



NSW POLICE FORCE

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Site Crime Risk Assessment of the Mullumbimby Skate park and Recreation Grounds.

In April 2001 the NSW Minister for planning introduced Crime Prevention Guidelines to Section 79C of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979. These guidelines require consent authorities to ensure that development provides safety and security to users and the community. 'If a development presents a crime risk, the guidelines can be used to justify modification of the development to minimise crime risk, or, refusal of the development on the grounds that crime risk cannot be appropriately minimised'.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is a crime prevention strategy that focuses on the planning, design and structure of cities and neighbourhoods. It reduces opportunities for crime by using design and place management principles that reduce the likelihood of essential crime ingredients from intersecting in time and place.

Predatory offenders often make cost-benefit assessments of potential victims and locations before committing crime. CPTED aims to create the reality (or perception) that the costs of committing crime are greater than the likely benefits. This is achieved by creating environmental and social conditions that:

- Maximise risk to offenders (increasing the likelihood of detection, challenge and apprehension).
- Maximise the effort required to commit crime (increasing the time, energy and resources required to commit crime).
- Minimise the actual and perceived benefits of crime (removing, minimising or concealing crime attractors and rewards) and
- Minimising excuse making opportunities (removing conditions that encourage/facilitate rationalisation of inappropriate behaviour)

CPTED employs four key strategies. These are surveillance, access control, territorial re-enforcement and space/activity management.

Crime Risk Assessment of the Mullumbimby Skate park and Recreation Grounds.

Site Description

Car park allocated for community use for the Football fields, Netball Courts and Skate Park .



The Mullumbimby skate park is situated opposite Mullumbimby High School on Jubilee Ave on the outskirts of the Mullumbimby township. The skate bowl is in the South-East corner of the Jubilee Ave Sports fields approximately 250 - 300 meters east of Jubilee Avenue.

The surrounding area is primarily farming land and open paddocks to the south and south-east of the skate bowl. To the north of the location is the residential area of Mullumbimby before you enter the CBD. To the west of the bowl it is sporting fields consisting on netball courts and football fields for approximately 250 – 300 meters before Jubilee Avenue and then Mullumbimby High School.

Reason for Assessment.

A request was received from Mr Michael Matthews from Byron Shire Council. The council has a motion to increase the activity and patronage of the skate park by increasing its usage at night and had suggested floodlighting the skate bowl.

Initial concerns regarding the proposal were discussed and the crime risk assessment (CRA) was completed at the location to address any issues of concern with the status and condition of the venue.

The original plan to flood light the skate bowl, at night has been discussed and the general lighting of the area may not be appropriate at this time. Some alternative suggestions were made to improve the possible lighting of the area. The submission to council for the upgrade of the skate park and the lighting has been placed on hold pending the report from the Crime Risk Assessment.

Site Risk Rating

The NSW Police Safer by Design Evaluation process is based upon Australia and New Zealand Risk Management Standard ANZS4360:1999. It is a contextually flexible, transparent process that identifies and quantifies crime hazards and location risk. Evaluation measures include crime likelihood (statistical probability), consequence (crime outcome), distributions of reported crime (hotspot analysis), socio-economic conditions (relative disadvantage), situational hazards and crime opportunity.

The statistics and data reported to Police indicate that there is very little in the way of crime, alcohol related incidences, or anti-social behaviour at the skate park which has been being reported to police over the past 12 months.

