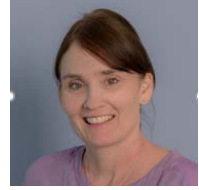


Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry

Environmental Infrastructure for Growing Populations
30 March 2021

Associate Professor Jenny Veitch
Heart Foundation of Australia, Future Leader Fellow



Benefits of visiting parks for physical activity

- **Physical inactivity** is responsible for >5 million deaths per year globally
- Currently in Australia, 70% children/adolescents and 60% adults do not do enough physical activity
- Parks can facilitate physical activity and encourage active travel



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Park use is low

Parks are generally under-utilised, and most park visitors engage in low levels of physical activity

Visitation is particularly low among **adolescents** and **older adults**:

- only 7% of park visitors adolescents and 16% older adults
- >67% both age groups: sedentary activities like sitting/standing when in the park

Critical that parks are PRESERVED and DESIGNED to foster active use across all age groups

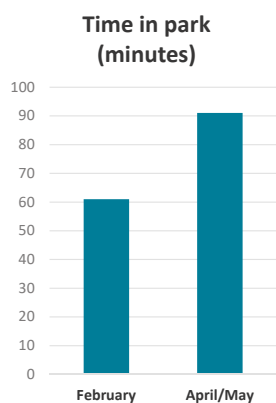


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The *Our Life at Home* study

The impact of COVID-19 on park use



33%: parks were an important place to be active during COVID lockdown

72%: local parks **did not** have the features/amenity to encourage them to visit or be active



suggests that much more could be done to improve local parks to meet resident's needs

Recommendations (Parks):

- Preserve green space in existing neighbourhoods and allocate green space in new neighbourhoods
- Location of park:
 - In close proximity to people, regardless of where they live
 - Continuous, linked together and lead to destinations (where possible)
 - Support thoroughfares for walking and cycling
- High quality parks:
 - Ensure park features meet the needs of all demographic groups
 - Invest in upgrades to enhance park features/amenity
 - Plan for on-going maintenance
 - Engage with community: availability, accessibility, design and quality issues
 - Install safe walking/cycling paths to support active travel & reduce car use
- Partnerships between academics and industry stakeholders should be fostered; research evidence needs to be readily available in a user-friendly format to inform planning

REVAMP

Recording and Evaluating Activity in a Modified Park

Examined the impact of play-scape installation on park usage & park-based physical activity over 2-years, in a park in low SES area of Melbourne

Veitch J, et al. (2014) A natural experiment to examine the impact of park renewal on park-use and park-based physical activity in a disadvantaged neighbourhood: The REVAMP study methods. *BMC Public Health*, 14;600.

Funding: ARC Linkage Project: 2013-2016

Investigators: A/Prof J Veitch, Prof A Timperio, Prof J Salmon, Prof D Crawford, Dr A Carver, Prof B Giles-Corti



Before



After



Across the whole park:

- Overall visitation **↑ 176%** (relative to control)
- Physical activity in the park **↑ 119%** (relative to control)
- Cost-effectiveness
 - ➔ AUD **\$0.58** per hour of activity gained per park visitor







Veitch J, et al. (2018) The REVAMP natural experiment study: the impact of a play-scape installation on park visitation and park-based physical activity. IJBNPA, 15:10

Lal A, et al. (2019) The impact of a park refurbishment in a low socioeconomic area on physical activity: A cost-effectiveness study. IJBNPA. 16:26



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Why is this important?

-  Investment in park refurbishment led to increased park use and physical activity
-  Installation of a new play-scape was a **cost-effective intervention** to facilitate greater levels of **physical activity**
-  Highlights that park features and design are critical
-  What features are most important for different age groups?



