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## Skate parks 'good influence' on teens

The West Australian SAM TOMLIN The West Australian April 15, 2014, 5:37 am

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The West Australian

They are a popular target for community suspicion, but research has found teenagers frequenting their local skate park may be unfairly stereotyped.

Although the development of skate parks has often been fiercely opposed by nearby residents because of fears of antisocial behaviour, researchers

from the University of WA's Centre for Built Environment and Health found the parks encouraged positive behaviour in teenagers.

"Skate parks are a powerful setting in which young people can learn the arts of co-operation, negotiation and compromise informally, in contrast to via the structured rules of organised sports," Associate Professor Lisa Wood said.

The survey of young skaters who frequented a central Perth skate park drew almost 400 responses, almost all reporting positive behaviours.

Professor Wood said more attention needed to be given to the positive results skate parks had on teenagers.

At the Leederville Skate Park yesterday afternoon, 15-year-old Hayden O'Meara said he was thankful the park was available.

"I've been skating for 2 1/2 years," he said.

"I'm here every day after school.

It gives us something to do instead of sitting around doing nothing."

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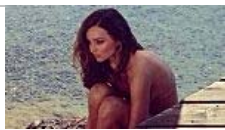
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