

# MEETING PLACES



## Where People & Places Meet: Approaches to Public Space Management

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## **Purpose of this document**

The purpose of this resource is to provide examples of socially inclusive, pragmatic problem-solving approaches to issues arising with young people's use of public (and other) space. We believe that innovative ideas are often stimulated by learning about other approaches. By drawing together some contemporary examples of how problems arising in young people's use of diverse locations have been effectively tackled, we hope to highlight possible solutions and generate further innovative responses. With a little research, creativity, consultation and through the involvement of all relevant stakeholders (especially young people), it is possible to prevent problems from escalating, without simply excluding or punishing young people.

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- Campbelltown City Council
- Blacktown Local Area Command (NSW Police Force)
- Blacktown Youth Services Association (BYSA)
- Transit Officers (Rail Corp)
- Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre
- Auburn Migrant Resource Centre
- Local shopkeepers in the Blacktown area

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The Youth Action & Policy Association NSW (YAPA) is the peak community group working in the interests of young people and youth services in NSW.

YAPA strives to achieve social justice for young people, including the appropriate provision of services for young people. The role of YAPA is to:

- Monitor and respond to government policies and proposals affecting young people
- Promote and advocate on issues affecting young people and youth services
- Bring young people and youth workers together to act on issues affecting them
- Work to raise a positive profile of young people in the media and in the community
- Provide training, forums and conferences to young people and youth workers
- Provide information and referral
- Produce a range of resources, publications and newsletters.

## Where People and Places Meet:

### Approaches to Public Space Management

As social beings, people seek to meet and socialise with others. Meeting and socialising in town squares and markets has been an enduring feature of human civilisation.

For young people,<sup>i</sup> identification with peers is a strong part of adolescent identity formation. Spending time with peers is an important part of adolescent development.

Communal meeting places are where people gather and congregate. For young people, communal meeting places take a variety of forms and provide opportunities to be with other young people, without adult supervision.

For many young people, the following are common places to 'hang out' and to be seen:

- Parks
- Marketplaces
- Shopping centres
- Bus and rail interchanges
- Libraries
- Beaches / rivers
- Bicycle pathways
- Skateboard parks
- Parking lots

Young people's behaviour in these areas is increasingly under scrutiny and surveillance. Many of these areas have become increasingly privatised or regulated. Few of these locations remain truly public spaces. Rather, some are now regarded as private spaces which the public can access, while others remain public but are managed by particular organisations. In this context, it is frequently the case that a traditional town centre is now managed by various organisations / corporations, each having different expectations of behaviour and conditions of entry or standards of behaviour.

There has been considerable work associated with young people's use of shopping centres in recent times. Numerous reports and documents have been produced suggesting ways of reducing the conflict between shopping centre security guards and young people. There has been less attention on responding to the needs of young people in other locations. This document seeks to adopt a problem-solving approach in responding to issues that can arise through young people's use of these public, semi-public and private spaces. It is anticipated that this document will be of assistance to local government, police, security, community workers and retailers (amongst others) seeking to respond to specific issues associated with young people and their presence in public, private or semi-private space.

## Statistics on Young People

- According to the 2006 Census, there are 1,141,199 young people aged between 12 and 24 years in New South Wales, which is 17.4% of the total population in the State. Of these young people, 36,613 identified as Indigenous, while 1,035,705 stated that they were not Indigenous. A further 68,881 did not declare if they were or were not Indigenous. Therefore, approximately 3.2% of the young people aged between 12 and 24 in New South Wales identify as Indigenous.
- The 2006 Census also revealed that Australians reported more than 250 ancestries and 400 different languages were spoken in homes across the country.
- Sydney has 731,062 young people aged 12-24 years, equating to approximately 18% of Sydney's population. Nearly 29% of Sydney's population (or 1.2 million people) speak non-English languages at home.
- The top 10 languages spoken at home in Australia are:
  - a. English – 78.5%
  - b. Italian – 1.6%
  - c. Greek – 1.3%
  - d. Cantonese – 1.2%
  - e. Arabic – 1.2%
  - f. Mandarin – 1.1%
  - g. Vietnamese – 1%
  - h. Spanish – 0.5%
  - i. German – 0.4%
  - j. Hindi – 0.4%
- Furthermore, approximately 22% of the Australian population was born overseas. This is largely unchanged since the 1996 Census.

