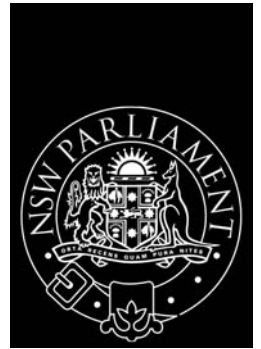


PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES



Committee on Children and Young People
INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT

New South Wales Parliamentary Library cataloguing-in-publication data:

New South Wales. Parliament. Legislative Assembly. Committee on Children and Young People.

Inquiry into children, young people and the built environment / Parliament of New South Wales, Committee on Children and Young People. [Sydney, N.S.W.] : the Committee, 2006. ? p.135; 30 cm. (Report; no.8/53)

Chair: Barbara Perry.

"October 2006".

ISBN 1921012412

1. City planning—New South Wales
2. Children—New South Wales.
3. Youth—New South Wales.
 - I. Title
 - II. Perry, Barbara.
 - III. Series: New South Wales. Parliament. Legislative Assembly. Committee on Children and Young People. Report ; no.53/8

307.76 (DDC)

Table of Contents

Membership & Staff	v
Terms of Reference	vii
Chairman’s Foreword	ix
List of Recommendations.....	xi
Executive Summary	xv
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE INQUIRY	1
CHAPTER 2: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT – PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS	11
CHAPTER 3: CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT	21
CHAPTER 4: CREATING CHILD- AND YOUTH-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS	45
CHAPTER 5: BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	67
APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SUBMISSIONS	69
APPENDIX 2: LIST OF WITNESSES.....	71
APPENDIX 3: SITE VISITS.....	73
APPENDIX 4: ISSUES PAPERS	75
APPENDIX 5: COMMITTEE MINUTES.....	103

Membership & Staff

Chairman	Mrs Barbara Perry MP, Member for Auburn
Members	<p>Ms Jan Burnswoods MLC (Vice Chairman)</p> <p>The Hon Kayee Griffin MLC</p> <p>Ms Sylvia Hale MLC</p> <p>The Hon Melinda Pavey MLC</p> <p>The Hon Penny Sharpe MLC</p> <p>Mr John Bartlett MP, Member for Port Stephens</p> <p>Mr Stephen Cansdell MP, Member for Clarence</p> <p>Mr Michael Daley MP, Member for Maroubra</p> <p>Mrs Judy Hopwood MP, Member for Hornsby</p> <p>Ms Virginia Judge MP, Member for Strathfield</p>
Staff	<p>Helen Minnican, Committee Manager</p> <p>Pru Sheaves, Senior Committee Officer</p> <p>Hilary Parker, Committee Officer</p> <p>Jenny North, Assistant Committee Officer</p>
Contact Details	<p>Committee on Children and Young People</p> <p>Parliament House</p> <p>Macquarie Street</p> <p>Sydney NSW 2000</p>
Telephone	02 9230 2737
Facsimile	02 9230 3052
E-mail	childrenscommittee@parliament.nsw.gov.au
URL	www.parliament.nsw.gov.au

Terms of Reference

The Committee resolved on 26 May 2005 to conduct an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

For the purpose of performing its statutory functions under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* in relation to the Commission, the Committee is to inquire into:

1. trends, changes and issues for children and young people in the development, implementation and coordination of policy, design and planning for the built environment;
2. the mechanisms available for monitoring and reporting on planning processes and decisions concerning the built environment, as they relate to and impact upon children and young people;
3. strategies to ensure that built environment issues affecting children and young people are readily identified and receive coordinated attention across portfolios and different levels of government;
4. the role of the Commission for Children and Young People in giving input to the Government and non-Government sectors on inclusive and integrated planning and policy-making for children and young people in the built environment;
5. any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee;

and report to both Houses of Parliament on the inquiry.

Chairman's Foreword

I am pleased to table this important report on children, young people and the built environment. Consistent with statements made by witnesses before the Committee, I believe this inquiry is the first of its kind in Australia. By conducting this inquiry, it is hoped that not only will there be developments that enhance the built environment for children and young people in New South Wales, but that the findings contained in the report will help inform the wider debate within Australia and internationally on child- and youth-friendly environments.

The built environment plays an integral part in child and adolescent development. Exciting, adventurous play spaces, carefully considered childcare centres, neighbourhood walkways and cycleways, stimulating learning environments, readily accessible public transport, strong, vibrant civic spaces and protected natural environments contribute to personal growth, learning and the creation of strong communities. Developing child- and youth-friendly environments is not only beneficial for children and young people, but for all communities in New South Wales.

The built environment continues to be transformed. Population growth, urbanisation, reliance on the motor vehicle, planning reforms and liability concerns affect and influence the built environment across the State. Balancing the needs of children and young people with those of other members of the community is a difficult, but important task. Failure to recognise the diverse needs of children and young people can have deleterious consequences. Physical environmental features are a factor in the rising rates of overweight and obese children; poorly built childcare facilities and schools have direct consequences for learning and behaviour; diminishing public space and play spaces inhibits development of motor skills and social interaction.

Working toward child- and youth-friendly environments is the responsibility of many. The built environment is the sum of many disciplines, government agencies and private companies. Ways forward include: teaching architects and planners about ways to involve children and young people in master planning; disseminating information about good practice examples of developments which reflect the needs of children and young people; devising tools to assist consent authorities regulate development; and working with the development industry to quantify the financial costs and benefits of child- and youth-friendly environments. These directions require significant commitment from different sectors with strong advocacy and guidance, the latter being a role that the NSW Commission for Children and Young People is well-equipped to play.

The report on this inquiry proposes an enhanced leadership role for the Commission in respect of policy development and other projects relating to children, young people and the built environment. In recognition of the level of commitment that will be required of the Commission in fostering and promoting the recommendations in this report, consideration should be given to the necessity to adjust the Commission's funding levels accordingly.

I hope that this inquiry contributes to the dialogue about child- and youth-friendly environments and that the activities of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People enhance our understanding of effective practice and result in measurable improvements for children, young people, their families and the wider community of New South Wales.

Chairman's Foreword

I would like to thank all the individuals, government agencies and other organisations who made submissions to the inquiry, and also those who presented evidence during public hearings. These sources of information were invaluable to the Committee during its deliberations.

I would also like to thank the representatives of organisations in Sydney and Brisbane who hosted Committee Members on site visits, in particular, Dr Phil Crane, who facilitated a number of meetings with community representatives during the Brisbane site visit, and the executive and members of *2050* who welcomed the Committee to their national conference. Insights gained during these activities significantly shaped Committee Members' understanding of relevant issues. The Committee's inquiry also benefited from the perspectives of children and young people given during site visits in various Sydney locations and, on behalf of the Committee I would like to thank the young members of Mission Australia's SWYPE group at Liverpool, Bankstown PCYC, and Misses Rebecca Hart and Mareta Varu from the Burnside Project, for sharing their views with the Committee.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Members of the Committee for their contributions to the inquiry and deliberations on the report. The Committee was assisted by the consultant to the inquiry, Mr Garner Clancey, and the staff of the Secretariat.

Barbara Perry MP
Chairman

List of Recommendations

Having concluded the Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, the New South Wales Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People makes the following recommendations (mostly found in Chapters 3 & 4), which give due consideration to the jurisdiction of the Committee as provided in Section 28 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* and the inter-disciplinary nature of the built environment:

Recommendation 1 (pp.64-65)

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People ('the Commission') seek to establish an inter-agency Steering Committee on Children, Young People and the Built Environment, with the role to consider and promote key projects and initiatives, as recommended in this report. The membership of the Steering Committee should comprise representatives of the following agencies:

- Department of Local Government
- Local Government and Shires Association
- Department of Community Services
- Department of Planning
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Property Council of Australia
- NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity
- NSW Disability Council of NSW
- Community Relations Commission
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Relevant tertiary institutions offering built environment courses (including but not limited to Sydney University, University of NSW, University of Technology Sydney)
- A youth representative (e.g. from the Government's Youth Advisory Council or the Young People's Reference Group of the Commission for Children and Young People).

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People chair the proposed Steering Committee and be responsible for reporting on the Committee's activities through current reporting mechanisms.

Recommendation 2 (p.65)

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People develop a proposal for a seminar series on children, young people and the built environment to promote a strategy across different sectors, departments and levels of government aimed at coordinating efforts to progress the projects and initiatives identified in this report, and other activities identified as priorities.

List of Recommendations

The seminars should aim to meet the needs of an inter-disciplinary audience, but also cater directly for the various disciplines within the built environment (for example, representatives from local government; planners; architects and the development industry).

The NSW Commission of Children and Young People promote the TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit to the built environment professions, including in preparation for the seminar series, and that the Young Visions Toolkit project by NAPCAN and Streetwise Communications also be considered as a potential resource for built environment professionals.

Recommendation 3

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People consider coordinating and promoting the following projects or initiatives identified by the Committee as a result of its inquiry, utilising the mechanism of the Steering Committee where consultation and negotiation is necessary in respect of each project or initiative:

Design, planning and consultation

- (a) involve the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity on relevant inter-agency forums, whereby the expertise gained by the Centre will inform developments associated with creating child- and youth-friendly environments. (p.34)
- (b) request the Minister for Planning consider a review by the Department of Planning of the effectiveness of the *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind* and, pending the outcome of a review, that the currency of the publication be enhanced and the publication be re-launched. (p.41)
- (c) consult with the Minister for Planning on the need for the Department of Planning to review and update the Department's *Child-friendly Environments* publication, which was re-issued in 1999 (although substantive elements of the document were first written for a 1981 publication). (p.61)
- (d) consult with the Growth Centres Commission about the possibilities for taking the needs of children and young people into account in the development of Sydney's new growth areas. (p.59)
- (e) explore opportunities to develop indicators of a 'child-friendly' community, which could be incorporated into the Department of Planning's tools for assessing land use plans. (p.51)
- (f) consult with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Planning Institute of Australia on the production of a new publication to promote children and young people's participation in the development of their environments. (p.58)
- (g) consult with the Minister for Education about considering a review by the NSW Department of Education of policies associated with the utilisation of school sporting and recreational facilities after school hours and the impact of these policies on children and young people. (p.37)

Early childhood and physical environments

- (h) undertake research into the factors that determine or contribute to positive play and recreational spaces for children and young people, and the economic costs and benefits of providing such spaces. (p.35)
- (i) consult with the Minister for Community Services on the need for the Department of Community Services to review the adequacy of the *Children's*

Services Regulation 2004 and current design guidelines issued by the Department of Community Services, including the 'Best Practice Guidelines for Early Childhood and Physical Environments'. (p.31)

- (j) Consult with Minister for Local Government about gathering together examples of good playground and recreational developments for dissemination to all councils. (p.19)

Housing

- (k) review the adequacy of current building standards in relation to noise insulation and assess the trend towards child-free housing developments. (p.24)
- (l) review the progress of the Department of Housing's Young People's Housing Access Strategy. (p.26)
- (m) monitor the consequences of recent housing policies on children and young people across New South Wales. (p.26)

Education

- (n) consult with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Planning Institute of Australia and the Property Council of Australia on the feasibility of establishing specific awards for developments reflecting the principles of child and youth-friendly environments. (p.63)
- (o) investigate with universities offering architecture and planning degrees the inclusion of a curriculum component or module on how to involve children and young people in planning. (p.63)
- (p) review documentation and multi-media kits produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (London, England) in relation to children, young people and the built environment and consider their relevance for curriculum development in New South Wales. (p.61)
- (q) Promote the outcomes of the project associated with security guard training, in consultation with the Commission for Community Relations. (p.41)

Monitoring

- (r) investigate the development of a set of indicators to be utilised by the Commissioner for Children and Young People to demonstrate the impact of the built environment on children and young people in NSW over time. (p.60)

Recommendation 4 (p.51)

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People explore the possibility of partnering with a local council to investigate how local government can harness its capacity to create more child-friendly environments. This partnership should include consideration of development of DCPs on children's services, availability of fast food outlets and provision of playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities. Attention to the engagement of children and young people in master planning and reviewing relevant development applications should also be considered.

Recommendation 5 (p.51)

The Minister for Planning consider the desirability of amending the NSW planning legislation or instruments to incorporate child-friendly planning principles, where appropriate, in consultation with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People.

Recommendation 6 (p.65)

Funding for the NSW Commission for Children and Young People be reviewed to ensure that the Commission is adequately resourced to carry out the responsibilities outlined in the recommendations above, in addition to its current work.

Executive Summary

The importance of the built environment to children and young people is often represented by the fond memories adults have of childhood experiences, such as games in backyards, adventures in local neighbourhoods, unsupervised bicycle trips, movie sessions and the meeting of friends in public places. These memories, while perhaps open to idealisation, reflect only a small part of the role played by the built (and natural) environment in childhood and adolescence.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the issues that led to this inquiry. Various trends ultimately contributed to the focus of the inquiry, including a greater policy and empirical focus on the needs of children and young people in recent decades. This greater focus culminated in the ratification by Australia of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990. The Convention contains 54 articles which set out a comprehensive framework for how governments should seek to protect the rights of children and promote positive development and well-being. Specific articles promote participation of children in decision-making, and highlight the right to peaceful assembly and the right to leisure and recreation (amongst others). The Convention has given greater recognition to the need for sustainable development, has increased understanding of the impact of the built environment on children and young people, and has contributed to the Child Friendly Cities movement. This movement has spawned numerous initiatives, including the establishment of the International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities, which is an organisation that advocates ways to involve children and young people in decisions regarding the built environment.

Closer to home, the establishment of the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) in June 1999 provided a voice for the 25 per cent of the State's population who are children and young people (i.e. under the age of 18 years). The Commission has been active in promoting participation of children and young people, and in advocating across government and non-government portfolios for greater consideration of the needs of children and young people. The Commission's research highlights the challenges facing children and young people today, including issues associated with the built environment.

The Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People was established in August 2000. This Committee has responsibility for overseeing the work of the Commission and has wide-ranging functions under s.28 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*. In 2005 the Committee resolved to conduct an Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. This inquiry received submissions from individuals and agencies and heard from a number of witnesses regarding their views of children, young people and the built environment. It also conducted site visits to Brisbane and parts of western Sydney (details attached at Appendices 1 & 3).

Chapter 2 provides some definitional clarity to the concept of the built environment. It includes (amongst other things) our homes, workplaces, recreational facilities, transport infrastructure and aspects of the natural environment. The diversity of structures, spaces and facilities included in the built environment demonstrates its importance in many facets of life.

Despite the high standard of living and the quality of built environments enjoyed by many children and young people in New South Wales, there are concerns that future generations of children and young people will not be so lucky. Population growth, urbanisation, environmental degradation, reliance on motor vehicles, fear of strangers and the threat of public liability claims are just some of the factors shaping our built environment. With the population ageing, there is also the risk that the built environment needs of children and young people will be overlooked and receive inadequate attention.

Chapter 3 focuses on the relationship between children, young people and the built environment and commences with a brief consideration of child and adolescent development. Understanding some of the basic developmental tasks of children and young people is central to understanding the importance of the built environment. For example, the development of gross and fine motor skills will be assisted by adventurous, stimulating play spaces; cognitive development is promoted through play and experimentation and socialisation occurs within public spaces. Consequently, it can be argued that child and adolescent development is intimately connected with the built environment.

Already the consequences of changes to the built, natural and social environments inhabited by children and young people have been alarming. Australia now stands as second only to the United States of America in child overweight and obesity statistics. Rates of depression and mental illness continue to increase and child abuse reports continue to climb. Despite the general wealth of the country and the State, there is evidence that children and young people are not necessarily faring well. The built environment is one of the many contributors to these outcomes.

Children and young people invariably spend more time in certain places and Chapter 3 provides detailed consideration as to how some of these significant locations impact on children and young people. Specifically, attention is given to the home, childcare facilities, recreational spaces, educational facilities and public spaces. Each location assumes a particular significance in the lives of children and young people.

Chapter 4 provides a framework for considering how child- and youth-friendly environments can be created. Firstly, consideration is given to regulation of the built environment. A complex array of national building codes, state and local regulations and recommended design guidelines currently controls development. Aspects of these regulations have been reformed in recent times, with the expressed goal of reducing bureaucracy and improving efficiency. The potential consequences of these reforms are considered, as are suggestions about how the needs of children and young people could be elevated in regulating the built environment.

Secondly, planning processes are reviewed. This review highlights the importance of participatory strategies, in which children and young people are included and involved in critical decisions, including master planning processes. Strategies adopted by the Department of Housing and Wollongong City Council are utilised to demonstrate how children and young people can be effectively engaged in planning processes for diverse developments.

Thirdly, attention is given to design guidelines. Built environment professionals can be assisted to better recognise the importance of the built environment to children and young people and how to better create child- and youth-friendly environments through the use of

design guidelines. While New South Wales currently has a small number of design guidelines to help guide and/or inform the development of childcare facilities and public spaces, there is scope to emulate the work of international organisations in this area.

Finally, brief attention is given to training and rewarding built environment professionals. The provision of tertiary education for built environment professions will be one way to work toward ongoing sustainable improvement in this area. Rewarding examples of developments that are child- and youth-friendly will also go some way to providing the necessary profile for these issues to gain traction.

This chapter also outlines the mechanisms by which the Committee considers the initiatives and projects proposed in the report can be brought forward so that there is a momentum and continued focus on children, young people and the built environment. The NSW Commission for Children and Young People will play a critical leadership role in this regard: chairing negotiations and consultations with key stakeholders; providing strong advocacy and guidance; and coordinating the efforts of stakeholders across sectors and disciplines. The enhanced role proposed for the Commission in respect of policy development and other projects relating to children, young people and the built environment requires consideration of the Commission's current funding levels to ensure its capacity to undertake the role envisaged by the Committee, in addition to its existing functions.

Most of the recommendations made by the Committee are contained within Chapters 3 and 4 of the report.

Chapter 1: Background to the Inquiry

1.1 This chapter contains definitions of children and young people and a brief analysis of some characteristics of children and young people in New South Wales. Consideration is then given to trends that have culminated in the Child Friendly Cities movement. These trends include greater recognition of the rights of children, increased understanding of the importance of sustainable development and growing evidence of the impact of the built environment on health and well-being. The following is not an exhaustive chronology of events and trends, but rather a summary of key pertinent developments.

1.2 **Defining Children and Young People**

1.2.1 Defining exactly whom the term ‘children’ and ‘young people’ covers is a necessary starting point. Different definitions are adopted by different organisations and for different purposes. Consequently, some clarity at the outset is necessary.

1.2.2 For the purposes of this inquiry, children and young people under the age of 18 are the specific focus. This is consistent with definitions within the legislation governing the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. Given that the focus of the Committee on Children and Young People is on the work of the Commission, the same definitions have been adopted for this inquiry.

1.2.3 While the terms ‘children’ and ‘young people’ will be used in this report to denote those persons under the age of 18 years, many of the submissions received and the witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee did not necessarily adopt a similar definition. For example, some organisations adopted the definition of young people that covers persons from 12 to 24 years of age. Consequently, some discretion is required when considering the views of organisations and individuals who adopted different age parameters for children and young people to those used by the Committee.

1.2.4 Furthermore, numerous submissions reinforced the heterogeneity of children and young people. Submissions from the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, the Disability Council of NSW and the Community Relations Commission (amongst others), highlight issues pertaining to specific groups of children and young people. While attention is given to children and young people more generally in this inquiry, it is acknowledged that young Indigenous people, children and young people with disabilities, children and young people from culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and young gay, lesbian and transgender people have diverse experiences and needs in relation to the built environment.

1.3 **Children and Young People in New South Wales**

1.3.1 The most recent data available at this time is taken from the 2001 Census. From this Census data, it is possible to describe various characteristics of children and young people in New South Wales. The following information provides some insight into the number of children and young people and some of the factors affecting their lives.

Background to the Inquiry

- There were 1 578 283 children and young people under the age of 18 living in NSW in 2001. They made up 25 per cent of the NSW population and there were slightly higher numbers of boys (809 923) than girls (768 360).
- There were 55 970 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in NSW in 2001. This represented 3.5 per cent of the total 0-17 year population, whereas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people constituted 1.9 per cent of the total NSW population.
- Cultural and linguistic diversity can be expressed in various ways, including country of birth and language spoken at home. Available data suggests that 84.1 per cent of children 0-17 years were born in Australia and 78.1 per cent speak English only. Small percentages of children in NSW were born in Oceania (apart from Australia – 1.3%), North East Asia (1.3%), South East Asia (1.1%), North West Europe (0.8%) and Southern and Central Asia (0.7%).¹
- According to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's submission, "69 per cent of these children and young people live in major cities and 31 per cent live in regional and remote areas".²
- Of those children and young people under 15 years, 7 per cent have a disability resulting in activity restriction (relating to communication, mobility, self-care, schooling or employment).³

1.4 Rights of the Child

1.4.1 The position of children and young people in society is constantly evolving. It was not that many years ago that children were treated similarly to adults. Child labour was challenged and largely abolished in industrial societies in the nineteenth century. The provision of compulsory education, the separation of treatment of adult and juvenile offenders, the creation of legal protections against abuse (including capital and corporal punishment), and the prohibition of the involvement of children in armed conflict are all recent historical developments. More sophisticated scientific research has provided more detailed understanding of childhood development, illustrating the importance of parent-child bonding and the long-term effects of positive parenting practices and stimulating environments. In so doing, there has generally been greater recognition of the importance of childhood and child development. Rather than viewing children as small adults or future adults, there is increased recognition of the importance of children within and of themselves.

1.4.2 The increased attention to and understanding of children has been suggested by some as an indicator of a momentous change in human society. One children's advocate, Ellen Key, has proclaimed that the twentieth century was the 'Century of the Child', in recognition of the advances and developments for children during this period.⁴ A feature of this 'Century of the Child' was the development of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). The Convention, declared on 2

¹ This data have been taken from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Kids' Stats website - <http://www.kidsstats.kids.nsw.gov.au/index.aspx> accessed on 5 August 2006.

² Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.3.

³ Submission No.35, Disability Council of NSW, p.4.

⁴ As cited in, Chawla, L. (2002) 'Cities for Human Development', in Chawla, L. (ed.) *Growing Up in an Urbanising World*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organisation and Earthscan Publications LTD, United Kingdom, p.26.

