

**Commissioner
for Children and
Young People**

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Adelaide City Skate Park Consultation



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A young woman with long, wavy brown hair is smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a blue and red striped t-shirt and a large silver hoop earring. The background is a lush, out-of-focus green bush with small white flowers. The text 'Consultations with children and young people' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the lower half of the image.

Consultations with children and young people

Commissioner for Children and Young People

The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People is an **independent statutory position**, established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* 'the Act'.

Context

As the Commissioner for Children and Young People I have engaged with thousands of children and young people since commencing in the role in 2017.

From my conversations I have heard that a lack of opportunities and spaces for young people to “hang out” in their community and a lack of rideable spaces negatively impacts on young people.

South Australia is very much a city State, and many young people regularly access the city to earn, learn and play. It is not surprising then, that for many young people they are looking for spaces and activities within the city that are youth focussed and where they see their interests and ideas supported and valued.

Many young people say they want the Melbourne, New York or Silicone Valley vibe. When I ask them what this vibe is, the response is almost unanimous.

It is young people friendly, comfortable and welcoming: where risk taking is accepted and creates a feeling that anything is possible. It is where groups of young people can get together, to innovate, to express themselves, to hang out and to just be young.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says children and young people have a right to have a say on all issues that affect them and for their views to be taken seriously.

The North Terrace city skate park was for many young people that space. It was iconic and embodied a vibe. When it was demolished in 2015 to make way for the new Royal Adelaide Hospital it mobilised a number of skate park users and others, to take action to ensure that those making decisions, knew how important it was not only for the users but for young people more broadly. Much has been said about the demolition of the city skate park and we know that for young people the demolition of the city skate park was significant.

Within the advocacy there was a clear message from young people that the existence of an accessible and visible youth friendly space was directly linked to how welcoming vibrant and playful they see their city.

Young people have a desire to be part of expressing what they value. They want to be engaged in creating cities, communities and spaces that reflect how they want to live, work and play. This is an enduring theme in so many of the conversations I continue to have with young people.

They want to participate; they want people to listen, consider their ideas validate them and demonstrate to them that they belong. They want us to understand what is important about space and place and to understand the importance of seeing yourself and your values reflected and celebrated. It builds a sense of optimism and positivity for the future.

What we were discussing

After a discussion with Adelaide City Council about their skateboarding scoping, they shared the location of the three proposed sites for the new city skate park:

- West Terrace near the new SACA Cricket Oval
- Morphett Street near the Torrens River
- Kintore Avenue near the Torrens Parade Ground

As young people had not contributed to the scoping, we wanted to ask children and young people about their views on a proposed location.

What we did

Between August and November 2018, CCYP undertook a series of consultations on preferences for a new skate park with young people aged 12-22. The participants included primary school and secondary school students, international students, young people in homeless accommodation and young activists. We asked these young people what they wanted in a city skate park and where they thought it should be.

Out of the 84 young people we contacted

1. 43 preferred the **West Terrace site**.
2. 23 preferred the **Kintore Avenue site**.
3. 18 preferred the **Morphett Street site**.

From those votes and discussions, there were common themes with what young people agreed was necessary when thinking about where we should put a city skate park.

What they wanted

- **big space; central and accessible for young people**
- **neutral space for everyone to feel welcome and included**
- **close to people, food and shops.**
- **a space for families and children of all ages**
- **well-lit so young people can use at night and feel safe**
- **recreational multi-use space**
- **space where young people can just hang out**

Highlights of the conversation

Young people had detailed responses to each site that reflected not only their own experiences but how inclusive the option was. Many young people voiced concerns that some groups might be negatively affected by the potential sites. They reflected on cultural considerations and accessibility of each location.

What we will do with the information

As discussed with participants, the information is to be provided to Adelaide City Council to include in their skateboarding scoping strategy.

In 2019, we are hosting a forum to advocate for Adelaide to become a rideable city, to share more broadly what young people want in their city.

Pros of each site, identified by children and young people

Proposed site	Pros
West Terrace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's the biggest space. 2. Hospital is close if there are injuries. 3. It's close to McDonalds and other cheap food spots. 4. Close to tram and bus stops and is the only site that has parking which makes it somewhat more accessible. 5. It will be a mix use hang out spot as people are already around the area doing other recreational activities.
Kintore Avenue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It'll be scenic next to the river. 2. It's close to Rundle Mall. 3. Something to do for young people in that area. 4. It's easily accessible. 5. It's already one of the go to BMX places in the city.
Morphett Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close to train station and transport options. 2. It could be a new meeting place and hang out spot. 3. It's a similar space to the previous city skate park. 4. It'll add a more youthful vibrancy to that area of town. 5. It has great scenery with the new RAH, the river and the footbridge.

Cons of each site, identified by children and young people

Proposed site	Cons
West Terrace	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Just out of the city. 2. It's next to Adelaide High School which might mean it becomes their skate park and is no longer neutral. 3. SACA's new cricket ground is next to it so it might create a weird dynamic. 4. As it is not central in the city it might become someone's 'turf'. 5. As it is just out of the city, there's not as much 'passive surveillance' so younger people might not feel as safe there at night.
Kintore Avenue	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It's a culturally significant space and a skate park would be disruptive to aboriginal communities. 2. Not as close to cheap food. 3. It's an area that people walk around. 4. It's next to busy universities which might affect how accessible it actually is. 5. It is very hilly so the terrain might not be very suitable.
Morphett Street	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No food spaces. 2. It could be dangerous being close to the river and trains and it makes it a bit of a 'dodgy area' for young people. 3. Trains are loud and the noise might make it an unpleasant place to just hang out. 4. Hard to get to when the footy is on. 5. Future thinking: what about train expansion?

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