



7 June 2018

New name and now open: All Abilities Play Space becomes a reality

Phase one of the All Abilities Play Space on the Nedlands foreshore – including the main playground area – has officially opened with a new name.

Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins, Rotary and the major sponsor formally opened the facility this morning at Beaton Park near the Swan River, unveiling it as the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space.

Vern and Jo Wheatley are major sponsors of the cutting-edge play facility for all ages and abilities, motivated by the many hours of Vern's happy childhood spent on the Nedlands foreshore.

Initiated by Rotary seven years ago, the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space is the result of a collaboration between the City of Nedlands and the Rotary Clubs of Nedlands, Subiaco and West Perth with other partners including Inclusion WA, COLAB, Wood & Grieve Engineers, Lotterywest and Department of Communities – Disability Services.

Rotary District Governor Lindsay Dry said the project demonstrated what communities working together could achieve.

“Rotary is delighted to have inspired the project and to have raised more than \$2.6 million in capital funding,” he said.

“The vision was to bring inclusive play to the whole of Perth and I'm pleased it has now come to life.

“It's wonderful, as a leading community partner, to now symbolically hand the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space over to the City of Nedlands.”

In relation to the play space's official name, Mayor Hipkins said Mrs Wheatley had been characteristically modest about the couple's generous support of the project over the years.

“She didn't want a fuss and was a touch embarrassed about the facility being named after her,” he said.

“But the City of Nedlands and Rotary both agreed the facility should include her name, reflecting their appreciation of the Wheatleys' support.”

The state-of-the-art playground – the first of its kind on this scale in WA – is expected to attract people from all over Perth with modern, high-quality play equipment purpose-designed for people of all ages and people with disability.

Features include a sensory walkway, flying fox, active climbing, decks and slide, active swinging, accessible picnic areas, a community garden and kitchen, an informal sports and games area, exercise equipment, ramps and relaxation areas, parking (including ACROD bays), accessible toilets and nature, music, sand and water play areas.

Covering 10,000m², the new facility has been carefully built around and under existing trees and was designed by award-winning architect Fiona Robbé, who is part of an international group developing standards for inclusive playgrounds.

“Research shows that play is important for people of all ages, not just children, and helps to build physical, psychological and social health,” Mayor Hipkins said.

“An added bonus is that parents and grandparents can now enjoy the play equipment themselves, as well as children – fitness, laughter and well-being are all outcomes of playing together.

“Families of children with disability can enjoy the inclusive design because careful attention has also been paid to their needs.

“There is wheelchair access throughout the playground and perimeter fencing was requested by parents of children with disability.”

A family fun day at the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space is planned for November to further celebrate bringing people of all ages together through play.

Work continues on phase two of the project with Rotary raising funds for the new toilet facilities – in the meantime, people will be able to use the existing toilet block.



LEFT: Major sponsors Vern and Jo Wheatley cut the ribbon with Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins to officially open the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space.



ABOVE RIGHT: Vern Wheatley, left, Angus Buchanan and Cheryl Jennings from Rotary, Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins and Jo Wheatley at the official launch.



LEFT: The Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space is now open for business.



LEFT: Bella Hopewell, left, and Justin Lekias check out the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space – they helped with the ground-breaking ceremony in March last year.

BELOW RIGHT: Vern and Jo Wheatley, in foreground, with Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins, on slide, trying out some of the play equipment at the Jo Wheatley All Abilities Play Space.



About the City of Nedlands

The City of Nedlands is situated 7km from Perth and stretches from the banks of the Swan River to the edge of the Indian Ocean. A population of more than 21,000 lives in the suburbs of Nedlands, Dalkeith, Mt Claremont, Swanbourne, Karrakatta and parts of Floreat and Shenton Park.

For further information, please contact communications@nedlands.wa.gov.au or 9273 3500.