September 1990, provides an important context for this inquiry. The Convention, is a “comprehensive listing of the obligations the States are prepared to recognise towards the child ... the whole thrust of the Convention is to emphasise the inter-connected and mutually-reinforcing nature of all rights in ensuring what UNICEF terms the ‘survival and development’ of children”.⁵

1.4.3 Australia is one of the 191 countries that ratified the Convention by 2002.⁶ As one of the signatories to the Convention, Australia is committed to its 54 articles. Australia also “commits itself to make the Convention widely known to its citizens – adults and children alike”.⁷

1.4.4 With respect to the 54 articles contained in the Convention, it is worth noting that there are specific articles that are closely aligned with issues relevant to the Committee’s inquiry. These are:

- Article 2 – non-discrimination
- Article 3 – best interests of the child
- Article 6 – the right to life and maximum development
- Article 12 – respecting the views of the child (participation)
- Article 15 – the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly
- Article 27 – the right to a standard of living adequate for the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development
- Article 31 – the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities, and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

1.4.5 The movement toward and eventual creation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child reflects growing understanding of the importance of childhood and adolescence. Striving to accomplish the spirit of the articles of the Convention provides the basis for a healthy, vibrant democratic society. As Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations notes,

No one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death.⁸

1.5 Sustainable Development

1.5.1 The international community has long been interested in assessing and quantifying the impact of human existence on the planet. Clearly, much has been written, particularly in recent decades, about the negative impact of human endeavour on the environment.

⁵ Cantwell, N. (1995) ‘United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Introduction’, *Rights of the Child*, Defence for Children International, Switzerland.

⁶ Bridgman, R. (2004) ‘Child-Friendly Cities: Canadian Perspective’, *Children Youth and Environment*, 14 (2).

⁷ Chawla, L. (2002) ‘Cities for Human Development’, in Chawla, L. (ed.) *Growing Up in an Urbanising World*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organisation and Earthscan Publications LTD, United Kingdom, p.26.

⁸ United Nations (2003) *World Youth Report 2003*, United Nations, p.271.

1.5.2 Chawla reveals the impact of economic development:

... the burning of fossil fuels has increased almost fivefold since 1950, the world's marine catch fourfold and the consumption of fresh water twofold since 1960.⁹

1.5.3 Professor Brendan Gleeson draws parallels between economic development and ecological damage. He couches his analysis in terms of environmental debts that are mounting as the priorities of economic development remain paramount. According to Professor Gleeson:

Relentless depletion of the energy stocks that have fuelled growth for two centuries has brought us to the 'end of the age of oil'. Further, the dependency on oil and other non-renewable energy sources has accumulated ecological debts – notably, stored atmospheric carbon emission – which soon must be acquitted.¹⁰

1.5.4 Concern about the nature of these ecological debts and the impact that they will have on future generations has been the centre of attention from the international community, resulting in a focus on sustainable development. The World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) developed a definition of sustainable development:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.¹¹

1.5.5 A commitment to sustainable development has been echoed in numerous international and national agendas. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro 1992 acknowledged the planet's limits and extended the definition of development to include the protection of the environment. Agenda 21, the plan of action endorsed by the governments involved in UNCED, identified the important role of children and young people in making the vision a reality. The Rio +10 Conference in Johannesburg in 2002 re-affirmed commitments to these important goals.

1.5.6 While minimising the human ecological footprint is clearly a challenge confronting the planet, it is also a significant element in discussions about child-friendly cities and environments. The pursuit of child-friendly cities without attention to ecological considerations will undermine the efficacy of such efforts. It is the view of 2050 - Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment that:

Sustainability is implicitly about passing onto subsequent generations a quality of life that is as good as, or better than the departing generation's experience. Therefore gaining an understanding of the built environment issues facing the next generation, who are today's

⁹ Chawla, L. (2002) 'Cities for Human Development', in Chawla, L. (ed.) *Growing Up in an Urbanising World*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organisation and Earthscan Publications LTD, United Kingdom, p.17.

¹⁰ Gleeson, B. (2006) *Australian Heartlands: Making Space for Hope in the Suburbs*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, p.132.

¹¹ As cited in Submission No.45, 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment, p.3.

children and young people, is crucial for a better appreciation of what sustainability is, and what the creation of a more sustainable Australia might look like.¹²

1.6 Child Friendly Cities Movement

1.6.1 The Child Friendly Cities movement has evolved out of some of the issues identified in the preceding pages, in particular: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, increased attempts to pursue sustainable development and reduce ecological damage, and growing recognition of the importance of the built environment in promoting health and positive well-being among children and young people.

1.6.2 The following significant events, coupled with the above trends, have resulted in the Child Friendly Cities movement:

- 1992 – Mayors Defenders of Children initiative launched in Dakar, Senegal, as a way of involving municipal authorities in implementing child rights;
- 1993 – The General Conference of UNESCO established the UNESCO MOST Programme (Management of Social Transformations). The Growing Up in Cities project (coordinated by UNESCO MOST) has provided examples of where children and young people have contributed to improving urban environments.
- 1996 – The UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, in Istanbul stressed that the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy society and that child-friendly cities are also cities that are better for all age groups;
- 2000 - The International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities was formed;
- 2002 – The UN Special Session on Children highlighted the role of mayors and local governments in achieving children’s rights at the local level.

1.6.3 The concept of child-friendly cities “has been developed to ensure that city governments consistently make decisions in the best interests of children, and that cities are places where children’s rights to a healthy, caring, protective, educative, stimulating, non-discriminating, inclusive, culturally rich environment are addressed”.¹³ Reflecting the realities of urban environments, the “concept of a child-friendly city is not based on an ideal end state or standard model”.¹⁴

1.6.4 According to UNICEF, a child-friendly city is actively engaged in fulfilling the right of **every** citizen to:

- Influence decisions about their city;
- Express their opinions on the city they want;
- Participate in family, community and social life;
- Gain access to basic services such as health care, education and shelter;
- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation;
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;

¹² Submission No.45, 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment, p.3.

¹³ Riggio, E. (2002) ‘Child friendly cities: good governance in the best interest of the child’, Environment and Urbanisation, Vol 14, No. 2, p.45.

¹⁴ UNICEF (2004) *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, p.2.

Background to the Inquiry

- Walk safely in the streets, on their own;
- Meet friends and play;
- Have green spaces for plants and animals;
- Live in an unpolluted and sustainable environment;
- Participate in cultural and social events;
- Be supported, loved and cared for; and
- Be equal citizens with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.¹⁵

1.6.5 To support and stimulate the international Child Friendly Cities movement, an International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities was established. The International Secretariat is hosted by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy. The Child Friendly Cities initiative “documents innovative experiences of local governance systems engaged in realizing children’s rights”¹⁶ and promotes the following nine building blocks to becoming a child-friendly city:

1. Children’s participation – promoting children’s active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes.
2. A child-friendly legal framework – ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures which consistently promote and protect the rights of children.
3. A city-wide Children’s Rights Strategy – developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention.
4. A Children’s Rights Unit or coordinating mechanism – developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children’s perspectives.
5. Child impact assessment and evaluation – ensuring that there is a systematic process in place to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children – in advance, during and after implementation.
6. A children’s budget – ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children.
7. A regular State of the City’s Children report – ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights.
8. Making children’s rights known – ensuring awareness of children’s rights among adults and children.
9. Independent advocacy for children – supporting non-government organisations and developing independent human rights institutions – children’s ombudsmen or commissioners for children – to promote children’s rights.¹⁷

1.6.6 Determining the impact of the Child Friendly Cities initiative is difficult. What is known, at this time, is that there have been diverse initiatives adopted across numerous countries consistent with the Building Child Friendly Cities: Framework of

¹⁵ http://www.childfriendlycities.org/resources/index_definition.html accessed on 27/08/05.

¹⁶ Baraldi, C. and Emilia, R. (2005) *Cities with Children: Child Friendly Cities in Italy*, UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, p.5.

¹⁷ UNICEF (2004) *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, pp.8-17.

Action. Some examples are detailed in the second of the Issues Papers prepared for this inquiry (see Appendix 4).

1.7 The NSW Commission for Children and Young People

1.7.1 The NSW Commission for Children and Young People was established in June 1999. The Commission's principal functions as provided for in s.11 of the *Commission of Children and Young People Act 1998 (CCYP Act 1998)* are:

- (a) to promote the participation of children in the making of decisions that affect their lives and to encourage government and non-government agencies to seek the participation of children appropriate to their age and maturity,
- (b) to promote and monitor the overall safety, welfare and well-being of children in the community and to monitor the trends in complaints made by or on behalf of children,
- (c) to conduct special inquiries under Part 4 into issues affecting children,
- (d) to make recommendations to government and non-government agencies on legislation, policies, practices and services affecting children,
- (e) to promote the provision of information and advice to assist children,
- (f) to conduct, promote and monitor training on issues affecting children,
- (g) to conduct, promote and monitor public awareness activities on issues affecting children,
- (h) to conduct, promote and monitor research into issues affecting children,
- (h1) to determine or intervene in review applications concerning prohibited persons,
- (i) to participate in and monitor screening for child-related employment in accordance with Part 7,
- (j) to develop and administer a voluntary accreditation scheme for persons working with persons who have committed sexual offences against children,
- (k) to support and assist the Child Death Review Team in the exercise of its functions under Part 7A,
- (l) to encourage organisations to develop their capacity to be safe and friendly for children,
- (m) to develop and administer a voluntary accreditation scheme for programs for persons who have committed sexual offences against children.

1.7.2 Section 12 of the CCYP Act 1998 requires that the Commission give priority to the interests and needs of vulnerable children.

1.8 The NSW Parliamentary Committee for Children and Young People

1.8.1 The Committee on Children and Young People was formed in August 2000. Its primary responsibility is to monitor and review the work of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People and report its findings and recommendations to Parliament. In particular, the Committee is required to examine and report on annual and other reports of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. However, the Committee has a broader responsibility to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children and young people, and to make recommendations as to the need for changes to the functions and procedures of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People. The Committee's functions under Part 6 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* are:

Background to the Inquiry

- (a) to monitor and review the exercise by the Commission of its functions,
- (b) to report to both Houses of Parliament, with such comments as it thinks fit, on any matter appertaining to the Commission or connected with the exercise of its functions to which, in the opinion of the Joint Committee, the attention of Parliament should be directed,
- (c) to examine each annual or other report of the Commission and report to both Houses of Parliament on any matter appearing in, or arising out of, any such report,
- (d) to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children, and report to both Houses of Parliament any changes that the Joint Committee thinks desirable to the functions and procedures of the Commission,
- (e) to inquire into any question in connection with the Committee's functions which is referred to it by both Houses of Parliament, and report to both Houses on that question.

1.8.2 Section 28(2) of the Act provides that the Committee is not authorised to "investigate a matter relating to particular conduct."

1.9 Conduct of the Inquiry

1.9.1 The Committee resolved on 26 May 2005 to conduct an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

1.9.2 For the purpose of performing its statutory functions under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* in relation to the Commission, the Committee is to inquire into:

1. trends, changes and issues for children and young people in the development, implementation and coordination of policy, design and planning for the built environment;
2. the mechanisms available for monitoring and reporting on planning processes and decisions concerning the built environment, as they relate to and impact upon children and young people;
3. strategies to ensure that built environment issues affecting children and young people are readily identified and receive coordinated attention across portfolios and different levels of government;
4. the role of the Commission for Children and Young People in giving input to the Government and non-Government sectors on inclusive and integrated planning and policy-making for children and young people in the built environment;
5. any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee;

and report to both Houses of Parliament on the inquiry.

1.9.3 The Committee announced the inquiry and called for submissions in the major metropolitan newspapers on 15 October 2005. In addition, invitations were made direct to several agencies and departments and interest groups.

1.9.4 A list of the 57 submissions received can be found at Appendix 1.

1.10 Public Hearings

1.10.1 The Committee held public hearings in relation to the inquiry on 9 and 16 May, and 13 June 2006 taking evidence from a range of public sector agencies and departments, local government representatives, academics, professionals and children and youth advocates, the details of which are listed in Appendix 2.

1.11 Site visits

1.11.1 The Committee undertook two programs of site visits in relation to the inquiry. The first was to Brisbane on 25 and 26 November 2005 and included discussions with managers of Brisbane City Council and staff of the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People. Inspections of various CBD locations were made, including Queen Street Mall, Myer centre, King George Square, Red Cross Centre and Brisbane City Hall, South Bank precinct and Logan area and skate park.

1.11.2 Members of the Committee also attended proceedings of the Future Shock Conference, a national conference organised by 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment, at which the Chairman of the Committee presented a paper about the inquiry.

1.11.3 The second program of site visits took place on 15 May 2006 in various locations in Sydney's west, including:

- South Western Sydney Youth Peer Education (SWYPE) at Miller
- Liverpool Police Citizen's Youth Club, Miller
- Bonnyrigg Urban Renewal Program
- Burnside Under 12s Project, Minto

Chapter 2: The Built Environment – Preliminary Considerations

2.1 The built environment, as a term and concept, requires some explanation. This chapter considers a definition of the built environment and provides preliminary analysis of associated key concepts. This information will provide a platform for considering the relationship between children, young people and the built environment in the next chapter.

2.2 **Defining the Built Environment**

2.2.1 The built environment is somewhat difficult to define succinctly. It is perhaps easier to consider its meaning through consideration of what it entails. The built environment covers a broad array of structures, developments and spaces, which have significant consequences for the quality of life, civic relationships, play, exploration and safety and security.

2.2.2 Associate Professor Linda Corkery's (University of New South Wales) submission employs the definition of the built environment used by Health Canada:

The built environment includes our homes, schools, workplaces, parks/recreation areas, business areas and roads. It extends overhead in the form of electric transmission lines, underground in the form of waste disposal sites and subway trains and across the country in the form of highways. The built environment encompasses all buildings, spaces and products that are created or modified by people. It impacts indoor and outdoor physical environments, e.g. climatic conditions and indoor/outdoor air quality, as well as social environments e.g. civic participation, community capacity and investment, and subsequently our health and quality of life (Health Canada in Srinivasan, et al 2003).¹⁸

2.2.3 A number of issues emerge from this definition. Firstly, it is clear that any discussion or analysis of the built environment is a task of complexity. Not only does the built environment cover numerous professions (i.e. architects, engineers, landscape gardeners, town/traffic/social/economic planners, surveyors, developers, construction companies, etc.), but it can also refer to very small considerations such as the use of specific building materials, right through to state-wide urban planning instruments and international architectural trends. Furthermore, the built environment (as will be considered in greater detail in the following chapters) serves numerous functions for diverse populations. Elements of contemporary pluralistic societies often place competing demands on the built environment. The number and location of religious monuments and facilities; the centrality of public space to particular cultures; mobility and accessibility issues; aesthetic differences; day- versus night-time usage; seasonal requirements; safety; and inclusivity are just a small number of the potential issues that emerge in considering the diverse built environments

2.2.4 Moreover, decisions about the built environment today have consequences for many years and generations to come. Historical planning decisions shape and continue to influence contemporary built environments. Planning decisions at the

¹⁸ Submission No.27, Associate Professor Linda Corkery, University of New South Wales, p.2.

commencement of the Australian penal colony still influence planning considerations today.

- 2.2.5 Consequently, discussion of the built environment invokes consideration of a broad array of structures, spaces and places. There are many lenses through which the built environment can be considered, analysed and understood, reflecting numerous movements and theories across diverse disciplines.

2.3 Key Trends and Influences of the Built Environment

- 2.3.1 The built environment is forged through inter-disciplinary decisions of varying significance and intent. It is neither static nor immune to social, cultural, technological and ideological trends. The following is an overview of a small number of some of the most relevant trends and developments impacting on the built environment, many of which are inter-related and indirectly relate to children and young people. Those built environment issues directly relevant to children and young people will be considered in the following chapter.

2.3.2 Population

- 2.3.2.1 The overall estimated residential population of NSW was 6,731,300 in June 2004. This is expected to continue to grow, with population estimates suggesting that NSW might have anywhere between 7,484,000 and 9,593,200 in 2051.¹⁹
- 2.3.2.2 It is well known that the overall population is ageing. In the last two decades, the median age in Australia has increased by 5.9 years, increasing from 30.5 years in 1984 to 36.4 years in 2004.²⁰ Projections suggest that this will rise further and could be as high as 46.2 years by 2051.²¹ Reduced infant mortality, falling fertility rates and increasing life expectancy are three of the key factors driving ageing population trends.
- 2.3.2.3 It is important to note that these population trends mask particular anomalies experienced by particular communities or groups subsumed into overall population figures. For example, indigenous Australians continue to suffer higher rates of infant mortality and lower life expectancy than the general population. Recognising intra-population variance is vital to understanding the different needs of population subsets and being sensitive to associated planning requirements.
- 2.3.2.4 The consequence of these demographic changes is somewhat contested, given the uncertainty of the direct implications of particular trends. A growing and ageing population has implications for the built environment. Housing and transporting more people have resource implications. An ageing population demands different amenities than a young population. Beyond demands for services, fewer children might also have a profound impact on future orientation. For example, Stanley, Richardson and Prior suggest that “perhaps the greatest concern about low birth

¹⁹ Trewin, D. (2006) *2006 Australia Year Book*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

²⁰ 3210.0 *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/B52C3903D894336DCA2568A9001393C1> accessed 2/9/05

²¹ <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/ADF9B2B905D43653CA256FCE001101B5?Open> accessed 2/9/05

rates is that our society begins to lose its future orientation ... If we feel no personal connection with the future, we are much less likely to care about the destruction we leave behind at the end of our lives".²²

2.3.3 *Family Structure*

2.3.3.1 Families are generally smaller today than there were previously. Declining fertility rates and the rise in single parent families (particular since family law reforms in the mid 1970s) mean that there are fewer traditional nuclear families and fewer people making up these families. Blended families are more common, for example remarried divorcees and their children and same sex couples with children.

2.3.3.2 Further to these trends, there are more people choosing to live alone and more couples without children. In Sydney, 22 per cent of all households are occupied by one person. By 2031 this will be 30 per cent of all households.²³

2.3.4 *Dual Income Earners and Hours of Work*

2.3.4.1 Coupled with changes to the make-up of families are changes to the hours worked and the number of adults working in each family. Some of the most significant changes in recent decades pertain to the entry of women in the workforce. De Vaus compiled numerous data in relation to women's involvement in the workforce:

- Since the mid 1980s the employment rate of mothers whose youngest child is aged 5-9 has increased from 58.5 per cent in 1986 to 67.1 per cent in 2002
- Among lone mothers whose youngest child is aged 5-9, the employment rate over the same period has increased from 41.5 per cent to 49 per cent
- Among older men and women (aged 55 and over) the employment levels of men have been steadily declining while those of older women have been steadily increasing since at least 1979²⁴

2.3.4.2 With greater numbers of women working, there has been increased demand for childcare and after-school activities. The number of children in childcare has increased dramatically in the last three decades. This trend has implications for urban design, as more attention and consideration needs to be given to the establishment of childcare facilities, particularly in locations easily accessible for those parents commuting to work. With increased property prices, locating childcare facilities in inner urban areas has become problematic.

2.3.4.3 Some estimates suggest that Australians are working the longest hours in the OECD.²⁵ Increased working hours further add to the strain on childcare facilities and increase the potential reliance on after-school activities. Professor Gleeson suggests that time-poor families engage in 'productivism'. This is where the leisure time of children and young people is heavily programmed with after-school activities. While participation in numerous educational, cultural and sporting

²² Stanley, F; Richardson, S. and Prior. M. (2005) *Children of the Lucky Country? How Australian society has turned its back on children and why children matter*, Macmillan, Sydney. p.88.

²³ Department of Planning (2005) *City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney's Future*, p.24.

²⁴ De Vaus, D. (2004) *Diversity and change in Australian families: statistical profiles*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Canberra p.320.

²⁵ Hamilton, C. and Denniss, R. (2005) *Affluenza*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, Sydney. p.86.

activities is no doubt beneficial, Professor Gleeson cautions that the almost constant participation in after-school activities reflects wider pressures to get ahead, to build personal wealth and succeed in a narrowly self-interested way.²⁶ Furthermore, Tranter suggests that these demands result in social traps, whereby parents feel compelled to drive their children to school as a mark of being a good parent. In order to afford the second car to drive the children to school, parents work longer hours to earn more, resulting in a somewhat self-defeating cycle that ultimately prevents parents and children spending quality time together.²⁷

2.3.4.4 Some of these themes are woven together in evidence given to the Committee by the social planner Sarah Reilly:

People are spending so much money on their mortgages that both parents are having to work ... What are these kids doing when the parents are working? The parents are driving 1 ½ hours in the morning and 1 ½ hours in the afternoon. They are probably leaving at seven and getting home at six or seven at night. That is one of the biggest issues in those communities at the moment. Kids are exhausted, parents are exhausted.²⁸

2.3.5 *Urbanisation*

2.3.5.1 In the last 100 years it has been estimated that greater numbers of people have moved to the cities. While this trend might be abating with the 'sea change' and 'tree change' phenomena, there has nonetheless been increased demand for employment, housing and associated services in capital cities across Australia and major regional centres. Increased population pressure on these locations has numerous implications. Provision of affordable housing, transport infrastructure and the provision of general services are key challenges associated with an increasing population base. This is particularly true for Sydney, in which it is expected that there will be an extra 1.1 million people by 2031.²⁹

2.3.5.2 Increasing populations and increased urbanisation place considerable pressure on specific sites. Greater numbers of users with diverse perspectives and expectations can result in 'facilities stress'. Dr Phil Crane discussed these concerns in his evidence to the Committee:

... spaces are being far more intensely utilised, often by groups when there are different prevailing interests.³⁰

It very easily results in what I would call facilities stress; for example, behaviour which may not warrant attention in previous years is warranting attention because it is far more compact space with multiple users, multiple demands.³¹

2.3.5.3 A common refrain from submissions and from those giving evidence to the inquiry was the impact of the motor vehicle on the built environment. Increased motor

²⁶ Submission No.25, Professor Brendan Gleeson, p.4.

²⁷ Tranter, P. (2005) 'Overcoming social traps: a key to creating child friendly cities', Presentation to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Child Friendly Cities seminar 27 June 2005.

²⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.41

²⁹ Department of Planning (2005) *City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney's Future*.

³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p 2.

³¹ *ibid.*, p.3.

vehicle use has been identified as being responsible for limiting children's play in local neighbourhoods and the concomitant erosion of community due to reduced personal interaction. NAPCAN and Streetwize Communications submitted that:

The lack of community is exacerbated by a reliance on personal modes of transportation, particularly cars, and the ensuing effect this has on traffic and the design of the built environment.³²

- 2.3.5.4 Urban consolidation affects some areas, while others are experiencing different patterns of migration and development. For example, the Richmond Valley Council submission highlights some of the changes occurring in regional areas that are affecting the built environment. In particular:

Council is beginning to notice a trend for families to move to the more rural areas. Families who can afford it are making the 'Tree Change', this then requires better school bus routes, bus shelters and roads in rural areas where there was not such a high demand before. This adds a financial burden to Council.³³

- 2.3.5.5 Whether it be greater urban consolidation or sea and tree change, the greater infrastructure required, is placing increasing pressure on existing facilities and budgets.

2.3.6 *Privatisation*

- 2.3.6.1 The state is no longer responsible for the provision of all major services. Western democratic nations have all embraced privatisation, with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Private schools, private health care, privately-owned roads, private bus operators, competitive telecommunication markets, commercial television and radio stations and private security are examples of this movement away from state-owned utilities and services.

