



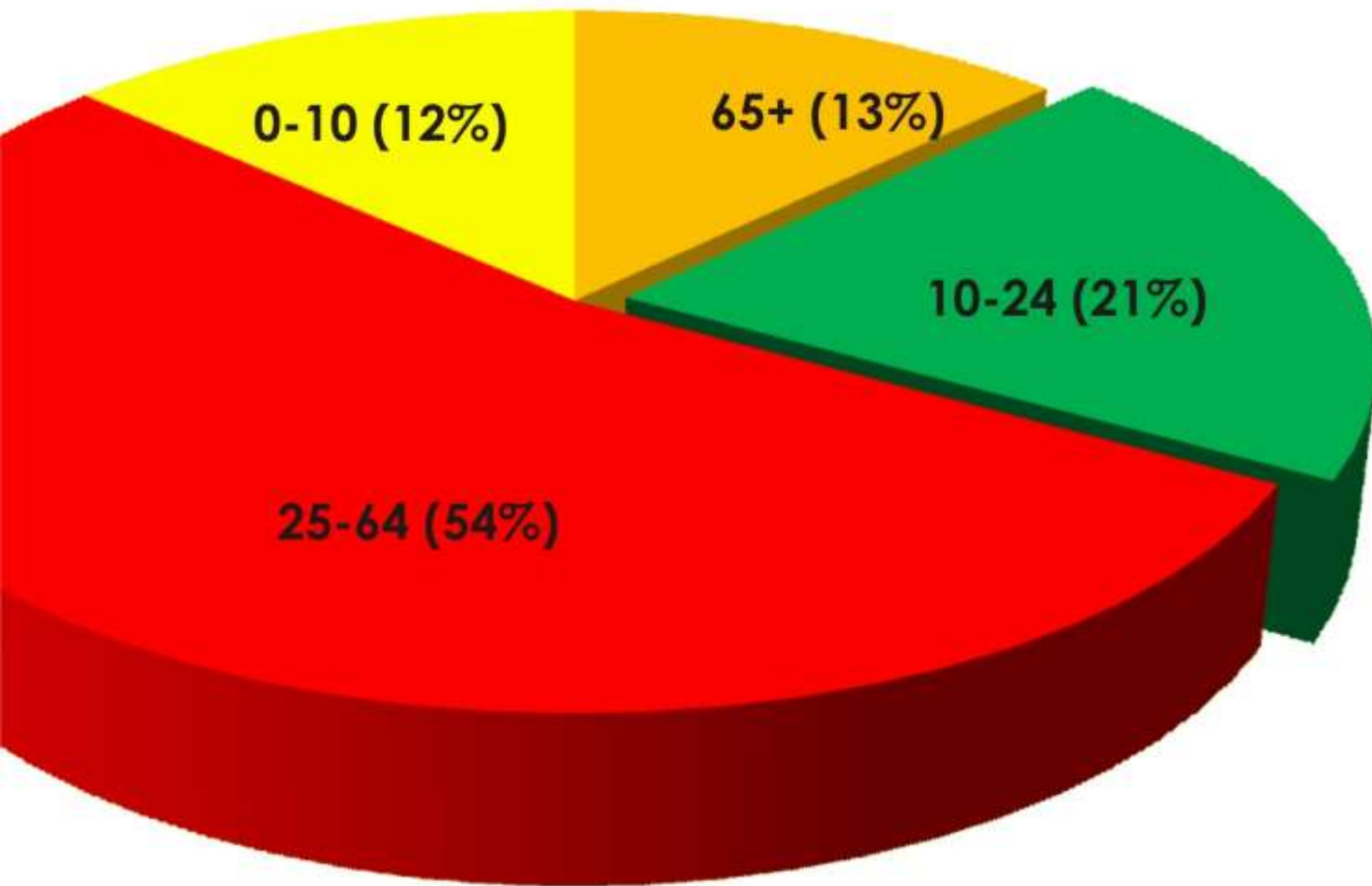
reconnecting youth back into our communities with great
public recreation space

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This presentation will focus on the challenges facing our teens and their exclusion from public space and how a number of councils throughout Australia are taking a more integrated intergenerational youth inclusive approach to both public recreation space & urban design in their city centres.



Our younger generations (teens and young adults) make up approximately a fifth Of Australia's population, more than both the elderly or young children.



teenagers

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Ageism?

*“NO ONE USES THE CITY SQUARE! ITS
JUST FILLED WITH YOUTH”*

Melbourne councillor circa 1997

A group of 10 year olds play.....

A group of 14 year olds loiter.....



"Just wait until you're my age

ageism?

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“I see no hope for the future of our people if they are dependent on the frivolous youth of today, for certainly all youth are reckless beyond words.

When I was a boy, we were taught to be discrete and respectful of elders, but the present youth are exceedingly wise and impatient of restraint.”

Greek poet Hesiod 700 BC

9% of **all** teens are on antidepressants.

In an average year 12 classroom in Australia at **least 1 student has attempted suicide.**

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

Sources:(abs stats 1993-2003 on suicide)
(cancer vic 2007)
(Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health at the Royal Alexandra Hospital)
(beyond blue –ybblue 2006)



yet our youth are in crisis!

