Understanding Place.

Argyle Square Carlton City of Melbourne





Place Place Audit Report
Wednesday 17 November 2021

Understanding Place.

"Sometimes, the most valuable information you gather in a public life survey is something you observe, or a conversation you have, that simply comes out of spending hours at a time in a space."

Gehl Institute c. 2018, *Using Public Life Tools: The Complete Guide*, Gehl Institute, New York

About this document

This report collects user based data to locate demographic trends and understand changes of use over time. It provides an easy-to-understand snapshot of how we use spaces and how they influence us. The report charts a collection of *Public Life and Public Space* metrics (https://gehlinstitute.org/public-life-tools/) that can influence public space design and inform recommendations for improvements to the public realm.

Company contact

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Audit

Name

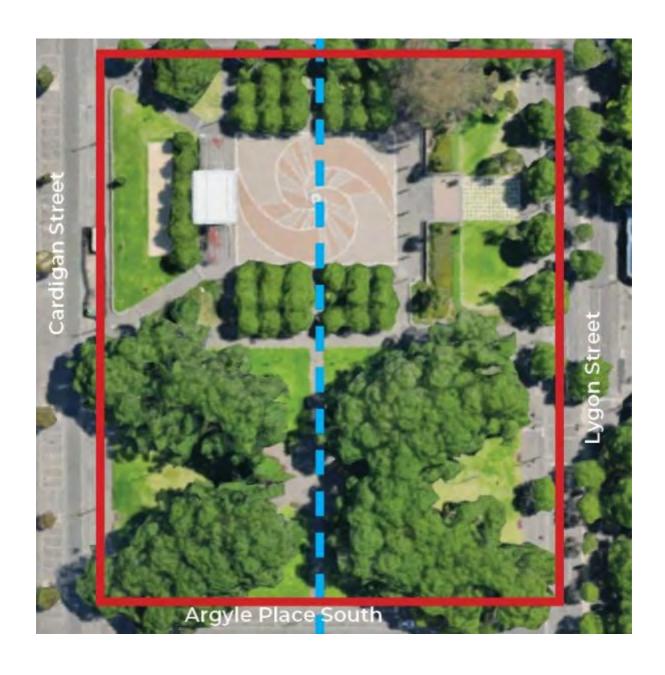
Argyle Square, Carlton

Timeframe

Wednesday 17 November, 2021 8am - 6pm

Location

Bordered east by Lygon Street, west by Cardigan Street and north/south by Argyle Place, Carlton Melbourne VIC 3053



About

Place Auditing

The places we inhabit are not static. We move through them in a complex and layered manner, creating patterns of usage over time. Truly understanding how people use places contributes toward better design for a better quality of life.

Inhabit Place was created to help shape better places; through understanding how a space is actually used we can formulate an enhanced appreciation of what does and does not work, and create places that better suit their environment and their people. With the knowledge gained from an Inhabit Place Audit, planners, developers and government can call upon real data captured in situ to inform their decisions and create places that better serve and delight their citizens.

A Place Audit is shaped around an hourly cycle with a continuous data capture to demonstrate trends over time. Movement, Patterns of Movement, Time in Place and Interviews are documented for 30 minutes every hour as a snapshot of how the space is used.

Data is rounded to the nearest decimal point and in some instances this will result in totals that do not meet 100%.

The Glossary provides definitions on the use of terms and icons in the report.

Site description

This Audit observes user behaviour and engagement within Argyle Square, including Piazza Italia between 8am-6pm.

Argyle Square is a large open space adjacent to the Lygon Street dining precinct. It incorporates Piazza Italia, a Bocce court and large outdoor screen and stage. The open space has a network of formal paths and public infrastructure including seating, drinking fountains and rubbish bins. The space is a destination for people to gather, take picnics and play on the grass as well as serving a connective function to Lygon Street and its public transport links.

Methodology

This report collects quantitative and qualitative information. Data was captured by auditors using the Inhabit Place app to map and monitor civic life using the framework of Jan Gehl's **Public Life and Public Space** Studies. By conducting a survey of public areas, we learn how, when, where, and why people are using public spaces.

The metrics of a *Public Life and Public Space* study include:

Movement: capturing demographic and mode information of those passing through the space and mapping their desire paths.

Time in place: capturing demographic and behavioural information of those people choosing to spend time in the space, mapping their activities to understand duration of stay and activation of different zones within the space.

