How to use the Tool

The Evaluation Tool (Tool) can assist in evaluating what is working well and what could be improved in your public space or transport hub precinct. The Tool draws on research and globally renowned methodologies such as those by Gehl and Project for Public Spaces.

Results from your completed evaluations will add to your evidence base of what is working well and future improvements for the public space or transport hub precinct. This can be used to help inform place planning, project scoping and briefs, grant applications or document changes in a place over time as a before and after survey. It is not intended to be used to survey other people.

Note: The evaluation results are for the use of the project team and are not collected by the NSW Government.

If you are a government agency, you must comply with the requirements of any applicable privacy legislation when collecting personal information using this form.

Refer to the Great Places Toolkit and the NSW Public Spaces Charter to further build your understanding of what contributes to great places.

Evaluating perceptions of safety

The perceptions of safety section on page 6 was developed in consultation with the community as part of the Safer Cities program.

Through consultation and research, several physical elements were identified that influence a person's sense of safety in public spaces and transport hub precincts. This section focuses on evaluating place through these physical elements to help make places feel safer for everyone.

Steps

1. Read all pages of the Tool to understand the steps. Depending on the type of space being evaluated, some questions may not be required.
2. Complete the evaluation form on site based on your observations.
3. Familiarise yourself with the site. Observe, move around and experience the environment.
4. On page 2 complete the information about the place and include details on who is completing the evaluation. Draw a site sketch.
5. On page 3 record the number of people using the space.
6. On pages 4-6, record your evaluation of the place, including the perceptions of safety section on page 6.
7. Take photos of your observations e.g. activities, built and natural features.
8. Fill out the Tool on multiple occasions e.g. different times of the day and night, week, year and in different weather conditions.
9. It may help the evaluation for different people to complete the Tool at different times of the day. If you want to learn how others feel in the space, you can use the Community Survey Tool or arrange a time where they can complete this Tool on site.
10. Analyse the results of your completed evaluations and summarise into an insights report. The results can inform interventions to improve the place quality or assess the success of an intervention.

Where you can use this Tool

The quality of a public space is just as important as access to the public space, as quality helps people feel safe, welcome and included. Quality is not only reflected in a public space's physical form—how it's designed, maintained and integrated with its environment—but also through the activities it supports and the meaning it holds. This Tool can be used in public spaces, which 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

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

This Tool can also be used in **transport hub precincts,** which include areas in close proximity to:

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

Gathering data for successful places

The Evaluation Tool for Public Space and Public Life can be supplemented with other data collection tools to generate further insights and build your understanding of the place.

Refer to The right tool for the task for other tools that can be used for your analysis.

The Data for Places guide can provide guidance on the application of data in the management and monitoring of places.

General

Your name

Council area

What type of place is this?

Open space

Age

Location

Public facility

Street

Gender

Weather

Public transport hub or precinct

Other

Project name and stage

Date

Time

What is this place?

Use this space to visualise the place you are evaluating. You can draw a simple site map, sketch features of the place or even make a collage. Show how people use the public space, where they sit or stand and how they enter and exit. This map can also help define the area for the Snapshot of people on page 3. You can also use this space for extra notes or photos if using digitally.

When using a digital PDF with Adobe Acrobat, use the Pencil and Text tool from the Comment taskbar.

Example Legend:

✕ Gathering point
△ Person
— Pedestrian path
☰ Cycleway
☐ Building/structure
◯ Point of interest
Ⓑ Bus stop
Ⓣ Train station
Ⓛ Light rail stop
⫽ Open area/grass
⊠ Tree
N̂ North

Snapshot of people

Tally the number of people   ‖‖ = 5 people

Use this table to count how many people are using the space for five minutes. To get an hourly average, multiply the total amounts by twelve. Record users' approximate age. Count people together under the Everyone column. If you feel comfortable, you can also include their gender. Count the number of people either moving through the site or staying. You can use the site sketch on page 1 to help define the area you are counting people in, as a smaller zone can be helpful for a busy space. Do not double count people.