## Is it public or private space?

For many (young) people, the distinction between public or private space is of little consequence, or at least until something goes wrong. The difference between private and public space can be important in relation to expectations of behaviour and regulation of that behaviour.

Oscar Newman, a renowned architect, described four types of spaces. While Newman's distinction is in the context of residential accommodation, his distinction is instructive for other purposes.

- **Private space** – Grounds that belong to and for the use of the owners of the property.
- **Semi-private** – An area privately owned yet accessible to certain people from the public.
- **Public** – An area that is open to the public and which serves a variety of purposes.
- **Semi public** – An area that is accessible by the general public but is limited in use.<sup>ii</sup>

Newman's hierarchy of space provides an insight into the different levels of private ownership of land. Ownership of land is accompanied by rights and expectations.

The distinction between private and public space is somewhat blurred. Shopping centres once recognised as public spaces have now become privately owned. Crane refers to this as "hybrid or community accessed spaces which cannot be defined simply by considering ownership or function".<sup>iii</sup> Therefore, individuals who think they are entering a 'public' space are actually entering a private space, run by managers, who employ security staff to monitor the premises.

Public space, occasionally referred to as community space,<sup>iv</sup> is not just the gaps between buildings and is not just physical space - it is considerably more than that. It is a "community resource", and "reflective of broader cultural facets and mechanisms of our urban life"<sup>v</sup>.

Public space usually has no time limitations and there is no cost involved. For example, people do not pay to sit on a park bench. A café, on the other hand, may be situated outdoors, yet contain dress codes and other conditions of use and entry. This is classified as a private space. Therefore, it can be difficult at times for people to distinguish between space that is private and space that is public. This is the case for young people as much as it is for other sections of the community.



## **Why is public space important to young people?**

Public space has a different and important significance to the lives of young people. Young people use public space for a variety of reasons including:

- As a meeting point with friends
- To entertain themselves ('hang out')
- An alternative to paid events/places
- To socialise- sustain friendships
- To make new friends and social contacts
- As an escape

Young people rely on public space, as they are less economically able to indulge in activities than older people are. They are also constrained by their age; particular venues require persons to be over the age of 18. In addition, many young people are not old enough to obtain a drivers licence, so therefore their transport options are limited.

Young people are reliant on public spaces because they have a particularly increased dependence on public transport and public venues. Public space is free, there is no cost involved in going to the beach or visiting a park. There are few, if any limitations placed on entry, so young people feel that they are able to enjoy the use of public space.

Overall, young people not only need public space, but require public space that is conducive to their needs. Its accessibility is desirable for an array of young people.

## **Problems arising from young people's use of public space**

Young people's use of public space can cause problems. Different users of the same space will have different expectations. Culture, age and gender are some of the factors that will influence an individual's expectation of how people should behave in public space. Furthermore, those personnel with responsibility for managing a space will also have expectations regarding acceptable behaviour. The intersection of these different perspectives can make it difficult to anticipate and to know exactly what is required.

Some common problems associated with young people's use of public space can include the following:

- Fear of young people (particularly groups)
- Alcohol consumption and under-age drinking
- Anti-social behaviour
- Boredom



## Principles of effective practice

Each of these issues will be considered separately. However, it is suggested that the following set of principles should be considered in the development of any response:

