

Festivals as a *Vehicle* for Place Promotion: A case study of the complex planning challenges inherent in the staging of the Clipsal 500 motor-racing festival in Adelaide, South Australia.

Dr Matthew W. Rofe¹ and Ms Clare Woosnam²

1. Senior Lecturer, Urban and Regional Planning, the University of South Australia, South Australia. matthew.rofe@unisa.edu.au
2. Community Safety Officer, Adelaide City Council, South Australia. c.woosnam@adelaidecitycouncil.com

Abstract:

In an increasingly competitive global world, urban managers are constantly seeking new and innovative ways to position cities strategically in order to enhance their identity, improve their amenity and attract capital investment. The policy directions that such endeavours spawn are diverse. However, the development and promotions of festivals has become a core strategy in city marketing and place making agendas. Festivals can be considered as a physical and temporal manifestation of policies that seek to promote places as being 'creative'. The creative city proposition, as advanced by Florida (2002), has proven highly attractive to policy makers and urban managers the world-over. Creative cities are construed to be dynamic places characterised by '...an openness to diversity and the freedom for creative people to validate their creative identities' (Miles 2010, p.44). Thus, the creative city ethos can be said to be imbued a sense of inclusion and progress. As a specific manifestation of this this ethos, festivals have been equally positioned as a positive form of '...celebration [that] can bind a community and... [act as] the instrument that keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience' (Derrett 2004, p.42). However, an emergent literature problematises these assertions, emphasising the potential negative stemming from festivals, from the seemingly benign general disorder and disruption to local places and their communities, to more serious issues of increased instances of anti-social behaviour and crime (see for example Peel 2005; Roberts and Eldridge 2009; Tiesdell and Slater 2006; Williams 2008). This literature reveals the complex and contested terrain that confronts policy makers and planners when considering or managing festivals as part of a wider city marketing and place making agenda.

This paper critically engages with these complexities drawing upon an Australian-based case study. Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, is marketed as Australia's 'festival city', a city of '...frenetic fun beneath an elegant exterior' (Tourism Australia 2012) that plays host to numerous festivals of local, national and international significance. However, belying this positive image, Adelaide's festival calendar brings disruption for the local community, while also heralding significant contestation between different community groups and key stakeholders, both internal and external to the city, over the uses of public space and indeed

the identity of the city itself. These disruptions and contestations are illustrated and explored through a detailed analysis of the Clipsal 500 V8 Super-Car race, which is held annually on an inner-city street circuit. Drawing upon analysis of policies pertaining to festival promotion, marketing agendas and materials, participant observation at the Clipsal 500 and interviews with key stakeholders from government and several non-government organisations and community groups, this paper presents a richly textured discussion of the opportunities and challenges facing policy makers and planners considering and managing festivals. In doing so, the paper contributes not only the literature on festivals and creative economies, but also the professional practice of festival governance.

Key Words: festivals, city marketing, creative cities, contestation, Adelaide.

Introduction

City marketing has become an important aspect of contemporary urban policy. Drawing upon the ethos of creativity, urban managers are increasingly concerned with urban identity. Cities thus are no longer viewed as just physical spaces, but as vibrant discursive spaces. Framed within the discourse of globalisation, urban identity management is now seen as a critical dimension in developing and maintaining a city's competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive urban world. As Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005, p.507) astutely observe, '...the management of... [a] city's image [is vital] because, at its simplest, encounters between cities and their users take place through perception and images'. Urban identities are not inconsequential.

The scope of agendas and projects available to policy makers seeking to promote their 'place' are numerous and diverse. This paper is concerned with policies embedded in the creative city ethos, as espoused by Richard Florida (2003) and Charles Landry (2006). The fundamental tenant of Florida's work is that the emergence of a creative class has witnessed the development of a new geography premised on creative lifestyles as opposed to the dogma of traditional economic rationalism. As Florida (2003, p.9) argues:

Creative people are not moving... for traditional reasons. The physical attractions that most cities focus on – sports stadiums, freeways, urban malls, and tourism-and-entertainment districts that resemble theme parks – are irrelevant, insufficient, or actually unattractive to many creative-class people. What they look for in communities are abundant high-quality experiences, an openness to diversity of all kinds and, above all else, the opportunities to validate their identities as creative people.

At face value, this challenges more 'traditional' policy agendas that place emphasis on large-scale infrastructure and urban design projects as a mechanism to drive development and spark confidence. The notion of creative places appears to be less formal and more grass-roots, flexible and organic. The notion of creativity itself is

significant here, for by its very nature it denotes new and innovative ways of perceiving, managing and experiencing the city. Creative places then need not be fixed. Rather, they may be temporary in nature and transitory in expression, such as the short-term use of derelict buildings or landscapes in innovative and unexpected ways (Stevens 2010). Consequently, the development of policies seeking to stimulate and nurture such places would appear to be extremely difficult. Regardless, the creative city ethos has been embraced with great enthusiasm. Indeed, an entire industry of place makers, and city marketers has emerged attesting to the attention and resources devoted to place promotion. This is not to scorn these undertakings, for urban identities are important. However, to blithely follow and promulgate creative city policies uncritically is naive. Rather, after Peck (2005), Atkinson and Easthope (2009) and Waitt and Gibson (2009) this paper critically engages with the opportunities, challenges and conflicts inherent in the development of temporary creative landscapes within the Australian city. Specifically, with the paper addresses the complexities inherent in 'festivals' as creative space generators and their use as vehicles for place promotion.

