management Register • Land known or suspected as being contaminated • Land under High Voltage Power lines or within 50m of the Line easement. • Land constrained by Easements • Land constrained by proximity to noxious uses 	<p>Land should be greater than 15 m wide unless part of a linkage or minor entry point then 5 m minimum applies. Land for sporting use must be 200 m or greater for any dimension.</p>	<p>All location choice and development of public parks and community facilities should consider CPTED¹⁸ principles and any urban design guidelines for public spaces and facilities adopted by Council.</p>	<p>Parks should consider adjacent land uses and be adequately buffered from incompatible uses. Solutions may include vegetation corridors, planted mounds and fencing.</p>	<p>Constructed drains and overland flow paths are not suitable for parkland. Detention and Retention Basins are not suitable for parkland. All Parkland should be above the ARI 5 inundation line.</p>

¹⁸ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

7. Embellishment (Minimum Level of Development)

7.1. Summary

All parks and sporting areas should be developed to a minimum level to enable the community to use the park for the intended purpose.

7.1.1. Local Provision

A local recreation park or node should provide for informal recreation with shade, tables, seats, a water tap and play facilities suitable for the context of the site. An open area for “kick a bout” or a similar active node for older children should be provided if possible.

The park should be accessible by foot, bicycle and car and should have good road frontage (minimum 50%) and visibility from surrounding houses. Footpath and boundary entries should allow for people with mobility challenges.

Hazards such as busy roads, drains or power lines should not be present or should be buffered.

7.1.2. District/Destination Provision

Recreation

District/Destination Recreation Parks should provide mixed active and passive use with picnic and play facilities, toilets (or adjacent access to public toilets), water, lighting, internal paths, an informal active facility (such as half or full court) for older youth, active recreation elements and off-street parking. Provision of shade, tree plantings and a high landscape quality are core elements. Path and facility access should consider people with mobility challenges. District/Destination parks can also provide opportunities for expression of local culture and neighbourhood character through public art, community art and interpretive elements.

Sport

District Sport Parks should have minimum street frontage of 50% and there should be multiple access points, off-street parking (unless there is greater than 50% of boundary with on-street parking) and opportunity for several user groups.

The minimum development standard would require parking provision, toilets (or a serviced site for future club facilities), fields and/or courts developed to playing standard, boundary fencing, water, power and security lights.

It is also desirable to have District Sport Parks provide local recreation opportunities or be collocated with District Recreation Parks.

7.1.3. City Wide/Regional Provision

Recreation

Development should be according to a master plan and provide mixed active and passive use with picnic and play facilities, toilets, water, lighting, internal paths, a range of informal active facilities (such as half courts, trails and youth spaces) and off-street parking. A range of settings/ locations should be provided and features may include built facilities, kiosks and event spaces. Provision of shade, tree plantings and a high landscape quality are core elements.

Sport

Development would be according to a master plan and is likely to involve several sporting groups and other agencies as partners or tenants. Internal roads, parking, facility hubs and bikeways are considered essential as are fields, courts and suitable locations for larger “built” sports facility development.

7.2. Detailed Explanation of Embellishments

The following Table provides a summary of the embellishment outcomes considered as the minimum desired level of development (or embellishment) for each park type. The information in this table should be considered as a summary only and should be further informed by any current or future park planning and design guidelines identified by Cairns Regional Council in the Planning Scheme or other adopted policies and documents. It is noted that in some instances there will be constraints that restrict the ability to meet the desired minimum level of development. In these instances a merit based approach will be taken to determine a reasonable level of improvement at Council’s discretion. The level of improvements required is to be commensurate with the size of the park and other park characteristics. For example in terms of play spaces, a very small park may only require a single small play item whilst a very large natural park would contain a nature play/adventure type space incorporating materials, designs and elements that pick up on the natural themes in the park.