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From 1985 to 1995 the number of overweight 7–15 year olds **almost doubled** in Australia

At the current rate, it is predicted that **65%** of young Australians will be overweight or obese by 2020.

About **80%** of obese adolescents will become obese adults.

It has been estimated that the overall cost of obesity to Australian society and governments was **\$58.2 billion in 2008** alone.

These costs are expected to **double** by 2018

(cancer vic 2007)
(Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health at the Royal Alexandra Hospital)



Yet our youth are in crisis!

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Most young people also;

- have no political voice or lobbying power
- have significant 'free time'
- are high users of public transport
- are attracted to city centres & public spaces to socialise and gather
- have a high disposable income
- are going through such a period of transition and change



a confusing contradiction?

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Therefore the very people who are one of most significant users of
public space and who will benefit from it the most

are often

one of the least catered for and are actively prevented
from being able to use it.

a confusing contradiction?

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Kids want to be part of their communities. They do not want to be excluded or be invisible in the everyday life of their cities.

public space can give them a chance to learn the skills of social negotiation and conflict resolution.

Inclusion in public spaces can allow them the freedom to try out new social identities in a safe and secure environment.



a mall?

a bus stop?



a back fence?

a BBQ shelter?



So what is a youth space?

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caroline springs youth space strategy

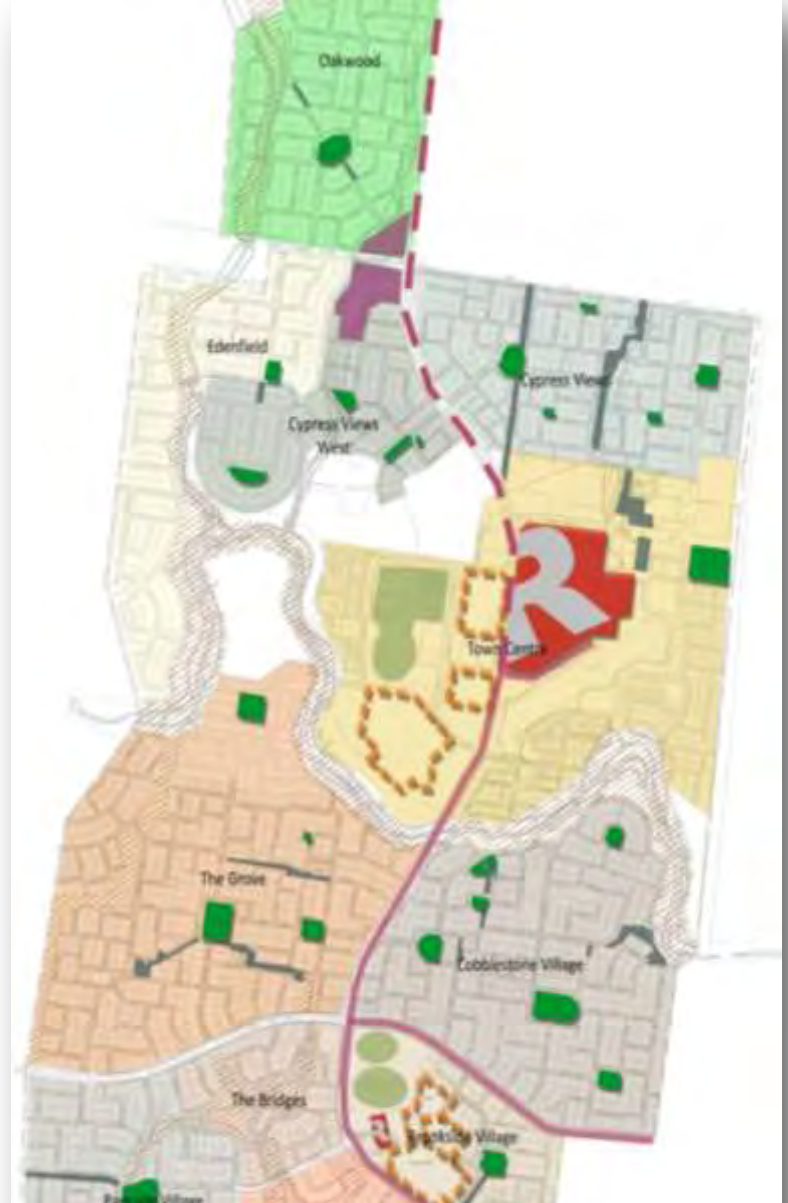
an example of a strategic plan for appropriate
youth inclusive spaces across a municipality

Caroline Springs is new planned community on western edge of Melbourne.

Growing population of 11000 people in the Shire of Melton

Original focus by Delfin on providing for young families.

Engaged by Delfin in 2005 to look at how we can improve recreation opportunities for young people with these younger children now growing up!



Was a 3 phase project

Firstly defined existing spaces and urban character within the suburb

This included analyzing different spatial & social characteristics of the different spaces

Mapped these spaces across suburb

Local Links

Character:

Fragmented. Concrete or other hard surface pathway through maintained grassed area. Some plantings and screenings. Clear line of sight along link.

Constraints:

These areas may not always be suitable for groups of kids to hang out. All granted there often immediate proximity to residents. Care must be taken to avoid conflict with pedestrian movement through site.

