

# Playground Matters

## BEATING THE BOUNCE !

It's the new hot issue in playground safety



The impact rebound of some safety surfaces is a hot issue for playground safety regulators. Despite the introduction of national playground surfacing standards in 1996, there are more than 100,000 child admissions at emergency departments every year for playground injuries, most related to falls.

The 1996 standards were designed to stop fatal injuries in particular, but flaws in the testing criteria that encouraged suppliers of rubber playground surfaces to market products with fast recovery times had unintended consequences. Dr David Eager's research presented at the Australian Injury Prevention Network Conference in September 2004 concluded that common rubber surfacing caused more long-bone fractures than bark because the impact of the fall, although initially absorbed by the rubber, then bounced back through the bone, often several times, causing the bone to break.

The good news is not all rubber or synthetic playground surfacing is high rebound. **Aero** rubber surfacing, which was developed to overcome the problem of chemical toxicity in wet pour rubber surfacing, is an exception. As well as being chemically inert when it leaves the factory, **Aero** rubber has a unique slow-rebound intensity (patent pending) for gentle deceleration and maximum safety.

At the National Kidsafe Conference in Sydney on playground undersurfacing, Dr Eager was astounded when a raw egg, twice dropped from a height of over 2 metres onto a sample piece of **Aero** Rubber, failed to crack and showed little rebound. Dr Eager, who holds the honorary position of Engineers Australia representative on the Australian Standards Committee, is enthusiastic about the technical superiority of low rebound intensity rubber that is also soft and dense. He is currently working on revising the testing criteria for playground safety surfaces so that high rebound intensity rubber will no longer pass Australian Standards.

Rubber surfacing has solved many playground surfacing problems that occur with bark and other loose-fill such as insufficient depth, loss of impact absorption due to decomposition, and contaminants such as hidden needles, broken glass and faeces, as well as spider and other infestations. It's good to know that this doesn't have to come at the cost of an increased risk of long-bone fractures.

For more details, brochures,  
Aero Rubber samples or  
prices tel.62973700 or visit us at  
[www.playgroundpeople.com.au](http://www.playgroundpeople.com.au)

### In this issue:

#### This page

- Rubber Surfacing update: Beating the Bounce
- Bright ideas for Playground Safety : the sand pit

#### Overleaf

- How Cool is That? Imaginative and practical transformations
- News Bits: The delightful new Mini Q at Questacon



### Bright Ideas for Playground Safety

Sandpit surrounds can be unforgiving, sometimes consisting of brick or concrete, sometimes of timber with splintering or cracks wide enough to trap tiny fingers. Worn timbers can be replaced or may only need maintenance, while harsh surfaces can be made child-friendly when covered with impact-absorbing rubber.

To prevent animal fouling, unwanted syringes, broken glass etc. sand pit covers can be custom made to size with stretch toggles for easy fitting whenever the sandpit will be unattended.

In extreme cases, where there is a high incidence of contamination, a safety enclosure with clear Perspex sides and a weatherproof roof will maintain a safe play environment so that children don't have to forego the pleasures of a sand pit.



Aero Rubber sand pit surround at RMC Duntroon

How 'cool' is that !  
*You'd be amazed how a quickly a little Aero Cool \* and some imagination can transform a playground*



**Below and left:**  
 Calwell Primary School



\* *AeroCool* is an optional painted coating exclusive to *Aero Rubber* softfall. Originally developed to provide surface cooling in our hot northern states, *AeroCool* is now widely used to make rubber surfacing even more appealing. This practical and imaginative 'rubber art' can be applied over any rubber surface, including older wet pour playground surfaces. *AeroCool* also acts as a wear layer, extending the life of the protected rubber surface beneath.



**Above and left:**  
 South Queanbeyan Community Child Care Centre bike path and road way

**Below:**  
 Bear prints and stepping stones lead the way to the sand pit at Majura Child Care Centre's Babies play area



**Above:**  
 Gordon Primary School

**News Bits**



*Science for the very young!*

Questacon's delightful new **Mini Q** hands-on exhibit for 0-6yrs is rapidly becoming a star attraction. If you haven't seen it yet, we thoroughly recommend a visit.



Attractions include the construction zone, garage, animal hospital, bakery and the sensory cave. Each play zone has its own unique Aero Cool floor design from mosaic and crazy paving to tyre skid marks and a glittering cave floor.



**A new lease of life for an old favourite...**



We recently completed a major safety upgrade at a much loved Canberra icon, The Castle at Commonwealth Park, that included Aero Rubber Super Saver tiles.

