

Gender-Sensitive Design for Parks, Sport and Recreational Spaces

FEB 2025

WWW.MONASH.EDU/MADA/RESEARCH/LABS/XYX



**advocate for
women,
gender-diverse
and LGBTIQ+**



**gender-sensitive
placemaking**



**co-design
method**



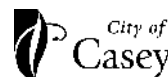
**develop
knowledge
through design
thinking**



**share
knowledge**



PREVIOUS PARTNERSHIPS ++



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GRIFFITH



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SAFETY AND INCLUSION
FOR DIVERSE
COMMUNITIES



+
1x RA
1 x POSTDOC
1x PhD
First Nation



Aims and outcomes*

- Understand the **spatial factors** that contribute to women's perceptions of safety and risk
- Examine how different **modes of active recreation** influence women's perceptions of **unsafety**
- Reveal the influence of **time of day** and women's perceptions
- Develop **benchmark** for gender-sensitive design of recreational spaces and amenity across Australia
- Cement the **role of expert gender-sensitive design** in improving perceptions of safety in parks and recreational spaces

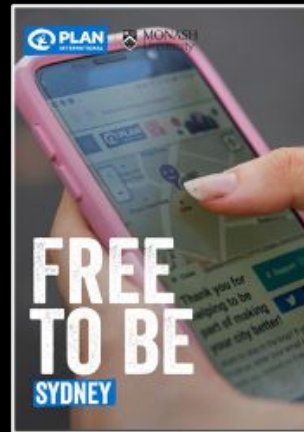
* LINKAGE PROJECT

gender sensitive

Shrink it, and pink it...



Source: Madonna Inn, San Luis Obispo, CA



an existing dataset of over
3,500+ geolocated points
gathered directly from
women and girls in
Victoria and New South
Wales will inform this
project**

I have to run through here to get to the trail on the other side of the creek. For such a long tunnel, it really has **no provisions for safety beyond some basic lighting**. It is quite dirty, with litter, graffiti etc. I find myself constantly looking behind me and then looking ahead as I feel so trapped and scared.

The path can't be seen from the busy freeway and on the other side are empty fields. **Even on a bike it feels like there is nowhere to run and no-one can see or hear you** (as the freeway is so loud and no one is around early in the morning). It also felt super creepy where the path crosses to the Footy field.

The **carpark is pitch black** after sport when the court/field lights are turned off. Too dark for waiting for a ride home. There is a walking track but no passive surveillance. **There's no changing rooms for females only males so it's uncomfortable to get changed in front of everyone.**

Carry a cell phone or change for a phone call

Trust your intuition about a person or an area.

Avoid a person or situation if you're unsure.

If something tells you a situation is not "right", it isn't.

Alter or vary your running route pattern.

Run in familiar areas if possible.

Know where open businesses or stores are located in case of emergency.

Run with a partner.

Run with a dog.

Write down or leave word of the direction of your run.

Tell friends and family of your favorite running routes.

Avoid unpopulated areas, deserted streets, and overgrown trails.

Avoid unlit areas, especially at night.

Run clear of parked cars or bushes.

Ignore verbal harassment.

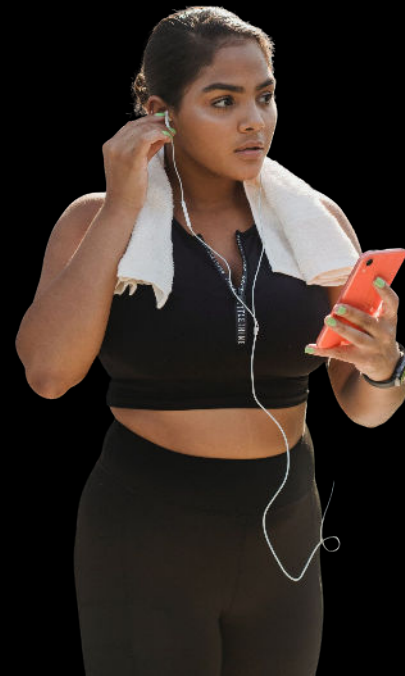
Wear reflective material if you must run before dawn or after dark.