Opportunities:

Youth are often very mobile and may travel to friend's houses in other neighbourhoods. The links provide a great opportunity to provide varying levels of elements to make for a more interesting journey. Beginner riders may be provided with a more intimate place to practice their skills by structuring elements. There is also an opportunity to make the obstacles unique to each neighbourhood's desire and existing aesthetics thereby encouraging a sense of ownership.



Urbanised Public Space

Character:

Hard surfaces with some planting. Active and energetic space. Retail shops with food and drink for sale. Indoor and outdoor spaces. Public amenity including phones and toilets. There is a small event space/stage located on the lake.

Constraints:

Youth activities should not interfere with commercial nature of this area. Need to address movement through car parks.

Opportunities:

Direct youth to retail areas more aligned to their shopping needs. Provision of areas for youth to enjoy that are visible but do not conflict with main pedestrian thoroughfares. Enhance event spaces.



Central Recreation Facilities

Character:

Highly active zone suitable for larger groups and events. Carries the same tendency towards a more formal form of activity as shared by the other adjacent recreational facilities such as football ovals, tennis courts and recreation centres.

Constraints:

High levels of programming throughout the site. Often located in prime public space which may be highly contested. Care must be taken in formulating site circulation strategies.

Opportunities:

A central recreation node set out to provide for skateboarding and other active recreation opportunities.



case study 1: caroline springs youth spaces strategy

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Then we looked at what opportunities these spaces provided for young people?

We looked at how we could provide facilities, programs or infrastructure into these spaces to ensure young people were catered for across the suburb

School Break Out Space (& other peripheral spaces)

Character:
Spaces on the periphery of school grounds.

Constraints:
The schools should always be consulted regarding any nearby proposals that would encourage youth activity outside of school hours and school supervision.

Opportunities:
School edges provide a convenient informal, after school hang-out spaces for youth that should not interfere with local residents. There may also be opportunity for small school exhibitions, displays and events.



Recreation Corridors

Character:
Drainage areas with native grasses and vegetation. Largely undeveloped. Cross through many of the neighbourhoods. Proposed bicycle/hiking trail.

Constraints:
Grading may not always suit skateboarding. There may be limited possibility for obstacles due to other program requirements.

Opportunities:
Provide an active movement corridor for youth to move through and link with other areas.



Neighbourhood Park

Character:
Materials may vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Some materials used include granitic sand, timber, rock gabions, concrete and other hard surfaces; plantings; trees; shelters, irrigated grass, playground equipment, BBQ's, picnic facilities and seating. Attention to detail. Overlapping surfaces and materials. Usually located somewhat central to neighbourhood with at least one link.

Constraints:
Many of these spaces are already built with program and aesthetics determined. As many of these parks have playground facilities, care must be taken to avoid physical conflict between older and younger children. Lack of toilet facilities may be an issue if youth travel any distance from known residents or major centres.

Opportunities:

To do this we created 5 main strategy layers

Access circuit

Connecting CS

A hierarchy of facilities

CS youth infrastructure

Equal Opportunities for all

Strategy Layers

CS Youth Infrastructure

Objective:

Provide a diverse range of (social, recreational and cultural) experiences based on proximity.

Description:

A prime arterial, "The Superhighway" is identified. "The Superhighway" is a concrete path which provides a route for fast moving pedestrian, bicycle and skate traffic to efficiently move between larger attractions and throughout the entire development.

Smaller collector lanes branch off the "Superhighway" into the different neighbourhoods. These branches serve to collect youth from closer to home and bring them into the wider circulation network. Branches, from small to medium scale interventions in neighbourhoods as well as existing emerging interventions to discover, attract and challenge users along the way.

CS Circuit

Objective:

Provide a range of recreational experiences suited to users of varying skills and capabilities with the opportunity to challenge themselves through progression.

Description:

Circuit are constructed from comprising the CS infrastructure. There is an advanced, intermediate and beginner's circuit located within Caroline Springs which may be potentially located according to neighbourhood demographics (older children likely to be more advanced, smaller children likely to use a beginner's circuit). The beginner's circuit is smaller while the advanced circuit is larger and contains the most challenging elements. Circuits may be identified by visual indicators or by distributing maps as part of a wider

Radiating from Central Recreation Facilities

Objective:

To form a logical strategy for rolling out CS Youth Infrastructure.

Description:

Radiating strokes are drawn out from the Central Recreational facilities or main points of attraction. Interventions within the most inner circles are implemented first to facilitate a smooth collection that grows outwards in line with construction phasing. The Superhighway is implemented as part of the like/like design and construction.

Connecting CS

Objective:

Connect Caroline Springs into the wider community.

Description:

Points of potential interest, currently and planned, for young people outside Caroline Springs such as planned train station and cinemas. CS infrastructure is extended in the directions of the attractions. A youth inspired gateway or marker may be appropriate at some of these locations.

Equal Opportunities

Objective:

To ensure that youth spaces are available to all CS youth residents.

Description:

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These formed the final strategy

Key components included

Clear access trails throughout CS

major central youth hub/spaces

Secondary incidental youth infrastructure

Programs & partnerships with Council and schools



Youth infrastructure examples

- Perforated vertical screens to catch stray basket balls.
- Youth related artwork, text & images, incorporated with screen.
- Folded steel & skate ledge.
- Skate manual pad using Basket Ball area as recovery space.

