



School Playgrounds

.....
We design and construct imaginative
play and learning spaces

Phone 0401 534 476

info@ediblekidsgardens.com.au

[www.
EdibleKidsGardens.
com.au](http://www.EdibleKidsGardens.com.au)



Edible & Sensory Gardens in Schools

We believe that kids deserve to be surrounded by fresh healthy food and stimulated by all that nature has to offer.

The play spaces we design aim to make engaging with nature the primary play experience, rather than simply 'plonking' pieces of play equipment on a barren site.

Many types of passive and active learning can happen in a **nature-based sensory play space**, where the site's existing features are considered, and logs, boulders, trees, shrubs, flowering and edible plants are carefully selected.

The innate benefits of an **edible garden and school kitchen garden** planted and used by students & staff as part of the educational curriculum cannot be understated.

Did you know what the Australian Standard for playgrounds says?

“The majority of children’s play takes place in non-designated areas such as paths, steps and ramps, and planted areas.”

Outdoor classrooms & Yarning Circles

When teachers incorporate outdoor learning opportunities into their teaching, students' behaviour improves and many students feel more comfortable learning outdoors than in the classroom.

Currently, 72% of Australian teachers have said they take lessons outdoors at least once a week, which provides more structure and connects what the students learn inside to what they explore outside.

The Australian curriculum notes that “students can gain unique and specific benefits from outdoor learning, including skills and understandings, while valuing a positive relationship with natural environments and promote sustainable use of these environments.”





Forts & play structures

School kids love the challenge of climbing up to an elevated fort, pirate ship or platform, with the reward of sliding down a fireman's pole or slippery dip... only to do it all again moments later!

Kids are inherently drawn to elevated play structures due to the risk involved: the thrill of the possibility of falling.

Climbing helps develop children's self-efficacy, gross motor skills and co-ordination, especially where foot surfaces or grasping objects are irregular and uneven.



‘Ninja Warrior’ courses

In recent years we’ve designed some nature-based playgrounds with a “Ninja” themed circuit.

Get in touch about a similar playground for students to test out their abilities and burn off steam!



Did you know that demanding regularity in play equipment might be a hazard itself !?

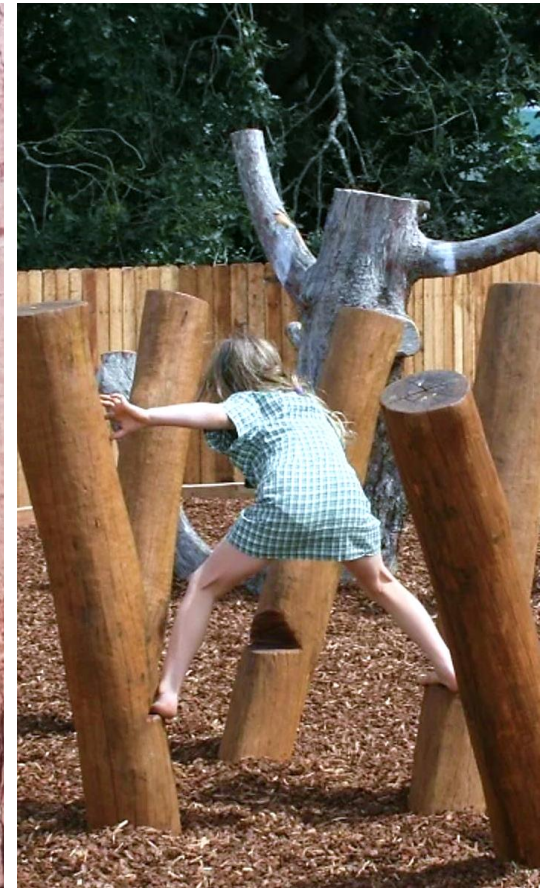
“ Children who have never had to assess their surrounds expect for every rung of a ladder or a monkey bar to be uniformly separated. These kids have no capacity to make appropriate judgments when they face situations that have not been perfectly engineered. ”

Climbing & balance

Children are naturally intrigued by rocks, trees and other natural environments where they play. A natural play space affords many opportunities for co-ordinating the body and balance, especially where surfaces are unpredictable and irregular.

Play equipment such as a natural log, wobbly steppers or notched log posts help children to actively test out the limits of their reaching and balancing capabilities.

EKG can design a specific climbing or balancing combination trail for your school playground.



The Australian Standards on Risk-Taking

“Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing...

