



HEALTHY SPACES & PLACES

A national guide to designing places for healthy living

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Parks and open space refers to land that has been reserved for the purpose of sport and recreation, preservation of natural environments, provision of green space and/or urban stormwater management.

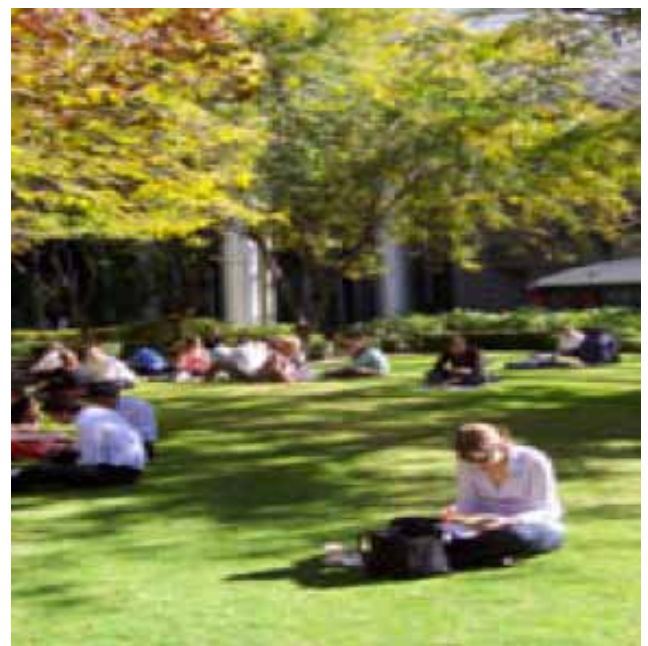
Parks and open space vary in size, form and the range of functions that they perform. Public open space is usually categorised into a hierarchy including neighbourhood, district and regional open space and may perform either a passive or active recreation role.

The provision of suitable parks and open space can contribute to people meeting Australian physical activity recommendations of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous activity for children and adolescents each day and 30 minutes of moderate intensity recreation activity on most days of the week for adults.

There is more information on www.healthyplaces.org.au about parks and open space.

Parks and open space is one of ten design elements outlined on the website. The Fact Sheet on Parks and Open Space at <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/userfiles/file/Parks%20and%20Open%20Space%20June09.pdf>: includes information such as:

Parks and open space vary in size, form and the functions that they perform. A strategic approach is needed in assessing the needs of a community and planning an open space network. Public open space is usually categorised into a hierarchy of neighbourhood, district and regional open space and can be used for either passive or active recreation (Thompson, 2008).



Source: TPG Town Planning & Urban Design

Good quality open space can contribute to improved mental health.

Neighbourhood parks provide for regular local use and may include:

- small areas of open space that are accessible to local residents, generally providing for recreation such as children's play and relaxation, which also can provide an identity and a sense of place for a community especially where it incorporates an important landscape or historic feature;

- playing fields for organised sport (from 1ha to 3ha in size) which can also be used for walking and informal activities; and
- linear parks linking areas of open space. These often follow drainage lines or environmental corridors and can incorporate off road shared pedestrian and cyclist paths.

District and regional parks are larger and cater to the needs of a broader population.

The types of parks may include:

- district playing fields that provide for a range of active, organised sport and recreation such as football/soccer fields, cricket pitches, tennis courts, baseball fields and the like;
- waterfront and other regional parks for social gatherings, such as picnics, recreation and education; and
- areas reserved for cultural or environmental retention (escarpments and areas of biodiversity value such as wetlands and bushland) that may provide some limited recreation opportunities, such as bird watching, picnicking and bushwalking.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARKS

Example of a neighbourhood park that is located to retain natural vegetation, that links with the neighbourhood centre. Development fronts the park to ensure good surveillance.



- Low Density Residential
- Retail
- Community Purpose
- Urban Park



Other sections of the website with information about Parks and Open Spaces are:

- **Image Gallery** – contains downloadable photographs and drawings;



Source: TPG Town Planning and Urban Design

Hobart Park

- **Development types** – Advice on key considerations and practice implications for parks and open spaces are outlined for several development types including regional recreation facilities, neighbourhood parks, infill development, , neighbourhood planning and design and rural and regional development. See <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/devtype.php>;
- **Case studies** – There are over 40 case studies that provide a small snapshot of policies, programs and projects being undertaken around Australia that encourage physical activity through changes to the built environment and have resulted in, or aim to improve mental and physical health. See for example, Varsity Lakes, Queensland, Bendigo City centre, Victoria, Renwick Subdivision NSW. <http://www.healthyplaces.org.au/site/casestudies.php>;
- **Resources** – There is a list of resources and links to Australian and international organisations working in the areas of health and planning as well as links to further health and planning research.

For more information go to www.healthyplaces.org.au or email healthyplaces@planning.org.au.



This project was funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing