



# Let's Play ōtepoti

PLAY SPACES PLAN 2021  
TE MAHERE PAPA TĀKARO 2021



**DUNEDIN** | kaunihera  
CITY COUNCIL | a-rohe o  
ōtepoti





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# Our vision

Ōtepoti, where play is for everyone.  
Ōtepoti, he wāhi tākaro mō te katoa.



# Ready, set, go!

*Kia rite, kia rite, karawhina!*

AN INTRODUCTION

When we play, we imagine.

We're curious and inspired by what's around us. We're energetic, brave, trying new things or teaching others. We're spending time with our family and friends, or we're meeting new people.

We are exploring and experiencing the world around us, immersed in nature and keeping fit and active.

Play is for everyone.

That makes it important to us because it keeps our community connected, fostering safe neighbourhoods and promoting overall health and wellbeing for Dunedin people.

When we asked for feedback about what's important when it comes to Dunedin's play spaces, our community told us to provide a range of recreational opportunities so everyone in our city can be fit, active and have fun.

And we listened. In this Dunedin City Council Play Spaces Plan, we have focused on establishing value across all of our play spaces, where variety, inclusivity and sustainability form the basis of how we will create a city where play is for everyone.

This plan replaces the first DCC Play Strategy released in 2009, which concentrated on how we would maintain our play spaces. Projects from that plan have now been completed.

Now, we are looking beyond managing play spaces as assets but to the importance of play as beneficial for the wellbeing of our wider community. This means we have combined community feedback, research and analysis of societal trends to consider how we can create play spaces that are

designed for everyone's changing needs - with equipment that encourages interaction, interest and challenge for our children, with options for teenagers and adults.

We want to improve play experiences for our whole community, including those with disabilities. We want our play spaces to be welcoming, to be fun and stimulating, and to be places where our tamariki, rangatahi and the wider community can play freely, safely, explore nature and share experiences with those around them.

We would like to thank all those who offered feedback and provided insights so we could develop what our future play spaces will look like.

**Together, Let's create  
OUR FUTURE play spaces.**



# Playing a part

## Te uru atu

DUNEDIN'S SAY ON HOW WE PLAY

Community feedback about play spaces in our city has been the cornerstone of developing this plan.

We received more than 900 responses to our survey asking for feedback on our playgrounds in and around Dunedin, and we spoke with more than 1000 children from right across our community. We also received a number of submissions regarding our playgrounds as part of our 10 year plan consultation process.

As part of our engagement to develop this plan, we also spoke with Aukaha, groups from the disability sector, young people's groups, community groups, sporting organisations, teachers, academics and researchers.

Special thanks to all those who provided input.



# Guided play!

*Te tākarō kua ārahina!*

## GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Feedback from our community, together with Dunedin City Council's research and analysis of the trends impacting and guiding play, helped us to identify the goals and outcomes we want to achieve through this Play Spaces Plan.



# Let's play Ōtepoti!

## Me tākaro Ōtepoti!

OUR PLAN ON A PAGE

WE HEARD WHAT  
YOU TOLD US



### WE WILL:

Provide opportunities for tamariki and rangatahi to explore, challenge themselves, learn new skills, interact and have fun.

### BY:

Providing play equipment that challenges children of all ages and lets them take risks.

Developing opportunities for different kinds of play – individual, exploratory, imaginative, social, active.

Offering differences between playgrounds by providing a variety of equipment and play experiences.



### WE WILL:

Provide excellent play spaces that are fully accessible for all ages, abilities and cultures.

### BY:

Providing family-friendly facilities where the whole whānau can be together.

Making our play spaces more accessible and inclusive for people with social, cognitive and physical disabilities.

Collaborating with our community to ensure improvements to our play spaces capture the needs of all ages, abilities and cultures.



### WE WILL:

Provide sustainable play spaces where tamariki and rangatahi can play in a natural environment.

### BY:

Providing more opportunities for non-traditional play equipment and experiences.

Using vegetation and natural structures to ignite imaginative play and also provide shade spaces.

Operating a sustainable approach to looking after our play spaces through ongoing maintenance and upgrades.



### WE WILL:

Provide fun and safe facilities for everyone to enjoy free play like biking, skating, parkour or outdoor ball play.

### BY:

Creating more spaces for play on wheels – including biking, scooting, skating.