The term festival is extremely broad, encapsulating a range of events varying '...by size – including mega-events, hallmark events, major events and local or community events – and by form or content – including [cultural] festivals, sporting events and business events' (Allen *et al.* 2011, p.25). Regardless of their size or nature, festivals, it is asserted constitute a temporal '...celebration [that] can bind a community and... [act as] the instrument that keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience' (Derrett 2004, p.42). This is a contentious claim, for festivals can become the foci of conflict as various facets of the wider community struggle over space and contest the identity of place they create. Given the context of this paper and its emphasis on city marketing, we are concerned with large-scale, flag-ship events. Specifically, the paper presents a detailed case study of the Clipsal 500, a round of the Australian V8 Supercars Championship Series held in the city of Adelaide. While for some Clipsal, as it is commonly referred to, is a vibrant celebration of car culture, for others it is an inappropriate aberration within a refined city of culture.

The research presented in this paper draws upon both quantitative and qualitative methods. A multi-method approach was deemed appropriate as the juxtaposing of different methods holds promise to furnish more nuanced understandings of and insights into the phenomena under research (Johnson *et al.* 2007). In order to quantify the scale and significance of the Clipsal 500, a range of statistical data was gathered from both relevant local and state government bodies and the official Clipsal website. This material, particularly visitor numbers and revenue figures, are cited as indicators of Clipsal's popularity and value. Various government policies, most notably the *Creating our Future: City of Adelaide Strategic Plan 2008-2012* (2010), were subjected to textual analysis. This undertaking sought to not just engage with the explicit intent of these policies, but to uncover their implicit construction of Adelaide's identity as pursued through the staging of festivals. Such an undertaking is important, for discourse as communicated through texts ultimately

gives ‘...shape and lend[s] significance to our experience of reality’ (Bignell 2002, p.30). This form of analysis is ideal for planning research as it contextualises the means through which power is exercised, as well as providing an opportunity for a critique of government policy-making and decision-making processes (Walter 2006).

Similarly, the landscape itself can be considered as a text to be ‘read’ (see Winchester *et al* 2003). Thus, landscape deconstruction was undertaken during the 2011 Clipsal 500. Finally, to generate deeper insights into and to contextualise the findings derived from the aforementioned methods, a series of semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 4 key-informants from 3 stake holder organisations. Interviewing is valuable as it fills ‘knowledge gaps’ inherent in other sampling techniques (Dunn 2011). Two interviews were conducted with staff from Adelaide City Council (ACC), specifically the Senior Manager of the Events and Festivals Portfolio and the Safer City Program Team Leader, with one interview each being conducted with a representative from the South-East City Residents Association (SECRA), the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). These organisations represent a diverse cross-section of the community and their specific interests. Both SECRA and YWCA have, at various times, been outspoken opponents of the Clipsal. Regrettably, the Clipsal organising committee declined several invitations to participate in this research. In the absence of their direct involvement, press releases and various comments within the media by this organisation have been supplemented to understand their position with regards to the purpose and significance of the festival.

The creative imperative:

The past decade has witnessed the ascendancy of a creativity ethos as a prime policy agenda. Spearheaded by Richard Florida (2003) and Charles Landry (2006) is the contention that ‘creativity’ is the driving force of contemporary, advanced economies. Arguably, this is not a fundamentally original contention and apes a well-developed literature exploring global cities and their competitive jostling at the macro-scale and local, place-based responses to these challenges, such as the regeneration of derelict industrial land as part of a post-industrial transformation at the micro-scale. Landry (2006, p.xiii) tacitly acknowledges this when asserting that the need for creative policy agendas stems has been ‘...brought about by the vigour of renewed globalization’. Atkinson and Easthope (2009) observe notions of creative economies nor some form of creative class, are not new (see also Peck 2005). However, with clever rebadging and astute promotion, the creative ethos has gained significant traction within policy circles. This in spite of Marcuse’s (2003, p.41, cited in Peck 2005, p.746) stinging critique that Florida’s work is simply a ‘...engaging account of the lifestyle preferences of yuppies’.

While both Florida and Landry promote creativity, they take subtly different approaches to it. Florida’s (2003) emphasises the emergence of a creative class and how, in order to remain competitive places need to attract and retain them.

Espousing that creative places are those that embrace the *3Ts* of *technology, talent* and *tolerance*, Florida (2003, p.8) proposes that ‘...creative centers tend to be the economic winners of our age’. The notion of tolerance is an interesting one and would seem to resonate with other works espousing the city’s scope for equity (for example Harvey 2000). However, Florida’s measure of tolerance includes notions of social-mix reminiscent of a ‘shake-and-bake’ recipe, replete with Gay and Bohemian Indexes. Sweepingly, it is declared that ‘...statistical analysis on the gay population... [is] squarely in line with the creative capital theory... [as] the Gay Index is a very strong predictor of a regions high-tech industry concentration’ (Florida 2003, p.12). Moreover, the ‘...Bohemian Index turns out to be an *amazingly strong predictor of everything* from a region’s high-technology base to its overall population and employment growth’ (Florida 2003, p.13) (emphases added). The solution to urban decline it seems would be to attract more ‘...gays, geeks and the creative class’ (Bell and Jayne 2006, p.14). Landry (2006) follows a slightly different tact. He places greater emphasis on the creativity of planning, governance and policy. From this perspective, it is the ‘...creativity of those who... run cities [that] will determine future success’ (Landry 2006, p.xiii). Developing this further, Landry (2006, p.7) contends:

Cultural resources are the raw materials of the city and its value base, its assets replacing coal, steel or gold. Creativity is the method of exploiting these resources and helping them grow... the task of urban planners is to recognise, manage and exploit these resources responsibly. Culture, therefore, should shape the technicalities of urban planning.

