



WINDSOR SPORT & COMMUNITY PARK

Case Study

BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

ABOUT US

We are a specialist team thinking beyond the conventional to create unique, award winning recreational spaces to benefit children, families and communities across Australia.

Beginnings

A cornerstone of the Australian Recreational industry since 1998 with experience across aquatic, play and fitness space design and construction and custom engineering and fabrication projects.

The Team

Led by Director Marcel Veraart, we are a team of specialists with a diverse range of interests and experiences, dedicated to delivering your unique magic.

Our Capabilities

In the last 5 years we have delivered:

- 844 Projects valued at over \$43 million
- 3 Major Waterparks delivered in 2019, valued at over \$5.8 million
- A complete integrated aquatic and adventure play experience valued at over \$1.7 million, opened November 2020
- World first Australian Made aquatic parks in Gladstone and Maryborough, completed June 2021

PROJECT *Overview*

Brisbane City Council opened the new Windsor Sport and Community Park, a bespoke playground adjoining recreational green space in the inner-city suburb of Windsor, in late 2021. The park is located opposite the Northey Street City Farm Market and a metropolitan level sports precinct - Downey Park.

Serving as a hub for Windsor's diverse community, the new playground within the park includes a range of embellishments including a treehouse-styled tower to allow for 'at height' views of the iconic fig tree and surrounds.

The objective of the Windsor Sport and Community Park project is to activate one of Brisbane's valued open space assets, and to provide a green recreation haven for the precinct and the Brisbane community. The project site consisted of flood prone former residential vacant land that Council acquired, to form a new park of 1.57ha.

The site presented an ideal opportunity to activate for the community while demonstrating best-practice flood resilient park design.

Council engaged with various stakeholders, consultants and local residents to ensure the design of the playground is forward-thinking with planning objectives, remediation for restoration and flood resilience in mind.



KEY STATISTICS

WHERE

Windsor, Qld

WHO

Collaboration between Playscape Creations,
Naturform and Brisbane City Council

BUDGET

Project: \$1.25M
Equipment: \$200K

DELIVERED

December 2021



DESIGN Methodology

The design process, undertaken by Brisbane City Council's City Design Team, reflected the sense of connection the local community already held for the site. Council consulted with the community to identify how they would like to use the space, including how the community strongly wanted to celebrate the local landmark, being the iconic fig tree and incorporated this information into the design.

The project's location and site constraints were a key driver in achieving a space that was able to address the desires of community. The site was previously vacant residential lots and it needed to undergo investigations and assessment to ensure it was brought to standard level for park use.

This meant collaboration with Council's flood and contaminated land teams to ensure the park met council park standards. The playground was designed to encourage exploration, promote learning as well as physical activity and provide a stimulating natural environment for children.

The techniques involved extensive understanding of various disciplines including flooding constraints, geotechnical, stormwater investigations, contamination, arborists utilising the specialised LiDAR surveying to ensure the iconic fig tree was treated with special care and precision up-rooting protection technology.

The design process then took into account the various assessments, disciplines and reports, and given the low-lying nature of the site the playground had to be designed to account for the flood resilient constraints and materials had to be chosen to withstand the flooding constraints.

The playground was designed to celebrate the significant fig tree retained on site and its importance to the community. The project sought to prioritise natural materials such as timber and sandstone to provide a more tactile experience and to complement the existing fig tree.

The choice to use gabion wall was done in collaboration with arborist and contaminated land officer, as the minimal disruptive construction method to the root system already pruned. The gabion wall allows excess water to drain freely without the loss of any soil and increases airflow and water to the root systems. The area was also excavated, and new soil brought in to ensure suitable drainage around the tree.

The gabion system performs well in inundation settings and allowed for changes in ground level around the fig tree for its successful retention.

Arboricultural advice was received throughout the design and construction stages. The tree was watered and fertilised for 9 months prior to any ground disturbance to ensure its health was maintained during construction. A root prune zone was established with the arborist to allow for excavation works and regrade the area around the tree, during this period the tree was monitored by the arborist (water and fertilisation continued to be administered).

Fencing was required due to the playground's proximity to main roads. The custom fencing was designed to complement the setting of the fig tree, and in collaboration with playground certifier to ensure it met the standards.



DESIGN Methodology

Applying a gender lens

Within major cities around the world, the provision of play experiences for tweens and teenagers is generally in the form of active or organised activities such as sporting fields and skate parks. When analysed through a gender lens, we can see this significantly disadvantages girls and young women who don't feel like they belong.

The community consultation phases of this project sought to uncover and understand any cultural or gender biases apparent within community member's experiences, and address this throughout the design phase to ensure full community participation.



Key design considerations and implementations for girls and young women include:

- Multiple points of exit, open spaces and clear lines of sight have been provided to allow for passive surveillance among other CPTED principles to help girls feel safe and welcomed
- Hammocks, formal and informal seating options have been provided to encourage socialisation and a calming and inclusive hangout environment
- Walking trails, extensive sensory plantings and discovery experiences have been introduced to encourage individual exploration and reflection
- Oases for imaginary play have been introduced, away from the main play space, to provide opportunities for role play and social experiences, both key developmental areas for young girls
- Adjacent green space is large enough for a kickabout field but can also be used for picnics and intimate social groups
- Elevated net structures and the central "treehouse" provide elevated points of outlook and safe spaces to gather



Inclusive Experience

As an inclusive play space, active opportunities have been provided for people regardless of age, gender or ability, with unstructured play experiences allowing children to access any section of the equipment and engage in whichever way best suits them. All equipment has been specifically designed to engage with users and invite them to play, with the organic nature of the hardwood timber structures creating a tactile element that will develop a unique patina over time, hand rubbed and polished by the countless hands that will pass over them.