- **Consultation** – gaining an understanding of the problem or issue is critical. To gain a deep understanding of the dynamics of a particular situation, all relevant stakeholders should be consulted. This can take the form of simple informal discussions through to focus groups or surveying all stakeholders. Young people and users of the area, business owners, and place managers for the area and relevant local authorities should be included. The inclusion of young people in consultations allows their voices to be heard and can be of considerable value.
- **Problem-identification** – once information is gathered from various sources, the key problem(s) should be isolated and analysed. This will include looking to the causes of any problem. Understanding what is contributing to a situation will help to tackle the underlying causes.
- **Participation** – involving key stakeholders in the development of appropriate responses will help to avoid perceptions of exclusion. Creative responses to problems are often the result of diverse perspectives contributing to a solution. Engaging young people, retailers, rangers, police, security personnel, transport providers and other users of public space can help all stakeholders gain a better understanding of each other's perspective and can result in innovative local responses to emerging problems.
- **Inclusive responses** – many strategies developed in response to problems in public areas can prove (knowingly or unknowingly) to be exclusionary. While immediate problems might be arrested by such responses, it is often true that similar issues emerge in other local areas, often places that are even less safe. For example, an enforcement approach designed to move young people from a CBD area could result in groups being displaced to less well-lit and less well patronised areas. This could increase the risks to the young people, causing greater negative outcomes to the community at large. Consequently, it is important to consider unintended consequences of decisions taken and strategies adopted.
- **Skills development** – problems in public areas often have implications for the people responsible for managing these spaces. Rarely are those people responsible for the area provided opportunities to learn better ways of managing young people. Joint training can help to promote confidence and improve consistency of responses across agencies.
- **Pooling resources** – numerous agencies and organisations will often have a vested interest in reducing problems in a particular location. Through the sharing of ideas and resources, it is often possible to achieve outcomes that would not be possible if one agency tackled the problem.

These principles should guide the development of responses to all problems emerging in public space. Through the development of a deep understanding of the problem, engagement of key stakeholders in framing the problem and developing solutions, enhancing skills to respond to young people and pooling limited resources, more effective solutions can be developed for enduring problems.

## Issue 1- Fear of groups of young people

Young people may become the target of law enforcement, due to “assumptions ... about the clothes worn, the colour of skin, and the activity of congregating in public space”.<sup>vi</sup> Many young people feel that they are targeted because they are socialising in groups. Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds can feel particularly vulnerable to law enforcement harassment due to their increased visibility in public places. For many young people, being in groups provides not only a sense of identity, but also a sense of safety. Parents will frequently encourage their children to socialise in groups for the purposes of safety and security.

However, other users of public space will often feel intimidated by groups of young people. Gregarious and boisterous behaviour, the blocking of pedestrian walkways and the gathering of large groups are some of the circumstances that result in the fear of young people.

The below diagram outlines the process of how the fear of young people can generate or result in increased attention from law enforcement agencies.

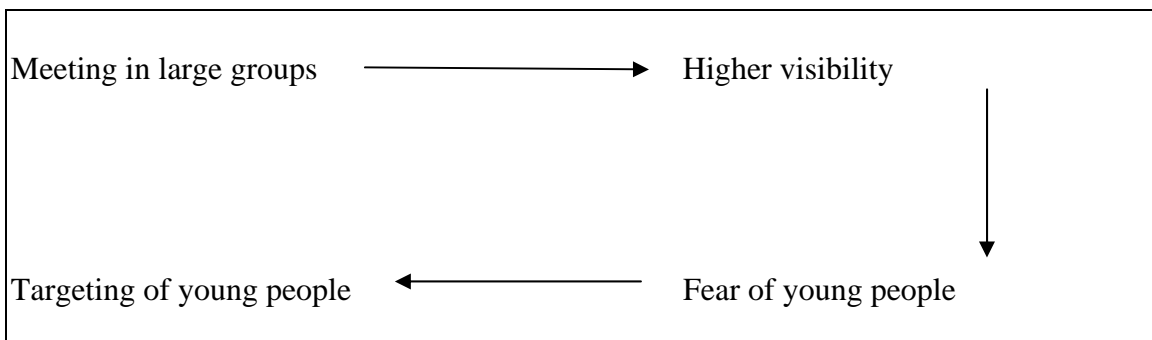


Figure 1: Process of fear of young people in groups

A further and somewhat recent dimension to the fear of groups of young people relates to swarming. Swarming, as defined by White, is the “unexpected gathering of large numbers in particular public locales”.<sup>vii</sup> Through the use of mobile phones, text messaging and the Internet, large groups can converge and descend on an area. For people responsible for the management of such spaces, this can cause considerable anxiety. At times, swarming might be in the form of flash mobs, which pose few threats. Flash mobs are groups of people that move into an area, do something of an irreverent nature and then disperse. Flash mobs do not pose any real dangers. However, conventional “mobs” and “gatecrashers” do potentially pose problems. These groups generally have more sinister intentions. Some of the strategies below specifically attend to the challenges posed by mobs and gatecrashers.