Don't wear headphones.

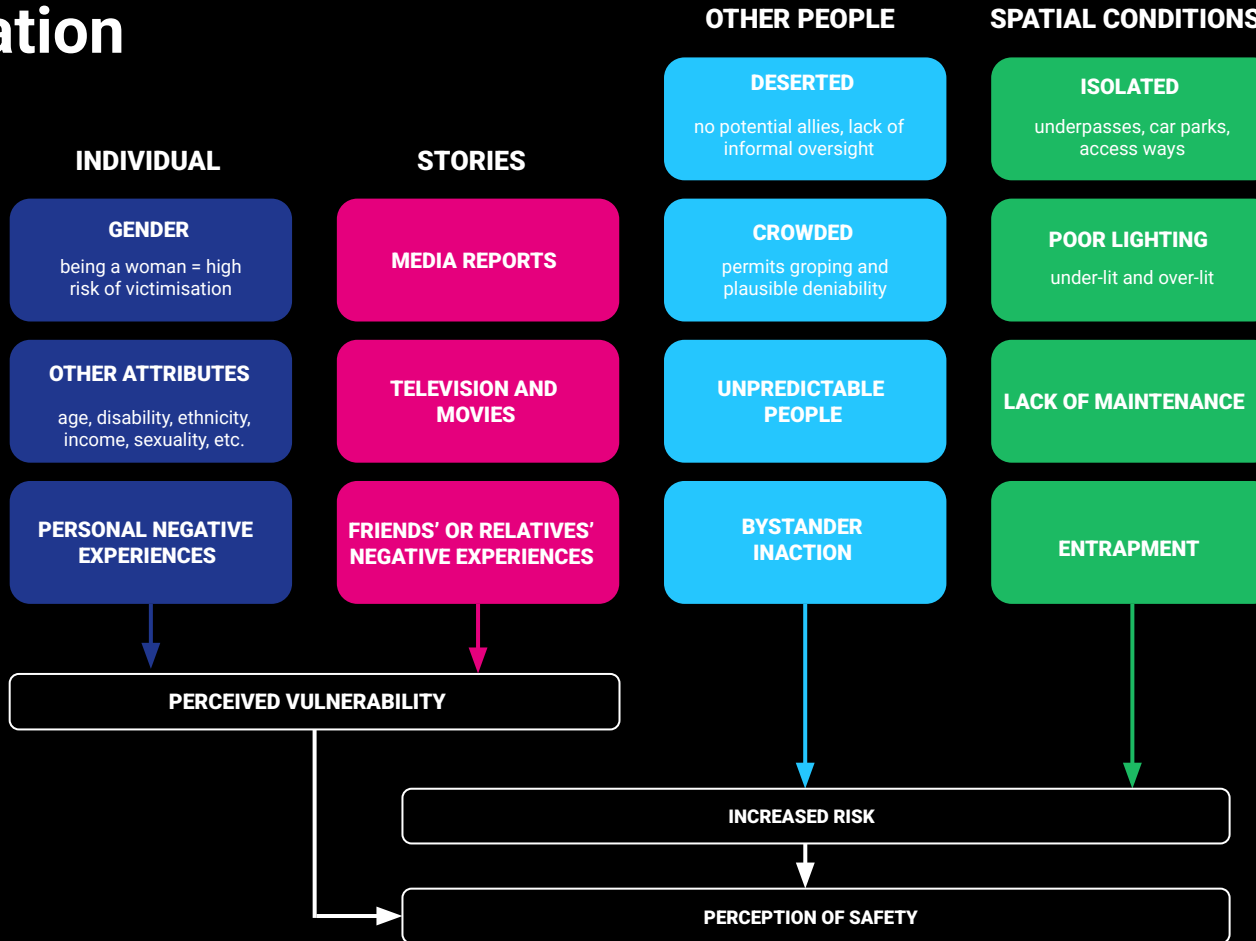
Avoid running on the street when it is dark.

Don't run alone.

