



## Park planning and design

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# Introduction

## Purpose of the guideline

This guideline sets out the objectives, planning principles and standards for the provision and design of Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in Queensland. The guideline should be used in conjunction with:

- » the relevant PDA-wide criteria in the development schemes and in the related provisions of interim land use plans (ILUPs) prepared for PDAs in accordance with the Economic Development Act 2012, including indicative locations of greenspace corridors and district and major parks
- » other relevant PDA Guidelines including:
  - ⌘ Guideline 5: Neighbourhood planning and design
  - ⌘ Guideline 6: Street and movement network
  - ⌘ Guideline 9: Centres
  - ⌘ Guideline 13: Engineering standards
  - ⌘ Guideline 14: Environment and natural resources sustainability
- » PDA Guideline no.1 Residential 30 complements and supports this guideline. This guideline takes precedence in the event of any inconsistencies with Guideline no.1.
- » a context analysis identifying constraints and opportunities, including an assessment of the existing and proposed parks network in the locality, and the parks and open space plans of the relevant local government
- » the relevant PDA Local Infrastructure Plan.



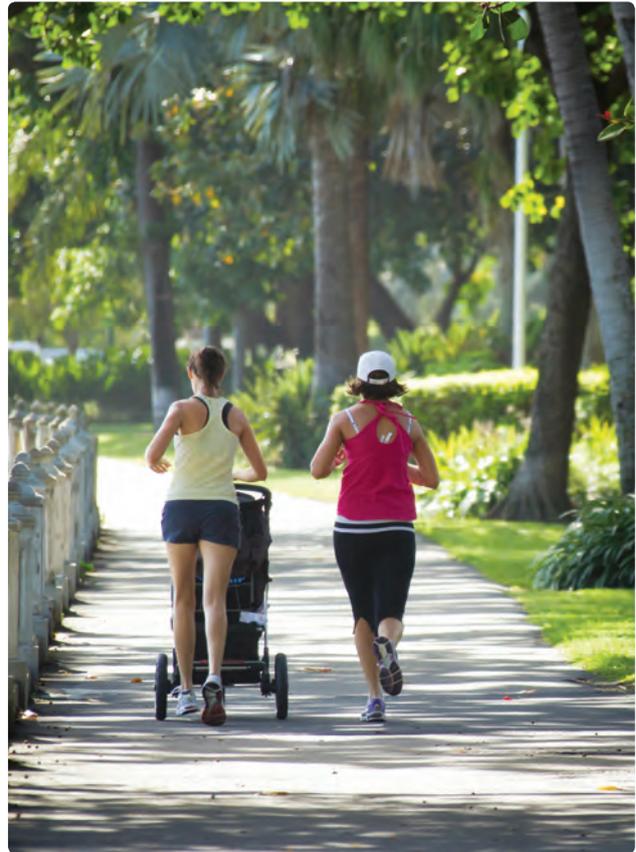
In general the detailed design of individual parks should be undertaken as part of the suite of design activities associated with an application for reconfiguring a lot. In many instances this should be preceded by a more strategic study that identifies the overall parks network in the locality. Parks network planning is expected to be conducted through one of the following mechanisms:

- » A parks (or open space) master plan for a whole PDA. This approach is only likely to be applicable for PDAs that are in single ownership or control.
- » As one component of a context plan that may be required to accompany a PDA development application in the circumstances set out in the relevant development scheme.
- » As supporting information providing the overall context for a PDA development application proposing the creation of a significant number of additional lots (The MEDQ will advise at pre-lodgement discussions if supporting information of this nature is required).

## Context

The MEDQ aims to provide a range of lot sizes and dwellings types to ensure land is used efficiently and meets diverse community demands. As set out in PDA Guideline No 5: Neighbourhood Planning and Design, the MEDQ aims to achieve a minimum net residential density of 15 dwellings per hectare, and substantially higher densities in locations with good access to facilities and services including public transport.

These densities are significantly higher than achieved in traditional neighbourhoods, and parks play an important role in contributing visual relief and interest to residential communities as well as meeting recreational needs.



District recreation park - for active and passive recreational needs

# Objective

The MEDQs objective for parks is to achieve a network of diverse, accessible, high quality parks and recreation facilities that are sustainable, contribute to the attractiveness and vitality of communities, and enhance people's health and wellbeing by meeting their needs for outdoor recreation in urban settings now and into the future.