- 2.3.6.2 Private ownership and market forces expand the range of choice available to consumers and drive competitive pricing. Furthermore, private intervention in some areas enables governments to reduce their direct investment in particular services or infrastructure. However, privatisation also has implications for accessibility to public goods. Costs and direct exclusion can inhibit access to private education, private childcare, private health care and privately-owned spaces (such as leisure and entertainment facilities and shopping centres).

- 2.3.6.3 The NSW Aboriginal Land Council's submission to the inquiry identified the problems associated with access, especially for young indigenous people, to spaces that are increasingly privately owned:

In many cities and towns throughout NSW, young Aboriginal people have found that the built environment serves to exclude them and increase their sense of inequality and alienation. Aboriginal children and young people have found that in many situations they are denied access to public spaces in streets and shopping malls.³⁴

³² Submission No.29, NAPCAN Foundation and Streetwize Communications, p.3.

³³ Submission No.17, Richmond Valley Council, p.1.

³⁴ Submission No.49, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, p.5.

2.3.6.4 Dr Phil Crane suggested that governments have yet to fully understand their role in protecting the rights of citizens in this movement toward greater privatisation of what was previously public space. He notes:

From a governance point of view I would have to say I do not believe government has really fully appreciated the role it has in protecting the basic rights of citizens to access basic goods and services in a world where it has overseen the privatisation of many goods and services to being delivered from private property. What is the Government's role in this new privatising world in terms of guaranteeing access? Does someone have the right to catch a bus separate from the right to go shopping?³⁵

2.3.7 *Technological Developments*

2.3.7.1 It is taken for granted that there have been massive technological developments in recent decades. These developments affect many aspects of contemporary life. The increased mobility of telecommunication devices has enabled increased opportunities to work remotely; the Internet and mobile telephones facilitate communication across the globe; increased access to air flight has resulted in greater movement of human traffic throughout the world; and television and mass media beam images and stories about different cultures into living rooms.

2.3.7.2 Many technological changes are quickly embraced by children and young people. For example, the 2003 Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that 95 per cent of all children used a computer during or outside of school hours and 64 per cent accessed the Internet.³⁶

2.3.7.3 These trends in passive recreation place greater importance on facilities in the home and have implications for physical activity and personal relationships.

2.3.8 *Risk, Fear and Litigation*

2.3.8.1 Various social commentators have analysed contemporary social trends and coined phrases such as 'risk society' or 'surveillance society' to describe their observations of late modern society. These phrases reflect contemporary concerns. cursory consideration of the risk society thesis highlights the centrality of risk in contemporary life. Fear of litigation, liability considerations and the quantification of risk in diverse settings are examples of the heightened sensitivity to risk. Offenders are routinely risk-assessed; company activities are analysed for risk exposure; people are warned of the risks of international travel, mobile phone use, unprotected sex; and media reports communicate and transmit stories from across the globe highlighting terrorist activities and the consequences of ecological degradation.

2.3.8.2 Fears stimulated by these risks, whether real or perceived, have had significant consequences for the built environment. Improved consideration of and attention to health and safety regulations and rapid repair of faulty or damaged facilities are positive reforms linked to increased consciousness of risk. Removal of play

³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, pp.5-6

³⁶ Page 3, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities* 4901.0

equipment, cessation of community activities and creation of sterile play environments are negative outcomes of the prevailing prioritisation of risk.

- 2.3.8.3 Numerous submissions and witnesses highlight some of the consequences of the risk aversion. For instance, Mr Michael Manikas, Chairman 2050, highlighted the loss of public amenity:

They [children and young people] probably cannot get out and play because councils are too scared to put up play equipment and schools are fenced off to stop children from entering schools after hours because they are too scared that someone will break their leg and then sue them. There is really a declining choice for children so they are forced in doors and they have no other option but to sit at home.³⁷

- 2.3.8.4 The following discussion between Committee member Melinda Pavey and Dr Timothy Gill, Director, New South Wales Centre for Public Health Nutrition, University of Sydney explores the consequences for accessing school premises:

Melinda Pavey: I visited a local high school which has fenced off the whole high school from the community. A local country paper this week carried the story of a young girl who can no longer train on the track at the high school because it has been closed off. Instead of fencing off the building, for fear of vandalism, the school has taken away the use of the whole school out of hours.³⁸

Timothy Gill: At the recent Child Obesity Summit in Queensland, the Premier, Mr Beattie, indicated that he would ensure that the facilities that are currently locked up in schools would be opened up to the community. He said that he would be happy to bear that liability, which is borne by the State anyway, as an opportunity to encourage greater community use of existing sporting facilities³⁹

- 2.3.8.5 Social Planner, Sarah Reilly and Treasurer, Local Government and Shires Association, Julie Hegarty, each pointed to the consequences of public liability concerns on local government:

Sarah Reilly: Councils now have a lot of responsibilities to deliver to a community and I just think that they are really frightened that if they get sued they are going to be broke.⁴⁰

Julie Hegarty: I guess councils have become overly cautious. Some of the significant cases against council have caused us to be that way... Changes in society and litigation have caused us to become very cautious.⁴¹

- 2.3.8.6 Fear of litigation has affected the built environment, whether it be through the closing of school premises after hours, the removal of play equipment, the closure of toilet blocks or the creation of sterile, scripted play spaces.

³⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.16

³⁸ *ibid.*, p.25

³⁹ *ibid.*, p.26

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.40

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.68

2.3.8.7 In response to these concerns, the NSW Government introduced the *Civil Liability Act 2002*. Despite the concerns raised by various organisations and individuals, the NSW Commission for Children and Young People is hopeful that these reforms will have positive consequences in the coming years:

Changes to public liability legislation ... aimed at reducing litigation, may mean that authorities such as councils and schools may be encouraged to develop more adventurous play areas for children.⁴²

2.3.8.8 Further to these reforms, Ross Woodward, Deputy Director General, Department of Local Government discussed what might be considered the second generation of risk assessment methodologies. He suggests that local government is now looking at tools that also seek to quantify the relative strengths or positive contribution that particular equipment, designs or activities will have, rather than merely quantifying the risks posed by these activities or infrastructure:

There are some fairly sophisticated tools now for assessing risk. So councils are looking at those models. But as I say, that tends to focus on the negatives. We are starting to look at ways of expanding that. A lot of it is around community engagement and what the community expects. For instance, if a council has consulted with the community in terms of its risk assessment and has community acceptance about the potential risks and that has been made public, I would say that that would probably have some weight in court if something went wrong in that area. It is yet to be tested but it is the next phase around risk. Otherwise the outcome is to close things down, and none of us really want that.⁴³

2.3.8.9 In the context of children and young people some commentators suggest that there is an increasing propensity to protect children and young people from exposure to risks. Fear of predators or 'stranger danger' is frequently cited as a reason for not allowing children to walk to school or to socialise without adult supervision. Fear of road traffic is cited as a reason for inhibiting a child or young person's ability to explore a local neighbourhood. Irrespective of the veracity of the fears, commentators have dubbed these children and young people as forming part of the 'bubblewrap generation' or 'pampered prisoners'. Professor Gleeson suggests that this fear and anxiety is driving the 'rigid scripting of children's lives and routines'.⁴⁴ Such rigid scripting limits natural risk-taking by children and particular commentators express concern about the long-term consequences of such an approach.

2.3.8.10 The following exchange between Mr Adrian Bauman, Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney and the Acting Chair (Jan Burnswoods) highlight how many of these fears combine to undermine potentially positive initiatives.

Adrian Bauman: ... we tried the walking bus which is a well-developed model in many countries overseas where kids walk in groups, usually supervised by an adult at each end and they form a bus that walks to school. There were three issues that are particularly problematic in New South Wales: one was public liability issues for that walking bus. Two, the amount of screening that those two adults had to undertake to be

⁴² Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.11.

⁴³ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, pp.48-49.

⁴⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, p.2.

deemed to be safe and proper individuals to do that that it was intrusive that adults, even parents were disinclined to be part of. The third for walking to school are parental perceived safety issues, even where those safety issues are way out of proportion to the real safety issue. We have a community that is hypersensitive to these issues and perceived parental safety is an issue.

Acting Chair: When you say safety do you mean physical safety from being hit by a car or in terms of fears of sexual predators?

Adrian Bauman: Both, stranger danger and physical safety. Parents have morbid preoccupations with both of those that are real problems but because they are reported in great detail in the media their true prevalence and incidence are vastly over-estimated by parents compared to their real state, so parental anxiety is therefore high. These are big challenges to walking and cycling to school in our city, plus the traffic one, the first bit which is driver disconnect from pedestrians and cyclists.⁴⁵

2.3.8.11 The NAPCAN foundation and Streetwize Communications submission also considers the issues of ‘stranger danger’, noting that “the majority of abuse occurs in [the] child’s immediate circle of family and friends”.⁴⁶ In this regard, the perceived risks of strangers could well be considered to be exaggerated while the perceived risks of family, friends and acquaintances under-estimated.

2.3.8.12 Whatever the cause, there is little doubt that concerns about risk and general anxieties about the safety of children and young people have considerable implications for the development and maintenance of the built environment and its use by children and young people. However, the Committee did note during the inquiry that while some councils had taken a fairly restrictive approach towards playground and recreational developments other councils had adopted innovative approaches.

Recommendation: That the Minister for Local Government be consulted about gathering together examples of good playground and recreational developments for dissemination to all councils (Recommendation 3j).

2.3.9 *Sustainability*

2.3.9.1 A significant element of any discussion of the built environment relates to sustainability. Ecological and environmental degradation have implications for future built environments. With predictions suggesting that current petrol reserves will begin to diminish, it is predicted that urban sprawl, as experienced in Sydney, will contribute to substantial geographic segregation. Water shortages will place greater stress on existing supplies, which will have repercussions for farming, prices of produce and for daily living. Carbon dioxide emissions threaten to cause irreparable damage to the planet through global warming. The emissions created through the production of building materials and deforestation has further environmental consequences. Mr Manikas, Chairman, 2050, stressed the importance of sustainability in any discussions of the built environment:

⁴⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.32.

⁴⁶ Submission No.29, NAPCAN foundation and Streetwize Communications, p.4.

We believe there is a definite need for leadership from government on this issue as we are faced with the alarming prospect that the following generations will be the first to inherit a declining planet and a quality of life lower than experienced by their parents. The fundamental idea behind our submission is that built environments that are good for children and young people will be good for the rest of the community. The priority issue facing the built environment as it relates to children and young people is sustainability.⁴⁷

2.4 **Conclusion**

2.4.1 Barnett (cited in Carmona, Heath, Oc and Tiesdell) contends that,

Today's city is not an accident. Its form is the product of decisions made for single, separate purposes, whose interrelationships and side effects have not been fully considered.⁴⁸

2.4.2 Professor Gleeson also highlights the inter-dependence between the built environment and social, economic, cultural, technological and political forces:

Cities do not exist unto themselves. They are not sealed systems. They reflect the sorts of decisions we make about labour markets, about housing markets, about the way we manage the environment generally, the way we manage the population, resources, all those sorts of things.⁴⁹

2.4.3 Consequently, the following changes to the urban landscape, highlighted in Dr Crane's submission to the Committee, provide an apt summary of some of the key issues considered thus far:

Some features of this [rapidly changing urban landscape] include:

- The loss, fragmentation and commodification of natural environments such as bushland, coastal fringes and water courses;
- The development of urban precincts and planned 'communities';
- The quest by cities for continued economic growth and the link between this and development of 'liveable' cities and towns attractive to investment;
- The individualisation of risk and as part of this trend for 'feelings' of security to assume heightened importance in urban design and management. The propensity for authorities to adopt 'move on' policing strategies is an example of this;
- An increased focus on 'localism' with particular localities targeted for intervention around disadvantage.⁵⁰

2.4.4 This brief analysis of recent developments serves to frame discussion of the built environment. As has been stated, the built environment does not operate separate to social, economic, political and demographic trends. The built environment responds to and predicts implications of these developments.

⁴⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.12

⁴⁸ Carmona, M; Heath, T.; Oc, T. and Tiesdell, S. (2003) *Public Places, Urban Spaces*, Architectural Press, Amsterdam.

⁴⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, p.10.

⁵⁰ Submission No.21, Dr Phil Crane, p.1.

Chapter 3: Children, Young People and the Built Environment

- 3.1 Some of the general trends influencing the built environment were considered in Chapter 2. This chapter now turns to considering the specific relationships between children, young people and the built environment. Comments from one commentator on this topic are noteworthy at the commencement of this chapter.

... there is a serious lack of interest in children's urban concerns and reluctance to accept childhood as a crucially distinctive phase of like, in and of itself, by most professionals responsible for shaping the physical environment. Children are hardly a consideration in the design of public places and they are conspicuously absent in the works of scholars that deal with the environment. The tendency to treat children as 'incomplete adults who love primary colours' is manifest in the attitudes of many adults with a simplistic perspective on childhood. Despite the current international emphasis on children's issues and education, urban environments have become painfully inhospitable to children.⁵¹

- 3.2 These comments reveal the merits of considering child and adolescent development and the general position of such issues in contemporary discussions of the built environment. They also demonstrate the significant work that needs to be done to raise the profile of the needs of children and young people within the built environment.

- 3.3 Child and adolescent development will be considered briefly, followed by some specific issues affecting children, young people and their relationship with the built environment. The importance of the built environment will be considered in relation to the formation and maintenance of relationships and for learning and motor skills development. The rise of childhood overweight and obesity will also be considered in the context of the built environment.

3.4 **Child and Adolescent Development**

- 3.4.1 In considering the importance and impact of the built environment on children and young people, it is necessary to further deconstruct the concepts of 'child' and 'young person'. The physical competence and needs of a toddler will be significantly different to those of a young person in early adolescence.

- 3.4.2 Mr Chris Johnson, Department of Planning, explained that the needs of children and young people are heterogeneous and age-related:

I think a built environment that is conducive to younger people has a bit of issue about scale. However, the group you are looking at, if it is from nought to 18, is a very diverse group of people. I sense that it falls into three or four different categories. There are the kids who have to be looked after totally by their parents – prams and all those sorts of issues and that brings up ramps, crossing of streets and curbs, and things – the walking group that is still not adult enough to be totally on their own, and then the more adolescent group who almost want to challenge society a bit... To create through a

⁵¹ Haider, J. (2003) 'Interplay between Design and Research: Interactive Play and Learning Environments for Children'. Second International Conference of the Associations of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA) Conference, University of Melbourne, 28-30 September 2003.

planning system the built environment that responds to all of those is not easy and it is challenging, but that is what we will have to try to achieve, I think.⁵²

3.4.3 Increasingly researchers across various disciplines are considering human development through a life course or a life-span perspective.⁵³ This simply suggests that human development stretches throughout one's life and that the transition to different 'stages' of development have significant implications. Furthermore, this perspective recognises that individuals will experience growth and development differently. While this life course perspective embodies a more fluid understanding of individual development, it is nonetheless beneficial to create some distinctions between stages of development in childhood and adolescence. While acknowledging the limitations and diversity of opinion regarding the key life stages during the first 18 years of life, the following provides some delineation between particular stages, which serves to illustrate the changing demands of the built environment throughout life:

- Infant – the period from birth to walking is generally covered by the infant period. During this time, various physical milestones will be reached. An infant requires parental attention. Long periods will generally be spent in and within close proximity to the home. The home and the stimulation from the close surrounds are important for promoting early gross and fine motor skills. Environmental factors that indirectly impact on infants pertain to pram accessibility of locations, baby changing facilities and facilities providing privacy for breastfeeding.
- Toddler – toddlers are generally considered to be those children who have commenced walking and prior to entry to pre-school. Speech commences and mobility increases during this period. Play is critical to cognitive development and further development of fine motor skills. Local neighbourhoods and exploration of wider geographical areas becomes more prevalent during this time.
- Pre-school – children between three and five years are often considered to be pre-schoolers. While transition into childcare and pre-school facilities will occur at different ages for children, entry into pre-school is relatively common for this age group. Social interaction accelerates through contact with same-aged peers. Preparatory educational concepts are being introduced at this time.
- Middle childhood – the years from entry to completion of primary school are often considered to cover middle childhood. Commencement of formal schooling occurs at this time and then continues for the next ten or more years. Independence is enhanced by transition to unaccompanied travel to school. Participation in structured education and recreational activities coincides with entry to school. Unaccompanied exploration of local neighbourhoods also facilitates this growing independence.
- Early adolescence – entry into the teenage years is generally considered to coincide with the onset of adolescence. Transition into high school further contributes to growing independence. High school students are supervised less,

⁵² Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.83

⁵³ Slee, P. T. (2002) *Child, Adolescent and Family Development*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.465.

rotating through different classes with different teachers. Affiliations with peers assume greater priority through this period. Identity formation is influenced by social norms and peer group trends. Wider independent mobility occurs.

- Late adolescence – late adolescence tends to cover the period prior to independent living. Significant milestones during this time include commencement of casual/part-time employment, gaining a driver's licence and completion of formal schooling. Romantic attachments assume greater priority and preparation for future employment and independent living grows. Socialising with peers remains important. University campuses and workplaces then become places where considerable time is spent for many late adolescent young people.

3.4.4 With little effort, it is easy to see just some of the changing requirements of children and young people in relation to the built environment. Greater exploration of surroundings occurs as children develop and mature. The home gives way to local neighbourhoods, childcare facilities, schools, parks, skate parks, entertainment facilities, transport inter-changes, shopping centres, motor vehicles, workplaces, university campuses and licensed premises.

3.4.5 While having somewhat universal implications, the built environment also performs very specific functions for children and young people. Some of these more specific functions will be considered in detail, highlighting the importance of creating child- and youth-friendly environments.

3.5 **Shelter and Protection**

3.5.1 The built environment partially serves a very basic function – the provision of shelter. Earliest forms of the built environment merely served to provide shelter and protection from the elements. More sophisticated forms of the built environment evolved as populations increased, cities developed, industry commenced and societies evolved.

3.5.2 In the context of children and young people, the home is where considerable time is spent and development occurs. Familial bonding, sibling relationships, social interaction, physical activity and privacy are first experienced in the home. The home can be a source of pride or a marker of low social status. The location of the home can facilitate easy access to community services and resources, employment and natural environments. It also can be a source of fondness and enjoyment or pain. The absence of a home impacts on life chances and opportunities, including employment, education, safety and identity.

3.5.3 The humble home is changing. The 'Aussie dream' bungalow on the quarter acre block is increasingly expensive. Smaller families, the demand for more single occupancy dwellings, inner-city regeneration, increased population density and concerns about urban sprawl and attendant environment impacts have contributed to urban consolidation. Higher density housing developments are increasingly common to Sydney and major regional and coastal centres.

3.5.4 Professor Gleeson suggests that urban consolidation (or higher density housing) has had negative consequences on children through the impact on families:

We have not tended to offer housing choices for families. They have tended to be smaller units. The buildings have been constructed in ways that are not family-friendly ... we lived in a new multi-unit development ... it was just a hellish place for anyone with children. There was no noise insulation. There was no accommodation in the design of that built environment for children. It was just not a good place for families.⁵⁴

3.5.5 Professor Gleeson went on to note that many new housing developments offer little in the way of dwelling choice. Medium to high density developments predominantly offer one or two bedroom units. The actual mixture of dwelling types can actively dissuade families from buying or living in these developments. Moreover, Professor Gleeson highlighted the problems with large houses on small blocks. With little or no play spaces, children invariably play indoors, which potentially has negative consequences for the health and well-being of children.

3.5.6 Sound insulation, as discussed by Professor Gleeson, can be a major ingredient in determining whether families with children will move into or stay in particular developments. As a way of rectifying this concern, Mr Manikas, Chairman of the 2050 organisation proposed:

We suggest changes could be made to Building Code of Australia [BCA] in relation to these items. Definitely soundproofing is an issue ... Probably that is something that the Building Code of Australia has to address in relation to trying to be more aware that we are living in a more urbanised environment and that more steps have to be made to make sure that buildings are made to incorporate these idea of everyone living on top of each other and ensuring that there are community facilities and community spaces where people can mix and enjoy each other's company without upsetting their neighbours.⁵⁵

3.5.7 Furthermore, Mr Johnson from the Department of Planning discussed some methods of integrating higher density living with outdoor amenities and play areas.

I think there is a whole range of terrace houses, villas and low-rise apartments that can be very adaptable for families and for family living, but they have to be designed carefully as they have to be worked on in that sort of a way. I think some of the more medium-rise buildings – four, five, six or seven storeys – can also have very big outdoor spaces so people can move indoors and outdoors.⁵⁶

3.5.8 Beyond noise concerns and limitations on accessing (green) play space, Professor Gleeson said that there had recently been attempts in Queensland to develop childfree housing estates. The Queensland Commission for Child and Young People opposed such developments.

Recommendation: The adequacy of current building standards in relation to noise insulation be reviewed and the trend towards child-free housing developments be assessed (Recommendation 3k).

⁵⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, p.3.

⁵⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.16.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p.79.

3.5.9 Private housing is not an option for all residents of New South Wales. For many, the costs of renting or owning a private home are beyond their means. Consequently, many people and families in New South Wales are reliant on public and community housing. The Committee was informed of the numbers of people in New South Wales in this position.

3.5.10 Ms Maura Boland (Office of Community Housing) provided the following figures:

In the financial year ending June 2005 there were approximately 257,000 people living in public housing; of those, about 29 per cent, or just over 60,000 were young people, children aged under 18, and another 13,000, or 6 per cent, were aged between 18 and 24 – so a significant percentage. In the same year, there were approximately 28,000 people living in mainstream community housing; of those, 39 per cent, or 9,400, were children aged under 18, and a further 7 per cent or 1,700 were aged between 18 and 24, so a slightly higher percentage in community housing than in public housing.⁵⁷

3.5.11 Accommodating the needs of all of these people and families is difficult, increasingly so as State housing stock ages. Ms Boland commented on the changing community demographics and its impact on the need for housing stock:

... we noted that the demographics of the population was changing and increasingly we are seeing a need for housing for smaller households, that is particularly where young people come into it. Our housing stock is predominantly three bedroom housing. It is not really appropriate for young people to come into a three-bedroom household when they are a sole household occupant. It does not meet their needs.⁵⁸

3.5.12 Apart from the challenges posed by old housing stock, public and community housing tenants are frequently confronted with an array of difficulties. The Benevolent Society's submission to the inquiry highlighted the challenges facing those people living in public housing.

- Multi level, adjoining housing is inappropriate for families with small children. Supervision of children is made more difficult in multi level housing, thus impacting on the safety of children and the stress levels of parents. High rise flats, mostly in inner Sydney, are particularly unsuitable for children
- Lack of choice in type and place of housing is a concern for families. Single level housing close to amenities, including effective transport mechanisms or family supports, is essential for the wellbeing of the children in vulnerable families
- A large proportion of families housed in community housing are single parent families. This in itself places greater stressors on the children and resident parent/s. Some are under threat of eviction.
- Department of Housing estates have high rates of crime and violence thus increasing the risk of harm to children in these areas. For children, these estates are often where all of their time is spent – they become their entire world. Living in an environment where drug use, crime and harassment are common place desensitises children, as these experiences are normalised.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p.90.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.91.

