

# LONGREACH REGIONAL COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING AGENDA

**Thursday 16 November 2023**

*Town Hall, Isisford*

## LATE ITEMS

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**15. LATE ITEMS**  
**15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision**

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**15. LATE ITEMS**

**15.1 Longreach Region Playground Provision**

File Ref:

Officers were asked to review the provision of playground opportunities in the Longreach region and determine whether residents are currently provided with suitable access to a variety of age group appropriate playground facilities. Current provision was assessed using:

- Geographic spread of asset locations
- Neighbourhood walkability to public playgrounds
- Findings from current research around age group specific playground equipment provision (informed by engaging with children/youth).

This report is to be read in conjunction with the Longreach Regional Playground Review (see appendices).

**Council Action**

Recognise

**Applicable Legislation**

Nil

**Policy Considerations**

Nil

**Corporate and Operational Plan Considerations**

OUR COMMUNITY	
	Corporate Plan Outcome
1.1	Council infrastructure and services support liveability and community amenity.
1.2	Council recognises cultural heritage and supports inclusion of all peoples.
1.3	The region's natural environment is managed, maintained and protected.

**Budget Considerations**

Nil at this point in time, but future budget bids will be brought to Council as concept plans are progressed.

**Previous Council Resolutions related to this Matter**

Nil

**Officer Comment**

## 15. LATE ITEMS

### 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision

**Responsible Officer/s:** *Karyn Stillwell, Director of Communities*  
*Joel Perry, Project Manager*

#### **Background:**

A major national study<sup>1</sup> into suburban parks and playgrounds was published by Deakin University in 2021 to determine the needs from all age groups. Well-designed parks should include different features for all age groups such as:

- Children (8 -12 years old) – Physical challenges, playground equipment.
- Youths (13 to 18 years old) – Open areas, sport courts, etc.
- Adults – Relaxed settings with walking trails with nature.

A survey of 252 children determined the most important drivers for a park. The results (see appendices) show a large adventure playground was the feature that most encouraged children to visit a park, and once there, a flying fox was the most common feature to encourage children to be active. A complementary survey of 244 teens determined the most important drivers for a park from that age groups perspective. The results (see appendices) show a large 360 swing was the feature that most encouraged teens to visit a park, and once there, sports courts were the most common feature to encourage teens to be active.

The Australian national median of playgrounds per 1,000 children in 2019 was 5.8<sup>2</sup>. The 2021 Census<sup>3</sup> showed Longreach (not region) had 777 children. Based on this data, Longreach should have 4.5 playgrounds. Longreach currently has 2 public playgrounds (Edkins Park and Lioness Park), both in sound condition, whilst Ilfracombe, Isisford and Yaraka each have one public playground, each in sound condition.

#### **Research findings**

The table below displays the top ten important items for encouraging physical activity among children (as per research findings, see Appendices), and whether Longreach Council currently accommodates this type of equipment:

Children (8 -12 yr) Importance rating	Playground item	Longreach Region currently offers:
1	Flying fox	Nil
2	Playground	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
3	Trees for climbing	Yes, although not for this specific purpose
4	Swings	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
5	Obstacle course / parkour	Nil
6	Climbing equipment	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
7	Grassy open space	Yes

<sup>1</sup>ProjectPARK

[https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/wpcontent/uploads/sites/101/2020/11/IPAN\\_ProjectPARK\\_Summary\\_FA\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/wpcontent/uploads/sites/101/2020/11/IPAN_ProjectPARK_Summary_FA_DIGITAL.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Longreach Community Profile | Summary | REMPLAN](#)

<sup>3</sup> ibid

## 15. LATE ITEMS

### 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision

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8	Outdoor fitness equipment	Yes
9	Slides	Yes
10	Sport goals	Yes

The Longreach Region currently provides eight of the ten most important items, except for a flying fox and obstacle course/parkour. This demonstrate a lack of physical activities provided to children based on the surveyed results of important park features i.e. providing physical activities that are more extreme than the usual playground equipment, such as swings and slides. The study noted the importance of other factors such as accessibility and availability of equipment and concluded that “policymakers should prioritise the inclusion of:

- long flying foxs,
- large adventure playgrounds,
- lots of tree for climbing,
- large round swings,
- obstacle courses/parkour areas,
- large climbing equipment.

