

Transport  
for NSW

# NSW Guide to gender- inclusive placemaking

Ideas and opportunities  
for inclusive places

Draft for consultation



Transport for NSW acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal people and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of NSW.

Many of the transport routes we use today – from rail lines, to roads, to water crossings – follow the traditional Songlines, trade routes and ceremonial paths in Country that our nation’s First Peoples followed for tens of thousands of years.

Transport for NSW is committed to honouring Aboriginal peoples’ cultural and spiritual connections to the lands, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Cover image: Reimagining Wagga Wagga’s city centre, delivered as part of the [Places to Love funded grant program](#)

Credit: Matt Beaver for NSW Government

Burwood Council, Unity Place activation as part of the [Places to Love](#) and [Summer Fund grant programs](#)  
Credit: Mike Belkin for NSW Government



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# Introduction

## Overview

Many attributes feed into successful places. For everyone to be able to enjoy them, they need to be planned, designed and operated so that they feel safe, inclusive and welcoming.

Research demonstrates that a person's gender and gender identity can impact the way they experience places<sup>1</sup>. This can have a range of impacts, from feeling unsafe and unwelcome when navigating cities, towns and neighbourhoods, to their autonomous mobility, what opportunities they can access, and what connections they can make in their own communities.

According to the [NSW Safer Cities Survey Report](#), 59% of women do not feel safe in public spaces after dark, compared to 32% of men. Nine out of ten women also stated they agree that a sense of safety influences how they move around cities and towns. Nearly one in five non-binary persons in NSW say they feel unsafe in public spaces during the day, however more research is needed to understand the nuances of their experiences<sup>2</sup>.

The NSW Guide to gender-inclusive placemaking (the guide) has been developed as part of the [Safer Cities program](#). The guide identifies ideas, opportunities and methods for applying gender-inclusive placemaking principles across public spaces and transport hub precincts. The guide supports the planning, design, management and activation of places that are culturally, physically, and socially accessible for the entire community.

Creating more gender-inclusive places can help all people participate fully in civic life, with equal access to jobs, education, cultural and social connection, regardless of their gender identity.

## About this document

The guide has been informed by engagement with women, girls and gender diverse people across NSW, as well as research and input from state agencies, local councils and practitioners.

The guide is not exhaustive or all-inclusive but highlights key ideas and opportunities that emerged from the engagement and research, which have been organised by the themes that were heard.

This guide incorporates research from [Monash University XYX Lab](#). XYX Lab is a team of experienced design researchers, exploring gender-sensitive design practices and theory. Their work operates at the intersection of gender, identity, urban space and advocacy and is inclusive of all gender and sexual identities.

## What are public spaces?

The [NSW Public Spaces Charter](#) defines public spaces as all places that are publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. They include:



### Streets

Streets, avenues and boulevards, squares and plazas, pavements, passages and lanes, and bicycle paths.



### Public open spaces

Both active and passive (including parks, gardens, playgrounds, public beaches, riverbanks and waterfronts, outdoor playing fields and courts, and publicly accessible bushland).



### Public facilities

Such as public libraries, museums, galleries, civic/community centres, showgrounds and indoor public sports facilities.

This guide is also relevant for public spaces in transport hub precincts. Transport hub precincts include areas in close proximity to:

Bus stops, interchanges, train stations, light rail or tram stops, ferry wharves, cycleways, and taxi or rideshare ranks.

## The quality of public space

The quality of public space including in transport hub precincts is important as quality makes people feel safe, welcome and included. The quality of a place is reflected not only in its physical form — how it's designed, maintained and integrated with its environment — but also through the activities it supports and the meaning it holds. Using the [Evaluation Tool for Public Space and Public Life](#) or the Great Places Community Survey Tool, a place can be evaluated by asking:

- Am I able to get there?
- Am I able to play and participate?
- Am I able to stay?
- Am I able to connect?

# What is gender-inclusive placemaking?

## Definitions for the purpose of this guide

**Gender identity** refers to a person's sense of whether they are a man, woman, non-binary, agender, gender queer, gender fluid or a combination of one or more of those definitions. Gender can be binary (either a man or a woman) or non-binary. This includes people who have no binary gender at all and people who have some relationship to binary gender/s<sup>8</sup>.

