

DRAFT

# OUR SPACES

## *Banyule Youth Spaces Plan*



June 2021  
For Exhibition

**PLA'CE**

  
**Banyule**  
CITY COUNCIL

  
**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government



# Introduction

**The purpose of this plan is to provide strategic direction for the future provision of outdoor recreation places and spaces for young people throughout Banyule.**

## Introduction

This plan has been prepared by Playce Pty Ltd for Banyule City Council to;

- Assess the need and community demand for additional youth recreation spaces and facilities in the City;
- Identify the design principles to determine the scale, preferred components and most appropriate locations for such facilities.

## Background

Banyule City Council is committed to providing desirable public open space facilities for Banyule's youth.

This commitment is articulated within Banyule's City Plan 2017-2021 under People and Participation and in the Banyule Youth Plan 2018-2021. Key guiding principles include meaningful engagement, valuing young people and valuing diversity- promoting inclusiveness, accessibility and diversity.

Banyule's Public Open Space Plan 2016-2031 states that with increasing urban density and shrinking backyards, public open space is increasingly being utilised by young people in urban areas. Banyule City Council has identified a need to provide suitable open space facilities for young people between the ages of 12 - 25 that meets their unique needs.

Currently there is no specific plan to guide the provision of youth facilities and their design in open spaces across Banyule. There is a need to design and plan youth friendly spaces so that young people feel included within the community and have legitimate spaces to 'hang out'. This report aims to address this gap and provide a strategic plan to guide the provision of youth facilities and the design of spaces across the municipality.

## Why it is important

Young people in Australia are playing less and have fewer community-based areas that facilitate play. As a result, obesity is on the increase. This issue is compounded by the fact that more than 8% of the most vulnerable young people in Australia are excluded from play and recreation.

- **42% of young people are not involved in sport**
- **630,000 young people spend 40+ hours of screen time per fortnight**
- **50% drop in young people playing in their local neighbourhoods within the last generation**
- **65% of families have both parents working**
- **8% of our youth have a disability. 50% of these are either severe or profound with 75% of these disabilities being neurological, not physical**
- **40% increase in childhood obesity between 1995-2005**
- **25% of Australian children are obese or overweight**

*Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing 2010 Report & Inclusive Play Space 2012*

Play and recreation is critical to all young people. Spaces that are safe and accessible within our neighbourhoods need to be created to facilitate this.





# What is play for young people?

This section touches on current industry thinking about what play is for pre-teen/ early teens & teens, and what play or recreation is for young adults. It includes discussion on issues young people face, why play for pre-teen/ early teens and teens is so important and a review of existing models of provision. It then highlights a new approach to teen and pre-teen/ early teen play and recreation space provision.

***“Every child (up to age 18) has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”***

Article 31 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

All young people, including pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults, have the right to participate in play and this UN Convention has been ratified by the Australian Government.

Firstly for the purposes of this study;

**Pre-teens/ early teens** are considered children from 12-14 years transitioning into adolescence.

**Teens** are defined as 15-17 year olds.

**Young adults** are defined as 18- 25 year olds.

When discussing adolescents more generally it relates to both pre-teen/ early teens and teens from 12-17 years old.

So what is play and why is it important and how does it differ to different ages? The following section aims to provide some answers.

“Play is described by some as the universal language of childhood though not only children play”<sup>1</sup>. No matter our age, we all play: in different ways, at different times, in different places and with different people. But what is play? It has many descriptions, however enjoyment is the common link between them all:

“To play is to engage in activity for enjoyment and recreation rather than a serious or practical purpose”<sup>2</sup>. “The focus of play is on the actual experience, not on accomplishing any goal. There doesn’t need to be any point to the activity beyond having fun and enjoying yourself”<sup>3</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Play Scotland. What is play? <http://www.playscotland.org/what-is-play/playwork/what-is-play>.  
<sup>2</sup> Oxford Dictionary. [www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/play](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/play).  
<sup>3</sup> Helpguide.org. The benefits of play for adults. <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/emotional-health/benefits-of-play-for-adults.htm>: n.d.

## Why is play important?

Providing play opportunities for young people means acknowledging that everyone can, and should play. Most importantly, providing play opportunities is not just about providing play equipment and facilities: play can include public place pop-ups, performance, programs and events or artworks and sculptures that foster fun, inspire imagination or evoke senses and memories. Play is not just physical or active.

All young people need to play. All young people have the right to play. When young people play they are not just filling in time, they are learning to make sense of their world. Play facilitates the learning of life skills and for this reason, the provision of quality outdoor play spaces is vitally important in local communities. Through play, young people develop qualities necessary in adulthood, including problem solving, independence, self awareness, creativity, resilience and spatial knowledge.

*Play is about more than just ‘letting off steam’; it can be quiet and contemplative, as well as active and boisterous. All children and young people, including those who are disabled or have specific needs, should have opportunities to experience challenge and take risks while playing. Play is essential to the healthy development of children and young people – not just their physical development, but their social and cognitive development too.*

*‘Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces’, Play England 2008*

## Re-imagining play...

In recent times, playspace design and planning has focused on provision of safe playground equipment (along with associated maintenance and timely replacement), rather than provision of creative, challenging and exciting play environments. We need to re-imagine our approach to play to ensure the needs of people of all ages and abilities are met.

One of the critical components in re-imagining play is to understand that while adults may be arbiters of providing playspaces, young people are the main users. It is integral to the success of spaces for young people that their voice is heard throughout the design process. Banyule City Council undertake community consultation for all parks and open space projects, inclusive of nature play, providing opportunity for young people and people of all ages to provide valued feedback. For designers, this provides great opportunity to see the possibilities through the lens of a young person who is likely to use the space, again and again. In too many cases, play is managed and controlled; often simply by the structure of standardised play equipment. If we consider other forms of play that encourage exploration, inspire creativity and offer varying levels of challenge, each time a player returns they can find new ways to engage in play, to use their imagination or stretch their boundaries through adventure and discovery.

We should be imaginative in thinking about how to design play spaces that provide opportunity for physical challenge, exploration and social interaction for people of all ages.

Increasingly people are seeking vibrant, playful places where they can interact as a whole family, socialise with friends or simply watch other people play. The challenge is to now incorporate playfulness into all aspects of the public realm, not just parks and playgrounds; to build in flexibility and provide play opportunities that can adapt as community preferences and expectations change. Our re-imagined places for play need to enable people of all ages and abilities to play independently as much as they need to enable people of all ages and abilities to play together.



# So what is play for young people?

When considering what 'play' is for young people, traditional models of activity such as active recreation and skateparks come to mind, however these are not the only ways young people engage in play. The majority of young people throughout Australia spend time with their friends. Friendships are among the most important activities of life. ***“Peer relationships are very influential in adolescence. During this time, when young people are developing autonomy from their parents, peers become a significant source of social and emotional support”*** (Gorrese & Ruggieri, 2012).