Interviews: documenting people's impressions of the space through intercept surveys and conversations.

Images: visualises changes throughout the day to express the mood and feel of the space.

Observations: diarised notes of place auditors adding detail that is not otherwise documented.

Frontages: mapping activation of the building line that frames the site to understand the extent the building edge interacts with and contributes to the space.

Inventory: maps the physical infrastruce on site and makes condition assessments of each item.

Glossary: provides definitions on the use of terms and icons in the report.

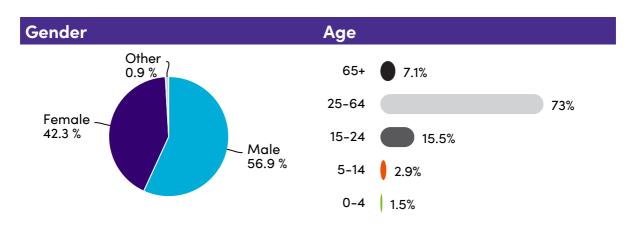
Overview



Wed 17 November, 2021, 8:00am - 6:00pm Total people: 1,372



The following provides an overview of data from across all audit days. Gender and Age in this section reflect the aggregate of Movement and Time in Place.



Top Behaviours

Main Modes



75.5%





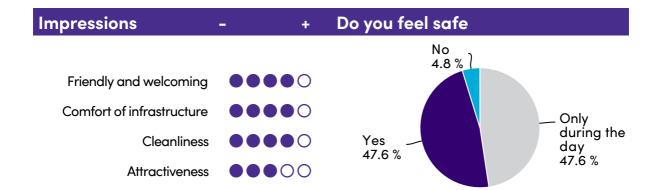
20.2% 1.69







92.9% 3.2% 1.2%





Weather

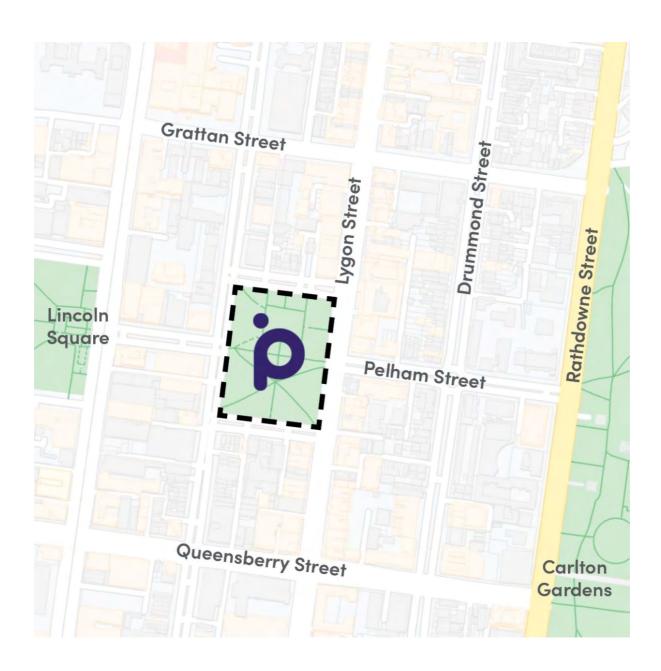




17 November 2021 Clear Sky

Location

Argyle Square and Piazza Italia between Cardigan Street and Lygon Street, Carlton.



