

THE REDLAND YOUTH PLAZA STORY

BY REDLAND CITY COUNCIL AND PLAN C



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The Redland Youth Plaza was developed collaboratively over three years and many stages. Community consultation, enquiry-by-design, the Management and Activation Plan, Plaza Advisory Crew (PAC) formation and mentoring and production of the Concrete Carnival Launch Event was developed by Plan C in collaboration with Redland City Council. The plaza was designed by CONVIC and constructed by Hadore and Concrete Skateparks. The Queensland State Government together with Redland City Council provided approximately \$1.1 million to the Redland Youth Plaza project. This is its story.



The Redland City Council is the local government authority for the Redlands, which includes the Southern Moreton Bay Islands, North Stradbroke Island and areas on the mainland. The Redlands combines quality lifestyle with a progressive workforce and economy. Just 30 minutes from Brisbane's CBD, but light years away from the stress and pressure of major cities, the Redlands is ideally located for people who want to escape for rest and relaxation.

www.redland.qld.gov.au



Plan C are specialist community engagement, activation, planning and social development consultants working at the intersection of public space, built environment, community and creative industries. We seek to evolve community and public spaces and build activated, connected and inclusive cities and places.

www.planc.com.au



CONVIC Design has designed over 200 skate & BMX parks worldwide including the world's largest skate park in Shanghai, China and also has significant experience in all facets of Landscape Architecture including urban design, master planning for active & teenage recreation, parks & recreation trails and youth inclusive public space.

THANKYOU

The Redland Youth Plaza project team would like to offer kind thanks to the Redland City community and in particular everyone listed below for their assistance in making the Redland Youth Plaza a reality.

All the amazing young people in Redland

Angela Wright

Redland City Council

Sport and Recreation Queensland

Plaza Advisory Crew

Cr Karen Williams

(for being an amazing advocate for the project and fighting really hard to make the plaza a reality)

Wendy Carroll

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The Redland Youth Plaza is a world class skate and BMX facility and integrated youth space in Capalaba, located in the City of Redland, approximately thirty minutes from Brisbane's CBD. It opened to the appreciation of thousands of young people in December 2007.

The Plaza is a unique space which is responsive to the local area and equivalent to best practice internationally, a facility that provides excellent challenges to skaters and BMX riders at all levels, and an integrated youth space which has been designed, managed and activated in conjunction with young people and the local community.

It's a rare privilege for council officers, planners, designers and other professionals to be involved with a project like the Redland Youth Plaza across its entire lifespan, dating back from the project inception right through the stages of community engagement, detailed design, construction, and finally, post-construction, the management and activation of the space. Arguably it is even rarer amongst built environment and recreation professionals to reflect upon their projects, celebrate their achievements and share their learnings with other professionals and interested people.

Both Redland City Council and Plan C are incredibly proud of the outcomes of the Redland Youth Plaza project. This publication, 'The Redland Youth Plaza Story' is our way of celebrating this amazing public space for young people and the community, in hope of encouraging greater dialogue about young people's engagement with and experiences of public spaces, and last but not least, as an opportunity to thank all of the wonderful people who helped make the Redland Youth Plaza possible.



HOW DID WE GET FROM HERE.....



TO HERE, IN THREE YEARS?



PROJECT INCEPTION

DREAMING BIG AND THEN MAKING IT HAPPEN



In June 2004, the Redland Shire Council's *Skate Park Strategy 2004 – 2016* put forward a recommendation that Council should consider replacing the Capalaba Skate Park with a new regional facility. The original skate park was in a poor condition and the location seemed an excellent site for a regional facility.

A nominal figure of \$250,000 was put in the 03/04 10 year capital works budget for the development of a new facility in 2005/06. In February 2005, Council commissioned Plan C to develop the brief which would go out to tender for the consultation and design of a new facility. The tender for the Consultation, Design and Estimate of the Capalaba Regional Ramp Park and Integrated Youth Facility closed in April 05. Several companies made submissions. CONVIC Design and Plan C were appointed to undertake the project in August 2005.