As part of the consultation with young people within Banyule for this study, they were asked about what their favourite pastime or leisure activity was. Of the 177 responses, overwhelmingly the most popular activity was “Hanging Out with friends” at 49%; followed by playing video games and going shopping. As way of comparison, BMX and bike riding was 11th and skateboarding was 12th on the list at 8%. Reading and listening to music at a park was higher than these more traditional “youth” activities at 11% and 10% respectively.

When asked about what existing facilities and places they currently frequented, the results were similar with shopping centres first; followed by parks and open space second. Skateparks were 8th. This is a small sample of data, but shows that there is a fundamental need and interest for young people to hang out and socialise. Therefore, essentially teenage play is simply providing opportunities for young people to have fun and socialise.

## Relevant spaces?

If young people are most interested in socialising and hanging out with friends, it becomes important to expand on where they want to be to do this. Providing spaces that welcome and celebrate a diverse mix of young people regardless of their cultural background or socio-economic profile is important. A lot of young people have to use public transport to get around, are attracted to fashion, movies, music and books. All of these are found in town centres (ie. libraries, transport hubs) and commercial precincts.

There is significant evidence confirming this throughout Australia with most shopping and commercial centres and malls experiencing issues with many young people congregating in these central and accessible locations. Ironically though, this is seen as a negative and a major problem for many commercial centres. Strategies have been put in place to remove teens from “loitering” in these spaces such as employing security guards and even more significant responses such as the “Mosquito” (a high pitched tone that only younger people can hear).

## None of this makes sense?

So we are creating 'youth' spaces in parks that are hard to access; not where young people want to be, yet at the same time implementing strategies aimed at preventing young people from using shopping precincts, transport nodes and commercial centres to which they are naturally attracted. So who should then be responsible for designing spaces for young people?

Due to the structure of most local governments within Australia, different departments are responsible for different strategic areas. Recreation departments are traditionally involved in managing sporting and active recreation facilities. Parks and Open Space departments are typically responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of parks and reserves as well as the design and delivery of passive recreational infrastructure. Youth Services focus more on at risk youth, programs and support. Urban Design and City Planning are responsible for the implementation and management of more centralised urban centres and transport nodes. Given this demarcation of responsibility, it is essential that cross- Council collaboration take place in the planning and design of spaces specifically for teenagers.





# Youth recreation needs

## Play for young people

Pre-teen/ early teens (12-14), teens (15-17) and young adults (18-25) all recreate for different reasons and require different spaces and places.

Pre-teen/ early teens are still very much looking for opportunities to play and be active. At an age where they are still not able to travel independently, spaces that are local to them are critical. Therefore, looking at adapting existing play spaces in key locations with a range of different active elements including parkour, scooter loops, ball courts and skate can provide diversity in play and active experiences.

Teens are very much moving into an important new stage of adolescence. A key part of this phase is their transition into adulthood. As such, places to socialise are the key focus. Recreation spaces that are accessible and safe in relevant areas such as commercial precincts, libraries and transport nodes are therefore critical.

Young adults are more likely to be interested in traditional sport and fitness in line with broader recommendations detailed in Banyule's Public Open Space Plan (2016 - 2031) and Recreation Plan (2017 - 2021).

*“Recreation has been found to be an important contributor to adolescent development, assisting with the positive formation of a young person’s identity and minimising drug and alcohol abuse. Unstructured recreational opportunities have also been found to assist with better psychological health outcomes for young people.”*

*The Rationale for Recreation Services for Youth: An Evidence Based Approach. (Banyule Youth Plan 2018-2021)*

## Not just active recreation

For a start, we need to acknowledge that sport is not the only recreation solution for young people. Art, music and dance can also be attractive and relevant to young people, with many undertaking these pursuits as part of their school curriculum. Teens are also highly influenced and enjoy these pursuits socially, in particular both music and dance. Tapping into this interest allows a potential space to become far more relevant to a much larger range of young people.

Most importantly, accommodating a broad range of pursuits in a space allows it to transform and change as trends change. Art, music and events allow the space to transform with the trends and remain relevant.

## What is a youth space?

A youth space can be defined as any outdoor activity space that is free to access, and is designed with the intention for young people to engage through social and physical activity. These spaces focus on young people aged between 10 and 24 years. They typically facilitate social gathering and free access social sports facilities, such as multipurpose courts, hit-up walls, goalposts and practice wickets, as well as the conduct of one or more action sports.