As a resource culture then can be harnessed through creative policies that seek to unlock its potential in space. Thus, the notion of cultural creativity is not only highly strategic, it is equally highly spatial. Cultural events and/or festivals have been acknowledged as contributing positively to urban regeneration policies. Previously thought of as providing temporary consumption-scapes, events and festivals have been recast within the policy arena as creative clusters. Tallon *et al.* (2006, p.353) assert that such ‘clusters’ are ‘...concentrations of leisure and cultural uses... [that] combine authentic artistic and cultural activities with a variety of leisure and entertainment elements’. Kunzmann (2004) similarly asserts that festivals boost creativity for, as Alvarez (2010) argues, festivals offering moments of creative participation and engagement that contribute to the vibrant culture of the city. Herein lies the circular logic of the creative city ethos; that the fostering of creativity in place attracts creatives and creatives themselves infuse place with creativity.

Festivals; the good, the bad and the ugly:

Extremely diverse, festivals have come to be increasingly associated with place-making endeavours and as such have been identified as requiring significant and more critical policy attention (Campo and Ryan 2008; Gibson *et al.* 2010; Roberts and Eldridge 2009; Roberts and Turner 2005; Quinn 2005). Indeed, as Quinn (2005, p.928) observes that there has been a great deal of policy excitement ‘...about the theoretically catalytic effect that festivals can have in terms of attracting visitors, spearheading the regeneration of derelict city districts and reclaiming public time and space for communal celebrations, *hard evidence is in short supply* (Quinn 2005, p.928, emphases added). This is critical, especially as the ethos of creativity become ubiquitous within the policy landscape (Atkinson and Easthope 2009; Waitt and Gibson 2009).

At their most basic festivals may be thought of as temporary events where moments of pleasure, entertainment and leisure are offered and actively sought. Festivals transform ordinary places into energetic spaces that are alive with new possibilities and opportunities. Thus, festival spaces constitute the ‘...habitat where all forms of creativity – artistic and cultural, technological and economic – can take root and flourish’ (Florida 2003, p.9). Within this ‘habitat’, groups preserve, celebrate, and develop their cultural and/or community identities (see Waterman 1998; Williams 2008; Derrett 2004; Bianchini 1995; Willems-Braun 1994). Further, festivals are said to operate in an inclusionary manner, inviting people from beyond the festival’s core community to be immersed and participate in their practices and lifestyles. According to Waterman (1998, p.60), festivals thus constitute potential ‘...mechanisms for neutralizing social conflict’. These positive, emancipatory sentiments echo Florida’s comments on creative spaces as being *tolerant*.

Another way of conceptualising festival spaces is as *other* spaces. Pløger (2010, p.851) asserts that festivals create, however fleetingly, other or liminal spaces that:

...can never be seen as fixed...there must be *something distinct* about them... [that are] about *alternating spaces*’ meaning and function *temporarily* - they are about avoiding them being only located within a common understanding - and this temporary meaning is made by actors by making distinct events as the *eventalisation of space* (emphases added).

This *eventalism of space* extends beyond the festival in space and encapsulates the way that festivals function as a celebration of place. Here is the crux of policy interest in festivals. It is the way in which festivals not only enliven space, but equally create a sense of place that may be *exploited*. Reflecting Landry (2006), policy makers and planners are increasingly taking advantage of festivals as, in the words of Quinn (2005, p.934), ‘...opportunities to challenge the status quo and push out boundaries’ and so demonstrate the creative credentials of their city. In short, festivals are not just about the local, they are also about the regional, the national and the international depending upon the scale and scope of the festival.

Despite the ebullient rhetoric of creativity and the role of festivals in its nurturing and celebration, all is not as indubitable as would appear. Landry (2006, p.120) has contended that:

City Centres... as ‘*neutral territory*’ help creative ideas, because they are areas where people feel comfortably relaxed and simultaneously stimulated and challenged by contact with an environment that is more socially heterogeneous than normally experienced (emphases added).

The assertion that city centres are somehow a ‘neutral territory’ is breathtakingly naive. Places are not natural or neutral, but rather are shot through with power differentials, experiences and opportunities in a myriad of ways. Festivals spaces are not immune to this. Taking a more considered approach, Darrett (2003a) and Gibson *et al.* (2010) note the potentially exclusionary nature of festivals. This may relate to the function of the festival as a pseudo ‘gatekeeper’ to space and activity (Darrett, 2003b, p.38), or even the decision making process that selectively approving some festivals while rejecting others (Gibson *et al.* 2010).

Festivals, especially large-scale, flag-ship festivals bring a raft of other undesirable consequences. To return to the concept of other or liminal spaces, the literature defines a liminal space as one that is ‘on the margin’ (Shields 1991), within which ‘... everyday values and norms’ (Pløger 2010, p.862) are relaxed or even suspended. The corollary is that participants within liminal space – liminars – may well embrace their place on the margin and act in ways contrary to their typical conduct. This intersects with the night-time economy literature, where issues of public nuisance, drunkenness, violence and vandalism have been reported as significant impacts upon the built environment and, more importantly, the quality of life for local communities in close proximity of these spaces feature prominently (Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Roberts and Gornostaeva 2007; Tiesdell and Slater 2006). Other facets of this literature comment on the impacts felt disproportionately by women as a consequence

of sexual harassment and assault and how this contributes adversely to the fear of crime (Lovatt and O'Connor 1995; Thomas and Bromley 2000; Roberts and Eldridge 2009; Tiesdell and Slater 2006; Williams 2008). These literatures constitute a stinging critique of and rebuke to assertions that the city is a neutral space. Further, policy approaches that unproblematically accept this assertion and take as a truism that creative policies and festivals can usher in landscapes free from conflict are certainly not creative in their thinking. This discussion alerts us to the central tension in the creative city ethos; this being balancing these policies against the needs and desires of local communities. As Roberts and Turner (2005, p.171) observe this is critical as it concerns '...the future form and management of cities'.