**Gender expression** refers to the way a person shows their gender to the world, through things such as clothing, hairstyles and mannerisms<sup>3</sup>.

**Gender-inclusive** refers to an approach that takes an inclusive view of gender, considering people of all genders and sexualities as well as intersections with factors such as race, ethnicity, income, class, age and ability<sup>3</sup>.

**Gender diverse** refers to people who identify with a gender or genders outside of the binary of female and male<sup>9</sup>.

**Gender bias** refers to the unfair difference in the treatment of people based on their gender<sup>10</sup>.

**Placemaking** means the reimagination and rejuvenation of places so they have long term social, cultural, environmental and economic value for communities<sup>11</sup>.

Gender-inclusive placemaking is the practice of creating places that are inclusive, safe and welcoming of all genders. It involves understanding how gender can influence people's use and enjoyment of spaces and through participatory processes, shapes places that embraces diversity and creates more welcoming and equitable places for everyone.

The built environment is often considered gender-neutral, however it has not always been designed to address the needs of women, girls and gender-diverse people. Research shows that historically, they have often been underrepresented in the processes that shape the built environment; this includes urban planning, design and management of infrastructure and places<sup>3,4</sup>. In Australia, while women make up 27.4% of the transport workforce, the transport sector is the third most male-dominated sector by employment behind construction and mining<sup>5</sup>. While women comprise almost half of architectural graduates, they only make up 35% of the entire architectural workforce<sup>6</sup>.

There can be an assumption that the design process "objectively" guides solutions and resists bias; however, this assumption downplays how a person's different characteristics or intersecting identities can impact their experience of places.

In working towards more inclusive places, it is important to remember that women and gender diverse people are not homogenous groups and it is important to engage with them with recognition of their unique intersecting identities, including gender, age, race and ethnicity, ability, and socio-economic background. It is also important to remember that this work is not just a women's issue<sup>7</sup>.

Centering diverse voices in the planning, design, management and activation of places can uncover shared values and promote more inclusive design.



"Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

Jane Jacobs 1961, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

People standing on Oxford Street, Sydney, NSW  
Credit: Sander Danhuisen

# Principles for gender-inclusive placemaking

Public spaces and transport hub precincts are community assets that help support a society in providing opportunities or capabilities to participate and connect. Inclusion in places and in the processes to plan, design, manage and activate them is central to creating equitable places and ensuring all people can access the benefits they provide.

Creating gender-inclusive places should begin with the lived experiences of people and how their gender identity and expression has affected their experience of places. Gender-inclusive placemaking is not just about what is implemented in the built environment, but how organisations and communities can work together to create inclusive places for all.

## Safety

One of the most important considerations for women, girls and gender diverse people enjoying places is a concern for their safety<sup>3,10</sup>. Feeling safe is important as it can impact where people choose to go and how they choose to get there<sup>12</sup>. While concern for personal safety is not exclusive to women, girls and gender-diverse people, they are much more likely to feel unsafe when navigating cities and towns and are more likely to change their behaviours based on how safe or unsafe they may feel<sup>2,13</sup>.

On the other hand, research also demonstrates that people feel safest in activated places that have plenty of people around<sup>2</sup>. Places feel safer when they are well-used and inclusive, and people can see and interact with others<sup>14</sup>. Rather than focusing on designing out any potential risks, this principle encourages socially inviting places that attract a wide mix of people to visit and dwell<sup>15</sup>.

### What this could look like in practice

- Diversity in people and activities within a place can help attract people to visit and dwell, providing 'eyes on the street' or 'eyes on the place'. A diverse mix of people of different ages, genders and cultural backgrounds can help to support a feeling of safety and inclusivity<sup>14</sup>.
- Approaches to addressing these feelings of unsafety can sometimes focus on crime prevention, such as the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)<sup>16</sup>. Evidence gathered within and beyond the Safer Cities program indicates that broadening the application of CPTED to include further gender inclusive placemaking approaches to perceptions of safety could further support people in places.

- Wayfinding, especially in connection to and between transport modes and hubs, that is easily perceptible during both the day and night will make women, girls and gender diverse people feel safer and help them to plan their time within a place. Visual markers, signs, landscaping, lighting of signage and maps are all important wayfinding components that help people understand the distance and time it takes to travel to, from and within a place<sup>7,17</sup>.



