

# Inclusive Playground Strategy

Positioning Document



“There can be no keener revelation of societies soul than the way it treats its children” - Mandela



Produced by the Touched By Olivia Foundation 2011

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Children have the fundamental right to play, and that regardless of ability; all children have the right to access the same services

*UN Committee for the Rights of a Child*

Provide more opportunities for people with a disability to participate in and enjoy Australia's economic and social life.

*Top Priority Australian Social Inclusion Policy*



Childhood obesity has increased 40% between 1995-2005, and over 25% of Australian children are obese or overweight.

*Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing 2010 Report*



## The International Issue

Children in Australia are playing less and have fewer community-based areas that facilitate play. As a result, obesity is on the increase. This issue is compounded by the fact that more than 8% of the most vulnerable children in Australia are excluded from play.

Touched By Olivia Foundation aims to do help address these issues by facilitating partnerships with community groups to roll out Inclusive Playgrounds across Australia.

Australia has given a global commitment to advocate change in both government and planning strategies, with a goal to become aligned with the conventions detailed in the UNICEF Rights of Children and the United Nations Committee for Rights Child. We're moving towards fulfilling that promise with the federal government's creation of a Social Inclusion Policy, focused on supporting children at greatest risk of long term disadvantage.

So why does the ARACY report prepared for UNICEF in 2008 state that despite our economic prosperity, Australia is underperforming on key indicators for health and wellbeing of our children?

The research holds the key:

- 42% of kids are not involved in sport (1)
- 630,000 Australian children spend 40+ hrs of screen time per fortnight (1)
- Kids playing in their local neighbourhood has decreased from 71% to 21% within the last generation (3)
- 65% of families have both parents working. (2)

A key finding in the Shut Out Report (for the National Disability Strategy) is that children with a disability find themselves excluded from local kindergartens and schools, and everyday social interactions. (4) In response, some of the desired outcomes are:

- Social inclusion through accessible built environments
- Community awareness and support
- General health and wellbeing, including the enjoyment of life.

# *What Touched By Olivia is doing to help*

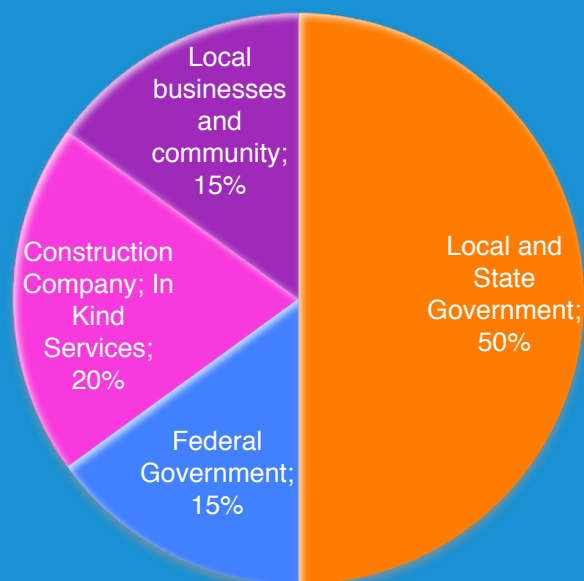
## **We aim to help facilitate a “Livvi’s Place” Inclusive Playground in every Australian Community.**

Inclusive playgrounds form the foundation of a socially inclusive community. An inclusive playground is one where all children, regardless of age or ability, play, and socialise, side by side. Inclusive playgrounds can become a reality within every community, through government and industry acceptance of a set of guiding principles for inclusive playground design.

Research shows children, who by the age of 5 who play with children with disabilities, grow up accepting their differences the same way you would those with brown hair or green eyes.

Despite neurological disorders making up 75% of disabilities, numerous “all ability, all inclusive, playgrounds” have neglected to take children, parents and carers with disabilities and neurological conditions into consideration. It is our understanding that Livvi’s Place Inclusive Playgrounds are the first to ever take into consideration children with neurological disorders such as autism or aspergers.

Touched By Olivia Foundation has developed a very successful model in partnership with local government, businesses and the community for the deployment of inclusive playgrounds. The playgrounds remain local government playgrounds



## *The Results*

### **Award**

- Livvi’s Place Five Dock Best playground in Australia Parks and Leisure Australia 2010
- IPWEA Award for Best Community Facility 2010

### **Use**

- Playground use increasing 1000% from 150 people visiting a week to over 1500 per week.
- Over 10% of visitors at anytime have a disability.

### **Demand**

Livvi’s Place, Dubbo opened early 2011, Livvi’s Place, Brisbane opened June 2011. Ryde, Penrith, Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne in 2012 - 2013



## *What are we asking Government for?*

**That every community has an inclusive playground within 10 years**

The one-off financial commitment could total just \$10million - the equivalent of a donation of 50 cents from every Australian.



## *The Benefits*

- 1. Social Inclusion** – Acceptance of children of all abilities, empowering all kids to become an engaged part of their community.
- 2. Reducing Childhood Obesity** - Reducing childhood obesity – we are experiencing a 1000% increase in the number of children playing at Livvi's Place Inclusive Playgrounds.
- 3. Inclusive Playground Standard** –Touched By Olivia Foundation is working with leading academics, practitioners, designers, disability groups and government to ensure a nationally consistent standard for inclusive playgrounds. Touched By Olivia Foundation has established an expert panel of industry leaders to ensure that the inclusive playground standard is successful. All designs and intellectual property are made freely available to other communities.



## *What Happens Next?*

Federal and State governments need to set policy that aligns with UNICEF's Child Friendly City to and the Federal Government's own social inclusion policy to enable ALL children to play regardless of their ability. Every child has access to an inclusive playground.

This will create a generational change for our children and our communities.