Adelaide, The Festival State capital:

Adelaide, founded in 1836, is Australia's fifth largest city and the capital of South Australia. With a small population, even by Australian standards, of approximately 1.2 million people, Adelaide is often derided as a city of marginal significance in comparison to other cities such as Sydney or Melbourne. Indeed Adelaide has been attacked by interstate political leaders as a 'boring' 'backwater' and even derided as a politically failed city where visions of creative development are '...masterpieces of floss and wishful thinking' (Montgomery 2008, p.13 cited in Rofe and Stein 2011). These external discourses are stinging rebukes and while motivated by readily apparent political agendas that reflect the cut-and-thrust of inter-urban competition, they are echoed to some extent by discourses internal to Adelaide. Foremost amongst these are the monikers of Adelaide as the 'city of churches' and Adelaide, despite being a state capital, as 'a big country town'. The former of these is a reflection of the centrality of religious tolerance and diversity, which underpinned much of the colonial planning and ideological foundation. The 'big country town' identity is both a reflection of the smaller population base of the city and its relative geographic isolation from other Australian capital cities. Combined, these are said to create a stable and comfortable community where social networks are deeply entrenched. Both the city of churches and big country town identities are replete with the notions of security, familiarity and stability that underpin much of the idyllic discourse that typically underpins romanticised notions of rural. However, Adelaide as constructed through these identities can alternatively be read as a conservative, stayed place at best and at worst an introspective, closed place. Recognizing the danger of this, Jory (2000, p.18) quipped:

Come on Adelaide, hitch up your skirt and show us a bit of ankle. Give us some excitement. As a city Adelaide has become drab, grey and boring. There's no life, energy or vitality in the streets. It is a city going through the motions. It's entering middle-age without grace, style or pride. Walking through the city is a chore, not an experience.

Much political attention, albeit not necessarily in direct response to Jory's aforementioned challenge, has been directed to enlivening both Adelaide's landscape and identity. While the policy agendas pursuing this are varied, the development of

flag-ship festivals is seen as critical to this undertaking. Seeking to reposition the city in the national and international marketplace more effectively, South Australia has declared itself as Australia's Festival State. Indeed, given the primacy of Adelaide within the State of South Australia, it is not incorrect to assert that Adelaide is the epicentre of the Festival State and thus is its animated heart. While Adelaide plays host to numerous small-scale events and festivals, as do all cities, there are five flag-ship festivals that constitute the core planks of the city's creative policy attention as articulated through festivals and tourism. These comprise three arts oriented festivals; the Adelaide Festival, the Adelaide Fringe and the WOMADelaide world music festival. The other two events are sporting events; one being the Tour Down Under an International Union of Cycling (UCI) World Tour event and the Clipsal 500. Of these, all but the Tour Down Under are staged during or over part of March. Colloquially, this period is referred to as Mad March. In reality, each of these is not a single event, but rather a series of events under a broader festival banner. Exemplifying this, Adelaide Fringe in 2011 comprised 759 events, the majority of which held multiple shows, with the combined sale of 3,34,000 tickets. Ironically, Adelaide Fringe (18th February - 13th March), WOMADelaide (11th - 14th March) and the *Clipsal 500* (17th - 20th March) not only co-occur temporally, but they also co-exist spatially. Figure 1 illustrates the clustering of these flag-ship festivals in the city's Eastern Parklands. Comparing Figure 1 with Figure 2, a detailed map of the fenced-off Clipsal 500 area reveals that Clipsal occupies them majority of Rundle Park 14 (*Mullawirraburka*¹), all of Park 15 (*Ityamaiitpinna*) and the majority of Victoria Park 16 (*Bakkabakkandi*). Also worthy of note is that the Clipsal site directly borders the city's South East Corner precinct, which at the 2006 Census was home to 3623 residents. The scale and nature of these festivals are said to transform the city generally and the City East and South East Corner precincts and Eastern Parklands specifically and as emphasised by ACC (2011, p.52):

The city's famous 'Mad March' is the time when our streets and parks fill with a carnival atmosphere, bringing culture and vitality to the capital. This season is great for the state's economy and well-loved by many, but also brings challenges for the city.

It is to a critical discussion of the opportunities, challenges and contestations over Mad March, with specific reference to the Clipsal 500 that we now turn.