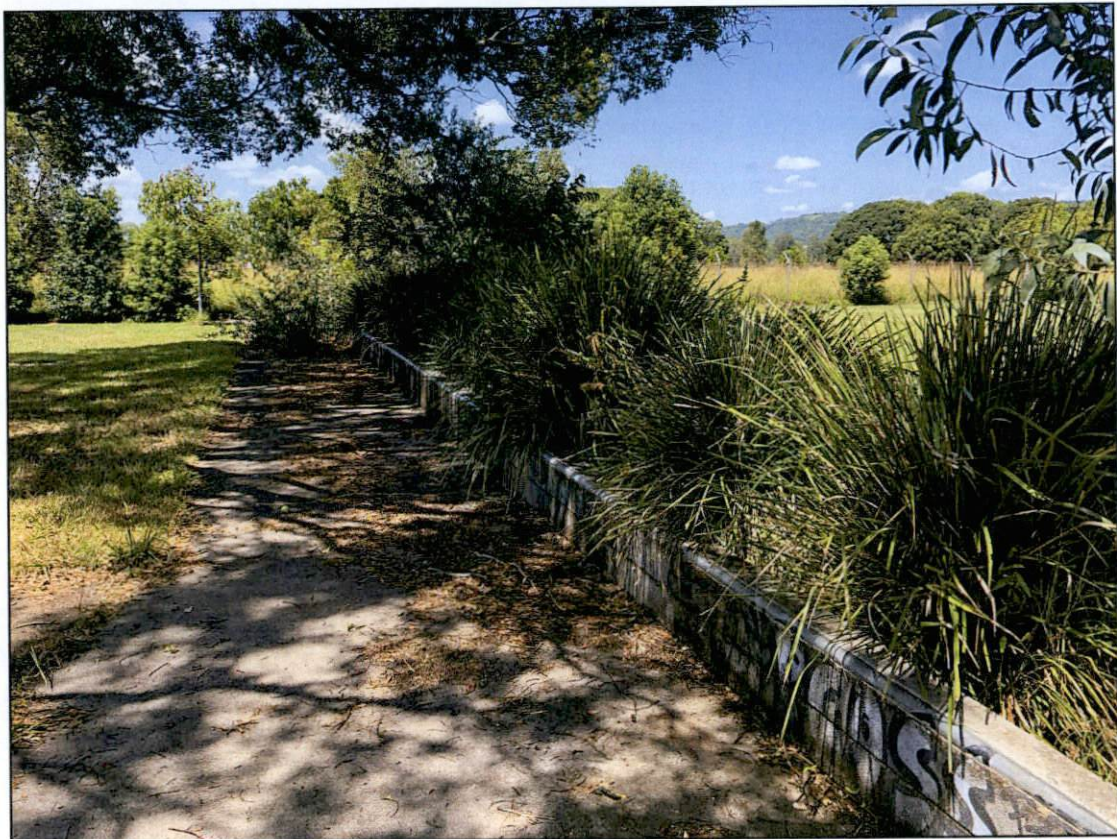
After conducting the Crime Risk Assessment, a rating for the Skate bowl / park at Mullumbimby has been identified as a, **Moderate Crime Risk at 46%.**

Surveillance

Natural surveillance is achieved when normal space users can see and be seen by others. This highlights the importance of structure layout, orientation and location: the strategic use of design' landscaping and lighting. Natural surveillance is a by-product of well planned, well designed and well used space.

The surveillance of the location is quite poor, primarily due to the general location of the skate bowl, which is approximately 250-300 meters away from the main road running past. In addition, there is very little to no passive surveillance of the location as the southern and south-eastern perimeter of the skate park is surrounded only by farming land and open paddocks.

The view from Jubilee Avenue of the skate bowl is restricted by poorly placed garden beds and over grown trees and scrubs.



General Maintenance.

The general maintenance of the surrounding area, garden beds, and structures near the skate park needs improving to increase the desirability of the location for use by families and young people.



Seating and garden furniture is in need to repair and or replacement.

Small garden beds are overgrown and provide no benefit to the area.



Urban decay at the location gives the impression of the area being unkept and unsafe.



The structure shown above is located on the northern side of the Jubilee Sports fields on the opposite side of the oval from the skate park, approximately 50 meters from the car park. The structure is run down and does not provide the welcoming image that would attract the community to use the area.

As can be seen there is significant graffiti, fire damage and damage to the seating on and within this structure. All these issues need to be removed or repaired. The structure is obviously being used by the homeless as shelter which is not what it was intended for.

This type of urban decay needs to be repaired, replaced or removed entirely to improve the impression of the location. By addressing these issues as they occur it would improve the image of the surrounding area and reduce the potential for injuries occurring at the location which could result in claims against the council.

Lighting

There is a proven correlation between poor lighting, fear of crime, the avoidance of public places and crime opportunity (Painter, 1997). Good lighting can assist in usage of an area.