Neighbourhood Park



Youth infrastructure examples



Youth infrastructure examples

- Drain-like low level skate intervention.
- Aligned with exiting pathways (linear).
- Controlled entries highlighted with feature treatment.
- Barrier to separate site use and allow leaning and viewing.
- Terraced seating at path.



Local Links

ventions

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Youth infrastructure examples



- Off-set linear path with low level jump for 'off road' bike riding.
- Sizes and skill levels varies along the linear corridor.
- Surface materiality distinct from paved path. Granitic material with informal alignment and formal edging/planting.
- Peninsula with seating refuge, passive/social opportunity.
- Terraced seating at jump facing both directions, unconventional seating arrangement.
- Terraced seating at path.

Recreation Corridors

TS
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- 2008 NATIONAL PLA/PRAV SPECIAL INNOVATION AWARD
- 2008 VICTORIAN AILA PRESIDENTS PLAYGROUND AWARD FOR CAROLINE SPRINGS CYAN





case study 1: caroline springs youth spaces strategy

geelong youth activities area

An example of creating a skate & youth space as a catalyst for broader acceptance & integration into the community

An amazing location

Engaged by CoGG in 2003

5 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



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under utilised foreshore

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



case study 2: geelong youth activities area

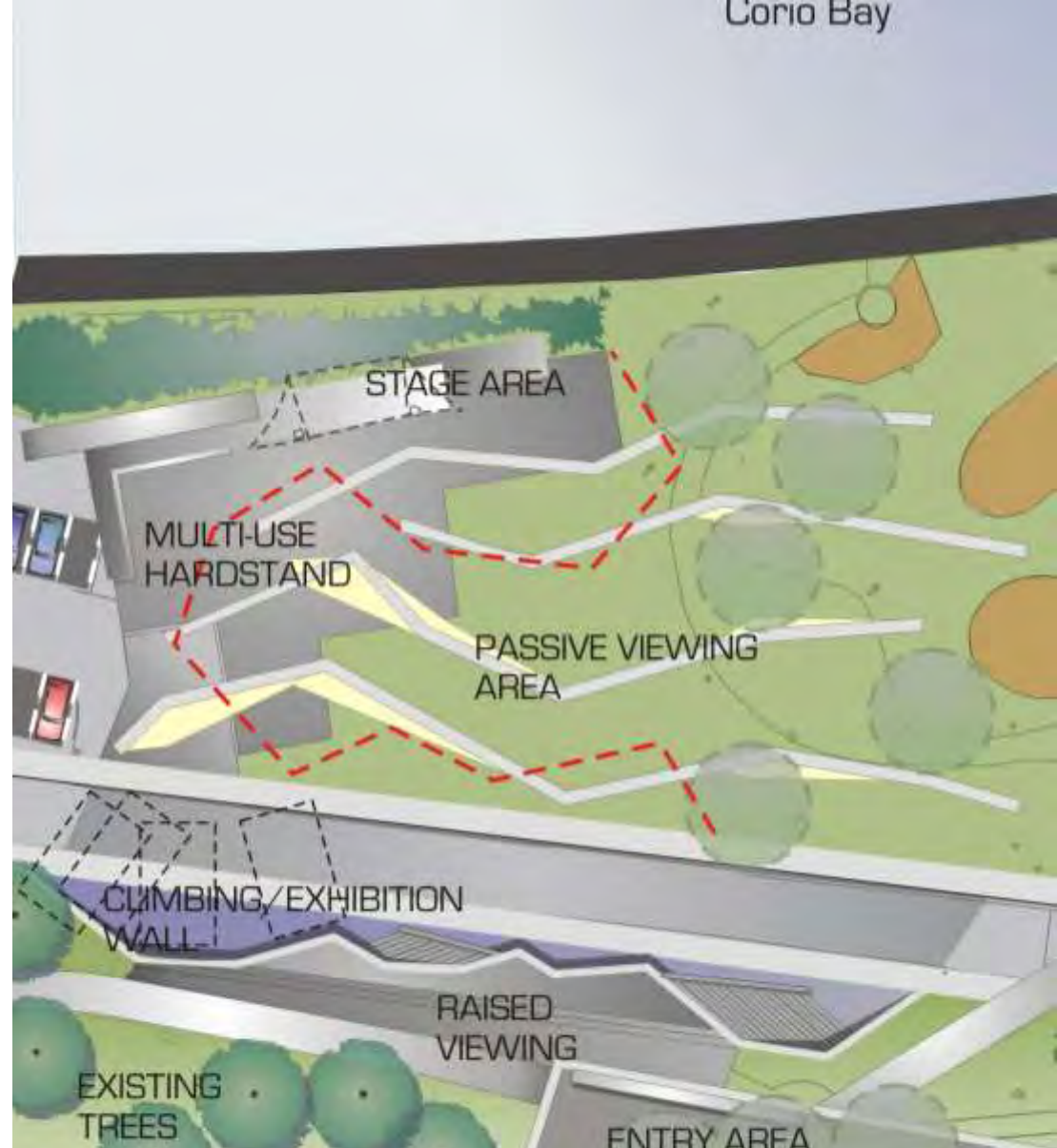
An evolving concept

With Council embracing the potential to cater for a greater range of young people the brief expanded to look at a much larger integrated proposal