⁵⁹ Submission No.28, Benevolent Society, pp.7-8.

3.5.13 In addition to these concerns, the Legal Aid Commission of NSW stressed the importance of housing for children and young people, particularly those at risk of becoming homeless or where family breakdown results in limited or no accommodation. It observed that “at present, there are too few accommodation options for children in New South Wales. This can lead to children being granted bail but they remain in detention, while appropriate accommodation is found for them”.⁶⁰

Recommendation: The progress of the Department of Housing’s Young People’s Housing Access Strategy be reviewed (Recommendation 3l).

Recommendation: The consequences of recent housing policies on children and young people across New South Wales be monitored (Recommendation 3m).

3.6 Childcare

3.6.1 Childcare denotes an array of facilities and arrangements. The Ku-ring-gai Council’s submission provides some definitional clarity to the following discussion of childcare centres:

childcare facilities will be defined to include buildings for long day care centres, pre-schools and occasional care centres. These buildings provide a centre-based childcare service for children between the ages of 0-6 years of age in a formal, non-parental care setting.⁶¹

3.6.2 As was confirmed in the previous chapter, the make-up of and pressures on families has changed, particularly in the last 30 years. Single-parent and dual income earning families mean that there is greater demand for childcare services. The following national data demonstrates the substantial changes in use of formal childcare in recent decades.

The percentage of young children receiving non-parental care in 2002 was quite different from that just 18 years earlier. Since 1984 the per cent of children under 12 years of age:

- receiving formal childcare doubled from 12 per cent to 25 per cent
- being cared for exclusively by their parents declined from 62 per cent to 51 per cent
- the increase in formal childcare between 1984 and 2002 was sharpest among 0-2 year olds where formal care trebled from 8 per cent to 25 per cent.⁶²

3.6.3 Research suggests that children are spending longer periods in childcare. For example, Ku-ring-gai Council reported that “some children aged 0-6 years may spend approximately 10 hours per day, 5 days per week, in a childcare centre”.⁶³ As a consequence, childcare centres and staff of these centres have considerable

⁶⁰ Submission No.55, Legal Aid Commission of NSW, p.5.

⁶¹ Submission No.18, Ku-ring-gai Council, p.2.

⁶² De Vaus, D. (2004) Diversity and change in Australian families: statistical profiles, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Canberra.

⁶³ Submission No.18, Ku-ring-gai Council, p.2.

impact upon large numbers of children. Childcare centres in part provide quasi-home like experiences and early educational exposure.

3.6.4 The design of childcare centres has been shown to affect the behaviour of children. For example, research cited in the *Child-friendly Environments* publication, developed by the then NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now the Department of Planning) suggests that “when play space in a childcare centre was halved, children’s play became more aggressive and less cooperative. The children were more irritable and teachers more controlling”.⁶⁴ Moreover, Prue Walsh (Play Environment Consultant) informed the Committee that “children who do not have good early childhood facilities and experiences ... are more likely to end up on drugs, ..., more likely to commit suicide, less likely to stick to doing university courses, and more likely to have a broken marriage”.⁶⁵

3.6.5 In light of the importance of childcare centres for child development and with increasing demand for childcare places it is necessary to review some of the key issues impacting on the development and provision of childcare. Responsibility for funding, provision, regulation and monitoring of childcare centres and standards for staff is spread across all tiers of government. The Federal Government is a major provider of funds for childcare centres; the NSW Government regulates and licences childcare centres via, amongst other instruments, the *Children’s Services Regulation 2004*; local governments across New South Wales review development applications for the extension and development of childcare centres, and also provide childcare. Private providers are increasingly entering the market, which has had consequences on the nature and type of services provided. These issues will be considered separately.

3.6.6 *Operators of Childcare Centres*

3.6.6.1 Government, non-government and private companies provide childcare in New South Wales. The inquiry learnt that increasingly there is a trend toward private operators. It has been claimed that “just over 70 per cent of Australia’s 4300 childcare centres are now run for profit”.⁶⁶ This has implications for the nature and quality of care provided. It is argued that there is a fundamental difference between community versus privately operated childcare facilities. Community-based centres “emphasise parental accountability and individual child welfare” compared with privately operated centres, which are “dominated by the logic of shareholder accountability and thus cost minimisation”.⁶⁷

3.6.6.2 These trends and assertions were supported by the Willoughby Council submission:
The trend within Willoughby LGA is towards privately operated childcare centres. To be financially profitable, these services are less likely to provide care for the age group, which has the greatest demand – 0-2 year olds.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ NSW Department of Urban, Affairs and Planning (1999) *Child-friendly Environments*, DUAP, Sydney.

⁶⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.13.

⁶⁶ Gleeson, B. (2006) *Australian Heartlands: Making Space for Hope in the Suburbs*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, p.105.

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, pp.105-106

⁶⁸ Submission No.15, Willoughby City Council, p.1.

3.6.6.3 By targeting the older children who require less intense supervision, companies are more able to return a profit on their investment.

3.6.7 *Licensing Requirements*

3.6.7.1 The NSW Department of Community Services licenses childcare providers. The *Children's Services Regulation 2004* outlines the requirements for childcare providers. A host of requirements are contained within the regulation, including suitability of staff, the philosophy of the centre/facility, group sizes, programs for children, supervision of children, access to children, maintenance of records, and probity arrangements. A further feature of the regulation pertains to the space ratios per child required to receive a license and the general design and maintenance of the childcare facilities. In particular, the provisions surrounding the space ratios received considerable attention during the inquiry. For instance, the submission from the Benevolent Society outlines the space ratios required and queries the efficacy of current guidelines contained in the *Children Services Regulation 2004*:

The NSW *Children's Services Regulation 2004* requires that there be 3.25 square metres of indoor play space and 7 square metres of outdoor place space provided per child in childcare centres, but does not stipulate how this space is to be organised. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by the Department of Community Services and funding made available for alterations to centre layouts to provide better play spaces in order to enhance children's learning and development.⁶⁹

3.6.8 *Planning and Development of Childcare Centres*

3.6.8.1 In addition to these concerns about the allocation of space, various submissions raised issues regarding the arrangements for approving development applications for the modification and the development of new childcare centres.

3.6.8.2 Willoughby City Council's submission to the inquiry raises various concerns in relation to current arrangements. Firstly they highlight the difficulties with local government's review of development applications:

The introduction of the *Children's Services Regulation 2004* has resulted in a move by the Department of Community Services away from consultations with developers prior to their licence application. This has put the onus on Councils to attempt to ensure any development applications meet all aspects of the Regulation prior to consent being given. As not all councils have designated Children's Services staff, there is increasing chance that consent will be given to applications that do not meet the *Children's Services Regulation 2004*. This is likely to result in more developments not able to be successfully licensed by the Department of Community Services unless significant and potentially costly works are carried out.⁷⁰

3.6.8.3 Secondly, Willoughby City Council identified other challenges in providing appropriate childcare and appropriate childcare facilities.

There has been an increase in development applications for childcare centres in mixed use buildings. These are generally multi-level, with a combination of uses ranging from corporate offices to food courts. Evacuation procedures are generally of greater importance in such situations, considering the increased likelihood of fire in many of

⁶⁹ Submission No.28, Benevolent Society, p.5.

⁷⁰ Submission No.15, Willoughby City Council, p.1.

these buildings. The majority of applications for childcare centres tend to be for 90 children, which is the maximum allowable under the *Children's Services Regulation 2004*. This has obvious impacts on quality of care provided and on the quality of the applicant to provide suitable and age appropriate evacuation procedures.⁷¹

3.6.8.4 Ku-ring-gai Council's submission supports this view and stresses the importance of monitoring development applications for childcare centres, given the ongoing legacy once they are established. It is contended that the reduced role of the Department of Community Services in reviewing development applications will see a further erosion of the quality of childcare centres across New South Wales:

The absence of DoCS children's services input into plans has seen a reduction in the quality of plans received in the Ku-ring-gai area. The changing role of DoCS responsibility in regards to assessments of childcare centre plans will also greatly impact on the quality of the design and construction of future childcare centres in NSW. Overall there is varied quality of childcare centre design and childcare centres built in NSW according to assessment processes the plans have undergone at local council and DoCS level.⁷²

3.6.8.5 Ms Prue Walsh gave an example of one of the childcare centres that she visited in her work as a Play Environment Consultant:

The adult toilet was upstairs and the babies were downstairs. Any teacher wanting to go to the toilet would have to run upstairs and leave the kids unattended. To get to the playground you had to walk through other playrooms. The playgrounds were literally nothing more than a climbing structure with a shade shelter and rubberised surfaces.⁷³

3.6.8.6 More generally, the Benevolent Society's submission compiled experiences of their workers involved in Partnerships in Early Childhood (PIEC) programs. Workers involved in these programs visit numerous childcare centres. The following are some of the key observations of Society workers attached to these programs:

- Clear sight lines and smooth flow of movement from the entrance of the centre to the main area allows children to settle more easily at the beginning of the day. If the separation from the parent involves moving through different spaces it can create anxiety, which in turn impedes learning.
- Centres with only large play areas can also create anxiety in children as they can feel overwhelmed. A sense of security and emotional regulation can be enhanced by having some smaller, more controlled environments in centres, along with some larger spaces. This then promotes children's ability to learn.
- Children's confidence and physical development is enhanced by being able to play outside for extended periods of time. As children of vastly different ages cannot play safely together, centres that have separate outside play areas for various age groups are more beneficial for children than those with one large area.
- The placement of staff within the space is also important. In centres where PIEC operates, staff are encouraged to sit on the floor and stay in one place for the first hour of the day. This gives staff a different perspective on children as they are looking at the space from a child's height.

⁷¹ *ibid.*

⁷² Submission No.18, Ku-ring-gai Council, p.6.

⁷³ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.11.

- Few centres have rooms where parents can congregate and interact with each other or with workers in an informal way.⁷⁴

3.6.8.7 While concerns were expressed in various submissions and by witnesses about existing licensing arrangements for childcare centres as they relate to the built environment, there was a call for consideration of flexible models that account for specific concerns in particular locations. Regulations frequently seek to provide blanket restrictions on the building of particular facilities like childcare centres. This may not be appropriate in all circumstances. For example, Prue Walsh drew attention to the perhaps unique needs of childcare centres in inner Sydney:

I also believe – and say this with enormous caution – that what can apply to 90 per cent of Australia cannot apply to inner Sydney. Exceptional circumstances in criteria have to be set. What about rooftop gardens? How do you do those in high-rise buildings? What are the criteria to make it work? ... Do you allow an undercroft area in a building to be part of the outdoor play space?⁷⁵

3.6.8.8 To improve practices and the standard of childcare centres, Prue Walsh suggested that “we need best-practice documents and better training for government officers”.⁷⁶ Revision and updating of the ‘Best Practice Guidelines for Early Childhood Physical Environments’, first written in 1996, was suggested as a practical way of providing the sector with current information that could guide practice and the design of childcare facilities. In updating these guidelines, consideration should be had to best practices in diverse locations, including inner-metropolitan locations and rural and remote sites.

3.6.9 *Funding*

3.6.9.1 Another issue associated with childcare centres that received some attention during the inquiry was funding. As previously stated, all three tiers of government have some responsibility for funding, supporting and/or providing childcare centres. In some instances, capital funding is provided to assist with the establishment or modification of childcare centres. These arrangements can result in ad hoc funding of particular facilities, which can ultimately undermine efforts to provide a suitable facility to children.

3.6.9.2 Ms Walsh provided an example of the potential consequences of this ad hoc funding system:

I go into some centres and find they have had about a quarter of a million dollars worth of grants in a period of five years without any master planning. So, you find the verandah has been blocked in; the toilets have to be shifted because the legislation has changed and children do not have playground access to a toilet and they need a storage shed so they get an aluminium one and that is dangerous in itself. They buy a new climbing structure which is suited to a public park and they find they have not got the softfall surface so they get another grant for that. Suddenly, the adhocery is appalling ... it has been perpetrated

⁷⁴ Submission No.28, Benevolent Society, p.5.

⁷⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.14.

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.5.

by piecemeal grants. There has been no encouragement to look at the bigger picture in buildings and playgrounds.⁷⁷

3.6.9.3 In contrast to these arrangements, Ms Walsh recommended provision of one-off capital grants, with strict accountability guidelines, to build long-lasting, integrated, quality childcare centres. Also, by making it a condition of every subdivision over a particular size that a childcare facility must be included, Ms Walsh suggested that more appropriate facilities would be developed to service the needs of children for many decades, requiring less recurrent ad-hoc funding grants:

An effective community asset is one which is integrated with complementary facilities. For example, a childcare centre as part of a multiservice hub, or public play spaces integrated with whole-of-shire (or town, or suburb, or remote community) planning. However, integrated planning tends to be initially more expensive and more time-consuming. In practice I have found that additional support and guidance is needed to steer implementation of the plans and by doing so there is an assurance of better quality finished buildings and product which will be long-term viable. Given that DCPs are the responsibility of Local Government, but funding of facilities can be a mix of government/non-government sources, a rethink of appropriate processes could well deliver quality facilities otherwise unobtainable. It should also be noted that the cost (capital outlay) for inner city sites may need special funding arrangements and agreements – such as a one-off seeding grant for site purchase or funding for the building bound by best practice design parameters.⁷⁸

3.6.9.4 Given the demand for and importance of childcare, it is critical that the design and layout of these centres meet, or preferably exceed, best practice standards. Based on the concerns raised by the Benevolent Society and Willoughby Council’s submissions, it is evident that further attention needs to be given to design guidelines for childcare centres.

Recommendation: The Minister for Community Services be consulted on the need for the Department of Community Services to review the adequacy of the *Children’s Services Regulation 2004* and current design guidelines issued by the Department of Community Services, including the ‘Best Practice Guidelines for Early Childhood and Physical Environments’. (Recommendation 3i)

3.7 Healthy Physical Development

3.7.1 The built environment is essential to healthy physical development. Play, physical activity and recreation can be enabled or frustrated by the built environment. Through these activities, children and young people not only receive numerous physical health benefits, but they also develop gross and fine motor skills. “Children’s local environments help shape their level of cognitive development, their social and motor skills and their personal identity”.⁷⁹ Furthermore, “access to good public space can help children to stay healthy and tackle problems of obesity by providing opportunities for exercise and getting fresh air”.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p.10.

⁷⁸ Submission No.9, Prue Walsh, pp.5-6.

⁷⁹ Tranter, P. and Pawson, E. (2001) ‘Children’s Access to Local Environments: a case-study of Christchurch, New Zealand, *Local Environment*, Vol. 6, No.1.

⁸⁰ CABE Space, *Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces*, London.

3.7.2 *Overweight and Obesity*

3.7.2.1 There is growing concern about childhood obesity and obesogenic environments (environments that promote obesity). Some estimates suggest that the number of obese and overweight children in Australia could be as high as 30 per cent, which according to Professor Adrian Bauman, appears to place Australia second only to the United States.⁸¹

3.7.2.2 The NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity report, *Creating Healthy Environments: a review of the links between the physical environment, physical activity and obesity*, and the Centre's submission to the inquiry stress the complex relationship between the physical environment, physical activity and childhood obesity. Touching on many of the themes of this inquiry, the following excerpt from the Centre's submission identifies factors that contribute to increased childhood obesity:

Our research on behavioural and environmental influences indicates the importance of specific aspects of the built environment in influencing children and young people's nutrition, physical activity and weight status. The research findings are consistent with, and can be interpreted in light of other information, such as:

- Increasing parental concern regarding children's personal safety outdoors
- Increases in housing density
- Increased traffic and reduced pedestrian safety
- Reduced opportunities for informal, un-structured outdoor play and recreation
- Inadequate supply of sporting fields and courts in some areas
- Increased availability, marketing of, and consumption of energy-dense foods
- Impact of threat of litigation on local government playground facilities.⁸²

3.7.2.3 Some of these factors are borne out by the results from the Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities survey, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, which reveals increased sedentary recreation by children and young people. The 2003 results indicate that 60.9 per cent of 12 to 14 year olds watch in excess of 20 hours television or videos per fortnight and 13.3 per cent of 12-14 year olds play electronic or computer games for more than 20 hours per fortnight. Children in single parent families and families where one or both parents are unemployed participate in less organised cultural activities like playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing or drama.⁸³

3.7.2.4 The NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity proposes a number of areas for attention in preventing further increases in childhood obesity:

Based on our understanding of some of the current health concerns related to children and young people, and the role of the physical environment in influencing these problems, the following suggestions for action emerge:

⁸¹ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.25.

⁸² Submission No.19, NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity, p.4.

⁸³ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities* 4901.0. p.17.

- Actions to support physical activity
 - Build and extend infrastructure, including footpaths, cycleways, playing fields and courts
 - Improve active transport routes to schools, sporting venues and shopping centres
 - Investigate and overcome local governments' liability concerns related to playgrounds, to enable building of more playgrounds and play areas
 - Public policy changes to ensure community access to school facilities outside of school hours, including weekends
 - Investigate and change parental perceptions regarding child safety and the built environment
- Actions to support nutrition
 - Energy dense foods are heavily marketed to young people, and may influence food choices. Consideration should be given to including controls on the density and location of fast food outlets, to support increased food choices for children, young people and families. It is important that alternative settings and food choices are made available and affordable for young people throughout communities in NSW
 - As well as regulating the locations of fast food outlets, planning mechanisms should be used to encourage a mix of food shops in neighbourhoods and shopping centres, facilitate easy access to fruit and vegetables, through fruit barrows in CBDs and other strategic locations, farmgate sales, protecting land for horticultural produce, setting aside land for community gardens, and farmers' markets. There are precedents for all these actions in areas across NSW and Australia.
 - Planning/building regulations to support breastfeeding facilities in shopping centres, other public places and workplaces
 - Introduce controls on the extent and size of food marketing in public places (e.g. billboard height restrictions)
- Integrated approaches to planning
 - In order to incorporate a long list of concerns and considerations related to children, planning processes and guides should adopt integrative approaches, so that social needs, physical activity, safety, shade, and nutrition/food access can all be accommodated
- Research to underpin policy and programs
 - There is a need for further research that carefully monitors the effects of differing urban features on children and young people's physical activity and food consumption. Collaborative research studies involving multidisciplinary teams including health and urban planning expertise are essential. It is likely that there is particular value in studying the effects of 'natural experiments', where new changes in transport arrangements, land use, infrastructure and shopping access are identified and evaluated prospectively for impacts on children and young people
 - It is recognised that it is important for planning processes and actions to continue to respond to new research findings⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Submission No.19, NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity, pp.5-6.

Recommendation: The NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity be involved on relevant inter-agency forums, whereby the expertise gained by the Centre will inform developments associated with creating child- and youth-friendly environments (Recommendation 3a).

3.7.3 *Play spaces*

3.7.3.1 Play spaces are important for children to interact socially. Associate Professor Corkery notes that “play environments, including playgrounds, are in the public domain and are gathering places where children are likely to have some of their initial interactions with other children who are unknown to them. Therefore, these are the places where children have the opportunity to be socialised to the idea of community life, outside the more comfortable, familiar domains of home and school”.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Associate Professor Corkery suggests that “accepting that play environments are the primary public setting for physical activity and social interaction of young children, we would expect those places to be:

- well-designed with regard for child development considerations, i.e. providing gross and fine motor skills, encouraging interaction between children, and between children and adults
- located in areas where they can be readily and safely accessed, preferably by walking or bicycling
- provision of a range of places across the spectrum, from smaller close-to-home places and larger more developed playgrounds within the urban context
- free of hazards and toxic elements
- inclusive of and enhancing natural elements and local ecosystems
- integrated with other community activities, so that children’s activities are welcomed in the community⁸⁶

3.7.3.2 Similarly, during the public hearing on 9 May 2006, Professor Gleeson, in discussion with Mr Steve Cansdell MP, highlighted the importance of wild, unstructured play areas:

Brendan Gleeson: ... they [children and young people] both need more formal spaces in which to interact and less scripted, wilder spaces ... it is immensely important that children’s recreation spaces and areas are not simply manicured parks or places in which athletic sports are performed. They need those kind of wild spaces, that strange bit of undeveloped land or bushland or otherwise wild spaces in which they can take safe risks ... children need to be able to undertake a level of risk, sort of safe risky behaviour.

Steve Cansdell: Climb trees.

Brendan Gleeson: Climb trees, for example, but naturally we do not want them to take too many risks. There is a level of risk-taking that they need to take if they are going to develop. We need those kinds of spaces in which risk can occur.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Submission No.27, Associate Professor Linda Corkery, p.4.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*, p.4.

⁸⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, pp.15-16.

3.7.3.3 An article by Cunningham and Jones, enclosed with the NAPCAN and Streetwise Communications submission, reaffirms the importance of play generally and wild, unstructured play in particular. Cunningham and Jones also introduce differences between boys and girls. Findings from their research of the play experiences of children aged between eight and 12 years, reveals “significant gender differences in the propensity of children to play away from home. More boys than girls played away from home in after-school free time, and boys who played away from home ventured further”⁸⁸. On average, the distances away from home was twice that for boys than girls (400-500 metres compared to 150-200 metres). This close proximity to home, Cunningham and Jones concluded, has implications for how close and dispersed play spaces need to be within local neighbourhoods to enable access.

3.7.3.4 Associate Professor Corkery suggests the importance of quantifying the cost and benefits of particular play environments. The rationale for measuring the economic costs and benefits applies not just to play environments,

If we contend that ‘improved public health’ is the benefit, there needs to be some means of capturing this information more convincingly. This requires interdisciplinary research to take what has been discovered through epidemiological studies and compare it to our understanding of the ecological systems in urban areas and the built environment that impacts them, and then expressing that in costs and benefits. For example, it may be more beneficial to provide more but smaller play spaces throughout a community, i.e. ones that are closer to home and safely accessed along footpaths, than to rationalise these small parcels into fewer but more extensively developed district or regional scale playgrounds. Or, perhaps the budget is better spent getting kids on bicycles and we should concentrate on building safe bikeway systems throughout the entire metropolitan area, focusing less on providing specific places for play but expanding opportunities for playful activity and incidental physical exercise throughout our neighbourhoods and communities.⁸⁹

Recommendation: Research be undertaken into the factors that determine or contribute to positive play and recreational spaces for children and young people, and the economic costs and benefits of providing such spaces (Recommendation 3h).

3.7.4 *Sporting, Recreation and Cultural Facilities*

3.7.4.1 The submission from the Legal Aid Commission of NSW refers to Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child which outlines a child’s right to “rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.⁹⁰ Not only are such activities a right, they are celebrated as core elements of Australian ‘culture’. Australian sporting prowess is a celebrated cultural trait. Appropriate facilities and parental support (transport and funding, amongst other things) are essential to enable children to participate in sporting and recreational activities.