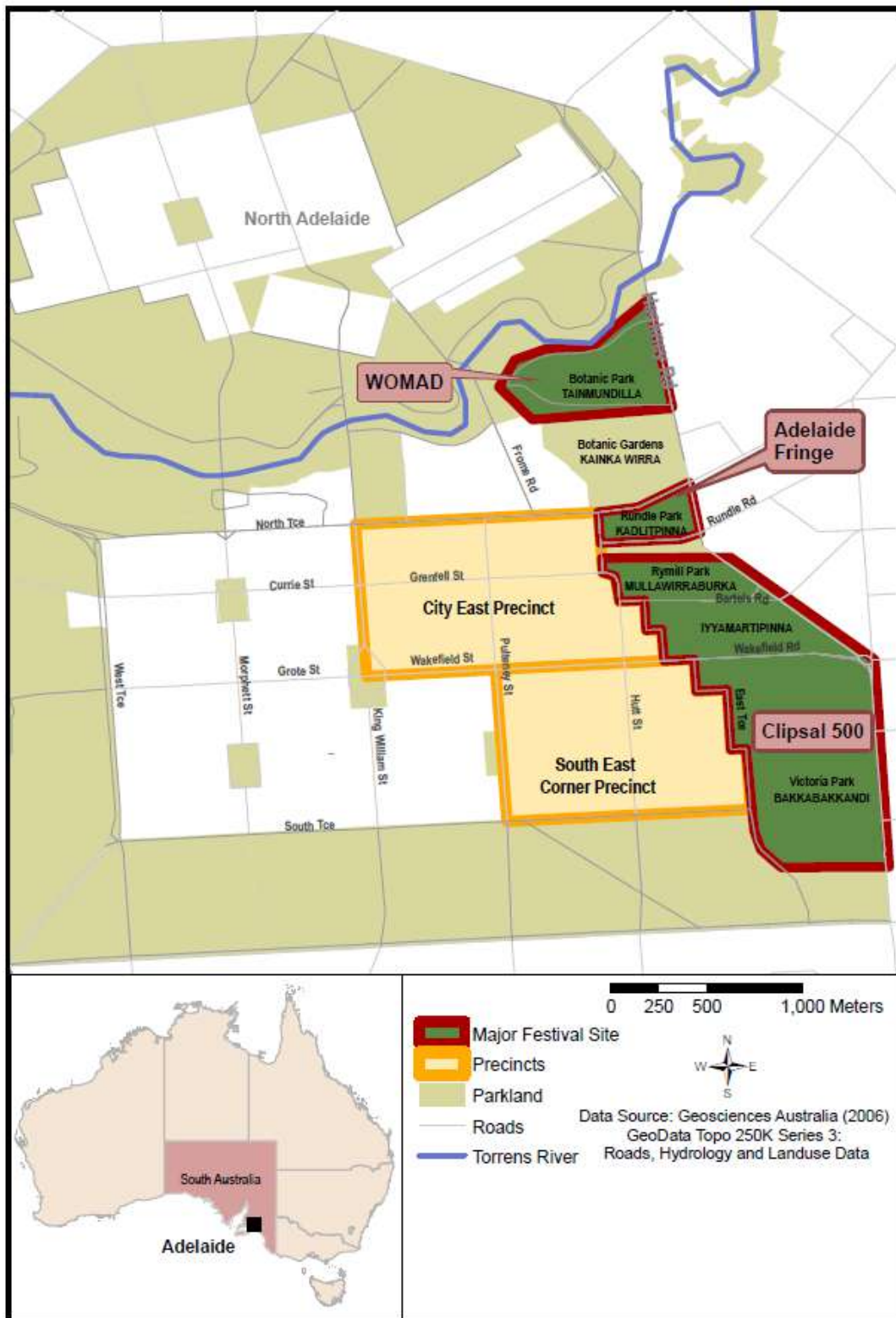


Figure 1: Study site map



Figure 2: Detail of Clipsal 500 site.

Source: Clipsal 500 Adelaide

Creativity Through Festivals. Opportunity and Issues:

Adelaide City Council's *Creating our Future Strategic Plan 2008-2011* (2010, p.9) articulates the following vision:

The City's vibrancy will flow from creating diverse communities that actively participate in every aspect of City life. People who work and study in the City will live and play in the City. Residents and visitors alike will enjoy the beautiful open spaces and facilities of the Park Lands, an exciting built form which respects our heritage, [and] shapes our future.

This vision posits a city moving confidentially into future. Worthy of note is the acknowledgement that this vibrant future is respectful of the city's heritage. It may be assumed that this respect if not only for the built form, but equally for the Adelaide's identity and sense of place. Furthermore, the explicit acknowledgement of diversity and participation echoes Florida's (2003) *T* for *tolerance*. It is should not be surprising then that Adelaide's creative policies promoting flag-ship festivals

as vehicles for place promotion should be equally diverse, embracing the cultures and desires of different social and sub-cultural groups. Encapsulating this, ACC's Senior Manager of the Events and Festivals Portfolio stressed the merits of promoting a diverse array of festivals, observing that:

When you have a city that you can have a Clipsal and an arts festival, what your identity is showing is that you actually have many strengths to your bow... you have got a community that's broadly interested in many different things and I think it's actually a good positive view [to] brand Adelaide'.

As would be expected of a festival portfolio manager, the emphasis on place brand is here paramount. While the notion of nurturing and celebrating diversity in place is an important aspect of the creative city ethos, so too is its exploitation to present a vibrant, positive identity to external people and markets. However, the use of festivals in such an undertaking promises opportunities and can be bedevilled by pitfalls. Balancing these is extremely important.

By all *objective* indicators, the Clipsal 500 is a success. Since its inception in 1989, the event has never failed to attract fewer than 150,000 spectators over the festivals duration each year. In 2011, a reported 270,800 patrons attended Clipsal, with of these some 12,529 being identified as interstate or overseas visitorsⁱⁱ. In total, in the thirteen years from 1989 to 2011 the Clipsal has been attended by some three and a quarter million people. Naturally, the Clipsal represents a major economic boost for the State of Australia. Data from the Clipsal website reveals that the economic benefit derived from the event grew from A\$13.7millionⁱⁱⁱ in 1999 to A\$33.76 in 2010 (see http://www.clipsal500.com.au/about_the_event/facts_and_figures/about_the_clipsal_500). The South Australian Minister for Tourism, John Rau (2011), announced that the 2011 Clipsal had attracted total earnings in the vicinity of A\$55 to A\$60 million, of which some A\$34.03 million had been injected directly into the South Australian economy. Furthermore, the Clipsal has been reported as generating significant media benefit for the city of Adelaide specifically and the State of South Australia generally. In 2010, it was reported that the Clipsal was viewed in '...853 homes in 142 countries' (see http://www.clipsal500.com.au/files/360_history_of_clipsal_500_-_8.9.10.pdf), with an estimated media benefit in the vicinity of A\$133million (see http://www.clipsal500.com.au/about_the_event/facts_and_figures/about_the_clipsal_500). The value of this cannot be underestimated and as Getz (2005, p.14) asserts, so significant can the benefits of such publicity be that '...some destinations will use this fact alone to justify great expenditures on attracting events'.