Civic park - landscape and amenity for residents, workers and visitors to a centre

# Parks planning and design principles

The following principles should be used to guide the parks planning and design process. Other sections of this guideline set out specific standards that are intended to achieve these principles. Development proposals involving parks that do not comply with these standards will be required to submit a parks planning report that demonstrates that the proposed park (or parks network) achieves the relevant PDA-wide criteria and the parks planning and design principles stated here.

## Principle 1: Diverse

The parks network should provide a diverse range of settings and opportunities that cater for the varied recreational needs of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Diversity should be addressed at all levels of planning and design. At the broad network level, park settings should range across the spectrum from natural and semi-natural places to highly modified areas for organised sports. Parks should be located and designed to highlight significant local features such as waterways, hills and ridgelines.

Parks should provide a variety of settings and opportunities for formal sports and active and passive recreational opportunities<sup>1</sup>. Parks that are primarily for sports activities should also include informal recreation opportunities to cater for diverse user groups.

## Principle 2: Accessible and connected

Parks should be distributed and located to provide high levels of accessibility, and form part of an integrated parks network.

Parks are publicly accessible and free to use. All dwellings should be within a comfortable walking distance of a neighbourhood recreation park or other park that provides active and passive recreation opportunities.

District and major parks should be highly visible and accessible to their catchments and located on major connector or arterial roads with good public transport access.

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this guideline the following definitions apply: Active spaces are primarily designed for users to participate in physical and social activity. Passive spaces are primarily designed for their natural or created amenity or views. Refer to the Framework for the Integration of Flood and Stormwater Management into Open Space, Water by Design, Healthy Waterways Limited for further information including examples of these spaces.

Civic parks should be at central, prominent and accessible locations within centres.

Where possible, parks should be integrated into the overall greenspace network to facilitate access by active transport. Linear parks should provide walking and cycling paths and use existing natural features such as waterways and ridgelines to connect to other elements of the parks network and key destinations including centres and schools.

Park design should ensure that all members of the community, regardless of age or ability, have access to suitable recreation opportunities.

## Principle 3: Sense of place

Parks should respond positively to the natural environment and to local community values and needs.

Parks should play a major role in creating the identity or sense of place for a community. Parks should be designed to take advantage of natural features, provide opportunities for social interaction and community events, be lively, attractive and interesting places about which the community feels a sense of pride and ownership.

Parks should be welcoming, and designed to avoid perceptions that some areas are limited access or private spaces.

## Principle 4: Safe and healthy

Parks should be located and designed to provide a safe environment and encourage healthy activities.

Park design should incorporate the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Parks should have clear sightlines from nearby buildings and roads, should provide a variety of recreational opportunities and facilities (including lighting where appropriate) that attract a range of users to ensure high levels of activity for extended periods, and should include appropriate treatments of potentially unsafe areas such as close to busy roads or waterbodies.

Parks should enhance physical and mental health by encouraging physical and social activities, and providing opportunities for respite from the surrounding built environment.

### Principle 5: Cost effective

Parks should be planned and designed to balance capital costs with ongoing maintenance and operational costs.

The MEDQ encourages multiple use of parkland and shared use of facilities, where the proposed uses are safe and compatible, as a means of reducing initial development costs and the ongoing costs of the parks network to the community.

Specific initiatives that are encouraged to achieve this principle include integration of flood and stormwater management elements, utility corridors and active transport links into parkland, co-location of recreation, sporting and community facilities, shared use of recreational facilities such as school ovals, and use of natural and semi-natural areas for compatible recreation purposes. The inclusion of multiple use elements such as utility corridors, flood and stormwater elements should not diminish the functionality of the park or its recreational use values.

Embellishments should be long lasting, require limited maintenance and incorporate sustainability principles. Within individual parks, facilities that require high maintenance should be grouped in accessible locations to reduce the maintenance effort.

Parks can be used to buffer incompatible uses provided this does not occur at the expense of the other principles.

### Principle 6: Fit for purpose

Parks should be fit for purpose and capable of adaption to cater for changing recreational demands.

Key elements in achieving this include appropriate location, size, shape; physical characteristics and facilities to accommodate the intended range of activities; and compatibility with adjoining land uses. Larger, regularly shaped parks are inherently more flexible and should comprise a significant proportion of the parks network. Varied topography within parks is desirable but land with steep slopes or other significant constraints should comprise only a limited proportion of the parks network.