## Visibility and representation

Women tend to be less visible in public spaces and transport hubs. This may be because they are concerned about their personal safety, or the public spaces don't meet their needs and support their interests. Obvious visual indicators, like public artwork, can help make women, girls, and gender diverse people feel more welcome in places. This can help to demonstrate that a place is welcoming and inclusive for all.

When women, girls and gender diverse people are engaged in decision making processes in meaningful ways, they are also more likely to feel connected to places and will spend more time there.

*"By addressing their concerns regarding safety, sociability, access and image, we [can] take a crucial step towards legitimising their right to occupy and utilise public spaces. This, in turn, instils confidence in individuals encouraging their active participation in public life."*

### What this could look like in practice

- Host organised opportunities and community events for women, girls and gender diverse people to increase their use of places<sup>17</sup>. Programmed events like dance performances and markets can attract a diverse range of people to a place<sup>18</sup>.
- Feature local women, girls and gender diverse people in the imagery used in places. This includes public art, signage, advertising and symbolism such as LGBTIQ+ pride flags. These demonstrate a sense of welcoming to women, girls and gender diverse people by acting as visual and/or physical indicators of who is welcome to use the place.
- Use place-naming to be welcoming and inclusive. Ask if places named things such as 'Sporting Pavilion' could be renamed to 'Activity Hub' to attract a broader range of interests and activities. If an opportunity emerges to name a new street or place, consider gender biases in new naming options to ensure women and gender diverse people are well represented in place identity and recognition of local people.

Mural by James R. Ellis for the [Big Picture Fest 2022](#) on a multi-storey carpark in Newcastle, NSW as part of The Festival of Place  
Credit: Wilt Living



## Embracing diversity

To make your place inclusive and welcoming, it is important to involve a wide and diverse range of perspectives in its design.

Women, girls and gender diverse people come from different cultural backgrounds, speak different languages, have different sexual orientations and have different economic advantage and ability. All of these things will influence how, when and why they visit a place or choose not to<sup>4</sup>.

Welcome a wide range of views and perspectives when seeking to design and improve public spaces to help embrace diversity and deliver towns and cities that are more inclusive.

This can help build empathy towards women, girls and gender diverse people and challenge business-as-usual thinking and processes. By embracing diversity, placemaking can help create cities and towns that are more inclusive<sup>19</sup>.

## What this could look like in practice

- Collect and analyse data that is separated or disaggregated by sex and gender to identify any needs or opportunities related to women, girls, gender diverse individuals, and minoritised groups in places. Quality data can also help evaluate interventions or activities, and build the case for longer term change<sup>20</sup>.
- Place-based assessment tools such as the [Great Places Community Survey tool](#), the [Evaluation Tool for Public Space and Public Life](#), and the [Data for Places Guide](#) can help to identify issues and opportunities that are important to women, girls and gender diverse people within their physical context. When trialling or implementing a project, conduct a before- and after-assessment with women, girls and gender diverse people to build a complete picture of the project's impact. Consider any potential for bias in your evaluation or assessment and seek to address this.
- Consider the other barriers women, girls and gender diverse people face to understand socio-cultural and intersectional issues – particularly around fear of violence and their perceived vulnerability in places<sup>4</sup>. Targeted co-design can help to challenge stereotypes and unconscious bias<sup>21</sup>. You can read [Shaping places together: Ideas for co-designing places](#) for more information.



Kids on Q - Campbelltown City Council  
Credit: Campbelltown City Council





Mothers crossing the street with babies in prams  
Credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Salty Dingo

## Processes and decision-making

As women and gender diverse people have historically been underrepresented in processes that shape cities and towns, involving their needs and perspectives goes beyond the built environment<sup>3</sup>. Bringing a gendered perspective to processes and decision-making can help guide the efforts of gender-inclusive placemaking towards creating more inclusive places<sup>12</sup>.

There are a range of ways to embed gendered perspectives in organisations. For example, the City of Vienna has integrated gendered perspectives, specifically of women, into planning processes since the early 90s. Through the creation of a new Department for Women's Affairs, the City adopted a framework called gender mainstreaming in their organisation<sup>22</sup>.

