

Where are the safe places?

Safety mapping with Town Campers in Alice Springs.



What does 'safety' mean to you? Artwork by Louise Abbott

Acknowledgments

I would like to pay my respects to the traditional custodians and their Elders past, present, and emerging, on whose lands we conducted this safety mapping. I'd also like to acknowledge and pay my respects to all the Town Campers who participated in the safety mapping – thank you for your time, and for sharing your expertise in this research. I'd also like to thank all the community centre coordinators and youth workers who helped to organise the safety mapping sessions, and thank the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program, particularly the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group, for their input and guidance. I'd also like to thank the Tangentyere Council Research Hub for providing the maps and their feedback and assistance throughout the safety mapping. It is my hope this report can be useful to Town Campers and those who work alongside them.

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Abbreviations

Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group	TWFSG
Central Australian Alcohol Program Unit	CAAPU
Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program	TFVPP
Alice Springs Town Council	ASTC
Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation	TCAC

Purpose

The safety mapping was conducted on seven Town Camps and with one representative group (the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group) as part of the 'Good Practice in Indigenous-led interventions to prevent violence against women' research project. Eight safety mapping sessions took place between the 4th of April 2019 and the 12th of April 2019.

The purpose of the safety mapping was threefold: first to ascertain whether domestic and family violence was identified as a safety concern by Town Camp women; secondly to gauge the reach and impact of the Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program¹; and thirdly to take a strengths-based approach to identify safe places on Town Camps and within the wider context of Alice Springs, and gather Town Camp women's views on what made these places safe. It is the hope of this exercise that if the 'ingredients' of safety can be identified, then they can be replicated to increase Town Campers' feelings of safety on their Town Camps and within the wider community. The safety mapping exercise also aimed to identify safe people and safe relationships that could be drawn upon if Town Campers ever felt unsafe. This report collates the views of the participants to present the main safety issues according to participating Town Campers, and what needs to be done to improve safety in Town Camps and within Alice Springs.

The purpose of this report is to relay the views of the participants about the safety issues on their Town Camps and what is needed to improve Town Camp safety to stakeholders, including participants, community centre staff, and Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation (TCAC).

Method

Safety mapping is a method that asks participants in focus groups to use maps to identify the safe places in their communities. This method was designed in response to a method which attempted to map crime 'hot spots' in Alice Springs by measuring how many times emergency buttons were hit in certain locations. Safety mapping flips this concept to a strengths-based approach by asking participants to identify the safe places in their communities and gather their views about what they consider 'safe' and why.

This safety mapping exercise with Town Camp women made use of the Alice Springs Transformation Plan maps of Town Camps, which were provided by Tangentyere Council Research Hub. The safety mapping took place in groups of varying sizes, the smallest had three participants, whilst the largest had over sixteen. Seven sessions took place on Town Camps at the community centre or learning centre, and one session took place at Tangentyere Family Violence Prevention Program's offices. The sessions typically lasted between 30 minutes and one hour.

The safety mapping was semi-structured: four questions were pre-planned, but the method also allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up or additional questions. The planned questions were made up of the following questions:

1. Can you tell me about your community?
2. What does 'safety' mean to you?
3. Using the map, can you circle the safe places? What makes these places safe?
4. If we are ever unsafe, where would you go or who would you talk to?

These questions were designed to elicit Town Camp women's perceptions of their Town Camp; to understand their ideas of safety and what is most important; to identify the areas of safety on their Town Camp and why these places are considered safe; and finally to identify supportive services or relationships that Town Campers feel they can draw upon for safety. The questions were posed to the group, then a discussion between the participants would follow. The researcher would

¹ The findings for this objective will be reported as part of the TFVPP final report.

sometimes ask follow-up questions in response to the participants' answers, and at times, the participants would also ask the researcher questions – usually about what other Town Camps had reported in their safety mapping session.

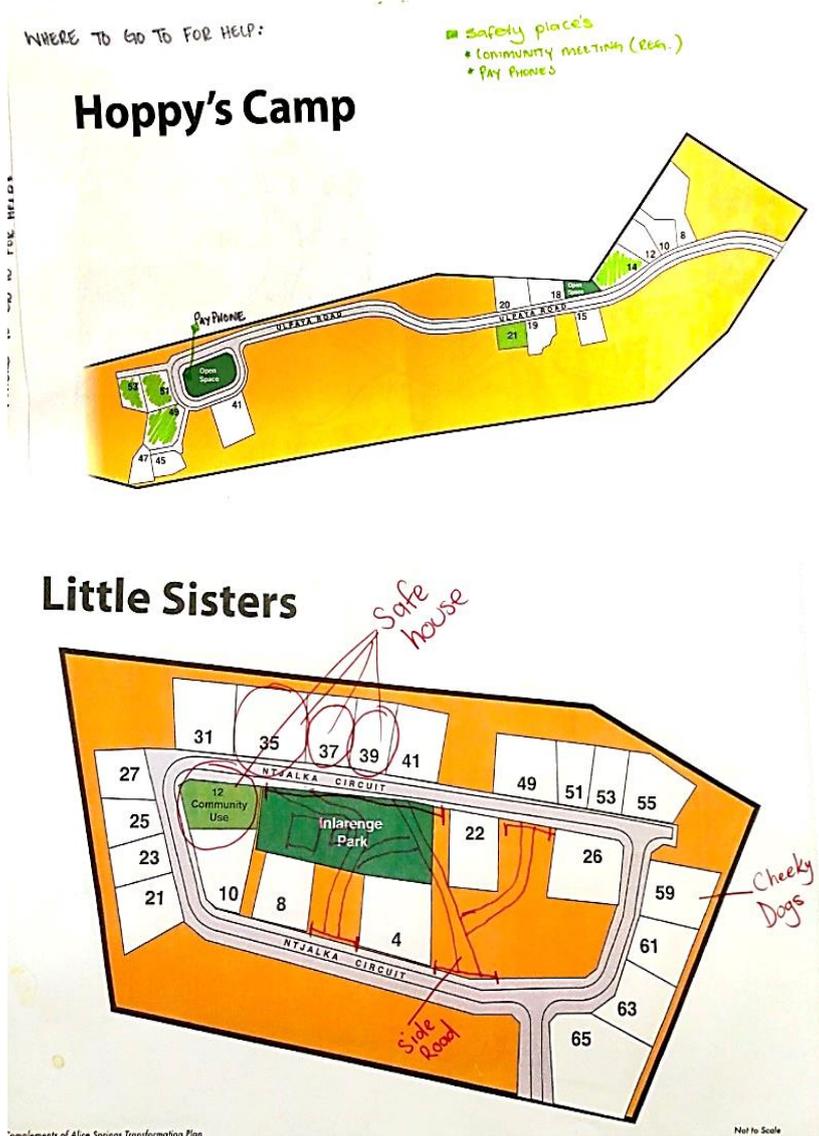
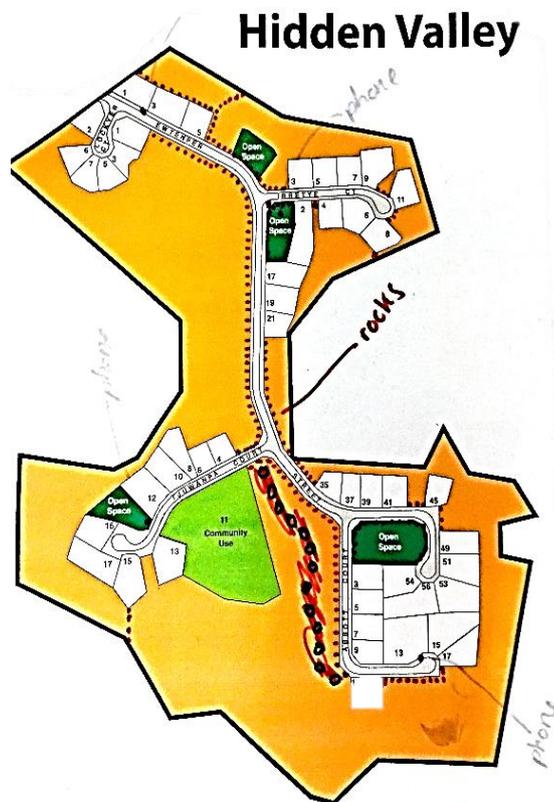


Figure 1 Examples of Individuals' Maps from safety mapping with Town Campers



Each individual was given a map of the Town Camp on which they were asked to circle the safe places – some participants did this, whilst others preferred to point and discuss. As can be seen in **Figure 1**, some participants added the safety features they would like to see implemented; some drew additional houses or side-roads; and many chose to label their maps. All participants used the maps as a focus for discussion and to illustrate their points to the researcher. Many participants commented that they had never seen a map of their Town Camp before, and many participants requested to keep their map after the session had ended, signalling a high level of engagement. Many participants also commented that they had found the session useful and that “it was good to talk about safety” [SM37] and “you can come again [to do the safety mapping]” [SM5].