Parks should be designed to respond to the local climate. Key issues to consider are the provision of shade, locally endemic species, passive cooling and the availability of water in hot climates.

Parks should be comfortable and attractive for the intended activities. For example, areas with high noise levels may be acceptable for short duration sports activities but would not be appropriate for walking trails, picnicking and other quieter activities.

Linear park - linking parks network between neighbourhoods



## Park types and roles

Parks should be freely accessible and free to use. Sports and recreation facilities that are not available for use by the general public, for example because they are operated for profit or for the exclusive benefit of members and their guests, do not generally form part of the park network addressed in this guideline. Examples of such facilities include sports stadiums, sports fields that are fenced to prevent public access, private recreation facilities such as country clubs, and indoor sports facilities that require payment of a fee for entry or use. Public sports and recreation facilities that require payment of an entry fee (such as public swimming pools) are acceptable provided they do not occupy a large proportion of the park.

Table 1 describes the various park types used in this guideline. In practice, a park may comprise a combination of two or more of the park types shown in Table 1 (for example a park that is primarily a major sports park could also include part of a linear park and provide neighbourhood recreation facilities). In such cases the park should be disaggregated into its component park types to identify the particular standards applying to each.

Table 1: Park types and role

	Park type	Role
Recreation parks	Linear park	A long, relatively narrow park often provided as part of a floodplain management or environmental area such as a buffer to a waterway or wetland. Linear parks provide informal recreation opportunities, particularly paths for walking and cycling, and are used as a linking element in the overall parks network either within or between neighbourhoods or between neighbourhoods and destinations such as a school or centre.
	Local recreation park	A small park that provides visual amenity and passive recreation opportunities in an area with medium to high net residential density (more than 15 dwellings per hectare). A local recreation park allows existing vegetation to be retained, and provides seating, a small grassed area and, in suitable locations, can also include play equipment for young children. Local recreation parks provide a meeting point for nearby residents.
	Neighbourhood recreation park	A moderately sized park that provides a focal point for a neighbourhood. Neighbourhood recreation parks should provide places and facilities for passive and active recreation activities and a range of local community activities and events.
	District recreation park	A large park that caters for the varied active and passive recreational needs and community activities of a group of neighbourhoods. District recreation parks should provide a variety of settings, spaces and facilities to cater for large numbers of people, including large groups of people at significant community events, and for all age groups and levels of ability in the community.
	Major recreation park	A very large park with extensive facilities and settings to cater for the varied recreation demands of a large population catchment. Major recreation parks provide a significant range of active and passive recreation opportunities to cater for the whole community, and should be capable of supporting a large community event and multiple activities undertaken simultaneously by large groups of people.

	Park type	Role
Recreation Parks	Civic park	A small park within a neighbourhood, district or major centre. They provide landscape and amenity values and passive recreation opportunities for residents, workers and visitors to the centre. Civic parks provide spaces and facilities for social interaction and community events. A civic park may be more urban in nature, with hard surfaces and treatments in recognition of its setting and high activity levels.
Sports parks	District sports park	A large park that provides spaces and facilities for practising and playing structured or organised sports. District sports parks normally accommodate several sporting organisations that share the sports facilities, and also provide some informal recreation activities and spaces for the immediate area and visitors to the park.
	Regional sports park	A very large park that provides spaces and facilities for practising and playing structured or organised sports, including spectator seating and parking for major sports events. Major sports parks cater to a large catchment and normally accommodate several sporting organisations that share the sports facilities. Major sports parks also provide a range of informal recreation activities and spaces for the immediate area and visitors to the park.

Major recreation park - large area for multiple activities



# Parks planning and design standards

## Rates of provision, size and accessibility

The rates of provision and accessibility standards are shown in Table 2. The rates of provision for different park types are provided as ranges within overall specified standards of provision. For example, the required rate of provision for Local Parks is 1.3 hectares per thousand population - however there is flexibility as to how this overall allocation is distributed amongst the linear, local recreation and neighbourhood recreation parks that make up the total provision of local parks. This approach is intended to provide flexibility for park network planning to respond to local conditions.