Table 6 Minimum Level of Development (Embellishments)

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Features								
Boundary fencing	Bollards or suitable alternative to prevent car access	Bollards or suitable alternative to prevent car access	Bollards or suitable alternative to prevent car access	Bollards to prevent car access onto fields	Range of fencing/ boundary definition styles as appropriate to location. Bollards or suitable alternative to prevent car access	Fencing/ bollards to control access into site as well as limiting internal traffic access to field and facilities	Boundary fencing/ bollards on road frontage	As needed at public access points
Water taps & Irrigation	1 drinking tap / fountain .	In ground irrigation where necessary. 2 drinking fountains. Taps for picnic areas. Taps at active recreation nodes	In ground irrigation where necessary. 2+ drinking fountains. Taps for picnic areas. Taps at active recreation nodes	In ground irrigation. Taps located on built facilities and 1 per field	In ground irrigation where necessary. Drinking fountains and taps provided at picnic nodes and active nodes	In ground irrigation. Taps located on built facilities and 1 per field	Taps provided at Recreation nodes or trail heads	Not normally provided. May be provided at some picnic areas and trail heads

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Features								
Toilets	Not required	Required where Council assessment demonstrates need	Required at main car parking area / activity hub	Provided if not being provided as part of club facilities ¹⁹	Provided	Provided by clubs as part of facilities	Not provided	Not usually provided
Bike /pedestrian paths and facilities.	On footpath and providing access to boundary	Paths and links to park and within park. Bike racks provided	Paths and links to park and within park. Bike racks provided	Bikeway links to park. Internal links to facilities. Bike racks provided	Bikeway links to park. Internal links to facilities. Bike racks provided	Bikeway links to park. Internal links to facilities. Bike racks provided	Shared paths/ bikeways provided	Walking tracks and board walks provided

¹⁹ Minimum standard would be to provide a serviced site for later club development of toilet/change facilities.

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Features								
Power, Lighting and CCTV	Safety lighting provided by street lights. Internal lighting CCTV and power to play areas and other embellishments not required	Power/lighting for carpark, toilets, youth space and picnic area. CCTV where an assessment deems it's necessary	Power/lighting for carpark, toilets, youth space and picnic area. CCTV where an assessment deems it's necessary	For carpark, toilets, security lighting for buildings. Field lighting responsibility of clubs	Power/ lighting for carpark, toilets, picnic areas, active rec facilities. CCTV where an assessment deems it's necessary	For carpark, toilets, security lighting for buildings. Field lighting responsibility of clubs	Lighting at road/ path entry points to bikeways	Not normally provided but can be provided at trail heads
Playgrounds ²⁰	1 playground provided. Should provide up to 7 different activities	Large playground that provides more than 10 different activities	At least one large playground with multiple play elements including large signature element	Not provided except in associated Recreation nodes (e.g. local Rec)	Large playgrounds with multiple play elements, large signature element and possibly at multiple locations	Not provided except as part of recreation nodes	Not provided	Not provided
Youth facilities- Informal Active facilities	Not provided	Youth "active" facilities provided- e.g.: ½ court, Bike tracks, youth space etc.	Large Youth "active" facilities provided- full or mixed multi court, Skate park, youth space etc.	Not provided except as public access to sporting fields.	Large Youth "active" facilities provided- full or mixed court, Skate park, youth space etc.	Not provided except as public access to sporting fields or as dedicated facility (e.g. skate park)	Not provided	Not provided

²⁰ Playgrounds provided according to Council standard which includes soft fall and shade (natural shade preferred over built shade sail).