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

The waterfront was now being given back to the community

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



the built space

A lot of the community said the space was too valuable to be for youth, Council said it was too valuable not to be



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A skate space

Skate validates 'YOUTH' ownership of the space & provides ongoing energy

Designed specifically to maximise skate use in a unique and dynamic way

Redefining what is possible in skateable terrain



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an events space

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

Music, drama, dancing, art, exhibition

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



case study 2: geelong youth activities area

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case study 2: geelong youth activities area

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a relaxing 'PLACE'



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A social space

the space strategically designed to promote social connection, ownership & fun

Allowing for interaction by different age groups in the one locale

Promoting greater personal management & mutual respect of other ages & interest groups in a single space



case study 2: geelong youth activities area

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a community 'PLACE'

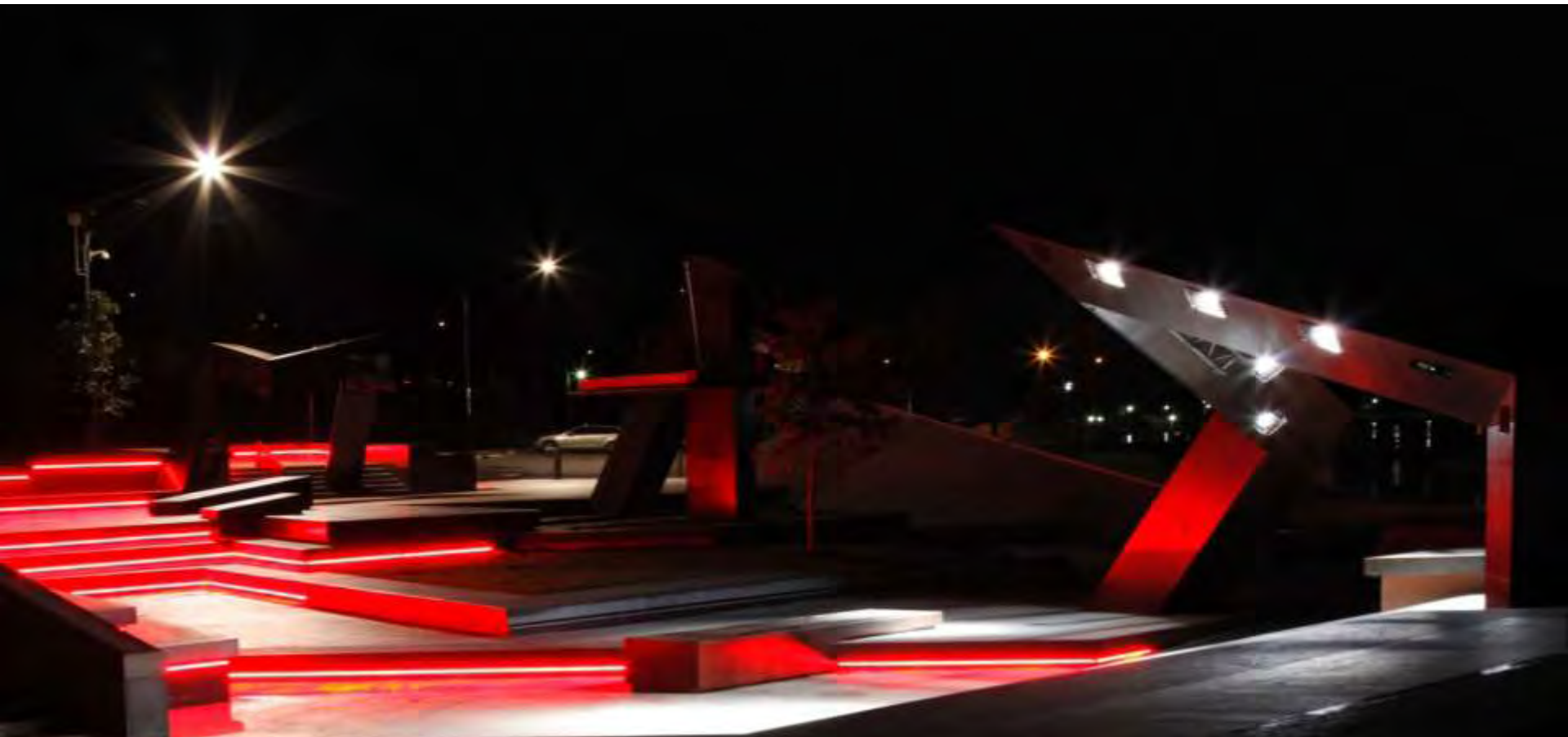


case study 2: geelong youth activities area

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case study 2: geelong youth activities area