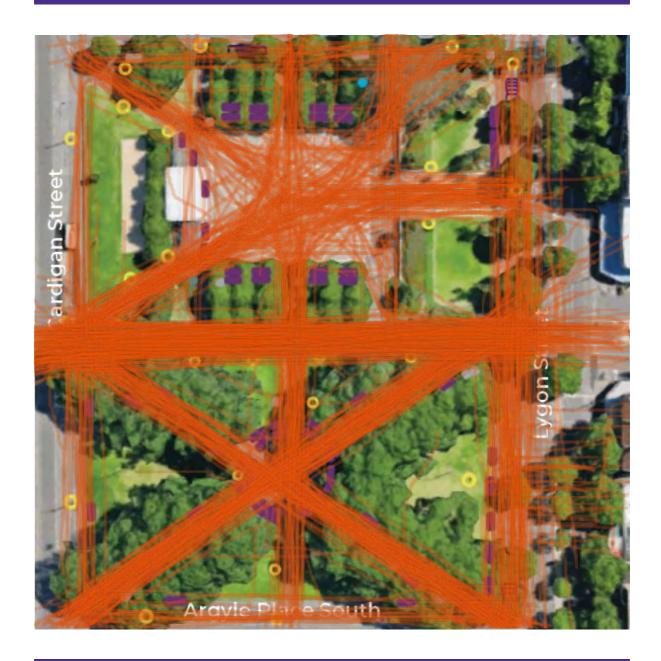
Public Life Findings



Wed 17 November, 2021 8:00am - 6:00pm

Movement

Patterns of movement



Mode



















983

31

11

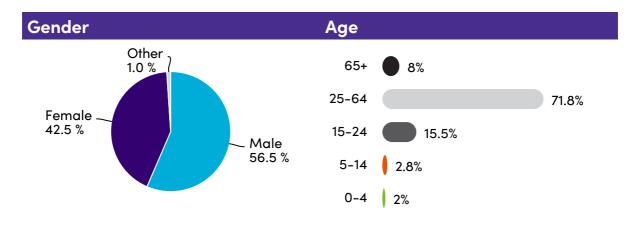
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2

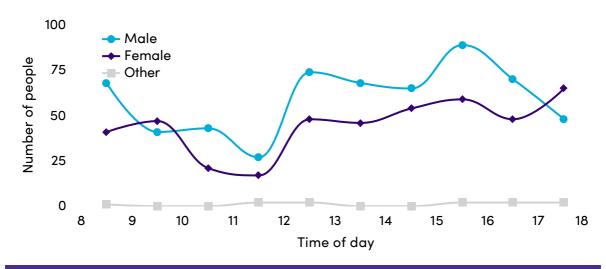
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Movement