The participants' answers were recorded in handwritten note form, and photographs were taken of their maps. At the end of the session, the researcher would read back over her notes and ask participants if the notes accurately reflected their views – this would often lead to further details and discussion. The researcher would then summarise what she thought were the main safety issues to arise in the safety mapping and ask participants if they agreed – this would also usually lead to further discussion. After the safety mapping, the written notes were then typed into transcripts and emailed through to

the community centre coordinator who was asked to check over the transcript and if possible, share with participants for review.

All the transcripts were then compiled into files using NVivo software. The researcher used NVivo to code words, phrases, sentences, and whole files according to what they were about – these are called ‘nodes’. For example, a participant mentioned a visitor ripping the phone away from her when she tried to call the police, this was coded under the nodes ‘phones’, ‘police’, ‘visitors’, and ‘violence’. As coding continued, if nodes related to each other they were grouped together in parent-child relationships, for the example the child node ‘fighting’ was grouped with the parent node ‘violence’. In this way, overarching themes began to emerge, and the researcher was able to see the dominant nodes by the amount of codes assigned to them. This allowed the researcher to identify the main safety issues of concern to participating Town Campers and the most commonly identified safe places.

The draft of this safety mapping report was also provided to TFVPP, Tangentyere Research Hub, and community centre coordinators so they could provide feedback before it was finalised.

Working in a good way

The method of safety mapping also required the researcher to work in a good way with Aboriginal people. ‘A good way’ meant following a consultation and engagement process prior to commencing the safety mapping, and also ensuring the method was appropriate for participants and that it allowed for a range of different voices to be heard.

The researcher firstly contacted the community centre coordinators via email to introduce herself but also to get feedback on the safety mapping method. Initially the researcher proposed using either maps or artwork with participants, the coordinators fed back that maps would be better. The community centre coordinator would then typically consult with community members about whether they were interested in participating, on some occasions the community centre coordinator directed the researcher to speak directly to particular community members. If it was agreed, the researcher then made a time with the community centre coordinator to attend the community centre to lead a session with Town Camp women, although men could also participate if they chose and if the women felt comfortable to include them. The community centre coordinator recruited participants by inviting local community members to the session.

On the day of the safety mapping, the researcher would bring lunch, which would be prepared and eaten prior, during, or after the safety mapping. The session would begin by the researcher firstly introducing herself and where she came from to establish positionality, everyone in the group would then introduce themselves. The researcher would then explain the safety mapping method, the purpose of the research, and how the data would be used. The researcher also asked to take notes throughout the session which would be typed up and sent back through to the community centre coordinator for checking. If the participants consented, the researcher would then ask if it was okay to begin. At the end of the session, the researcher would read out her notes to check their accuracy and would summarise the main issues raised in the session. This provided the participants with two opportunities to correct the researcher and to provide further details if they choose – it also reaffirmed consent and offered a level of transparency about what was recorded and how. The typed transcripts were also emailed through to the community centre for review.

The location of the safety mapping was also important, some sessions were held outside with all participants including the researcher sitting in a circle on the ground, whilst other sessions were held inside the community centre around art tables as participants painted. Some participants did not stay for the duration of the safety mapping, but came in or out of the session freely, participating as much or as little as they pleased. Other people chose to simply sit and listen rather than verbally participate in the session.

Going through this process ensured informed consent. The method was culturally safe and culturally appropriate as it ensured that not too many questions were asked, instead emphasising listening, and allowed people to participate in different ways as much as possible. For example, some participants had limited English, they would participate by communicating in language and another participant would translate for them, or they would participate by drawing on the map and pointing or making gestures. The process also ensured participants felt comfortable - the environment was familiar, relaxed, and informal.

Participants

The total number of participants in the safety mapping was fifty-nine. As shown in **Figure 2**, the participants were made up of forty-four Indigenous women, ten non-Indigenous women, and five Indigenous men. The ten non-Indigenous women include the community centre coordinators, youth workers, Tangentyere researchers, and program coordinators who were present at the safety mapping sessions and participated in them or contributed their comments as part of feedback on the draft report. All quotations indicate the kind of participant: SM (Town Camper, safety mapping participant); IS (internal stakeholder: community centre staff or youth worker); TWFSG (Tangentyere Women’s Family Safety Group member); SP (staff participant: program staff).

Although the safety mapping was designed to harness the views of Town Camp women, men were also welcome to participate and several attended the safety mapping sessions to give their views about Town Camp safety, other men were present but they did not always participate verbally in the session - this explains the disparity between the male and female participants. There were also many more people present at safety mapping sessions than is reflected in the participant numbers. Many of these people did not participate in the session verbally and although the researcher tried to include as many views as possible through the use of individual maps and other participants acting as translators, only those participants who contributed to the session in a recordable way have been included in these figures.

