



MANDURAH

# Skaters given bad rap



IF you think kids at skate parks are likely to be getting up to no good, think again.

UWA researchers have found that skate parks are actually more likely to promote good behaviour – yet skate parks are often under threat from community opposition because of fears that young people who congregate at them will engage in anti-social behaviour.

The community survey found young people cooperate, learn from, teach, help and respect others, socialise with friends and take turns more often than they engage in anti-social behaviour at skate parks.

Despite its popularity, skateboarding often suffered negative associations and far less attention had been given to the positive pro-social behaviours that went on at skate parks.

“Yet skate parks are in fact 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,” a researcher said.

“The growing need for autonomy during adolescence encourages teenagers to spend more time away from home, but where do they go?”

“As playgrounds cater to younger children, groups of adolescents using parks and public places are often stereo-

typed as being ‘up to no good’. While recognising that skate parks don’t meet the needs of all young people, there are few other community spaces where they can hang out.”

The researcher said Australian data indicated youth participation in skateboarding, in-line skating, rollerblading and scooting was close to exceeding participation in organised sports.



**A university study has found skate parks are not as bad as people fear.**