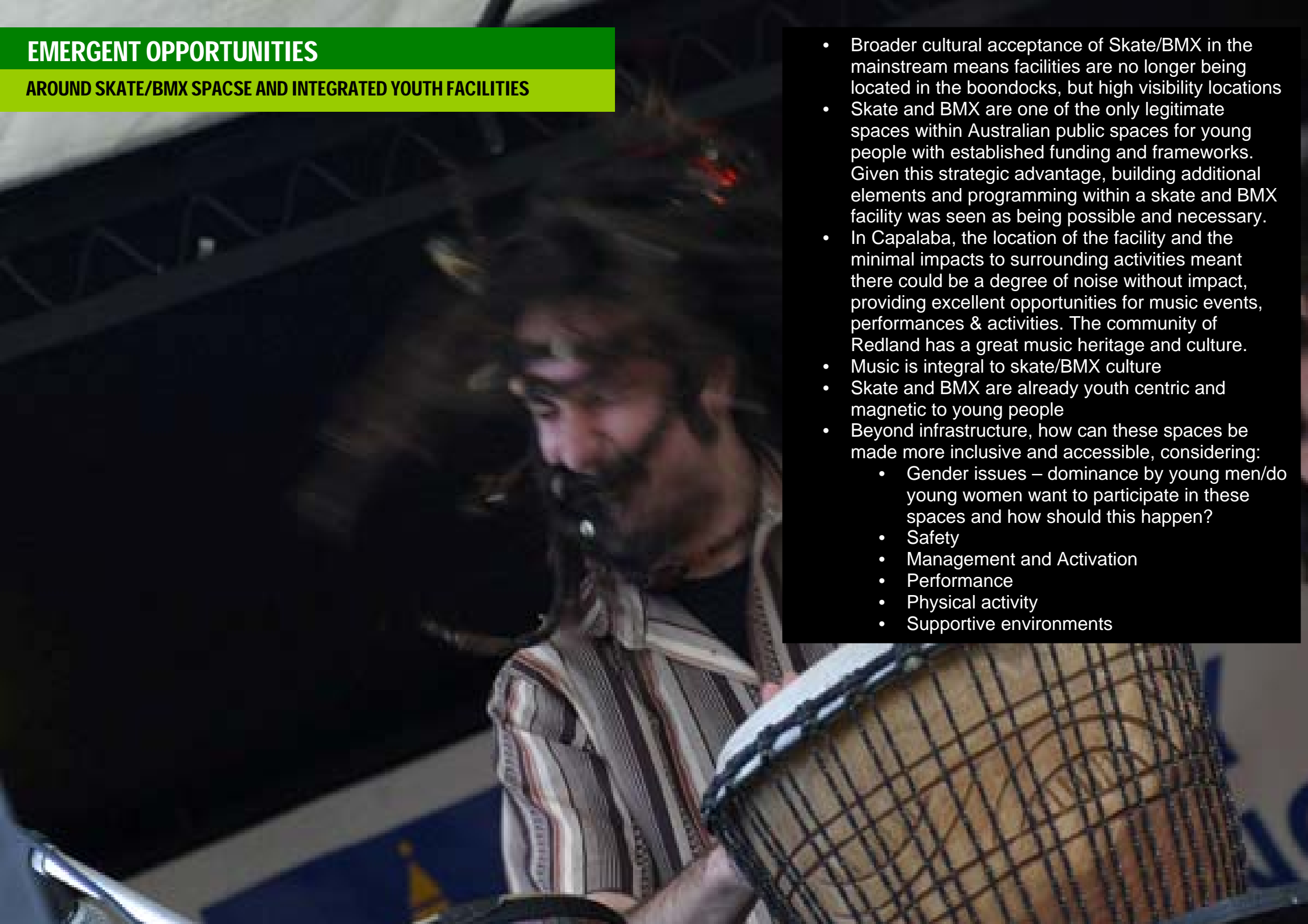
The initial vision for the Redland Youth Plaza was inspired by recent trends for the development of skating and BMX spaces which focused on being inclusive youth spaces, rather than singular stand-alone facilities intended only for active participants. Council, Plan C and Convic recognised that although a skate/BMX component was critical in legitimising the space as being youth-centric, there were also significant opportunities to tie in other active spaces, social infrastructure and entertainment in a flexible and dynamic precinct and in doing so, maximise opportunities for a broader range of young people to interact, play, watch and participate on many levels, creating on many levels a truly youth-centric recreation facility.

