



Activation for Meaningful Intergenerational Play

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acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Data was collected for this project within Moreton Bay Regional Council in South-East Queensland. I acknowledge and pay my respects to the Kabi Kabi, Jinibara, Yugara, and Turrbal Traditional Custodians, and their elders past, present, and emerging.

I also acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and all First Nations Peoples on whose land we gather and all First Nations People who are with us today.

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don't we already
know how to
design parks?

Yes, but....**evidence-**
based strategies are
critical to ensure parks
are effectively **designed**
for all ages.













what we knew



1

Suburban parks can be **non-stimulating**, and lack challenging equipment for all ages

(Veitch et al., 2006)



2

Park visitors are **often sedentary**, and adults supervise children's activities rather than be active themselves

(Cohen et al., 2007)



3

55% of Australian adults and 70% of children **do not meet the physical activity guidelines**

(AIHW, 2018)

our approach

to understand affordances
(opportunities and cues) that create
health-promoting parks which offer
intergenerational activities

A 'salutogenic' approach
focuses on promoting health
and wellbeing, instead of
'pathogenic' which focuses
on risk and problems.

Affordances are
opportunities for action
that are signaled by how
spaces and objects are
designed.

People who are socially
connected to friends and
family are happier and live
longer.

Affordances must have **design cues** that signal what we can do... and are also a way to “give permission” for activities.

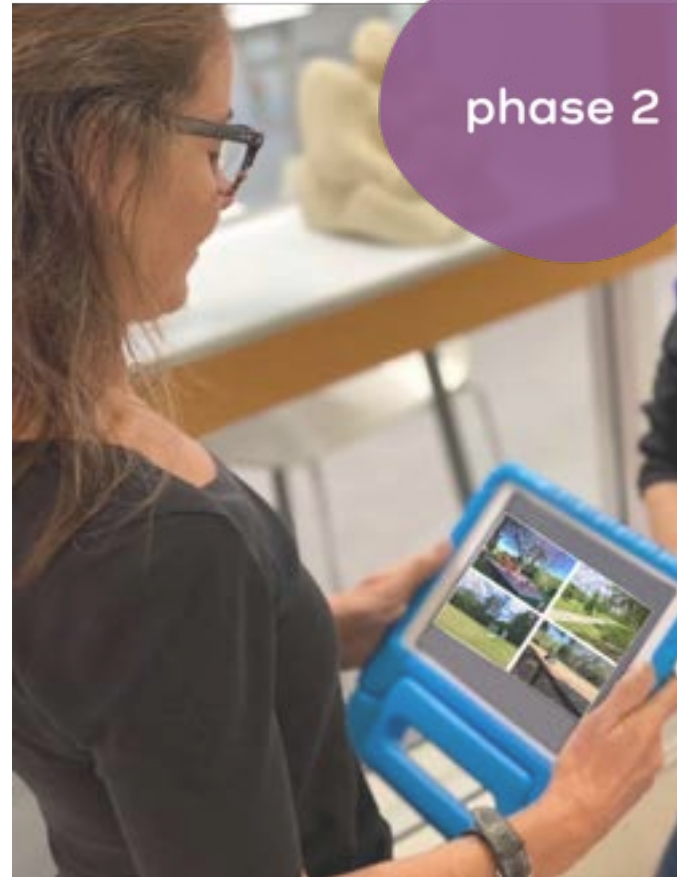


For example...a zebra crossing is a cue that signals the safe point to cross a street. This has evolved and includes some cultural or age-related norms.

research methods



**systematic
observations**



**interviews +
photochoice tool**



design workshops



objectives

to inspire
designers,
researchers, and
policymakers to
design parks that
entice, enable
and **engage**.

A selection of key findings



Well-designed pathways are critical in parks

01

nature

Pathways immersed within nature or with a natural view were the most desired park scenes to get people to the park to be active.



walking

65% of adults currently walk for physical activity, which is more than any other type of activity.



learning to ride

Adults use pathways at the park to teach children how to ride bikes.



higher intensity activities

Pathways allow for higher intensity activities such as jogging, cycling, and running.



skating, blading and skateboarding

Pathways provide opportunities to learn and practice how to roller skate, roller blade, and skateboard; activities that are appealing for children, teenagers, and young adults.



intergenerational activities

Some adults like to walk on pathways whilst their children ride bikes or scooters at the park. This is one example of intergenerational physical activity.





choosing parks with playgrounds

Adults with children or grandchildren under 18 years are more likely to choose to go to a park with a playground.



children are most active

Playgrounds are key locations within a park where children are most active.



children can play

One of the top reasons people visit parks is for children to play.



caregivers play, observe and teach

When in the playground, caregivers play, observe, and teach children skills, and often do a combination of all three.



limited opportunities for adults to be active

Playgrounds currently provide opportunities for children to play and be active, but there are limited physical activity opportunities for adults and older adults.



children decide

When at the park, the children usually decide what to do. For many caregivers, they follow the lead of their child because time at the park is viewed as the "children's time", and they only intervene if the children's choices are perceived as unsafe.