Don't speak back to verbal harassment

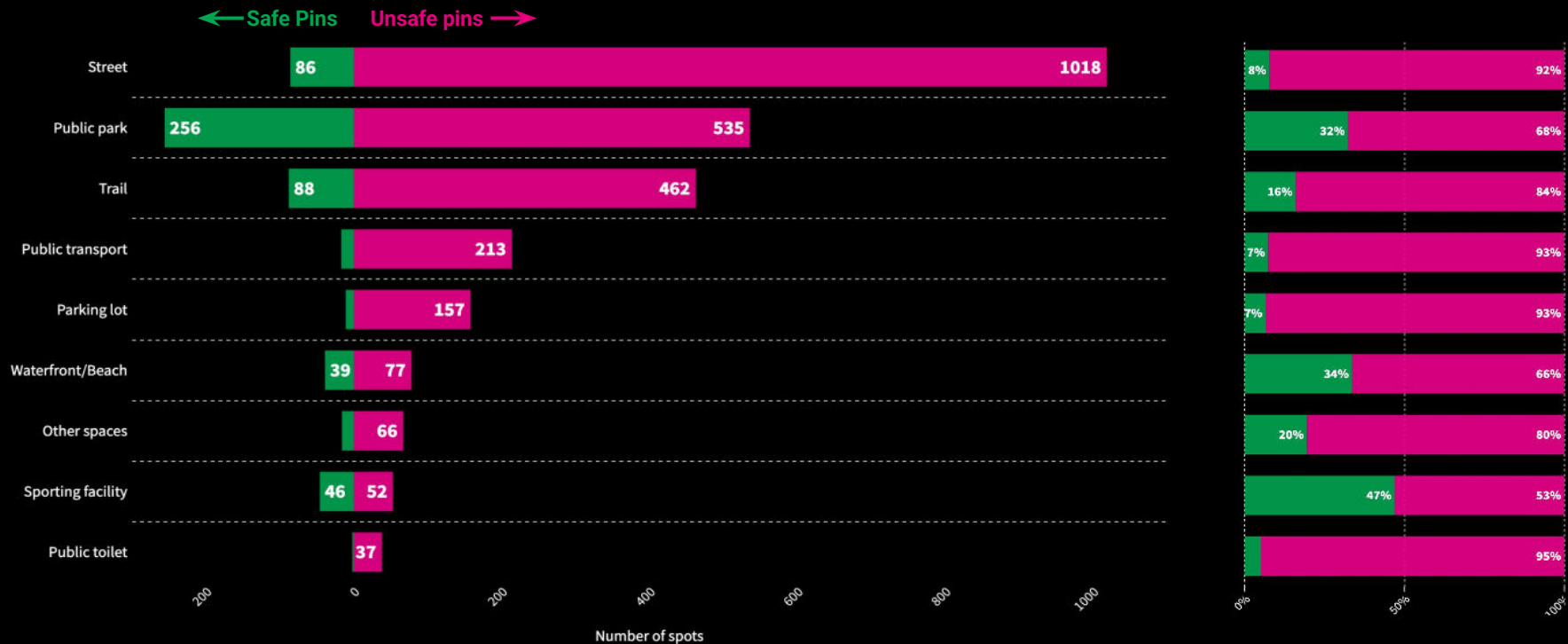


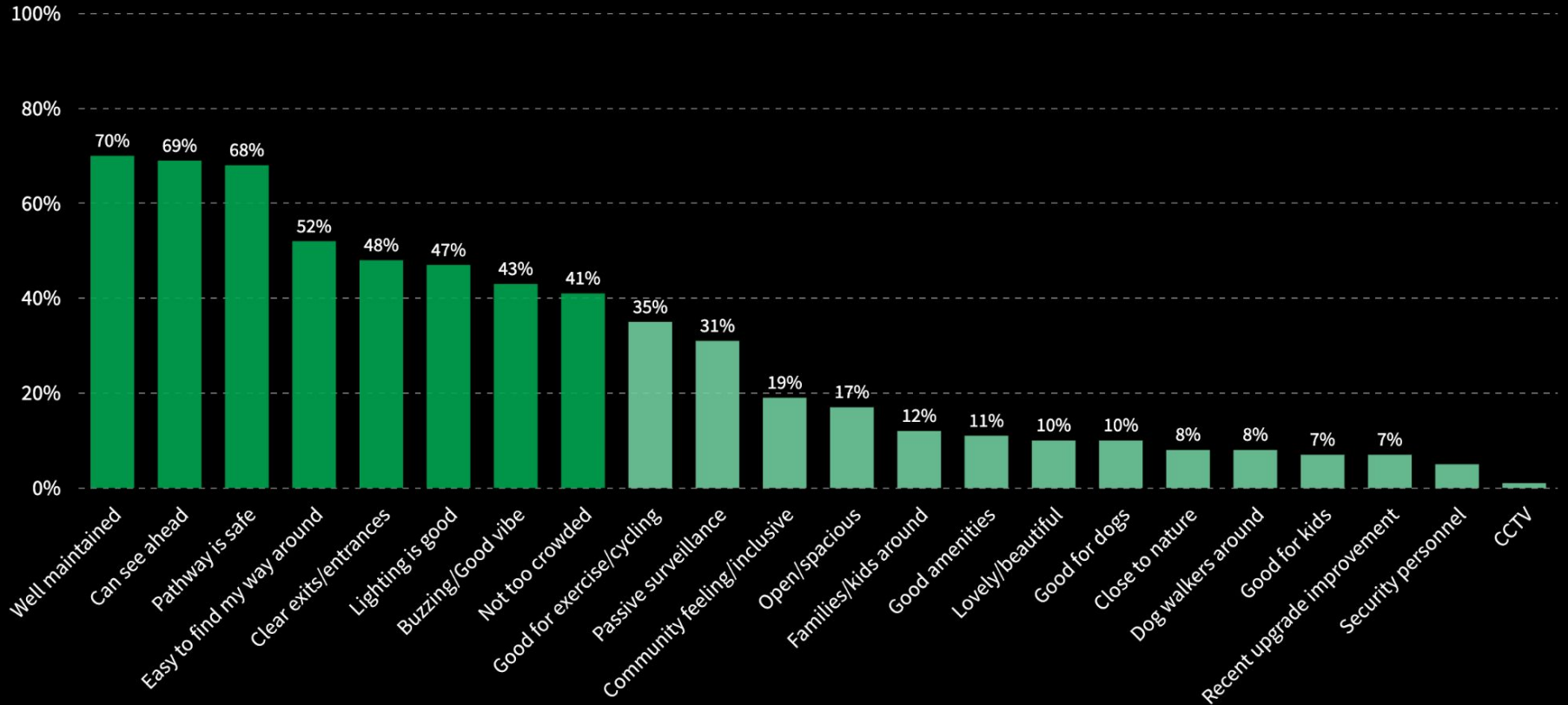
Fields of research & investigation



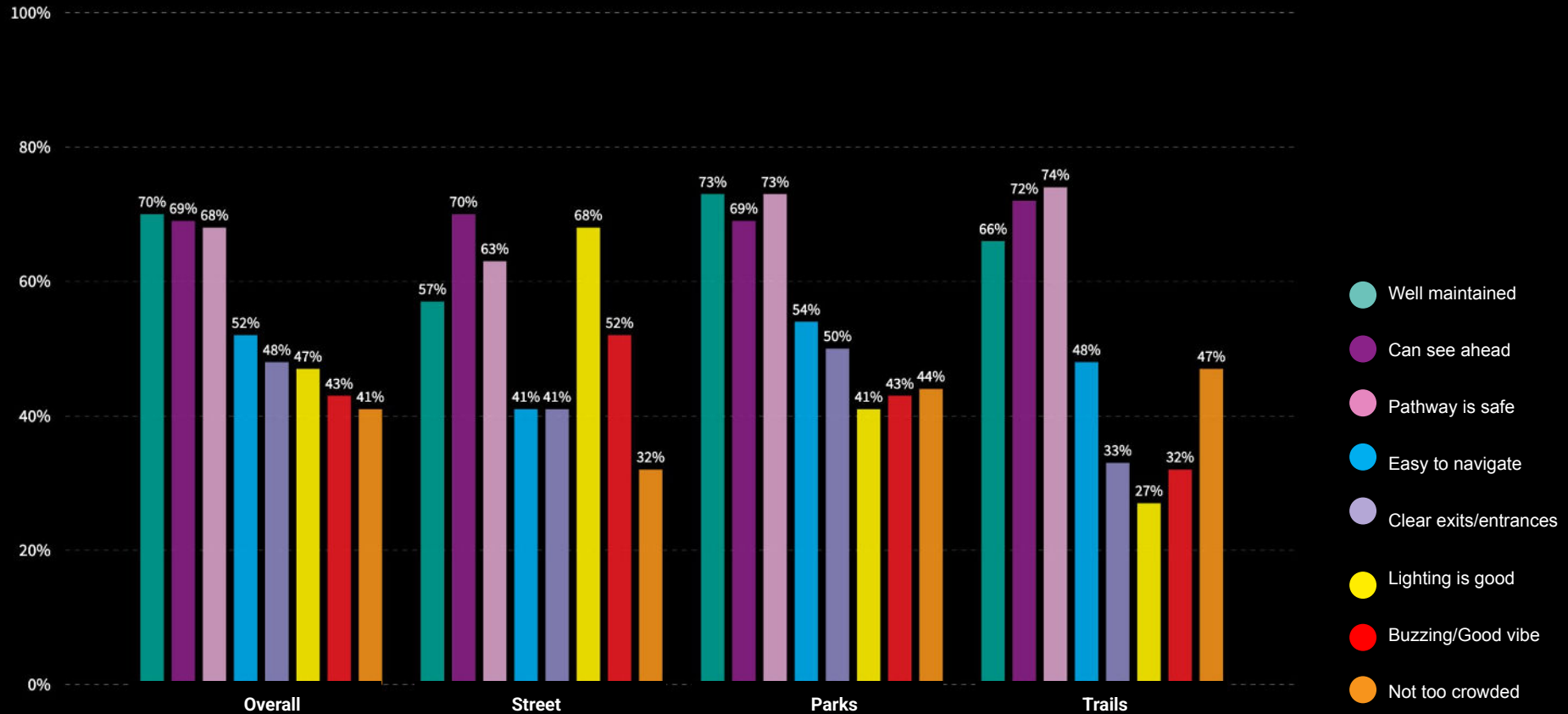
Findings

safe to unsafe pins by environment type





findings: reasons for safety by environment type



Why this research is needed?

Safe recreation spaces are:

- critical for positive physical and mental health and well-being
- contribute to social cohesion and strong community connections
- provide people with a sense of social belonging and inclusion
- underpins sustainable communities

Gender is important because:

- impacts perceptions of safety
- significant for inequitable access (including intersectional qualities)
- shapes the amenities offered for sport, recreation and exercise

Why this research is valuable to partners?

