



# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Creating welcoming & activated public open spaces

National Parks and Leisure Australia Conference

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

I acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin, whose land on which we operate.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, Ancestors and Elders past and present. We recognise the strength, resilience and contributions of First Nations Peoples, and the eternal and spiritual connection held in the lands, skies and waters, through cultural practices and beliefs.



# PUBLIC OPEN SPACE SHOULD BE OUR TRULY EQUITABLE SPACE



**...by 2030, cities should provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green and public spaces particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities".**

- United Nations



# WE AREN'T ALL THE SAME AND DON'T NEED THE SAME THINGS



# WHO ARE WE PLANNING, DESIGNING AND MANAGING OUR PUBLIC OPEN SPACES FOR ANYWAY?

This guy?



or ALL these people?

# WE NEED TO KNOW OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES' PUBLIC OPEN SPACE & RECREATION NEEDS BETTER, SO THAT WE GET MORE VALUE OUT OF OUR PUBLIC OPEN SPACE INVESTMENTS

For parks alone, for every \$1 invested, **\$7 of social value** is experienced by park users (COP, 2021); and **\$38 of social value** is experienced by sportsground users /other stakeholders over a year

*(COP, 2021)*



# THERE ARE ALSO COMPETING NEEDS AND INTERESTS

With some in our community having a stronger voice, and more influence than others.

More population in growth areas without **public open space**, competing for what's there already

More population in already **highly dense** areas, and limited or no land

More culturally diverse people with more **diverse recreational interests** and amenity needs

More demand for **adventure** - but consistent objection to this

Rising **inequality** in terms of income, agency and proximity

More **women** playing in sports traditionally the domain of men

More people wanting more **informal recreational opportunities** - with walking, running, playing and cycling our most popular recreational activities

# WHAT CAN WE DO TO CREATE MORE WELCOMING (AND ACTIVATED) PUBLIC OPEN SPACES FOR ALL...

## 1. PLAN

based on needs to ensure equity and proximity

## 2. ENGAGE

and co-design and engage inclusively with diverse communities

## 3. DESIGN

Led by the community and aimed for sharing, connection, and intergenerational use

## 4. EMBELLISH

for comfort with amenity

## 5. MANAGE,

train and educate

## 6. ACTIVATE

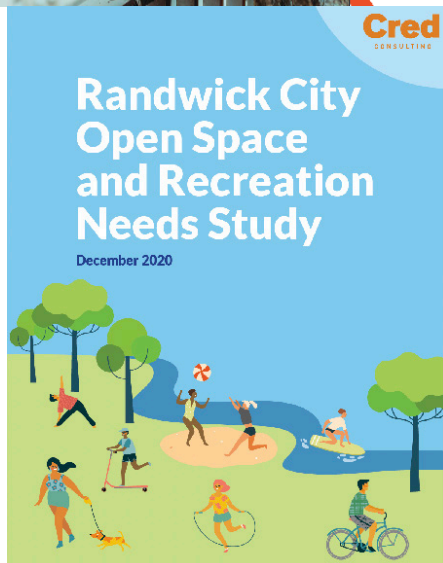
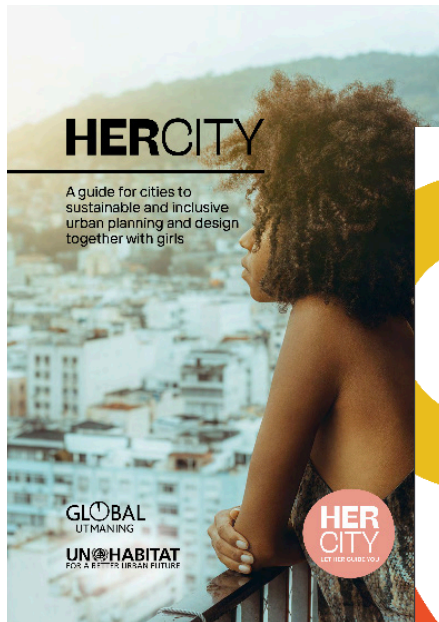
with programs, events and programs

## 7. REPRESENT

diverse communities through public art, murals, plantings and other visibility



# 1. START WITH A NEEDS BASED PLAN



# People have a range of different needs...

"They are too big, too loud, too old for playgrounds, at least in the eyes of parents; and too young, too loud, too broke for restaurants, bars and stores. The problem is magnified for teen girls who, surveys show, are less likely to use the basketball courts and skate parks intended for adolescents, and run the risk of harassment, or worse, when they appear in adult spaces".

- Bloomberg we need more spaces for teen girls

"I need a skate park where my mum or gran can sit and watch while I skate - I like to know that they are comfortable."