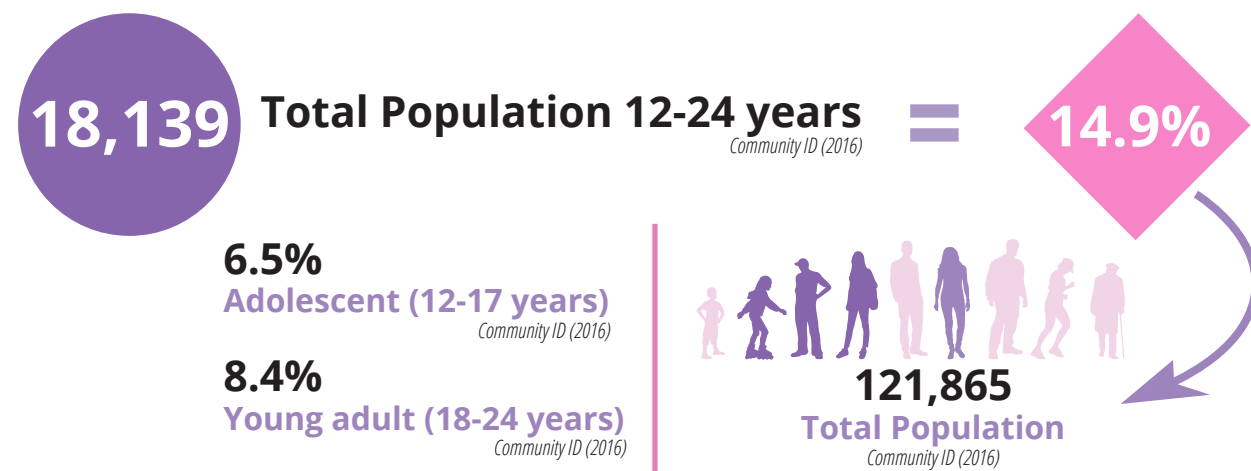


# Demographic review

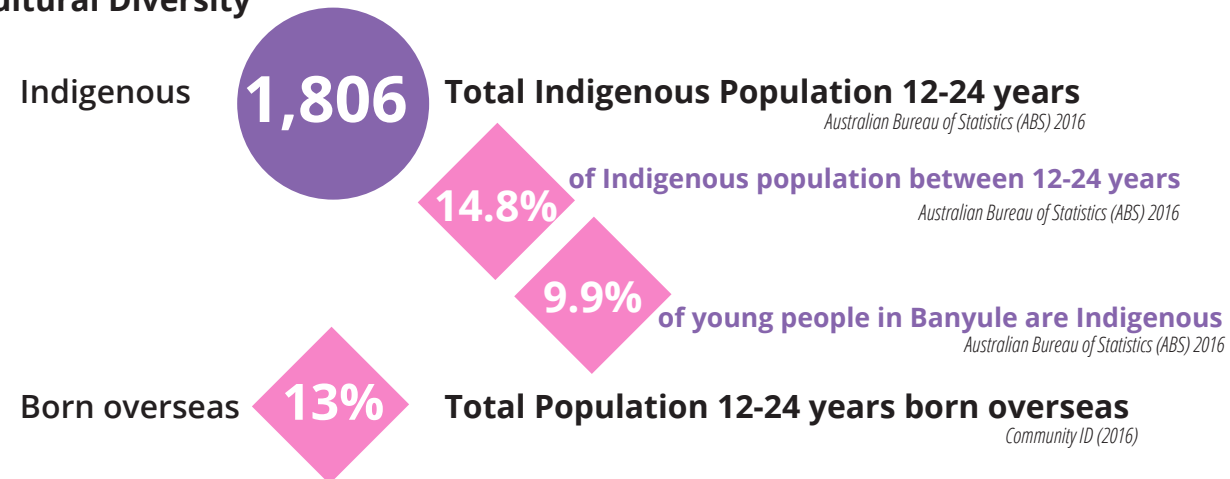
## Introduction

The following section provides a brief snapshot of the broader distribution of where young people live in the City of Banyule, now and where they are forecast to live in 2031. Where possible, facilities should be located close to where young people live.

### Age



### Cultural Diversity



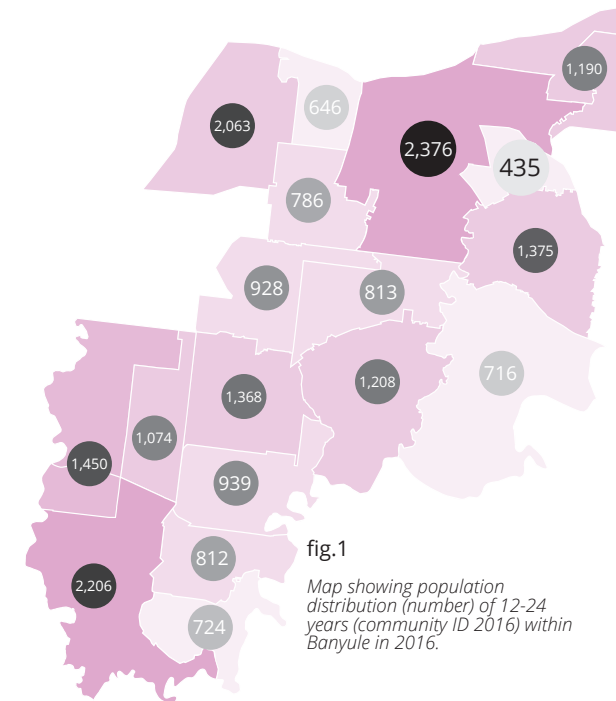
Banyule City Council has a smaller percentage (13%) of 12-24 year olds born overseas compared to its Indigenous population (14.8%).

The cultural diversity of Banyule is celebrated through various groups which focus on engaging a broader demographic of young people across the municipality and neighboring LGAs. This was prominent at the Banyule Youth Festival consultation pop up, which celebrated the multiculturalism of Banyule's young people through cultural dancing and drumming and a diverse range of food, workshops and music.

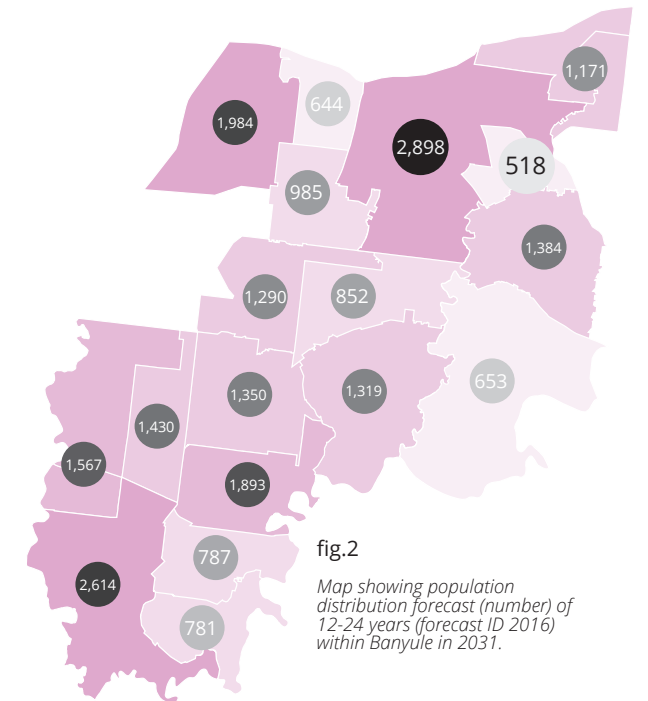
## Youth population distribution

The following maps show the existing distribution of youths across the municipality of Banyule, as well as the forecast for youth population distribution in 2031.

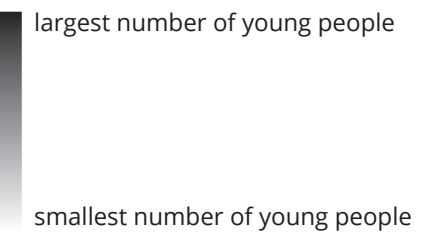
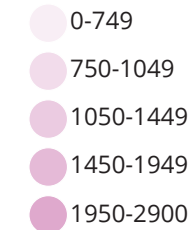
### Youth population distribution: 2016



### Youth population distribution: forecast 2031



#### Youth population distribution per suburb



### Top 5 areas predicted to have the most growth from 2016 to 2031:

1. Heidelberg +101.6%
2. Macleod +39.0%
3. Heidelberg Heights +33.2%
4. Watsonia +25.3%
5. Greensborough +22%

### Summary

The above maps show that the highest proportion (numbers) of young people aged 12-24 years in 2016 resided in Greensborough (2,376), Ivanhoe (2,206) and Bundoora (2,063). By 2031, Heidelberg will have experienced the highest growth in its youth population across the municipality (increasing from 939 to 1,893). Greensborough is also predicted to experience substantial growth (increasing from 2,376 to 2,898), as well as Macleod (increasing from 928 to 1,290). Accordingly, these areas should be a focus for the geographical distribution of any new youth recreation infrastructure. Greensborough is currently the suburb with the highest youth population and will continue to be so going forward to 2031.



