

Public Spaces and Recreation

Young people participate in activities and contribute to the Tasmanian community in multiple ways, including through friends and family, employment, sport and recreation activities. The *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, states that young people have the right to rest, recreation and leisure activities, yet many young people can be made to feel unwelcome in public spaces where these activities occur. Young people use public spaces for a variety of reasons including, to meet with friends, for entertainment or to make new friends. Young people do not always have access to their own private space so they seek out public spaces to conduct activities.

Young people's use of public spaces is often monitored and regulated, a move that can make young people feel out of place, unwanted or wanting to rebel against those enforcing the way they use public spaces. Shopping centers often attract groups of young people, however if they are not making purchases, shop owners can be reluctant to have young people using that space. A 2007 report on issues surrounding public spaces found that shopping centers were introducing tighter security, loitering notices and introducing banning notices. It was suggested that including young people in a problem solving approach would be beneficial when deciding on how public spaces should be used.

There are various recreation activities that young people in Tasmania engage in. Some may be part of a sporting team, a volunteer organisation and many spend time socialising with their peers. Structured recreation activities need to be held at venues that are accessible and they must be affordable, ideally free, to allow young people to participate. Many recreation activities such as sports clubs require payment to participate. This is often a barrier for young people and consequently, many young people cannot participate in some recreation activities. Structured recreation activities must also be able to offer young people interesting and engaging programs. Young people often initiate their own activities which can be culturally diverse and inclusive; these activities need to be supported and enabled. Regular involvement in recreation activities, particularly sport, has a positive impact on the health and well being of young people.



YNOT is committed to:

- Promoting young people's right to use public spaces, as well as the importance of public spaces to young people and the community.
- Involving young people in decision making about public spaces and they way they are designed and used.
- Combating negative stereotypes of youth culture and young people engaged in recreation activities.
- Advocating for accessible and affordable recreation activities for young people around the State.
- Promoting the importance of assisting young people in establishing their own activities and the importance of providing them with support to ensure they are effective in their activities.

Future Vision

A Tasmania where all young people are accepted into the community as they make use of public spaces to conduct their daily activities and feel that they have a say on how public spaces are used. There will be additional structured recreation activities around the State that are accessible and affordable for young people to participate in.

References

Clancy, G. & Usien, O (2007), *Considering Youth Issues in Shopping Centre Development Applications*, Department of Community Services, New South Wales.

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