## **Strategies- Fear of groups of young people**

### **1. Inter-generational programs**

Intergenerational activities are a great opportunity for the entire community to get involved. Young people and older people working together will assist in reducing the fear that some community members have of young people.

Intergenerational programs may include:

- (1) **An Intergenerational Art Exchange** between a group of older artists and young students. Artwork can be displayed at schools, senior centres, community centres or even the local shopping centre.
- (2) **The use of information technology** to bring disparate age groups together. Local exchange programs where young people assist older community members to learn how to use different forms of technology.
- (3) **Joint contribution** to considering how particular spaces will be developed or community funds managed. By bringing different groups together to contribute to community decisions, the fear held of some groups can be eroded.

### **2. Enlightened enforcement**

The general public will often feel re-assured by a police, ranger or security presence in public areas. However, an enforcement approach can create unnecessary conflict. A more enlightened enforcement approach can include the involvement of other organisations to work with police. For example, outreach youth workers working with police can help promote appropriate behaviour without causing conflict or excluding young people from particular areas. Street teams have operated at different times in Redfern, Bankstown and Cronulla. Furthermore, mobile PCYC facilities have been deployed in places like Charlestown Mall and Parramatta Church Street Mall to engage young people and to provide a police presence. Often local youth workers will help the police with these deployments. These approaches can prove to be more constructive than tactics to simply move-on young people.

Some police commands have adopted the approach of inducting new police to the area. This induction includes meeting with local youth workers and young people. By establishing relationships in a non-combative manner, these relationships can be utilised in situations where problems emerge or intervention is required.

Furthermore, building relationships with local young people and youth networks can help to generate relevant information and intelligence that can help prevent gatecrashing and mob behaviour. Establishing and maintaining close relationships with young people and youth networks will often result in authorities being alerted to particular planned activities.

### 3. Service provision

A key factor associated with many issues that arise in public space is the lack of programs, activities and services for young people. Many youth programs and services are closed during the times of greatest need (i.e. after hours, particularly on weekends). Services are often not sufficiently funded to operate outside of normal business hours and few will be adequately equipped to compete with the facilities of shopping centres.

Numerous successful models exist which engage young people outside of normal business hours. Outreach workers operate in numerous areas (particularly CBD environments). These workers engage young people on the streets and encourage participation in local programs and activities, as well as providing necessary individual support. Some shopping centres have specific youth spaces built in. Erina Fair (NSW Central Coast) has a well equipped and frequently utilised youth centre. Greensborough Plaza (Victoria) provided vacant shops to the local youth service to utilise. Other organisations host events outside of normal hours to provide opportunities for young people to engage in enjoyable social activities.

## Issue 2 - Under-age drinking

A key issue frequently identified by people involved in the management of public space is under-age drinking. Complaints are often made by community members about under-age drinking in parks and open spaces. Alcohol consumption can lead to the damage of benches, play equipment, toilet blocks and other playground amenities and the visibility of broken glasses creates an unsafe environment and a fear of 'going out' during the evening.

Statistics from the 2004 National Drug Strategy Household Survey noted that 83.5% of individuals aged 14-19 years were offered or had the opportunity to use alcohol in the last 12 months. Of those males and females aged between 16 – 17 years, 21.6% consumed alcohol on a weekly basis.

This data highlights the significance of under-age drinking. The following provide some contemporary examples of promising initiatives in responding to under-age drinking in public spaces.