Gender mainstreaming is a framework that improves, develops and evaluates processes, so that gender equality is incorporated into all stages of the design process and resources are efficiently allocated. It is an approach that integrates a gender perspective through strategic action<sup>23</sup>. Ideally, it should involve gathering insights from a range of people in communities to ensure that the needs and perspectives – across age, disability, ethnicity, geographic location, income, indigeneity, migratory status, race, religion, and sexuality – are accounted for<sup>24</sup>.

## What this could look like in practice

- Create a gender balanced project team that is representative of the community you work with<sup>7</sup>. This balance is not just about the number of men, women and gender diverse people in a team. It is also important to consider the composition of the project team and who has influence on decisions.
- Check for gender-neutral language in your organisation's design, planning and place guidelines and frameworks. Investigate whether this may be adversely impacting or excluding women, girls and gender diverse people and what could be done to change this or improve<sup>25</sup>.
- Undertake training in gender inclusivity and intersectionality to build confidence in communicating on these issues within and outside your organisation<sup>7,25</sup>.
- Use analysis or assessment tools like gender-inclusive audits or women's safety audits<sup>26</sup> to understand specific issues such as how decision-making processes may treat people unequally based on their gender, and the options to address them<sup>24</sup>.
- Look for opportunities to work across your organisation on how best to embed gender equality and inclusivity in placemaking projects. Advocating for gender equality is not the sole responsibility of women and gender diverse people. This can help raise awareness within your organisation about equality and inclusivity and empower others to work collaboratively<sup>22</sup>.



# Lighting and visibility

## Ideas and opportunities

According to the NSW Safer Cities Survey Report, lighting is the most important factor that people, regardless of their gender, consider when choosing how to move around public spaces and transport hub precincts<sup>2</sup>. This is not just about installing ‘more’ and brighter lighting<sup>27</sup>, which can often create shadowed and dark areas and reinforce feelings of unsafety.

Gender-inclusive lighting can have a wide range of benefits. These include improved feelings of safety when women, girls and gender diverse people are in public spaces and using transport hub precincts. This can lead to increased access to cities and towns at night – from dusk until dawn and more inclusive and accessible experiences and events after dark.

It is also important to remember that lighting infrastructure must be well-maintained for visibility and to encourage people to a place, which can increase passive surveillance<sup>28</sup>. The impacts of light pollution on the natural environment, particularly insects, birds and other wildlife should also be considered<sup>29</sup>.

“...[we need] lighting [that] illuminates the areas where they are walking and gathering...most public lighting currently doesn’t function well for people walking or cycling or just having a chat.  
— Ideas board submission to the Safer Cities Survey

## What we've heard:

Engagement through the Safer Cities program shows that women, girls and gender diverse people prefer variety of lights in places. They also prefer lighting that creates a pleasant atmosphere that is conducive to social settings. Motion-sensor lighting, ground lights, festival lighting and lighting in trees and shrubs as well lighting of public art and monuments contributes to a place feeling more inviting and easier to see what and who is nearby.

## Ideas for lighting and visibility:

1. This idea consists of lighting of monuments and statues, lighting of existing monuments and lighting of shrubs, both along the walkway and throughout the place in general. This can help the environment feel more inviting and make it easier to see what and who is nearby. Playful lighting, like coloured lighting, fairy lights or lanterns can add vibrancy and character to places.
2. A consistent, layered lighting approach can reduce the need and effect of overly bright lighting and the creation of shadow/dark spaces. Consider how different lighting elements create an overall effect rather than planning or designing each element individually<sup>30</sup>. Consider opportunities for integrating lighting with public art as part of the layering approach.
3. Cold, white light, LED lighting are usually specified for CCTV to enhance facial recognition<sup>31</sup> and surveillance of assets. This does not always contribute to feelings of safety for women, girls and gender diverse people. Research with young women reveals warmer light promotes feelings of safety, instead of cooler white light<sup>30</sup>.
4. Lighting of laneways, pedestrian bridges and pedestrian tunnels using creative lighting methods can help bring vibrancy to a place<sup>32</sup>. This could also provide more choice to people navigating cities and towns.
5. Over-lit places (or the “fishbowl effect”) may intensify feelings of risk for women, girls and gender diverse people and can exacerbate social inequity and exclusion for marginalised people more broadly<sup>33</sup>. When lighting is very white and bright it can make women, girls and gender diverse people overly visible and more vulnerable – marking places as ‘risky’<sup>34</sup>.