Table 2: Rates of provision, minimum area and accessibility requirements

Park type	Rates of provision		Minimum area	Accessibility requirements
	Land (ha/1,000 popn)	No. of parks (popn)		
Local recreation park	0.0 - 0.2	NA	500m <sup>2</sup>	NA
Neighbourhood recreation park (1)	0.5 - 1.1	1/1,000 - 1,500	5,000m <sup>2</sup>	90 per cent of dwellings within 400m of a neighbourhood recreation park or other park providing equivalent informal recreation opportunities.
Local linear park (2), (3)	0.0 - 0.8	NA	NA	NA
Total local parks (4)	1.3	NA	NA	NA
District recreation park (5)	0.5 - 1.0	1/10 - 15,000	5 ha	90 per cent of dwellings within 2.5 km, must comply with location criteria in Table 3.
Major recreation park (6)	0.5 - 1.0	1/20,000+	10 ha	Must comply with location criteria in Table 3.
Major linear park (3)	0.0 - 0.5	NA	NA	NA
Total district/major recreation parks	1.5	NA	NA	NA
Total recreation parks	2.8	NA	NA	NA

### Notes:

- (1) Includes allowance for civic parks in neighbourhood centres.
- (2) A local linear park is within or adjoining a predominantly residential neighbourhood.
- (3) The actual rate of provision for linear parks may exceed the indicated maximum rate, particularly in areas with extensive waterway or other environmental corridors. The allocation in the table sets the parameters for determining the contribution of linear parks to creditable park area.
- (4) This is the base requirement of parks for neighbourhood or local area planning purposes (e.g. context plans) for areas that do not include a designated higher order recreation or sports park. Local parks must be provided within or adjacent to the neighbourhoods they serve and cannot be offset by contributions elsewhere within the PDA.
- (5) Includes allowance for civic parks in district centres.
- (6) Includes allowance for civic parks in regional/town centres.

Table 2: Rates of provision, minimum area and accessibility requirements continued

Park type	Rates of provision		Minimum area	Accessibility requirements
	Land (ha/1,000 popn)	No. of parks (popn)		
District sports park	0.75 - 1.2	1/10-20,000	7.5 ha	90 per cent of dwellings within 4 km, must comply with location criteria in Table 3.
Major sports park	0.5 - 1.0	1/25,000+	15 ha	Must comply with location criteria in Table 3.
Total sports parks	1.8	NA	NA	NA
Total parks	4.6	NA	NA	NA
Community land (7)	0.2	NA	NA	NA
Total parks and community land (8)	4.8	NA	NA	NA

Notes:

(7) Refer to PDA Guideline 11: Community Facilities for more information.

(8) The total rate of provision for parks and community land is consistent with the maximum chargeable rate of provision set out in the Sustainable Planning Act 2009 Statutory Guideline 01/09.

## Shape, frontage and location

Parks should achieve the requirements set out in Table 3.

Table 3: Area and dimensions

Park type		Shape	Road frontage	Location
Recreation parks	Linear park	Preferred minimum width of 15 metres, may be reduced to 10m for short distances to respond to physical constraints.	No specific requirements but paths should be located and designed to maximise passive surveillance opportunities.	Site specific.
	Local recreation park	Parkland should be regularly shaped and of sufficient dimensions to achieve its role in the parks network, accommodate proposed activities and provide flexibility for new activities in the future. Minimum dimension of any part should not be less than 10 metres for maintenance purposes.	Minimum 50 per cent of park perimeter to have road frontage.	Generally provided in areas of medium to high residential density (more than 15 dwellings per hectare).
	Neighbourhood recreation park			Central, accessible location within neighbourhood or adjacent to linear park network.
	District recreation park			Direct access from connector or higher order road, and by local public transport.
	Major recreation park			Direct access from trunk connector or higher order road, and by frequent public transport.
	Civic park			Designed as an integral part of the centre in accordance with CPTED principles.
Sports parks	District sports park	Parkland must be regularly shaped and of sufficient dimensions to accommodate proposed sportsfields and facilities, and provide flexibility for new activities in the future. Minimum dimension of any part should not be less than 25 metres for maintenance purposes.	No specific requirements but must have highly visible and well-signed entrances.	Direct access from trunk connector or higher order road, and by local public transport.
	Major sports park			Direct access from trunk connector or higher order road, and by frequent public transport.

## Designing parks as places for people

All but the smallest parks should be designed to provide a variety of settings ranging from places for group activities and events to active play areas and places for quiet contemplation. This can be achieved by designing parks as a number of zones of different character with high activity uses grouped in convenient locations close to park access points.