Respecting the characteristics of children's play and the way children benefit from playing on the playground with regard to development, children need to learn to cope with risk and this can lead to bumps and bruises and even occasionally a broken limb. ”

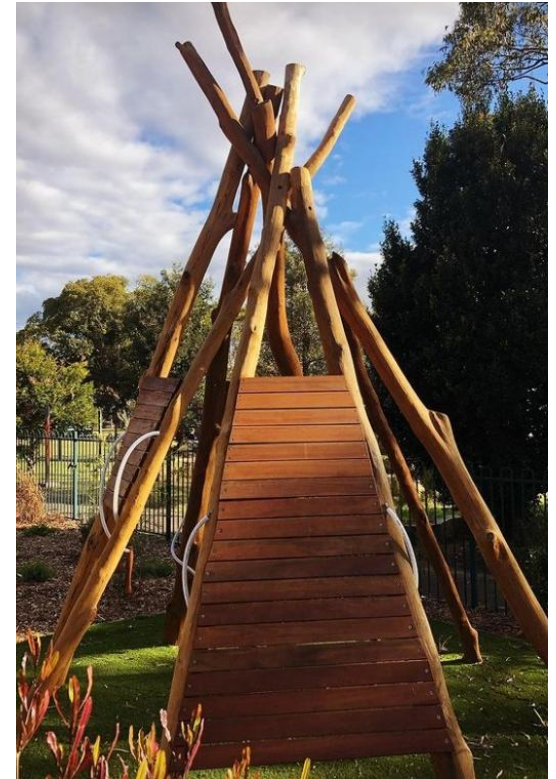
Playground Equipment and Surfacing
AS 4685.1:2021



Cubby houses, humpies & tee pees

Cubbies are always a favourite amongst Primary aged students!

An open-ended cubby house can one day be a café, then a castle, or a tinkering shed, or a fairy's cottage – the possibilities are only limited by the imagination!



Water & sand play

Children are naturally drawn to sand and water as play and learning materials. With sand, children can manipulate, rake, shovel and shape their physical environment. Water gives the children options of splashing, pouring and mixing. Sand and water play help students to have calm minds and bodies.

Through sand and water play students use skills of maths and science, through hands on experience. When children begin mixing water with sand, it provides them with an understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. When water is added to the sand, the sand becomes firmer and can be manipulated through being shaped.

At EKG we love to create functional and beautiful school water and sand play environments which mimic nature as much as possible.





Bespoke feature play

The sky is the limit when it comes to fun, creative ideas for your play environment!

We love a challenge, so give us your best when it comes to a concept for your outdoor environment.

Who are we ?

EKG Nature Playgrounds (Edible Kids' Gardens) is a design and construct nature-based play space company based in Sydney / Southern Highlands of NSW.

We specialise in creating unique outdoor spaces which engage the senses and stimulate the imagination in a safe, fun and inclusive way.

EKG offers consultation, design development, project management and construction on a wide variety of projects, including residential, early education centres, preschools/ kindergartens, primary & secondary schools, and public parks.



Steve Webb – Lead Landscape Architect + Certified Playground Assessor

Steve is a Landscape Architect, Permaculture gardener, and certified Level 3 Comprehensive Playground Safety Inspector.

He has designed hundreds of nature play spaces projects over the past 17 years running EKG.

Steve specialises in sensory play space and therapeutic gardens, integrating his knowledge from his background in psychology and psychotherapy.

Steve and his team work in collaboration with carpenters, horticulturists, builders, occupational therapists and other professionals to achieve the best possible results in their projects.

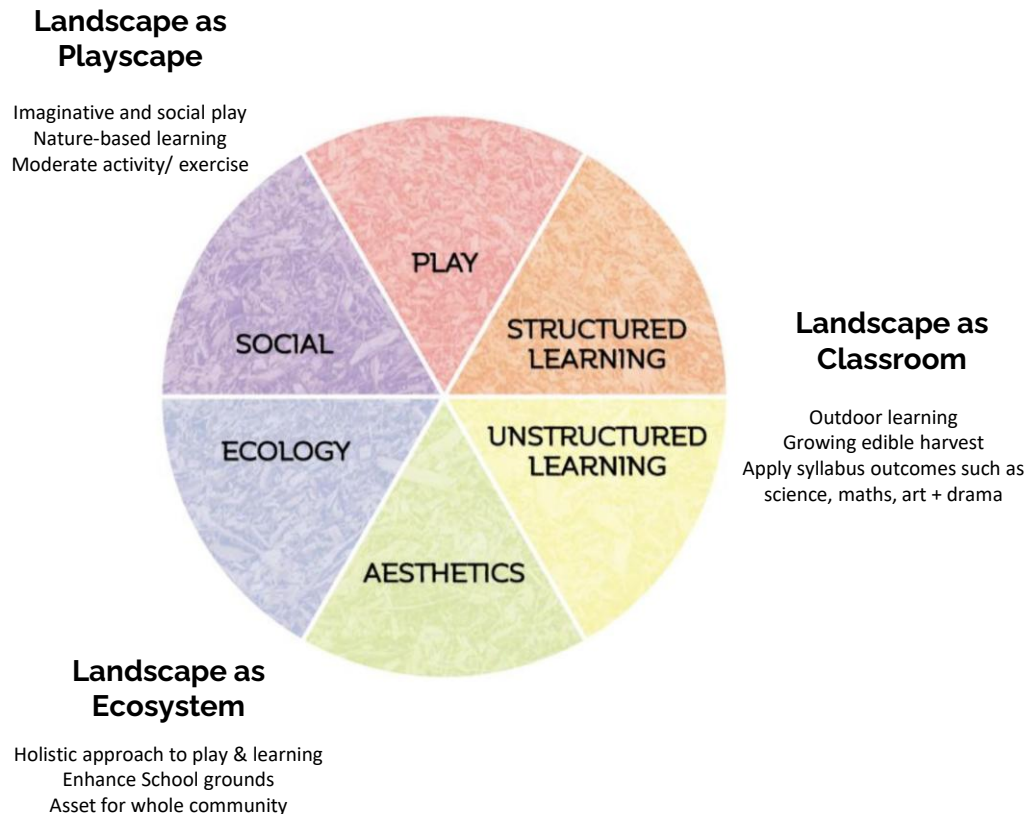
As a parent and Permaculture gardener, Steve is conscious of the quality of the food we consume and the integrity of the food systems we are part of. His passion is for children growing up in urban environments to be connected to the food they consume - how their fruit and veggies grow; how soils, air, water, food, animals and waste are so intimately linked; and how each of us has a role to play in contributing to and shaping these systems.