## Case study: reVITALise Creative Lighting

Transport for NSW, Sydney, Australia (2023)

As part of the Sydney WorldPride Festival in 2023, three pedestrian tunnels along a train line in Sydney's Inner West were reimagined with rainbow lighting artworks by local LGBTIQ+ artists as the reVITALise program. Each of the three Rainbow Tunnels was designed by a different local LGBTIQ+ artist to celebrate the Inner West community and boost place experience, sense of pride, and attachment to place. At the conclusion of the trials, more than 90% of survey respondents agreed that the art installations improved their experience in the tunnels.

“The colourful lighting completely changes my mood when driving past it or walking through it at night. Thank you.”

-Non-binary participant, reVITALise 2023 Survey.



‘1000 kisses’ in Bedford St. Tunnel, Newtown as part of the reVITALise 2023 Creative Lighting project.  
Credit both images: Transport for NSW



# Design of the place

## Ideas and opportunities

Places should be designed and maintained to ensure the highest possible level of accessibility, so that people of all genders, ages, abilities can use them with dignity and ease<sup>2</sup>. Places comprise numerous elements, like topography, the natural and built environment, as well as less tangible elements like activities, the history of a place and its meaning and significance to people that use them<sup>35</sup>.

Consultation and engagement through the Safer Cities program has shown there are a number of factors related to physical design that women, girls and gender diverse people believe will help to create more inclusive and welcoming places. These include: if a place or route is well-lit, if there are other people around, what time of the day it is, if there are clear sightlines and if a place or route appears well-maintained. Comfort and amenity are also part of designing a place. The opportunities for gender inclusive placemaking for creating a comfortable place and supporting high quality amenity are covered in the following section on page 14.

“Cater for pedestrians first above all else... with clear paths, clear routes, clear entry/ exit points...”

-Safer Cities Survey, woman participant.

## What we've heard

Access, connectivity, and ease of navigation are important. Safer Cities co-design workshop participants stated that the narrow path forces strangers to walk more closely together, which creates the need to be alert and aware of who is around. Wider and well-maintained footpaths can make it easier for people of all abilities to safely move to, through and within places.