#### **Shade structures in playgrounds**

Council provides a range of playground facilities across the region and it is recognised that Council has a responsibility to ensure that those facilities allow the community to undertake

recreational activities in a safe and enjoyable manner. Whilst it is unrealistic to provide 100% shade coverage to all playgrounds at all times, there are a number of shade options for parks, including natural shade from trees, shade sails and solid shade structures. All three options provide benefits, however it would be beneficial for Council to consider developing a shade structure policy to help guide council recreation planners, private developers and project budgets when maintaining/planning for playground infrastructure. A Shade Structure Plan would specify the location of existing shade structures, determine whether natural shade and/or a solid roofed structure is appropriate at each location, and help inform future planning, asset maintenance and grant applications.

#### **Conclusion:**

There are a number of gaps that the playground provision review has highlighted, including the following:

- Residents in both Eastern and Southern Longreach do not have access to a public playground within a 500m walk (see maps in Appendix 2).
- There is only one baby swing in Longreach, despite the 2021 census data showing that the town has over 100 children aged under four years.
- The Wompoo Road mini basketball court has been identified as a facility requiring an upgrade.
- There is a lack of ‘adventure’ playground equipment, such as high climbing net structures, large swings and flying foxes
- There is a lack of specific playground equipment for children with mobility issues/special needs

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- A review of the appropriate sun shade mitigations available at each playground location should be undertaken to inform future policy

Future planning (and grant applications) should consider opportunities for new adventure playgrounds at the Longreach skate park and on the eastern side of Wompoo Road, and existing playgrounds should be assessed for the ability to add more adventure play equipment.

#### **Risk Management Factors:**

This matter has been assessed using Council's Risk Matrix to decide the likelihood and consequence of any risk to Council:

Likelihood: Low  
Consequence: Medium  
Rating: Medium

#### **Environmental Management Factors:**

Nil

#### **Appendices**

1. ProjectPARK - Play features for Children [↓](#)
2. ProjectPARK - Play features for Teens [↓](#)
3. Longreach Regional Playground Review - Nov 2023 [↓](#)

#### **Recommendation:**

*That Council receives the Longreach Region Playground Provision report, as presented.*

# ProjectPARK

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:  
**CHILDREN**

**ProjectPARK:** a study with children 8-12 years to identify the park features they consider to be most important for their park visitation, park-based physical activity and social interaction (2017-2020)



**30** completed a walk-along interview in a park to discuss park features



**272** rated 42 photos of different park features



**252** completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features

**TOP 10**

## FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO VISIT PARKS<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Large adventure playground
- 2 Giant slides (i.e. long curly slide)
- 3 Interactive areas (e.g. touch-sensor illuminated statues)
- 4 Obstacle course or parkour area to climb on
- 5 Long flying fox
- 6 Things to climb (i.e. climbing structures)
- 7 Water play area
- 8 Long slides
- 9 Large swings (i.e. 360° swing)
- 10 Trees for climbing

**TOP 10**

## FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION IN PARKS<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Large adventure playground
- 2 Interactive areas (e.g. touch-sensor illuminated statues)
- 3 Obstacle course or parkour area to climb on
- 4 Giant slides (i.e. long curly slide)
- 5 Water play area
- 6 Things to climb (i.e. climbing structures)
- 7 Table tennis table
- 8 Café
- 9 Long slide
- 10 Swings you can use in a group (i.e. swings in a circle)

<sup>1</sup>Based on photo ratings only <sup>2</sup>Particularly for girls <sup>3</sup>Particularly for boys