### Strategies – Under-age drinking

#### 1. Safe partying

Considerable work in recent years has focused on safe celebrations. Safe party packs, created by YouthSafe and the NSW Police Force, help parents conduct safe parties. These guidelines include registering parties with local police, providing appropriate security, restricting access to gate crashers and providing appropriate transport to and from the party venue. More information about safe partying can be found at the Youthsafe website: <[http://www.youthsafe.org/safe\\_celebrate.html](http://www.youthsafe.org/safe_celebrate.html)>.

Another example of a socially inclusive approach is provided by the “Safe Party Squad” run by the Coffs Harbour Community Drug Action Team. This initiative provides education, assistance and helps reduce crime. Police, youth workers, and volunteers target underage drinking on local beaches. They distribute bottles of water, drug and alcohol information, and condoms and organise the occasional BBQ. The provision of food and water serves to lessen the negative consequences of intoxication, while the presence of volunteers, police and youth workers helps to increase surveillance and enables referral to appropriate services as required.

#### 2. Secondary supply

Restricting secondary supply of alcohol is an enforcement approach which can directly reduce the supply of alcohol in an area. Various Initiatives have sought to educate adults about the penalties associated with secondary supply of alcohol, while also working with licensed premises to prevent known offenders from purchasing alcohol on behalf of young people.

It is against the law to supply alcohol to minors (those aged under 18 years). Section 114 of the NSW Liquor Act 1982 states that “A person shall not, in any place whether or not licensed premises, sell or supply liquor to a person under the age of 18 years”.

The NSW Office of Liquor Gaming and Racing provides information on their website regarding secondary supply of alcohol. Adults who purchase alcohol for minors to consume may be fined and/or gaoled for up to 12 months. For further information visit;

[http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor\\_info\\_young\\_people\\_2nd\\_party.asp](http://www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor_info_young_people_2nd_party.asp).

The “Supply means Supply” program run in Brisbane Waters on the Central Coast is a campaign designed to assist teachers in raising awareness amongst students of the issue of the secondary supply of alcohol. The resource investigates various scenarios where adults are depicted supplying alcohol to people younger than 18. Each of the scenarios is accompanied by a description by Licensing Police of the various offences committed and the consequent penalties. The material provides a powerful discussion point on issues associated with alcohol and young people. This is a NSW Police Force initiative to tackle the problems of underage drinking and secondary supply.

### **3. Education**

The “Your Choice” program focuses on young people and their consumption of alcohol. If they are caught possessing or consuming alcohol by police, they are given the opportunity to either receive an infringement notice or attend a responsible drinking education evening with their parents. Education events run for 2 hours and consist of an array of community speakers. Similar initiatives also include attendance of parents at the information sessions. The possibility of conducting a brief intervention through these courses enhances the likelihood of improved parental supervision and referral into appropriate services.



## Issue 3 - Anti-Social Behaviour

Despite the problems in defining anti-social behaviour, it is frequently identified as being of concern to police, rangers, local businesses and users of public areas. Behaviours that are often considered as being anti-social include:

- Racial slurs
- Tagging (graffiti) on utilities and infrastructure
- Skateboarding and rollerblading in public areas
- Increased level of noise
- Loitering (gathering in groups)

Some of these behaviours are illegal, while others pose more of a problem to the amenity and atmosphere in an area.

### Strategies - Anti-Social Behaviour

#### 1. Consistent behavioural guidelines

A challenge for pluralistic or diverse communities is coming to a shared understanding of what is acceptable behaviour in public spaces. Cultural and regional differences operate, whereby certain behaviour will be accepted by some, but discouraged by others. Arriving at an agreed understanding of what is or is not acceptable is a difficult task.

One example where attempts have been made to consider standards of behaviour in public (and private) space is the Bondi Junction Youth Protocol. This protocol seeks to outline and define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in the Bondi Junction area. By establishing agreed guidelines, young people can be confident that there will be a more consistent response from relevant security and place managers. The protocol can be accessed from;

[www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/commsservices/communitysafety/Flyer.pdf](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/commsservices/communitysafety/Flyer.pdf)

Further to establishing agreed behavioural standards, there have been attempts to educate young people about these standards. Protocols, including the Macarthur Square Handshake and the Bondi Junction Youth Protocol have been produced in wallet size cards. This has helped increased penetration amongst young people.