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Features								
Active Recreation Elements	pathways	Activity spaces	Fitness stations, exercise equipment, activity spaces, specific activity elements such as running trails or bike paths.	Pathways and sporting facilities. Community access to fields and practice elements such as cricket nets	Fitness stations, exercise equipment, activity spaces, specific activity elements such as running trails or bike paths.	Pathways and sporting facilities. Community access to fields and practice elements such as cricket nets	Pathways	Trails
Sporting Fields	Informal field if space permits	Informal field provided	Informal fields/ playing areas provided	Fields provided and developed to playing standard	Informal fields/ playing areas sometimes provided	Fields developed to playing standard.	n/a	n/a
Picnic tables, seats, BBQs, bins	1 table 2 seats No BBQ provided Bin may be provided subject to needs assessment	Min 2 tables Min 4 seats BBQs may be provided based on needs assessment. Sheltered tables Bins to meet need	At least one picnic node located near activity area and containing BBQ, shelter, seats, benches and bins to meet need. Benches, seats, shelters, bins and seats elsewhere as required	Not provided except as recreation nodes. 2-4 perimeter seats Bins to meet need	Multiple picnic nodes provided with BBQs, shelters, seats and bins to meet need	Not provided except as recreation nodes. 2 perimeter seats per field Bins to meet need	Seats provided every 300-500 metres where appropriate in association with paths	Seats provided every 500-1000 m where appropriate in association with walking tracks

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Features								
Shade	Shade from trees or structures provided for play events and picnic node	Built shade for play and picnic facilities if natural shade unavailable	Shade for picnic facilities and all use nodes. Combination of natural and built but natural preferred	Perimeter shade from appropriate tree species	Shade for picnic facilities and all use nodes. Combination of natural and built but natural preferred	Perimeter shade for fields from trees	Shade planting as part of general landscape works along corridor	n/a
Landscape works	Turf, some ornamental plantings if needed and shade species. Buffer plantings with other use nodes	Turf, enhancement plantings and shade plantings along with screening and buffers	Significant works including plantings, turf, features, public art	Turf, planted buffer areas adjacent to residential. Screening/buffer plantings for nodes	Significant works including plantings, turf, features, public art	Turf. Planted buffer areas adjacent to residential. Screening/buffer plantings for recreation	Minor works at entry points and plantings as appropriate to constraints of corridor (eg. flooding)	Hardening of access points, regeneration and enhancement plantings
Car parks and internal roads	On-street. Mainly walk to park	Off- street parking provided unless sufficient on-street available	Off-street or dedicated on street parking possibly provided in several locations. Internal roads if needed	Off-street parking provided as a central hub to sporting facilities	Off-street or dedicated on street parking possibly provided in several locations. Internal roads if needed	Off-street parking provided as central hubs to facilities/ filed areas linked by internal road network	No dedicated parking	Off-street or on street parking at access points, trail heads and use areas

Park / Facility Type	Local Recreation Park /Node	District Recreation Park/ Node	Destination Recreation Park/Node	District Sport Park	City Wide/ Regional Recreation Park	City Wide Sports Park/ Precinct	Linear Open Space	Bushland /Conservation Areas
Special elements and all abilities access	Footpath kerbing and entry to park should allow for people with mobility challenges where possible	Location and directional signage. Open areas for neighbourhood events. Public art and expressions of local culture and heritage. Footpath kerbing and entry to park should allow for people with mobility challenges where possible	Location, interpretive and directional signage. Large informal open spaces for community and civic events. Public art and expressions of city cultures and heritage. All abilities access to key activity and picnic areas, play spaces, toilets required	Location and directional signage	Location, interpretive and directional signage. Large informal open spaces for community and civic events. Public art and expressions of city cultures and heritage. All abilities access to key activity and picnic areas, play spaces, toilets required	Location and directional signage. Interpretation signs Public art	Directional signage	Location, interpretive and directional signage and displays

8. Rationalisation and Consolidation Guidelines

Rationalisation of the existing open space network acknowledges that in some cases the legacy of numerous smaller urban planning decisions has resulted in a final network that does not provide sufficient capacity to meet demands, yet “on paper” would appear to have sufficient supply. Rationalisation is also indicated where urban development and intensification may not have occurred around existing open space resources creating demand where there is limited supply and supply where there is limited demand. Rationalisation can also be effective where numerous small parcels which have limited functionality yet represent a maintenance burden which is hard to justify given the return to the community in terms of outdoor recreation opportunity.