**TOP 10**

## FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO BE ACTIVE IN PARKS

- 1 Long flying fox
- 2 Large adventure playground
- 3 Lots of trees for climbing
- 4 Large round swings<sup>2</sup>
- 5 Obstacle course or parkour area to climb on<sup>3</sup>
- 6 Large climbing equipment
- 7 Outdoor fitness equipment
- 8 Giant slides
- 9 Sports goals<sup>3</sup>
- 10 Water play area<sup>2</sup>

For all outcomes, children valued large adventure playgrounds and equipment that provided opportunities for climbing and physically challenging play

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**IPAN**  
INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION



Investigators: A/Prof Jenny Veitch, Prof Anna Timperio, Prof Kylie Ball, Prof Benedicte Deforche  
Funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project (DP170100188)  
Jenny Veitch is supported by an Australian National Heart Foundation Future Leader Fellowship (ID 101928) Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 001138

# ProjectPARK

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:  
**TEENS**

**ProjectPARK:** a study with teens 13-18 years to identify the park features they consider to be most important for their park visitation, park-based physical activity and social interaction (2017-2020)



**34** completed a walk-along interview in a park to discuss park features



**222** rated 40 photos of different park features



**244** completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features

## TOP 10 FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE TEENS TO VISIT PARKS

- 1 Large swings (i.e. 360° swing)
- 2 Large grassy open space
- 3 Café<sup>2</sup>
- 4 Sports goals<sup>1</sup>
- 5 Trampolines<sup>2</sup>
- 6 Quiet, private place to hang out
- 7 Outdoor fitness equipment
- 8 Giant slides<sup>2</sup>
- 9 Obstacle course or parkour area to climb on<sup>1</sup>
- 10 Table tennis tables<sup>1</sup>

## TOP 10 FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION IN PARKS

- 1 Café
- 2 BBQ/picnic area
- 3 Sports courts (netball or basketball)
- 4 Traditional swings<sup>3</sup>
- 5 Large grassy open space
- 6 Sports goals<sup>1</sup>
- 7 Long flying fox<sup>2</sup>
- 8 Interactive areas (e.g. touch-sensor illuminated statues)
- 9 Trampolines
- 10 Giant slides

<sup>1</sup>Particularly for males <sup>2</sup>Particularly for females <sup>3</sup>Swings were more important for females than males, particularly group swings in a circle

## TOP 10 FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE TEENS TO BE ACTIVE IN PARKS

- 1 Sports courts (netball or basketball)
- 2 Large grassy open space<sup>1</sup>
- 3 Outdoor fitness equipment<sup>2</sup>
- 4 Walking/cycling paths
- 5 Long flying fox
- 6 Sports goals<sup>1</sup>
- 7 Large swings (i.e. 360° swing)
- 8 Obstacle course or parkour area to climb on
- 9 Trampolines
- 10 Large things to climb (i.e. climbing structures)

In all three phases, teens tended to prefer park features that were large, adventurous, and challenging, such as a long flying fox

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**IPAN**  
INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICAL  
ACTIVITY AND NUTRITION



Investigators: Elise Rivera, A/Prof Jenny Veitch, Prof Anna Timperio, Prof Kylie Ball, Prof Benedicte Deforche

Funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Project (DP170100188)

Jenny Veitch is supported by an Australian National Heart Foundation Future Leader Fellowship (ID 101928) Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B