Some areas have also taken to developing educational material on behaviour in public areas. The NSW Department of Education has developed a module on public space as part of their Crime Prevention Workshop manual. This module encourages consideration of the impact of behaviour on other people. Some shopping centre management personnel have also sought to work with local high schools to clearly explain expectations of behaviour in their centres.<sup>viii</sup> Such an approach provides an opportunity for communication to be established between

young people and shopping centre management. This can help inform both groups about diverse perspectives.

### 2. Tackling graffiti

A common anti-social behaviour reported in many public spaces is that of graffiti. The total cost of graffiti to NSW annually is reputedly in the vicinity of \$100 million.<sup>ix</sup> Preventing graffiti is clearly a priority for many local governments and local businesses.

There are few completely successful responses to graffiti. The strategies most frequently encouraged include:

- **Rapid removal** – rapid removal of graffiti reduces the kudos associated with its application. Some council's meet costs of removal from public buildings and contribute to the removal from commercial and residential properties.
- **Controlling access** – controlling access to spray paints is an approach adopted in numerous areas. Voluntary codes amongst local businesses prevent sales of spray paints to young people under 18 years.
- **Murals** – large blank surfaces provide the best canvasses. Rather than leaving them to be tagged, there have been successful examples of murals being applied by local young people. These murals generally do not attract graffiti.
- **Design** – the design of an area will contribute or inhibit opportunities for graffiti. Use of foliage to cover potential targets; use of graffiti resistant paint; and the use of fence designs that reduce the total surface area (i.e. slats rather than joined) are just some ways to prevent graffiti.

The NSW Government website on graffiti provides a range of examples on how to tackle these problems - [www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/) and the following publication looks at preventing illegal graffiti;

[http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/cpd/graffiti.nsf/files/GHbookPart2.pdf/\\$FILE/GHbookPart2.pdf](http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/cpd/graffiti.nsf/files/GHbookPart2.pdf/$FILE/GHbookPart2.pdf).

### 3. Providing safe transport

Many young people rely on public transport to get to and from social activities. Lengthy waiting periods can contribute to boredom and resultant problems. Provision of appropriate levels of transport can help to alleviate such problems.

The Boomerang Bus Service (Maroubra/La Perouse) and the Redfern Street Beat Bus are two examples where specific transport is provided for young people to facilitate their transport home. These buses generally operate across the weekends, providing local young people with free (or low cost) transport options.

Another initiative that can support safe use of public transport and provide increased guardianship is the deployment of security guards at key bus and taxi ranks on critical evenings. Frankston (Victoria) City Council operates such a service to reduce problems with waiting patrons and to increase guardianship of the town centre.

#### **4. Provide community activities**

As many young people may not be able to afford transportation and paid social events, the need for free community events is imperative, especially on weekends and during the school holidays. To be effective, young people should be involved in all aspects of the events, from design to implementation.

The creation of a skating ramp is an example of a free community facility to be utilised by young people for communal activities. Adequate lighting should also surround the ramp during the evening, in case young people wish to continue engaging in this activity after sunset.

## Issue 3 - Preventing Boredom

Boredom has been identified as a key issue in the lives of young people. Young people are generally not financially able to indulge in a spectrum of social activities. An inability to access licensed premises and limited access to transport can restrict social and recreational opportunities.

Guerra and White claim that “the lack of affordable entertainment facilities and public spaces in which to meet...means that....young people have restricted opportunities and are prone to boredom”.<sup>x</sup> To alleviate their boredom, young people may gather in groups with their friends and visit local public spaces.

### Strategies For Boredom

#### 1. Provision of programs and activities

The absence of programs and activities can contribute to boredom. Many youth services and relevant programs close at 5pm leaving few options for young people in the evenings and across weekends. Extending the hours of operation of youth services has obvious financial implications. Nonetheless, finding ways to conduct appropriate activities at times of greatest need is worthy of consideration.

