



FROM THE COAST

Playgrounds and Open Spaces

Esperance has always been known for its white sandy beaches, turquoise waters and local wildlife, but it is also gaining recognition for our public spaces. It's something we take great pride in and that's why the Playgrounds and Public Open Space Strategic Plan is a focus for Council.

It costs to maintain public open space but it also adds beauty, function and tourism value to our town. The amount of positive feedback we continue to hear from visitors and locals about the beauty of the foreshore development supports this. The Plan will help us to manage, upgrade and develop playgrounds and public open space within the Shire of Esperance for the next ten years.

Esperance was identified as having double the amount of public open space and parks per population than the average in Western Australia. This means our community is well serviced in this area but this additional service level comes at a significant cost to the community. Community engagement about our playgrounds and open spaces revealed that the community would prefer fewer, better quality playgrounds, which makes sense.

Some people have expressed concern at seeing playground equipment removed from their local playground but with much of the playground equipment exceeding its lifespan, this has been done for the safety of children. Some of these playgrounds are earmarked for better replacement equipment, while others will be left as open space for recreation and leisure activities. Inevitable concern has been raised about what the Shire intends to do with the playgrounds that are not receiving replacement equipment. I can assure you there is no predetermined intention. No decisions other than those pertaining to public safety will be made without community consultation. Any suggestion that we have plans at this stage other than what is publicly available is simply wrong.

If you're wondering what is happening to the playground near your home, have a read of the Shire's Playgrounds and Public Open Space Strategic Plan. The Public Open Space Strategic Plan lists all the playground and open space areas in the Shire of Esperance, and what is being planned. The Shire has been recognised for its innovation and awarded for the quality of our playgrounds on the waterfront. This recognition highlights that we are delivering a high quality service which is clearly being frequently used and appreciated by many within the community and those visiting Esperance.

The Playground and Public Open Space Strategy will ensure Esperance has high quality playgrounds located so that everyone in the community has a safe and well maintained playground within a reasonable distance. If you'd like to read the Shire's Playgrounds and Public Open Space Strategic Plan, head to the Shire website www.esperance.wa.gov.au or call us on 9071 0666.