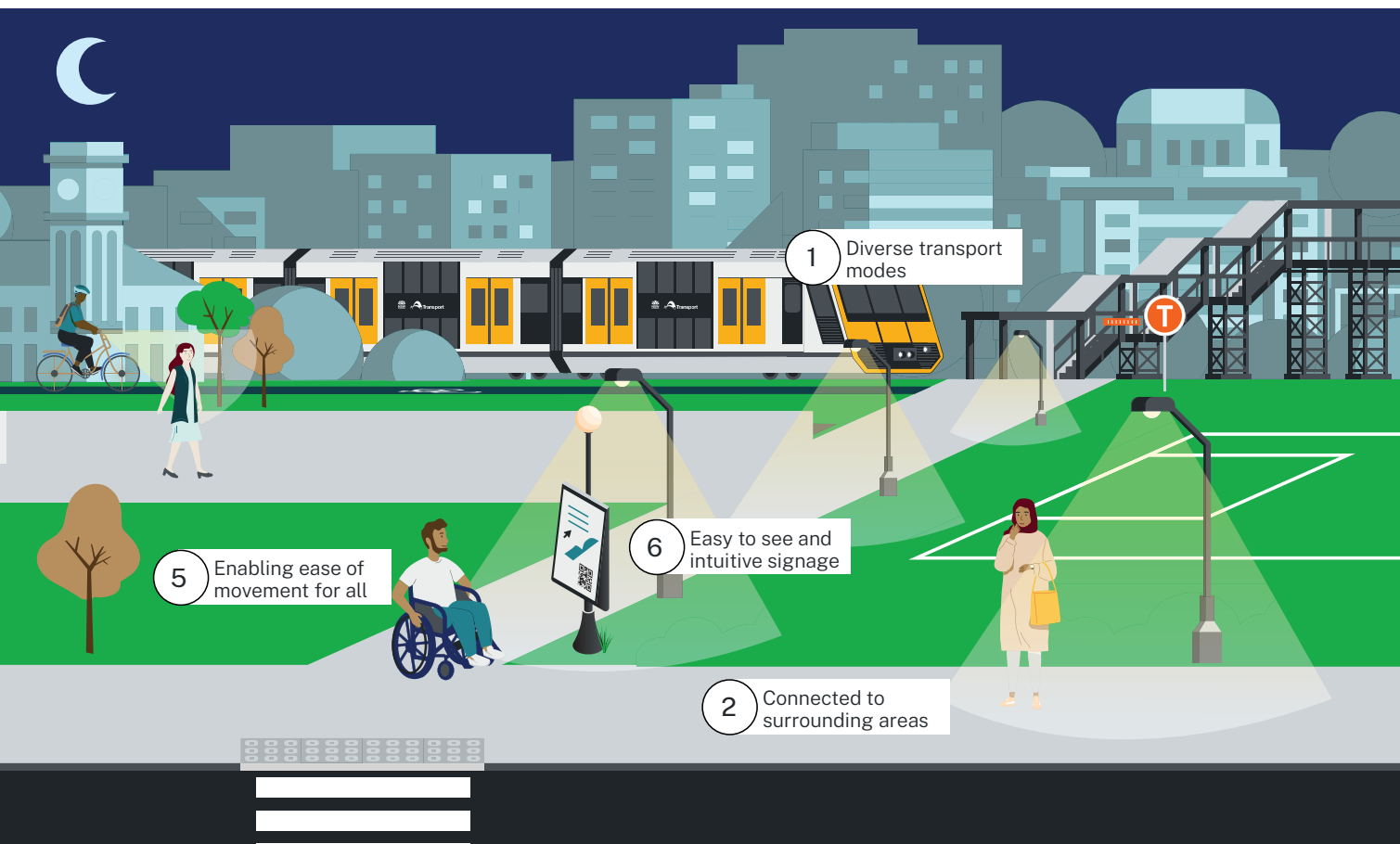
Clear sightlines or being able to clearly see what is happening in surrounding areas have also been identified.

Maintenance was also a commonly highlighted factor. Maintenance is important to how a place feels. A well looked after and cared for space brings respect and safety and can communicate to users that people regularly come to the place.

“Clear sightlines in all directions is needed... Wide streets make me feel safer...”

-Safer Cities Survey, woman participant.

Refer to 'Ideas for the design of the place' on page 13 for more information.  
Disclaimer: Illustration shows various opportunities to implement the ideas.



## Ideas for the design of the place

1. Diverse transport modes including public and active transport such as footpaths and bicycle paths can provide more opportunities to a greater diversity of people to safely access places<sup>36</sup>.
2. Places that are well connected to surrounding areas with points of interest like shops, activation and recreation areas can allow people to easily move to, from and within a place. This includes multiple entry points to the place, clear connections to modes of public and active transport and traffic calming to help ensure pedestrians can easily move to and from the place<sup>14</sup>.
3. Paths that are wide enough for prams, stroller, social groups and micro-mobility users can provide greater opportunities for people of all abilities and needs to access a place.
4. Well-maintained vegetation helps support clear sightlines and ease of navigation. Well-maintained trees can also provide shade and comfort to people in a place.
5. Enable ease of movement to, from and within a place such as through raised crossings or wide paths. This can give people greater visibility and can make it easier to enter and leave a place<sup>14</sup>.
6. Install intuitive and easy to read signage that shows connections including estimated walking times to surrounding areas as well as for use within a place. Consider how the signage may look at different times of the day.

## Case study: The Live, Work, Play Grid

Penrith City Council in partnership with NSW Government, Kingswood, Australia (2021)

Penrith City Council and the NSW Government partnered to deliver the Live, Work, Play Grid, a 1.2km walking trail along streets and open spaces adjacent to Kingswood station. The project is part of the Places to Love program. The project aimed to improve the area's safety and walkability by upgrading places where the community can interact and gather. Solutions were co-designed through workshops with local women. The improvements delivered included: playful wayfinding, creative lighting, new seating, and new landscaping. The infrastructure improvements were accompanied by a free activation program over two months that offered 40 events to the community.