Nation-wide initiatives are demanding that programs, funding and infrastructure are invested in reducing the barriers to women and girls safe and equitable access to sport and recreation facilities in their communities. Gender-sensitive approaches and expertise will release greater \$\$ in the funding pool.

GENDER
within
INTERSECTIONALITY

TECHNOLOGY

CO-DESIGN

INDIGENEITY

COMMUNICATION

ACTIVISM

**MEDIA
ENGAGEMENT**

**SPATIAL
INTERVENTIONS**

**ACTIVITIES/ PUBLIC
INITIATIVES**

**ADVOCATES
& AMBASSADORS**

Access and movement

Can get to and move freely	Very Poor	Poor
Public transport How accessible is the site by public transport?	No public transport options within a 10 minute walk from site	No public transport options within 5 minute walk from the site
Car parking How safe is the car parking in regards to design, location and access to any facilities on the site?	Car park is hidden at the rear of the site/ over 100m from facility entrance and has no paths for pedestrians	Car park is partially hidden, away from the facility entrance with uneven pedestrian paths
Pedestrian access What is the quality of the paths, ramps and crossings, how easy is it for people with all abilities to get around?	No pedestrian paths or ramps	Minimal pedestrian paths in poor condition, no ramps for access into raised areas
Pedestrian priority How prioritized are pedestrians within the space?	Motor vehicles are prioritized, with no consideration of pedestrian access	Pedestrians are somewhat considered in areas of the site
Cycling How have cyclists' amenity and safety been considered within the site?	No cycle lanes, paths or bike storage provided	On-road bike lanes provided with some weather-exposed bike hoops