# Consultation Summary

Playce and Banyule City Council actively engaged with a total of 348 members of the community to gather insight and information to assist in developing a strategic plan that meets young peoples needs.

During this period a diverse mix of community groups were engaged through stakeholder workshops, school and university visits, public events/ festivals and through the online survey platform.

Through engaging in community participation and via an online survey, participants were asked to consider how they use their spare time, what they do in open public spaces, what they would like to see more of in Banyule and what issues they face in accessing spaces/ facilities within the municipality.

We engaged the following stakeholders;

- Banyule Youth Festival attendees (97)
- Skate Jam, Greensy skatepark attendees (24)
- Young mother's group (6)
- Our Ladies of Mercy College students (35)
- La Trobe University (50)
- Jets Music and Creative Arts centre (7)
- Malahang Festival attendees (15)
- Malahang bike hut drop in attendees (15)

The 'dotmocracy' exercise asked participants to place a sticker on their top 3 favourite images across 3 posters, which categorised 'Creative, Social and Active' opportunities that could be had within Banyule. From this exercise, it was evident that Banyule is a creative and artistic community with an appetite for culture, adventure and fun and community focused events.

## Highlights

- 70% of survey participants were aged between 12-24
- Socialising with friends, adventure play and parks/ open spaces voted most favoured ways to spend time, now and into the future
- Majority of survey respondents use public transport when moving around Banyule

## Summary

Overall the community engagement for the Banyule Youth Spaces Plan confirmed broader trends in the preferences for young people for facilities and activities within public open space.

The general themes focus on creating places to socialise and feel safe with friends, as well as opportunities to explore and create through adventure play (ropes, climbing, obstacle courses etc) and active recreation (multipurpose ball courts, skateable elements, parkour etc).



Malahang Festival, Youth Spaces Plan Consultation: participant engaging in Dotmocracy exercise



# What can spaces for young people look like?

Based on the outcomes of previous Council studies, youth recreation trends, the youth engagements undertaken for this study and the current significant youth population, there is a need for improved spaces within Banyule. This Section describes what these spaces could look like and where they would be best located, through renewals or park upgrades and additions to existing youth facilities. It defines the model of provision to assist the City in effectively implementing new youth spaces over the next 10 years.

## Pre-teen/ early teens

The one key focus for pre-teen/ early teen play is looking at providing local opportunities within smaller parks and public spaces to complement other existing play opportunities.

### Local recreation hub (pre-teen/ early teen)

As Banyule City Council already has a vast number of basketball half courts scattered throughout the municipality, there is a significant opportunity to build upon these for use as localized pre-teen/ early teen play.

Currently they are limited to providing informal opportunities for ball sports. The addition of a range of recreation and play options can ensure these existing play/recreation spaces are far more usable and relevant to many more pre-teen/ early teens.

Elements could include more challenging play equipment, scooter loops, climbing walls, parkour elements, skateable elements or obstacles etc.



Half ball court with skate elements in Werribee, VIC



Scooter loop added to district playspace in Whittlesea, VIC

## Teen and young adults needs

The needs of teenagers and young adults are best accommodated across two main facility types.

Specifically, they require larger district and regional size spaces (District Recreation Plazas) that attract large groups of young people to congregate and enjoy as a destination space complemented by smaller localized spaces (Local Recreation Hubs) to hang out at during times when there is less free time or access to public transport. The following provides a brief description of each;

### Local recreation hub (teen and young adult)

A local recreation hub is essentially a freely accessed public area within a local catchment that has a shelter where possible, seating, social spaces, art or some minor sporting infrastructure relevant to young people. It may be within a local park, along a street or at a local shopping precinct. The focus is the provision of opportunities to 'hang out' and socialise within the local neighbourhood.

Given the number of existing ball courts throughout the municipality, like the pre-teen/ early teen spaces, these existing recreation hubs will form the basis of local teen/ young adult spaces.

The main difference with these spaces and pre-teen/ early teen spaces is their location. They need to be in more centrally accessible locations where young people prefer to be and are easily accessed by public transport.

There is emerging evidence supporting the co-location of Community and Youth facilities/hubs alongside regional recreational/play centres. This facilitates the effective management and programming of spaces, running of events and enhances opportunities to provide assistance to at-risk youth and all young people in locations that youth are already appropriating freely. Community-based, integrated youth service hubs have the potential to address some of the longstanding issues with services for young people, including problems with access and system fragmentation. Banyule's current youth facility "Jets Creative Arts studio" is currently located in an aging building that is not fit for purpose, and also lacks centrality and public transport access. There are future opportunity to explore the relocation of a Council youth facility alongside a new accessible youth recreation hub.

### District recreation plaza/hub

A district recreation plaza is a public space with designated areas and opportunities to facilitate young people (and others in the community) to congregate, socialise and engage in passive and active recreation pursuits. Importantly, whilst not size specific, it is designed to be large enough to cater for a diverse range of programs and activities that will attract a diverse range of young people across the City.

As such, it will become a focus for youth events and activities at a city-wide level. The plaza should include adequate space for cultural and social activities. It requires sufficient provision of seating and shade, to provide designated space for art exhibition spaces, music and performance opportunities, whilst also including active recreation spaces to accommodate activities such as climbing, parkour or ball courts.

The key to the success of a district recreation plaza/hub is location. It needs to be in a high profile, central location that is attractive and accessible to young people via public transport. Therefore town centres, central reserves, major shopping precincts and public transport interchanges are potential key locations.

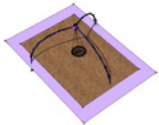

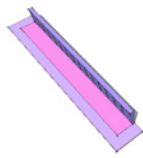
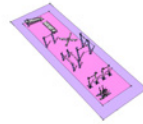

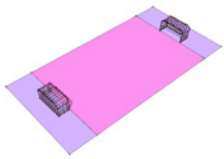
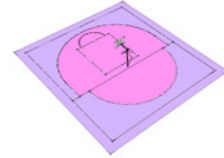


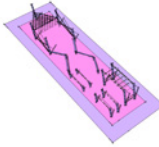
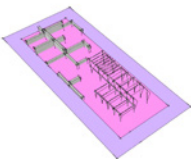
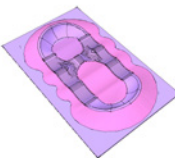

Municipal Recreation Plaza at Geelong CBD, VIC with music stage and skateable elements



# Pre-teen/ early teen & teen/ young adult recreation components

This section illustrates the potential elements for inclusion in both local pre-teen/ early teen and teen spaces. They are all indicative but provide an approximate idea of size. Smaller spaces will typically include 1-2 elements and be placed around existing half courts. Larger spaces will contain a mix of elements as shown in the next section, District Examples.