Playgrounds are a drawcard, but need to provide adults with options to be active too



nature

Pathways immersed within nature or with a natural view were the most desired park scenes to get people to the park to be active.

03

Scenes of nature can effectively encourage physical activity in parks

04

Open playing fields can be valuable, but often need more cues about possible activities



physical activity

Open playing fields are some of the key areas within a park where children and adults, as well as adults without children, are physically active.



BYO equipment

People who use open playing fields often bring their own equipment, such as a cricket bat and ball, and are happy to do so.



teaching skills

Open playing fields are used by caregivers to teach physical skills and for children to learn and practice these skills, especially kicking, catching, and throwing balls. This engagement demonstrates valuable intergenerational physical activity.



males are drawn to open playing fields

Males seem to be drawn to open space areas for physical activity, slightly more than females.



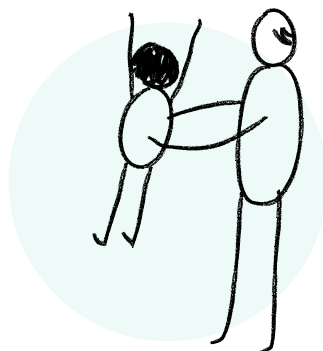
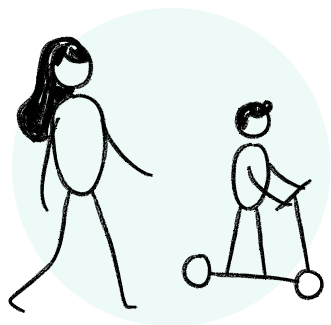
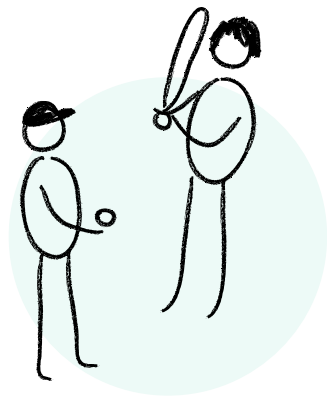
running and kicking

Running around and kicking balls are key activities that adults easily envisage within open playing fields in parks.



lack of visual cues

Open playing fields afford many forms of physical activity. However, there can be a lack of visual prompts or cues to encourage different activities due to the simplicity of their design and limited fixed physical elements in the open space.