Average	Good	Excellent
Adequate lighting in some areas, other areas may be over-lit or a little too dark	Adequate lighting in most areas	Lighting is comfortable and sufficient for clear visibility in all areas
One or two blind corners, most landscape features and obstacles meet requirements	Clear sightlines throughout most of the space, all obstacles meet requirements	Clear sightlines throughout the entire space, all landscape features meet requirements
Two pathway options and exits in case of emergency	Clear path of escape with many pathway choices and no dead ends or enclosed areas	Clear wayfinding showing multiple paths of escape with many wide and accessible path and exit options
Some natural surveillance from public spaces or surrounding tenancies with some windows facing towards site	Sufficient natural surveillance with surrounding tenancies looking onto the site	Space is filled with natural surveillance from windows/ balconies facing site (if applicable) or nearby amenity that attracts multiple pedestrians/ commuters
Security officer/s present	Security officers/ staff are present and approachable	Gender diverse, racially diverse and approachable staff present or gender and racially diverse security officers
One to two CCTV cameras visible, no immediate response to incidents that occur in the space	Site has CCTV cameras that are directly linked to an employed security guard, available to respond promptly	CCTV only needed when the site is closed/ after hours if at all, due to the high level of natural and formal surveillance during open hours

Average	Good	Excellent
There's a public transport stop within five minute walk from the site	The site is within a three minute walk of a bus stop or train station used by people at peak times	The site is in close proximity to a range of bustling public transport options, with clear wayfinding & signage
Car park is easy to access from building entrance and has a pedestrian path leading up to it	Car park is nearby and mostly visible from building entrances and has pedestrian paths in most areas	Car park is well presented, visible and accessible from any building or site entrances with wide pedestrian path connections throughout
Sufficient pedestrian paths and ramps in most of the site	Wide pedestrian paths and ramps for prams and wheelchairs to easily access	Good quality, wide pedestrian paths and ramps for prams and wheelchairs to fit side by side
Clear pedestrian connections in the majority of the site	Pedestrians are prioritized with wide, protected footpaths and raised crossings to low traffic	Site has a pedestrianized zone, separating pedestrians from traffic, encouraging walking and social activity in the urban space
On-road protected bike lane with weather protected bike hoops	Off-road bike lanes with secure end of trip bike storage	Off-road bike lanes with secure end of trip bike storage, weather protection and shower facilities

Figure 7.1 Safety Audit developed by Casey City Council, Austr security', 'connection and belonging', access and movement', a

categories of 'safety and unity.

Xiuying

(she/ her)

Age: 55
Employment: Engineer

Background:

Xiuying grew up in the area and close to her parents, who are in need of regular assistance. She is a runner and is currently training for a marathon. She spends her evenings using the local trails and runs over 15 kms to the weekends she is able to join a running group but this is not her favourite. Akira is active in her social group most nights of the week.

Safety Concerns:

Some of the reserves and parks in the area are underutilised due to a lack of a young migrant woman's newspaper. Some of the parks are frequented by groups of teenagers, to whom she has noticed increased reports of drug use. Xiuying has never been to the office because she starts in the office because she assists her parents during the train for the marathon in the area.

Primary Transport Mode(s):
Active transport (running)

Hali

(she/ her)

Felicity

(she/ her)

Age: 72
Employment:
Retired widow and carer

Background:

Felicity is an active retiree. She has two school-aged grandchildren who she cares for in the afternoons and uses the local bus to collect them. She is a regular volunteer at the neighbourhood community centre and is part of a walking group who also have a regular coffee at the shopping mall.