Longreach Regional Playground Review – Nov 2023

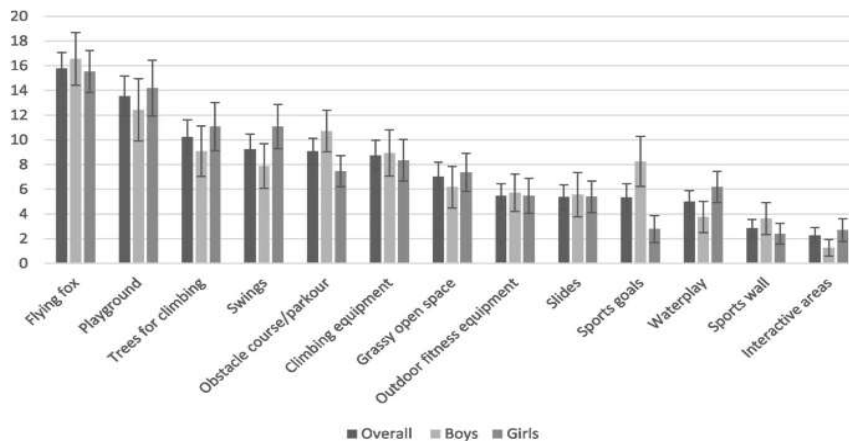
A review has recently been completed to determine if Longreach residents are provided with suitable access to playgrounds, and that Council provides an appropriate variety of playground facilities for different age groups. Walking distance to local playgrounds has been mapped out, as well as an inventory of the available equipment at each playground.

Provision of playground equipment

A major national study<sup>1</sup> into suburban parks and playgrounds was published by Deakin University in 2021 to determine the needs from all age groups. Well-designed parks should include different features for all age groups such as:

- Children – Physical challenges, playground equipment.
- Youths – Open areas, sport courts, etc.
- Adults – Relaxed settings with walking trails with nature.

The study included a survey of 252 children to determine the most important driver for a park. The results (see below) shows a flying fox was the most common feature to encourage children to be active. Longreach does not provide this feature, nor any medium to high physical playground equipment, e.g. obstacle course, climbing equipment, etc.



Relative importance scores for encouraging physical activity among children

Table 1 – Specific activity importance as rated by user groups

<sup>1</sup>ProjectPARK  
[https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/wpcontent/uploads/sites/101/2020/11/IPAN\\_ProjectPARK\\_Summary\\_FA\\_DIGITAL.pdf](https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/wpcontent/uploads/sites/101/2020/11/IPAN_ProjectPARK_Summary_FA_DIGITAL.pdf)



## 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision --Appendix 3

The table below displays the top ten important items for encouraging physical activity among children (8 - 12 yrs), and how Longreach Council currently fulfils them:

Importance rating	Item	Longreach Region currently offers:
1	Flying fox	Nil
2	Playground	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
3	Trees for climbing	Yes, although not for this specific purpose
4	Swings	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
5	Obstacle course / parkour	Nil
6	Climbing equipment	2 for Longreach, 1 for each other town
7	Grassy open space	Yes
8	Outdoor fitness equipment	Yes
9	Slides	Yes
10	Sport goals	Yes

Table 2 – Top 10 Playground items for Children aged 8 -12, and current Longreach regional provision

The Longreach Region currently provides eight of the ten most important items, except for a flying fox and obstacle course/parkour. This demonstrate a lack of physical activities provided to children/teenagers based on the surveyed results of important park features i.e. providing physical activities that are more extreme than the usual playground equipment, such as swings and slides. It is also important to note that only one baby swing is publicly provided in the town of Longreach, despite the 2021 census showing that there were 166 children aged from 0 to 4 years old.

The study noted the importance of other factors such as accessibility and availability of equipment and concluded that “policymakers should prioritise the inclusion of:

- long flying foxs,
- large adventure playgrounds,
- lots of tree for climbing,
- large round swings,
- obstacle courses/parkour areas
- large/high climbing equipment.

The Longreach Open Space, Sport and Recreation Plan (Nov 2008)<sup>2</sup> was also considered as part of this review and it also confirmed that there were playground provision gaps.

### Access to playgrounds

Another metric to consider in terms of optimal facility provision is the physical distance that all residents have to travel to visit a playground. The ACT requires that all playgrounds must be located within 400m walking distance for every resident, however after reviewing other states and Councils, 500m seems to be a more common distance. Longreach region has been mapped using a 'pedestrian shed' (defined as the area covered by a 5-minute walk) to demonstrate Council's existing playground provision (see Appendix 1). It includes public and private playgrounds plus public toilets and other sporting facilities.