- Poppy Star Olsen



"I probably would've never come to the pool if I didn't have this opportunity to come and suss it out. It's a space where people are seeing a lot of your body. Now I feel safe to come here."

- Trans non-binary person Trin Ford at Inner West Transgender pool party



"I like to play social sports with my friends, and need spaces in the park for my children and family to play socially, so we can all be together."

- Indian engagement participant



When footpaths are uneven, or there are large tree roots I won't walk on them, and that stops me going to the park. I need to know I can get there safely

- Older person, Cumberland Open Space

"We need a different way of looking at 'monuments' – as significant, empowering, culturally correct markers of the truth. Trees of significant monuments; Sites of significance as monuments; Take leadership on dealing with colonial artefacts; Gadigal artists creating new markers of truth."

- First Nations recommendations for Crown Lands Plans of Management (City of Sydney)

# ....that's how we can understand (and remove) the barriers diverse and underrepresented cohorts face

- Not being invited to be involved; discriminatory attitudes and behaviours:
- Fear for personal safety
- Language and information
- Physical and health constraints
- Lack of agency/dependence on others
- Social isolation/no one to go with.
- Not universally designed
- Poor or no amenity to play and stay
- No accessible/inclusive toilets
- Poor or no lighting
- No access - or proximity
- Heat
- Single purpose design
- No visual representation or discriminatory visual representation (e.g. colonial statues)
- Quality - poor maintenance, quality and condition
- No sense of welcome - or feeling too exclusive
- Heat, floods and other climate impacts
- No \$\$ for uniforms, entry or equipment

"We have lots of parks and playgrounds for kids but the huge issue we have is that it is hot in summer. When you drive through the area in summer you see all these great parks abandoned. You can't sit on the equipment without bringing a blanket."

"Small symbols like language for example can increase the sense of belonging, even though the community members might be able to read the signs in English but seeing their language on signage in a public space provides that reinforcement that you belong here."

-Western Sydney University



# 2. ENGAGE INCLUSIVELY



# And while facts tell, stories sell.... Listen to other people's experience



## DEFYING EXPECTATIONS

I'm a year 12 student at Liverpool Girl's High School.

I also arrived to Australia as an Iraqi refugee three years ago.

Living in an area that has a lot of newly arrived Arabic communities, I sometimes find myself living in two worlds.

While I feel free and independent when I ride my bike with my friends after school, this is looked down on by others in our community. Sometimes we even have to deal with harassment and comments from older men because riding a bike and being independent is not how young women are expected to behave.

I wish there were more women riding in my area, and more women from different cultural backgrounds like me so that it becomes the new normal.

What are some **INFRASTRUCTURE/FACILITIES**, **BEHAVIOUR CHANGE** and **POLICY/ADVOCACY** solutions that would help in this scenario?

"I am Lebanese – when we go to the park we go in groups, especially women and children. We need more seating and rubbish bins in parks for picnics - it is an affordable activity and space."

- Georges River Multicultural Advisory Group



## RIKKI (25) + SABRINA (20s) SENSORY SENSITIVITY

Rikki is a young woman with an invisible disability. When travelling with her carer Sabrina, the two of them often have to take a combination of public transport, ubers and walking as Sabrina doesn't drive (one of the reasons being a concern for the environment). On this trip, Rikki and Sabrina used a combination of mum driving, walking and bus to get to their destination - Rikki's favourite bookstore in Glebe. The trip poses various challenges, from the risk of flashing business signage on Enmore Road that could induce an epileptic fit, to crowded and busy King Street where Rikki is at risk of being knocked over because she walks a little slower, to bus drivers that aren't always patient and accommodating. To avoid loud, busy streets, Rikki and Sabrina often find themselves on adjacent laneways that also present dangers such as speeding cars or unmaintained footpaths.



# 3. DESIGN (LED BY COMMUNITY)

## Heart of Play Master plan

July 2021



Shade and amenity



Walking and cycling connections



Informal recreation and sharing



Increase the capacity of sporting spaces



Recreation with dogs



Diverse and inclusive spaces



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# 4. EMBELLISH & 5. MANAGE



The Auburn Ruth Everuss Aquatic Centre installed privacy curtains around their Program Pool to deliver a female-only swimming program for women to feel more comfortable in swim environments.



AFTER



BEFORE



LOCATION MAP



## 6. ACTIVATE & 7. REPRESENT



**"For me, I don't really need to see a [physical] sign that says 'This is a multicultural place'... I can sense from a painting, or mural, that I am welcome here."**

*-Mya Arafin, Skater Uktis ambassador*