Safety Concerns:

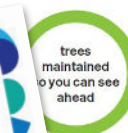
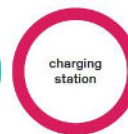
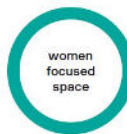
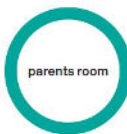
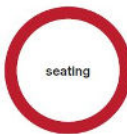
She feels vulnerable accessing the local bus stop as the cars honk across the intersection and she feels pressured to move quickly. She is afraid she may fall when she hurries. She has been harassed by men in cars both on the street and at the mall and now only exercises with her walking group - this is disappointing as she would like to stay active and independent.

Primary Transport Mode(s):

Felicity relies on public transport for moving around the community - using the bus either alone or when caring for her grandchildren. Active transport (walking) to

Intervention type labels

SAFE SPACES



wheelchair access

collect gender-disaggregated data

footpath widening

co-design with women

playground

ambient lighting

co-design with youth

CUT THE LABELS OUT AND STICK THEM TO YOUR MODEL.

Reference Cards Key Research Findings

Lighting

- Lighting is the issue women feel most concerned about
- Media influences perceptions of safety after dark
- Not just about night but also dusk and dawn (especially in winter)
- Beware the 'fishbowl effect' which can make women feel more visible and exposed
- Brighter lighting is not better lighting
- Good lighting coupled with natural surveillance has the most impact
- Good lighting can discourage crime and reduce fear

Surveillance

- Oversight from people in adjoining houses, retail and business (passive or natural surveillance) makes people feel safest
- Public transport waiting areas and stops should be observable
- Spaces that cannot be observed can benefit from CCTV, police or security
- CCTV can reduce vandalism and theft, and is most effective in car parks
- CCTV is not effective in reducing violence and/or assault (Bowers et al. 2016)
- CCTV may increase fear for women and marginalised groups (Witzman 2008)
- Smart cities are not 'neutral' cities but disguise injustices (Sadowski et al. 2020)
- Surveillance by technology can target women of colour and other marginalised groups

Behaviour

- Violence against women and minoritised groups can be physical and non-physical
- Key sites for harassment are the street and public transport
- Alcohol and drugs increase all forms of sexual harassment and racism
- Communication campaigns can encourage positive behaviour
- Local culture (festivals, events etc) strengthens sense of ownership, identity and place
- Positive behavioural cues can increase activation of public space





YOUR SPORT • YOUR LEISURE • YOUR PLAY • YOUR PLACE • YOUR VICTORIA

Where do you feel safe?

Add a spot
and share your
experiences
before the end
of July to help
map a safer
Victoria



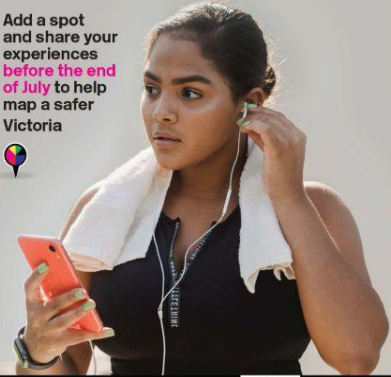
MAPPING A SAFER VICTORIA FOR WOMEN AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE



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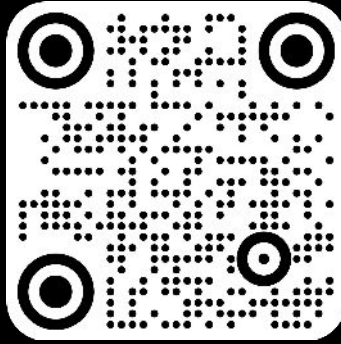
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**ENVIRONMENTAL
FACTORS**

**BEHAVIOR OF
OTHER PEOPLE**



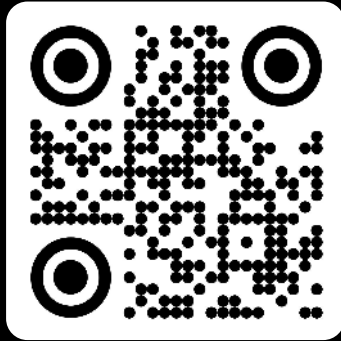
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Safe Spaces Toolkits



HyperSext City Exhibition



YourGround NSW

Reach out to the XYX Lab

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