Moving

For example a person walking, using a wheelchair, on a bicycle

Age	Everyone Tally	Total	Hourly	OR	Men Tally	Total	Hourly	Women Tally	Total	Hourly
<12										
12-17										
18-24										
25-34										
35-44										
45-54										
55-64										
65-74										
75+										

Staying

For example a person sitting, standing or laying down

Age	Everyone Tally	Total	Hourly	OR	Men Tally	Total	Hourly	Women Tally	Total	Hourly
<12										
12-17										
18-24										
25-34										
35-44										
45-54										
55-64										
65-74										
75+										

Snapshot of pets being walked

Tally the number of pets   ‖‖ = 5 pets

Use this table to count the number of pets either moving through the site or staying. You can use the site sketch on page 1 to help define the area you are counting people or pets in. Using a smaller zone can be helpful for a busy space.

Pets with walkers		
Tally	Total	Hourly

What are people doing?

Tick all that apply

- In a group
- By themselves
- Walking
- Using a mobility aid
- Walking a pet
- Riding a bicycle
- On a scooter or skateboard
- Pushing a pram
- Socialising
- Relaxing/sitting
- On a laptop, device or phone
- Reading
- Performing/busking
- Exercising/playing
- Other:

What features can you see?

Tick all that apply

- Public transport options
- Active transport options
- Furniture/seating
- Shops/cafe/kiosk/market/stall
- Stage/event space
- Shade structure
- Playspace
- Sportsfield/court
- Toilets/amenities
- Drinking water
- Wayfinding signage
- Public or community art
- Community building
- Educational program/space
- Meeting room/space
- Welcome desk/information pod
- Heritage elements
- Trees/plants
- Beach/foreshore
- Wetlands/river/water
- Animals/wildlife
- Other:

What can you hear?

Rate if the sound is positive (P) or negative (N) in your experience. N/A if not applicable.

- .... Birds/wildlife
- .... Trees/foliage
- .... People talking/socialising
- .... Music/creative performance
- .... Construction
- .... Traffic
- .... Industrial noise (fan/pumps)
- .... Wind
- .... Other:

Questions and observations

How would you describe the overall quality of this place?

    High   Medium   Low

What makes this place special or unique? Are there visible signs of vandalism, litter or maintenance issues? What does the community value about the place?

How has this place changed since your last evaluation?

Note: Only answer this question if you have done a place evaluation previously.

Ideas to improve the place

Short to medium-term or temporary

Long-term and permanent

Who could help deliver these ideas? (e.g. businesses/community groups/ schools)

Other observations or ideas

Please fill out your evaluation below

N/A Can't answer/not applicable   **1** Strongly disagree   **2** Disagree   **3** Neutral   **4** Agree   **5** Strongly agree

Divide the total score by the number of answered questions in each of the four themes.
The average score for each theme provides an overview of its performance compared to the other themes.

Am I able to get there?	Score
People find it easy and pleasant to get to the place, through a network of paths, streets, public transport and signage	
People can easily access the place through multiple entrances	
People of all ages and abilities can easily and comfortably move around the place	
There is enough space for people who are walking and cycling	
People riding bikes are protected from other vehicles	
Average score
Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Am I able to stay?	Score
People can sit in the shade or in the sun	
There are a range of comfortable places to sit, stay or relax and amenities are provided	
There are enough trees, grass and plants to make the place shaded and comfortable	
The place feels safe during the day	
The place feels safe at night	
The place is lit at night and has clear sight lines and good visibility	
The place is clean and well-maintained	
The surrounding buildings scale are not too dominating, allowing people to feel comfortable in the place	
It is well designed, visually attractive with scenic qualities	
There are features that shelter you from wind, sun, and rain	
You are protected from noise, dust, unpleasant smells, and/or pollution in the place	
Average score
Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Am I able to connect?	Score
People with a diversity of ages, genders, cultural or ethnic backgrounds are using the place	
There is an interesting atmosphere and activities e.g. people watching, arts and cultural activations	
You can meet people and socialise, and it is a positive place	
There are shops, cafes, community services or economic activity close by	
People are able to connect with each other in both commercial and non-commercial settings	
There are local stories of significance told and celebrated in the place	
There are public artworks, heritage or monuments that reflect the unique local character	
There is evidence of volunteerism, community stewardship and/or the space is well-loved and well attended for its function	
There are cultural, performance or musical activations	
The place feels welcoming with a sense of belonging and you feel encouraged to return to the place	
Average score
Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Am I able to play and participate?	Score
There are a range of things to do in the place including exercise, recreation, games, play and/or learning opportunities	
The place encourages positive social interactions or individual experiences e.g. talking, casual or planned	
People of all ages and abilities can use the place and have the facilities they need to stay (e.g. end of trip facilities or drinking water)	
There is a choice of places or features to safely sit, play, thrive and relax	
There are social or cultural activities appropriate to the place e.g. programmed activities or events	
Average score
Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Please fill out your evaluation below