Midnight Basketball is an initiative which seeks to specifically fill the void on Saturday evenings. Midnight Basketball first commenced in Redfern. Tournaments are run during school term on Saturday evenings between 7 and midnight. Young people play basketball and participate in a workshop before being returned home. More information on Midnight Basketball can be found at: [www.midnightbasketball.org.au/](http://www.midnightbasketball.org.au/)

Midnight Basketball is not the only youth program offered outside of business hours. A host of activities are organised by local councils, police and youth and community services. Blue Light, PCYC, Indent (see below) and various other organisations routinely organise activities in local areas. Organising and supporting these events can be useful in tackling and preventing boredom.

#### 2. Organise events

Restricted access to licensed premises inhibits many young people from accessing live music performances and dance events. Organising local under-age events can help to alleviate boredom and provide opportunities for young people to socialise in appropriate settings.

NSW Blue Light has operated since 1983. NSW Blue Light operates across a number of locations and offers a variety of under-age activities and events (not just discos). Information about Blue Light can be accessed from <http://www.bluelight.com.au/>

The Indent website provides regular updates on all age music and cultural events - [www.indent.net.au/](http://www.indent.net.au/).

Indent is a project of MusicNSW that plays an important role in the development of all-ages entertainment. Indent provides resources, information, workshops, funding, skills development, and networking opportunities.

The NSW Youth website regularly lists activities and events around the state - [www.youth.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au/)

### **3. Increase number of internet cafes**

As internet usage is constantly on the rise, many young people are using the internet to communicate with friends from all over the world. MySpace, YouTube, MSN Messenger, chat rooms and many other internet communication options are used as social networking tools by young people. Therefore, by increasing the number of internet cafes, young people are able to socialise and interact with friends (especially young people without internet access at home).

## Final Comments

The earliest forms of civilisation have had places to meet and socialise. Being with friends, interacting with peers, watching and being watched in public space are all fundamental aspects of human societies.

As has been the case in the past, the nature of these meeting places continues to change. There is increasing privatisation of what was previously public space. New players are being introduced to watch, guard and manage these spaces. Standards of acceptable behaviour are becoming more complex, as more diverse users seek to move into these spaces.

There is no single solution to effectively managing public (and private / semi-private / semi-public) spaces. Where problems do arise, they will often be the result of a combination of variables. Fear of groups of young people, under-age drinking, boredom, restricted access to transport and to activities and differing perceptions of behavioural standards are just some of the challenges which emerge in the management of public space.

In responding to problems that do arise, it is recommended that the following principles guide any strategies adopted:

- Consultation
- Problem-identification
- Participation
- Inclusive responses
- Skills development
- Pooling resources

Through these principles, it is possible to develop solutions appropriate to the local circumstances.

Throughout this document, numerous examples of promising practice have been identified. These strategies have evolved from specific local situations, but they might well stimulate further innovative and creative responses to public space management issues. Through the sharing of ideas and approaches, new and improved practices will flourish.

Balancing the competing demands of public space users is challenging. New forms of technology mean that large groups can converge on areas very quickly. Training rarely provides key stakeholders with the requisite skills to deal with all contingencies that can arise and different groups will take opposing views about how best to respond to particular problems. By discussing some of the strategies listed in this document, talking with different stakeholders (including young people) and by working together, there is a greater likelihood that problems will be addressed effectively, rather than displacing or inflating the problem.

## Where to Get Help

The following information on key relevant agencies and services has been provided. Each of these agencies should be able to provide some assistance on specific relevant issues:

### Youth Action Policy Association (YAPA)

YAPA is the peak community group working in the interests of young people and youth services in NSW. YAPA has had extensive involvement in public space issues and have wide networks within the youth sector. YAPA can provide advice about strategies to adopt, suggest people to contact for support or assistance or can provide ideas that might have been successful in other locations.

Telephone: (02) 9319 1100

Freecall: 1800 627 323

Website: [www.yapa.org.au](http://www.yapa.org.au)

Email: [info@yapa.org.au](mailto:info@yapa.org.au)

### NSW Commission for Children and Young People

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) develops policy, advises government, undertakes research and educates people about the needs of children and young people. CCYP has developed a number of useful resources, including *Taking PARTicipation Seriously*, a guide to involving young people in making decisions that affect their lives.