The Live, Work, Play Grid in Kingswood  
Credit: Penrith City Council



# Comfort and amenity

## Ideas and opportunities

Places can enhance social interaction, promote exercise and leisure activities, and have a positive impact on community life. People often choose to engage in places based on their comfort and the amenities available<sup>7</sup>. Amenities can support socialising and interaction, and support a person's ability to stay, play and participate.

Features like Wi-Fi, charging points, clocks, water bubblers, shade structures and live information displays can also add to the comfort of users. These amenities can allow people, including those with caring responsibilities, to occupy places with agency and for longer periods of time.

“We need to keep public areas clean and well maintained. Graffiti, vandalism, and shopping strips with vacant tenancies feel unsafe.”

— Safer Cities Survey, woman participant.

## What we've heard

Through Safer Cities program consultation and engagement, teenage girls identified that they prefer toilets to be well-maintained, brightly lit and located close to paths, as they feel uncomfortable and unsafe accessing toilets that are located away from points of interest and in darker locations. It can also help to ensure that the toilet is clean and well-maintained.

Seating in places and transport hub precincts is not always designed or configured to encourage socialising. Research shows women and girls prefer comfortable seating that enables them to spend time with family and friends in a natural setting. This could include circular or modular seating, arranged in configurations to encourage people to stay longer and socialise.

“We like to socialise and take pictures and sit and hang out and chat.”

— Safer Cities co-design workshop, teenage girl participant.

Refer to 'Ideas for comfort and amenity' on page 15 for more information.  
Disclaimer: Illustration shows various opportunities to implement the ideas.



### Ideas for comfort and amenity:

1. Flexible and subdivided areas can be used by varied groups of people. They can help encourage social connection and help to reduce the feeling of being observed. Consider how seating can cater to different people including elderly, adults with small children, and include furniture that is designed for diversity in ability<sup>7</sup>.
2. Maintenance, including smart bins, regular cleaning and management of vegetation, landscaping, toilets and infrastructure can be important to how a place feels<sup>7</sup>.
3. Consider how amenities like parking, toilets, parents' rooms, water bubblers, sufficient seating can be located close to one another. Pathways to and from these amenities and facilities should be well-lit and gender-inclusive<sup>3</sup>.
4. Help provide protection from the elements to support a person or people to stay in a place. This includes tree canopy, shade and shelter from sun, heat, wind and rain<sup>37</sup>.
5. Smart technology options such as charging stations, Wi-Fi, and real-time data displays integrated with furniture such as seating, water bubblers and lighting can encourage people to stay in a place and provide flexibility in the use of the space. Live information boards showing real time public transport options can help people plan their time in a place<sup>38</sup>.

### Case study: Meet me @ Miller Street

Gilgandra Shire Council and Transport for NSW, Gilgandra, Australia (2020)

As part of the Transport for NSW's Streets as Shared Spaces program, Gilgandra council revamped Miller Street, the main street in the CBD. It was done to improve the quality of the area to create a connected activated space through using amenities such as seating, shade, planter boxes, festoon lighting, outdoor speakers, misting fans and public Wi-Fi to provide more comfort for the community members accessing the space.



Meet Me @ Miller Street as part of the Streets as Shared Spaces program  
Credit: Amber Creative



# Activation and public life

## Ideas and opportunities

Engagement through the Safer Cities program shows that women, girls and gender diverse people feel safer in the presence of others. Activated places extend active periods across the day and evening and can have wider benefits that brings more people to a place, increasing natural surveillance by increasing the time people spend in a place and improving perceptions of safety.

More active and appealing places foster greater community attachment to place, reducing vandalism and anti-social behaviour and leads to improvements in the feelings of safety. Activation can also result in a greater diversity of people using a place, and can reinforce a more inclusive and representative community identity<sup>39</sup>. The [NSW Guide to Activation](#) provides more information and tools for improving the activation of places.

“Make public spaces safer and more vibrant by encouraging more pedestrians and cyclists to use them. This would make public spaces more enjoyable to spend time in and improve passive surveillance.”