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ProjectPARK

Examined the relative importance of park features for encouraging park visitation, park-based physical activity & social interaction among children, adolescents, and older adults living in Melbourne (2017-2020)

Veitch J, et al. (2021) Children's ratings of park features that encourage park visitation, physical activity and social interaction. *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, 58,126963

Funding: ARC Discovery Project

Investigators: A/Prof J Veitch, Prof A Timperio, Prof K Ball, Prof B Deforche



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ProjectPARK

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
CHILDREN
8-12 YEARS

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
TEENS
13-18 YEARS

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
OLDER ADULTS

1



In-park walking interviews

2



Rating of park images

3



Relative importance of park features

4

Stakeholders



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ProjectPARK

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
CHILDREN
8-12 YEARS

Adventure playground, physically challenging play equipment, obstacle courses, climbing structures, sports goals, flying fox

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
TEENS
13-18 YEARS

Café, swings, grassy open spaces, sports courts, outdoor fitness equipment, picnic areas

IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR:
OLDER ADULTS

Walking paths, peaceful and relaxed setting, shady trees, nature, birdlife, picnic areas, water feature



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Why is this important?



Identified features that should be **PRIORITISED** in park design to encourage people to visit, be active and social when in the park



Identified what features are most important for different age groups



Identified that preferred features **VARIED** by **AGE GROUP** and **GENDER**



Creating high quality parks is critical
Need to allocate funding to build parks that incorporate these features



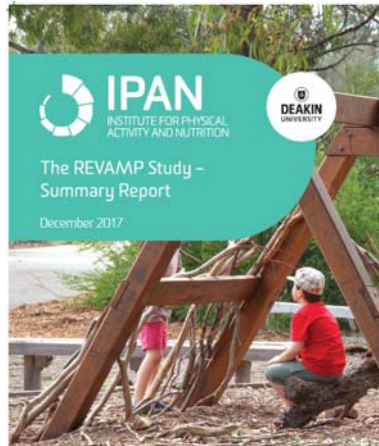
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RESOURCES:



<https://ipan.deakin.edu.au/impact-and-resources/#research>



ProjectPARK REPORT ON PARK FEATURES FOR CHILDREN

ProjectPARK: a study with over 10 years to identify the park features they consider to be most important for their park visitation, park based physical activity and social interaction (2007-2020).

34 completed a walk along interview in a park to discuss park features
222 completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features
243 completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features

FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO VISIT PARKS

1. Large grassy open space
2. Shade (e.g. long shady trees)
3. Well-maintained equipment
4. Well-maintained equipment
5. Long flying fox
6. Shade (e.g. long shady trees)
7. Well-maintained equipment
8. Well-maintained equipment
9. Well-maintained equipment
10. Well-maintained equipment

FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO BE ACTIVE IN PARKS

1. Large grassy open space
2. Large grassy open space
3. Large grassy open space
4. Large grassy open space
5. Large grassy open space
6. Large grassy open space
7. Large grassy open space
8. Large grassy open space
9. Large grassy open space
10. Large grassy open space

FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION IN PARKS

1. Large grassy open space
2. Large grassy open space
3. Large grassy open space
4. Large grassy open space
5. Large grassy open space
6. Large grassy open space
7. Large grassy open space
8. Large grassy open space
9. Large grassy open space
10. Large grassy open space

For all outcomes, children rated large grassy open space, shade, and well-maintained equipment as the most important features for encouraging visitation, physical activity and social interaction.

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ProjectPARK IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR TEENS

ProjectPARK: a study with over 10 years to identify the park features they consider to be most important for their park visitation, park based physical activity and social interaction (2007-2020).

34 completed a walk along interview in a park to discuss park features
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FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE TEENS TO VISIT PARKS

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In all three phases, teens tended to prefer park features that were large, adventurous, and challenging, such as a long flying fox.

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ProjectPARK IMPORTANT PARK FEATURES FOR OLDER ADULTS

ProjectPARK: a study with over 10 years to identify the park features they consider to be most important for their park visitation, park based physical activity and social interaction (2007-2020).

34 completed a walk along interview in a park to discuss park features
222 completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features
243 completed a survey to identify the relative importance of park features

FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE OLDER ADULTS TO VISIT PARKS

1. Large grassy open space
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5. Large grassy open space
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FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE OLDER ADULTS TO BE ACTIVE IN PARKS

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FEATURES THAT ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION IN PARKS

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10. Large grassy open space

A peaceful and relaxed setting, shady trees and walking paths were the top three features for older adults across all outcomes.

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