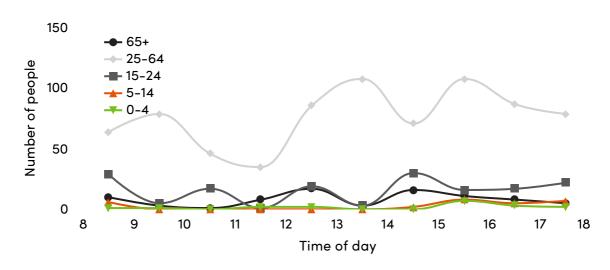
Daily total 1050



Gender across the day



Age across the day



Time In Place

Activation of place



Behaviour Posture







26









5



3





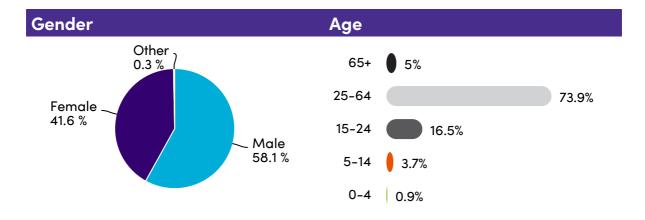




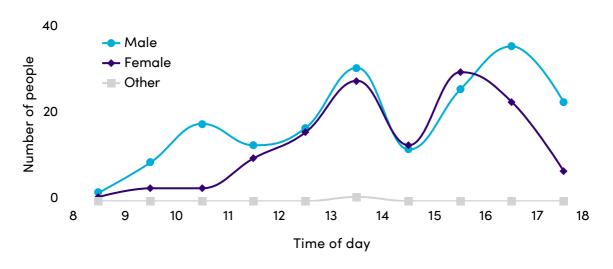


Time In Place

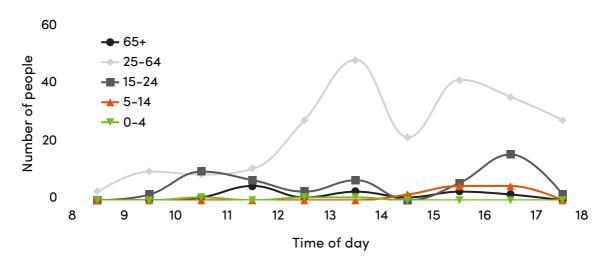
Daily total 322



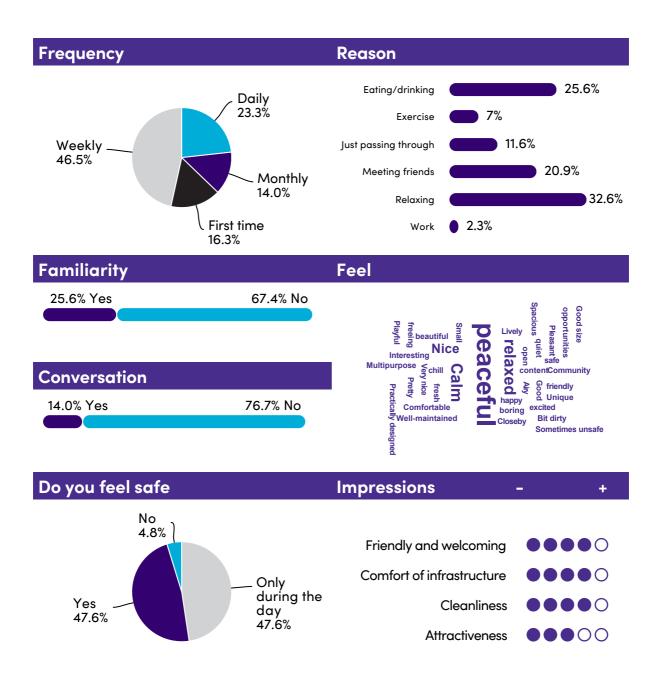
Gender across the day

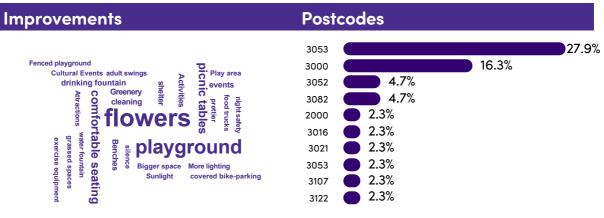


Age across the day



Daily total 43





Comments

Comments are provided by survey respondents to an open question about their experience of the space and how they would like to see the space evolve.

08:41	More comfortable benches, the ones in the park now are quite rigid.
08:51	The person lives quite close to this area, he often comes here to listen to
	podcasts, drink coffee and eat during his lunch breaks. He enjoys the quietness
	and openness of the area and proximity to retail shops on Lygon Street,
	compared to the nearby Lincoln square and Carlton gardens. He thinks the
	place is also sometimes lively with children skateboarding and people dancing
	on the stage. He mentioned that there had been artwork exhibition in the open
	space before which makes the square unique as this was not seen in other parks.
08:52	Would like have more parks in the city, enjoying green spaces.
09:41	He usually bikes here so when it's a cloudy day with chance of rain there's no
	place with shelter to park or hang out.
09:58	The person feels that the area can be better improved with more lighting so it
	seems safer during the night. The benches could be more consistent. They could
	also have more playgrounds for kids and exercising facilities for the elderly. The
	lack of these recreational facilities has reduced the overall attractiveness and
	comfort compared to Lincoln Square and Carlton Gardens.
10:50	The person often comes here during lunch break to eat, relax and enjoy the
	sunlight. She thinks the place is very well maintained with the newly planted
	grass and trees. She sometimes comes here to meet friends. It's also close to her
	work so it's easily accessible. She has not seen anyone using the stage and
	screen area however. She has noticed a decline in people using the space after
	COVID, whereas before COVID schools often organise activities for students in the
	square.
10:53	There were not many events in the Piazza or stage so didn't feel like coming
	here. Would like the square to be an active space.
11:52	The person rarely comes here. She doesn't like the tiles in the square, but she
	enjoys the other infrastructure and greenery here.
11:52	Could use some benches in the sun as well as in the shade - mosquitos can be
•	an issue in the shade. Would want some options to choose from. Some water
	features (fountain or waterfall) for the peaceful sound of flowing water.
11:55	The place might be a bit unsafe for women at night even though he thinks the
	current lighting is sufficient. He likes the proximity to Lygon retail centres.
12:56	They would like to have more options to sit on the grass as it is not that inviting in
12.50	the park. They feel the fencing of grass areas in the park makes them not use the
	grass to relax.
13:05	Precious green space.
13:38	Thinks the area is quite nice with the existing shade, seating areas for people to
	relax and get fresh air. This is her first time coming here.
	The person feels that this public space is quite accessible with its proximity to
13.41	Lygon Street and retail shops. He really enjoys the grass areas.
	Lygon oneer and retail shops. He really enjoys the grass areas.