The Consultation, Design and Estimate stage was undertaken from August 2005 – February 2006. A submission was made to the Queensland Government, Sport and Recreation Queensland Major Facilities Grant Program in February 2006. Plan C were instrumental in preparing the grant application. Queensland Government Funding was approved in July 2006. The State provided \$347,000 towards the cost of the facility. CONVIC Design commenced work on the full design documentation for the Plaza in March 2006.

EMERGENT OPPORTUNITIES

AROUND SKATE/BMX SPACSE AND INTEGRATED YOUTH FACILITIES

- Broader cultural acceptance of Skate/BMX in the mainstream means facilities are no longer being located in the boondocks, but high visibility locations
- Skate and BMX are one of the only legitimate spaces within Australian public spaces for young people with established funding and frameworks. Given this strategic advantage, building additional elements and programming within a skate and BMX facility was seen as being possible and necessary.
- In Capalaba, the location of the facility and the minimal impacts to surrounding activities meant there could be a degree of noise without impact, providing excellent opportunities for music events, performances & activities. The community of Redland has a great music heritage and culture.
- Music is integral to skate/BMX culture
- Skate and BMX are already youth centric and magnetic to young people
- Beyond infrastructure, how can these spaces be made more inclusive and accessible, considering:
 - Gender issues – dominance by young men/do young women want to participate in these spaces and how should this happen?
 - Safety
 - Management and Activation
 - Performance
 - Physical activity
 - Supportive environments




PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINS

OF EVOLVED OUTDOOR YOUTH SPACES

Public space is a philosophic space as well as a physical space. It is a domain that should be vibrant and inclusive, a microcosm for our wider society, a place to be challenged where we encounter the *erotic* - *the* strange and unknown, and sometimes those that are similar to ourselves. As a place of democracy, demonstration and resistance we use these spaces to act up and voice concern. As a place of recreation and respite, we also use public space to escape the urbanity, catch our breath and chill, play and participate in city life.

Many public spaces are expectant – something new and exciting needed to enter the mix!



*The Redland Youth Plaza
is one of the first skate facilities to
receive a Major Facilities Grant from
Sport and Recreation Queensland.
Governments are now responding to
the obvious need to invest in young
people!!!!*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



A widespread and collaborative community engagement process was facilitated by Plan C to gain the community's ideas, visions and requirements for the Redland Youth Plaza. Within this engagement process was an embedded Enquiry by Design (EbD) process to enable young people to be 'hands on' in the concept development process.

The consultation process included identification of young people, user groups and stakeholders. Telephone surveys, personal consultations and workshops were conducted with a wide range of people. Specific consultation tools such as digital storytelling, short film and sketch interviews were used to engage with large numbers of stakeholders and communicate ideas across a range of media to inform conceptual development. The needs of young women and non active users were specifically sought to ensure the design development strove to conceptualise an inclusive space for young people. Consultation was also undertaken with surrounding businesses and clubs to mitigate any perceived impacts and seek buy in and support.

