

geelong youth activities area

A healthy city needs appropriate spaces & places for young people



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playce

An introduction

This presentation will outline the importance of providing spaces and programs for our youth in our cities

It will include a discussion about;

the significant issues our youth face & why spaces for them are so important in our cities

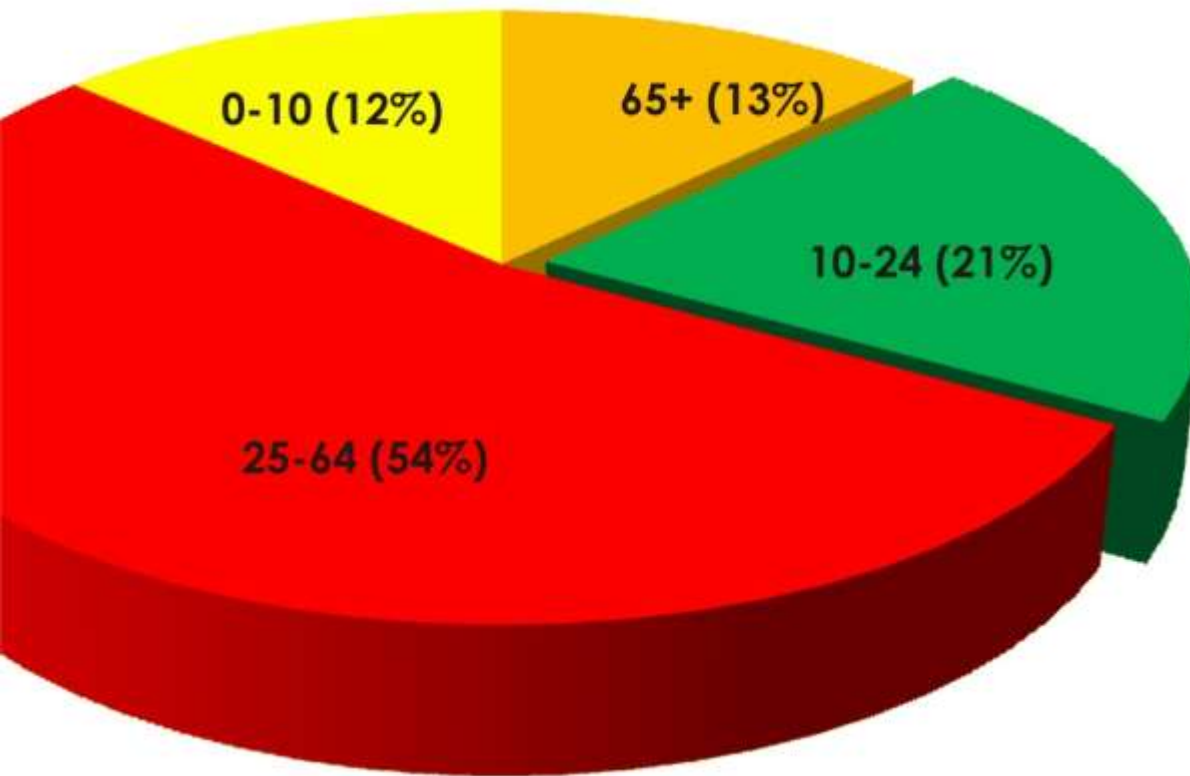
the issues around traditional methods of facility provision

detailed look at the geelong youth activities area as a successful case study on how to appropriately cater for a broad cross section of young people in a central activated public space.

Who am i?

- former design manager of convic **including lead designer on geelong youth activities area**
 - Over 400 skate/youth space projects delivered including 9 separate major design awards
 - director of new practice playce p/l which focuses on strategic engagement, planning & design for youth in our cities.
 - registered landscape architect
 - **newly appointed member of victorian design review panel**
 - lecturer at RMIT university
 - play australia member
 - parks & leisure australia member
- advocate for the provision appropriate youth inclusive public space

Why?



teenagers and young adults make up approximately 21% of Australia's population,

More than both the elderly or young children

Why?



“no one uses the city square! its just filled with youth”

Melbourne councillor circa 1997

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Why?



A group of 10 year olds play.....a group of 14 year olds loiter.....

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Why?



9% of all teens are on antidepressants.

Suicide actually counts for almost 20% of all teenage deaths.

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Why?



it is predicted that 65% of young Australians will be obese by 2020

About 80% of obese adolescents will become obese adults

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So what does all this mean.....

We have an age group that are going through significant issues....

But how do we currently adequately cater for their needs?

A common '**solution**' is the focus on "**facility**" options for young people.

But this comes with its own issues....

Avoiding facilities.....

Traditionally most 'facilities' are the domain of parks and open space.... They have the room and often, less political, commercial & community resistance.