A need to rationalise the existing open space network can be triggered by:

- Numerous small parcels which do not meet minimum size requirements and do not provide any outdoor recreation opportunity.
- Highly dispersed very small parcels which are more expensive to maintain than a single larger more functional parcel.
- A high proportion of small parcels which are sub-optimal due to extreme slope, drainage and flooding constraints, inaccessibility, hazards from other infrastructure (e.g. high voltage lines, transport corridors).
- The occurrence of “stranded assets” where parks have become alienated from the main area of demand.
- An over-supply of certain types or settings of public park which create a drain on maintenance resources.
- Poor distribution of open space relative to demand and a need to reallocate resources to improve supply in areas of demand.

8.1. Objective of Rationalisation

The objective of rationalising the open space supply is to ensure that resulting open space network more effectively meets current and future demand. This means:

- Open space is located appropriately to serve needs of surrounding residents.
- Resources are not “wasted” maintaining open space that does not effectively contribute to meeting local demand.
- Alternative uses of some under-used or surplus parcels may return a financial or other benefit that can be utilised to improve supply in areas of need.
- Disposal or conversion of existing open space assets does not diminish the networks ability to meet current and future needs.
- Opportunities to consolidate disparate parcels or expand existing small parcels will create more functional open spaces in areas of need.

8.2. Mechanisms of Rationalisation

Rationalisation, as explained earlier, is driven by the desire for a more effective open space network. This can be achieved in a number of ways including sale and conversion of use. The main strategies used in rationalising the supply of open space are:

1. Sale of surplus land and the resulting profits used to acquire land that is more suitable for the intended open space purpose or is more appropriately located.

2. Conversion of existing land from maintained public park to naturally vegetated urban bushland reducing maintenance costs.
3. Conversion of existing land to an alternative municipal use.
4. Leasing an existing parcel to an adjacent land owner or other party for a set period of time which removes the maintenance burden for that period but retains the land against a future need. (this is often termed a “transitional use strategy”).
5. Land swaps and transfers which effectively relocate supply to more essential locations.
6. Acquisition of “critical parcels” which expand existing undersized areas or connect multiple areas creating larger more effective public open space areas.

8.3. Principles of Rationalisation

Deciding to dispose of public open space assets is a significant decision and can create concerns in the community. The process needs to be undertaken cautiously and with respect to the local community’s sense of ownership and perception of local character. The overwhelming principle that must apply is that:

Sale or disposal of public open space should only occur where the benefit from that disposal is tangible and contributes to an improved level of service (of public open space) within the same planning area/ precinct.

The income derived from sale of Council –owned parcels should be spent:

- To offset debt incurred in the acquisition of a public park or sporting land within the area.
- To acquire other parcels for public park or sporting land in the same districts (or in locations that service that district) that will better satisfy the open space and recreation needs of the local community.
- For the ongoing improvement of existing public open space in the district in which the open space is located.

Council must be publicly accountable for all income derived from the disposal of public open space and be able to demonstrate clearly that the income has been spent on improvement of the public open space network in the same district as the disposal.

Any rationalisation program should consider the following principles:

- Funds from sale/transfer of land must be used to improve other open space provision preferably close by- this is best done through local area planning or neighbourhood planning.
- Considering future demand and long term strategic outcomes is essential.
- Disposal or permanent re-assignment of land should not be undertaken lightly. It is important that the likely path of future development in the area is considered at both medium and long term planning horizons. If a parcel meets performance criteria normally associated with a district or higher order park or is able to provide space for sporting use, then there would need to be a very strong certainty that it will not be required as a result of future residential growth.
- Consider Interim Use Strategies as an alternative to disposal. If there is no current demand for a parcel of land but there is some likelihood of it being required in the future, then an interim (transitional) use may be appropriate. The alternative use should return a benefit in financial terms or at the least remove a maintenance burden. However Interim Use Strategies should only be considered where the land meets the performance criteria for public parks- in other words where it has obvious potential as public open space serving a future need.

