

MEDIA RELEASE



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New Australian Standard for Playground Safety

- New playground standard provides guidance on the development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playgrounds
- Promotes fun and enjoyment through stimulating learning environments
- New risk benefit analysis technique

Today Standards Australia announces the publication of the new standard for playgrounds, *AS 4685.0:2017, Playground equipment and surfacing – Part 0: Development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation.*

Playgrounds are a positive environment for learning and development—from problem-solving to exploring natural environments, developing imagination to social-emotional aspects.

However, with any play environment intended for children it is important to effectively manage risk in the planning and design stages.

The objective of AS 4685.0 is to minimise the risk of injury to playground users. It provides designers, owners and operators of playgrounds with guidance on the development, installation, inspection, maintenance and operation of playgrounds.

This standard creates the foundation for all Australian playground equipment and surfacing standards. The other parts of the AS 4685 series specify equipment requirements and test methods.

Professor David Eager, Chairperson of the Technical Committee CS-005, Playground Equipment, explained the intention behind the new standard.

“Risk is an inherent feature of playtime and there are many acceptable risks as part of a stimulating and challenging learning environment. The solution is not to wrap kids in cotton wool; the standard is all about challenging children and developing important life skills.

“AS 4685.0 introduces a risk benefit analysis technique that allows operators and owners of playgrounds to quantify their exposure to hazards using techniques that are simple to apply. Then they can make evidence-based decisions with regard to the maintenance, repairs and the timely replacement of their assets,” explained Professor Eager.

CEO of Standards Australia, Dr Bronwyn Evans said “the standard helps promote one of the joys of an Australian childhood. In a world that is increasingly digital it is important that children enjoy physical play environments as well,” added Dr Evans.

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