The success of Clipsal is not accidental. Like all flag-ship festivals, it is a carefully orchestrated and highly corporatized undertaking. At times criticised for being little more than a car race, the Clipsal is in fact a diversified endeavour offering a range of experiences and sub-events that augment the main spectacle of race-day. Over the four days of the festival, driver autograph sessions, aviation displays, support races and displays, a ladies day luncheon, fashion parades, a family play zone and rock concert entertainment over several nights are staged. Thus, the Clipsal is said to cater for a broad selection of the community beyond the stereotypical fans, who in Australia are referred to as revheads or bogans. As one Adelaide newspaper positively commented, Clipsal is ‘...not just a car race’ rather it is a ‘...multifaceted entertainment smorgasbord’ (Stoneman 2006, p.10). Internally, Clipsal’s success has been recognised through its award with the Championship Series ‘promoter of the year’ award from 1999-2005. Further, in 2005 the festival was the first round of the series inducted into the series ‘Hall of Fame’, as this honour had previously been the domain of individual drivers. While internal accolades may be viewed as highly subjective, the festival has also received external recognition. Illustrating this, Clipsal has been awarded the highly prestigious Major Festivals and Events trophy at the National Australia Tourism Awards on four occasions (2003/2004, 2005, 2007 and 2008). However, with these successes have come significant challenges and problems that recur annually and cause much contention over the staging of the Clipsal 500.

A major area of contention over the staging of the Clipsal is its various disruptions to the city and how these impact upon the local and wider community. Street circuits, by their very nature require public road closures and the instillation of large-scale safety and amenities infrastructure. While Clipsal is only held over four days, the set-up and dismantling times required are considerable. In consultation with ACC, road closures are staged so as to minimise disruption. However, these inevitably result in traffic congestion and generate significant community ire. Preparations for the 2012 Clipsal, for example, began with parking restrictions as early as February 6th, lane restrictions from February 15th and the first road closures from February 22nd. Given that the 2012 Clipsal was staged from March 1st to 4th, this represents almost a month of disruptions prior to the event. All road restrictions and closures were scheduled to have been removed by 7th March.

While major road access is restored in a reasonable time-frame, access to the Eastern Parklands (see Figure 3) remains restricted for up to eight weeks post Clipsal. This is a major contention with many local community groups, in-particular with SECRA and Adelaide Parklands Preservation Association Inc. (APPA). Both of these organisations place great emphasis on the heritage and, their interpretation of, the cultural value of the Parklands. APPA’s website (http://www.adelaideparklands.org/html/parklands_history.html) emphasises former Deputy Mayor of Adelaide Lewis Cohen’s 1910 charge that:

The parks are the pride and glory of this city—the best and greatest asset it has, or ever can have. To every generation they are becoming more valuable. Let us, therefore, keep them inviolate, keep them intact, keep them sacred from the hands of the despoiler.



Figure 3: Restricted access to the Eastern Parklands following Clipsal

Source: Woosnam, 2011.

While the privatisation of this public ‘asset’ is taken to represent an erosion of their intended ‘glory’, environmental degradation and/or damage is another point of community contention. Concerns over damage to vegetation, both as a result of infrastructure set-up/removal and from acts of vandalism have been raised (see Figure 4). Indeed, following Clipsal sections of the Eastern Parklands needed to be restricted for public access so as to regenerate (see Figure 5).



Figure 4: Clipsal set-up in the parklands.

Source: Woosnam, 2011.



Figure 5: Remediating environmental damage.

Source: Woosnam, 2011.

Cohen's 'despoilers' are not considered to be the Clipsal alone. SECRA attributed a great deal of responsibility on The City of Adelaide for not enforcing its own environmental policies stringently enough. In the face of this, SECRA positioned itself as a public watch-dog protecting the interests of the parklands. As the SECRA respondent explained:

...because of what people like our group have said, as well as many other groups and citizens across Adelaide, there is starting to be a bit more pressure on them [Adelaide City Council] about this [parkland destruction], but it's always seemed as though we've had to complain or point things out, rather than Council having the [appropriate] policies in place.

The position of watch-dog and public champion is a deliberate undertaking designed to legitimise the actions of SECRA. This is not to undermine their concern with the environmental condition of the Eastern Parklands. However, it should not be uncritically accepted that their motivations are entirely altruistic. Regardless, ACC's Festivals Portfolio Manager acknowledged that Council took note of such concerns, stating that '...once you start getting those warnings from your stakeholders you start to know you are getting at a tipping point and you've got to start paying attention to the impact'. However, this same respondent was equally adamant that notwithstanding the '...inconvenience... [Clipsal] cause[s]... the positive impact outweighs the inconvenience'. Ensuring Clipsal's long-term viability requires Council to manage the concerns of local groups, although tensions and conflicts are unlikely to ever be completely resolved. Indeed, such tensions would appear to be intractable, for as SECA flatly stated 'our group is not happy with the Clipsal'.

Whose City?

Issues of physical access aside, concerns over a sense of access are also discernible. While Clipsal, as indeed does Mad March, brings energy and excitement to Adelaide, it is undeniable that the festival has long been associated with overcrowded streets, rowdy anti-social behaviours and excessive noise, which have caused many tensions within the city centre. In effect operating as liminal spaces (Pløger 2010) festivals can erode social morays and so encourage participants to behave in ways contrary to accepted social morays. When combined with high levels of alcohol consumption, the spilling out of these effects beyond the margins of the festival can have

unacceptable consequences. Concerns have certainly been expressed regarding the intersection between motor-racings inherently hyper-masculine identity, alcohol consumption and the anti-social behaviours that can stem from these intersections. Exemplifying this, local journalist Amy Noonan (2009, p.22) reported that ‘...police were sick of dealing with the aftermath of alcohol-fuelled violence’ and that a greater police presence was required to ‘...prevent... revelry from spiralling into violence’. SECRA was extremely forthright in their comments on this, commenting on the prevalence of public drunkenness leading to situations where ‘...a lot of people... were abusing us verbally... so there is an issue of safety and vandalism of property and people drunk and urinating in the front of homes during this event [Clipsal] period’. The response of many local residents according to SECRA was to leave the city during Clipsal. While this removed the threat, real or perceived, of physical danger instances of vandalism to property cannot be similarly alleviated.