Our Landscape Design ethos

EKG aims to design school playgrounds to be logically incorporated within a natural setting.

Rather than “plonking” pieces of play equipment onto a blank space with no connections between them, play features are nestled into the overall playground design, with pathways and other connecting elements serving as important places for imaginative social play. For example, a bridge feature leads from one discrete area into another, and it purposefully serves as a crossing over a creek or planted wetland area.

EKG takes a holistic approach to the design of school playgrounds, as environments which can provide for **play, learning and ecological considerations** all at the same time:



The design processbeautiful, fun & productive

Our design approach seeks to create spaces which engage all five senses.

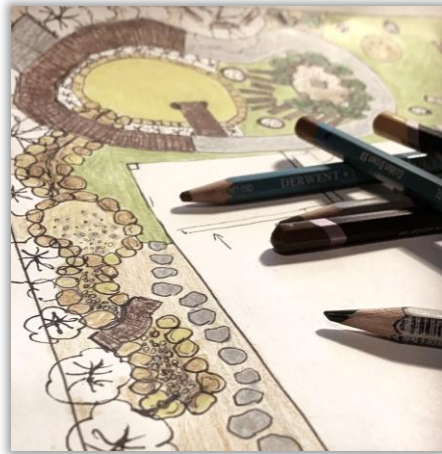
We do this through careful selection of textural, colourful and scented plants, foliage which changes colour with the seasons, and by including elements such as ramps and bridges, elevated play areas, wildlife habitats, ability-non-specific basket swings, and natural features such as creeks, boulders, and hand pumps.

We believe in landscaping for a sustainable future. We hope to ignite in kids a love of nature, so that they will be the ones who grow up to preserve it. We are convinced of the invaluable role that complex, natural environments play as a resource for learning and shaping our sense of responsibility about tomorrow. We strive to create beautiful, sensory nature-filled spaces where kids are free to harness their imaginations and explore their inner boundaries



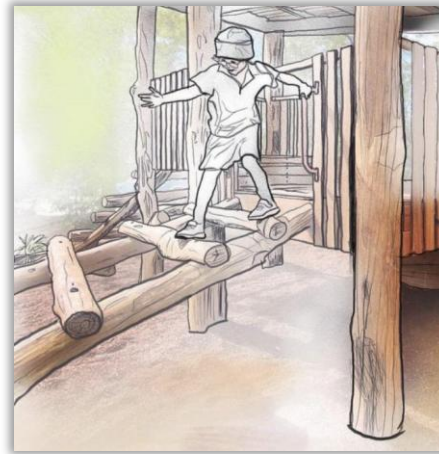
INITIAL CONSULTATION

- Initial consultation and working up a design brief for the client...to suit their needs and playscape aspirations.
- Rough concept schematics



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

- Design workshops and community input to promote ownership of the future playscape if required.
- Discussions with all stakeholders



FINAL DESIGN APPROVAL

- Sign-off on concept design and concept schematics.
- Stakeholders' approval, documentation, contracts, and finance



CONSTRUCTION ON-SITE

- Design and construction documentation begun and consultation with contractors and supplier's lead times.
- On-site construction begins



**where
nature
is
play**

“ The outdoors offers limitless potential to young children. It becomes a place where they can go to relax their mind, to be inspired and to deep dive into the world of imagination. It's a place where they can design, create and explore. The possibilities are endless. ”

Angela Hanscome

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