Figure 2 Participants disaggregated by sex and Indigeneity

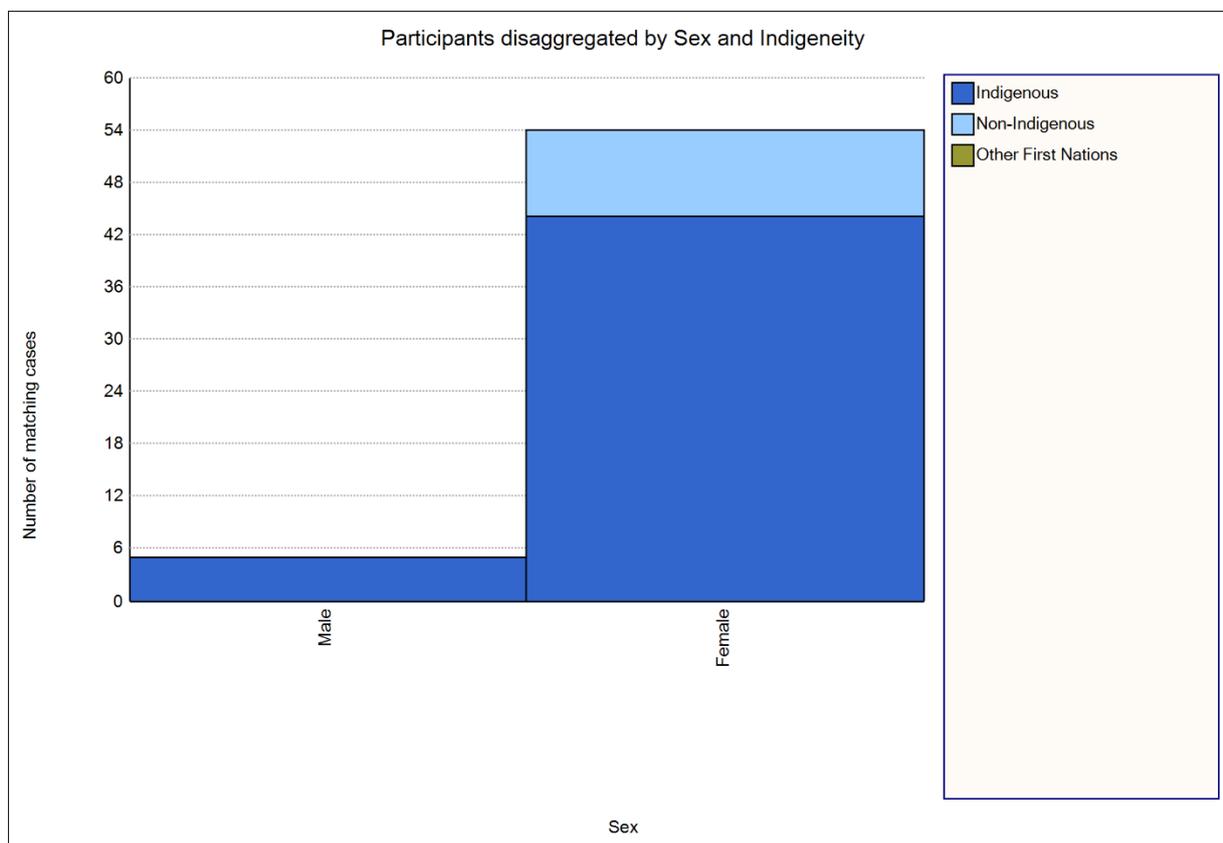
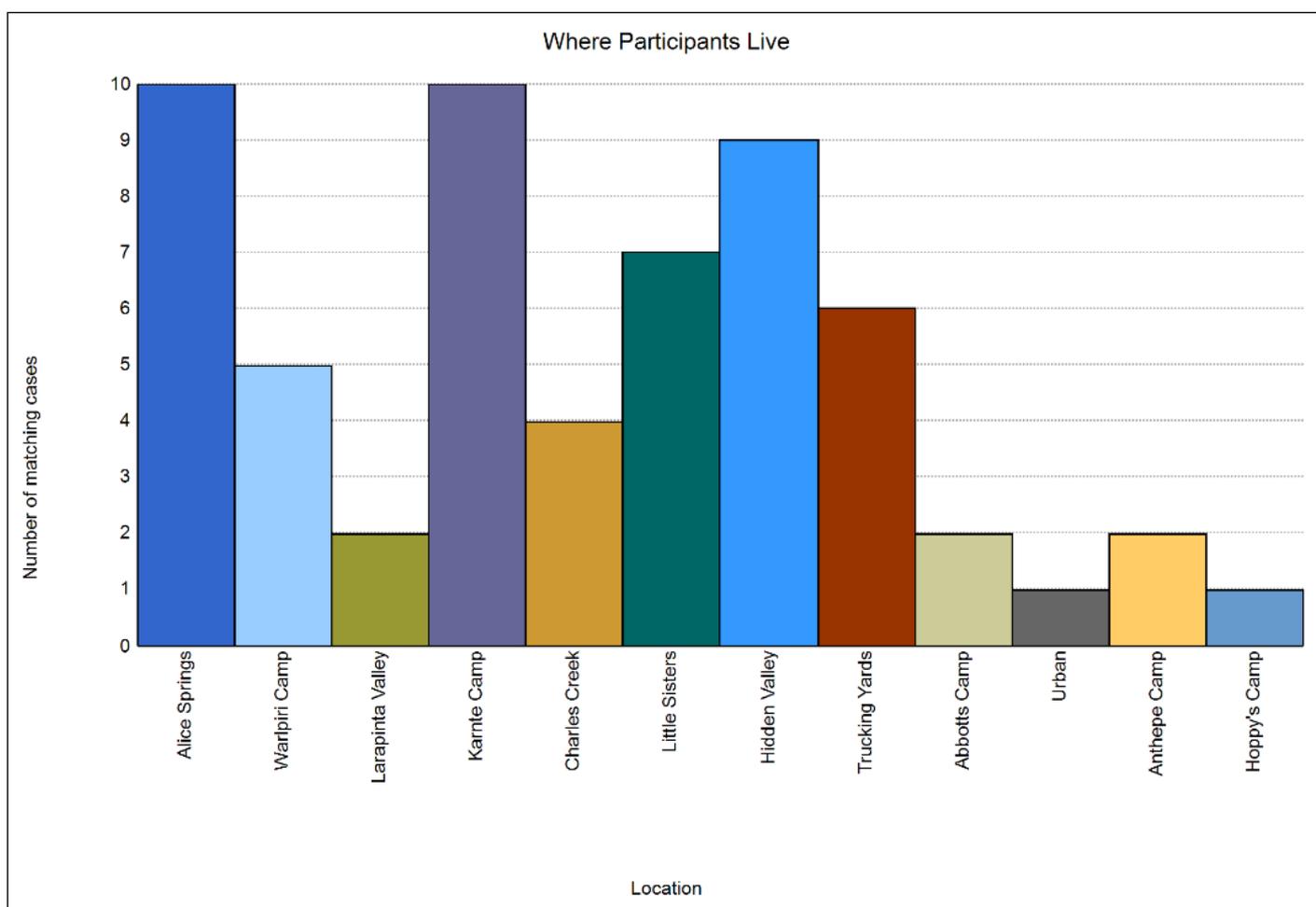


Figure 3 shows the breakdown of where participants reside. Seven of the eight safety mapping sessions were conducted on Town Camps. These Town Camps were Little Sisters, Warlpiri Camp, Charles Creek, Karnte, Trucking Yards, Hidden Valley, and Larapinta Valley. The size of the participant group in each session depended largely on what was happening at the community centre that day, although the community centre coordinators tried to mobilise participants beforehand. As such the safety mapping session at Karnte Camp was very well attended with ten participants, as was the session at Hidden Valley, whilst some of the other sessions were much smaller with only three participants.

One of the sessions was conducted with a representative group, the Tangentyere Women's Family Safety Group (TWFSG), whose members come from ten different Town Camps in Alice Springs. Some TWFSG members now live in urban housing but previously lived for many years on Town Camps. Seven members of the TWFSG participated in the safety mapping. The participants recorded as residing in Alice Springs in general is comprised of the community centre coordinators, program coordinators, and youth workers. **Figure 3** shows that 11 of the 16 Town Camps in Alice Springs were represented in the safety mapping.