Element	Preferred Age Group focus	Indicative example
<b>Adventure/social play</b> Focus on range of more challenging elements incl swings/flying foxes, slides and climbing elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens	
<b>BMX Jumps,race &amp; MTB Tracks</b> Allows for more advanced challenging bumps and MTB track for freestyle BMX and mountain bike use <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	
<b>Bouldering/climbing walls</b> Either insitu or blockwork. Can also be used as rebound wall if combined with courts <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Generally concrete/blockwork.</li><li>Any length but preferable for 10m min</li><li>Can also be art walls</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	
<b>Fitness/warm up stations</b> Allows for all age outdoor fitness options <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Teens Young Adults	
<b>Fusball/ping pong tables</b> Small scale informal recreation opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide informal social activities in small areas.</li><li>Combine with social seating spaces</li></ul>	Teens	
<b>Futsal goals/multipurpose nets</b> Mix of options with linemarking, nets, rings etc. (Basketball, volleyball, tennis, netball, four square, futsal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Generally Plexipave finish.</li><li>Approx 28x15m for Full Size Court.</li><li>Bookable for competitions, social games, other events such as markets, music, film nights.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	
<b>Multipurpose courts</b> Mix of options with linemarking, nets, rings etc. (Basketball, volleyball, tennis, netball, four square, futsal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Generally Plexipave finish.</li><li>Approx 28x15m for Full Size Court.</li><li>Bookable for competitions, social games, other events such as markets, music, film nights.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	

Element	Preferred Age Group focus	Indicative example
<b>Music/stage/event space</b> Focus on open but sheltered spaces for events and classes to complement indoor spaces  Size and extent variable to meet client needs.	Teens Young Adults	
<b>Obstacle courses</b> Allows for all age outdoor fitness and play <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens	
<b>Parkour/free running</b> Focus on challenge and training <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	
<b>Pumps tracks</b> Allows for all age wheeled play (scooters, skateboards, bikes etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens	
<b>Scooter loops</b> Allows for junior wheeled play (scooters, bikes etc) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens	
<b>Skate &amp; BMX spaces</b> Focus on range of different elements to cater for diverse users include Vert Ramps, Bowls, Parks and Plaza elements  Size and extent variable to meet client needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Catalyst for other programs such as youth services</li></ul>	Pre-teen/ early teens Teens Young Adults	
<b>Social spaces</b> Focus on small shaded spaces to hang out around other active recreation spaces or relevant spaces for young people to congregate such as urban malls and transit hubs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Size and extent variable to meet client needs.</li></ul>	Teens Young Adults	



# District Spaces

The following examples show how a combination of components can be created that include a range of different recreation options for larger district spaces. They may focus on one key element such as a skatepark or be a mix of components.



fig. 6

## District recreation example 1

This includes a mix of a multipurpose court, climbing/rebound wall, scooter loop, parkour and fitness space.

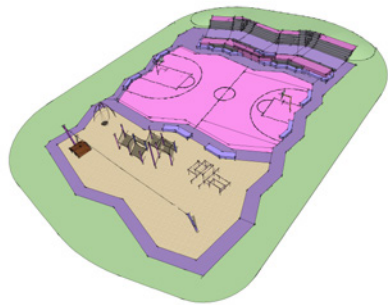


fig. 7

## District recreation example 2

This example combines a multipurpose court, scooter loop, skate bowl, play zone and fitness space.

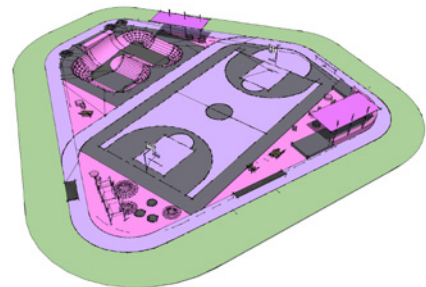


fig. 8

## District recreation example 3

This example combines a multipurpose court, scooter loop, skate bowl, play zone and fitness space in a different configuration to example 2.



fig. 9

## District recreation example 4

This includes a mix of a multipurpose 1/2 court, climbing/rebound wall, scooter loop, adventure play and fitness space.



# But where do Skateparks fit in?

But what about skateparks? Where do they fit in? Over the last 20 years there has been a significant growth in the interest and participation of action sports including skateboarding and BMX (including pumps tracks). Skateparks have been created to meet this need. If they are not youth spaces or pre-teen/ early teen recreation spaces, what are they? Where do they fit in?

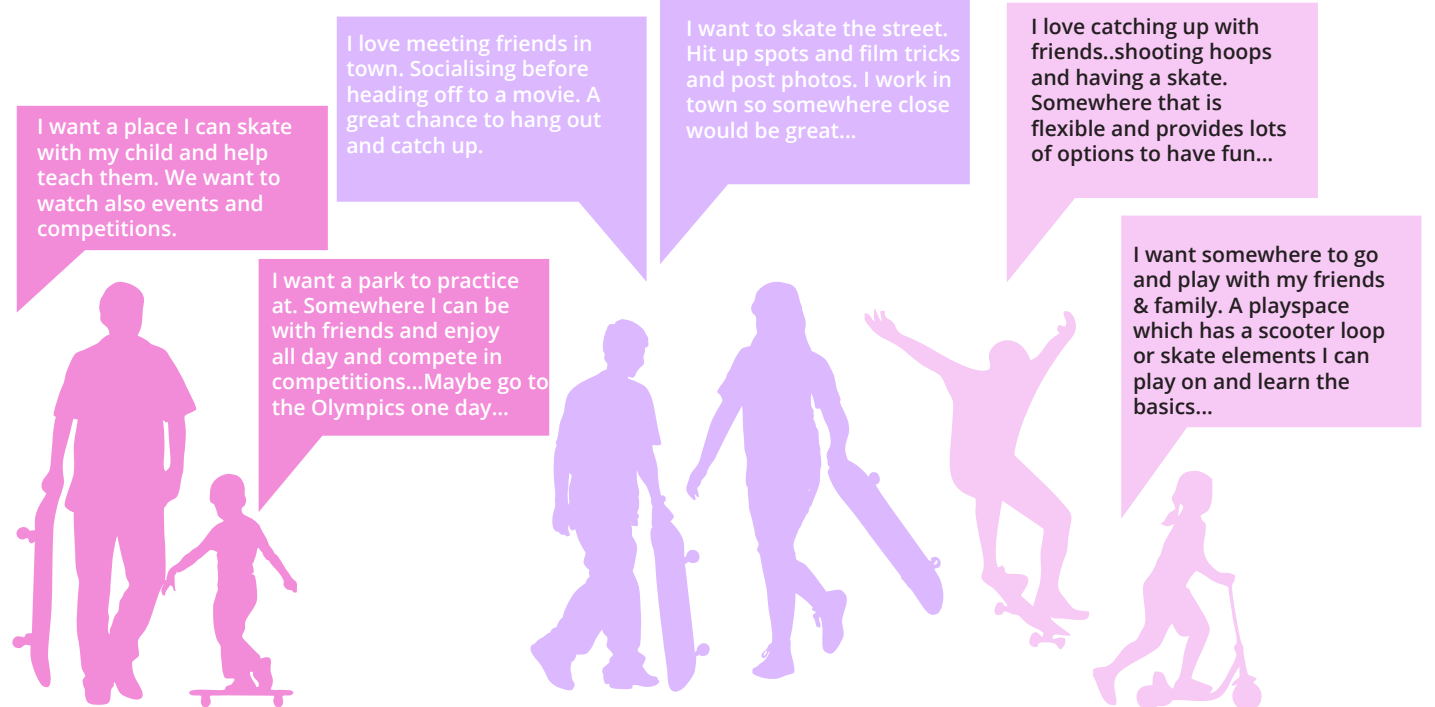
Given they are facilities specifically created to allow participants to enjoy their chosen activity, this study sees them in a more formal sporting model sense. They need to be considered as designated sporting spaces, much like a basketball court and be implemented accordingly. One of the big challenges though is the hierarchy model of sporting skate provision. Whilst district skate facilities cater for BMX, skate, scootering and allow for a diverse range of users, most smaller skateparks cannot.