Such negative outcomes are not to be unexpected. The night-time economy and entertainment precinct literature details problems associated with public drunkenness and anti-social behaviour. As Roberts and Gornostaeva (2007) suggests such issues engender a ‘sense of threat’ thereby reducing a ‘sense of safety’ in festival areas themselves and those in close proximity. Such risks, according to Valentine (1989), contribute significantly to the geography of women’s fear. Echoing this, ACC’s Safer City Program Team Leader recognised that ‘...people do not feel safer on the Clipsal weekend... and women generally feel less safe during this time’. Clipsal is, at its core, a masculine-oriented event. Clipsal’s marketing explicitly positions it as such (see Figure 6) while its schedule of sub-events and *attractions* position women as passive objects for visual enjoyment and consumption (see Figure 7). While the V8 Supercar series has been seeking to build its female fan-base, the continued inclusion of scantily clad grid-girls and bikini parades as entertainment at Clipsal and other championship rounds simply perpetuates the objectification of women. Taking a philosophical approach, the YWCA observed that ‘...the V8 Supercar race draws a particular crowd and so there would possibly be cultural groups or minority groups that would feel [like] that event is not for them’. Notwithstanding this, the YWCA is adamant that many women do not feel ‘...safe in the city during that time and are not going into the city during that time’. These comments affirm to Waterman’s (1998, p.67, emphasis added) concerns that festivals possess the power to ‘...exclude or include on the basis of ethnicity or class, *and perhaps gender*’. In turn, this refutes the notion of festivals as creative opportunities.



Figure 6: Gendering Adelaide through Clipsal

Source: Clipsal 500 Adelaide, 2011



Figure 7: Problematic representations.

Source: *Adelaide Advertiser*, 1st March 2012, pp.12-13.

Conclusion:

Adelaide's Mad March brings energy and diversity that contributes to the temporary development of creative spaces where individuals can experience new forms of pleasure and entertainment. These festival spaces may be thought of as liminal in that they are outside the norm of everyday practices. The literature endorsing creativity as a policy direction positively endorses such undertakings. This literature proposes that festivals constitute creative spectacles that are founded upon and which promotes tolerance and openness within the claimed neutral space of the inner city. This paper refutes such assertions as simplistic. The lessons derived from the Clipsal 500 motor-racing festival provide a salient example of the complexities inherent in the staging of flag-ship events as vehicles for place promotion.

While it is accurate that festivals constitute a '...celebration [that] can bind a community and... also be the instrument that keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience' Derrett (2003, p.53), they are not necessarily inclusionary. Festivals are inclusive of some and exclusionary of others. This is not necessarily a negative. From the perspective of Adelaide City Council, having a diverse portfolio of festivals caters to a wider cross-section of the community's needs, interests and desires, while also showcasing to the world that Adelaide is not a stayed, mono-cultural city. However, where some perceive diversity others see conflict. The Clipsal 500 certainly brings moments of conflict to Adelaide. These can be thought of as occurring along a spectrum of significance. Arguably at the more benign end are issues of traffic disruption and congestion. While inconvenient, these can be dealt with through careful planning and management. At the more concerning end of this spectrum are issues of alcohol abuse, anti-social behaviour and violence. Addressing these issues is certainly within the remit of organisations like the Clipsal 500 and ACC. However, they are complex as they involve and impinge upon wider societal attitudes and also sub-cultural practices. Responding to these challenges is a much more significant and long term undertaking.

Ultimately, flag-ship festivals promise policy makers attractive rewards with regards to economic benefits. Clipsal is a case in point and makes a significant annual economic contribution to the local and state economy. However, the research presented in this paper demand that a more holistic perspective be taken by governments with regards to flag-ship festivals specifically and creative economy approaches generally. The lesson of the Clipsal 500 demands that policy makers and communities seriously question what types of places they want to foster, what values they will encapsulate and what senses of place they encapsulate and how this contributes to the complex identity of the city. Hence, creative cities require creative governments that engage critically and openly with policy ideas and direction in partnership with the community to envisage progressive and equitable futures.

Literature cited:

Allen, J., O'Toole, W., Harris, R. and McDonnell, I., 2011. *Festival & Special Event Management*. Fifth Edition. Australia: John Wiley & Sons.

Alvarez, M.D., 2010. Creative cities and cultural spaces: new perspectives for city tourism. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4(3), pp.171-175.

Atkinson, R. and Easthope, H. 2009. The consequences of the Creative Class: the pursuit of Creativity Strategies in Australian cities. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 33(1), pp.64-79.

Bell, D. and Jayne, M. 2006. Conceptualising small cities, in: Bell, D and Jayne, M. (eds) *Small Cities: Urban Experience Beyond the Metropolis*, pp.1-18. Routledge: Abingdon.

Bianchini, F., 1995. Night Cultures, Night Economies', *Planning Practices and Research*, 10(2), pp.121-126.

Bignell, J. 2002 *Media Semiotics – an introduction*, 2nd edition. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

Campo, D. and Ryan, B.D., 2008. The Entertainment Zone: unplanned nightlife and the revitalization of the American downtown. *Journal of Urban Design*, 13(3), pp.291-315.

Chatterton, C. and Hollands, R., 2002. Theorising Urban Playscapes: Producing, Regulating, and Consuming Youthful Nightlife City Spaces. *Urban Studies*, 39(1), pp.95-116.

Derrett, R., 2003a. Making Sense of How Festivals Demonstrate a Community's Sense of Place. *Event Management*, 8, pp.49-58.

Derrett, R., 2003b. Festivals & Regional Destination: How festivals demonstrate a sense of community and place. *Rural Society*, 13(1), pp.35-53.

Derrett, R., 2004. Festivals, events and the destination. In: I. Yeoman, M. Robertson, J. Ali-Knight, S. Drummond and U. McMahon-Beattie, ed. *Festivals & Events*

Management: an international arts and culture perspective. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp.32-50.