Parks that also focus on the interaction between different activity areas are more interesting places that can also be more convenient to park users. The interactions between different park users and activities create animation and interest, rather than a series of isolated events. Examples of simple activation synergies include:

- » Locating park shelters to overlook a playground or other active recreation space
- » Designing pathways to travel between activity nodes and lookouts to destination
- » Situating a large grassed area for active recreation next to areas of natural bushland and associated trails.

For recreation parks it is important to achieve a balance between active and passive recreation spaces. Table 4 shows the minimum level of active recreation spaces that should be provided for each type of recreation park. Sports parks should also include a variety of informal and passive recreation opportunities to complement the sports areas and facilities.

Table 4: Requirements for active recreation spaces

Park type	Active recreation spaces required
Linear park	No specific requirement except must be provided with walking and cycling path.
Local recreation park	No specific requirement.
Neighbourhood recreation park	At least 3 active recreation spaces including at least one of suitable size for kickabout and other group activities (minimum dimensions 50m x 30m).
District recreation park	Multiple active recreation spaces including multiple large spaces for active group recreation commensurate with scale and nature of park.
Major recreation park	Multiple active recreation spaces including multiple large spaces for active group recreation commensurate with scale and nature of park.

## Slopes, batters and retaining walls

### Slopes

All areas intended for active recreation and sports activities (including active recreation spaces, playgrounds, sports fields and courts<sup>2</sup>), outdoor eating and barbecue areas, and areas intended for support infrastructure such as buildings and carparking areas should have a slope of 3 per cent (1:33) or less. Other park areas can have varied topography provided:

- » the areas are accessible and functional for the intended recreation purposes
- » the area of any park with a gradient of 1:10 or more should not exceed 20 per cent of the total park area.

<sup>2</sup> Sports fields and courts should comply with accepted standards for the particular sport which may impose more stringent standards.

## Batters

Wherever possible natural topography should be retained, rather than creating batters or retaining walls that are relatively expensive to build and maintain. Batters within areas that contribute to flood and stormwater management are to comply with the standards for flood and stormwater management set out in this guideline. In all other circumstances, batters are to meet the following requirements:

- » Maximum gradient of turfed batters to allow mowing: 1:4 (except where designed as an integral part of a play experience)
- » Maximum gradient of planted batters: 1:3.

## Retaining walls

Retaining walls should only be used in limited circumstances where other solutions are impractical, and should meet the following requirements:

- » Maximum 900mm high
- » Designed by a structural engineer
- » Low maintenance (e.g. non painted rock or concrete or other inert material)
- » Make a positive contribution to the overall park design
- » Designed to ensure public safety.

## Flood and stormwater management

The MEDQ encourages the integration of flood and stormwater management practices into parks. These aspects of park design are required to achieve:

- » relevant performance criteria in the Framework for the Integration of Flood and Stormwater Management into Open Space, Water by Design, Healthy Waterways Limited. (Note: for design purposes a "minor storm event" is defined as a storm event with an Average Recurrence Interval (ARI) of 2 years), and
- » the minimum flood immunities shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Minimum flood immunities

Park type	Minimum flood immunity
Recreation parks	Maximum 30 per cent of any park is below the 5 year ARI (average recurrence interval) flood level. Clubhouses, toilet and amenities blocks and other buildings (and areas designated for these facilities) are above the 100 year ARI.
Sports parks	All formal playing surfaces (fields and courts) are above the 20 year ARI flood level. Clubhouses, toilet and amenities blocks and other buildings (and areas designated for these facilities) are above the 100 year ARI.

## Lakes and other permanent water bodies

At its discretion the MEDQ may approve lakes and other permanent water bodies in parks provided they:

- » Form part of an overall integrated stormwater management system
- » Are located in district or major recreation parks
- » Are highly visible
- » Have safe and active edge treatments
- » Are designed to maintain the required levels of water quality and minimise ongoing maintenance costs
- » Are provided with suitable access for maintenance purposes including by small boats
- » Comply with all relevant local government standards and the applicable standards in PDA Guideline No. 13: Engineering Standards.

The maximum area of a permanent water body that can be counted towards the required area of park provision is:

- » Where the water quality standard supports secondary contact recreation - 50% of the water surface at normal fill level
- » Where the water quality standard does not support secondary contact recreation - the area between the edge of the water body at normal fill level and a line 5m in from the water edge.