They also focus on specific sports or recreation requirements....

Often they are not where young people want to be.....

Avoiding facilities.....

Skateparks for example are fantastic & critically important spaces for those that pursue interests in action sports and are great at legitimising a space as being youth centric.

They do not however cater for the bulk of young people....particularly girls....

Ball courts & other unstructured recreation are important too but once again **they have a sporting focus and often male bias.**

Look to our cities.....

Most young people

- have significant 'free time'
- are high users of public transport
- have a high disposable income
- are attracted to commercial centres (fashion, media, movies etc) & the associated entertainment they provide

They want to be where the action is.....

They want to be in our cities....

It doesn't make sense?

Therefore the very people who are one of most significant users of centralised public space & who will benefit from it the most are often one of the least catered for & are actively prevented from being able to use it.

A case study.....



Geelong Youth Activities Area

Originally engaged by CoGG in 2001 whilst working at Aspect Melbourne.

Continued when Convic Design established in 2002 and 6 year process to provide a central youth activities space in the heart of Geelong's CBD

Project is located on Geelong's multi award winning waterfront

Directly opposite Deakin & adjacent to the pier & adventure playground

Image :cogg

geelong youth activities area....

Existing conditions.....



Existing 'Port of Geelong Authority' club rooms with limited patronage dominated space & enjoyed exclusive rights to waterfront

Car park had limited use & little connection to rest of activated waterfront

Deakin University had no physical connectivity to waterfront

Public use of this part of the waterfront was limited

Part of a larger precinct.....

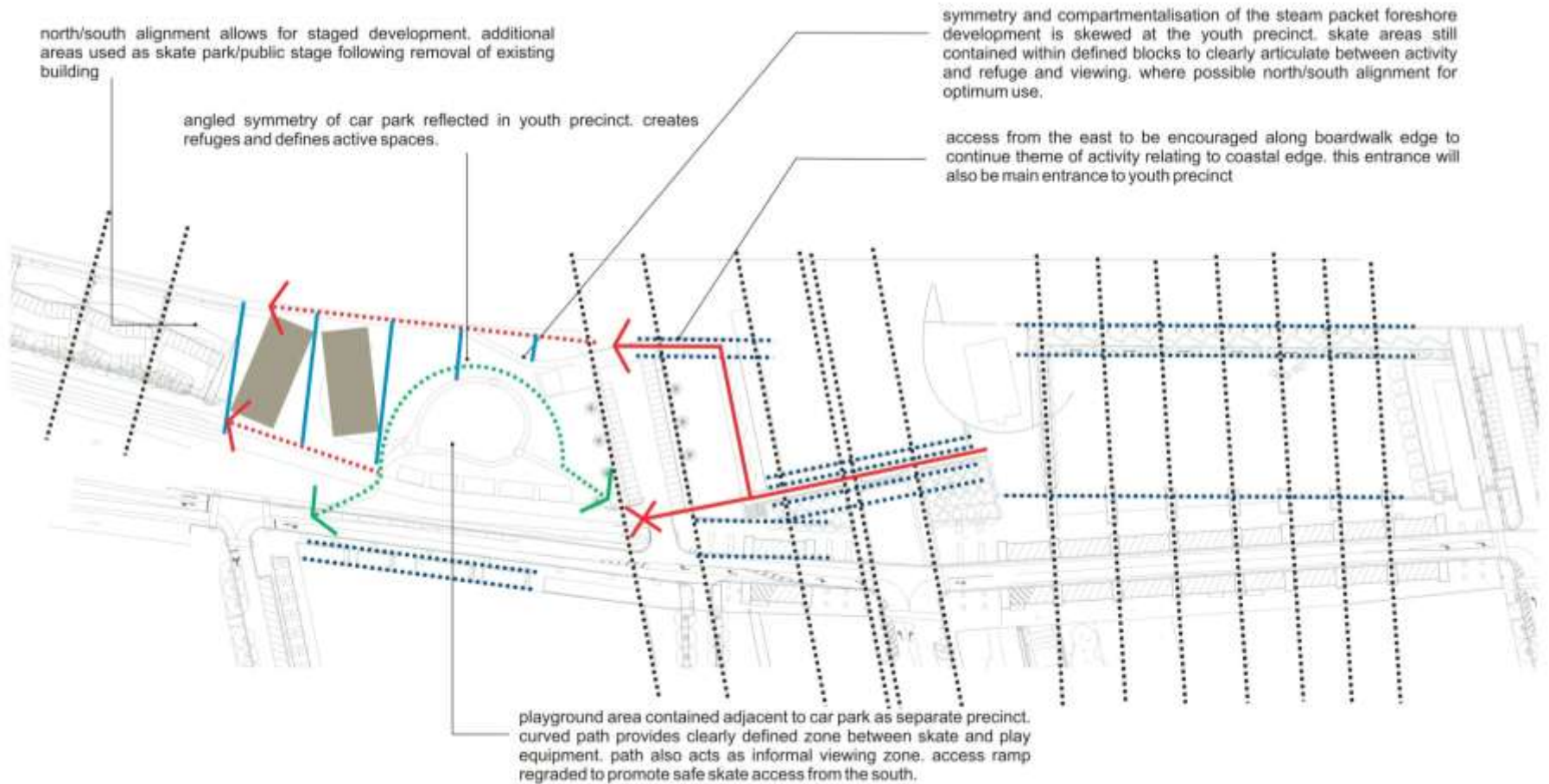
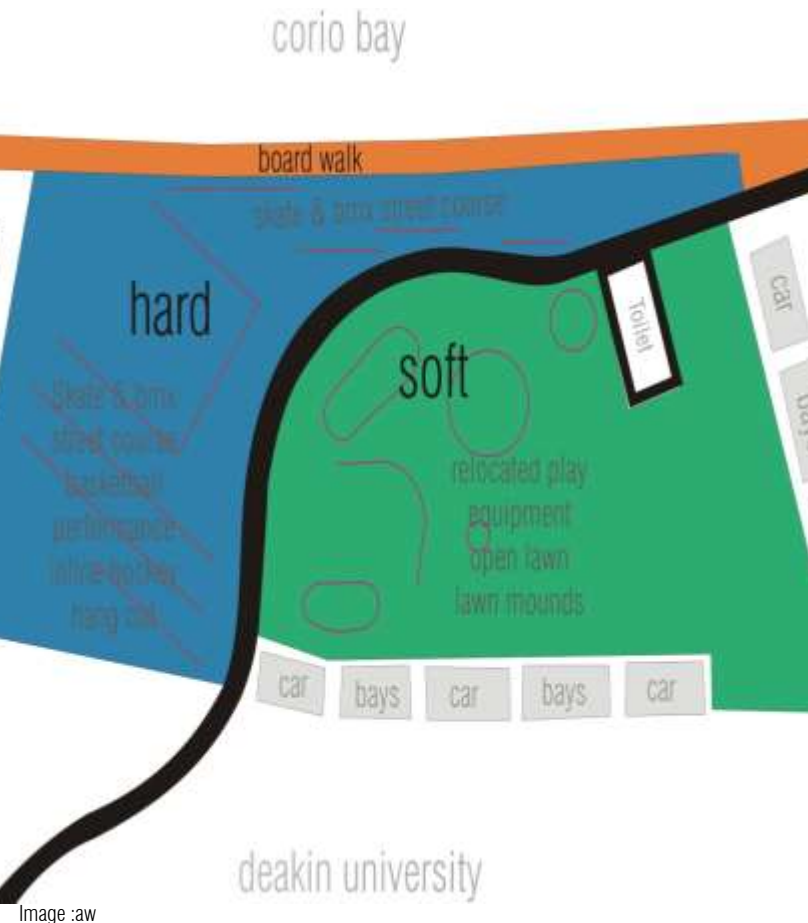