### Community Engagement

The ProjectPARK research carried out by Deakin University (see attachments) involved working with children and young people to find out what they wanted in playgrounds and parks which resulted in a list of features that encourage children/youth to visit parks and features that encourage children/youth to be active in parks. These results provide clear direction to planners and recreation teams on where to start when considering how to layout playgrounds and recreation spaces. It is also a reminder to co-design with children/youth throughout the process.

### Conclusions

The Australian national median of playgrounds per 1,000 children in 2019 was 5.8<sup>3</sup>. The 2021 Census<sup>4</sup> showed Longreach (not region) had 777 children. Based off this, Longreach should have 4.5 playgrounds. Longreach currently has 2 public playgrounds (Edkins Park and Lioness Park), both in sound condition, whilst Ilfracombe, Isisford and Yarakka each have one public playground, each in sound condition. One gap that has been highlighted is the lack of baby swings in the Longreach – there is only one baby swing, despite having over 100 children aged under four years. Longreach playgrounds are also lacking in equipment that promotes more adventurous play and activity.

As shown on the map (Appendix 2), the areas which lack the required access (within 500m walk) to public park are eastern and southern Longreach. To resolve this, playgrounds at the Longreach skate park and the mini basketball park on the eastern side of Wompoo Road can be considered. It should also be noted that the mini basketball court has been identified as a facility requiring an upgrade.

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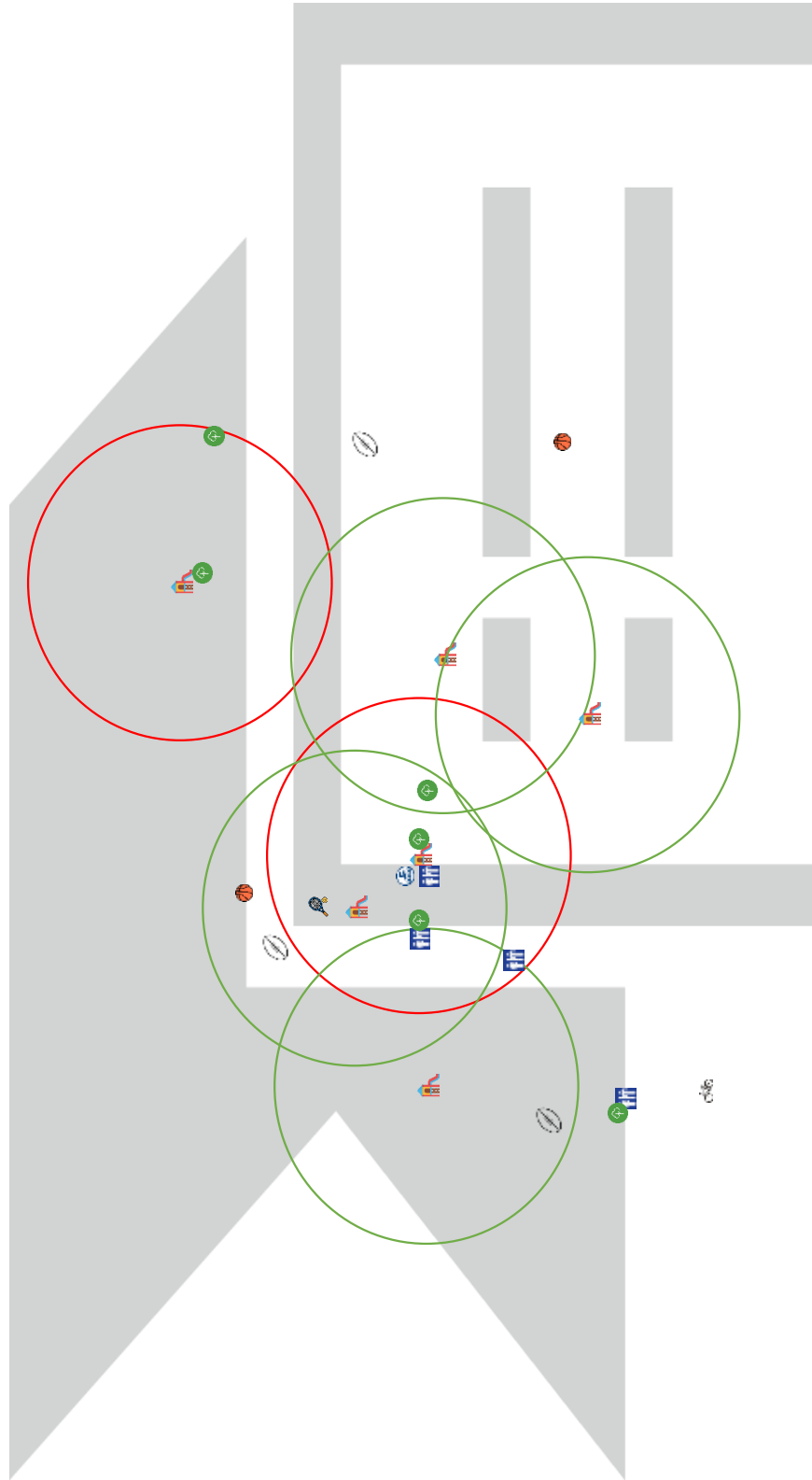
<sup>2</sup> Longreach Open Space, Sport and Recreation Plan, Strategic Leisure Group, Nov 2008