## Managing access

All parks should be provided with at least one controlled access point for maintenance, service and emergency vehicles at strategic locations along the road frontages or from internal roads or car parks. Except for local recreation parks, a driveway should be provided to the main access point for occasional access by an industrial refuse collection vehicle, a medium rigid vehicle with trailer, and emergency vehicle. For linear parks, controlled access points will need to be provided at regular intervals. Vehicle access at these points should be controlled through the use of removable bollards or a locking rail type gate.

Otherwise parks should be designed to prevent illegal access by motor vehicles from external streets, internal streets and parking areas. Where necessary this should include the provision of low maintenance, transparent fencing or bollards.

## Shade cover

Parks should be provided with shade cover in accordance with Table 6.

Table 6: Provision of shade cover

Park type	Required shade provision (1)
Recreation parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» 50 per cent shading of walking and cycling paths</li><li>» 50 per cent shading of formal seating</li></ul>
Sports parks	Shaded spectator viewing areas provided for at least one-third of one boundary of all formal sports fields, preferably in good viewing positions (e.g. near the centreline along the long boundary of football, hockey etc fields).

Note:

(1) Shade can be provided by existing or new trees at maturity or shade structures. Percentage of shading should be calculated as at 9am or 3pm on 22 December.

## Embellishments

Parks should be provided with appropriate facilities and embellishments to suit their intended roles and functions. Wherever practicable, embellishments should incorporate sustainable design elements such as drought tolerant landscaping, water reuse, renewable energy sources and recycled materials. All parks should be provided with the following basic facilities:

- » Fencing/bollards
- » Seating
- » Taps and bubblers
- » Landscaping (including earthworks, turfing and revegetation as required).

Table 7 provides an indication of the standard embellishments normally associated with each park type. The numbers and locations of embellishments should reflect the size and function of the park. High maintenance embellishments such as shelter sheds, barbecues and play areas should be grouped to facilitate access and maintenance and to create nodes of high activity within the park.

In addition to the standard embellishments, embellishments should be provided to respond to specific opportunities. Examples of such embellishments include viewing platforms, jetties and boat/canoe ramps.

Irrigation has not been included as a standard embellishment but should be provided, particularly for sports parks, wherever it is practicable to use non-potable water for irrigation purposes.

Artworks create a sense of place and character



Table 7: Standard embellishments

Embellishment	Recreation parks						Sports parks	
	Linear	Local	Neighbourhood	District	Major	Civic	District	Major
Internal access road(s) (1)				X	X		X	X
Parking (cars)				X	X		X	X
Parking (bicycles)			X	X	X	X	X	X
Lighting			X	X	X	X	X	X
Toilets				X	X		X	X
Paths (pedestrian/cycle)	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Shade structures			X	X	X	X	X	X
Table and seating - uncovered	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Table and seating - covered			X	X	X	X	X	X
Barbecues				X	X			
Play areas/facilities			X	X	X		X	X
Informal active recreation spaces			X	X	X		X	X
Half- court, rebound wall or similar			X	X	X			
Sports fields (3)							X	X
Spectator seating area (2)							X	X
Courts (3)				X	X		X	X
Community events space				X	X	X		

Notes:

(1) Where required for internal access only.

(2) Spectator seating may be provided by grass mounds where appropriate.

(3) Sports fields and courts should comply with accepted standards for the particular sport.

## Engineering design and construction

Park infrastructure and facilities, such as internal roads, parking areas and walking and cycling paths, are required to comply with all relevant standards in PDA Guideline No. 13: Engineering Standards.

Where a park is to be located adjacent to an existing watercourse a study of the watercourse geomorphology maybe required for the area immediately adjoining the proposed park and an area upstream and downstream of the site sufficient to determine the stability of the watercourse and its surrounds. The study shall also propose what site works are required to ensure the stability of the watercourse and therefore safeguard park embellishments. The study shall be undertaken by a suitable qualified geomorphologist.



Local recreation park - visual amenity and passive recreation



For more information contact us on:  
Economic Development Queensland  
GPO Box 2202 Brisbane Qld 4001  
Telephone: (07) 3452 7880  
Email: [edq@dilgp.qld.gov.au](mailto:edq@dilgp.qld.gov.au)  
Web: [www.edq.qld.gov.au](http://www.edq.qld.gov.au)