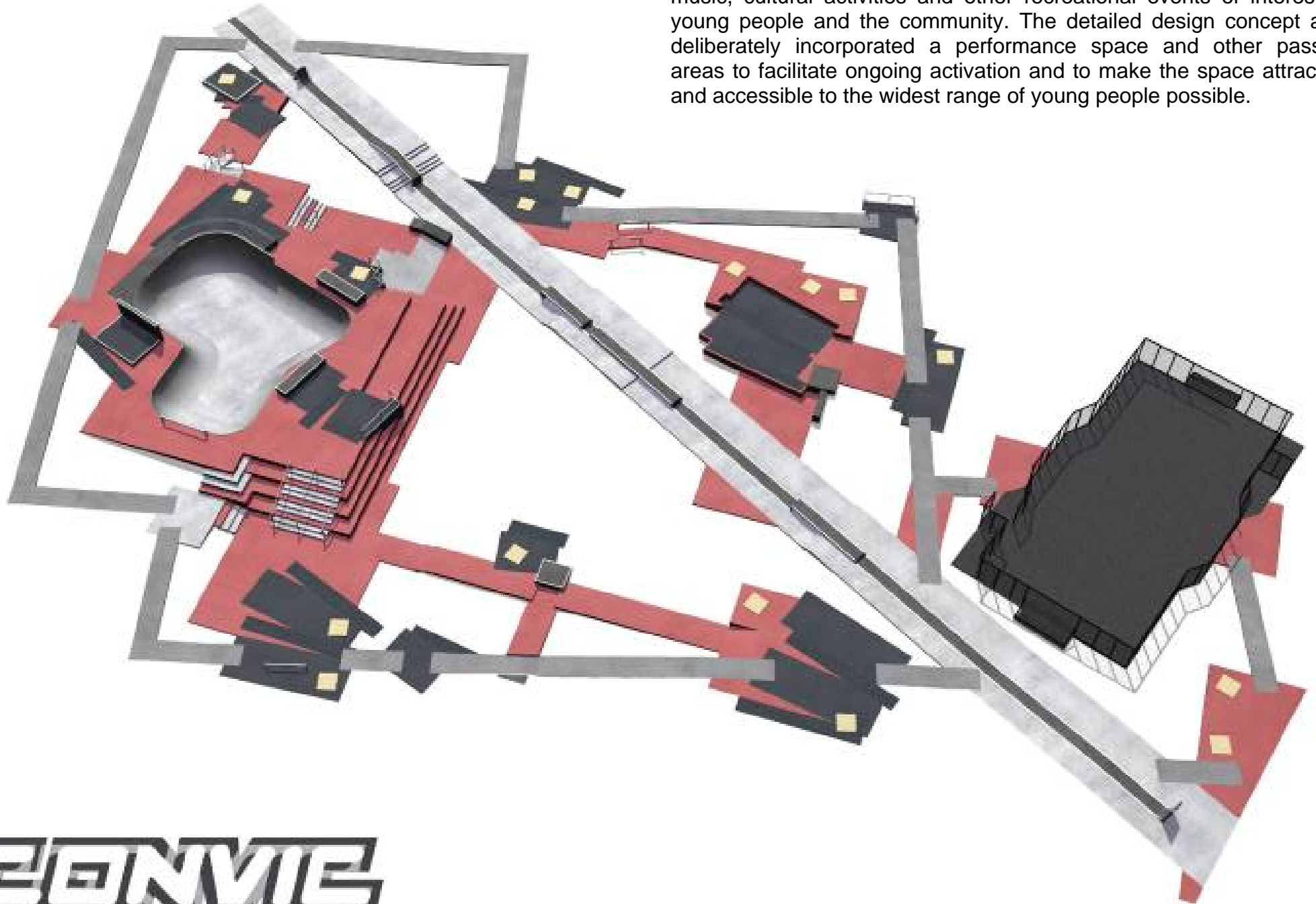
A core group of local young people were involved in each step of the project consultation process and contributed valuable time to ensuring that their voices were heard and their ideas transferred to the final concept design.

By working collaboratively, Plan C, CONVIC and Redland Council helped draw the ideas and needs of key stakeholders directly into the design process. The engagement process used a variety of tools, events and multi-stakeholder and technical workshops at critical stages to ensure that community visions were carried forward. The progression of concept and design development by CONVIC Design adhered to the brief set down by stakeholders, who provided input to concepts as the design progressed.



DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The final design for the Plaza constituted a regional sized active space for young people, providing facilities for skateboarding, BMX riding, music, cultural activities and other recreational events of interest to young people and the community. The detailed design concept also deliberately incorporated a performance space and other passive areas to facilitate ongoing activation and to make the space attractive and accessible to the widest range of young people possible.