The location currently has no lighting, hence the request by Council for advice regarding the potential risks of lighting the location permanently at night.

As a rule, increased lighting is a benefit to the urban landscape. However, in remote locations like this skate park it can contribute to prolonged exposure to anti-social behaviour and increase the use of the location for alcohol and drug consumption. The remoteness of the skate park and perceived lack of ownership and limited community and passive surveillance of the park provides people the opportunity to attend the location for other inappropriate uses.

If the skate park was in a better location with more passive surveillance from passing traffic that had a clear unobstructed view of the skate bowl or had more proactive ownership of the location by means of nearby housing and community surrounding the skate park, then increased lighting could benefit. Unfortunately, this is not the case at this location.

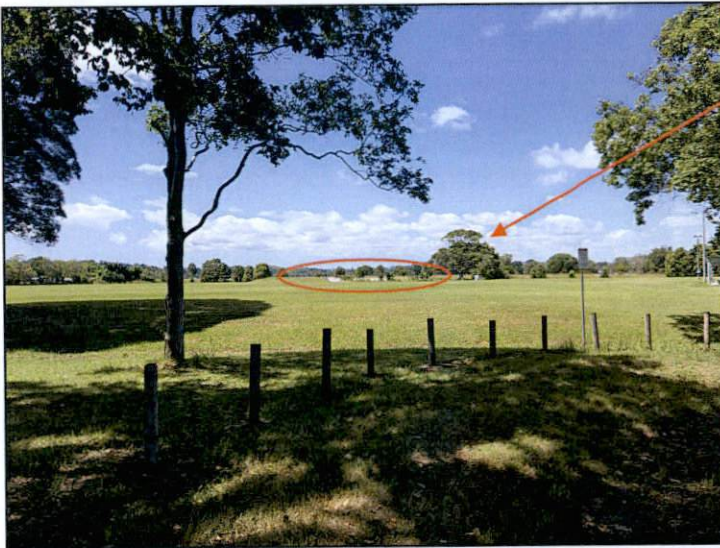
If lighting were to be installed, it is the recommendation of Police that the council take steps to activate the area further by improving the surrounding area and facilities. Making the location more appealing to young families and mothers groups by improving access, EG: footpaths from the car park, removing overgrown gardens and possibly installing other facilities like young children's play grounds or water activity spaces which would encourage young families to attend the area in greater numbers to use and take an increase ownership of the location.

If flood lighting of the area is still desired by council, a recommendation that a timed system be installed with access to the ability to turn the light on be made only to those whom make application to the council for official use of the skate park at such times. A limited timing of 30-60 minute intervals be introduced to reduce the likelihood of youth congregating for other means than the legitimate use of the skate park.

Territorial Re-enforcement

Criminals rarely commit crime in areas where the risk of detection and challenge are high. People who have guardianship or ownership of areas are more likely to provide effective supervision and to intervene in crime than passing strangers. Effective guardians are often ordinary people who are spatially 'connected' to a place and feel an association with, or responsibility for it. Territorial Re-enforcement uses actual and symbolic boundary markers, spatial legibility and environmental cues to 'connect' people with space, to encourage communal responsibility for public areas and facilities, and to communicate to people where they should/not be and what activities are appropriate.

The territorial re-enforcement of the location is quite poor due to the physical location being 250 – 300 meters from Jubilee Ave and having a row of tree and over grown garden beds preventing the surveillance of the skate bowl from Jubilee Ave.



View from the closest available parking to the skate park, across the full width of the cricket oval.

Over grown garden beds preventing the clear view from Jubilee Ave of the skate park.



Access Control

Access Control treatments restrict, channel and encourage people and vehicles into, out of and around the development. Way-finding, desire-lines and formal/informal routes are important crime prevention considerations.

Access control is used to increase the time and effort required to commit crime and to increase the risk to criminals. Natural access control included the tactical use of landforms and waterway features, design measures including building configuration; formal and informal pathways, landscaping, fencing and gardens. Technical/mechanical access control includes the employment of security hardware and Formal (or organised) access control includes on-site guardians such as employed security officers.