- Funds from the sale of a parcel of land may be used to embellish/ develop sub optimal parcels allowing them to provide outdoor recreation opportunity. The income from the sale should deliver a greater benefit than that lost by disposing of the land.
- Disposal of several small non- functional or surplus parcels can be considered as a means of funding acquisition of a single parcel of higher quality/ more functional open space.

8.4. Selection and Identification of Land for Disposal:

In instances where parcels are considered for divestment, an assessment of the suitability of such divestment must be made against the objectives, mechanisms and principles of Rationalisation identified in sections 8.1 to 8.3 of these guidelines. Additional to this, Parcels considered suitable for possible divestment must:

- Be Council owned as opposed to Crown Reserves “deed in trust”.
- Be of minimal importance to overall supply of public parkland or sporting land in terms of quantity, quality and distribution e.g. located in an area of high supply, an area with numerous small used parcels, or an area with more appropriate alternative parcels to meet local needs.
- Have minimal potential for improvement by acquisition of adjoining parcels or consolidation e.g. small in size/at a distance from other parcels, isolated from easy access.
- Have limited potential for improvement through development.
- Be able to generate some market interest and achieve a sale that returns a profit over the costs of sale and disposal.
- Have potential for alternative uses (or Material Change of Use) which does not conflict with the planning scheme nor generate undue impact on adjacent land uses.
- Be subject to legislative processes and community consultation.

8.5. Consolidation

Detailed provision planning at neighbourhood or district levels may identify parcels of open space which have limited capacity but are well located to serve local or district needs. When located in areas of undersupply or likely future undersupply then these parcels may be suitable for enhancement through strategic acquisition of adjacent land to expand their capacity or improve their functionality.

Consolidation occurs when other open space in the same planning area is disposed of to facilitate this.

A consolidation strategy aims to reconfigure the open space network so that numerous individual parcels of limited value are replaced with fewer (but larger) parcels of greater potential and offering increased outdoor recreation opportunity, improved efficiencies in maintenance and improved quality of public open space.

8.6. Transparency and Community Engagement

Rationalisation and consolidation strategies are sensitive projects and it is important that both the nexus of disposal and community benefit is communicated and the transparency of the process is maintained.

A comprehensive community engagement strategy is required from the start of any rationalisation or consolidation program or strategy. The disposal of land perceived as a community asset is a sensitive issue and can easily be inflamed by misinformation or lack of information. The principal message that the objective is improvement of public open space in the local area must be communicated before any proposals are canvassed.

It is clear that once the initial planning has been undertaken regarding rationalisation and consolidation then a detailed community engagement program must be developed as part of the implementation program. This program should be built around the preparation of an LAOSMP (strategy to improve local open space provision) as opposed to being seen as a general cost saving measure to dispose of assets.

Key elements of the Community Engagement Program should be:

- Anchor the program around the overall objective of improving the level of service in regard to public parks and the protection and enhancement of natural systems such as waterways and local habitats.
- Provide transparency in how the plans will be implemented, particularly how Council will guarantee that all funds from rationalisation in a particular area will be used to benefit that area.
- Provide a genuine set of opportunities for the local community to consider proposals and be involved in the refinement of those proposals as well as opportunities to suggest alternatives.
- Ensure continual reference to clear criteria used in assessing sites and visible linkage to the overriding principle of a net benefit to the local community.
- Consideration of sensitive locations or possible negotiations that may have commercial implications is required. Early disclosure of intent by Council to acquire a parcel of land may cause inflation of the purchase price or alternatively may generate a pre-emptive acquisition by another party. Therefore it is recommended that engagement processes focus more on the development of draft plans and strategic intent with the objective to develop a “trusted” process that is implemented when disposal of a site is being progressed.