N/A Can't answer/not applicable   **1** Strongly disagree   **2** Disagree   **3** Neutral   **4** Agree   **5** Strongly agree

Divide the total score by the number of answered questions in each of the four themes.
The average score for each theme provides an overview of its performance compared to the other themes.

Perceptions of safety section

This section was developed through research and engagement for the Safer Cities program, which included community engagement, including with women, girls and gender diverse people, about their perceptions of safety and what they feel is important in a place to help them feel safer.

The section is organised according to four themes: lighting and visibility, design of place, comfort and amenity, and activation and public life. These are broad categories of physical and non-physical elements of places that can influence whether people feel safe.

You can learn more about how these elements can influence a person's perceptions of place in the NSW Guide to gender-inclusive placemaking.

Lighting and visibility	Score
The place is well-lit (e.g. streetlights illuminate footpaths and do not create dark and shadowed areas)	
Lighting in the place creates a pleasant atmosphere without being excessively bright (e.g. decorative, warm or coloured lighting, and placement of lighting does not create dark areas within or adjacent to the place)	
The place has clear lines of sight and good visibility allowing people to easily see who is around (e.g. views are not obstructed by signage or furniture)	
Landscaping, planting and trees do not impact lines of sight or create blind spots (e.g. plants and trees are well-maintained)	
Average score Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Design of the place	Score
People can easily find and access the entrances and exits to the place at all times of the day (e.g. the entrance and exit points are easy to see from different vantage points, there is tactile paving, pathways are not blocked off)	
The place has wide and well-maintained paths that allow people of all abilities to move around comfortably	
People can easily exit the place if needed (e.g. there is access to public transport, bike lanes, taxi or ride share transport options)	
The place has clear and appropriate signs and information, making it easy to navigate at all times of the day (e.g. the place is clearly named, signage is lit up at night, there are Braille signs)	
It is easy to find information on the nearest public transport service (e.g. signage, live timetables)	
The place does not feel isolated (e.g. not fenced in, or the space is connected to a main street)	
Assistance can be easily found (e.g. there are visible emergency help points, CCTV, smart technology or staff that I can ask for help from)	
Average score Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Comfort and amenity	Score
There are safe amenities (e.g. parking, public toilets and/or playspaces) in visible and convenient locations that can be accessed by people of all abilities	
Amenities (e.g. car or bike parking, public toilets and/or play areas) are clean and well-maintained	
The design of street furniture helps to make the place interesting and attractive (e.g. colourful seating in circular arrangements)	
The place has good mobile connectivity (such as reception or Wi-Fi)	
The place has device charging points that are freely accessible and well-maintained	
Average score Total score ÷ number of answered questions	

Activation and public life	Score
It is easy to see and be seen in the place, or there are eyes on the street in visible locations (e.g. a café open across the street, people walking around)	
The place has an inclusive atmosphere that encourages people to participate in various activities	
There is a diverse representation of people reflected in the place (e.g. place names and public art represent community diversity in gender, age, cultural background and/or abilities)	
Average score Total score ÷ number of answered questions	