<sup>3</sup> [Longreach Community Profile | Summary | REMPLAN](#)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

Appendix One - Map of Longreach Highlighting where Playgrounds are currently Located with a 500m Radius






Legend: **Red circle:** Public Playground, **Green circle:** Private Playground



Appendix Two – Playground Inventory

Edkins Park



- A recent external playground inspection determined all playground equipment to be a sound condition.
- Playground equipment is six years' old
- Playground suppliers' generally guarantees their equipment to last up to 15 years.
- Ages covered from 1 to 10.
- Only 1 baby swing in the whole town of Longreach.

Edkins Park - Item	Age target	
Combination Climber	2 - 8	
Combination Unit	2 - 8	
Multi Swing	4 - 10	
Seesaw Rocker	1 - 4	
Spinner	2 - 6	

## 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision --Appendix 3

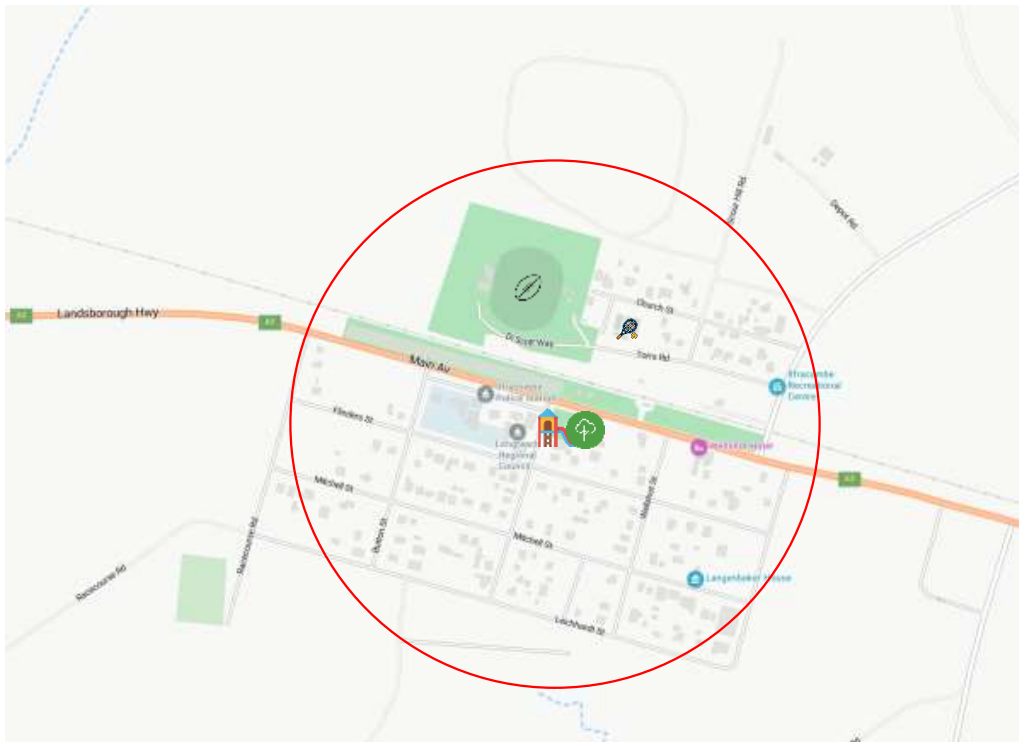
### Lioness Park

- A recent external playground inspection determined all playground equipment to be a sound condition. Maintenance on softfall has been completed.
- Playground equipment is six years' old
- Playground suppliers' generally guarantees their equipment to last up to 15 years.
- Ages covered from 2 to 15.





Lioness Park - Item	Age target	
Supernova	6-15	
Combination Climber	2 - 8	
Seesaw Rocker	2 - 6	
Multi Swing	4 - 10	

### Ifracombe

- A recent external playground inspection determined all playground equipment to be a sound condition.



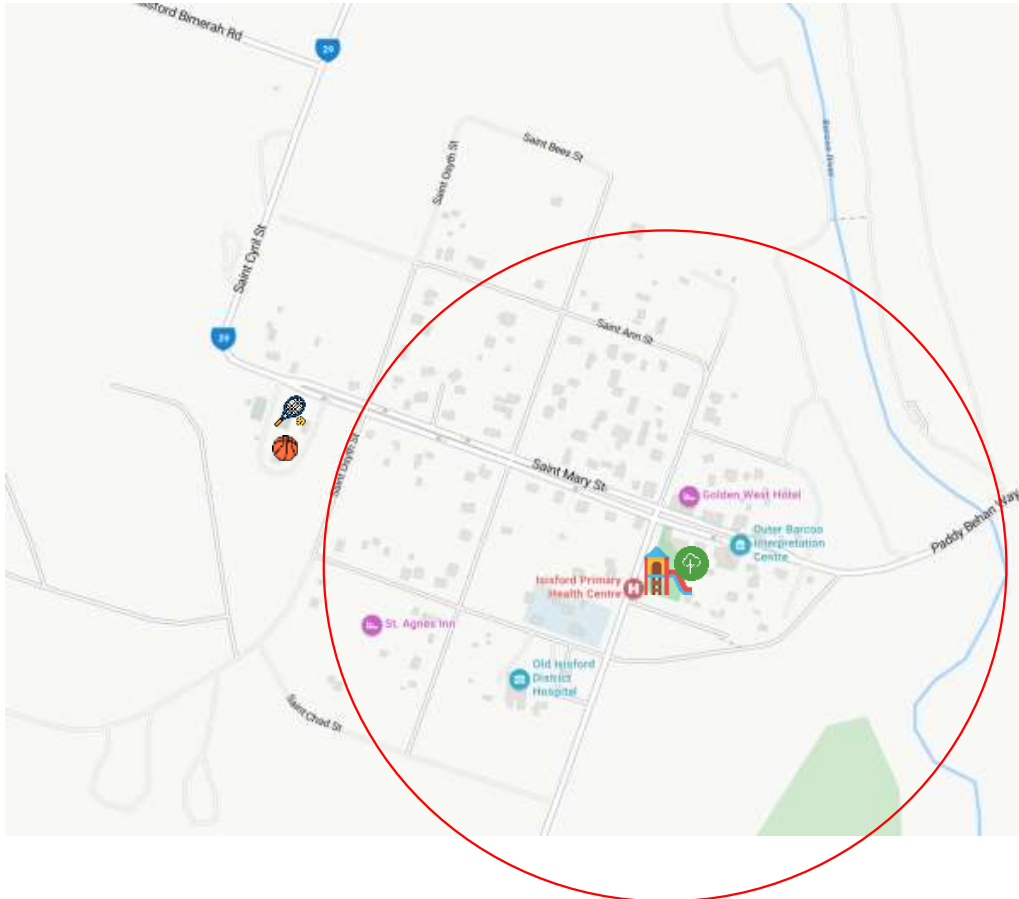
## 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision --Appendix 3