⁸⁸ Cunningham, C. and Jones, M. (2006) *Middle Childhood and the Built Environment: a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment* (on behalf of NAPCAN), p.13.

⁸⁹ Submission No.27, Associate Professor Linda Corkery, p.7.

⁹⁰ Submission No.55, Legal Aid Commission of New South Wales, pp.4-5.

3.7.4.2 Common sports for young people include swimming, outdoor soccer, Australian Rules Football, tennis, outdoor cricket and basketball. According to the survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, approximately 62 per cent of Australian children aged between five and 14 years participated in sport outside of school hours. Further to these organised activities, 62 per cent rode their bikes and 23 per cent skateboarded or rollerbladed, while 17 per cent played a musical instrument, 12 per cent participated in dancing, 5 per cent were involved in singing and 4 per cent were involved in drama.⁹¹ In light of the overweight and obesity trends, levels of participation in sporting and cultural activities are of considerable importance.

3.7.4.3 As identified by the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity, the availability of sporting facilities, cycleways, walking tracks and natural environments is central to boosting participation in activities and protecting children against being overweight and obese.

3.8 **Education and Learning**

3.8.1 Schools are important educational and recreational sites for children and young people. Social planner Sarah Reilly stressed the importance of schools, particularly in providing a safe, parentally-approved location for various activities:

Many of the parents out there said that they feel very comfortable with their children doing things at schools. They felt safe about the school environment. So if you build things around schools it is good.⁹²

3.8.2 Schools are clearly critical places for the growth, development and learning of children and young people. The schooling environment can foster and augment the learning experience.

For children, the built environment can be a place of exploration, excitement and challenge. Learning can be impeded or enhanced by the environment. Research shows that children and young people learn best by hands on, experiential, inferential work, not didactic, directive learning. The built environment needs to support this style of learning.⁹³

3.8.3 The Department of Education and Training submission points to recent trends in considering the overall learning environment for students:

... the development of a quality learning environment that understands and caters for active learning where students are engaged, motivated and self-directed with appropriate technological support has gained prominence.⁹⁴

3.8.4 Reflecting the importance of school design to the learning experience, the Department of Education and Training, through its Education Facilities Research Group has established a rigorous regime for the design of government schools. The

⁹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities* 4901.0 pp.3-6.

⁹² Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.41.

⁹³ Submission No. 39, The Department of Education and Training, p.3.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p.1.

Department's School Facilities Standards (SFS) address issues like school facilities, design specification, landscape and colour. The Department notes that these standards are the result of research, trial and evaluation.⁹⁵

3.8.5 While considerable effort may have been invested in developing design guidelines for schools, concerns were raised during the inquiry in relation to accessing school premises after school hours. Notwithstanding the security benefits achieved by enclosing schools and the public liability fears, review of the impact of these policies on recreation and sporting activities of children and young people should be considered. Based on evidence of the NSW Centre Overweight and Obesity, there is merit in giving consideration to the adoption of the approach recently heralded by the Queensland Premier of opening school facilities to the community (referred to in Chapter 2).

3.8.6 Research undertaken by Tranter and Malone (reported in the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's submission to the inquiry) demonstrates how children's use of school playgrounds is not just inhibited after school hours:

Tranter and Malone tracked the spatial movements of children in school grounds in Melbourne and Canberra during recess and lunch breaks. One school had an excellent environment for children's environmental learning but the area was out of bounds during these periods. The children's play was quite restricted and was mostly confined to concrete and cropped enclosed areas. The children's movements were quite small over these periods.⁹⁶

Recommendation: The Minister for Education be consulted about considering a review by the NSW Department of Education of policies associated with the utilisation of school sporting and recreational facilities after school hours and the impact of these policies on children and young people (Recommendation 3g).

3.9 Social Relationships and Civic Responsibilities

3.9.1 Through the agora, piazza and town square, the built environment nurtured and bore witness to the birth of democracy. Social relationships and civic responsibilities have long been associated with the built environment. Some argue that these spaces are today being traded for privately-owned entertainment complexes (cinemas, restaurants, licensed premises) and shopping centres. In so doing, freedoms to associate and to enjoy public spaces free of scrutiny and surveillance are being eroded.

3.9.2 Various submissions highlighted the importance of relationships for children and young people. As has been stated, Associate Professor Corkery notes that:

...play environments, including playgrounds, are in the public domain and are gathering places where children are likely to have some of their initial interactions with other children who are unknown to them. Therefore, these are the places where children have

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p.2.

⁹⁶ Tranter, P. and Malone, K. (2003) 'Out of bounds: Insights from children to support a cultural shift towards sustainable and child-friendly cities', Paper presented to the State of Australian Cities National Conference, Parramatta, 3-5 December 2004, as cited in Submission No. 53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, pp.11-12.

the opportunity to be socialised to the idea of community life, outside the more comfortable, familiar domains of home and school.⁹⁷

3.9.3 The formation and maintenance of relationships is in part affected by the built environment. Mr Manikas, Chairman 2050, stated the following in his evidence to the Committee:

One of the things we found that affects young people in society these days is a detachment from other people of their own age in different situations and one of the biggest issues is probably the urban sprawl of Sydney and how Sydney is the second largest city in the world in area and the difficulty in transportation and people being able to mix with other people of possibly different social and economic backgrounds. Therefore, it detaches different classes from other people and pushes the divide even further.⁹⁸

3.9.4 NAPCAN and Streetwise Communications link the built environment to social capital and community cohesion. In their joint submission, NAPCAN and Streetwise Communications state that:

...relationships and community cohesion are paramount to the quality of children and young people's lives. Built environments that enable and foster community are one of the keys to the health, wellbeing and safety of children and young people.⁹⁹

3.9.5 Beyond the opportunities to socialise, interact and observe other children, the built environment also fosters an understanding of how communities and societies operate and function. Exposure to different cultural practices, different perspectives and different generations are key features of a healthy open society.

3.9.6 Professor Brendan Gleeson articulates some of these dimensions:

Coming back to children, it is in civic and public realms where children experience difference, where they mix, and it is a form of civic schooling for them and preparing them for adulthood and the kinds of complexities that being an adult brings upon you, and realising that you are living in a society that is bigger than your own neighbourhood and your own immediate family.¹⁰⁰

3.9.7 Despite the rights to and benefits of accessing public spaces, it is understood that this is not true for all children and young people. For young people emerging from parental supervision and experiencing independence, public spaces assume greater significance. Apart from simple enjoyment, unescorted journeys into a central business district, to a cinema or to a local shopping centre, provide opportunities for peer interaction and identity formation. Young people's access to these and other locations is frequently dependent upon public transport. The inquiry was repeatedly informed of the importance and difficulties for young people of accessing public transport.

⁹⁷ Submission No.27, Associate Professor Linda Corkery, p.4.

⁹⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.15.

⁹⁹ Submission No.29, NAPCAN foundation and Streetwise Communications, p.2.

¹⁰⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, p.11.

- 3.9.8 The Youth Justice Coalition highlighted a theme of various submissions – young people’s access and use of public space and recreational facilities is heavily reliant on public transport.

Young people are more reliant on forms of public transport than adults. The public transport systems form an integral part of how many young people enjoy their social time. They serve the practical function of getting them to and from school and work, and are central to young peoples’ experience of the built environment.¹⁰¹

- 3.9.9 Accessibility to public space is not only dependent upon public transport. Groups of young people run the risk of being perceived as dangerous or unruly. The Youth Justice Coalition affirmed how perceptions of young people can influence their ability to access public space.

It is our experience that young people are often the target of move on directions, even when they are just ‘hanging around’. This is often due to the perception that young people hanging around in groups are intrinsically intimidating to some people in the community. It is also our experience that the move on power is used by police quite broadly and arbitrarily in relation to young people, especially in areas where there is a higher presence of marginalised young people in a local area.¹⁰²

- 3.9.10 This can be particularly true for young Aboriginal people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. As stated previously, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council’s submission to the inquiry identified the problems associated with access (especially for young indigenous people) to public spaces:

In many cities and towns throughout NSW, young Aboriginal people have found that the built environment serves to exclude them and increase their sense of inequality and alienation. Aboriginal children and young people have found that in many situations they are denied access to public spaces in streets and shopping malls.¹⁰³

- 3.9.11 The public gaze cast over young people socialising in public spaces can result in narrow attribution of responsibility for ‘inappropriate’ behaviour. Rather than consideration of the influence of environmental factors to particular behaviours, it was suggested that individual young people are held responsible:

Phil Crane: A lot of issues with the buses were to do with rocks being thrown at the buses. They can be seen as behavioural issues and could be responded to behaviourally. The difficulty was in that case that they used river rocks as the fill to separate the lanes of road across which the students walked from the school to the bus depot. It is no wonder they had a supply of missiles. There being some level of frustration and tension on hot days one could ask is that a behavioural issue or is that a built environment issue?

Steve Cansdell: A bad planning issue?

Phil Crane: A bad planning issues, bad design.

Steve Cansdell: They did the same thing in Grafton. They put those rocks in the streetscape and wondered why windows were being smashed.

¹⁰¹ Submission No.38, Youth Justice Coalition, p.7.

¹⁰² *ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁰³ Submission No.49, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, p.5.

Phil Crane: That is right. We can pick it up as a behavioural issue but it really is a built environment issue.

Michael Daley: It could be a bit of both?

Phil Crane: It can be a bit of both.¹⁰⁴

3.9.12 Dr Crane went on to elaborate:

But we are often very quick to leap on a behavioural explanation in relation to what young people are seen or perceived to have done, and then to most quickly suggest that it is a management, or a police, or a security response that is needed rather than looking at the full range of factors that might be contributing to the situation and looking at what is the most effective and efficient way to respond to these sorts of issues.¹⁰⁵

3.9.13 Dr Crane concluded his evidence with the warning that,

...the more we rely on policing as the strategy, the more we are asking the police to be the principal agents for managing and dealing with public space issues.¹⁰⁶

3.9.14 Another method for dealing with concerns that arise in relation to young people is to place facilities specifically designed to cater for young people in locations away from public view. The Planning Institute of Australia highlighted the following phenomena based on their members' experiences of planning procedures:

- There is a tendency to separate youth space away from other uses making them seem scary to other community members and making young people somehow different from the rest of us. It is better to integrate youth spaces with other community facilities.
- Many communities believe that there is a need to develop skate facilities, but many in the past have not consulted with young people about the location, which tends to be in an isolated section of a park, away from other people, making them unsafe and invisible, and ultimately unused, particularly by young women and young girls.¹⁰⁷

3.9.15 Dr Crane concurred, suggesting that in the 1980s and 1990s youth facilities were put on "disused blocks with no commercial value". He cautioned against such an approach, suggesting that:

My experience is that overwhelmingly when young people and the community are in a relationship with each other where they have the opportunity to communicate, a lot of myths and stereotypes wash away ... The notion of putting young people out in the back blocks away from the community eye is not what young people want, it is not the safest and it does not build that relationship between young people and other people in the community.¹⁰⁸

3.9.16 The NSW Commission for Children and Young People also endorsed integration, rather than segregation:

¹⁰⁴ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.7.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁰⁷ Submission No.33, Planning Institute of Australia (NSW Division), pp.2-3.

¹⁰⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.10.

Paradoxically, it is apparent from what children and young people have told us and from both Australian and international research, that it is just as important to have areas available that are not necessarily specifically designed or designated for children and young people. These 'separated' areas often fail to satisfy the complexity of children's developmental needs and also tend to separate children from the daily life of their communities.¹⁰⁹

- 3.9.17 Various submissions highlighted approaches that have been adopted in New South Wales in response to the challenges posed by diverse users utilising public spaces. The National Children's and Youth Law Centre submission supported the *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind* publication, but questioned whether there had been any form of monitoring to determine how widely these guidelines had been utilised since publication in 1999. The Commission for Community Relations' submission supported efforts to better train private security personnel in dealing with young people and suggested that one of their projects tackling this issue would conclude in December 2006.

Recommendation: The Minister for Planning consider a review by the Department of Planning of the effectiveness of the *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind* and, pending the outcome of a review, the currency of the publication be enhanced and the publication be re-launched (Recommendation 3b).

Recommendation: The outcomes of the project associated with security guard training be promoted, in consultation with the Commission for Community Relations (Recommendation 3q).

3.10 Transportation and access

- 3.10.1 Submissions from the Youth Justice Coalition and the NSW Commission for Children and Young People highlight the importance of and barriers to accessing public transport to children and young people. The Youth Justice Coalition suggested that the cost of travel can be a barrier to utilising public and private transport options.¹¹⁰ The NSW Commission for Children and Young People pointed to difficulties experienced by children, young people and their carers in accessing public transport:

In many parts of NSW there are major shortcomings in the public transport system. The shortcomings include route penetration in some areas, low frequencies, high cost and inadequate physical design of infrastructure such as terminals, stations and bus stops.¹¹¹

- 3.10.2 The Centre for Overweight and Obesity also stressed the impact that transportation systems, as a feature of the built environment, have on healthy eating and lifestyle for children and young people:

Timothy Gill: ...We know that if you have limited opportunity to purchase from large shopping venues, such as supermarkets where there is a wider array of foods, then, obviously, the restricted number of products available in convenience foods limits what

¹⁰⁹ Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.11.

¹¹⁰ Submission No.38, Youth Justice Coalition, p.7.

¹¹¹ Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.16.

you can eat. Your access in terms of where those facilities are sited and the transport to them also influences the capacity to purchase appropriate or inappropriate foods. There also is a whole range of issues associated with opportunity. If, as a teenager, you are going to want to go somewhere, one of the most obvious places to congregate is a fast food outlet because it is safe and because there is a degree of attraction for you there—it is situated away from parents. It is one of the few facilities in the built environment that actually encourages teenagers to hang around.¹¹²

3.10.3 Similarly, Professor Bauman stated that integration of transport within developments was an important factor in determining patterns of food consumption. He cited the following examples of connected environments to illustrate this point:

...The opportunity for us is with the green fields developments at the urban fringe where urban sprawl can be redefined, as well as places on the Central Coast, Western Sydney and south-western Sydney, where new housing developments are being built. There are case studies from the United States, Europe and Canada that demonstrate this. If you create connected environments, you plan the types of shops that are going to be there, you allow destinations so that the cull-de-sacs link to each other through connectors so your kids can walk to school. You create the paths. You create that the environment that allows physical activity and nutritional patterns that are planned more in advance, and there may even be a health benefit that is saleable to the developers of these ideas. For example, retirement villages in the United States sell health by having physical activity facilities for older adults so, it is not impossible to plan communities a little more oriented towards activity, towards having transportation systems that can get people to things and towards patterns of food consumption.¹¹³

3.10.4 Beyond these shortcomings and barriers to access, the NSW Commission for Children and Young People identified various challenges for young people with disabilities. The unsuitability of some train stations and buses for wheelchair access adds further barrier to accessing public and private transport for children and young people with disabilities.¹¹⁴

3.10.5 There is a trend towards connected development that is dependent upon the features of the specific locations involved and effective planning and coordination. Mr Johnson raised the current focus on accessibility in transport to ensure easy access to locations, and gave the following evidence on planning around transport nodes:

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: I am interested in building around transport nodes. You talked about them being for households of one or two people but there is obviously a plan to have a mixture of buildings in such developments. Can you talk specifically about what people are thinking in terms of how children and young people will be accommodated? ...How do you see children and young people fitting into high-density environments around public transport and so on?

Chris Johnson: I think there will have to be a whole variety of approaches. I think we are actually at the front end—the beginning—of tackling these issues. In many parts of the world people obviously do live with families in reasonably dense environments.

¹¹² Transcript of evidence, 16 May 2006, pp.23-24.

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p.35.

¹¹⁴ Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.17.

...In America there is a movement called transit-oriented development, TOD, which aims to try to get developments within walking distance—a 400- or 500-metre diameter—of a transport node so that everyone within that dimension can walk. I think that can be quite a positive aspect relative to over-reliance on cars in other areas. But I guess in Australian society as opposed to some others—Europe has a more monoculture perhaps in these terms—we are about variety and providing differences and options. I think that is what the planning system needs to encourage.¹¹⁵

3.10.6 Ms Beverley Giegerl, Local Government and Shires Association, confirmed the complexities of such coordinated planning:

...There is pedestrian accessibility so that kids of whatever age and their parents can get to these things safely. This is where it begins to merge in with what is sometimes felt is the hard infrastructure things such as traffic planning, roads—

. . .

Yes, access and appropriate bus services and so forth. It is a really big, complex jigsaw. You could have perfection in several areas and if you miss one of those critical links that is particularly relevant to the specific local area you are looking at you are going to be wondering why it did not work.

3.10.7 Access issues were apparent in both regional and urban areas, apparent from the evidence of both Richmond Valley and Canterbury Councils:

Steve Cansdell: ...It has 20,000 people and no public transport for the youth to travel from one place to another. So you almost have to duplicate all those facilities in every little community. Is that a real challenge for the smaller communities?

Joanne Petrovic: For example, in Richmond Valley Council there is no youth centre in Casino, Evans Head or Coraki. There are a number of smaller rural towns, but they are the biggest three towns in the area. We have a four-day-a-week youth worker one in Casino. That covers a population of 10,000. That is all we have. In Evans Head we were recently really lucky. We got some funds and got a five-day-a-week youth worker.

Steve Cansdell: Is the neighbourhood centre running that?

Joanne Petrovic: Yes, that is Evans Head neighbourhood centre. When I say "we", I mean the whole council area. It would be amazing if the council got those funds itself! That is basically all we have. So for the whole of Richmond Valley I think we have a sum total of under \$150,000 worth to put into young people, youth centres, youth workers, renting premises—the whole lot. That is the reality. There is no transport. For example, if you want to get to TAFE from Evans Head it is \$17 return to the nearest TAFE. That is simply to get an education beyond year 12, and university would be even further away.

Steve Cansdell: I asked those questions to highlight the problems faced in small rural communities compared with Sydney.

Joanne Petrovic: That is exacerbated 100-fold by simple things like if you cannot afford a car or the petrol many places do not have bus routes or public transport systems at all. In Aboriginal communities the number of people with licences is very low so you cannot even grab a lift. Most young people in our areas hitchhike.

¹¹⁵ Transcript of evidence, 16 May 2006, pp.78-79

Andy Sammut: In terms of the fundamental issue you have raised about affordability of access to services, the same applies in the inner city as in rural areas. There are many low-income families in Sydney and, similarly, young people do not get access to facilities because, as much as we would like to think there is a youth centre in every community, there is not. Even in an area as small and as densely populated as Canterbury we have just one youth centre for the whole local government area. So the affordability of access by people, whose pocket money in a low-income area is not that great, is a big issue, whether it is in rural or city-based areas. It is about affordability. It is about access. If we are really going to improve the lives of young people and children we must put those facilities where they can reach them. I think that is the real pressure for local government.¹¹⁶

3.11 **Conclusion**

3.11.1 Children and young people, for the purposes of this inquiry, cover those people aged less than 18 years. The needs of children and young people vary dramatically according to, amongst other things, age. Mr Johnson, Department of Planning, summarised some of these differences.

... the group you are looking at, if it is from nought to 18, is a very diverse group of people. I sense that it falls into three or four different categories. There are the kids who have to be looked after totally by their parents – prams and all those sorts of issues and that brings up ramps, crossing of streets and curbs, and things – the walking group that is still not adult enough to be totally on their own, and then the more adolescent group who almost want to challenge society a bit.¹¹⁷

3.11.2 As children move from being infants to toddlers, to pre-schoolers, to middle childhood and then into adolescence, their needs evolve. The built environment is integral to this maturation process. Shelter, cognitive and physical development, social interaction and civic responsibility are all impacted by one's environment. Ensuring that the built environment responds, anticipates and meets the needs of children and young people will not only contribute to a vibrant society, but also ameliorate the excesses of contemporary life. Failure to create child- and youth-friendly environments will be to the detriment of all society, not just children and young people.

¹¹⁶ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.49

¹¹⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.83

Chapter 4: Creating Child- and Youth-Friendly Environments

- 4.1 There can be no single solution to creating child- and youth-friendly environments. As has been portrayed, there are many factors and influences that determine the nature of the built environment. Nonetheless, there does need to be some overarching framework for exploring how child- and youth-friendly environments can more often be created in NSW and a mechanism to give impetus and profile to the framework. A fundamental shift is needed to bring young people up to the forefront of an integrated, multi-disciplinary approach.
- 4.2 In his submission to the inquiry, Dr Crane outlined an approach to thinking about public space and urban planning, which includes:
- Management – laws and regulations
 - Planning processes – participation and consultation structures
 - Design – inclusive design reflecting information from consultations and all users
 - Policy – guidelines for specific elements of the built environment
 - Facilities and activities – consider potential uses of locations and ways that behaviour can be influenced positively by these activities¹¹⁸
- 4.3 This framework has been abbreviated and modified slightly and used to structure a blueprint for ensuring child- and youth-friendly environments are replicated across New South Wales.
- 4.4 **Regulation**
- 4.4.1 Numerous built environment laws and regulations operate at Federal, State and local government levels. Providing a detailed analysis of the various codes and Acts that regulate the built environment is beyond the scope of this inquiry. Rather, some key features will be considered here.
- 4.4.2 Firstly, and perhaps obviously, the regulation of the built environment is complex. Some aspects require strict regulation, while other features of the built environment are more open to local and site differences. Mr Chris Johnson (Department of Planning) noted the complexity of planning systems and the need for diversity and balance:
- In planning systems there is a mixture of absolutes and sensible guidelines. For instance, if you want to get sunshine onto a park you cannot have a building above a certain height, and that is absolute. If you are flexible, you then do not achieve the objective of what you are setting out.¹¹⁹
- 4.4.3 The balance between absolute regulations and sensible guidelines is reflected in the NSW planning system, which operates at different levels. The following provides a very brief overview of the layers of regulation affecting the built environment.

¹¹⁸ Submission No.21, Dr Phil Crane, pp.4-5.