Figure 3 Breakdown of where participants reside



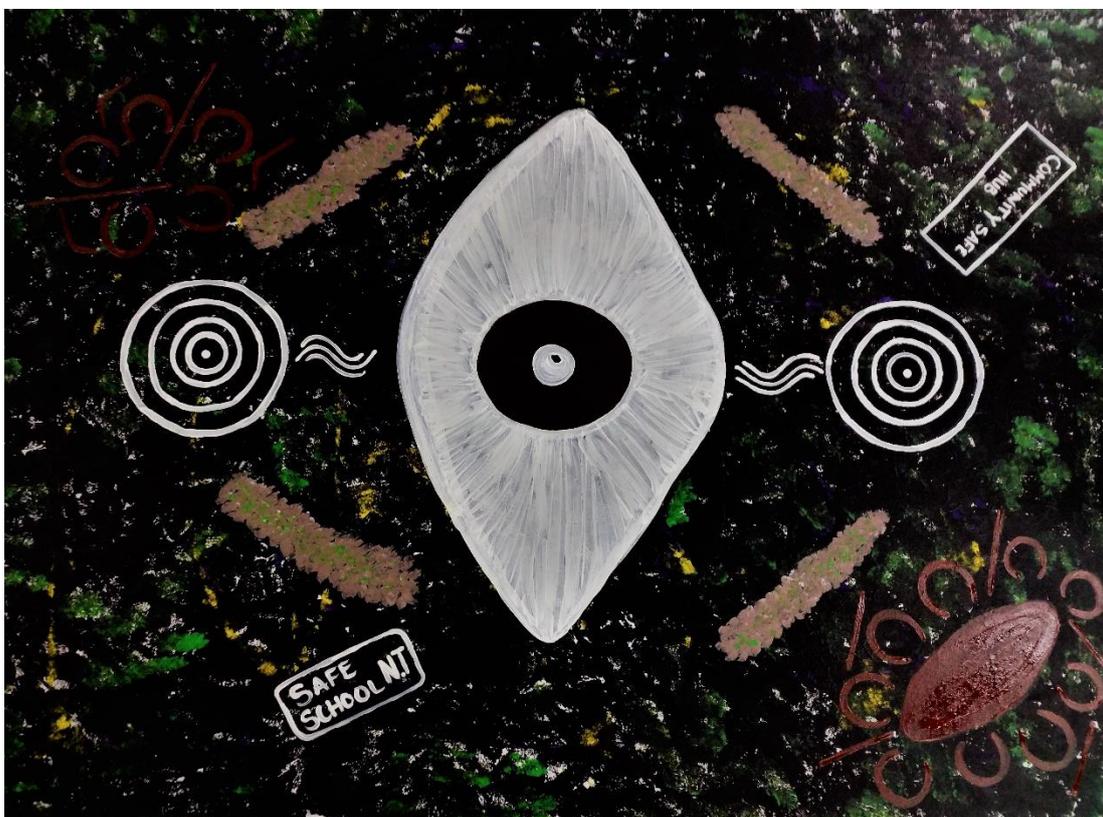
Limitations

Although steps were taken to minimise them, there are several limitations to the safety mapping. Firstly, although the community centres were useful for recruiting Town Camp women, this preferred Town Campers who were already making use of the community centers, who were largely older women, artists, and those working in the community centre. This may mean the views of Town Campers not engaged with the community centre have been excluded.

Moreover, it's the nature of focus groups that some participants will speak more than others and tend to dominate the discussion. The researcher was aware of this and tried to mitigate this as much as possible by speaking with quiet members of the group and asking more reserved individuals about the places they had circled on their maps. Nevertheless, some participants were able to participate more, and these were usually the people who were more confident using English and more confident engaging with the researcher, usually older women.

Another possible limitation is that not all 16 Town Camps are represented in the safety mapping and this is because the participating Town Camps were selected based on whether they had a community centre as a venue and point of mobilisation for the safety mapping. Also, Town Camps which had *not* received domestic and family violence training from TWFSG were selected as way to gauge the impact of that program and also to compare Town Campers knowledge and understanding of domestic and family violence before and after the training.

Another limitation is that although 49 Town Campers is a good sample size for Alice Springs Town Camps, this is still a small amount of participants given the population of Town Camps is around 2000, and can fluctuate and increase due to the significant mobility of people between remote communities and Town Camps (Foster, Mitchell, Ulrik, & Williams, 2005). This may mean that the diversity of opinion, perspective, and experience of Town Campers and their ideas about safety have not fully being captured in this exercise. However, despite these limitations, there are still some interesting findings from the safety mapping, which include place-based responses and solutions for safety issues on Town Camps.



I 'Safe Places' Artwork by Shirleen Campbell

Discussion

What follows is a discussion of the key findings of the safety mapping exercise in terms of how Town Campers view safety; what they perceive as the primary safety issues; where they consider safe; and what is needed to increase safety on their Town Camps.

1. What safety means to Town Campers

Town Campers were asked what safety meant to them as part of the safety mapping exercise. This question was designed to elicit Town Campers understanding of safety and to ensure the researcher was not imposing her own ideas and values on Town Campers. Participants' responses to this question revealed that safety is important to Town Campers, particularly for children, but that they also considered it lacking in their Town Camps.

Town Campers gave their own definitions of safety in response to this question:

"Do everything without being interrupted by some kind of unwanted activity or conflict. Or violence." [SM41]

"Secure. Everything secure. Good feeling." [SM7]

"How you're feeling when you're not feeling terrified or scared. Some people you can see they're scared in their body." [SM37]

"Family and kids." [TWFSG9]

"Safe home." [TWFSG1]

"Good feeling because we're around family." [SM23]

These definitions show how important family is to Town Campers' ideas of safety, and that safety was often defined as the absence of fear and conflict. 'Safety' was also often expressed as a collective idea rather than an individual one. It was clear that Town Campers regarded safety for the whole camp and the whole community to be of importance.

It was also revealed however, that Town Campers considered safety to be lacking in their community, and that they were particularly concerned for the safety of children. This was made apparent in the Town Campers responses to the first question "can you tell me about your community?" Their responses showed that they were proud of their Town Camps but that safety was a concern, and Town Campers often reflected that they had raised their concerns about safety in multiple forums many times before.

"Can you tell me about your community?" [Researcher]

"Safe during the day." [SM12]

"Not at night." [SM13]

"Night-time sometimes safe." [SM12]

"Sometimes. There is fights night and day, every other week." [SM13]

"Sometimes it's quite nice." [SM12]

"Can you tell me about your community?" [Researcher]

"Good because family here and amongst family. Don't know how safe you are with visitors because you don't know how they'll act or retaliate. There is no visitor control." [SM41]

"Can you tell me about your community?" [Researcher]

"Quiet." [SM5]

"Some days." [SM2]

"Sometimes drunks drive around, most days it's good. Nothing." [SM5]

"This area's good, too much noise on other end." [SM2]

"Noisy [drawing on map indicating noisy half of camp]" [SM5]

“Can you tell me about your community?” [Researcher]

“Pretty safe.” [SM38]

“Good, safe. Mostly family, it’s a family camp. People not coming in. Do have visitors in some houses. Visitors create problems. People who come in and speed, don’t think about kids and residents who live here. Kids walk around at night because they feel safe, but on weekends people speed and they’re not aware.” [SM37]

“We’ve been talking about these things for a long time, and nothing” [SM33]

It’s evident that Town Campers feel safe on their Town Camps much of the time, but there continues to be ongoing safety issues that concern them, especially for children. The responses to this question also highlight what Town Campers consider to be the main safety issues, which were fairly uniform across all participating Town Camps.

2. The main safety issues

Across all participating Town Camps, the following were raised as the main safety issues: visitors; violence; road safety; payphones; and parks. Some Town Campers also raised other issues of concern including cheeky dogs and the drinking of alcohol, but this report will focus on the five most commonly raised safety issues, which were shared across all participating Town Camps.

2.1 Visitors

One concern overwhelmingly listed by Town Campers was visitors and the lack of visitor control. This was regarded as a safety issue because Town Campers linked visitors to drinking, violence and trouble, as well as contributing to the overcrowding of houses. There was a strong belief that the local inhabitants of Town Camps were mostly quiet whilst visitors, who were coming mostly from remote communities but also sometimes from other Town Camps or urban housing, would come to the Town Camps with a view to party and this in turn led to road safety issues and family fighting.

“Wasn’t safe for me the other week. I got my pension, and people from other camps came in and there was a fight.” [SM12]

“Visitors making trouble all the time, local people are quiet.” [SM25]

“People come in, with money, and then drinking, and wherever, and they try to find space to camp around the Town Camp.” [SM26]

“Mostly visitors cause problems.” [SM32]

“When they come, get drunk and cause trouble.” [SM34]

“Turns into a big issue at parties or anytime, and that front area is packed out with people looking for black market, looking for people selling grog. Recently my auntie, people came running through her front gate, and she got hit. Me and my other auntie went over there and stood around with her until the police came. She called the police. This happens a lot. It’s sometimes peaceful.” [SM11]

There was also a feeling that local bus services played a strong role in visitor influx because they would drop people from remote communities off at Town Camps. It was reported that policy change has provided the context in which funds have been redirected from Return to Country programs into the establishment of commercial bus services in Central Australia, which has resulted in significant visitor management concerns for Town Camps. Town Campers also felt the police and other services played a role in this as well by returning or dropping people off at Town Camps who didn’t live there. Town Campers felt that non-residents should not be dropped off at Town Camps and if they are, that these services first speak with the house boss before leaving.

