

Australian Standard[®]

**Supervised adventure
playgrounds**

**Guide to establishment and
administration**

This standard was prepared by Committee CS/5, Playground Equipment. It was approved on behalf of the Council of the Standards Association of Australia on 20 April 1982 and was published on 9 August 1982.

The following interests were represented on the committee responsible for the preparation of this standard:

Australian Consumers Association
Australian Council of State School Organizations
Australian Federation of Consumer Organizations
Australian Retailers Association
Australian Toy Association
Confederation of Australian Industry
Department of Business and Consumer Affairs
Department of Education, N.S.W.
Department of Education, Vic.
Department of Health (Commonwealth)
Department of Home Affairs
Department of Industrial Relations, N.S.W.
Department of Labour and Industry, Vic.
Health Commission of New South Wales
Industrial Design Council of Australia
Kindergarten Union of New South Wales Incorporated
Local Government Association of New South Wales
Metal Trades Industry Association of Australia
Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Vic.
Municipal Association of Victoria
National Safety Council of Australia (Victorian Division)
Plastics Institute of Australia Incorporated
Playgrounds and Recreation Association of Victoria
Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation
Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne

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PREFACE

This standard was prepared by the Association's Committee on Playground Equipment, with the cooperation and assistance of the directors of two successfully operating playgrounds in Fitzroy (Melbourne) and in North Sydney.

It has been developed to encourage the establishment of this type of playground, a concept which was conceived in Denmark and has spread widely throughout Europe, Scandinavia and the U.K.

The proposal to develop this standard arose during the discussions at the first meeting of the committee. It was generally agreed that such playgrounds were needed in Australia, and that a standard should be prepared in the form of a guide to their establishment and administration.

In the development of this standard the committee referred to the draft Consultative Document prepared by the National Playing Fields Association, London Adventure Playground Association and the National Delegates Meeting of Playworkers entitled Towards a Safer Playground, Part 1—Structures and Outdoors.

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STANDARDS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Australian Standard
for
SUPERVISED ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS—GUIDE TO ESTABLISHMENT AND
ADMINISTRATION

FOREWORD

The term 'adventure playground' has been adopted internationally for a fully supervised playground where children can develop their own ideas of play and where they are given an opportunity to undertake individual or group activities which would not otherwise be available to them.

The need for such playgrounds was recognized in 1943 by a Danish architect. T.H. Sorenson, who was responsible for the building of a high-rise, high-density-population housing scheme. A playground was to be designed and built as an amenity for the children who would live in the block. The children were given building materials and tools and asked to build the sort of playground they would like, the intention being that the architects would then design and build properly on the ideas generated by the children. A formal playground has never been built on the estate but generations of children have enjoyed the pleasures of building and creating their own activities on the area originally set aside for it. This was truly a children's playground and not one designed by adults.

The aim of the committee in preparing this standard is to draw the attention of educationalists, Local Government Authorities and Housing Commissions to this need and to provide information and guidelines which it is hoped will encourage them to consider the development of such playgrounds. According to educationalists, the playgrounds are needed not only in the less-affluent, high-density inner-city areas but also in affluent areas where children, because of their highly structured lives, have few opportunities available to them to enjoy creative activities in their leisure time.

The standard is also aimed at increasing the confidence of playground directors and their assistants, first in teaching the children to develop skills and patterns of play with due regard to their own safety and the safety of others, and secondly in coping with situations which will occur from time to time on the playground.

The need for adequate staffing and training and adequate finance to purchase necessary equipment should be recognized by those people or organizations responsible for playgrounds of this type.

Lady Allen of Hurtwood writes in support of adventure playgrounds in her book 'Planning for Play'—

'Most young people at one time or another have a deep urge to experiment with earth, fire, water and timber, to work with real tools without fear of undue criticism or censure. In these playgrounds their love of freedom to take calculated risks is recognized and can be enjoyed under tolerant and sympathetic guidance.'

Emphasis in an adventure playground is on self-built structures usually of a temporary nature, such as cubby houses. As the materials used will generally be second-hand or salvaged, they must be carefully inspected, and nails and other hazards recovered before being released for use by the children. It is therefore recognized that structures cannot comply with the standards set for playground equipment which is manufactured and installed for a use period of up to 20 years in public and school playgrounds. Nevertheless it is recommended that copies of the standards for playground equipment, AS 1924, Playground Equipment for Parks, Schools and Domestic Use, Part 1—General Requirements, and Part 2—Design and Construction—Safety Aspects, and AS 2155, Playgrounds—Guide to Siting and to Installation and Maintenance of Equipment, be kept in the playground director's office for reference.

The involvement of retired people with building, carpentry and other relevant skills should be encouraged at all times to the benefit of the community as a whole.

A reading list is given in Appendix F for those who wish to learn more about the concept from those who have actively participated in the establishment and operation of adventure playgrounds.