Access control to the location needs to be addressed. With the main attraction of the location being the netball courts, football field and skate park the council needs to improve the availability of parking and ease of access to the skate park which is approximately 200 meters from the closest parking area.



The closest off-street parking as shown here is quite run down and in need of renovation. There is no lighting of the parking space at all. This would contribute significantly, to a general feeling of being unsafe in the area at night.

During the crime risk assessment (CRA) it was identified that the space shown above is used as parking for the area. Police would make recommendations that before the lighting is installed at the skate park that access control for the venue be addressed. The general upkeep of the parking and surrounds needs to be improved.

If the council wants to increase the use of the location by the public during the hours of darkness for the general safety and wellbeing of the users the car park would benefit from being levelled to reduce the risk of trips and falls, also lighting the car park would reduce the likelihood of crime in the car park, and generally improve the feeling of safety at night.

This car park above is not only for the use of people attending the skate park but also the netball courts and football field. There is no lighting of the car park, netball courts or football fields at all and would need to be addressed before the skate park enhancements are made.



As can be seen in the picture above there is approximately 150 - 200 metres walk from the car park to the skate park across the grass next to the netball courts. If a lit footpath was installed it would provide clear access control to the venue and provide easier access for parents and young families to access all facilities within the area.

Conclusion

Police would make the following recommendations to reduce the risk of offences and anti-social behaviour occurring at the location:

- The first issue of installing lighting at the skate park would need to be closely monitored on a trial basis, to ensure there is no increase of criminal activity at the location because of lighting. It would not be recommended to light the area on a permanent basis every night. It's suggested that the lighting system be installed with restricted access to those who register with council to have access to the lighting for legitimate purposes only. Also have a timer placed on the lighting for 30 to 60-minute intervals.
- If council's desire is to increase community activity in the area, police would recommend that the current parking area be improved to reduce the risk of trips and falls because of the uneven surface. Lighting of the parking area would also be beneficial to provide better security at night if the areas activities area increased.
- To assist with the increased usage of the location improved access to and from the skate park is required. Currently access is limited to walking across playing fields and grassed areas. In wet weather or immediately after rain, the access to the skate park would be greatly improved if there were concrete foot paths leading to the desired areas from the car park.
- Surveillance of the skate park is almost non-existent due to the distance from Jubilee Avenue, being surrounded on two sides by open paddocks with very little to no access and because of the over grown and inappropriately placed garden beds that prevent the clear view of the Skate Park. There is very little council can do regarding passive surveillance of the location, as there is no residential housing or community access overlooking the location and the distance from the only passing street being Jubilee Ave. By removing or significantly reducing the current garden beds would assist in the surveillance of the area.
- If the council desires to increase community usage of the location the general up keep of the structures currently at the skate park would need to be repaired and improved. The addition of well-appointed and maintained facilities near the skate park such as family friendly facilities for the general community for example BBQ's, seating, shaded areas, toilets and even playgrounds would make the space more attractive to the general community. By increasing the communities use of the space on a more frequent basis, the community would provide a form of self-management of appropriate behaviour at and near the skate park.
- Police would suggest that the entire sporting fields and surrounding area is in need of significant upgrading to ensure the community feels safe and wants to attend the location. By limiting the upgrades to just lighting the skate park, this will only attract people to the area at night which would greatly increase the potential risk and liability of the council due to the increased patronage and potential for incidents at the location due to their poor state of repair of the run-down facilities.

The New South Wales Police Force have a vital interest in ensuring the safety of members of the community and their property. By using the recommendations contained in this evaluation, any person who does so acknowledges that:

1. It is not possible to make areas evaluated by the NSWPF absolutely safe for members of the community or their property.
2. It is based upon the information provided to the NSWPF at the time the evaluation was made and a site inspection.
3. The evaluation is a confidential document and is for the use by the consent authority – Byron Shire Council only,
4. The contents of this evaluation are not to be copied or circulated otherwise than for the purposes of, and the permission of, the consent authority – Byron Shire Council.

The NSW Police hopes that by using the recommendations contained in this document, criminal activity will be reduced and the safety of members of the community and their property will be increased. However, it does not guarantee that all risks have been identified, or that the area evaluated will be free from criminal activity if its recommendations are following.



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16 April 2018.



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