9. Definitions and Terminology

Terminology	Definition																		
Active Recreation	Recreation involving physical activity and exercise such as walking, cycling, using outdoor exercise equipment, social/informal sporting games on open areas or outdoor courts. Does not include formal, organised competitive sport and club training.																		
All Abilities Access	Provision of access for people of all abilities including but not limited to people that use wheelchairs, canes/frames, motorised scooters, and people using prams and strollers. Council's Access and Inclusion Action Plan 2017 – 2021 refers																		
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability or AEP – the AEP is the chance or probability of a natural hazard event (usually a rainfall or flooding event) occurring annually and is usually expressed as a percentage. Bigger rainfall events occur (are exceeded) less often and will therefore have a lesser probability <table border="1" data-bbox="555 757 1353 1070"> <thead> <tr> <th>Exceedance Probability (AEP)</th> <th>Potential Frequency</th> <th>Flooding Event Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1% AEP</td> <td>1 in 100 Years</td> <td rowspan="7" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;">  Greater Rain Fall Event Lesser Rainfall Event </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2% AEP</td> <td>1 in 50 Years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5% AEP</td> <td>1 in 20 Years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10% AEP</td> <td>1 in 10 Years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20% AEP</td> <td>1 in 5 Years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50% AEP</td> <td>1 in 2 Years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>100% AEP</td> <td>Happens every year</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Exceedance Probability (AEP)	Potential Frequency	Flooding Event Size	1% AEP	1 in 100 Years	 Greater Rain Fall Event Lesser Rainfall Event	2% AEP	1 in 50 Years	5% AEP	1 in 20 Years	10% AEP	1 in 10 Years	20% AEP	1 in 5 Years	50% AEP	1 in 2 Years	100% AEP	Happens every year
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Catchment Based Management Plans	Plans prepared to guide future planning and management of public parks and other open space in local community catchments involving several suburbs or a district. These plans include future acquisition and development plans as well as strategies for resolving current management issues and may include rationalisation and consolidation outcomes.																		
Citywide/Regional Parks	Major destination parks serving the whole city community. Sometimes referred to as metropolitan parks. Primarily recreation parks but may include major recreation infrastructure and commercial elements.																		
Citywide Sports Precincts	Large sporting precincts serving numerous sports and often hosting the main competition facilities for sporting associations.																		
Desired Standard of Provision	The set of criteria, standards and performance measures which guide the provision of public parks, sport and recreation facilities. <i>Should not be confused with Level of Service which refers to operational standards applied to maintenance activities associated with parks and sporting areas.</i>																		
District/Destination Parks	Recreation parks which service several neighbourhoods and provide a destination for extended stays. Would include a range of facility elements and recreation opportunities.																		
District Sporting Precincts	Sporting areas providing fields, courts and facilities for club based sport and training activities. Would normally support multiple sports.																		
Embellishments	The physical alterations to a park that improve the function and usability of the park as itemised in the features column of table 6 in these guidelines.																		
General parkland - Recreational parkland	Park that is provided for general public use, outdoor recreation and enhancement of the urban landscape.																		
Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP)	Council's Local Government Infrastructure Plan that came into effect on 1 July 2017.																		

Terminology	Definition
Local Parks	Public parks provided for local – walk to use within a single neighbourhood. Normally smaller parks providing play and informal recreation opportunities. May include active recreation opportunities such as kick about space, ½ court or exercise equipment.
Local Recreation Nodes	A specific part of a larger open space area (such as a district sports precinct or linear open space corridor along a creek) which has been developed to provide Local Park opportunities instead of providing a separate stand-alone Local Park.
Parks , Public Parks	Public open space which is predominantly natural and is developed specifically for use by the public for outdoor recreation and enhancement of the urban landscape.
Pathways, Recreational pathways	Shared use paths providing opportunities for walking, cycling, running and other related activities. Primarily recreational in nature or serving local access networks.
Place Making	A combination of process, community involvement, design and programs that increase community use, ownership of and engagement in public spaces.
Public Open Space	Open space areas and linear systems owned or controlled by local, state or federal government and used for: the provision of parks and sporting areas; public plazas and built outdoor areas; buffering different land uses; or protecting waterway systems, habitat corridors, natural areas and conservation areas. Public parks are a subset of Public Open Space.
Trails	Provided in bush and natural areas. May be stabilised or un surfaced paths. Provided for recreational use.