Because of the need to cater for park, plaza and transition skate as well as BMX, scootering, etc it is difficult to accommodate all needs in a single space. Therefore, Banyule should investigate opportunities to create one large central new skatepark across the municipality that is of a district scale to enable events, training and allow for long-stay use. Smaller skate opportunities can then be provided at pre-teen/ early teen and teen recreation spaces outlined previously. By combining skate at the local level with other recreation and play options, it is possible to create more multipurpose and relevant spaces for more young people.

## A range of users.... a range of needs...

When discussing skateboarding and freestyle BMX and skatepark provision, it is important to acknowledge that there is no single model that meets all needs. People ride and skate for different reasons, using different terrain and at different levels of expertise. It can be a form of transport, an opportunity to appropriate urban spaces in the street or it can be undertaken for sports competition such as the Olympic Games.

For younger children, skate and scootering may be about free play. Unlike many sporting pursuits there are no set court dimensions and rules.



Skateboarding, scootering and freestyle BMX, have no specific set facility type. It is, rather, the difference in spaces that provides the diversity and interest in use. There are so many different types of activity that one single space or model can not cater appropriately for everyone. Street skaters rarely use skateparks, preferring to find urban spots. Bowl skaters however will organize road trips and travel hundreds of kilometres to use a new bowl at a skatepark. It is therefore critical to understand the various styles of skateboarding, scootering and BMX summarised as follows.



# A diverse range of types...

The following describes the main styles of skateboarding and BMX and the types of terrain required for them.



## VERT SKATING

Vert skateboarding and BMX requires large ramps (generally 3m+ in height with at least 30cm vertical face at tops of ramp) for doing vertical tricks.



## TRANSITION SKATEBOARDING & RIDING

Popular over the world, these facilities can come in all shapes & sizes and include snake runs, single and combination bowls.



## 'PARK' STYLE SKATEBOARDING & RIDING

'Park' style is using contrived elements created to partially replicate real urban items. They can be used for both BMX and skate. The Olympic skateboarding event at Tokyo will be held on a 'park' style course.



## PLAZA SKATEBOARDING & RIDING

The final typology is plaza or street skating. This generally utilises existing urban spaces, streets and spots to skate or ride. Designated skate spots are now being created in urban centres around the world.

## Celebrate the diversity

Given the diversity of different user types and the mix of those that skate for competition and those that just skate for fun, skateparks cannot necessarily cater for all needs in a single space. This has been one of the biggest single issues with existing skatepark provision across Australia. There is a proliferation of similar types of smaller skateparks. The reasons for this are varied but generally result from budget and size limitations (easier to fund smaller facilities and less broader community backlash).

Therefore as outlined previously, Council should investigate opportunities for a larger district facility that services the entire municipality, as well as providing a diverse mix of opportunities for the various types of skating/riding at a localised level spread throughout the municipality. These smaller provisions will complement the district facility and provide more opportunities within each precinct.





# Existing Provision

The following map shows the existing provision of local recreation spaces for pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults within Banyule City Council.