“[local bus service] has been an influence on visitor influx because they bring visitors in and out. We are about to send them a letter, not to drive through or bring clients here.” [SM41]

“Live your life, and in your camp, it’s good here but visitors come in and create problems, then we feel unsafe. People come in here, come into the camp, and have their fights. I call the police. Police come, and they don’t speak to the house boss, they speak to the visitors, and the visitors say there’s no problem, and the police go. They need to talk to the house boss.” [SM37]

The link between visitors and overcrowding was clear. Visitors would often come from remote communities to town to shop and access services in town, but then they would not go home again for quite some time. This would mean that some people would have family members staying in their house for upwards of two weeks and longer. This would then place stress on the household as food and space was stretched thin, leading to conflict. Some participants reflected that the difference between people living in a crowded house and those living in a non-crowded house was marked. They said that when there was no crowding, kids would go to school, everyone had enough to eat, and everyone was getting enough rest. Some Town Campers reported upwards of more than 15 people in a three-bedroom house. With this level of overcrowding it is clear how visitors staying for long periods of time can contribute to stress and conflict within the Town Camp. However, overcrowding and mobility are not uniquely Town Camp issues: this also affects urban and remote public housing.

“Yeah visitors, it gets packed out. Then there’s arguments, disagreements between families.” [SM11]

“Some come here for shopping, and get stuck from drinking, and then houses are overcrowded, then there’s fighting.” [SM9]

“[Address] is a crowded house. Everywhere is. Especially [address]. Young kids coming back there late at night.” [SM27]

“I just wanted to bring up the crowded house, because when visitors go home, everyone is relaxed, everyone has food. But when it’s crowded, everyone is tired, there’s violence, and there’s not enough food. You can see the difference immediately, when it’s not crowded, kids are sleeping, kids are going to school, there’s enough food.” [IS10]

Town Campers also suggested many solutions to what they saw as a visitor problem. Some Town Campers proposed a two-week maximum stay for visitors, and it was clear that visitor control in some form was desired. Some Town Campers suggested having electric gates at the Town Camps with swipe cards that were only distributed to the residents of that particular Town Camp. Many Town Campers suggested that the bus services drop people from remote communities elsewhere in town but not to Town Camps. Several Town Camp Housing Associations have already made formal requests to local bus services to deter visitors.

2.2 Violence

Violence was raised by Town Campers frequently and it was couched in very different terms. Town Campers responses showed they believed there was an undeniable link between visitors and violence, as well as drinking and violence. This seemed to be because Town Campers believe that when visitors came to town they would engage in drinking which would both prolong their stay as well as often trigger violence.

“Other people come looking for fights. They came back Monday, I told them off, young fellas.” [SM12]

“Fights start when people are drinking.” [SM11]

“Put something up and say you can’t be here and do that, not all day and night. Visitors bring a lot of other people. There’s so many people drinking and having fights.” [SM37]

Town Campers also consistently talked about what they saw as a poor response from police or a long response time. However, what was interesting to note was that Town Campers are now actively seeking a service from police and demanding a service from police. On several occasions the researcher asked participants whether they felt okay to call the police and this was consistently met with a positive response, participants said that they were not only happy to call police but that they called police regularly. To improve the response from police, Town Campers suggested that communication not go through Darwin but there be a southern command call centre, and some participants talked about the introduction

of emergency buttons to all Town Camps. The poor response from police was mostly in regard to what Town Campers saw as police not speaking to the right people, by either speaking to visitors or not checking with the house boss. They also felt that police failed to move on large groups of people or visitors standing around in Town Camps, and Town Campers believed that had those groups of people been standing in urban centers, that police would be responding to them differently.

"And we don't have direct number to the police station. It goes through comms in Darwin. It takes a while for police to get here. They have to wait for their job number. If they're not here in time, someone could get hurt during the waiting time." [SM26]

"When there's a fight out of the camp, they come running into the camp." [SM11]

"In an emergency, you want to call the fire, ambulance, or police, and people rip the phone away, especially when you want to call the police." [SM27]

"Go to a house, the owner doesn't even know, the police will talk to someone who doesn't even live there." [SM38]

"Speak to the house boss. Control your visitors. People go out and next minute, someone gets stabbed or half murdered." [SM37]

"No. It's not safe there. I've seen women getting half killed [on oval], I have to call the police." [TWFSG8]

"Police come. Visitors come. And they make noise. Arguments and fights. We call the police straight away." [SM25]

There were also many veiled references to domestic and family violence. Although Town Campers did not use this terminology, they made repeated references to 'family fighting' and to 'noisy' houses where there were 'arguments'. This shows that Town Campers do regard domestic and family violence to be a problem in Town Camps, as it is a problem everywhere, but also shows that it is often the same houses and same families experiencing violence – and this is in keeping with patterns of abuse across all demographics. In several safety mapping sessions Town Campers were able to identify houses where there was consistent fighting and arguments. Town Campers also spoke about how people involved in the fights or the arguments would call upon other members of their community to intervene by calling the police. This shows how domestic and family violence comes to impact upon the lives of the Town Camp as a whole, as Town Campers witness domestic and family violence.

"You got to be smashed up before you can go to the women's shelter. When you get banged up. But otherwise no." [SM27]

"Noise. Argument. They fight [identifying house on the map]." [SM25]

In addition to domestic and family violence, there is also the violence that occurs between families, camps, and communities. Two Town Camps that took part in the safety mapping session raised the inter-camp conflict between them as being a primary safety issue that concerned them. This is because the nature of that violence was large scale and multi-site, often occurring in different parts of Alice Springs and involving numerous families. This type of violence means there are multiple victims and multiple perpetrators. This also feeds into the issue of reprisal violence which was also raised by Town Campers as a safety issue that concerned them. Town Campers were aware that one violent incident could lead to further instances of lateral violence and reprisal violence.

"Most of the problems between [Town Camp 1] and [Town Camp 2], we need to sort that out, between the families here... [Town Camp 1] and [Town Camp 2] fighting. Last night, it happened again, at [local venue]." [SM27]

"It's about the bigger picture, they just think it's just fighting, but if people get stabbed or someone gets murdered, people will come from out bush and family will be coming. What will people say then? We'll be terrified for the rest of our lives." [SM37]

"When kids fight, families fight. We need resolution there." [SM41]

Once more Town Campers proposed solutions for this safety issue. The most commonly offered solutions to violence were around visitor control and engaging with young people. Town Campers also desired an improved response from police both in the amount of time it took them to respond, as well as how they dealt with the incident once they arrived. Town Campers also raised concerns about the lack of intervention on the part of bystanders, and perhaps the bystander approach and similar training for Town Campers could also offer a solution. One Town Camp, in particular, repeatedly reinforced their desire for domestic and family violence training on their Town Camp.

"No one stops the fights, they just stand there and watch them." [SM38]

"Young ones grow up around violence, when you're young it's like glue in your head and you get stuck in it. Do the course, learn about safety, and how to get help." [SM37]

2.3 Road safety

Road safety was another huge safety concern of Town Campers who repeatedly linked their concerns around road safety to the safety of children. They reflected that children often like to play at the parks, on roundabouts, and other open spaces. Children would also walk to each other's houses and move freely about the Town Camps. Participants often said that children felt safe in their Town Camp and that children loved their Town Camp, but they remained concerned for children's safety when they were on the road. Town Campers said people would drive into the camp either without knowing or caring that there were often children on the road. One Town Camp talked about the lack of footpaths and they felt that children would be safer if there were proper footpaths so they would not have to walk on the road.