An all-abilities carousel allows children in wheelchairs to transfer directly onto the carousel and spin and engage with their peers rather than being segregated in another section of the playground.

Language barriers have been removed through the expression of play in its purest form, with no words or directions needed to show children how to play. It is part of their human blueprint. Organic pathways lead from one island of play to the next, all wheelchair and pram accessible. Artist interpretations of native animals adorn Australian hardwood timber posts and spark children's imaginations as they trace their shapes and try to find them in the neighbouring trees.

Spending time in green spaces has been proven time and time again to positively impact people's health and wellbeing; providing a space that is socially inclusive for girls improves their activity levels, mental health and wellbeing and fosters a sense of belonging within their local community.



INCLUSIVE PLAY





CONSTRUCTION *Methodology*

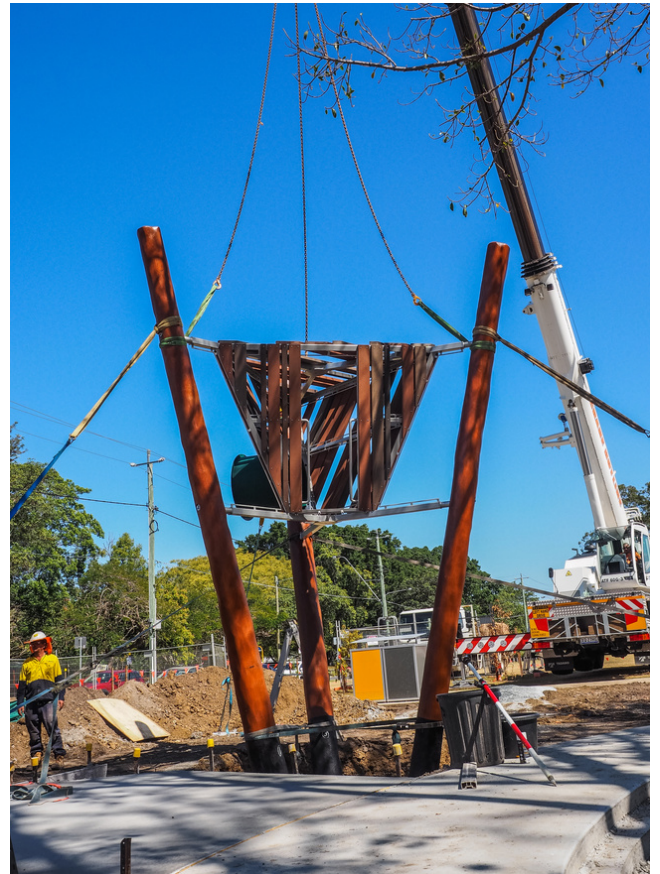
The delivery of this playspace was particularly complex, given the significant site constraints of prior land contamination and flooding, coupled with the need to protect a highly significant mature fig tree.

Flooding storage impacts had to also be considered on this site and during the construction period.

Working in conjunction with local urban landscaper, Naturform, construction and installation methodologies had to ensure no impact to the iconic fig tree crown branches, which included direct contact by plant and machinery. Instructions and risk management plans were put in place to ensure this did not occur to sustain the tree's integrity.



This included the meticulous crane lift of the centre piece, the Tallaganda Hut, carefully transported and craned in to site from Playscape Creations' local warehouse.



Sustainability was a key focus in selection of the play equipment. The structural features of the playground elements are constructed from sustainably grown and responsibly harvested Australian Ironbark (*Eucalyptus sideroxylon*). The hand-selected timber logs have had the sapwood removed through a meticulous process to expose only the Heartwood of the log, removing future risk of splitting or peeling of the timber.

Each log is painted with multiple coats of Timber Treatment; a protective and preservative coating that provides a 'furniture' quality finish and prevents future moisture ingress.

In-ground footings add both compressive and tensile strength to the system with a direct bury then concrete pier or concrete strip beam. The section of timber designated as footing is sealed with a black bitumen paint to prevent moisture ingress and encapsulated in concrete to prevent movement.



IMAGE COURTESY OF MARK - @BRIZZYPIX INSTAGRAM



PROOF OF CONCEPT *Flood Mitigation Design*

After the floods of 2022, the water level within the playground rose above the treehouse deck (more than 3m high), with the tops of the swings and some of the systems no longer visible above the flood waters.

When the water receded several days later, all footings were secure with no structural movement. The timber did not take on any additional moisture and the rubber soft fall was intact. The stainless-steel elements were surface rust and oxidation free and following a good wash down and debris removal, the play equipment is in fabulous working order.



"This project saw the creation of a new 7 Hectare green field for the community to enjoy, as well as a one-of-a-kind bespoke playground.

This is great addition to the Windsor community".

"This new Park is part of Lord Mayor Adrian Schrinner's vision to create new parkland across the City, the third park in as many years for the inner north".

"Can I also thank Trevor Evans MP and the Federal Government who provided funding to Brisbane City Council to help deliver this fantastic playground".

Cr Andrew Wines
Councillor for Enoggera Ward



"What a beautiful playground it is, well done on creating such a lovely community space. Thank you."

Kristie Sloane
Bubs and Reviews



Playscape *Creations*



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