Improving the quality of our skateparks so they are safe, functional, soften noise and offer spaces with shelter.

Designing spaces that also include options for outdoor activities like ball play, exercise, or parkour.

DELIVERING  
OUTCOMES FOR OUR  
COMMUNITY

PLAY IS  
VARIED

PLAY IS  
FOR ALL

PLAY IS  
NATURAL

PLAY IS  
FREEDOM







# Get set, GO! The Plan

OUR PLAY SPACES PLAN IN DETAIL

NGĀ PITOPITO KŌRERO MŌ TE MAHERE TĀKARO

# What we've got to play with

A STOCKTAKE

*He aha hai mea tākarō mā mātou*

## 89 LOCAL PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds that are generally used by those who live within walking distance, providing an outdoor play area with some equipment

WE CURRENTLY HAVE  
**123**  
PLAY SPACES, INCLUDING:

### 11 SKATEPARKS

A designated area for skateboarding, scootering and other wheeled play

### 1 PUMP TRACK

A dedicated looping track

### 3 DESTINATION PLAYGROUNDS

Large playgrounds that typically provide several pieces of equipment and amenities

### 19 COMMUNITY PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds that provide a wider range of play equipment than a local playground



# Playing better

## Whakapai ana te tākaro

WHAT NEEDS TO IMPROVE

Some of our play spaces are performing well but others need improving. We can do better when it comes to the quality, variety and availability of our play spaces. These core improvement areas, supported by community feedback, have helped drive our overall Play Spaces Plan.

### QUALITY

We have worked hard to improve the condition of our playgrounds. Now only a few playgrounds have equipment in poor condition, and we will renew these over time. Unfortunately, all of our skateparks are in poor condition and are not great places to skate. We will start by raising the standards of our skateparks.

"We need a new skatepark, our one is full of graffiti and broken glass, it is not fun or safe."

10-YEAR-OLD



### AVAILABILITY

Dunedin has roughly one playground per 200 children. This is a good number of playgrounds for a city of our size, but they are not evenly distributed. Some communities have a good supply of playgrounds but others do not. Where possible, we will aim to rectify this by developing new play spaces. This is not always easy to do in well-developed areas, nor is it possible to provide a play space close to every property. In some cases we may upgrade a local playground to a community playground instead of building an additional playground.

### VARIETY

Every child is different, but our local playgrounds tend to be all the same, providing limited experiences for those that use them. This means our communities don't benefit much from having lots of playgrounds. All of our playgrounds support active play and, in most cases, support playing with others. However, we have heard from adults and children that our playgrounds would provide more value if they had equipment that let children play in different ways.

"We want a proper, modern destination playground that excites kids and accommodates families. Not a 1950s seesaw with 60 coats of paint."

A PARENT



"Such a big park with not a lot for the kids to do."

A PARENT



# Our future play spaces

*Ngā wāhi tākarō o te anamata*

OUTCOME #1  
PLAY IS VARIED



## OUR GOAL:

Our tamariki and rangatahi can explore, challenge themselves, learn new skills and have fun.

A great playground provides children with the opportunity to explore, challenge themselves, learn new skills, interact and have fun. Children play in lots of different ways. Outdoor play can be creative, imaginative, active, social, calm or chaotic. Providing spaces that are well-designed for all types of play will support our children cognitively, physically and socially, where variety in equipment and play experiences will encourage our children to participate, grow and develop. One piece of modern play equipment will now enable children to play in several ways and risky play doesn't always mean it's unsafe. Changes to New Zealand play standards mean that equipment can now be more challenging for children to allow them to safely take more risks.

## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

Kindergarten children want free and messy play that includes water and sand.

Primary school children want to socialise and play freely in exploratory environments.

Older primary school children want more age-appropriate playgrounds (risk and challenge), more free space (where they can use wheels) and more places to hang out.

The majority of our community wanted investment in destination playgrounds or a combination of destination and local playgrounds.

*"Marlow park doesn't have enough variety. One new swing in 10 years is pitiful."*

A PARENT

*"The parks we have are not fun, not big enough, and need new equipment."*

14-YEAR-OLD

## WHAT OUR OWN INFORMATION TOLD US

Of our playgrounds, 34 have two or fewer pieces of play equipment.

In 29 of our playgrounds, there are only a couple of different ways to play.

The same swing and slide set is used in 37 playgrounds.