Comments

Comments are provided by survey respondents to an open question about their experience of the space and how they would like to see the space evolve.

13:58	The person comes here for her lunch break to eat while enjoying the sunshine.
	This space is very accessible to her workplace on Lygon street. She really likes the
	square and grass and thinks they make the public space more attractive. She
	thinks the provision of benches, shade are pretty sufficient at the moment. The
	openness of the plaza also allows direct line of sight with the surrounding areas,
	which makes her feel safe during the day.
14:00	Would like the gardners to not make noise during lunch hours.
15:06	They were here visiting the square for the first time from Clayton (international
	students at the Monash campus there) to see if they would like to live in the area
	or not. They said they prefer spending time in Caulfield Park because it is bigger
	and closer to where they live.
15:30	She was here watching her young daughter play in the piazza while they waited
	to meet others. She said she prefers coming here instead of Carlton Gardens
	(which is too big) or Lincoln Square (which is too busy). She said it was easy to
	watch her kid play in the big open piazza space but would like a small, fenced
	play area suited to younger children (the metal slide at Lincoln park is too fast
	and there are older kids there that play around roughly) - she used to live in
	Brisbane where playgrounds usually had fences but doesn't see this much in
	Melbourne parks She mentioned that sometimes the square can feel dangerous
	or unsafe because of drug-related activities and lots of littering around the big
	screen area.
15:47	Near the southern Lygon corner there are a few nightclubs. It can become
	dodgy during the night and she doesn't feel safe in that side of the park at night.
	She says there are few Afghani refugees living at RMIT housing making this park
	busier. Concerned about the skateboarders destroying the seats and steps.
15:55	He said that the bins often overflow, especially on weekends. He thinks the space
	is unique compared to other popular parks like Carlton Gardens where people
	go to socialise, but feels Argyle Square attracts more individuals either working/
	studying or relaxing alone - he was here reading a book and said he comes
	here to do so at least 3-4 times a week (consistently through lockdown and since
	restrictions eased).
15:59	More picnic tables would be nice, more public toilets. One girl said the parking is
	expensive and often not enough spaces.
16:27	She appreciated how well designed the space is to accomodate lots of different
	people and activities: relaxing on the grass, young kids playing, people working,
	teens skateboarding, etc. She said she walks her dog through here almost every
	morning but sometimes, since she lives down the street, she comes back in the
	afternoon so they can both get some fresh air/ outdoor time (that's what she was
	doing now).
16:44	It looks nice as is. As a small park, it had plenty. Would be nice to have a
	playground, but Lincoln Park already has one. Enjoys the blooming flowers. Loves
	the market at the square.
16:46	Don't want anything to change.
-	, 3

Interview responses for City of Melbourne

What kind of spaces? Mode of transport What kind of spaces did you seek out How did you get here today (mode of during COVID? transport)? Convenient comforting **7**% Bike Shops greenery Normal Faulkner Park Natural 9.3% Car Public space Zoo Public transport Indoors warm Secluded Beaches 72.1% Walk

	id your use of this space change during COVID?
08:41	Walk through this space more to drop her daughter.
08:51	He has noticed more people are using the space, especially during lockdowns
	when people start to appreciate outdoor times.
08:58	Went out more to outdoor spaces with people.
09:39	Went for walks/jogs more. Sought out green spaces to enhance good air quality in personal life.
09:39	Met more friends in the park
09:41	Central point to meet so they wouldn't change much about it
09:58	Came to watch the kids spend time outdoors.
10:43	Didn't come here before and has only used this space once before.
10:49	Came more often and spent more time in the park.
10:49	Came here more often.
10:53	Would walk through the square a few times over the lockdown.
11:48	Go to open spaces where there is sunlight
11:52	The person has gone out less compared to before COVID.
11:52	Did not use this space
11:54	Went out less and looked for isolated spaces in public.
11:55	He noticed there have been less people using public space after covid.
12:56	Used to come here the same amount of time as before COVID as they work
	around the square.
13:05	More sitting down time, more time hanging out with friends in the park.
13:38	She has been using public space more often and noticed others doing the same
13:41	He has been using green spaces more.
13:58	She doesn't really seek out any public spaces during the lockdowns, but she is
	more attracted to well-designed public spaces with picnic areas.
14:00	Came here everyday.
14:14	Hasn't changed much.
14:27	She hadn't noticed much change.
14:38	Spending more play time out in the park with kids.
15:30	She said this was the only place they came to through lockdowns, and came here more often than usual
15:47	Same as before but she felt this park was more congested.