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geelong youth activities area....

An evolving concept.....



Initially conceived to provide space for skaters to prevent damage to new waterfront.

Evolved to brief expanded to look at a much larger integrated space

Council took the bold step of relocating the POGA club & demolishing their building

The space now became a more inclusive and flexible activated skateable events plaza

Clear urban design focus.....



Connecting the CBD to the foreshore

Integrating the adjacent play space and car park & improving access and viewing

Creating a multitude of different individual equitable spaces to accommodate different activities and uses.

Incidental, non prescriptive spatial layout to create unstructured socialisation & appropriation of space

the final vision.....



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the built outcome.....



Image :aila

geelong youth activities area....

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the built outcome.....

A lot of the community said this space was too valuable for young people....council said it was too valuable not to be



Image :cogg

geelong youth activities area....

A flexible space.....

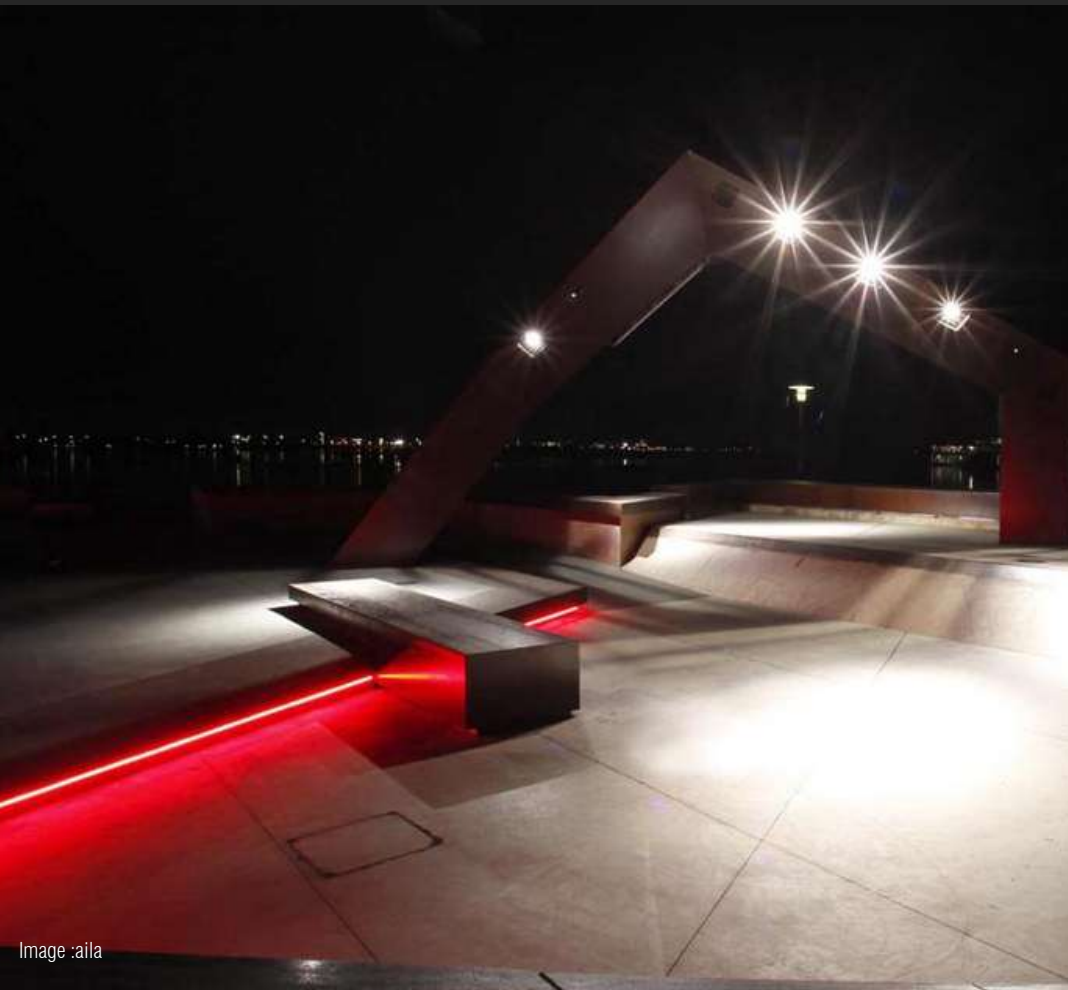


Over 1,000 young people take part in organized events monthly

Music, drama, dancing, art, exhibition

This creates flexibility, excitement and the capacity to reach to a greater range of young people

A cbd space.....



Accessible

Central

Relevant

Evolutionary

Iconic

Technically savvy

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An art space.....



Art classes run regularly

Projectors used to display art

Focus on culture & program

A performance space.....



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A music space.....



3 phase power, speakers, stage all provide opportunity for performance and music.

Monthly events energise & activate the space regularly and consistently

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A music space.....



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A social space.....



Simple seat walls, equitable nooks to inhabit and socialise at this central & engaging space

WIFI, ipod connectivity to attract interest & participation in the space.

A community space.....



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A vibrant & safe space.....



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A youth managed space.....



YAAPA

COGG youth services manage team of young volunteers to run events to promote youth participation and activities at site.

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Key outcomes for GYYA.....

Its central, accessible and in the heart of geelong's CBD, **where young people want to be....**

Whilst skateable, that is not its key focus. Skate gives the regular life & activity to a larger events space.

The success of GYYA is this **capability to accommodate regular events..**

This attracts a large range of diverse users (particularly girls) **to enjoy and participate in a central, safe & activated space.**

Conclusions....

Our youth are actively prejudiced from participating in much of our public domain. Yet they are going through some significant issues as they move into adulthood.

With so little provided for them, the default response often is skate or ball sports in public parks & reserves...a traditional recreation approach

We need to embrace a strategic social approach to the provision of spaces for young people by engaging with where they want to be, **IN THE HEARTS OF OUR CITIES**, and provide appropriate spaces that can accommodate relevant programs & activities

Size is not critical, it's the level of engagement & relevance of the space that matters

Conclusions....

socialisation, self expression, art, music are as important as sport or traditional active recreation for young people, particularly with girls.

Empower them to also manage their spaces and involve them in the planning of this management....

embrace technology and media to enable engagement with a very technically savvy generation whilst providing the conduit for evolutionary change.

They say thanks....



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questions....?

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