Dunn, K. 2011. 'Interviewing' in *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*. eds. I Hay, Oxford University Press, New York, pp. 79-105.

Florida, R. 2003. Cities and the creative class. *City and Community*. 2(1), pp.3-19.

Florida, R., 2002. *The Rise of the Creative Class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.

Gibson, C., Waitt, G., Walmsley, J. and Connell, J., 2010. Cultural Festivals and Economic Development in Nonmetropolitan Australia. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 29(3), pp.280-293.

Harvey, D., 2000. *Spaces of hope*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Johnson, R.B., Onwuegbuzie, A.J. and Turner L.A., 2007. Towards a definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(2), pp.112-133.

Jory, R. 2000. It's time to put a bit of life in the old town, *The Advertiser*, 24 October, p.18.

Kavaratzis, M. and Ashworth, G.J. 2005. City branding: an effective assertion of identity or a marketing trick? *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 96(5), pp.506-514.

Landry, C. 2006. *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators*. Earthscan: London.

Lovatt, A. and O'Connor, J., 1995. Cities and the Night-time Economy. *Planning Practice and Research*, 10(2), pp.127-133.

Miles, S. 2010. *Spaces for consumption: pleasure and placelessness in the post-industrial city*. SAGE Publications, London.

Noonan, A. 2009. Time to behave or beware. *The Advertiser*, 12th December, p.22.

Peck, J., 2005. Struggling with the Creative Class. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 29(4), pp.740-770.

Peel, D., 2005. Planning for Safer and Secure Communities: The Social Restructuring of Anti-Social Behaviour. *The Town Planning Review*, 76(3), pp.265-290.

Pløger, J., 2010. Presence-Experiences-the eventalisation of urban space. *Planning and Environment D: Society and Space*, 28, pp.848-866.

Quinn, B., 2005. Arts Festivals and the City. *Urban Studies*, 42(5/6), pp.927-943.

Roberts, M. and Eldridge, A., 2009. *Planning the Night-time City*. New York: Routledge.

Roberts, M. and Gornostaeva, G., 2007. The Night-Time Economy and Sustainable Town Centres: Dilemmas for Local Government. *The International Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 2(2), pp.134-152.

Roberts, M. and Turner, C., 2005. Conflicts of liveability in the 24 hour City: Learning from 48 hours in the life of London's Soho. *Journal of Urban Design*, 10(2), pp.171-193.

Rofe, M.W. and Stein, L. (2011) Shedding New Light on Adelaide? Intersections between Urban Design Projects and City Marketing, *Journal of Urban Design*, 16/3, pp.321-338.

Shields, R., 1991. *Places on the margins: alternative geographies of modernity*. New York: Routledge.

Stevens, Q 2011, 'The German 'city beach' as a new waterfront development model' in Gene Desfor, Jennefer Laidley, Quentin Stevens and Dirk Schubert (ed.) *Transforming Urban Waterfronts: Fixity and Flow*, Routledge, London, UK, pp. 235-256.

Stoneman, J. 2006. Supercars keep crashing awards. *The Adelaide Review* 6th April, p.10.

Tallon, A.R., Bromley, R.D.F., Reynolds, B. and Thomas, C.J., 2006. Developing Leisure and Cultural Attractions in the Regional City Centre: A policy perspective. *Planning and Environment C: Government and Policy*, 24, pp.357-370.

Thomas, C.J. and Bromley, R.D.F., 2000. City-centre revitalisation: Problems of fragmentation and fear in the evening and night-time city. *Urban Studies*, 37, pp.1403-1429.

Tiesdell, S. and Slater, A.M., 2006. Calling Time: Managing Activities in Space and Time in the Evening / Night-Time Economy. *Planning Theory and Practice*, 7(2), pp.137-157.

Valentine, G. 1989. The Geography of Women's Fear. *Area* 21(4), pp.385-390.

Waitt, G. and Gibson, C. 2009. Creative small cities: rethinking the creative economy in place. *Urban Studies*. 46(4&5), pp.1223-1246.

Walter, M., 2006. *Social Research Methods: an Australian perspective*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Waterman, S., 1998. Carnivals for Elites? The cultural politics of arts festivals. *Progress in Human Geography*, 22(1), pp.54-74.

Willems-Braun, B., 1994. Situating Cultural Politics: fringe festivals and the production of spaces of intersubjectivity. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12(1), pp.75-104.

Williams, R., 2008. Night Spaces: Darkness, Deterritorialization and Social Control. *Space and Culture*, 11(4), pp.514-532.

Winchester, H.P.M., Kong, L. and Dunn, K. 2003. *Landscapes: Ways of Imaging the World*, Pearson Prentice Hall, Harlow

Acknowledgements: the authors wish to thank Dr Rowena Butland for preparing Figure 1.

Notes:

ⁱ *Mullawirraburka*, *Ityamaiipinna* and *Bakkabakkandi* are the traditional names given to Rundle Park 14, Park 15 and Victoria Park 16 respectively by the Kaurna People. the authors wish to acknowledge the Kaurna People as the traditional owners of the land discussed in this paper.

ⁱⁱ Caution must be expressed regarding attempts to compare total festival attendance with the number of identified interstate and overseas visitors. The festival attendance figures cited are for total attendance over the four days of the festival. Thus, this figure will include persons attending more than one day and hence who are at least double-counted. The use of ticket-sales data would alleviate this issue. However, this data was not able to be obtained. Data recording total number of interstate/overseas visitors is derived from online ticket sales data and is unlikely to capture all such visitors. Further, these visitors are included in the total festival attendance figures.

ⁱⁱⁱ All financial values reported in this paper are in Australian Dollars (A\$). For reference, at 10th May 2012 A\$1 = USD\$1 or €0.78.