¹¹⁹ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.81

Instrument	Brief Overview
<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)</i>	<p>The <i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979</i> provides the legislative framework for planning and development in NSW. The objects of the Act (as detailed in section 5) include the following:</p> <p>5. (a) to encourage –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land, natural areas, forests, minerals, water, cities, towns and villages for the purpose of promoting the social and economic welfare of the community and a better environments (ii) The promotion and coordination of the orderly and economic use and development of land; (iii) The protection, provision and coordination of communication and utility services; (iv) The provision and coordination of community services and facilities; and (v) The provision of land for public purposes; (vi) The protection of the environment, including the protection and conservation of native animals and plants, including threatened species, populations and ecological communities and their habitats; and (vii) Ecologically sustainable development, and <p>(b) to promote the sharing of responsibility for environmental planning between the different levels of government in the State; and</p> <p>(c) to provide increased opportunity for public involvement and participation in environmental planning and assessment.</p>
State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs)	SEPPs deal with issues significant to the state and people of New South Wales. They are made by the Minister of Planning. Where any development is proposed, a SEPP will dictate considerations the development consent authority must take into account. There are a number of SEPPs currently in place, including those that relate to the number of storeys in a building (SEPP No. 6); retention of low-cost rental accommodation (SEPP No. 10); urban consolidation (redevelopment of urban land) (SEPP No. 32); manufactured home estates (SEPP No. 36); affordable housing (SEPP 70); and seniors living.
Regional Environmental Plans (REPs)	REPs deal with issues that go beyond the local government area like providing public transport to specific regions of New South Wales. REPs provide a framework for local government in their local planning and can apply to large parcels of land (for example, the Hunter region) or small sites with regional significance (for example, Homebush Bay).
Local Environmental Plans (LEPs)	LEPs are the principle legal documents for controlling development at the council level. The zoning provisions establish permissibility of uses and standards regulate the extent of development. They are prepared by councils and approved by the Minister for Planning (after public exhibition).
Development Control Plans (DCPs)	DCPs are detailed guidelines that illustrate the controls that apply to a particular type of development or in a particular area. A DCP refines or supplements an LEP. Many councils have DCPs for childcare facilities, for example, which cover such things as appropriateness of locations, parking requirements, etc.

4.4.4 As is evident from the above summary, the planning tools cascade from a state-wide perspective to more localised foci. Mr Johnson described this hierarchical arrangement in the following way:

The planning system is a balance from the top down, and that is from a broad State legislation, it needs to be fairly general about height-related issues and things. As it gets

down to the more local issues of development control plans, et cetera, public domain plans, it becomes much more local about those sorts of characteristics.¹²⁰

- 4.4.5 Given the above instruments and the competing demands, it is perhaps not surprising that coordination of planning decisions and managing competing interests is a considerable challenge to achieving an integrated approach to the built environment. Mr Johnson, summarised some key factors impacting upon the built environment in his opening remarks to the inquiry:

The planning process is, as you say, one of balancing competing requirements, desires and needs partly between economics and the environment, between different age groups, families and non-families, work and play and residential ... I guess 'diversity' would be the word that sums up what the planning system needs to be about – that is, to encourage opportunities for all groups to succeed and have their own form of the built environment that they can all be within¹²¹

4.4.6 *Planning Reforms*

- 4.4.6.1 The New South Wales planning system has recently undergone a series of reforms. These reforms have served multiple purposes, including the reduction of unnecessary bureaucratic requirements and responding to the demands of the planning system. Mr Johnson described these reforms, in the following way:

It seems crazy as I go around the State to find when I pick up a local environment plan or development control plan that they can be fundamentally different not in their local content but in the way they are structured, the format and all sorts of things, and unnecessarily so. The reform process has been more to help get a template that can allow people to pull together a simpler way of getting the system together. And to most people I think the planning system is a little bit difficult to comprehend, and I think it needs to be in fairly plain language, a simple system that the broader community can understand... The reform process really has been about simplifying, almost for consumers, for the public and the development industry as well, a system that makes it easier for everyone to get involved. The price of that should be to enable more potential for planners with the various tiers, in both the State and the local government system, to get a bit more involved on the detailed issues that then do relate to children and young people, do relate to older people, do relate to the character of town centres, village centres and neighbourhood centres.¹²²

- 4.4.6.2 The projected consequences and impact of these reforms varies. A number of submissions to the inquiry and witnesses appearing before the committee identified various potential consequences. These included consequences for councils, land use and children and young people.

- 4.4.6.3 Mosman Municipal Council considered the move toward centralised LEPs and the potential implications for councils and ultimately on land use. It submitted:

The Department of Planning prepared a draft standard local environmental plan (LEP). Once finalised, all councils will use the standard LEP to prepare a new local plan for their area within the next five years.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p.82.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p.76.

¹²² *ibid.*, p.80.

...

Knowing the latest urban design practices suggest that road networks should be well connected with local and regional facilities and activities and pedestrian and bicycle paths should have direct access to a destination, it is expected that the new LEP will increase even more the mix of land uses and densities, street connectivity and opportunities for walking and cycling – viable alternatives to the local use of the car.¹²³

4.4.6.4 The NSW Aboriginal Land Council cautions that planning reforms will “militate against the formulation of planning approaches that are inclusive of the populations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and young people”.¹²⁴

4.4.6.5 Moreover, the submission by the Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales raised concerns about the consequences of the reforms:

The Associations question where legitimate concerns about including the perspectives of children and young people about the built environment fit within the present planning reforms. As the Committee is aware, the NSW Government is currently undertaking a major overhaul of the NSW planning system. These reforms include focus on strategic planning for growth areas, simplify planning controls; improve development assessment processes and allow flexibility in the use of developer levies for local facilities and services. The reduction in the number and standardisation of local environmental plans (LEPs), regional environmental plans (REPs) and State environmental planning policies (SEPPs) aim to eliminate the current layers of red tape that slow down and complicate the approval process. The LEP will continue as the central planning document for mandatory development controls. It will contain links to most local planning rules that apply in the area – this means that one plan will tell the reader what local controls apply to a site. The format and some of the content of the LEPs are being standardised and modernised through the LEP template so that the community and developers more easily understand the planning system.

However, this standardisation, simplification and (alleged) modernisation may exclude or trivialise the non-standard or complex processes needed to engage children or young people or take account of the needs of children or young people. This information on the draft LEP template doesn't attempt to deal [with] the issues (or complexities) of accounting for different population groups or other communities of interest in the planning processes (with the arguable exception of the ageing population). For example, the draft LEP template does not deal with social impact assessments – which is one way the needs of children and young people could be taken into account in built environment planning decisions.¹²⁵

4.4.6.6 The Disability Council of NSW raised specific concerns about the impact that the planning reforms would have on children and young people with disabilities:

There is a danger that attention to the planning needs of children with disability in relation to the built environment may secure a low priority for attention by Councils already stretched by the demands of planning and developing local communities with complex and often contradictory interests to balance.

¹²³ Submission No.34, Mosman Municipal Council, p.3.

¹²⁴ Submission No.49, NSW Aboriginal Land Council, p.9.

¹²⁵ Submission No.23, Local Government and Shires Association of New South Wales, p.6.

Many Councils may look to the Building Code of Australia or the Disability Standards on Access to Premises (assuming it becomes enshrined in Commonwealth Law). Even if that happens, there would still be a strong likelihood that local planning instruments would miss out essential considerations (beyond the BCA/the DDA Standards) in areas such as public pathways, footway, cafes, public events, festivals, or parks to name but a few.¹²⁶

4.4.6.7 Mr Johnson disagreed to the suggestion that the needs of children and young people would be further marginalised as a consequence of the planning reforms:

Acting Chair: ...Some people commented on the planning reforms you are talking about and suggested that, although they are good in modernising and signifying the actual planning processes in place in the State, they might end up unintentionally further relegating the needs of children and young people. Would you agree with that or disagree with that?

Chris Johnson: I would not agree with it. I do not think there is anything in the reform process that is for or against any particular part of the community.¹²⁷

4.4.6.8 Nonetheless, the National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) proposed a number of reforms to existing controls, including the following:

NCYLC recommends that the Department of Planning produces a State Environmental Planning Policy specific to the needs of children and young people in NSW.¹²⁸

NCYLC recommends that the children and young person specific SEPP should apply to proposed development likely to have an impact on children and young people and should set out:

- (a) assessment criteria and considerations which the consent authority should take into account; and
- (b) require a developer to submit a 'Youth Impact Report' (YIR) with the Development Application which addresses specific children and young people issues relating to the proposed development.¹²⁹

4.4.6.9 These recommendations were put to various witnesses, with mixed responses:

Acting Chair: We did not ask you our last question about the extent to which you would support more formal plans and statements in dealing with development applications and so on and making sure that there is some sort of youth-specific impact statement or State Government plan. Would you go down that path or do you think it is too prescriptive and not what your organisation is on about?

Michael Manikas (2050): I do not think so. Putting another report as a condition on a DA is probably not the way to do it. I think it needs to happen before then. I think it needs to be incorporated more in the design stage than the approval stage, which is

¹²⁶ Submission No.35, Disability Council of NSW, p.11.

¹²⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.63.

¹²⁸ Submission No.46, National Children's and Youth Law Centre, p.18.

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, pp.21-22.

getting back to educating not only young people but senior people who are designing the places where we live and work.¹³⁰

4.4.6.10 and also,

Acting Chair: People who think that not enough attention is being paid to it have suggested things like a youth impact statement, a special SEPP dealing with the needs of children and young people, in other words various things that could be done legislatively or by regulation to beef up the attention paid at a moment to children and young people. What would your reaction be to that?

Ross Woodward (Department of Local Government): My view is that anything that can beef up the attention would be a good thing.¹³¹

4.4.6.11 Kayee Griffin put similar issues to Gillian Calvert, Commissioner for Children and Young People:

Kayee Griffin: One organisation spoke about having included youth impact reports in development applications and also the development application [DAs] of a youth specific State environmental planning policy. Representatives from local government saw a number of concerns with youth specific things with respect to DAs, new developments or master plans for certain areas. What would be your view of councils including youth issues in their social plans? How could they better incorporate aspects with respect to youth and the other aspects that local government said they needed to consider in DAs and master plans?

Ms Calvert: We are certainly supportive of including children and young people's needs and interests in the built environment. It is always a tension, is it not? You do not want to ignore the complexity and diversity of people in the community by focusing only on one group, but on the other hand we know that if you talk about social issues, they tend to be adult social issues rather than the social issues that impact on children and young people. Adults are generally the ones who respond to the social issues or those impact statements, and they tend to think of it from their own point of view and forget about children and young people.

...

In relation to the youth impact project or youth impact statements in respect to specific development applications [DAs], I would probably reserve judgment on that partly because I have seen those sorts of youth impact statements being just a series of, in a sense, bureaucratic processes rather than a real process of engaging in and understanding what it is that children and young people need, so I would be concerned about them.¹³²

4.4.6.12 Regulation of the built environment is complex. For instance, it was noted in evidence during the inquiry that local councils also provide for children in the middle childhood to early adolescent age group (as distinct from the 0-5 year olds and late adolescent group) when planning for children's services and facilities but that the needs of this particular group of children and young people are not so readily identifiable within the planning and development processes. The different

¹³⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.16.

¹³¹ *ibid.*, p.46.

¹³² Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.69.

regulatory controls that operate at State and local levels attempt to reflect diverse needs. Whether these controls effectively address the needs of children and young people is open to debate. The Committee heard competing perspectives in this regard. Consequently, further consideration and exploration of these issues is recommended.

Recommendation: The NSW Commission for Children and Young People explore the possibility of partnering with a Local Council to investigate how local government can harness its capacity to create more child-friendly environments. This partnership should include consideration of development of DCPs on children's services, availability of fast food outlets and provision of playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities. Attention to the engagement of children and young people in master planning and reviewing relevant development applications should also be considered (Recommendation 4).

Recommendation: The Minister for Planning consider the desirability of amending the NSW planning legislation or instruments to incorporate child-friendly planning principles, where appropriate, in consultation with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (Recommendation 5).

Recommendation: Opportunities be explored to develop indicators of a 'child-friendly' community, which could be incorporated into the Department of Planning's tools for assessing land use plans (Recommendation 3e).

4.5 Planning Processes

4.5.1 Development and planning decisions have profound implications for all members of an area, neighbourhood, town or city. Decisions to regenerate previously degraded sites have health implications for future users. Development of a green field site may further erode the remaining green space available for current and future generations, as well as having environmental implications. Erection of a ten-storey block of units increases the number of residents in that area, which might be welcomed by local businesses, but despised by local residents. Decisions to open a transport corridor will reduce travel time for commuters residing long distances from central business districts, but be opposed by those affected by construction activities. Although striking a balance of these perspectives will often be fraught, many people would expect to have opportunities to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives. Mr Johnson, Department of Planning summarised some of these tensions in his evidence to the Committee:

The planning process is, as you say, one of balancing competing requirements, desires and needs partly between economics and the environment, between different age groups, families and non-families, work and play and residential ... I guess 'diversity' would be the word that sums up what the planning system needs to be about – that is, to encourage opportunities for all groups to succeed and have their own form of the built environment that they can all be within¹³³

4.5.2 *Children and Young People's Participation in Planning Processes*

¹³³ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.76.

4.5.2.1 Providing opportunities for public involvement and comment in key planning decisions is a central feature of the NSW planning regime. Despite this, it is generally accepted that children and young people are rarely involved. Freeman, Aitken-Rose and Johnston conducted research in New Zealand on the involvement of children and young people in local planning decisions. In reporting this research, they came to the following conclusion:

Public participation in planning is universally acknowledged as a good thing by local government and planners ... Children and young people have not generally been included as 'public' for purposes of participation even though they usually constitute between 30 and 40% of the population. Consideration of children and young people has tended to be confined to issues relating to allocating of resources and developments, public services and facilities such as in building schools and sports fields.¹³⁴

4.5.2.2 Similar sentiments have been expressed about the situation in Australia, including in NSW. Professor Brendan Gleeson had the following observation:

... children are this kind of afterthought often, not necessarily for reasons of malfeasance or bad intention, but it just often is the case, that in areas of development practice they are not at the centre and when they are not ... they will find ways of appropriating space, and then you get frictions and people getting upset about ways that they are legitimately looking for space to use.¹³⁵

4.5.2.3 Freeman et al explain in part the absence of children and young people in planning processes linked to the built environment.

Generally, however, children and young people do not participate on their own volition, engaging only if particular initiatives are taken to connect with their networks and respond to their capabilities and interests ... Lack of time, cost and the rigour imposed by the legal process inhibited involvement and it is observed that the more 'creative' programmes are developed outside statutory requirements.¹³⁶

4.5.2.4 Inexperience of built environment professionals in dealing with children and young people was also cited as a potential barrier.

...there is limited experience within planning of working with children and young people and for most planners it represents a new and often intimidating area of work ... The most important issue is to be willing and open, to listen and to provide opportunities where partnerships between planners and children and young people can be nurtured and developed.¹³⁷

4.5.2.5 Despite the challenges, efforts to increase participation of children and young people in decisions associated with planning the built environment are supported by the Committee. The Committee acknowledges the good work already undertaken by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People in producing resources to

¹³⁴ Freeman, C.; Aitken-Rose, E. and Johnston, R. (2004) *Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in new Zealand*, Report on Research Findings, p.12.

¹³⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 9 May 2006, p.7.

¹³⁶ Freeman, Aitken-Rose and Johnston, op.cit., p.69.

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, pp.15-16.

assist organisations and individuals better understand how they can involve children and young people in decision-making.

- 4.5.2.6 Even when children and young people are involved, there is concern about whether the views expressed actually shape the final plans. For example, Dr Crane had the following observation from an experience in Queensland:

There were 30-odd suggestions that came out of focus groups, consultancies and working parties with young people. My understanding is not one of those ended up making it into the final way Roma Street [Brisbane] was done. That does not mean that Roma Street is not a fantastic place for some people, but it means a vast amount of energy went into consultation processes and very little outcome in relation to that was there for young people ... That is part of the limitation of participatory and consultation strategies, that they are tantamount to how we used to criticize public funding as being input oriented. It is about what we do in the process not about the outcomes.¹³⁸

- 4.5.2.7 The issue of which children and young people should be consulted presents practical difficulties. While numerous benefits can be achieved from consultation, Siggers, Palmer, Royce, Wilson and Charlton caution that “some believe that the practice of youth participation can be problematic and dominated by school leaders, or have a ‘hidden agenda’ about the need to create good citizens”.¹³⁹ Moreover, as was identified by Julie Hegarty (Local Government and Shires Association), participation confined to youth councils and advisory groups can exclude hard-to-reach or marginalised groups, which can distort the nature of the advice and input provided:

... it tends to be the same type of people who get involved, that is, the kids that are already on student representative councils, the kids that are already students leaders, that are class captains, school captains, tend to be the ones that participate in the Youth Council.¹⁴⁰

- 4.5.2.8 The following discussion between Mrs Barbara Perry (Chair) and Ms Gillian Calvert (Commissioner for Children and Young People) highlights the diverse experience in relation to youth councils and the potential that such structures offer:

Chair: Do you have specific opinions about councils that have youth advisory councils or youth councils, as to how they operate? Are they broad enough in their dealings at a local government level? Should those youth councils or advisory councils be able to broaden their input to local government?

Gillian Calvert: This is interesting. I hear quite different things, depending on the youth council. Some youth councils that are very active and vibrant say that they have never had any development application or development questions referred to them. It is pretty much social things that are referred to youth councils. On the other hand, some weeks ago I was at Orange and attended a forum organised by Orange City Council where they were consulting with the community about their master plan. They had set up a specific consultation group with young people to try to get young people’s views about the master plan. Local councils could make much better use of the youth councils around

¹³⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.7.

¹³⁹ Siggers, S; Palmer, D; Royce, P; Wilson, L. and Charlton, A. (2004) *“Alive and Motivated”*: Young People, Participation and Local Government, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, Canberra, p.15.

¹⁴⁰ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.62.

the built environment. I think it is an untapped resource for local councils, around the built environment. Some councils use them, a lot of councils do not.¹⁴¹

4.5.2.9 Despite the difficulties of appropriately engaging children and young people in planning processes, there is considerable evidence of the numerous benefits to flow from the involvement of children and young people, namely that it:

- increases a sense of being part of the community and builds ownership of solutions to particular problems/issues;
- enhances capabilities of decision-making;
- builds connections to other young people and adults;
- helps young people learn;
- improves financial outcomes; and
- shows and promotes talent.¹⁴²

4.5.2.10 Furthermore, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Australia has an obligation to meet its obligations under this Convention. Article 12 of the Convention states:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or indirectly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules or national law.

4.5.2.11 With this obligation in mind and the associated benefits, consideration is needed of when it is most appropriate to involve children and young people in decisions associated with the built environment and available examples of good practice in actually fulfilling commitments of child and youth participation.

4.5.2.12 With respect to when children and young people should be engaged in consultative and participatory processes, there was strong support from the witnesses to the inquiry that the master planning stage is the most appropriate time. This is when major decisions are made. The Planning Institute of Australia, representing over 4,500 planners across Australia involved in the fields of urban and regional planning, social planning, urban design, environmental planning, economic development planning, transport planning and planning, noted in its submission the absence of children and young people in master planning processes;

In particular, children and young people are rarely involved in the master planning stage, where a real difference can be made.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.73.

¹⁴² Burfoot, D. (2003) 'Children and young people's participation: Arguing for a better future', *Youth Studies Australia*, Vol. 22, No.3, Tasmania.

¹⁴³ Submission No.33, Planning Institute of Australia (NSW Division), p.2.

4.5.2.13 Not only should children and young people be engaged at the master planning stage, but they should also be involved in widespread developments. Typically, where children and young people are invited to participate in planning processes, the development will involve aspects of the built environment specifically linked to children and young people.

4.5.2.14 Freeman et al argue the following in relation to their work in New Zealand,

This report argues the case that this limited approach is inadequate and children and young people need to be considered with reference to the whole environment including, retail, transports, town centre redevelopment, sports provision, health provision, housing and open space developments.¹⁴⁴

4.5.2.15 In engaging children and young people, care should be taken not to create an expectation that what is suggested or recommended will inevitably be actioned:

Sylvia Hale: We seem to be getting two potentially contradictory streams of advice. We were out at Liverpool PCYC. The council seems to have been at great pains to take into account the wishes of the children in planning for the club. Yet the attitude of the PCYC, which is now managing it, is that you cannot plan along the lines of simply giving children everything they wish for. The result is that we have a club that no-one seems to be using, and it seems to be a great source of friction. This morning Phil Crane said that there should not be an over-reliance on participatory processes because development is going on at such a great rate that if you are fixated on participation the thing will be built before you get a chance to intervene in the outcome. What is more called for is an outcomes orientation.¹⁴⁵

4.5.2.16 Before turning to examples of good practice, whereby many of the issues considered in the previous pages have been constructively addressed, it is worth noting the importance of responding to the specific needs of the children and young people participating in particular processes. The Community Relations Commission supports children and young people being consulted in procedures associated with the built environment. For children, young people and their families from culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse backgrounds, provision of interpretation services and translated materials is critical for effective consultation/ participation.¹⁴⁶ This is also equally true of children and young people with disabilities or cognitive impairment.

4.5.3 *Positive Examples of Children and Young People's Participation*

4.5.3.1 The Committee was provided with many good examples where children and young people had been suitably engaged in master planning processes that resulted in tangible outcomes in the final designs. However, two examples were particularly noteworthy. The first was from the Department of Housing and the second from Wollongong City Council. Both showed sensitivity to the complexities of engaging and maintaining involvement of children and young people and both considered

¹⁴⁴ Freeman, C.; Aitken-Rose, E. and Johnston, R. (2004) *Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in new Zealand*, Report on Research Findings, p.12.

¹⁴⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.40

¹⁴⁶ Submission No.42, Community Relations Commission, pp.1-2.

the views of children and young people in developments that would not ordinarily be considered to be traditionally child or youth-specific.

4.5.3.2 The following excerpts of the evidence provided by Mr Paul Gilbertson from the Department of Housing show both a willingness to examine mistakes, but an apparently firm commitment to meaningful participation of children and young people. In this instance Mr Gilbertson is referring to the redevelopment of the Bonnyrigg Housing Estate:

One of the biggest challenges of consulting with any community is knowing who you have reached ... We found that there was a disconnect, particularly between the tenants, who invariably are parents, and the children. We had made an assumption, an assumption that if the parents knew, the household knew. Wrong assumption!¹⁴⁷

4.5.3.3 Mr Gilbertson highlighted a good example of youth participation and cooperation across agencies in master planning:

Some great examples of that were the master planning exercise, which is where the University of New South Wales Built Environment students took the local high school students as clients to develop master plans. They came up with master plans and went back and presented them to the students.¹⁴⁸

4.5.3.4 The Committee was privy to some of the work at Bonnyrigg via a site visit to the area. Members of the Committee witnessed the openness and commitment expressed by Mr Gilbertson. Despite ongoing challenges and previous problems at the relatively comparable re-development at Minto, the commitment in that location to engaging the local community, including children and young people, was another excellent practical example of the potential merits of child and youth participation.

4.5.3.5 Further to these examples from the Department of Housing, Wollongong City Council highlighted a series of recent initiatives involving children and young people, including:

- Social Data Research Project 2004 – In 2004 the Community and Cultural Services Division of Council undertook a Social Data Research Project...

The Project included extensive consultation with over 3000 people living in the Local Government Area. A range of engagement strategies were undertaken including surveys, kiosks and focus groups. Children and young people were identified as two separate target groups and consultation was undertaken with children aged 4 to 18 years.