"Cars speeding around, it's not safe for kids." [SM11]

"It's not good hey? Need a speed bump, not safe for kids to play at the playground. Youngsters not safe here." [SM10]

"Little ones walking on the road." [SM29]

"Too much cars going past. Kids run around the road. It's dangerous with cars." [SM14]

"Kids don't walk on footpaths, they walk on the road, they think the road is safe. Its automatic to walk on the road." [SM41]

The main road safety issues reported by Town Campers in the safety mapping were drink driving and speeding. Again, Town Campers often linked this issue to visitors because they felt the people driving these vehicles were often unaware of other people, particularly children, using these roads. Their main concern was that the cars were driving so fast through the Town Camps that they would hit and seriously injure someone. They also raised back ways and the creation of side roads which people used to come in and out of the Town Camp. These drivers would also use these areas for what participants called 'spinning' or 'doing donuts'. Town Campers often said they believed people came into Town Camps to speed because they wanted to show off their new cars. Many participants however linked the speeding and dangerous driving very clearly to drunks and drink driving.

"Night-time and afternoon, cars driving around and drunks." [SM4]

"I finish work about 5:30-6:00 o'clock, and people are already down there doing donuts." [IS7]

"Cars speeding, drunks on the weekend." [SM9]

"When it comes to the weekends, it's like cars speeding. Most little kids are on bikes, scooters. They use the roads on the weekends. Sometimes when it's quiet, sometimes on the weekends, drunks want to take over the road." [SM27]

"Instead of using the main roads [referring to back roads]." [SM31]

"Be able to walk down the road without fear of a speeding vehicle. People like to exercise but cars speeding. No footpath to walk on. Kids on the roads, there no access to a bike park." [SM41]

"You got cars spinning and spinning around, speeding." [SM5]

Once more Town Campers offered a myriad of solutions to this safety issue, and many of these can be seen illustrated on the maps in **Figure 1**. Many Town Campers expressed a desire for speed bumps as there were either no speed bumps in their Town Camp or the speed bumps were far too low - for example in one Town Camp the speed bumps are lower than their driveways. Town Campers also suggested the use of rocks or barriers to block off open spaces and to be placed along the sides of the roads to prevent the creation of back roads. Town Campers also requested speed signs and warning signs, as well as signs that alerted drivers to the presence of children on the roads. They also suggested constructing footpaths so that children no longer walked on the road. To accompany these safety measures, Town Campers also suggested improved street lighting.

"Rocks on the sides of the roads because people are driving on the sides of the road and spinning." [SM31]

"Children's not safe in the park, because there's a little fence. They should put more rocks around, more rocks around the side roads, and kids just wander around with bikes. My main worry for the kids is cars. Cars and kids." [SM5]

"Lots of cars. Need to put speed bump" [SM1]

"There are the little side roads. We need to get them rocks, and kids will get sore eyes because of the dust, cars spinning around." [SM5]

2.4 Phones

Phones were unanimously raised in all sessions and it was clear that Town Campers regarded pay phones in particular as being crucial to Town Camp safety. Only one participating Town Camp felt that their pay phone was in a safe place and reported that it was in working order. Aside from this one Town Camp, the other participating groups reported that their phones were damaged, inappropriately located, or were in unsafe places. Many Town Campers spoke about the deliberate destruction of these pay phones and the implication was that pay phones had been purposely damaged to prevent their use in calling the police. One participant reported having the phone snatched from their hand when they tried to call the police. Some Town Campers commented that phones were often located far away and where large groups of people would gather, so this means that when Town Campers need to phone for help, they must travel from their homes to the pay phone which also potentially places them at risk. This of course places further obstacles in the way of Town Campers who wish to use the phone to report violence or for any other reason.

"Policemen. Want to ring them, they [other people] come and pull the phone. One phone. [The phones] work when they're new." [SM27]

"Visitors smash the phone." [SM32]

"Yeah, two [phones]. But not working properly. They're in good places, but they're broken. Can't use them to call police or ambulance... No [phones are not in safe places]. There's too many people around there." [SM13]

"We need a pay phone this side." [SM6]

Town Campers considered the location of the phone, as well as the number of phones, to be important to safety, and reiterated that the phone must be regularly serviced. It was evident that Town Campers considered phones and pay phones to be crucial to their safety because they are necessary to call for help. Town Campers reflected that many Town Camp residents do not have mobile phones, nor have access to a mobile phone, nor necessarily the ability to purchase credit for the phone, or even know how to use a mobile phone - this was particularly true for vulnerable groups such as elderly and sick people.

"[Pointing to houses on opposite of community centre] These are family houses, they have phone. Can ring up the police if there's fight going on. Some people, they don't know how to use a phone, or they don't have a phone." [SM3]

“There are some that don’t [have a phone], there was a phone but they cut the wires, and there’s no phone anymore. If the centre’s [phone] is not open, then they don’t have access to a phone. We’re trying to get one outside of the community centre.” [SM37]

Town Campers also spoke about knowing who to call for help. Some Town Campers said that they felt confident in accessing services, but they felt that a lot of other Town Campers, particularly young people, wouldn't know who to call or how to access safety services. Awareness of services and how to access them was raised by several participants who felt that education and training was a crucial component to increasing safety within Town Camps and within Alice Springs in general.

“I know how to access health and safety. It’s a matter of making other people aware and understand where you can get health and safety. Pick up the phone and call services.” [SM41]

Once again Town Campers proposed a range of different solutions to this safety issue. To prevent the phones from being damaged, Town Campers suggested having the phones protected by cages, or housed in a locked phone booth, the key to which was held by a trusted community member. Many Town Campers also suggested placing pay phones at the community centre which were universally considered to be safe places by participating Town Campers. Other suggestions included having designated safety people with safety mobile phones who could be accessed in time of danger and who could call services on behalf of Town Campers. Another suggestion was that there should be charging stations for mobile phones in open areas like parks, and also on light poles within Town Camps so that people could easily charge their mobile phones in order to get help. One participant also suggested the installation of emergency buttons which could allow Town Campers to call for help anonymously.

“There is phone but need a cage to close them.” [SM29]

“Someone with a key to the phone.” [SM27]

“Put it here [indicating on the map, pointing at the park], but only if there’s a fence around it.” [SM19]

“Patrol. Arming our women with mobile phones with access to the services – all the numbers are already stored inside. People can access the women’s in their houses or hubs and they’ll call that safety service for you.” [SM41]

“Somewhere they can charge the phone.” [TWFSG8]

“What would make it safe is safety or emergency buttons. Normal little poles if people don’t have phone, or don’t want to use a phone. It’s unidentified means, the perpetrator doesn’t know. All people can use them.” [SP7]

2.5 Parks and Open Spaces

A final safety issue resoundingly named by participants was parks and open places. Town Campers felt that parks were extremely important for their Town Camp, particularly for young people, but that they needed to be made safer. Children are using the parks on Town Camps at all hours, but no participants felt they were safe. Most Town Campers felt parks were made unsafe by their proximity to busy roads, but also by the cars driving around the parks on the dirt side streets. They also felt that the lack of fences contributed to parks being unsafe, particularly for small children. Town Campers felt that it was extremely important that children be able to make use of parks at all times of the day, and that through the introduction of a few key safety features, parks could be turned into safer places. Internal stakeholders report that, although the Alice Springs Town Council (ASTC) subdivision guidelines state that residents should be able to access a park within 15 minutes walking distance, no Town Camp currently meets this guideline.