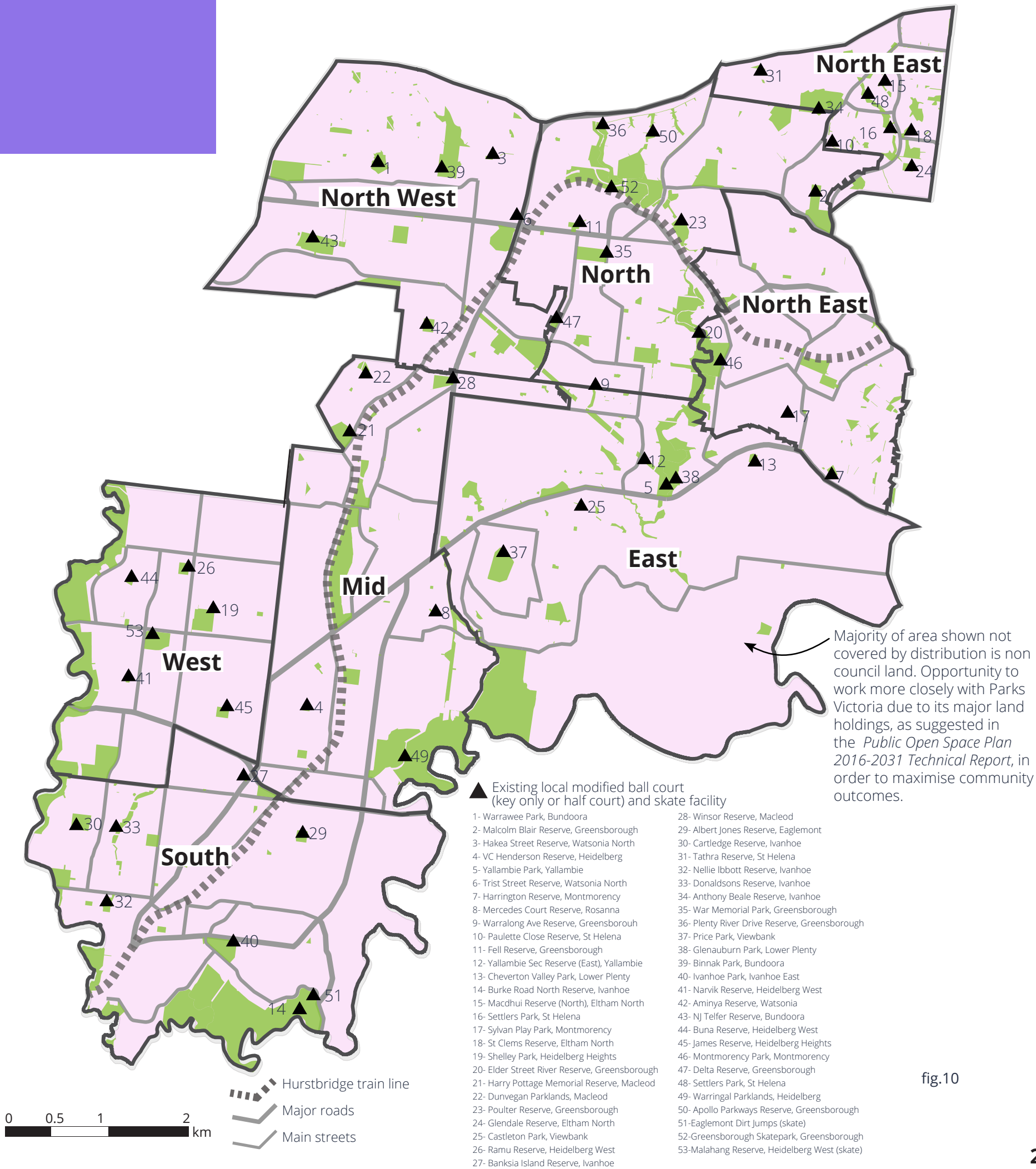
There are two skateparks, one at Kalparrin Gardens in Greensborough and the other at Malahang Reserve, Heidelberg West. There is also a small dirt bmx jumps track in Eaglemont. Whilst Malahang skatepark services the south western region of Banyule, a central/northern location for the new space needs consideration as the existing Greensborough skatepark does not provide adequate opportunities to skate appropriately and is in poor condition.

There are also 50 modified basketball courts across the city. They are a mix of free throw and 1/2 courts. They provide informal areas for recreation and social connection.

As the map to the right shows, overall there is a great distribution of spaces for young people from a walkability perspective. It is however the quality and diversity of experience that is significantly lacking.

The existing ball courts are essentially providing the same recreation experience, with little diversity of opportunity and little amenity. These facilities are spaces in which young people congregate and socialise, therefore all facilities should provide seating and shade-at a minimum-as outlined in the site selection matrix. They can also contain a range of other recreation elements to diversify the opportunities for young people to enjoy.

This site selection process is summarised on the following pages. It includes an outline on what should be contained within local recreation spaces. This helps confirm what elements require consideration when upgrading and adapting the existing ball courts into these new local pre-teen/ early teen and teen recreation hubs.





# Key youth space principles

Based on the outcomes of previous Council studies, youth recreation trends, the youth engagement undertaken for this study and the current significant youth population, there is a need for new youth spaces within Banyule. The following key principles should be adopted when considering these new spaces and places for young people.

## Central & accessible locations

- Young people are naturally attracted to urban centres, transport nodes and shopping precincts. We should look to redevelop these spaces to better accommodate their needs.
- We should also ensure there are localised spaces in our neighbourhoods for pre-teen/ early teens (less independent) so these younger children can access fun and appropriate recreation spaces.

## Diversity of opportunity

- We need to ensure the spaces we provide are diverse and accessible via public transport to ensure as many young people can enjoy them accordingly.
- We need to look at balancing the needs of both recreation and other cultural pursuits. Active recreation, music, art, events and other social opportunities could all be accommodated in high profile locations in places young people want to be.

## Relevance to young people

- The spaces we create need to be relevant to young people. Spaces should be contemporary and fun and be flexible to accommodate changing trends and interests.
- Projection, events and multimedia assist in allowing spaces to be adaptable with changing content allowing spaces to evolve as interests change.

## Communication & ownership

- Ensure young people have a voice and are appropriately engaged in what recreation activities are contained within these spaces.
- Allow them the opportunity to assist in confirming what events and activities are held in these spaces.

## Safe and inclusive

- We need to make sure young people feel safe in these spaces. They need to have high natural surveillance and be in high profile locations with great sight lines. They need to include well designed night-time lighting with no blind spots to ensure young people feel safe traversing through the space when it is dark. They also need to consider the needs of all young people and be inclusive and welcoming.





# Site Selection

## Introduction

This section describes the site selection criteria that are applied when siting pre-teen/ early teen, teen and young adult recreation hubs across the City.

## Finding the best locations

All spaces designed to accommodate pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults should be in accessible and highly visible locations and close to shops and public transport. Whilst the local facilities will be accommodated by utilising the existing ball courts, finding the right district facility is particularly important given its role in servicing young people in this northern and central region.

To assist in determining the best locations for all pre-teen/ early teen, teen and young adult spaces, a broad level site selection matrix has been created that indicates the key requirements for choosing the best possible sites for local recreation hubs and larger district spaces.

Existing district playspaces should also contain opportunities for older play for pre-teen/ early teens so whilst this framework discusses the types of play that should be considered for this age cohort, it focuses on existing ball courts only. Council can review and utilise some of the recommendations for local pre-teen/ early teen play and also apply them to existing regional playspaces.

The following is an outline of the recommended site selection criteria.

## Site condition & scale

- Is the proposed site able to cater for adequate facility/ events? (dependent on the type/ scale of space)
- Can it also accommodate potential additional recreation elements as per the proposed model?
- Is the proposed site suitable for the proposed recreation facility when considering surrounding context and existing provision?
- Will the proposed site provide a recreation space unique to the locale?

## Location / access to transport

- Are there appropriate access to local public transport at the proposed site?
- Is there other areas of interest for young people surrounding the site, such as shopping centres, schools, public transport hubs and recreation facilities?
- Are there pedestrian/footpath connections from transport nodes to the proposed site?
- Is there a safe drop off area or adequate car parking if applicable?
- Is there a local community/ youth centred organisation to assist with programming and overseeing the sites success ?

## Safety / security

- Is the site visually prominent with good public surveillance in line with CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles and for the promotion of the facility?
- Is the site a short distance from police response calls and does it provide ease of police access on scheduled routes?
- Can the site provide adequate emergency vehicle access (fire and ambulance)?
- Can the proposed site provide safe entry to and from the site and safe setbacks from busy roads, intersections and hazards such as vehicles/traffic (pedestrians, bike, cars etc) ?