How did your use of this space change during COVID?

15:59	Same as before
16:27	She usually comes here walking or stopping to rest with her dog but through
	covid she often came out just for some fresh air and did so more often than usual
	even when it was cold (whereas lately, since restrictions have eased, she hasn't
	come here on colder days). She mentioned that with so much time on her hands
	in lockdown, she found herself looking for different spaces or new areas to
	explore and sometimes took her dog in the car to walk around another area
	further away like the Zoo or Carlton Gardens.
16:46	Same as before
17:35	Going to parks more, not a lot has changed
17:41	Hasn't changed much but after lockdown she was able to go out more
17:49	Social distancing

What changes would you like to see in public space as a response to COVID?

08:41	Comfortable seating areas.
08:51	More shelters to these public spaces so people can still stay when it rains. More
	flowers to beautify the area.
08:58	Would like restriction circles to socially distance people.
09:39	Better paths for running and accommodating more diverse people to use
	spaces
09:58	The council can improve the planting of flowers as the current ones die very fast
	and look ugly. They don't support holding the soil either, which results in soil
	runoff, making the parks look even worse. The pavement can also be improved
	as the current one is cracked and uneven, likely for people to trip over.
10:43	More maintenance of green spaces.
10:49	More public toilets
10:49	Clean up crews.
10:50	More native vegetation.
10:53	More events or performances and even festivals to make use of the square
	more. Would like to see live music performances.
11:48	Places with options to sit in both sun and shade
11:54	Personal space is important.
11:55	More facilities for recreation to accommodate children.
12:56	More cleaning of benches and seats in parks as there seems to be a lot of
	cleaning services in public transport stops but not in public spaces especially in
	Argyle Square. Would like to see if there is a "humanely" possible way to make
	the birds relocate somewhere else so they can eat lunch more in peace.
13:05	Community events and food trucks in your local area.
13:41	More exercising facilities could attract more people
13:58	More exercising facilities. More kids playground could be helpful as they are
	currently just playing on the grass.
14:00	Addressing the core issues in relation to COVID rather than changes to spaces is
	important. Would not like to see any change.
14:14	Good accessible public toilets. She likes being around people so she likes going
	to public spaces where she can experience that.
14:38	Picnic areas, picnic tables. Children play areas.
15:06	More accessible public spaces
15:30	Fenced playgrounds



What changes would you like to see in public space as a response to COVID?

15:55	He would like to see more open areas in parks, with less engineering or
	infrastructure - he comes to Argyle Square instead of Carlton Gardens because
	it's quieter but still offers a lot of space to relax comfortably on the grass
15:59	Sanitisers and hand washing spaces and a good public toilet
15:59	need to clean the infrastructure everyday, some infrastructure(more interesting
	structures) that people can play and rest nearby
16:27	More flexibility in the application of council rules e.g. easing of parking tickets, less
	strict dog leash rules in recreational areas and more ways of accessing these (for
	people with dogs who can't take them on transport but don't have cars).
16:44	Community garden would be nice.
17:49	More parks and gardens so that we can meet up in open spaces.



Man exercising



Rest spot



Half the people observed so far don't use the zebra cross to cross the street.



Tai Chi behind the stage



Noisy street sweeper.



Kid rising scooter rider along the path



Pelham street informal crossing point for walkers and bike riders



Older lady walking her dog off lease



Using steps to do sit ups as part of morning workout



Waiting for public transport



workers collecting bins



A group of cyclists having breakfast by the stage





A skateboarder getting ready to skate



Tradies enjoying morning break



Skateboarders using stage to do tricks.



Group having lunch in the shade



Skateboarder



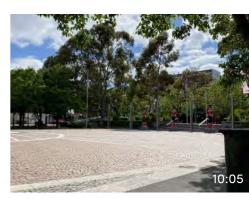
People on benches facing Lygon St



Two people having lunch sitting at benches



People enjoying leisure time in the shade



First sight of sunlight on the square.



Choosing shade or sun.



Food delivery cyclist taking a break



Skaters



Sitting on benches while respecting social distance



Skateboarder practicing using the path



Several bins and lots of benches on either side of the piazza



Park gets busier with the sunlight and lunch time



Walking through the square



A group of people having takeaway lunch on the edge of the bocce area



Walking though the square.



