

**Castlemaine
Botanic
Gardens**

Mount
Alexander
Shire

Urban Initiatives has been responsible for the design of a custom playspace in the Botanic Gardens at Castlemaine, which are currently being renewed. The playspace is themed around the gold mining heritage of the area and the treed nature of the site, incorporating many tree trunks and other local materials. The design includes a unique treehouse structure and formal play maze where planting will play a major part in the success of the design.



Indicative sketch of proposed playground area

THE PLAY SPACES AND PLAYGROUND
LANDSCAPE WORKS OF URBAN INITIATIVES



**PLAYSPACE
DESIGN**

**Albany
Crescent
Playground**

Kingston
City
Council

Urban Initiatives was engaged to carry out design development for this small park in Aspendale that lacked features and a sense of engagement by the community. The playground was designed around a train theme as Aspendale station is quite close by. The playground is now an active and engaging public space, including new shelters, seating, barbecues and tree planting, as well as the play space.



Custom designed playground area



Urban Initiatives Pty. Ltd. is one of Victoria's most established and respected specialist landscape architecture and urban design practices. We are based in central Melbourne and service clients throughout Victoria and Tasmania. We work for a wide range of private and government clients on a mix of built projects and policy and planning studies.

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Royal Botanic Gardens Picnic Area Cranbourne

Royal Botanic Gardens

All-Abilities Playground, Park Shelter & Amenities

This facility, built to complement the Australian Display Garden, is an expansive picnic and play area at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne.

The picnic site includes walking paths, picnic shelters, seating and barbecues, state of the art composting toilets and an exciting playground that caters for children of varying abilities.



Play Environment Design approach

For 30 years Urban Initiatives has been responsible for the design and delivery of high quality public and private open spaces, including the provision of play spaces and facilities. In more recent years, we have extended our range of services to the design of inclusive play environments, including playspaces for Early Childhood Centres, Schools, and public parks of all scales.

We understand the important role of play and playspaces in the social, physical and intellectual development of children. Formalised playspaces and their landscape settings are even more important in the increasingly urbanised contemporary city.

At Urban Initiatives we recognise the need to balance the the provision of complex, stimulating and visually appealing playspaces with maintenance capacity of different clients. Preferring to include natural elements and materials in our playspaces, children engage directly with the natural world and a rich range of sensory experiences. The horticultural knowledge of our staff ensures original and durable planting designs complement our playspaces.

At Urban Initiatives we have developed particular skills in the design of Accessible playgrounds where children and carers of all- abilities can play on an equal and inclusive social basis. We also review existing playgrounds on a strategic basis to propose improvements to their play value, landscape setting and the wider recreational opportunities associated with them.

With our in-house industrial designers, architects and landscape architects Urban Initiatives can produce unique, customised playspaces. Playspaces are set within robust but beautiful local landscapes.

Where required, we collaborate with a playground auditor to ensure that custom designs comply with the current Australian Standards.

Our experience and specialist team gives us the ability to choose from standard playground equipment ranges or to custom design elements. Either approach can fulfil the needs of children of different ages and abilities and suit the project budget and clients' needs.



Natural playspace



Primary playground area



Shaded junior playspace area



All-Ability Playground

Bialik College

Bialik College

Since 1995, Urban Initiatives has designed significant upgrades to a series of external spaces at Bialik College in Hawthorn. Two important components of this work were the College playspaces. The brief called for a challenging playspace that was well integrated with a naturalistic landscape.

A dry creek bed and landscaped swale that drains the site becomes the central feature around which viewing decks, bridges, sandpits and digging patches are arranged. Adjacent to the swale is the Primary Playground which features high quality, fixed equipment, water play elements, sensory planting areas and seating.

Barry Steggall Park

VicUrban and Swan Hill Rural City Council

This project provides a clear direction for development of a significant new park in Swan Hill associated with the VicUrban Tower Hill Estate. The site has severe environmental constraints due to sodic soils, salinity and an arid climate that had not previously been adequately considered. The new plan provides a strategy for developing the site as a regional recreation reserve in a sustainable manner, as well as developing plans for an all-abilities play facility to be built soon. The various stakeholders and the general community were consulted throughout the process of developing the masterplan.

The play facility has been designed to cater for people of all-abilities, and includes many custom designed elements relevant to the local area, including a paddlesteamer. It also contains an exciting custom designed play net, large birds nest swing, musical elements, creek bed with water feature, and wall maze. The playspace should be tendered early in 2011 by Swan Hill Rural City Council.