Ilfracombe - Item	Age target	
Seesaw with 3 seats	3-8	
Giant Tower	6 - 12	
Spinner	2 - 6	
Multi Swing	4 - 10	

## 15.1 - Longreach Region Playground Provision --Appendix 3

### Isisford

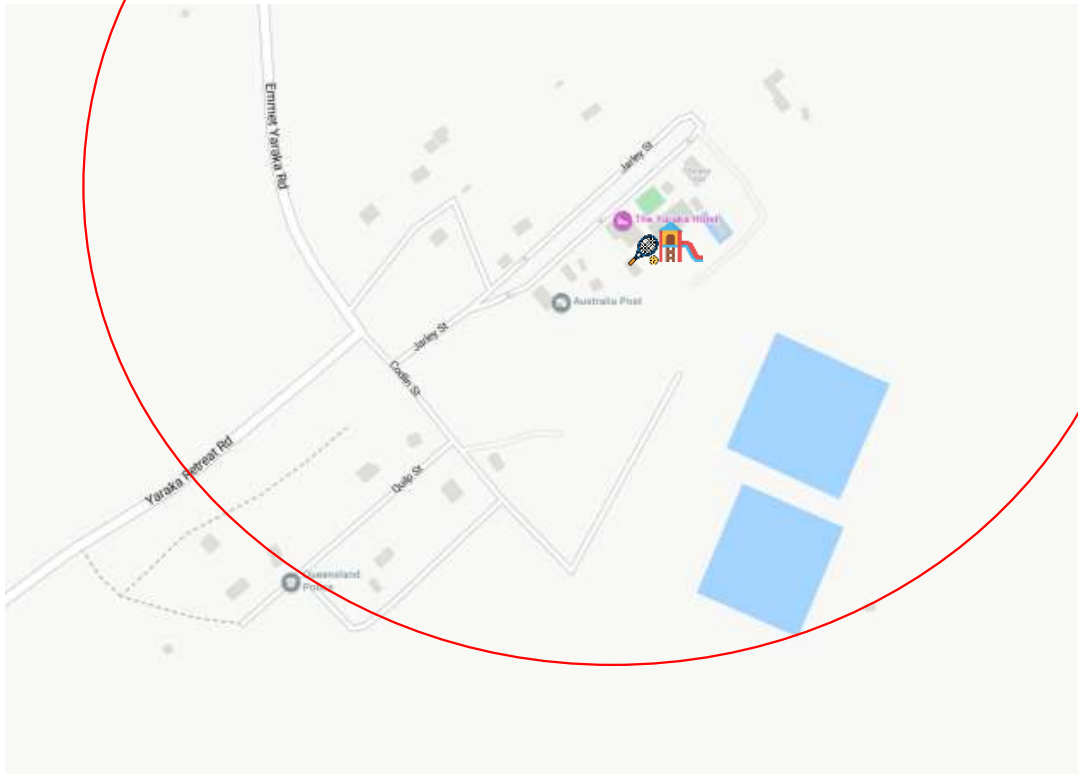
- A recent external playground inspection determined all playground equipment to be a sound condition.





### Yaraka

- A recent external playground inspection determined all playground equipment to be a sound condition.





**LONGREACH REGIONAL COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING AGENDA**

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**16. CLOSED MATTERS**

***Recommendation:***

*That pursuant to section 242J(1) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 the meeting be closed to discuss the following matters, which are considered confidential for the reasons indicated.*

**16.1 Sale of Lot 151 on SP259530**

Consideration of tender responses for the Sale of Lot 151 on SP259530.

*This report is considered confidential in accordance with section 254J(3) g, of the Local Government Regulation 2012, as it contains information relating to: negotiations relating to a commercial matter involving the council for which a public discussion would be likely to prejudice the interests of the council.*