CONVIC



CONSTRUCTION



The Redland Youth Plaza was designed by Convic and constructed by Hadore and Concrete Skateparks. During the construction period for the Plaza, Council had to fund a security guard to patrol the space at night time, as enthusiastic young skaters and BMX riders were breaking in at night time to ride the half-built facility!



MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVATION

PLAZA ADVISORY CREW



The Redland Youth Plaza is a hugely significant integrated Skate, BMX and youth facility for South East Queensland, and as such the potential for ongoing space *activation* and active involvement from young people, skaters and BMX riders presents the opportunity for sustainable cultural development around the facility.

Once construction of the Plaza was underway and anticipation of the Plaza was building amongst skate and BMX communities, Redland City Council and Plan C began the process of establishing an Advisory Crew for the Plaza.

This was a new and exploratory process which aimed to harness the enthusiasm of local young people, community organisations and local businesses, by involving them in the activation, management and programming of the Plaza whilst simultaneously empowering these individuals with the skills necessary to carry out these tasks.

Plan C were engaged to form the Plaza Advisory Crew and mentor this group in group decision making, governance, marketing, event production skills and film making. Not only did this group assist and provide direction and assistance in the development of the Redland Youth Plaza Management & Activation Plan, they also collaboratively produced the Concrete Carnival – the launch of the Redland Youth Plaza, held on December 9, 2007.

The capacity building process followed a module process, whereby the PAC's capacity as event producers were built over six modules across a 15 week time period. The modules consisted of Visioning, Bands and Performers, Workshops and Supporting Activities, Infrastructure, Legal Issues and Other considerations. Most weeks the PAC received a checklist outlining the aspects of the modules that were being covered, and the elements that needed to be addressed. They also received templates such as for Risk Management, and provider forms, and regular drafts of the running sheet and artists' contracts. The intention of the capacity building was for Plan C to work with the direct input of the PAC and to ensure that they received copies of all documentation and therefore developed capacity to plan and produce events in the future.

MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVATION

PLAZA ADVISORY CREW

As for the future of the Plaza Advisory Crew, the process has recently undergone review by the service providers in Council that have taken on the responsibility of continuing to facilitate the PAC and activate the Plaza. The group has determined that the PAC is a unique opportunity to continue to engage with users of the Plaza on numerous levels and on a multitude of issues. Council will continue to provide hands-on support through the Youth Development Officer to facilitate the PAC.



THE CONCRETE CARNIVAL

OFFICIALLY LAUNCHING THE REDLAND YOUTH PLAZA

The official launch of the Redland Youth Plaza, The Concrete Carnival, was the biggest event on the Skate and BMX calendar in Queensland in 2007!

Held on December 9, 2007, this event was produced collaboratively between Plan C, Council and the Plaza Advisory Crew.

This event was incredibly successful with an attendance of approximately 2000 young people turning up on December 9, 2008. The Concrete Carnival featured a diverse range of activities catering for a wide range of young people, (skate and BXM enthusiasts as well as young women, carers and other young people not interested in skate) such as live music, graffiti art demos, creative workshops, food, giveaways and more. It was also the first time we know of in Australia that a professional skate and BMX jam were carried out simultaneously at the same venue.



ACTIVATION OF THE REDLAND YOUTH PLAZA

THE STORY IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING

The Redland Youth Plaza Management and Activation Plan (RYPP) is the first of its type in Australia. This plan was produced by Plan C, the Plaza Advisory Crew and Redland City Council. It provides a framework for the ongoing management and activation of the Redland Youth Plaza in a manner which is collaborative and sustainable.

The Plan was developed in cooperation with a wide range of young people and local community from a diversity of interests and backgrounds including skaters, BMX riders, free runners, rollerbladers, scooter riders, sports players, musicians and music lovers and artists.

The key *management* considerations for the Plaza relate to day to day operations, maintenance, safety and security. Therefore the highest level of input into management policy has been sought and received from local skaters and BMXers, some of whom are represented on the PAC. Local skaters and BMXers are an important part of the management processes associated with the RYP. This plan recommends that Council officers continually liaise with local skaters and BMXers to identify and address management and maintenance issues, while using this plan for guidance.