case study 2: geelong youth activities area

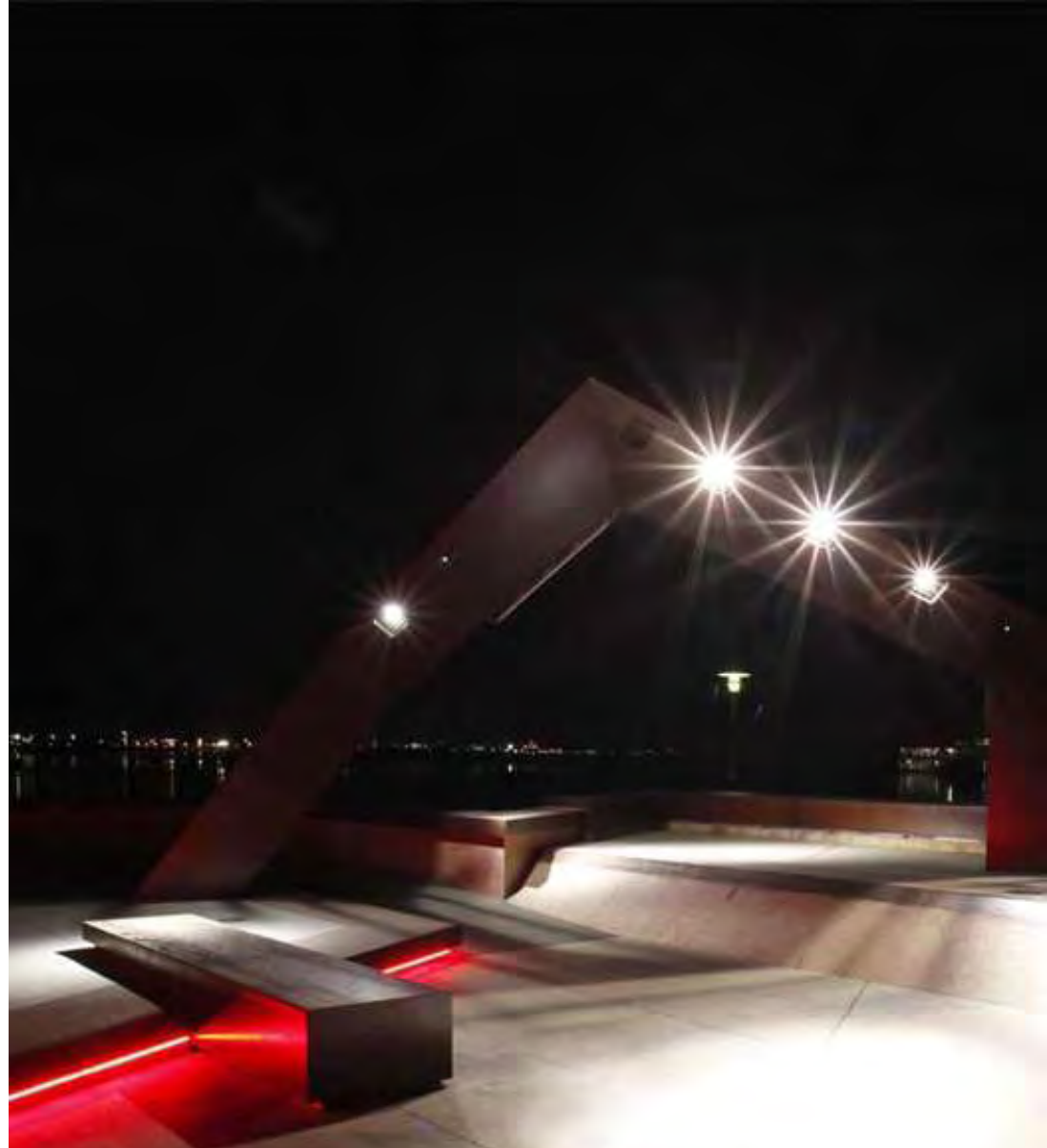
Visually iconic & bold

Fosters ownership & pride in the space

Minimal graffiti & vandalism

Significant broader community acceptance

Build a bunker and it will become one



case study 2: geelong youth activities area

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Ballarat 'PLAE' space

An example of creating a centralised play space for all ages
in the heart of a regional CBD

Ballarat PLAE brief

The Making Ballarat Central CBD strategy highlighted this as a possible ART/YOUTH SPACE

We then considered the following options;

Youth specific or youth inclusive?

Play for all ages

An evolutionary space - Activation, events, diversity

Art and exhibition

High quality public domain & associated amenity

Linking the CBD

What is Ballarat PLAE?

P is for physical (SKATE, CLIMBING, PLAY MOUNDS, ACTIVE RECREATION)

