

# JUNKYARD PLAY

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# SYNOPSIS



This project is a new playground initiative that maximises spaces for students to play imaginatively in a natural outdoor environment using junkyard items that are open ended in their purpose, **and increases pro-social behaviour in students by engaging them in creative role play.**

# PLAYGROUND SITUATION

- The three main play areas were the infants oval, the sandpit, and the playground equipment.
- Several big trees were recently cut down due to safety concerns, removing shade and natural play spaces.
- Large pavement areas lacked inspiration, materials and spaces for creative play.



# PLAYGROUND OBSERVATIONS

- Bigger, louder students dominated most of the large play areas.
- Bored students led to greater incidents of anti-social issues, such as teasing and exclusion.
- Teachers were constantly resolving disputes amongst students unable to work out solutions themselves.
- Recess and lunchtimes often seemed very long to students who were not engaged in play.
- There was a lack of creative and imaginative play occurring. Many students didn't know what or how to play.



# PLAYGROUND RESEARCH

- Professional Learning - I attended two PL's based on the theory of *Malarkey Playwork*, and the possibilities and benefits of creating child-directed play areas outdoors.
- School connections - I contacted and visited local schools and preschools that had practically implemented aspects of these concepts successfully.
- Policies & Procedures – I looked into our school's anti-bullying policy and procedure, and found lots of definitions of bullying and harassment, where to go to for help, and how to deal with bullying, but found no preventative measures or strategies for reducing it.
- Financial - I applied for, and was granted a small allowance from the K-2 consumables budget.
- Leadership team - I submitted a proposal to my leadership team to gain approval to initiate a trial playground idea.



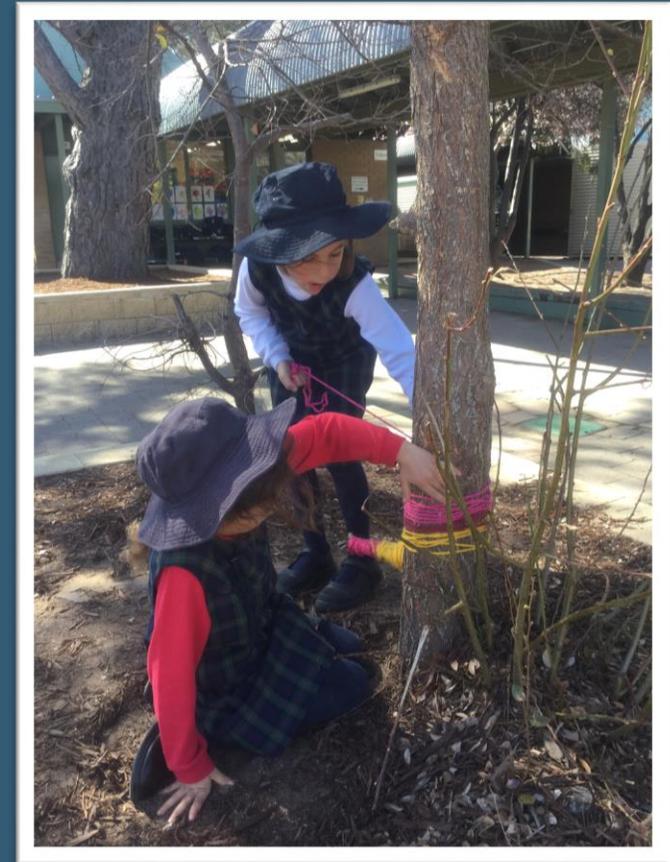
# PLAYGROUND PROPOSAL

*"To create and maintain a 'backyard' space for children to play in an imaginatively and intrinsically motivated way, using a variety of open ended materials and loose parts.*

*By occupying students in self directed play, the aim is to stimulate pro-social and emotional wellbeing in children, thereby reducing the incidents of anti-social behaviour in the playground.*

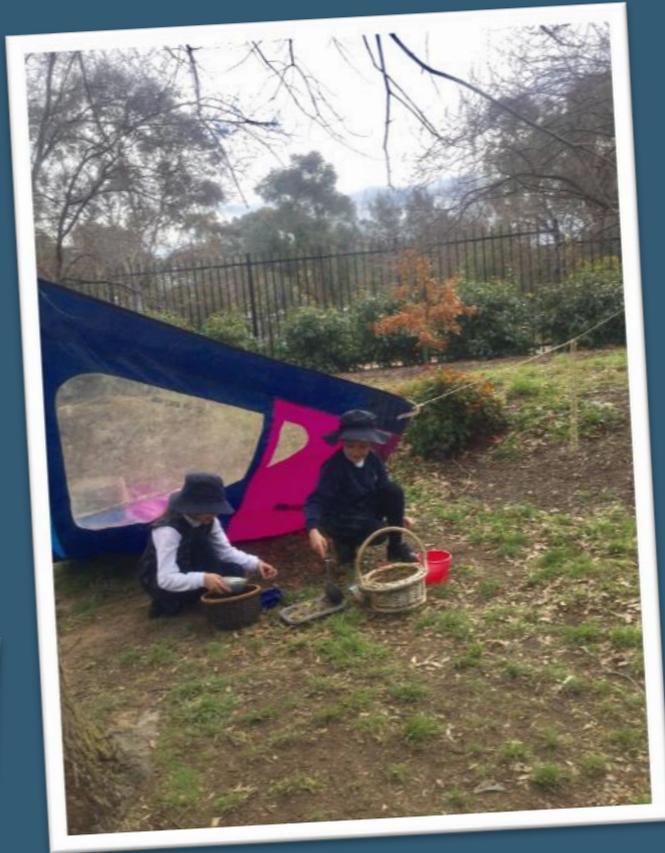
*I propose opening up the back garden area to K-2 students during lunchtimes, beginning the trial period with set days for each year level. A variety of junkyard items will be purchased from The Green Shed for use in the 'backyard' using funds from the K-2 Curriculum budget.*

*Students will be given the opportunities to engage in creative play in a natural environment, and to apply problem solving skills with limited adult involvement."*



# PLAYGROUND CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

Challenge	Solution
Some trees in the backyard has previously been deemed unsafe as they were known for dropping branches.	Maintenance team employed a tree surgeon to remove the most dangerous trees, and do regular inspections.
A change to the duty roster would need to be applied to provide adequate supervision.	Several staff volunteered to take on an extra playground duty to ensure duty of care was maintained.
An injury was sustained by a student from a heavy item during the opening week.	Item removed immediately. No record of significant injuries since. Items are regularly checked for damages.
Some staff members began creating 'rules' for how the space and the items were to be used by the children.	Reviewed the purpose of backyard play at staff meetings and regular personal and email contact initiated with staff.
Storage of items.	Temporary storage solutions in place. Currently reviewing a more permanent option.









# PLAYGROUND REVIEW

- The Junkyard Play project has been so well received by our students. It's success has meant that the initial 10-week trial period was opened up for it to become a more **permanent playground area for K-2.**
- Students are modelling greater pro-social behaviour when they are engaged in Backyard play. **Incidents of anti-social behaviour during lunchtime have decreased,** as reported by staff on yard duty.
- It has initiated discussions amongst Years 3-5 staff of a similar set up being developed for older primary students, with links to the **STEM curriculum.**
- Plans for looking at ways to include preventative measures and strategies into the **student welfare policies** are being considered by Leadership.
- **Positive buy-in** from the staff has ensured an easy and successful continuation of the project into 2018, and beyond.



THANK YOU.

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