People having lunch in the Piazza.



Benches in the centre of the southern half of the square



Skateboarder practicing on the path



Someone using the ledge to sit while they talk on the phone



A group gathering for lunch break (from work perhaps?)



People having lunch on the stage



A "Lebanese Student Society" from melbourne university having a meeting.



Hanging on the grass to chat



Unattended scooters parked in Piazza



Family taking a photo at the ornaments



Student group gathering for board games and a picnic



People sitting on the ledge around the piazza



Sunbathing people



Young teenage boys skateboarding in the piazza



Two men eating ice cream



Auditor interviewing someone



a small girl on a big square scootering

Images



Couple sitting on a bench by the square



Working remotely from a shady spot in Argyle Square



Guy playing with his dog in the sun



Someone laying on the grass between the central path and the pizza for the first time today



On a mobile zoom call by the bocce area



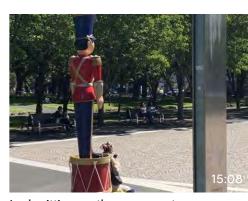
Business man on a call



People tend to avoid sunny open space, only sitting under shade or open green space



People hanging on the grass and benches by Lygon Street



Lady sitting on the ornament



Young girl scootering around the piazza while her mum watches from the side





Woman sketching a cafe at the SE corner of the square





Kids playing



Stake-borders gathering



Guy doing cycling



Lady walking dogs



Group of young men playing frisbee



Grandmother and granddaughter playing on the stairs



Someone sitting on the high ledge



It looks like an older woman has stopped to talk to the skateboarders to talk about what they're doing – she was gesturing a lot but didn't seem angry but instead like she was curious about the skateboards (pointing and touching them) then waved goodbye

Observations

Observations are auditors notes on the events of the day adding nuance to the quantitative data collected.

08:57	Mostly the park is used by people to commute (crossing over to get to the other
	road)
09:02	Observed parents taking children to school between 8:20am to 8:50am.
09:05	The greenery in the park is very dull and could use more visually appealing
	plants.
10:16	People stopping to spend time when the sun was out.
11:06	One male jogging seems to run past the same route again and again
11:30	Male walking carrying prop swords (likely LOTR) for stage plays
13:15	There are a lot of bins, sometimes 2–3 grouped together throughout the space.
15:22	One woman got swooped by a magpie and a pigeon.
15:49	Probably an architect or design student sitting at the park's edge and sketching
	a nearby cafe.
16:45	A number of people are sitting on the benches along Argyle Place N watching
	cricket or talking on their phones
16:47	A mother and daughter have been in the piazza space for almost 2 hours; the
	mother keeps changing where she's sitting but has just joined her daughter (who
	has been moving around the whole time) to play frisbee together
16:56	There's a group of 6-8 skateboarders around the square (mostly across the
	central path) at the moment and have been quite a few throughout the day
17:13	Even though the group of skateboarders is occupying the central path by the
	Lygon Street entrance, other people are still walking right through them to cross
	the square
17:16	Elderly woman commuting or just passing by having animated discussions with
	group of skateboarders who seem to frequent the path in the middle of the
	square.

Public Space Findings



Frontages

Facades categorise activation of the building line to demonstrate how the edges of the space contribute to the experience of the public realm.



- Active frontage which make a positive contribution to the vitality of the space, and supports a pedestrian friendly public domain.
- Passive frontage that is neutral to the pedestrian experience of the public domain, is not active or lively.
- Blank frontage which makes no contribution to activity, nor passive surveillance or security for those in the public domain.

- Vacant frontage which has no occupants or is derelict.
- Negative frontage which has a detrimental impact on the pedestrian public domain, either by being visually unattractive, the source of offensive noise, odour, runoff or exhaust, or by posing a safety risk during service or loading activities.

Inventory

Inventory documents the provision of public infrastructure making a condition assessment of each item as Poor (in need of maintenance or repair) or Good (clean and well maintained).



- Bicycle racks
 10 Good / 0 Poor
- Bins
 24 Good / 0 Poor
- Drinking Fountains4 Good / 0 Poor
- Lights28 Good / 0 Poor
- Pay phones
 1 Good / 0 Poor
- △ Sculptures 1 Good / 0 Poor

Seats

66 Good / 0 Poor

Inventory documents the provision and condition of public infrastructure in the space.