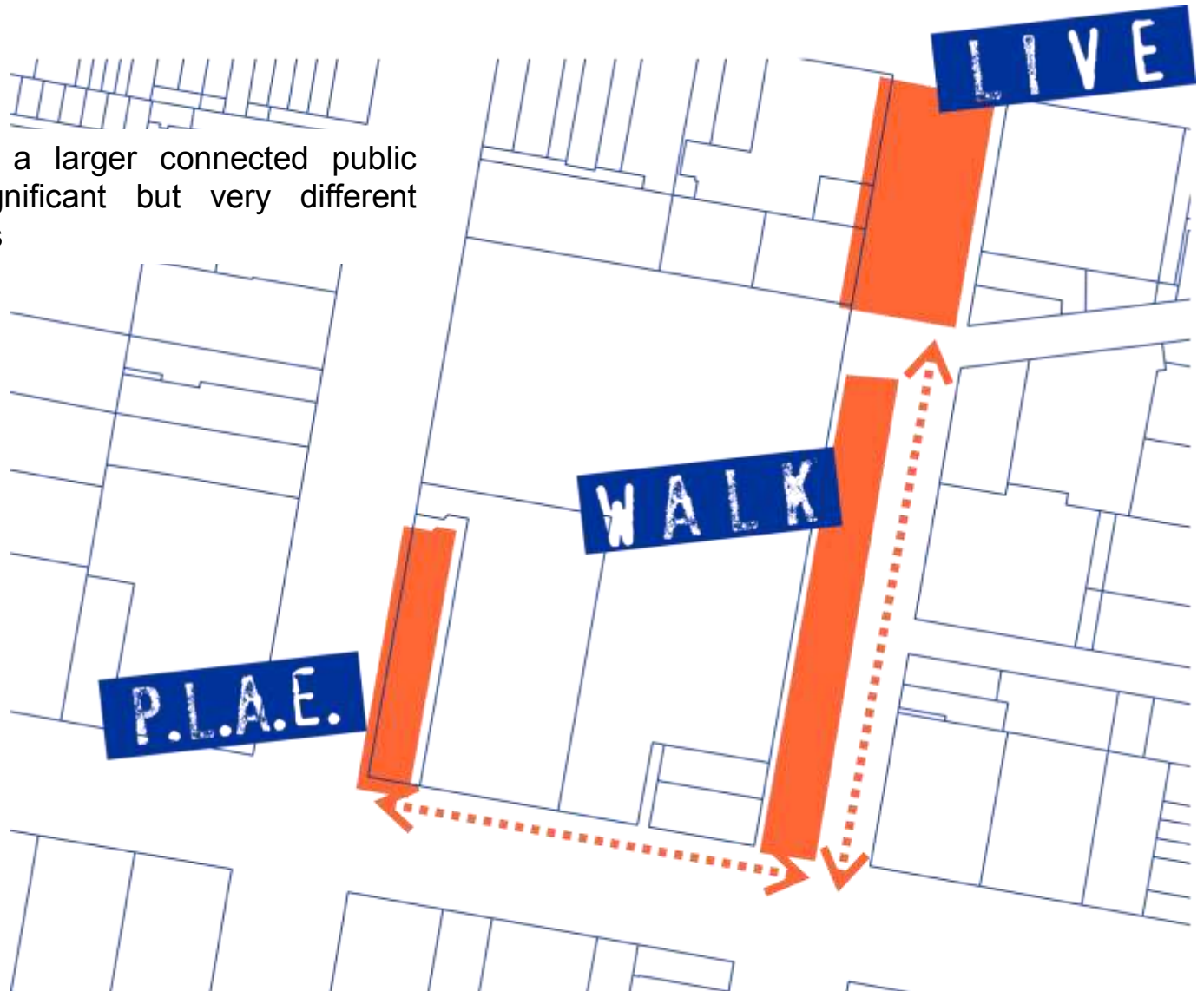
L is for life (EVENTS, ENERGY, MUSIC, ACTIVATED, SOCIAL SEATING)

A is for art (MUSIC, DISPLAY, PROJECTION, EXHIBITION)

E is for everyone (WHOLE OF COMMUNITY, ALL AGES)

PLAE context

ballarat PLAE is part of a larger connected public domain containing 3 significant but very different potential community spaces



ballarat 'WALK'

- pedestrian focus to phoenix mall
- community events including markets, displays, exhibition
- café precinct
- passive leisure space responding to commercial context
- significant seating & social spaces

ballarat 'LIVE'

Local, Iconic, Variety, Energy

- main events and gathering plaza for ballarat
- focus for meeting/gathering/seating
- media projection, music, live site
- art installation space
- dynamic high quality public domain



case study 3: ballarat plae

PLAE design

multimedia and art screens

on car park facade
provide interactive exhibition
curatorial
evolutionary

active zone

provides defined skate space
climbing structure for all ages
sculptural play mounds for all ages
feature community stage with event infrastructure

transition zone

clearly defined urban space surrounding active edges
provides safety area for viewing, pedestrians

park edge

The final edge is the existing pedestrian path and a large mix of shade trees which provide ample shade along this western edge of the park. hanging out, enjoying both the activity and media

passive zone

large pedestrian zone to provide for viewing, socialising, hanging out, enjoying both the activity and media

case study 3: ballarat plae



PHYSICAL



LIFE



case study 3: ballarat pla

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ART



case study 3: ballarat plae

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PLAE during the day



case study 3: ballarat plae

PLAE during the night



case study 3: ballarat plae

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other relevant examples

surveillance

Plaza can extend into second car park subject to demand and importance of turning lane and car park.

Plaza about 1000 sq/m replaces approx 34 x 2 hour free car spaces. Question of what is more important, car parking or central urban recreation space for young people? Can car parking be picked up in other locations?