The children's consultation included a workshop where children were asked to identify things that they would like or not like to see in their environments. This was done through verbal questions and pictorials. A total of 41 children under 5 years were consulted and 180 children aged 5-12 years...

As part of the Project a total of 509 surveys were returned by young people.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.86

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.85

¹⁴⁹ Submission No.44, Wollongong City Council, pp.1-2.

- Foreshore Master Plan – In 2005 the Division undertook an engagement process with the Community to gather input into the development of the Master Plan for the Wollongong Foreshore. Families with young children, children and young people were identified as target groups for the purpose of the project. A range of focus groups were undertaken with these groups to gather their input into issues and desires for the Foreshore Master Plan. A group of over 50 children were asked to draw a design of their dream for the foreshore. The consultation considered the areas of:
 - Access: pedestrian pathways and bicycle pathways
 - Amenity: building heights, building design, streetscape, commercial development, views, open space use, and natural environment.
 - Safety:
 - Traffic: volume, speed, parking, traffic signage.
 - Transport: bus routes, location of bus stops, modes.
 - Culture: facilities.

The issues raised by children, young people and their families were included within “The Community Engagement Interim Report for the Wollongong City Foreshore Master Plan”. This report is being considered by the design team and will inform the development of the City Foreshore Master Plan and the Linkages LEP.¹⁵⁰

- Council has developed a number of policies and plans which relate to children, young people and the built environment. These include:
 - Wollongong City Council’s Childcare Development Control Plan – The Development Control Plan provides information and provisions for the establishment of, and additions to childcare centres. The DCP is based on the provisions of the *Children’s Services Regulation 2004* where relevant and the principles of best practice childcare centres...

The DCP provides a policy framework to ensure that all those involved in the design, development and approval of childcare centres both within and external to Council are informed by and comply with a set of standards...¹⁵¹
 - Draft Towradgi Park Master Plan – As part of the community engagement process for the development of the Draft Towradgi Master Plan young women were identified as a target group. A focus group was undertaken to look at how the park is used, how the park can be improved, aspects of the park which are important to the group, ideas for the park, improvement of cultural aspects and areas of the park which are unsafe. The group also considered and made comment on the concept plan.

A report was submitted to Division for consideration when developing the draft Master Plan.¹⁵²

4.5.3.6 The above examples illustrate just a small number of projects to which children and young people have contributed. However, although these examples are instructive, they give little direction in relation to how to consult. The following

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., pp.3-4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁵² Ibid., p.5.

suggestions by Cunningham and Jones provide some useful tips, particularly for consultations involving children between eight and 12 years of age.

- Questionnaires which require a factual (and non-judgemental) rather than a hypothetical answer.
- Small group discussion of issues where the researcher first gains the children's trust.
- Working with maps.
- Children's photography.
- Story writing.¹⁵³

4.5.3.7 Participation of children and young people provides an ideal opportunity for built environment professionals to hear and understand how particular proposals will impact on children and young people, and conversely, for children and young people to learn about the competing demands of different groups in relation to the built environment. Creative strategies can be readily utilised to harness the views and energy of children and young people that will be most beneficial at the master planning stage.

4.5.3.8 In light of the submissions made to the Committee regarding consultation practices, the NSW Commission of Children and Young People made contact with Streetwise Communications and NAPCAN to ascertain the progress of the *Young Visions Toolkit*. This toolkit has the potential to be of use to built environment professionals and inform the work of the Commission.

Recommendation: The Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Planning Institute of Australia be consulted on the production of a new publication to promote children and young people's participation in the development of their environments (Recommendation 3f).

4.5.4 *New Developments*

4.5.4.1 Participation in planning decisions is obviously most effective prior to the development of a particular site, facility or area. Modifying or retrofitting existing developments can be costly and problematic. Consequently, enabling children and young people to participate in new developments and land releases provides an ideal opportunity to contribute to child- and youth-friendly environments.

Adrian Bauman: The opportunity for us is with green fields developments at the urban fringe where urban sprawl can be redefined, as well as places on the Central Coast, Western Sydney and South-Western Sydney, where new housing developments are being built. There are case studies from the United States, Europe and Canada that demonstrate this. If you create connected environments, you plan the types of shops that are going to be there, you allow destinations so that cull-de-sacs link to each other through connectors so your kids can walk to school. You create paths. You create the environment that allows physical activity and nutritional patterns that are planned more in advance, and there may even be health benefit that is saleable to the developers of these ideas.

¹⁵³ Cunningham, C. and Jones, M. (2006) *Middle Childhood and the Built Environment: a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment* (on behalf of NAPCAN), p.19.

4.5.4.2 As the NSW Commission for Children and Young People notes in their submission, the establishment of a Growth Centres Commission to “oversee the development of growth areas in North West and South West Sydney” provides “scope to work with it on creating new, child-friendly urban environments”.¹⁵⁴

4.5.4.3 While much attention was given to the role of state and local governments in relation to the built environment, the Committee is of the view that there is benefit in approaching the Growth Centres Commission and the private development industry. The significance of engaging the private sector development industry was raised during the inquiry:

Melinda Pavey: ...In relation to the built environment, has the Commission been able to engage appropriate private sector organisations with their ideas and input? Ultimately I think that is where we need to go to work hand in hand so they have a better, more successful development, which creates a better community.

Gillian Calvert: I agree with you. I think the private sector is a key player

...

We are learning and developing our skills and capacity in working with the private sector. We hope to extend that to people who are involved in planning and the built environment.¹⁵⁵

4.5.4.4 The Committee endorses this sentiment and recognises the work that the NSW Commission for Children and Young People has undertaken in recent years to engage with private sector organisations.

Recommendation: The Growth Centres Commission be consulted about the possibilities for taking the needs of children and young people into account in the development of Sydney’s new growth areas (Recommendation 3d).

4.5.5 *Monitoring Impact and Effectiveness*

4.5.5.1 Planning and developing child- and youth-friendly environments requires some understanding of what constitutes such environments. As was previously stated, the “concept of a child-friendly city is not based on an ideal end state or standard model”.¹⁵⁶ Dr Crane suggests that government must assume a role in identifying indicators and principles of child- and youth-friendly environments:

That is where the role of government is very clearly to identify key indicators and key principles and key benchmarks based on evidence and based on research that indicate what you would see in a child- and youth-friendly city or town or place and to demand some of those things in the planning process.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.19.

¹⁵⁵ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, pp.71-72.

¹⁵⁶ UNICEF (2004) *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, p.2.

¹⁵⁷ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.9.

4.5.5.2 The NSW Commission for Children and Young People concurs with these sentiments, noting that indicators such as “children’s independent mobility, modes of travel to and from school, their use of public transport, resources spent in ‘play’ and ‘provision for play’, and accessibility to green spaces ... are monitored in the United Kingdom”.¹⁵⁸ It may be possible for the NSW Commission for Children and Young People to undertake a similar function in NSW, allowing “changes in the impact of the built environment on children and young people to be measured over time”.¹⁵⁹

Recommendation: Investigate the development of a set of indicators, to be utilised by the Commissioner for Children and Young People to demonstrate the impact of the built environment on children and young people in NSW over time (Recommendation 3r).

4.6 Design Guidelines

4.6.1 Design processes are often informed by previous projects and experiences. Aspects of successful projects are lauded and widely disseminated through professional journals, publications, forums and educational settings. Consequently, the development of design guidelines which demonstrate ways of reflecting the needs of children and young people have the potential to be influential in future planning and development.

4.6.2 Freeman et al recommend the following from their review of planning arrangements in New Zealand:

Time, resources, confidence (through training and experience), leadership and institutional commitment are distinguished as critical factors in promoting the participation of children and young people. Guidelines and material specifically targeted at planners, combined with professional development, would be useful. Toolkits, best practice examples, and schedules identifying child/youth issues, appropriate contacts and support networks would help build capacity.¹⁶⁰

4.6.3 Perhaps some of the best examples of possible tools that assist in designing child- and youth-friendly spaces come from the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (London, England). CABE has produced a series of packages, books and interactive medium kits to assist built environment professionals. A small number of these resources include:

- *Being Involved in School Design: a guide for school communities, local authorities, funders and design and constructions teams*
- *Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces*
- *Space for Learning: A Handbook for Education Spaces in Museums, Heritage Sites and Discovery Centre*
- *Making Better Places CD*

¹⁵⁸ Submission No.53, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, p.26.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ Freeman, C.; Aitken-Rose, E. and Johnston, R. (2004) *Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in new Zealand*, Report on Research Findings, p.70.

- 4.6.4 The range and volume of relevant publications produced by CAFE is most impressive. The practical nature of the resources provided and the cooperation from built environment professions ensure that these publications have considerable utility.
- 4.6.5 While NSW has a number of relevant publications, it is noted that these publications are somewhat outdated. Furthermore, there appears to have been no analysis of the extent to which the local publications have been utilised.

Recommendation: The Minister for Planning be consulted on the need for the Department of Planning to review and update its *Child-friendly Environments* publication, which was re-issued in 1999 (although substantive elements of the document were first written for a 1981 publication) (Recommendation 3c).

Recommendation: The documentation and multi-media kits produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CAFE) (London, England) in relation to children, young people and the built environment be reviewed and their relevance for curriculum development in New South Wales be considered (Recommendation 3p).

4.7 **Education and Professional Recognition**

4.7.1 In the absence of a thorough analysis, questions were posed to witnesses to the inquiry about the level of education that they believe built environment professionals receive on issues associated with children and young people. Witnesses were somewhat unsure of the exact level of coverage of such issues in the diverse degree courses linked to the built environment. Nonetheless, the Committee was informed that there is generally pressure on tertiary built environment courses to become more generic. The contraction of courses has occurred in response to movement toward a user-pays tertiary education system. Courses that have the greatest potential financial rewards grow, while others decline. The Committee was also informed that generally tertiary built environment courses provide little in the way of instruction about the needs of children and young people.

4.7.2 Mr Manikas (Chairman, 2050) confirmed that little is probably taught specifically about children and young people in relevant tertiary courses, but he also provided a beneficial example of how generational change can be achieved within the built environment professions:

With sustainability, I think we are getting more and more towards where the whole construction and development industry are aware of the issues that face Australia in relation to water and energy savings. You will find most facets of the industry now thinking: what is it going to cost to go green? What will we save? Is there any benefit? But they are probably not looking at these issues of children and young people and how they need to be incorporated into the whole design process.¹⁶¹

4.7.3 Tackling the task of increasing the content of information about child- and youth-friendly environments in built environment tertiary courses is likely to be

¹⁶¹ Transcript of Evidence, 16 May 2006, p.16.

challenging. The following suggestions put to the Committee help to conceptualise methods for achieving this end. Ms Julie Hegarty (Local Government and Shires Association) suggested that:

Perhaps workshops could be enacted upon to make players in the development industry aware of council's social plans. I can guarantee that some of the big players like Meriton would not know that councils had social plans that required consideration be given to certain aspects of developments.¹⁶²

4.7.4 Mosman Municipal Council identified further ways that the NSW Commission for Children and Young People could assist in promoting initiatives relating to children, young people and the built environment:

The Commission for Children and Young People will also help even more by:

- disseminating on a regular basis, any related important information to local authorities;
- facilitating better access to sponsors and funding grants;
- providing examples of best practices – strategies (research findings, implementation, result evaluation, etc.) that can be adopted locally to improve services to the community, planning processes or the built environment (e.g. improving building accessibility/ramps, etc. for mothers with young children etc.).¹⁶³

4.7.5 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment made the following recommendation for enhancing the profile of the importance of considering the needs of children and young people within the context of the built environment professions:

Awards – encourage professions working in the areas of the built environment, such as engineering, architecture and planning, to reward exemplary examples of work in the built environment that is beneficial for children and young people. A precedent example, would be the international award for architecture and design for young children run by Children in Scotland, in association with The Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Children in Europe and with sponsorship from Lend Lease and support from the Scottish Executive.¹⁶⁴

4.7.6 The Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, also supported awarding good practice in this area. In their submission, the Institute elaborated on an existing awards system in Italy:

In Italy a national plan of action supported by the Ministry of the Environment encourages local authorities to develop policies and programmes for which prizes are awarded. The annual awards are for excellence in promoting 'sustainable spaces for children' and are based on parameters of measurable sustainability that refer directly to childhood. The objectives are to: rethink services for children, coordinate spaces dedicated to education, organise all areas of play, institute children's participation,

¹⁶² *ibid.*, p.72.

¹⁶³ Submission No.34, Mosman Municipal Council, p.6.

¹⁶⁴ Submission No.45, 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment, pp.11-12.

rethink functional aspects of the city in order to meet the needs of children, assign financial resources to fund child-friendly projects and renew squares, streets and public spaces to facilitate children's socialisation.¹⁶⁵

- 4.7.7 While not specifically relevant to the needs of built environment professionals today, 2050 also suggested the importance of educating children and young people about the built environment. Education in schools, they contend, will help shape the views of students' parents and the built environment professionals of the future.

Built Environment Education – built environment education should be made a highly desirable, if not compulsory component of primary and high school curriculum. New South Wales and Australia can never hope to increase the level of appreciation for quality built environments, or the desire to participate in their creation, if the general public are not educated at primary and secondary school about what a quality built environment actually looks like.¹⁶⁶

- 4.7.8 It is acknowledged that the NSW Commission for Children and Young People has already taken steps to promote greater understanding of child- and youth-friendly environments across relevant sectors. The Child-Friendly Cities seminar facilitated by the Commission on 27 June 2005, presentations to built environment university students and articles in the *Exchange* newsletter,¹⁶⁷ provide recent examples of efforts undertaken by the Commission to contribute to the education of built environment (and related) professionals and students. Notwithstanding these developments, the following recommendations extend the work of the Commission in this area.

Recommendation: The Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Planning Institute of Australia and the Property Council of Australia be consulted on the feasibility of establishing specific awards for developments reflecting the principles of child- and youth-friendly environments (Recommendation 3n).

Recommendation: Investigate with universities offering architecture and planning degrees the inclusion of a curriculum component or module on how to involve children and young people in planning (Recommendation 3o).

4.8 **Conclusion**

- 4.8.1 Developing child- and youth-friendly cities and environments across New South Wales requires cooperation across many sectors. The generally high living standards and good environments enjoyed by children and young people in New South Wales can be retained and improved through inter-sectorial cooperation.
- 4.8.2 In recognition of the cultural change required and the need for continued momentum after this inquiry concludes, it is important that a mechanism be developed to consider progressing the initiatives and projects outlined in this

¹⁶⁵ Submission No.32, Institute of Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, p.3.

¹⁶⁶ Submission No.45, 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment, pp.11-12.

¹⁶⁷ 'What kids want from their built environments', *Exchange*, Issue 24, Summer 2005/06; 'Inquiry seeks kids' advice on future directions for built environments', *Exchange*, Issue 26, Winter 2006.

report. For instance, a time-limited Steering Committee of appropriate stakeholders would provide a forum for inter-agency cooperation and negotiation on the recommendations made as a result of this inquiry. The NSW Commission for Children and Young People is well-placed to chair such a body and to encourage an over-arching, multi-disciplinary and inter-sectorial approach among the stakeholder representatives participating in the Steering Committee. In this role the NSW Commission for Children and Young People would consider coordinating and promoting the projects or initiatives identified by the Committee as a result of this inquiry, utilising the mechanism of the Steering Committee where consultation and negotiation is necessary in respect of each project or initiative.

4.8.3 To help foster increased awareness and ongoing attention across the sectors, departments and the professions, it is also proposed that the NSW Commission for Children and Young People plan a seminar series, which would enable specialist consideration of ways in which to enhance and further develop some of the approaches and initiatives arising from the inquiry. A seminar series would facilitate a regular, informed dialogue across stakeholder groups, and also internally within each stakeholder group, and offer a constructive way of achieving a body of knowledge sufficient to promote more informed decision-making and cooperation on priority issues relating to children, young people and the built environment.

4.8.4 In this regard the following comments from Gillian Calvert (Commissioner Children and Young People) provide an apt conclusion:

4.8.5 I believe this inquiry has already encouraged, and will continue to encourage, greater discussion, awareness of how the built environment affect us all and in particular children, and how we, as a community, can move towards creating the best built environment that we possibly can for us and our children to live in.¹⁶⁸

4.8.6 Consequently, it is recommended that:

Recommendation: The NSW Commission for Children and Young People ('the Commission') seek to establish an inter-agency Steering Committee on Children, Young People and the Built Environment, with the role to consider and promote key projects and initiatives, as recommended in this report. The membership of the Steering Committee should comprise representatives of the following agencies:

- Department of Local Government
- Local Government and Shires Association
- Department of Community Services
- Department of Planning
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Planning Institute of Australia

¹⁶⁸ Transcript of Evidence, 13 June 2006, p.66.

- Property Council of Australia
- NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity
- NSW Disability Council of NSW
- Community Relations Commission
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Relevant tertiary institutions offering built environment courses (including but not limited to Sydney University, University of NSW, University of Technology Sydney)
- A youth representative (e.g. from the Government's Youth Advisory Council or the Young People's Reference Group of the Commission of Children and Young People).

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People chair the proposed Steering Committee and be responsible for reporting on the Committee's activities through current reporting mechanisms. **(Recommendation 1).**

Recommendation: The NSW Commission for Children and Young People develop a proposal for a seminar series on children, young people and the built environment to promote a strategy across different sectors, departments and levels of government aimed at coordinating efforts to progress the projects and initiatives identified in this report, and other activities identified as priorities. The seminars should aim to meet the needs of an inter-disciplinary audience, but also cater directly for the various disciplines within the built environment (for example, representatives from local government; planners; architects and the development industry).

The NSW Commission of Children and Young People promote the TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit to the built environment professions, including in preparation for the seminar series, and that the Young Visions Toolkit project by NAPCAN and Streetwise Communications also be considered as a potential resource for built environment professionals **(Recommendation 2).**

Recommendation: Funding for the NSW Commission for Children and Young People be reviewed to ensure that the Commission is adequately resourced to carry out the responsibilities outlined in the recommendations above, in addition to its current work **(Recommendation 6).**

Chapter 5: Bibliography

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities* 4901.0, Canberra.

Australian Bureau of Statistics 3210.0 *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, accessed 2/9/05, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/B52C3903D894336DCA2568A9001393C1>

Baraldi, C. and Emilia, R. (2005) *Cities with Children: Child Friendly Cities in Italy*, UNICEF, Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

Bridgman, R. (2004) 'Child-Friendly Cities: Canadian Perspective', Children Youth and Environment, 14 (2).

Burfoot, D. (2003) 'Children and young people's participation: Arguing for a better future', Youth Studies Australia, Vol. 22, No. 3, Tasmania.

CABE Space, *Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces*, London

Cantwell, N. (1995) 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Introduction', *Rights of the Child*, Defence for Children International, Switzerland.

Carmona, M; Heath, T.; Oc, T. and Tiesdell, S. (2003) *Public Places, Urban Spaces*, Architectural Press, Amsterdam.

Chawla, L. (2002) 'Cities for Human Development', in Chawla, L. (ed.) *Growing Up in an Urbanising World*, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organisation and Earthscan Publications LTD, United Kingdom.

Cunningham, C. and Jones, M. (2006) *Middle Childhood and the Built Environment: a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment* (on behalf of NAPCAN).

De Vaus, D. (2004) *Diversity and change in Australian families: statistical profiles*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Canberra

Freeman, C.; Aitken-Rose, E. and Johnston, R. (2004) *Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in New Zealand*, Report on Research Findings,

Haider, J. (2003)' Interplay between Design and Research: Interactive Play and Learning Environments for Children'. Second International Conference of the Associations of Architecture Schools of Australasia (AASA) Conference, University of Melbourne, 28-30 September 2003

Hamilton, C. and Denniss, R. (2005) *Affluenza*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, Sydney.

Bibliography

NSW Department of Urban, Affairs and Planning (1999) *Child-friendly Environments*, DUAP, Sydney.

NSW Department of Planning (2005) *City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney's Future*, Department of Planning, Sydney.

Riggio, E. (2002) 'Child friendly cities: good governance in the best interest of the child', Environment and Urbanisation, Vol 14, No. 2.

Saggers, S; Palmer, D; Royce, P; Wilson, L. and Charlton, A. (2004) *"Alive and Motivated": Young People, Participation and Local Government*, National Youth Affairs Research Scheme, Canberra, p. 15.

Slee, P. T. (2002) *Child, Adolescent and Family Development*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Stanley, F; Richardson, S. and Prior. M. (2005) *Children of the Lucky Country? How Australian society has turned its back on children and why children matter*, Macmillan, Sydney

Tranter, P. (2005) 'Overcoming social traps: a key to creating child friendly cities', Presentation to the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Child Friendly Cities seminar 27 June 2005.

Tranter, P. and Pawson, E. (2001) 'Children's Access to Local Environments: a case-study of Christchurch, New Zealand, Local Environment, Vol. 6, No. 1.

Trewin, D. (2006) *2006 Australia Year Book*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.

UNICEF (2004) *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action*, UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, Florence.

United Nations (2003) *World Youth Report 2003*, United Nations.

