



The Play Space Award of Excellence

Recognises the project which contributes to the development of a sense of 'place' for its local community and exhibits design innovation excellence which will inspire others.

Livvi's Place—City of Canada Bay Council, NSW

Livvi's Place playground was developed in conjunction with the Touched By Olivia Foundation and Leighton Contractors to create Australia's first truly all abilities playground. This unique relationship is repeatable all over the country with the model requiring a 50/50 funding split between the participating Council and Touched By Olivia.

The playground has been designed to cater for both neurological and physical impairments. The playground looks the same as any traditional playground and it is often difficult to identify the special needs users as they are not segregated in any way. The design encourages interaction between impaired and able bodied users by providing equipment that is all accessible, graduated and inter-generational. This totally inclusive interaction helps prevent the development of bias between able bodied children and those of less ability.

To cater for neurological and physical impairments the playground equipment provides both physical and emotional support. This is achieved by making the equipment inter-generational, which is attractive regardless of ability. The four structured activities are swinging, sliding, spinning and climbing. While not all users will be able to participate in all of these activities they are able to participate in at least two, regardless of the level of impairment. The equipment is made up of off the shelf items, modified off the shelf items and custom items. The ground plane and static vertical elements have been visually cued to assist visually impaired and autistic users. The rubber softfall contains three contrasting colours and the vertical static items are red. These colours allow visually impaired children to navigate the space safely and unassisted building confidence. Autistic users use these cues to identify safe zones. There are several pieces of musical sculpture and natural areas for unstructured play. Supporting infrastructure is an accessible drop zone, electric change table and electric wheelchair gate.

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High Commendation

Pirate Island Playground Palm Beach Parklands—Gold Coast City Council, QLD

Pirate Island Playground is within Palm Beach Parklands at Palm Beach, on the Gold Coast. This site is in a spectacular location, adjacent to a calm swimming lagoon.

The rationale behind the 'Detailed Design Brief' for this playground was based on addressing a range of opportunities for play activities based on children's developmental milestones, prior to determining the actual play equipment required. These opportunities included types of play beyond merely those that focus on the gross motor skills typified by many playgrounds; hence the formulation of the brief requested that opportunities for such elements as dramatic, exploratory, and musical play be incorporated in the detailed design of the playground.

The design and construct team conducted workshops with year four and five students from nearby Palm Beach Primary School, to explore the varied ideas of what students considered to be 'treasure.' The first session was a 'brain storming' session involving students being shown a slide show of ideas with question and answer opportunities, followed by an opportunity for students to draw their ideas on paper. Drawings of proposed 'treasures' included such concepts as surfboards, teddy bears, guitars, electronic games, and native animals.

The second session involved turning these ideas into 3D shapes using the medium of clay. It was explained to the students that these 'treasures' were to be embedded into the playground for users to discover. After this session, the clay 'treasures' were taken away by the playground construction team, then cast and formed into more robust material and inserted as treasure around the playground.

The playground opened December 2009 and it was heartening to watch these students proudly showing family and friends where their treasure creations were buried in the playground. The discoveries of these same treasures are still a source of delight to playground visitors several months later.

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