Cities for Everyone

Beyond neoliberal urbanism, the future of public space and life

SATURDAY AUGUST 29, 11AM
BORDERLANDS COOPERATIVE FOOTSCRAY
BLUESTONE HALL, 32A PICKETT STREET

WHY THIS GATHERING

Throughout Australian cities, as the housing crisis and economic divide grows, local and state governments are enacting policies and increasing the deployment of police and security to criminalise poverty and homelessness. In Melbourne, a growing number of local councils are using bylaws, private security and arrangements with police, to push homeless people and others considered "undesirable" out of public view and public life.

The Cities for Everyone gathering hopes to bring people together who oppose this, recognising that public space is not restricted for commerce and transit, and involves basic human and democratic rights that guarantee and support participation in public life for all.

The idea behind the gathering is to connect campaigners, build our campaigns and impact on public debate.

Community safety is being increasingly recast as: fewer poor people in public space; fewer visible people with addiction and other health issues; less youth presence; less informal street culture; fewer public housing residents; and more regulation of public behaviour.

The gathering aims to help us explore how neoliberal policy frameworks reshape urban space — through privatisation, securitisation, financialisation, and "activation" — and how communities can resist, reclaim, and reimagine public life.

Organised by the People's Plan for Footscray

Supported by: Borderlands Cooperative, Footscray Community Response

11.00AM Introduction
The gathering is organised around two open conversations and a mapping activity. The conversations will involve a facilitator, a panel of contributors and general participant discussion.

11:15AM First Conversation

How can we define public space and 'public life' outside of the market

Facilitator: Jorge Jorquera (Coordinator Borderlands Cooperative)

Panelists include: Libby Porter (Director, RMIT Centre for Urban Research), **Patrick "Spike" Chiappalone** (activist, community worker, and co-founder of the Homeless Person's Union of Victoria HPUV), **Karen Fletcher** (prison abolition & public housing activist and former Executive Officer Flat Out Inc), **Jess Richter** (lawyer at Southside Justice community legal centre), **India Rowles** (activist, trained social worker and member of Care not Cruelty), **Dr Olivia Ball** (Greens councillor on Melbourne City Council)

Some specific issues:

- Replacing the public square with the shopping mall
- Rise of quasi-public/private-controlled environments
- Festivalisation and mega-event strategies as neoliberal urbanism
- Link to housing crisis, inequality, and social fragmentation
- Gentrification & displacement
- Anti-homeless design (hostile architecture +)
- Surveillance urbanism, policing & exclusion

Some big questions:

- Who owns the city?
- Who gets excluded?
- Is "public space" still meaningful under neoliberalism?

12:45PM Lunchtime & Mapping Activity

Mapping "lost" and "contested" public spaces throughout the city

Mapping, identifying & interrogating:

- Ownership and control
- Types of use
- Surveillance
- Exclusion zones
- What conflicts emerge
- What spaces could be used to support community
- participation and connectedness

Output: collective political map ('reclaiming our city')

1:45PM Second Conversation

Designing Democratic Space

Facilitator: Jo Willams (Coordinator Angliss Neighbourhood House)

Panelists include: Dr. Andrea Cook (Director RedRoad Consulting, urban research, policy and planning), **Nina Sharpe** (Lead Convener of 300,000 Streets, Regen Melbourne), **Jordan van den Lamb** (Victorian Socialists for Seat of Melbourne) ... *more to be announced*

Some specific issues:

- Commons-based governance
- Participatory planning
- Reimagining local sites (e.g. mall, plazas, vacant lots, etc)

Some big questions:

- Relationship between policy change and grassroots mobilisation
- Amelioration vs transformation

peoplesplanfootscray.net

Free Tickets