Plaza can contain social spaces, active areas & art spaces

Fencing along edge of road to maintain safety

Existing pedestrian crossing maintained to ensure safe access to space

Potential to consolidate fountain gardens to maximize active recreation use given proximity of Queens Park with passive rec



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Murrumbeena Youth Arts Space

- Social spaces, viewing, refuges
- Art boxes, display, exhibition areas
- Night time activity
- Projection
- LED Text, Wireless, IPOD capability
- Skateable seating terraces



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Tweed Sculpture Spine



a social approach to youth inclusive public space provision

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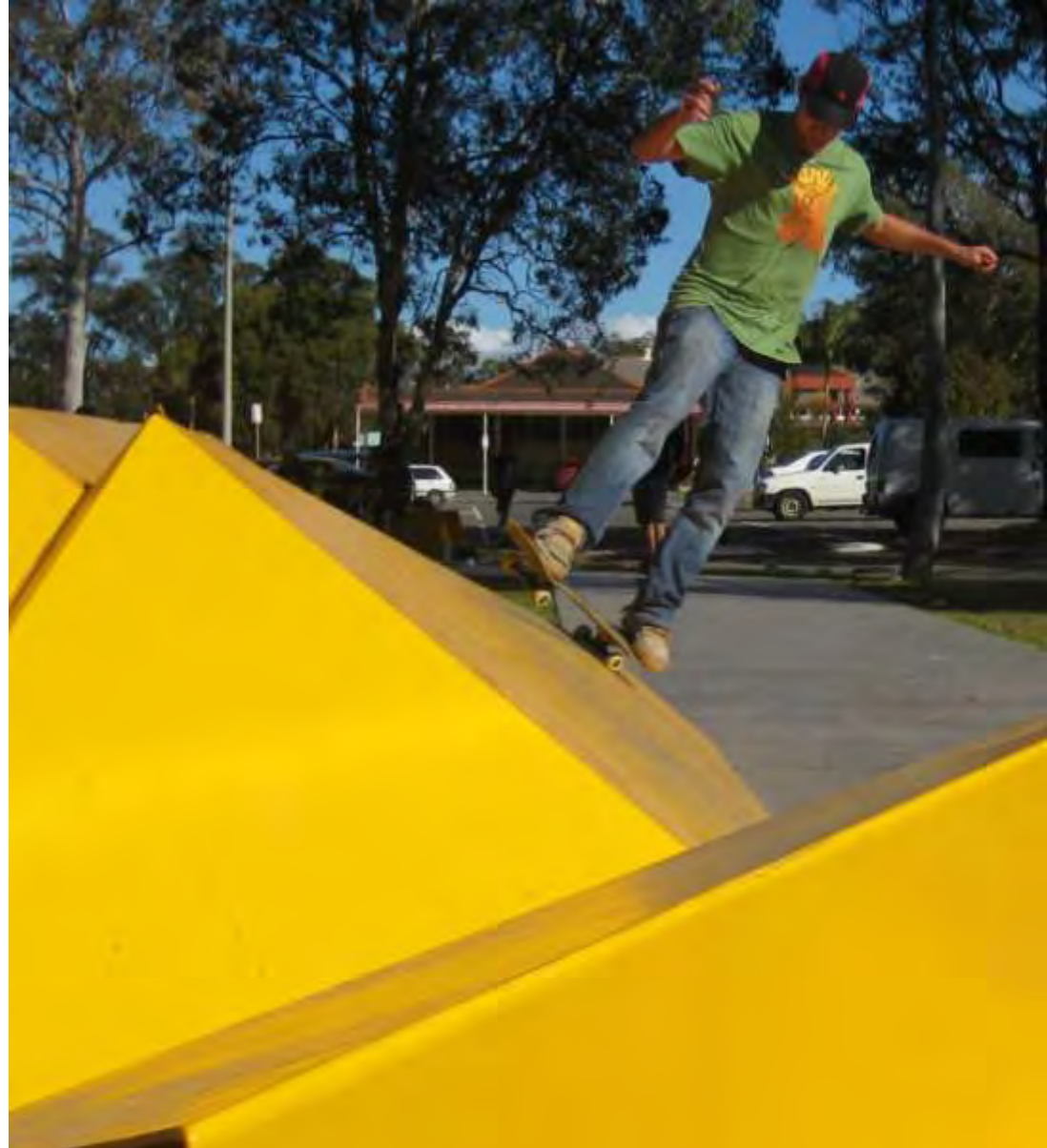
Tweed Sculpture Spine

High profile accessible location

Sculptural steel forms

Social spaces, viewing, refuges

Skateable infrastructure



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Peel Street Park



a social approach to youth inclusive public space provision

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Peel Street Park



a social approach to youth inclusive public space provision

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- listen to young people. empower them and give them an opportunity to take a lead role in creating their spaces
- embrace a social approach to the provision of spaces for young people rather than traditional recreation models. its about city planning & place making, not simply facility provision.
- look at where young people want to be, where they can access and therefore provide appropriate opportunities and programs for them in these spaces.
- size is not critical, a youth inclusive space could be a well positioned seat!
- activation and events programs are critical to give ensure a space caters for a variety of different users and can evolve over time to meet changing needs & interests
- socialisation, self expression, art, music are as important as sport or traditional active recreation
- embrace technology and media to enable engagement with a very technically savvy generation whilst providing the conduit for evolutionary change.



THANK YOU!!

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