— Safer Cities survey, man participant.

## What we’ve heard

According to the [NSW Safer Cities Survey Report](#), people feel safest in activated public places that have plenty of people around, like high streets, town centres and plazas no matter what time of the day it is<sup>2</sup>.

Consultation through the Safer Cities program revealed that women, particularly teenage girls can sometimes feel like bystanders on the side-line watching boys or men play sports.

“I don’t go out at night because there are less things to do and not as many people around.”

— Safer Cities co-design workshop, teenage girl participant





## Ideas for activation and public life

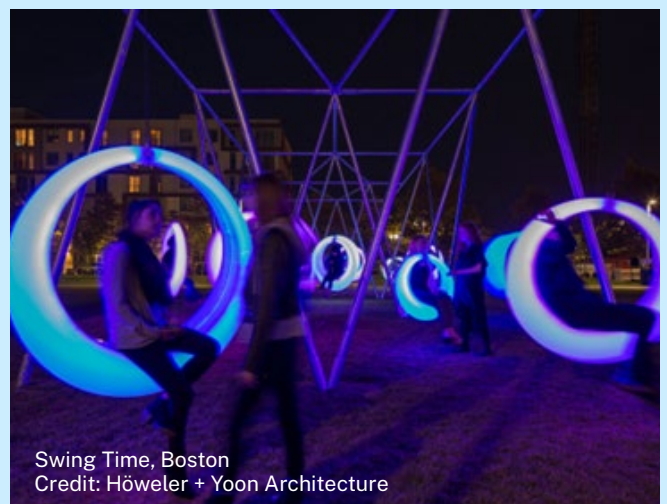
1. Use landscaping, art, signage and amenities to define spaces within a place for different uses and different user groups<sup>7</sup>.
2. Play elements or structures such as illuminated swings, group swings, climbing frames and flying foxes can cater to a diverse range of genders and age groups both in the day and night<sup>40</sup>. These can be either temporary or permanent.
3. Events and activations at night can help increase a feeling of safety as it increases the numbers of people around, creates a livelier and inviting atmosphere and improves levels of natural surveillance<sup>41</sup>. Free or non-transactional events can increase access to a broader range of people.
4. Evidence suggests that women, girls and gender diverse people can feel unsafe around places or events that are focused on alcohol<sup>19</sup>. Consider opportunities for activation, especially at night, that are not reliant on these activities.
5. Explore interactive digital play on screens, such as QR codes inviting feedback, engaging with community and displays of colour and art<sup>38</sup>.

## Case study: Swing Time

Höweler + Yoon Architecture, Boston, USA (2014)

In 2014, twenty swings in the form of LED rings made up the interactive playscape known as Swing Time were put up along a pedestrian pathway connecting D St to the Exhibition Centre in Boston, USA.

Swing Time's interactive play features encouraged visitors to engage with the swings and one another, energising the place and establishing a community lab. Though created for the whole community, teenage girls interacted with the installation the most, highlighting the need for more such activations.



Swing Time, Boston  
Credit: Höweler + Yoon Architecture



Darling Harbour Rollerama, Learn to Skate Class  
Credit: Henry Li for NSW Government

## Conclusion

Being gender-inclusive can take many forms: the width of a footpath, colourful public art, and warm, layered lighting are just some examples. Gender-inclusive placemaking can also take the form of a gender-balanced design team, gender-inclusive language and dedicated engagement and co-design for women and gender diverse people on their experiences of places. The ideas and opportunities outlined in this guide can help in creating inclusive places for people, regardless of their gender.

## What's next?

Resources from the [Great Places Toolkit](#) can support the planning, management and creation of better and more vibrant cities, towns and neighbourhoods particularly for streets and transport hub precincts. This guide was developed as part of the Safer Cities program. Other tools that have been developed that could help with creating gender-inclusive places include:

- Draft updated Evaluation Tool for Public Space and Public Life;
- Draft Community Survey Tool for Public Space and Public Life;
- Draft Shaping places together: Ideas for co-designing places; and
- Draft Case studies: Ideas for creating places that feel safer for women, girls and gender diverse people.

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## **NSW Guide to gender-inclusive placemaking**

Draft for consultation

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