## Amenities

- Are associated amenities such as public toilets, water, rubbish bins, shelter and shade existing and available or cost effective to install at the site?
- Are the associated amenities of quality standard that are cost effective to maintain and repair?
- Is the site close to shops selling food and drink and is there potential for seasonal, peak time and/or event day food and drink outlets?
- Is there adequate seating/ areas for viewing to cater for larger community events?

The selection criteria are outlined in the table according to the following rating.

- Critically important to function appropriately
- Highly preferable to function appropriately
- Preferable to function appropriately
- Unnecessary to function appropriately

	District Recreation Space	Local Teen Recreation Space	Local Pre-teen/ early teen Recreation Space
Site condition & scale			
Ability to accommodate facility of minimum 2500 sq.m			
Ability to accommodate space for youth events			
Ability to accommodate space for broader community events			
Considers context and landscaping to integrate/ complement surroundings			
Opportunity to contain a mix of social seating - passive and active recreation opportunities (music, sport, art, multimedia, skate) to ensure locally relevant			
Location / access to transport			
Close proximity to commercial/community centre			
Close proximity to public transport/access			
Proximity to youth interest areas (shopping areas, schools, other recreation)			
Close proximity to community/service based organisation that can actively assist in programming the space			
Safety / security			
Good natural surveillance			
Appropriate safety & entry signage			
Emergency vehicle access			
Adequate car parking/drop-off			
Amenities			
Shelter/shade			
Drinking fountain			
Rubbish bins			
Toilets (close proximity)			
Designated seating and viewing areas			



# A summary of the model

The following table summarises the key elements that should be considered when developing spaces and places for young people in Banyule.

Type	Target Age	Description and site considerations	Catchment	Length of Stay	Area (m2)	Connected Use	Specific types of elements to Consider
Local Pre-teen/ early teen Youth Space	Pre-teen/ early teens	<p>Nodes/hubs usually consist of low impact recreation elements which integrate within open spaces.</p> <p>These spaces should be well-located and highly visible.</p> <p>Nodes should be situated in locations close to existing primary schools and bike paths.</p> <p>Typically, these nodes should be integrated with other community focal points as local play spaces to encourage cross-generational interaction and ensuring a greater age range for play opportunities.</p>	1-1.5km	Short Stay based on more localised use of the minor elements provided	50-300 sq.m	Sports precinct Local playspace	<p>A mix of minor recreation elements that could include adventure play or obstacle courses, casual informal ball sport opportunities, climbing, multi-use games parkour, ping pong or futsal.</p> <p>There may also be local wheeled elements such as a small scooter track or Pumps Track or mix of skateable elements (street, plaza or transition). Given pre-teen/ early teen focus, elements should be geared towards entry level participation</p>
Local Teen/ Young adult Youth Space	Teens/ Young adults	<p>Nodes/hubs usually consist of low impact recreation elements which integrate within open spaces.</p> <p>These spaces should be well-located and highly visible.</p> <p>Nodes should be situated in locations with good pedestrian networks in central areas of neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Opportunities to also provide these nodes at community centres, libraries and youth centres is highly beneficial, in particular social spaces and event and performance spaces that can be managed/activated by the centres they are connected to.</p> <p>They can also be additions to an existing shopping centre or transport node to provide opportunities for young people at places that they are already naturally attracted to.</p>	1-1.5km	Short Stay based on more localised use of the minor elements provided	50-300 sq.m	Library, transport node, urban plaza Sports precinct	<p>A mix of minor recreation elements that could include fitness, obstacle courses, casual informal ball sport opportunities, climbing, multi-use games parkour, ping pong or futsal.</p> <p>There may also be local wheeled elements such as a small scooter track or Pumps Track or mix of skateable elements (street, plaza or transition).</p> <p>Art spaces and social seating areas should also be a priority Given teen focus, elements should be geared towards more intermediate level participation</p>
District Youth Space	All	<p>District recreation spaces should cater for a diverse array of activities which cater for a broad range of young people.</p> <p>A district recreation space can serve a number of different purposes. It can be either a purpose-built dedicated recreation facility such as a major skate park or it can be a combination of active recreation elements that provides a diverse range of opportunity for everyone in the community to enjoy.</p> <p>They need to be central and will attract people not only from the neighboring suburbs, but also attract young people and adults from the wider municipality.</p> <p>A district recreation space is generally located within a major activity centre and has convenient access to public transport. These spaces should be integrated with other community focal points to encourage cross-generational interactions.</p> <p>A district recreation space has the ability to cater for large numbers of users and the capacity to host small events such as competitions, demonstrations and youth events.</p>	3-5km	Long stay based on the space having a range of diverse elements to provide significant recreation opportunity	2500 sq.m+	Community Centre Events Plaza Active and public transport node	<p>An integrated large space with diverse opportunities for recreation, social connection and hanging out. Could include a large skatepark, event space, art exhibition space, designated multipurpose courts, significant fitness and parkour areas, some adventurous play spaces and a range of hangout and social seating spaces</p> <p>Given district focus, elements should be geared towards both beginner through to advanced level participation.</p>



# Key action plan

The following is a suggested key action plan outlining the next steps in implementing the above study to ensure Banyule has sufficient youth spaces for pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults to enjoy.

Scale/ Type of Facility	Location	Target Age	Recommendations
Local Pre-teen/ early teen Youth Space	7 precincts of Banyule	Pre-teen/ early teens	Investigate locations and feasibility for walkable local pre-teen/ early teen youth spaces spread equitably across the 7 precincts contained in the Public Open Space Strategy
Local Teen/ Young adult Youth Space	7 precincts of Banyule	Teens/ Young adults	Investigate locations and feasibility for walkable local teen spaces spread equitably across the 7 precincts contained in the Public Open Space Strategy
District Youth Space	South of municipality	All	Investigate locations and feasibility for a district youth space to service the needs of pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults in the south of the municipality
District Youth Space	North of municipality	All	Investigate locations and feasibility for a district youth space to service the needs of pre-teen/ early teens, teens and young adults in the north of the municipality
-	-	-	Ensure that ongoing funds are allocated for the maintenance and renewal of facilities

## Conclusion

This plan has been developed using a principle based approach that sets the foundations that spaces for young people are important and should be provided within the Banyule community. This has been further confirmed through extensive consultation with these young people.

With Council’s support and adoption of this plan, following more detailed site investigation and feasibility to confirm appropriate locations, Banyule City Council should look at implementing a range of suitable and relavant new recreation spaces to cater for the diverse needs of young people across the municipality and rectify a large gap in the provision of appropriate spaces for this age cohort moving forward.