Condition



Monument on the Lygon Street side



Bike racks and water fountain

13:02



Pergola structure at the front of the piazza



Newer bin cages



Entrance to the square from Lygon Street



Bins



Some exposed bins



Benches under the shade of the pergola



Bench seating along Lygon Street



Big screen in the piazza



Bin and pay phone by the bus stop on south east corner



Benches on the southwest border of the square



Bike racks in use



Different bike rack orientation



Christmas ornaments and person standing next to it



The Glossary provides definitions on the use of terms in the Inhabit Place platform and their application on site during an audit.

Activation of Place mapped for 30 minutes every hour this metric presents where people are spending time in the space and for how long

Age brackets adopted from Jan Gehl's Public Space Public Life Studies to ensure Inhabit Place data is relatable to global case studies, assessment is based on observation

Audit hours the duration of the place audit

Place Auditor data collector using the Inhabit Place platform

Base Map aerial perspective of the audit site with public inventory represented through symbols

Behaviour the main activity people are engaged in while spending time

Daily Total represents the total number of people counted

•••••

Frontage building line that fronts the public domain

Active - Frontage which makes a positive contribution to the vitality of the space and supports a pedestrian friendly public domain. Typically, continuous and transparent glazing, window displays, entries that provide for interaction between indoor and outdoor activities.

Blank - Frontage which makes no contribution to activity, nor passive surveillance or security for those in the public domain. Typically, heavily frosted glazing with no interactivity or visual stimulation

Passive - Frontage that is neutral to the pedestrian experience of the public domain but is not activated or lively. Typically, window displays that provide visual stimulus but no opportunity to engage, it may also include wall murals or artwork that provide interest to an otherwise blank surface.

Negative - Frontage which has detrimental impact on the public domain, being visually unattractive, the source of offensive noise, odour, runoff or exhaust, or by posing a safety risk during use. Typically, service delivery entries, waste storage enclosures, air intakes and exhausts, public or tenant toilet entries or windows, and car parking entries that intersect pedestrian thoroughfares.

Vacant - Frontage which has no occupants or is derelict. Typically, closed business premises.

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Gender assessments based on observation, where there is uncertainty auditors are instructed to mark 'Other'

Images taken by auditors to document mood of the space

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Interview Questions

Conversation - Have you spoken to anyone new while you've been here?
Familiarity - Do you recognise anyone in the space?

Feel – Describe how the space makes you feel? (Word clouds generate the most common responses as larger text)

Frequency - How often do you visit the space?

Impressions - Rank responses as Very Poor, Poor, Neutral, Good, Very Good Improvements - What would inspire you to spend more time here/ What would make your experience more comfortable? (Word clouds generate the most common responses as larger text)

Interview Comments – Further comment on the space

Postcodes - Where you reside Reason - What brought you to this space? Safety - Do you feel safe in the space?

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The Icon Glossary provides the definition for all symbols used within this report.

Interviews intercept survey conducted between auditor and user of the space

Mode the human method of transit

Movement recorded for 30 minutes every hour collecting the age, gender and mode of each individual crossing an imaginary line that transects the space, marked in blue on the site map

Observations auditors commentary on the events of the day

Other used for a person who has not been visually assessed as male or female

Out of Area non local residents

Overview a snapshot of metrics averaged across audit days

Patterns of Movement drawn for 30 minutes every hour capturing desire lines as people move through the space

Posture the position people adopt when spending time

Public Life Findings how people use and feel about the space inclusive of Movement, Time in Place, Interviews, Images and Observation data

Public Space Findings physical attributes of the space including Inventory and Frontage activation

Time in Place recorded for 30 minutes every hour collecting the age, gender and behaviours of those staying in the space

Total People is the combined footfall of people passing through and spending time in the space



Carried - children being carried



Cycling - riding a bicycle, in bike trailers or bike seat



Eating and drinking



Excercising - purposful active behaviours including stretching



Leisure activities such as people watching, reading, conversing



Interacting with installation



Mobility Scooter - motorised assistance device



Moving around - staying within the bounds of the space but in constant movement, such as playing



Other



Pram - being pushed in a pram or stroller



Sitting



Skateboard



Smoking



Standing



Waiting for public transport



Walking - includes jogging, running or walking a bicycle



Wheelchair



Scooter



Working