Activation considers a broader than day-to-day usage of the facility, where additional programming, physical activities, arts and cultural, food or music events and cultural development processes are utilised as methodologies to create inclusive space within the Plaza and enhance the appeal of the Plaza as a place of interest to the broadest range of young people. This Plan also recommends a number of initiatives that facilitate self-activation of the Plaza, where interested individuals and corporate entities are encouraged to appropriately use the Plaza for their own purposes.

There have already been a number of diverse events taking place at the Redland Youth Plaza since its launch in December 2007. These events have included a Queensland Scouts gathering, Redland Youth Day, New Edition Skateboarding event and skateboarding workshops.



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT?



It's important to take risks!

Not all ideas associated with the plaza were totally successful, while others were very successful. The only way to evolve spaces and practice is to take risks and be prepared to take failures and successes in equal stride. When you take this journey with the community, it does not matter if you get a perfect result, the journey is the important part. The nature of youth culture is dynamic and trends will constantly evolve and spaces need to take on new ideas and programs. We also learnt that even with clear specifications and tight contract conditions and management, building a unique facility such as the RYP is not a perfect science. Numerous design and construction issues will be ongoing in order to deliver the intent of original specification and improve on what is now a three year old design.

Encourage Continuity

The Council officers involved have learnt to involve the key people from the very beginning of the project including the project delivery company - in this case, Plan C. Plan C had high levels of ownership and influence over the project processes which greatly added value to all aspects of the project. Often over the life of a project, if a key Council officer leaves and takes the knowledge and richness of the project with them, it leaves it up to successive officers to reinterpret the past, without the fine-grained knowledge and relationships formed along the way.

Find a project champion

Plan C learnt that as an external agency trying to influence the delivery of a major piece of infrastructure over a long development timeframe (3 years) and ensure the community's vision remained intact through all stages, a key project champion within Council (in this case Angela Wright and local Councillor, Karen Williams) is a key aspect to successful delivery of outcomes.

Budget early and have a strategic plan

A good skate park strategy, backed up by good forward planning in the Council's 10 year capital works program lead to the smooth transition of this project through the corporate Council systems. It also proved to be a key in attracting funding from the State.

WHAT WERE OUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENTS?

A space which benefits the entire community

The implementation of a regional skate/BMX facility and integrated youth space such as the Redland Youth Plaza that adequately provides a public space for a variety of uses will have many benefits for the community as a whole. These benefits include increased opportunities for social interaction between groups the community that would normally not interact, provision of a physical and artistic outlet for a range of young people, economic benefits to surrounding businesses (new skate shops opened up in the immediately surrounding area and local shops such as the takeaway are benefiting from increased trade), social equity and creation of a healthier community just to name a few.

Intersection Project

The Plaza is an evolution in outdoor youth space, sitting between the contexts of Skate and BMX space and culture and inclusive outdoor youth space. It is attractive and accessible to a larger number of young women and men who were given physical and social opportunities to access the plaza, and is also a space capable of activation to ensure its broadest use. There is a layer that sits within the infrastructure that ensures the plaza functions to support the greatest number of stakeholders and becomes an outdoor cultural, musical, social and active space – a cultural space without walls.

Management and Activation Plan

The Management and Activation Plan sets a framework and process of activation for Redland City Council to implement. It also seeks to provide the mechanisms for natural activation to occur through the booking system. This combination of top down, bottom up approach will result in the greatest diversity of use and access to the plaza. The activation phase is the most important in making a space truly inclusive and accessible to the broadest range of people.

And then the rest of it...

The journey gave us great friendships, the satisfaction of seeing a project from inception to construction and ongoing activation, it put Capalaba on the map (and on YouTube!), the PAC worked very hard to put on a launch event for 2000 people, the local Councillor found extra funds to build the RYP, we took some risks and made a few mistakes but also had huge successes. It was rad!

