Sandpits are a fun way for children to socialise with others. Most children love to build and model objects out of sand. To ensure that children gain the best experience from your sandpit it is important to consider a few basic construction and maintenance guidelines.

**Size**
Size is dependent on the number of children using the service but a general guideline is 15m² for 20 children, 30m² for 40 children, and 40m² for 60 children. Sandpits can be of various shapes and even split level.

Sandpits should have a minimum depth of 500mm sand.

**Setting**
Sandpits are traditionally seen as a quiet play space and it is important they are positioned away from the main flow of traffic and can be easily supervised. Corners of playgrounds and alongside fences are preferred sandpit locations.

Incorporating natural elements such as boulders, dry creek beds and strappy plantings are popular and establishes a special “sense of place”.

Boulders can be placed into the sandpit or as edging. Boulders should be large enough to sit on or to be used as small building decks and should measure from 300-700mm across and 300-450mm high. The boulders should be positioned so they are stable and cannot be moved or tilted.

Sharp edges of boulders or rocks must be rounded off.

Introduce plants to at least one edge of the sandpit and include groundcover, strappy plants, plumed grasses and shade trees. A tap or access to water such as a water tank is recommended for play with wet sand.

Sand selection is important. Washed beach or river sand is recommended. Builder or brick sand is not recommended.

**Shade**
Sandpits should be adequately shaded. Deciduous trees can be used to provide shade in summer whilst open branches allow the sun to filter through in winter. A shade structure with removable sails or cantilevered umbrella is a great shade solution.
Construction
The sides of sandpits may be formed from logs or concrete, with the edge and paved areas constructed from concrete or pavers (refer to Figure 1). The inner edge facing the sandpit should not have any sharp corners or rough surface. Ensure that any timber used in construction is not treated with CCA or creosote. For more information refer to the information sheet Timber in Playspaces.

Drainage
Adequate drainage includes the installation of a drainage membrane/geotextile fabric separating the sand from the gravel sub-base (refer to Figure 1). If the site is not free draining install agricultural pipes in the gravel and connect to the storm water system to assist drainage. Consult with a plumber to ensure drainage meets regulations.

Paved Surround
A wide paved edge surrounding the sandpit make it easy to sweep surface and keep the sand in place. The inclusion of a ledge adds to the play experience as children are inevitably drawn to placing their masterpiece on the ledge to dry.

Maintenance
Inspect the sandpit daily or before use. The sand must be raked over to remove debris (sun and fresh air are good disinfectants), turned over monthly to aerate the sand and replenished when the sand level drops 100mm below the top edge of the sandpit. It is recommended that the sand is replaced annually or as required.

Remove sand contaminated by food or other materials, human or animal faeces, blood or other bodily fluids. Where extensive contamination has occurred, all sand should be replaced.

Covers
Sandpits should be protected with a tight-fitting animal and vermin proof cover such as tarpaulin or specially designed cover when not in use. Shade cloth utilised as cover allows water to permeate through without pooling on top of the cover.

For regular shaped sandpits a square piece of shade cloth may be attached to a piece of hollow PVC pipe. For irregular shaped sandpits a cover may be assembled from a piece of shade cloth with a heavy galvanised chain sewn into the hem to keep the cover in place.

Some sandpit covers also function as shade cover when hoisted above the sandpit during the day. Avoid creating trip hazards with the placement of raised fasteners for covers in the surrounding play bench and or pathway.

Aeration and sunshine is the most effective way of sanitising sand.