Only 4% of our playgrounds provide suitable space (e.g. shelter, seating, shading) for children to hang out.

## WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

Provide a wider variety of play equipment that offers managed risk and challenge for different age groups.

Provide a wider variety of play experiences including individual, exploratory, imaginative, social, active, free and natural play.

Offer more things that appeal to the senses, e.g. sounds, textures, smells, visual interest and taste.

Provide differences between play spaces by providing a variety of equipment and play experiences.

To find out what work we're going to do and when, check out our Implementation Plan at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)



# Our future play spaces

*Ngā wāhi tākarō o te anamata*

OUTCOME #2  
PLAY IS FOR ALL



## OUR GOAL:

Our play spaces are fully accessible for all ages, abilities and cultures.

We know that play benefits people of all ages and is important for all our tangata whenua - from young children to older people.

While traditionally designed play spaces are important, an inclusive space invites people of all ages, abilities and cultures to play together. Inclusive play spaces are easy to access and move around in. They provide a range of play options and the whole space is considered part of the experience. They are an area for the whole whānau, because play promotes interaction, releases endorphins, improves brain function and stimulates creativity for everyone who participates.

## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

Most respondents (86%) wanted us to fund more equipment for children with disabilities.

Many respondents (77%) said we should spend more on play equipment for older children (aged 14 and over) and equipment that adults can also play on.

"Multi-age play spaces are very helpful for parents with mixed age children, as well as presenting new challenges as children grow without needing to find a different playground to go to for each stage."

A PARENT

"Accessible playgrounds enable my child to have the same or similar experiences as non-disabled children."  
A PARENT OF A CHILD WITH DISABILITIES

## WHAT OUR OWN INFORMATION TOLD US

Only 6% of our playgrounds provide equipment for children of different abilities to play alongside each other.

Only a quarter of our playgrounds provide equipment for children aged 10-14.

Only 21 playgrounds support playing in an exploratory environment.

We provide no structures that children can hang out in whatever the weather.

## WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

Provide a bigger range of accessible environments that encourage play and enable friends and whānau to play together.

Develop more accessible and inclusive play spaces for those with social, cognitive and physical disabilities.

Collaborate with everyone in our communities around improvements to play spaces to ensure all needs are captured - including mana whenua, agencies, schools, community groups and trusts.

Look for opportunities to include areas where children, teenagers and families can spend time together within a play space.

"I would like to see more hanging out spots in playgrounds."  
10-YEAR-OLD

To find out what work we're going to do and when, check out our Implementation Plan at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)

# Our future play spaces

*Ngā wāhi tākarō o te anamata*

OUTCOME #3  
PLAY IS NATURAL



## OUR GOAL:

Our play spaces are sustainable and encourage play in the natural environment.

We know our community loves to play in nature. Evidence shows that children often play for longer in natural environments, where nature ignites their imagination and provides more engagement and enthusiasm, while also promoting health benefits and environmental awareness. Nature-based play also supports our Māori culture, where māra hūpara makes use of nature-based play equipment to help conserve cultural and natural heritages.

## WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

Nearly one in three kindergarten children told us they would like to play in a natural or exploratory setting.

Around a quarter of primary school children would like to play in a natural or exploratory setting.

More than a quarter (28%) of the community think we should provide play spaces with natural and exploratory settings for children to play.

"I like the quiet parts in the playgrounds, somewhere near trees like the Botanical Gardens."  
EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

"I would like to see our playgrounds incorporating the surrounding landscape and native vegetation to bring nature to the play environment."

A PARENT

## WHAT OUR OWN INFORMATION TOLD US

Only 9% of our playgrounds provide opportunities for play and social interaction in a natural or exploratory setting.

Only four playgrounds have landscaped design elements to provide a nature-play experience.

## WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

Make use of vegetation and natural structures to create more options for play and shelter and give people a chance to play in nature and on non-traditional equipment.

Make evidence-based decisions about when to provide new play spaces and when to re-purpose old ones.

Ensure we plan for the impact of population growth on our city's play spaces.

Operate a sustainable approach to maintenance by looking after our play spaces and keeping them in good condition.

Provide opportunities for local communities to care for and develop play spaces with us.