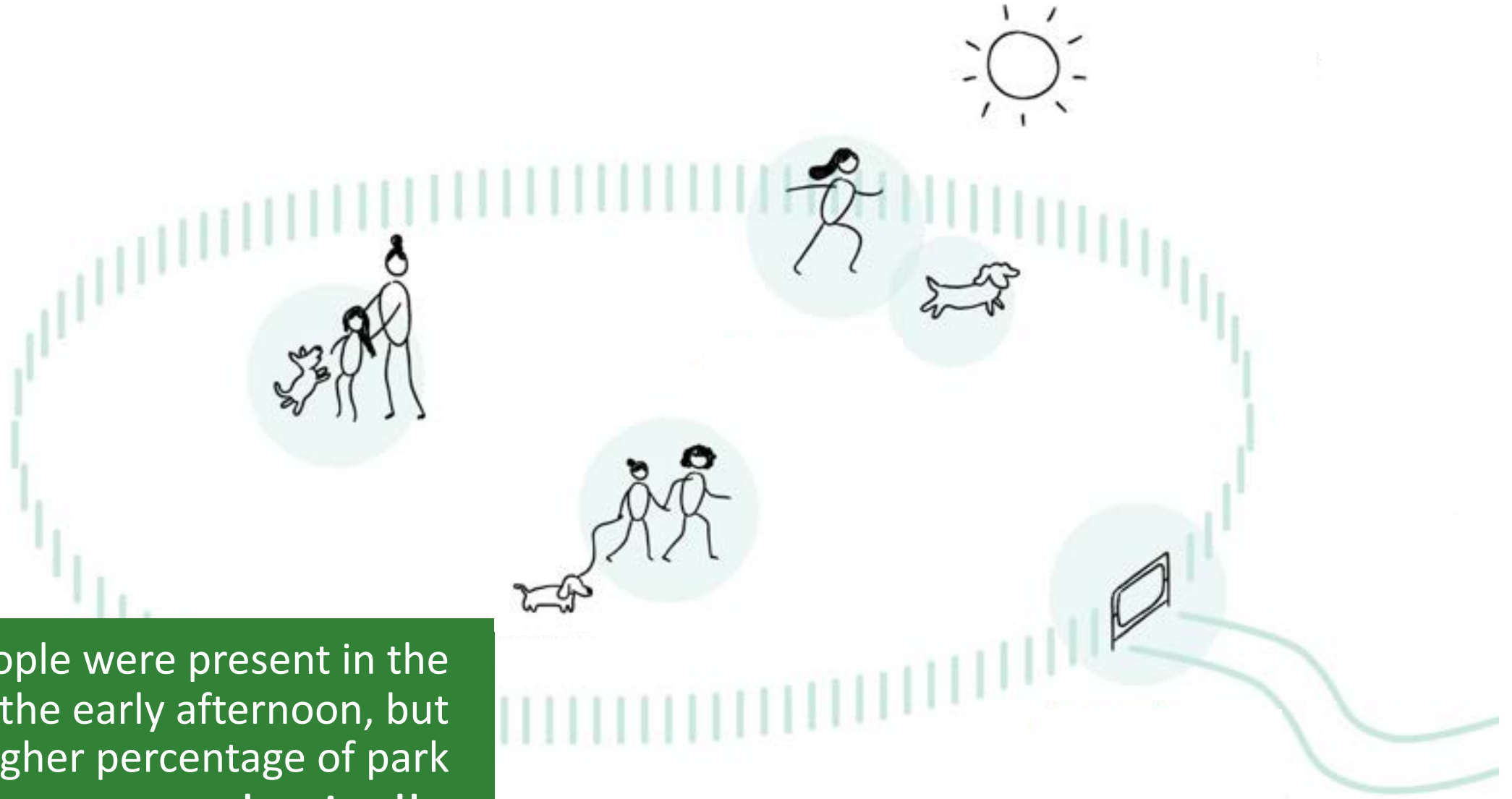


05

Intergenerational interactions do not automatically happen, so opportunities need to be afforded to enable multiple generations to be active together

06

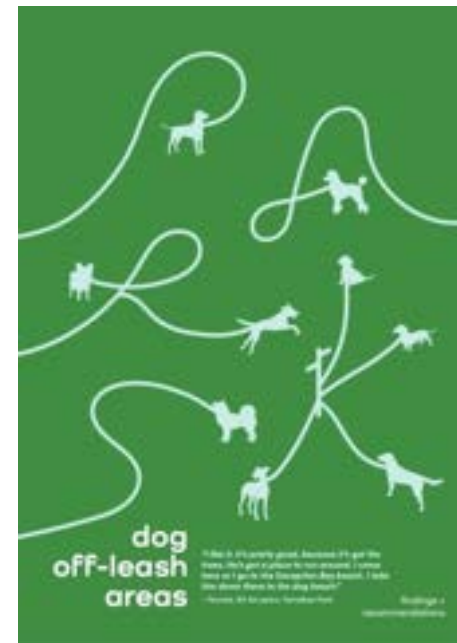
More people were present in the parks in the early afternoon, but a higher percentage of park visitors were **physically active** in the morning





The Design Guide

key sections



evidence-based recommendations

PLAYGROUNDS

recommendations

01

**afford both
physical
and social
skills**

Provide playground equipment that enables a range of physical and social skills to be exhibited.

02

**cater to
all ages**

Provide playground equipment that caters for different age groups, rather than just one.

03

**consider
under,
around,
and in
between**

Provide spaces in the playground that allow for playing under, around, or in between different elements.

04

**ensure a
sense of
safety**

Create perceived and actual safety from adjacent roads through distance, vegetation, or fencing.

05

provide shade

Provide shade over the playground so it is deemed useable during most of the day.

06

**consider
playground
location**

Consider the location of the playground within the context of the whole park.

07

**provide optimal
seating to view
playground**

Consider the placement and design of seating to afford views of the playground and encourage social interactions.



intergenerational play can
happen throughout a park.

**But deliberate opportunities
and cues** need to be designed
in to make it happen.

sample design ideas

graduated challenges





<https://mrcrec.com/expression-swing>

play equipment designed for adults and children together



wide pathways that enable shared use



Thank you!