“It’s too far for the kids to come to this park [indicating park near community centre].” [SM31]

“That’s [the park] not safe. Dangerous. Cars.” [SM13]

“Children’s not safe in the park, because there’s a little fence. They should put more rocks around, more rocks around the side roads, and kids just wander around with bikes.” [SM5]

Town Campers also spoke about the open spaces on their Town Camps. These spaces were considered to be extremely unsafe by participants, mostly at night but also during the day for different reasons. During the day the open spaces are where people would often do 'spinning' or drive dangerously in their cars. At night, open spaces are where large groups of people could gather to drink and to party. Visitors would also camp in the open spaces in and around Town Camps. Some Town Campers talked about the violence that would sometimes occur in these open spaces, which added extra impetus to making use of these open spaces in a better way. Internal stakeholders report that TCAC continues to hold responsibility for parks and playgrounds on Town Camps, however, they were unsuccessful in their funding submissions to upgrade parks to meet the ASTC subdivision guidelines, which include provision of crime prevention through environmental design. They report that current funding streams are insufficient to deliver this infrastructure.

"They use [the oval] as a recreation park, as a fighting ground." [TWFSG8]

"[Kids] don't use the main roads because there's drunks. So they use the dirt roads, they need the light." [SM31]

"Should have a park in the open area, because lots of little ones coming there, they like playing at that roundabout, and they use the roads [points at toddler walking in]." [SM27]

Once more, Town Campers had the solutions to what they perceived to be the safety issues around parks and open spaces on their Town Camps. To improve the safety of parks, Town Campers suggested the introduction of fences, and emergency buttons so that young people could call for help if they were ever unsafe. To improve the safety of open areas, Town Campers suggested turning these spaces into parks. They also suggested improving the lighting in open areas, particularly along those areas that are now being used as back ways or dirt side streets. These informal side streets are now being used by young people and other members of the community to travel between different areas of the Town Camp, so participants felt that improved lighting along these routes would increase safety. It was obvious that Town Campers valued parks and that these parks are being made use of frequently. Town Campers often felt there could be more parks by converting some of the open spaces into more family friendly environments, but that the design of these parks needed to include safety features. Town Campers also identified where they believed would be the best location for the parks on their Town Camps.

"Need to put a fence around that oval." [TWFSG8]

"They should put a park in that open space." [SM27]

"Put a park in the open space. Lots of kids there, so kids play in the road, kids on bikes." [SM35]

"Kids like to use the dirt roads instead of the main roads, need lights along there – street lights." [SM31]

"Lights there." [SM19]

"Kids feel safe in the park so they play there until late at night but they need better lighting there. Parks are central to all the houses here but need a phone or emergency button in them." [SM41]

The issue of parks and open spaces, as well as that of visitors, violence, road safety, and phones, illustrates that Town Campers are intimately familiar and aware of the safety issues on their Town Camps and that these safety issues are common between all participating Town Camps. It is clear Town Campers know the safety issues just as they know the solutions for them. Town Campers are not only able to identify the safety issues, but are also able to map out solutions and identify alternative locations for facilities to increase Town Camp safety. This is unsurprising as Town Campers are the experts on the issues that affect them and their Town Camp. What follows is the discussion of the safe places on Town Camps and within Alice Springs as identified by Town Campers.

“Community centre. To make it so when you have a President in the camp, the President’s house is a safe place... Safer here but people don’t use this place [community centre] after hours.” [SM41]

“A lot of these people wouldn’t go into town, they go to family, nanna’s, aunties’, uncles’ houses. If it gets out of hand then you can go to another organization, it depends on literacy. I go to the cousins’, or to family, or to community centre.” [SM37]

The other commonly identified safe place was individual houses, as Town Campers often circled their own homes or the homes of family members within the Town Camp. Some participants also identified family members’ homes who lived in urban housing or other parts of Alice Springs. Once again, it seemed to be the people that made these places safe, and participants often talked about being able to go to family members’ houses if they needed to call for help. There were also some safety features identified by Town Campers that made their homes and family members’ homes feel safe. These were: locks, fences, lockable doors and windows, and enclosed yards. Some Town Campers even suggested the installation of crim safe screens in the houses.

“Them houses got fence there.” [SM6]

“No [I don’t feel safe]. In my house. Yeah in my house, that’s the only place.” [SM11]

“Got my own house safety...Your [own] house. Gate and windows... Safe because I don’t drink grog. I live by myself.” [SM13]

“My house.” [SM17]

“Go to a family member’s place.” [SM11]

“Family in town, lock your place up and just go.” [SM2]

“Everywhere around here. We got family here. We can go to them, and the community centre. Other camps, because they’re all mixed, might be unsafe. But for us we can run to any house and feel safe with them if something’s happening. Main place is the centre and your home. No one home? Then you can go to family.” [SM37]

Another issue that was routinely raised was that Town Campers and their young people needed to be aware of where the safe places were. Many participants talked about advertising and the need for there to be identified safe places where people knew that they could access help. Several participants mentioned the ‘safety houses’ and they talked about the little yellow sign that was used to identify these houses. Many saw this advertising not just alerting people to safe areas, but as part of constructing the safety, as they felt it contributed to making that place safe. This may be because they believed people would be less likely to engage in harmful behaviours in designated safe areas.

“Advertise safe areas – street signs. Ensure families know the safe places and people who can assist with calling the police or ambulance at any time, whether in the early morning or the middle of the night. Have safety Awareness programs or workshops.” [SM41]

“Advertised. On the radio and television.” [TWFSG8]

“Some people have them, those little signs that say ‘This is a Safe House’.” [SM5]

Outside of Town Camps, participants identified many safe locations, and these included the women’s shelter, the hospital, and Gap Youth Centre and Brown Street for young people. Participants also mentioned many services which they considered approachable and safe and these are discussed below. Common to these identified safe places within Alice Springs was the presence of security and/or patrols. Also common to them was the presence of approachable and culturally safe staff - these were workers and places that Town Campers trusted and felt safe accessing.

“Hospital is safe. All them security.” [SM6]

“Where there is workers.” [TWFSG9]

3.1 Safe people and services

As previously mentioned, Town Campers were asked if they were ever unsafe where would they go or who would they call. By far the most common response to this question was the police. Town Campers said they would call the police for

help or when there had been a disturbance or fighting. The researcher followed these comments up by asking Town Campers if they were happy to call the police or if they felt okay calling the police, to which participants responded with 'yes'. It has been previously reported that there was often a reluctance by Town Campers to report and engage with police prior to and since the implementation of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (Brown, 2014). This represents a significant attitude change in that Town Campers are now expecting and demanding a service from police, and they often demand this service in the face of conflict and disagreement. However, many Town Campers were not happy with the response by police, they felt that police took too long to respond to their phone calls and that often police did a drive through of Town Camps without stopping to move along groups of people. Many participants also felt there could be better relationships between police and Town Campers, and that this would help police to identify visitors from local residents and encourage them to move groups of visitors along. However, Town Campers are making use of police service, and participants feel the police station is a safe place and that police officers are usually safe people. The Fire and Ambulance services were also routinely mentioned as safe services who could be called upon for help.

"Call the police. If there's something happening. Fighting or whatever." [SM9]

"The police." [SM31]

"Police come really late." [SM29]

"Lock the doors and windows. Ring the police when the drunks fight." [SM13]

"Call the police from a safe place." [SM16]

"Some people come to us for help, to call the police, or the ambulance, this is a safe place." [SM5]

Town Campers also identified other local services as being safe people and safe services. Multiple Town Camps identified Tangentyere Council and specifically TWFSG as safe people who could be called upon when they felt unsafe. However, opinion was split over the effectiveness of Night Patrol. Whilst some participants felt Night Patrol was 'doing a good job', others were critical of Night Patrol who they felt could be more proactive and conduct more patrols. These criticisms seemed to be based on a misunderstanding about the role of Night Patrol and what their powers are – some participants, for example, thought it was Night Patrol's job to control visitors. A similar criticism was leveled at community housing safety officers. Other safe services identified in the safety mapping included the women's shelter, NPY women's council, CAAPU, Aboriginal hostels, and Aboriginal legal services. Gap Youth Centre and Brown Street were also identified as safe services for young people.