To find out what work we're going to do and when, check out our Implementation Plan at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)





# Our future play spaces

## Ngā wāhi tākarō o te anamata

OUTCOME #4  
PLAY IS FREEDOM



### OUR GOAL:

Our city has fun and safe facilities for everyone to enjoy free play like biking, skating, parkour or outdoor ball play.

Play that enables free movement in open spaces helps release energy and increases self-development.

Biking, skating, scootering, outdoor ball play and parkour are all activities that enhance skills and provide options for learning new things.

This type of play is popular because it helps to express individuality, can be challenging and is suitable for all ages, genders and abilities, while also promoting fitness and building resilience.

### WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

More than a third (37%) of children said they wanted to feel free, and 36% of these said for them this means using wheels.

When children were asked which play equipment they preferred, cycling ranked highest out of wheeled equipment, closely followed by skateboarding.

Most respondents (84%) said we should invest more in challenging play areas for children aged between 10 and 14, including pump and BMX tracks, a mountain bike skills area and equipment that can be used for parkour/gymnastics.

More than half (57%) said we should spend more money on skateparks, and 132 respondents wanted opportunities for wheeled play, including skateparks (91) and pump tracks (41), while 34 wanted basketball hoops.

"I would like skateparks for 13 and under because older people on skateboards make fun of the younger kids."

10-YEAR-OLD

### WHAT OUR OWN INFORMATION TOLD US

Almost 60% of our playgrounds support free play. This can be provided with just open space.

All of our skateparks are in poor condition.

Even though our skateparks are designed for multiple users (skateboards, BMX, scooters and rollerblades), half of them are not fit for purpose.

We only have one pump track (Fairfield).

Rural communities have to travel to the destination skateparks for a space where they can play on wheels.

### WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT

Improve the quality and safety of our current skateparks.

Provide more play spaces where wheels can be used so our community can enjoy scootering, biking and skating.

Design wheeled-play spaces to include elements of interest that look good in our community, are safe, functional, soften noise and provide shelter.

Look for opportunities to provide spaces with options for outdoor ball play, exercise and parkour.

"Skateparks should be a huge priority. A huge variety of people would use these and if there were areas to have picnics/play around them, it would be a fantastic family area."

A PARENT

To find out what work we're going to do and when, check out our Implementation Plan at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)



# It's PlayTime! In Progress

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND TRACKING PROGRESS  
TE URU MAI O TE HAPORI ME TE AROTAKE I TE KAUNEKE



# Come play with us

## Me tākaro tāhi tātou

BUILDING PLAY SPACES TOGETHER

WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING  
WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Community involvement in the development of our play spaces is important to us. As we implement this Play Spaces Plan, we will work with the community to maintain, improve, create and develop play spaces across Dunedin city.




For projects where we replace more than one piece of equipment, add new equipment, or add a new play space

### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We will work with children to make sure their ideas are directly reflected in the replacements.

We will keep you informed, listen to and provide feedback on how your thoughts have influenced the decision.




For projects where we remove equipment, or change the purpose of the play space

### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge your feedback.

We will provide feedback on how your thoughts have influenced the decision.



For projects to address health and safety concerns, or where we replace one piece of equipment with the same, or similar

### OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We will keep you informed.

To review the results of our engagement with the community as part of developing this Play Spaces Plan, please visit [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)



# Tracking progress

## *Te arotake i te kauneke*

THE BUILDING BLOCKS

We know it's important to do what we say we're going to do. As we implement this Play Spaces Plan, we will continue to monitor our progress and keep our community updated on how we're going.

HERE'S HOW WE WILL KNOW THE DCC HAS  
DELIVERED ON ITS PLAY SPACES PLAN:

Dunedin city has a wide variety of  
play experiences

Our community is regularly asked for feedback and  
input in to Dunedin city's play spaces

There's a range of play equipment for  
everyone to enjoy

All our community and destination playgrounds have  
accessible play equipment that are fit for purpose  
for all ages, abilities and cultures

There are lots of options for wheeled and ball play  
and all of our skateparks are in very good condition

Our play spaces make more use of the  
natural environment

To find out about the work we're doing and when, check out our Implementation Plan at [www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space](http://www.dunedin.govt.nz/play-space)

**CONTACT US**

PO Box 5045  
Dunedin 9054  
New Zealand

phone 03 477 4000  
email [dcc@dcc.govt.nz](mailto:dcc@dcc.govt.nz)

 @DunedinCityCouncil

 @DnCityCouncil



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