



THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLACE ATTACHMENT IN PARKS

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Introduction

This report provides a summary of the literature pertaining to the development of place attachment. In presenting an overview of the literature, the reports also focuses on the use of the concept of place attachment in the development of a proposed urban park setting, a key requirement of the study. In so doing, the report provides a list of recommendations for the use of the concept in the urban setting. The key findings and recommendations are summarised below.

Key Findings

Place attachment is created as a result of complex human emotions, values and experiences unique to the individual, to form an identity from which we orientate ourselves with the world. The literature has highlighted that place attachment can be created when people invest time or energy into a place through work or recreational activities. Often attachment is not evident to the person until the place of attachment is threatened.

- Place attachment:
 - can be encouraged through memberships to organisations or groups, which use natural settings, or those places that provide solitude and satisfactory experiences
 - is strongly influenced by childhood experiences, more so than by engaging in adult activities
 - can be affected by social factors such as the different values held by sections of the community or changes in technology
 - can be destroyed because of natural events, political unrest or wars.
- Place attachment theory can be used in:
 - developing community identity
 - encouraging healthy communities
 - engaging communities
 - encouraging and supporting community attachment and sense of ownership.

Key Recommendations

The following recommendations relate to urban parks, and specifically to the proposed development site within the Melton Shire. These recommendations are based

on the information in this report, and take into account, the literature review and the demographic profile of the Melton Shire taken from the 2001 Census.

Managing a high use urban park

- Staffing—requires a skills base that needs to be strongly commercial.
- Funding and Impacts—a high prevalence of commercially based funding from leases, rentals, merchandising and sponsorships with limited government support will be required.
- Visitor and Asset Management—the key focus is on providing an entertaining and satisfying experience for visitors within a clean, attractive and safe environment. They tend to require high investment in infrastructure and operating assets to provide human comforts.
- Marketing and Distribution—marketing has a strong consumer orientation, utilising traditional marketing principles, with the aim of maximising visitor expenditure in the park.
- Governance—these parks may be best operated as autonomous corporative entities reporting to a business or tourism style ministry, rather than an environmental ministry.

Place attachment in urban parks

Urban parks by their location form part of the community, and therefore community attachment should extend to the urban park through strategic planning by managers.

- Children:
 - Encourage children to connect with natural environments, as attachments are formed most strongly in childhood.
 - Develop environmental education programs for children that involve excursions to the park.
- Influencing attachment:
 - Introduce symbols within the park design that reflect the community's historic and cultural values.
 - Avoid decisions that will lead to dislocation, desegregation or displacement of members of the community.



- Developing community identity:
 - Encourage community identity by the development of symbols that represent Australian heritage throughout the park, as a place for people to reconnect with their heritage. These may be an indigenous walking track, a plaque or war memorial, or an avenue of honour.
 - Conduct cultural and community events.
 - Develop interpretative facilities for historic and cultural heritage.
- Encouraging healthy communities:
 - Make the park accessible to a range of users.
 - Encourage community to use the park by providing a range of facilities such as nature based sport activity circuits, walking or bike tracks, or kite flying.
- Engaging community and encouraging a sense of ownership:
 - Natural amphitheatre space or display area sponsored by local businesses and community groups for artworks, fetes, art/craft, painting workshops or pet days.
 - Natural facilities sponsored by businesses that will draw people to use the park for family and leisure activities, natural picnic spots with shade.
 - Tearooms and picnic/barbeque facilities.
- Encouraging and supporting place attachment:
 - Facilitate the development of trust and improve relationships with community through open discussion and encouraging community involvement.
 - Engage those with the strongest attachments and those affected by issues in management processes.
 - When community participation is weak, consider global events that may assume importance at this time.