Telephone: (02) 9286 7276

Website: [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)

### Foundation for Young Australians

The Foundation for Young Australians is an independent national grant-making organisation, funding and working in partnership with youth-led initiatives which aim to positively contribute to young people and their communities. The Foundation's website is a great source of information about young people across Australia.

Telephone: (03) 9670 5436

Website: [www.youngaustralians.org/](http://www.youngaustralians.org/)



### **Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People**

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) was founded by a group of eminent experts and organisations in reaction to increasingly worrying trends in the wellbeing of Australia's young people. By using the latest information technology to span the distances of the nation ARACY has become a broker of collaborations, a disseminator of ideas and an advocate for Australia's future generation.

Website: [www.aracy.org.au/](http://www.aracy.org.au/)

### **Children's Legal Service, NSW Legal Aid Commission**

The Children's Legal Service operates across NSW. The Service employs solicitors who work in Children's Courts and represent young people in other courts. The Service also operates a legal advice helpline, which enables young people to receive legal advice from appropriately trained solicitors most hours of the day / week / year.

Helpline Phone Number: 1800 101810

### **Ethnic Communities Council of NSW**

The Ethnic Communities Council of NSW (ECC) is a non-government peak body representing many organisations and people from the multicultural community in NSW. The ECC's primary roles are advocacy, education and community development. The ECC actively promotes the principles of multiculturalism, and lobbies for the development of culturally inclusive society.

Telephone: (02) 9319 0288

Website: [www.eccnsw.org.au](http://www.eccnsw.org.au)

### **Y-Space Website**

The Queensland University of Technology created and maintains the Y-Space website, which is a clearinghouse of publications, articles and information about public space projects. The website is an excellent resource and the information contained on the website can promote thinking about different, innovative ways to tackle public space problems.

Website: [www.yspace.net/](http://www.yspace.net/)

### **Youth.NSW**

Youth.NSW is the NSW Government's website for young people and workers in the youth field. The site aims to provide people aged 12 to 25 with links to New South Wales Government, community services and information. It also contains a range of information for young people about getting involved in their community through programs and events. The site is a forum for youth participation and for government to hear young people's ideas on a range of issues.

Website: [www.youth.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au/)

### **The Source**

The Source is a Commonwealth government youth website which provides information on a range of issues relevant to young people. The Source is a good website to stay in touch with latest programs and developments affecting young people. It provides regular updates on Youth Week activities and other relevant initiatives.

Website: [www.thesource.gov.au/](http://www.thesource.gov.au/)

## Want to know more - References and resources

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## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> For the purposes of this document, young people includes people aged between 12 and 24 years, although those persons aged between 12 and 18 years will often be of greatest importance to any discussions of public space.

<sup>ii</sup> Newman, O. (1996) *Creating Defensible Space*

<sup>iii</sup> Crane, P (2005), The changing character of public space, implications for young people and community action, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland; page 1.

<sup>iv</sup> Crane, P (1999), Young people and public space: developing inclusive policy and practice, Queensland University of Technology, Queensland.

<sup>v</sup> Butcher, M, Thomas, M (2003), *Ingenious, emerging youth cultures in urban Australia*, Pluto Press Australia, Melbourne; page 127.

<sup>vi</sup> Guerra, C. and White, R. (1995) *Ethnic minority youth in Australia*, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart; page 189.

<sup>vii</sup> White, R. (2006) 'Swarming and the social dynamics of group violence', *Trends and Issues*, No. 326, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra; page 1.

<sup>viii</sup> Doran, S. (2006) *Shopping Centres and the Youth Sector: Hanging Out Together*, Final Report to the Youth Action and Policy Association

<sup>ix</sup> As stated on the NSW Graffiti Website - [www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au/)

<sup>x</sup> Guerra, C. and White, R. (1995) *Ethnic minority youth in Australia*, National Clearinghouse for Youth Studies, Hobart; page 187-188.

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