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Elizabeth Routley's daughter Ella, 11, is just one of a number of children with disabilities who would benefit from the new playground. Picture: Roger Wyman

Michelle Etheridge, CoastCity Messenger

A \$960,000 playground in Park Holme — Adelaide's first designed for children with disabilities — may have to be scaled back amid a cloud over a large chunk of its funding.

Charity Touched by Olivia Foundation last year said it would pay \$400,000 towards the new Hendrie Street Reserve playground, but has only fundraised about \$63,000 for the project.

[The group is appealing for businesses and locals to help cover the \\$337,000 shortfall.](#)

Marion Council will pay \$310,000 towards the play equipment and the State Government is chipping in \$250,000.

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Councillors last week considered putting the project on ice and delaying further planning work until the charity reached its funding target, but voted against the move.

Instead, elected members conceded they may have to scale back the project.

Next to the Marion Outdoor Swimming Centre, the park would include a range of equipment, including a flying fox with a high back and harness for children with physical disabilities and a carousel with wheelchair access.

It would also have a tubular slide, custom-built playhouse, trike track and swings.

Touched by Olivia Foundation executive officer Bec Ho said she was confident the organisation could fundraise the money.

“I think people haven’t got it yet — they don’t understand why it’s so important,” Ms Ho said.

“It’s designed to include children of all abilities, whether that child has mobility issues or sound or sight issues, or is on the spectrum

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break down prejudices.”

Ms Ho said the group was looking to a range of funding sources, including government grants, service organisations and business sponsorship.

“We’re appealing to businesses and the local community to dig deep in the spirit of Christmas and help turn this dream into reality,” she said.

Marion’s open space and recreation team leader Alicia Clutterham said the charity had asked to have until June 30 to come up with the money.

“We think we can give them until April and then draw a line in the sand and come back to (the) council with the funding that’s been received by then,” Ms Clutterham said.

Cr Bruce Hull said the council needed to do more to help the group find the money, such as appealing to the corporate sector.

“I’d hate to see the whole thing go a ... up,” he said.

Touched By Olivia Foundation was set up in 2006 by John and Justine Perkins, whose daughter Olivia died of a rare illness, lymphangioma, at eight months old.

It raises money to build playgrounds and pay for medical research.

Visit touchedbyolivia.com.au/marion.

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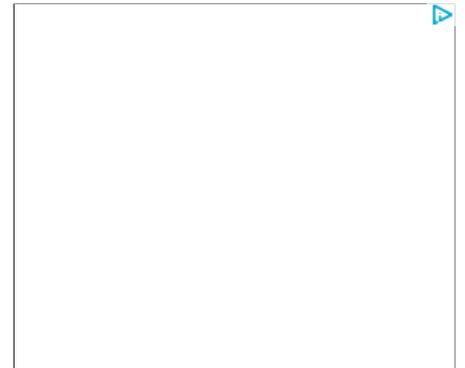
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Elizabeth Routley says her daughter Ella loves to play. Picture: Roger Wyman Source: News Corp Australia

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Ella Routley loves to explore outside.

Her mum, Elizabeth Routley, says her daughter enjoys riding her trike, climbing on play equipment and having a swing.

“She’s very adventurous,” she says.

However, not all play equipment is suitable for the 11-year-old, who has Cornelia de Lange syndrome.

She has an intellectual disability, slight vision and hearing loss and problems with her depth perception.

“Anything that’s too high, she wouldn’t access,” Mrs Routley says.

“The more noisy the environment is, she gets overwhelmed.”

She is looking forward to seeing the new Hendrie Street Reserve playground built, to give children with disabilities more opportunities to play outside.

“She’s often the only special needs child in the playground and I think that’s sad,” Mrs Routley says.

Park Holme is the perfect spot for a new park, she says, because it is close to Suneden Special School, which Ella attends, Kilparrin, for children with hearing or vision impairments and the SA School for Vision Impaired.

Originally published as [New playground for kids with disabilities under threat](#)

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