"Ring the police, women's shelter." [SM13]

"Talk to someone, women's safety group. Legal aid." [SM5]

"Women's safety group. Speak to them. Women's legal service, someone outside the camps you're knowing." [SM37]

"DV Unit – call them to come and act responsibly. Police in general. Ambulance. Hospital. After hours lawyers. NT Families." [SM41]

What was common between all these identified services is that participants seemed to feel that these services and people were reliable and approachable. There was also the sense that workers at these places were culturally safe for Aboriginal people. However, participants again raised the ongoing issue of literacy and awareness - Town Campers need to know what and where the services are and how to access them.

"Access is a lot of problems - parents or grandparents find it difficult to access support when young fellas get arrested. How do they get to the lock up? Are there any processes for them to follow? Our kids get picked up without doing anything wrong and get caught or harassed by the police. Even when they getting to a safe place. They get pulled up halfway." [SM41]

4. What is needed to increase safety on Town Camps.

In all the safety mapping sessions Town Campers made it clear what they felt was needed to increase safety in Town Camps. The researcher also explicitly asked about this in a number of safety mapping sessions in response to many of the comments that Town Campers had made. Their responses fall into three broad categories: improved facilities and infrastructure; education and training for Town Campers; and improved relationships with services and awareness.

Throughout the safety mapping the most commonly suggested improvements were to do with improved infrastructure. It was apparent that Town Campers thought that the problems to do with road safety, such as speeding, could be solved with improved infrastructure including speed bumps and proper signage. Town Campers also felt that places like parks and open spaces could be made safer if proper fencing and barriers (often referred to as rocks) were installed. Some of these improvements have been made in some Town Camps, including the instalment of repurposed concrete slabs to block informal side roads, which was an initiative proposed by Tangentyere Design with students from the University of Newcastle, in consultation with residents of Karnte Camp. Town Campers felt that installing these features in all Town Camps would improve road safety and make Town Camps safer for young people. Participants also talked about ensuring there were working payphones so that Town Campers could call for help. Finally, participants also talked about how improved and increased lighting, especially in open areas, could improve safety at night. All the safety features mentioned by Town Campers are basic and clearly should already be in place. It was clear that Town Campers were frustrated by having to continually ask for these basic safety features to be installed. Internal stakeholders report that the Town Camps have not achieved the level of amenity outlined by the ASTC subdivision guidelines. They report that TCAC has sought additional funding for playground infrastructure and continues to resource insurance; cyclical maintenance; and municipal services. However, currently the Town Camps still do not meet the standards set by the ASTC guidelines. Town Campers felt that improved infrastructure would not only curb dangerous behaviours but would increase safety for the Town Camp as a whole.

“At that other camp we need a speed bump, make them slow down so they can’t speed. I can’t let my little one to go to camp.” [SM9]

“Speed bumps.” [SM27]

“Rocks on the sides of the roads because people are driving on the sides of the road and spinning.” [SM31]

“Signs to slow down.” [SM29]

“Playground not safe for kids, no fence.” [SM20]

“They [referring to other Town Camps] got high fence. Talking about the speed bumps over and over again, and nothing is happening.” SM13]

“[Pointing at map, indicating the barren land that surrounds bushland] Need to clean with tractor, too much grass, visitors camp there.” [SM19]

“Inside the yard. They should put the telephone here.” [SM6]

“We need more lighting, more lights around. A lot of these lights are out and it’s really dark... We need better speed bumps. The gutters here are bigger than the speed bumps, the driveways here are bigger than the speed bumps.” [SM37]

“They have card ones [payphones], you need coins [operated payphones].” [SM38]

Participants also felt that safety education and training would improve safety on Town Camps. Town Campers talked about specialist training in domestic and family violence, but they also talked about having safety workshops where participants could learn about the different services on offer and how to access them. Basic first aid could also improve Town Camp safety. Participating Town Campers felt that it was important that people be educated to identify safety risks, and also how

to respond to different situations. Participants were advocating for a particular type of literacy: knowing what the services are, how to access them, and also knowing they have the right to make use of these services.

"It's a matter of making other people aware and understand where you can get health and safety. Pick up the phone and call services. Other people don't know. Services have to be available." [SM41]

"Education, and identifying bad behaviours." [SP7]

"We was trying to have the safety thing here because me and my sisters completed the safety training but we didn't end up joining. Some young girls don't know, but the course opens your mind... Young ones don't really know about safety and their right to safety. Do the course, it'll open your mind and change... Do the course, learn about safety, and how to get help." [SM37]

Town Campers also felt that improved relationships with services, especially police, would improve the safety on Town Camps. These improved relationships would also help to increase awareness amongst Town Campers of what safety services were available and how they can be accessed. Participating Town Campers also believe that improved relationships with police and services would also help to curb visitor influx and could positively contribute to visitor management. The strengthening of these relationships would mean that police and other services would know who lived on the Town Camp, and this could then address the commonly made complaints that visitors were able to cause trouble or bring their conflicts into Town Camps without fear of being moved on. Improved relationships could also increase Town Campers' feelings of safety in that they could have faith and confidence in services, especially police, who they felt were sometimes taking too long to respond to reports. It was clear that Town Campers desired a partnership with police and other services to improve Town Camp safety.

"We need more security cruising up and down... Some way to keep people out of here that don't live here." [SM11]

"We need a better relationship with affordable housing mob." [IS9]

"We need more security and patrols." [SM9]

"Need more people who know how to speak to different groups, who can speak language." [SM10]

"Get our own patrols, own women's group. Main priority is community safety and safety of our kids. Our priority is for our camp. Have a strong women's patrol." [SM41]

"We have problems with the police but we spoke to them. Police dropping off people who don't live here, don't even know people who live here. We told them not to drop people off who don't live here, we spoke about it at the AGM meeting. Police need to get out and ask people if they live here, it creates problems when they drop people off, yelling, and we don't even know who they are." [SM37]

"When you call the police, they don't come for hours, and everyone is gone." [SM38]

"Whole community needs to come up with programs for old people, like take them to yoga, once or twice a week." [SP7]

Conclusion

The safety mapping exercise offered an inclusive and culturally appropriate way for Town Campers to share their views about Town Camp safety. Although the findings represent the views of only a small number of participants, they point to common safety issues on Town Camps as perceived by Town Campers. The main safety issues identified by Town Campers participating in the safety mapping were: visitors, violence, road safety, phones, and parks and open spaces. Town Campers were able to offer solutions to all of these safety issues. It is clear that Town Campers had already identified the safety issues impacting on their Town Camp, they are aware and invested in the safety of their Town Camp, and they have the solutions, as they are the experts on the problems that affect them. It was clear in safety mapping sessions that there was a level of frustration about not being listened to by council or government, or by those in positions of power to address these safety problems which Town Campers considered obvious. Infrastructure issues on Town Camps are complex and driven by confusion over which government departments or local government bodies are responsible for the operation and maintenance of certain provisions and services on Town Camps. Infrastructure upgrades are also inhibited by inadequate funding. Resolving these issues would go a long way in helping to improve infrastructure on Town Camps.

The safe places identified by Town Campers showed that it was not necessarily about bricks and mortar but more about people and relationships to make places safe. Town Campers readily identified community centres, family homes, police, and local services as being places of safety. By identifying the safe places and what makes them safe, these safety features can hopefully be replicated elsewhere to improve Town Camp safety. Town Campers know that improved and maintained basic infrastructure, safety education and training, as well as improved relationships and awareness with services will improve Town Camp safety. Clearly, Town Camp safety, especially for children, is vitally important to Town Campers and they already have the solutions to the safety issues that affect them.

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