Legislation

Children Services Regulation 2004

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979

Commission of Children and Young People Act 1998

Appendix 1: List of Submissions

Submission No	Organisation
1	Mr WR Sinclair
2	City of Perth
3	[confidential submission]
4	Mr Ian Mason
5	Mr Martin Butcher
6	Ms Rebecca Fowles
7	Colour Blind Awareness and Support Group
8	Department of Local Government
9	Play Environment Consulting
10	Miss Rayann Bekdache
11	Ms Patricia Wagstaff
12	Community Cultural Development NSW
13	City East, Randwick TAFE (Community Identity class 2005)
14	Ms Ana Corpuz
15	Willoughby City Council
16	New South Wales Premier's Council for Active Living
17	Richmond Valley Council
18	Ku-ring-gai Council
19	NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity
20	[confidential submission]
21	Dr Phil Crane, School of Humanities and Human Services, Queensland University of Technology
22	Health Promotion Service, SSWAHS
23	Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW
24	Good Beginnings Australia
25	Professor Brendan Gleeson, Director, Urban Research Program Griffith University
26	The Hon Frank Sartor, Minister for Planning
27	Assoc Prof Linda Corkery, Landscape Architecture Program Faculty of the Built Environment, University of New South Wales
28	The Benevolent Society
29	NAPCAN Foundation & Streetwise Communications
30	Dr Brian Simpson, School of Law, Keele University
31	Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth
32	Institute for Sustainable Futures
33	Planning Institute Australia (NSW Division)
34	Mosman Municipal Council
35	Office of the Disability Council of NSW
36	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
37	Ms Sarah Judd
38	Youth Justice Coalition
39	The Department of Education and Training

List of Submissions

Submission No	Organisation
40	Campbelltown City Council
41	Canterbury City Council
42	Community Relations Commission
43	Ms Ann Sharp
44	Wollongong City Council
45	2050 Committee
46	National Children's and Youth Law Centre
47	Newcastle City Council
48	Department of Housing
49	NSW Aboriginal Land Council
50	NSW Police
51	NSW Office of the Children's Guardian
52	Northern Sydney Child and Family Health Services
53	NSW Commission for Children and Young People
54	Northern Sydney Central Coast Health
55	Legal Aid Commission of NSW
56	Ms Claudia Schott
57	Ms Nicola Hempel

Appendix 2: List of Witnesses

Date	Witness	Organisation
9 May 2006	Professor Brendan Gleeson	Professor of Urban Management and Policy, Director of Urban Research Program, Faculty of Environmental Science, Griffith University
16 May 2006	Dr Philip Crane	Senior Lecturer, School of Humanities and Human Services, Queensland University of Technology
16 May 2006	Michael Manikas	Chairman, 2050
16 May 2006	Lesley King Adrian Bauman Timothy Gill	Executive Officer, NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney Director, NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition, University of Sydney
16 May 2006	Sarah Reilly	Social Planning Consultant, Planning Institute of Australia
16 May 2006	Ross Woodward	Deputy Director General, Department of Local Government
16 May 2006	Beverley Giegerl Julie Hegarty	Local Government and Shires Association Local Government and Shires Association
16 May 2006	Christopher Johnson	Acting Executive Director for Cities and Centres, Department of Planning
16 May 2006	Paul Gilbertson Maura Boland	Executive Director, Strategic Projects, Department of Housing Executive Director, Office of Community Housing
13 June 2006	Prudence Walsh	Play Environment Consulting
13 June 2006	Cleonie Quayle Jason Field	Policy Officer, NSW Aboriginal Land Council Senior Policy Officer, NSW Aboriginal Land Council
13 June 2006	James McDougall Elizabeth Misfud Stephen Bray Kathleen Fennessy Gabriel Watts	Director, National Children and Youth Law Centre Volunteer Solicitor, National Children and Youth Law Centre Volunteer Solicitor, National Children and Youth Law Centre Volunteer Solicitor, National Children and Youth Law Centre Volunteer Law Student, National Children and Youth Law Centre
13 June 2006	Marcia Waller Maria Bennett Meredith Harrison John Hession Joanne Petrovic	Community Services Director, Willoughby Council Children's Services Manager, Willoughby Council Youth Services Co-ordinator, Willoughby Council Strategic Planning Officer, Richmond Valley Council Community Projects Officer, Richmond Valley

List of Witnesses

	Andy Sammut Kerry Hunt Tracy Venaglia	Council Operations Manager, Business and Community Services, Canterbury City Council Acting Assistant Manager, Community Development and Planning, Wollongong City Council Children and Family Services Co-ordinator, Wollongong City Council
13 June 2006	Gillian Calvert	Commissioner, NSW Commission for Children and Young People

Appendix 3: Site Visits

BRISBANE: 25-26 November 2005

- Brisbane City Council managers meeting
- Phil Crane walking tour, Brisbane CBD
- Queensland Commission for Children and Young People/Child Guardian
- Future Shock Conference (2050)

SOUTH-WESTERN SYDNEY: 15 May 2006

- South Western Sydney Youth Peer Education (SWYPE), Miller
- Liverpool Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), Miller
- Bonnyrigg Urban Renewal Program, Department of Housing
- Burnside Under 12s Project , Minto

Appendix 4: Issues Papers

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

ISSUES PAPER 1: Introduction and Overview

The Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment has the potential to explore numerous issues. The built environment is the product of the intersection of numerous disciplines, traditions and regulations. Diverse government (and non-government) authorities assume responsibility for aspects of the built environment. Given the potential to pursue numerous divergent lines of inquiry, a small number of briefing papers have been developed to assist in providing some background to issues relevant to the Committee and its responsibility of overseeing the work of the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People.

This first briefing paper provides an introduction to some key concepts associated with the inquiry. Subsequent briefing papers will sketch the evolution of the 'child-friendly cities movement', review international good practice, consider relevant developments in New South Wales and identify the role of the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People to further advancing the ways to incorporate the interests of children and young people in the built environment across the State.

Executive Summary

Definitions of children and young people are central to this inquiry. Different definitions operate across existing New South Wales (NSW) policy and law, children generally encompasses all persons aged below 18 years, while young people frequently denotes those persons aged between 12 and 24 (or 25) years. However as the Commission for Children and Young People's jurisdiction includes 18 year olds, this inquiry will consider the impact of the built environment on those persons aged between 0 and 18 years NSW.

According to the most recent census data, there are 2,227,500 children and young people in NSW. This represents approximately 34 per cent of the total population of the State. Consequently, the needs of children and young people in relation to the built environment are considerable and must be given due attention in planning, developing and building activities.

The built environment is taken to mean all that is constructed in our neighbourhoods, cities and State. Discussions of the built environment are complicated by the diversity of disciplines, traditions, regulations and practices that have contributed to its evolution and contemporary influences. Social, urban and town planners, architects, developers, engineers, builders and consent authorities (local and State) contribute to the often incremental changes to the built environment.

Without considerable foresight and planning, the built environment can have devastating consequences. Isolated decisions can render areas dangerous or promote unintended negative consequences. Take for example, the famed Radburn housing design from the early

1900s. This public housing design was adopted in numerous industrialised countries and was exalted for its open spaces and innovative designs. Decades after being introduced, many public housing estates adopting these design principles were razed due to high crime levels, directly attributable to manner in which these areas were developed. Furthermore, research points to increased levels of aggression in poorly designed childcare facilities, improved learning through effective school design and increased physical activity through urban planning. The legacies (positive or negative) of approaches to the built environment can be considerable.

Getting the built environment 'right' is a task of great complexity. Urbanisation, suburbanisation, increased vehicular traffic, diminishing natural environments and environmental degradation are just some of the changes influencing our built environment. Balancing the (often competing) needs of diverse groups with diverse interests is a challenge confronting developments in the built environment. Ensuring that the interests of children and young people are considered in these developments is increasingly acknowledged as critical for long-term sustainability of cities and neighbourhoods.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights the need to involve children and young people in key decisions affecting their lives, including decisions about the built environment. The Convention and growing attention in the involvement of children and young people combined in the development of the 'Child-Friendly Cities' movement. This movement has now spawned numerous international examples of good practice, in which the needs of children and young people are considered central to any developments of the built environment. Failure to consider the needs of children and young people will render our built environment dangerous, inaccessible and unsatisfactory.

Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

The Committee on Children and Young People was formed in August 2000. Its primary responsibility is to monitor and review the work of the Commission for Children and Young People and report its findings and recommendations to Parliament. In accordance with section 28.1 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, the Committee specifically has the following functions:

- (b) report to both Houses of Parliament, with such comments as it thinks fit, on any matter appertaining to the Commission or connected with the exercise of its functions to which, in the opinion of the Joint Committee, the attention of Parliament should be directed; and
- (d) to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children, and report to both Houses of Parliament any changes that the Joint Committee thinks desirable to the functions and procedures of the Commission.

Consistent with these functions, it has been resolved that the Committee will conduct an Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. The following terms of reference have been established for this Inquiry:

1. trends, changes and issues for children and young people in the development, implementation and coordination of policy, design and planning for the built environment;
2. the mechanisms available for monitoring and reporting on planning processes and decisions concerning the built environment, as they relate to and impact upon children and young people;
3. strategies to ensure that built environment issues affecting children and young people are readily identified and receive coordinated attention across portfolios and different levels of government;
4. the role of the Commission for Children and Young People in giving input to the Government and non-Government sectors on inclusive and integrated planning and policy-making for children and young people in the built environment;
5. any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee.

This inquiry will involve a call for public submissions and evidence from witnesses. The Commission for Children and Young People will be central to all aspects of the inquiry. The Commission will be expected to provide a submission and give evidence to the Committee. Recommendations from the inquiry will need to reflect the focus of the Committee – namely, the oversight of the Commission.

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People was established in 1999. The Commission's main functions (as outlined in section 11 of *NSW Commission of Children and Young People Act 1998*) include:

- Promoting the participation of children and young people in the making of decisions that affect their lives;
- Promoting and monitoring their safety, welfare and well-being;
- Making recommendations on legislation, policies and services affecting them;
- Promoting awareness and understanding of issues affecting them; and

- Conducting special inquiries, at the Minister's direction, into issues affecting them.

A key element of the inquiry will be to examine the contribution and role of the Commission in working towards better outcomes for children and young people in relation to the built environment.

Children and Young People – Definitions

There is some conjecture as to the exact definition of a child and a young person. The *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 (NSW)* defines a child as being between 0-16 years of age and a young person as being between 16 and 18 years of age. The minimum age of criminal responsibility in New South Wales (NSW) begins at 10 years and the maximum age of criminal responsibility for a child is 18 years of age.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC) defines a child as being from 0 to 18 years. This definition is consistent with the age at which parental responsibility legally ceases in NSW.¹⁶⁹

Furthermore, the NSW Youth Policy 'Working Together, Working for Young People 2002-2006' states that "young people are usually defined as people aged between 12 and 24 years".¹⁷⁰

Consequently, reference to children and young people will be taken to cover those persons aged from birth to 18 years of age.

Size of the Population and Significant Relevant Trends

The 2004 New South Wales Year Book states that there are 2,227,500 people in NSW aged between 0 and 25, which is 33.6 per cent of the population. While NSW continues to have positive population change, it is well known that the overall population is ageing. In the last two decades, the median age in Australia has increased by 5.9 years, increasing from 30.5 years in 1984 to 36.4 years in 2004.¹⁷¹ Projections suggest that this will rise further and could be as high as 46.2 years by 2051.¹⁷² Reduced infant mortality, falling fertility rates and increasing life expectancy are two of the key factors driving the ageing population trends.

Further to these changes, there have been other considerable social and demographic developments in NSW in recent decades. Broadly, some key trends associated with children and young people include:

- Increasing dependence on families, with more young people residing with their parents for longer periods
- Increasing school retention rates and tertiary participation

¹⁶⁹ Roth, L. (2005) *Children's Rights in NSW*, Background Paper No. 2/05, NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, Sydney.

¹⁷⁰ NSW Government (2002) *NSW Youth Policy: Working Together – Working for Young People 2002-2006*, Office of Children and Young People, Cabinet Office, Sydney.

¹⁷¹ 3210.0 *Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/B52C3903D894336DCA2568A9001393C1> accessed 2/9/05

¹⁷² <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/0/ADF9B2B905D43653CA256FCE001101B5?Open> accessed 2/9/05

- High rates of unemployment and casualisation of employment for young people
- Increased dual income families, with greater participation of females in the labour market
- Increased urbanization accompanied by growth in medium and high density housing
- Increased car ownership and vehicular traffic in many urban locations

These trends have significantly impacted on families, communities and directly on children and young people. These trends provide an important backdrop to discussions of the built environment.

The Built Environment

The built environment is somewhat difficult to define succinctly. It is perhaps easier to consider its meaning through consideration of what it entails. The built environment covers a broad array of structures, developments and spaces, which have significant consequences for the quality of life, civic relationships, play, exploration and safety and security. The built environment can serve to exclude and exacerbate inequalities. The built environment can enliven, stimulate and create new possibilities for socialising and interaction.

Numerous trends have influenced the built environment in recent times. The social changes identified above have significantly influenced the built environment. Population growth, improved transport, the advent of the motor vehicle, flight to the suburbs, telecommunication and technological advances, privatisation, globalisation and migration patterns are further factors influencing the built environment.

The built environment will be shaped by minor decisions at the micro level to master plans at the macro level. Barnett (cited in Carmona, Heath, Oc and Tiesdell) contends that "Today's city is not an accident. Its form is the product of decisions made for single, separate purposes, whose interrelationships and side effects have not been fully considered".¹⁷³ Coordination of these decisions and managing competing interests is a considerable challenge to achieving an integrated approach to the built environment. A decision to develop a green field site will have significant long-term consequences, as reversal of the outcomes of such a decision will be difficult. Returning an area to its former natural environment will take many years.

Cities and neighbourhoods are the result of numerous planning decisions. Once popular designs might become outdated quickly, resulting in incremental developments to the built environment. Competing perspectives of different consent authorities might result in conflicting developments. Budgetary constraints, time pressures and local factors might influence critical development decisions.

A further contribution to the complexity of the built environment is the sheer number of disciplines, authorities and individuals that contribute to planning, developing and shaping our built environments. Numerous disciplines and professions are responsible for aspects of the built environment. Town, urban and social planning are prominent, as are architects, landscape architects, developers, investors, environmental health professionals, builders, engineers, local and state consent authorities. The intersection of these disciplines, each

¹⁷³ Carmona, M; Heath, T.; Oc, T. and Tiesdell, S. (2003) *Public Places, Urban Spaces*, Architectural Press, Amsterdam.

with specific traditions, influences the way our towns, cities, infrastructure and environments evolve.

Children, Young People and the Built Environment

Children view their surroundings differently from adults. Animals, textures, natural objects, scents, shapes and colours assume greater importance to children. The smallest of items can assume the greatest significance. A discarded soft drink can become a source of great interest. A fence railing or electricity box, are potential play structures to children.

“Children view the environment as part of their total experience rather than seeing it in an episodic or compartmentalised fashion. Everything is connected: relationships with family, friends and animals; sights, sounds, learning and games; choices such as which way to go; and discoveries such as objects of interest”.¹⁷⁴ Unlike adults, for whom the built environment is frequently regarded in a functional way, children will often perceive their surroundings as locations for play, learning, interaction and stimulation. Development will be harnessed and stimulated through interaction with the built (and natural) environment.

Our surroundings have a dramatic impact on our development, quality of life and experience of the world. The built environment plays a critical role in shaping our lived experience. “Children’s local environments help shape their level of cognitive development, their social and motor skills and their personal identity”.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, “access to good public space can help children to stay healthy and tackle problems of obesity by providing opportunities for exercise and getting fresh air”.¹⁷⁶

The built environment will assume different importance as children grow and mature. For young people, peers begin to compete with parents for greatest influence. With increasing independence comes greater exploration of the built environment, often further away from home and parental supervision. Restricted access to licensed premises and reliance on public transport ensures that for many young people, ‘hanging out’ with friends becomes an important social function. Shopping centres, amusement arcades, cinema complexes, transport inter-changes, parks, beaches and other gathering spots are sites where the adolescent development milestones of developing mature relations with the opposite sex, developing an ethical code for behaviour and gaining independence from parents are achieved. These spaces (public and private) become central, for many, to the transition from childhood to adulthood.

Built environment considerations in relation to children and young people can include but is not limited to:

- Playground equipment
- The availability of parks and recreational spaces
- The design of childcare facilities
- Traffic flow through local communities
- Bus and rail interchanges
- Skateboard parks

¹⁷⁴ NSW Department of Urban, Affairs and Planning (1999) *Child-friendly Environments*, DUAP, Sydney.

¹⁷⁵ Tranter, P. and Pawson, E. (2001) ‘Children’s Access to Local Environments: a case-study of Christchurch, New Zealand, *Local Environment*, Vol. 6, No. 1.

¹⁷⁶ CABE Space, *Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces*, London.

- Youth centres
- School and university designs
- Green spaces, including access to natural environments
- Shopping centre designs and accessibility

A more inclusive approach involves looking beyond these more specific child and youth oriented locations, to broader factors affecting children and young people for example housing developments (public and private), urban development, suburban sprawl, transport systems, public amenities and city-wide planning decisions.

Numerous commentators have criticised the effectiveness of the built environment to meet the needs of children and young people. Some of these criticisms include:

- Diminishing accessibility for children and young people – “the urban environment is becoming increasingly inhospitable to children ... with play and urban interaction all but disappear[ing]”¹⁷⁷
- Diminishing availability of public spaces to recreate and socialise
- Non-differentiation of the needs of children to adults (children seen as ‘mini adults’, rather than with separate needs)
- Segregation of child and adult worlds through poor designs
- Little understanding by professionals involved in creating the built environment of the needs of children and young people
- Limited involvement of children and young people in making decisions associated with the built environment - “young people are rarely invited to participate in the urban planning decisions that affect their lives”.¹⁷⁸

To this end, it is critical that the built environment reflect the needs of children and young people. Given that children and young people constitute greater than 30% of the NSW population, it is essential that the views, needs and interests of children and young people are catered for in the way that homes, neighbourhoods, parks, schools, transport and shopping centres (to name a few) are designed and managed.

Impact of Poor Built Environments on Children and Young People

There is evidence across a broad range of built environments that poor planning, design and building can have negative consequences for (amongst others) children and young people. Well planned projects also may have unintended outcomes detrimental to children and young people. The legacy of this can be felt for many generations.

Research cited in the *Child-friendly Environments* publication, developed by the then NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (now the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources) suggests that “when play space in a childcare centre was halved, children’s play became more aggressive and less cooperative. The children were more

¹⁷⁷ Haider, J. (2003) ‘Interplay between Design and Research: Interactive Play and Learning Environments for Children’

¹⁷⁸ ‘Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth’, Presented by Growing Up in Cities, an action research project.

irritable and teachers more controlling”.¹⁷⁹ In this context, the built environment directly affects behaviour and has repercussions for learning.

In the 1920s, the Radburn public housing design was first utilised. This design attempted to segregate vehicles and pedestrians, often through a maze of laneways and culs-de-sac. Houses were reversed from traditional suburban street design, meaning that they did not face each other across the road. Communal gardens and green spaces were dispersed through the network of streets, in an attempt to promote communal meeting points. This approach was embraced in England, the United States and Australia, with many substantial public housing developments reflecting these design principles.

In more recent times, significant problems have been associated with this approach, including crime and anti-social behaviour. In areas like Macquarie Fields in the south-west of Sydney, considerable work has been undertaken to rectify some of these problems, including demolishing some of the town houses to improve vehicle access, removing laneways, reversing houses and establishing clear territorial ownership over green spaces. In this context, the housing design principles employed in these public housing estates contributed to anti-social behaviour and crime, disproportionately affecting young people who are consistently shown to be the greatest victims of crime.

More recently, there has been growing concern about childhood obesity. Some estimates suggest that the number of obese and overweight children in Australia could be as high as 30 per cent. Numerous factors have been linked to this emerging public health problem, including urban designs that inhibit physical activity. Parental fear of local traffic and of threats posed to children by ‘predators’ have been blamed for restricting the activities of children and young people. Less freedom is afforded to children and young people to explore their local neighbourhoods. In a recent Sun-Herald article on childhood obesity, Dr Timperio (author of a study linking parental concern about road safety with obesity), suggests that “There are lessons for urban design in residential areas – it could be traffic routing, reducing traffic speed or more roundabouts, and the building of more public open spaces”.¹⁸⁰ Failure to attend to understand the negative consequences on children and young people of poor urban design will continue to affect the health of children and young people.

Clearly, unless specific attention is given to the needs of children and young people in key designs associated with the built environment, then there will be many long-lasting negative outcomes. Aggression, poor socialisation, limited opportunities for cognitive development, obesity, crime and anti-social behaviour are just some of the social and health consequences of poorly designed environments.

¹⁷⁹ NSW Department of Urban, Affairs and Planning (1999) *Child-friendly Environments*, DUAP, Sydney.

¹⁸⁰ Wilmouth, P. (2005) ‘Generation XXL’, *Sun-Herald*, August 21, 2005

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

ISSUES PAPER 2: The 'Child-Friendly Cities Movement'

Executive Summary

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes the participation of children in decisions that affect their lives. As a signatory to the Convention, Australia is compelled to seek methods for ensuring that children and young people do freely participate in critical decisions.

The establishment of the UNICEF International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities in 2000 was the culmination of a decade of work promoting consideration of the needs of children in the built environment. The 'child friendly cities movement' originated in Italy, and in part seeks to build on the principles of participation established by the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The 'child friendly cities movement' has promoted practical methods for improving the built environment to recognise and reflect the needs of children and young people.

Numerous examples of good practice have now been identified by the International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities, which demonstrate the diverse application of principles for child friendly cities. London (England), Christchurch (New Zealand), Tilburg (Netherlands) and British Columbia (Canada) are just some of the locations that have been recognised for their innovative approach to the built environment. These examples of good practice provide some insight into how improvement can be achieved:

- through participation of children and young people in design;
- via training of key built environment personnel to effectively engage children and young people;
- by promoting and sharing practical outcomes and good news stories; and
- by improving the responsiveness and accessibility of local governance structures and developing coordinated planning principles and controls to ensure due consideration and involvement is given to children and young people.

However such developments are relatively recent and as a result there is little evaluation of this innovative approach currently available. In looking at possible methodologies for evaluating initiatives arising from the child friendly cities approach the Committee will be interested in any potential role for the Commission for Children and Young People in such evaluation processes.

Child-Friendly Cities

In recent years, there has been growing international interest in child-friendly cities. This is, in part, in recognition of the significance and importance of the built environment to children and young people. It also reflects national responses to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CROC). The Convention, declared on 2 September 1990, is a “comprehensive listing of the obligations the States are prepared to recognise towards the child ... the whole thrust of the Convention is to emphasise the inter-connected and mutually-reinforcing nature of all rights in ensuring what UNICEF terms the ‘survival and development’ of children. In this respect, it can be more useful to describe the range of rights covered by the Convention as the three Ps: provision, protection and participation”.¹⁸¹

Australia is one of the 191 countries that had ratified the Convention by 2002.¹⁸²

With respect to the 54 articles contained in the Convention, it is worth noting that there are specific articles that are most closely aligned with the child-friendly cities movement. These are:

- Article 2 – non-discrimination
- Article 3 – best interests of the child
- Article 6 – the right to life and maximum development
- Article 12 – respecting the views of the child (participation)

The Convention was the first of a series of developments driving attention to child-friendly cities. The following provides a brief overview of other key developments in this movement:

- 1992 – Mayors Defenders of Children initiative launched in Dakar, Senegal, as a way of involving municipal authorities in implementing child rights;
- 1996 UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat II, in Istanbul stressed that the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a health society and that child friendly cities are also cities that are better for all age groups;
- Four major international fora in Italy between 1997-2000; and
- September 2000, the International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities was set up.¹⁸³

According to UNICEF, a child friendly city is actively engaged in fulfilling the right of every citizen to:

- Influence decisions about their city;
- Express their opinions on the city they want;
- Participate in family, community and social life;
- Gain access to basic services such as health care, education and shelter;

¹⁸¹ Cantwell, N. (1995) ‘United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child: Introduction’, *Rights of the Child*, Defence for Children International, Switzerland.

¹⁸² Bridgman, R. (2004) ‘Child-Friendly Cities: Canadian Perspective’, *Children Youth and Environment*, 14 (2).

¹⁸³ Riggio, E. (2002) ‘Child friendly cities: good governance in the best interest of the child’, *Environment and Urbanisation*, Vol 14, No. 2.

- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation;
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
- Walk safely in the streets, on their own;
- Meet friends and play;
- Have green spaces for plants and animals;
- Live in an unpolluted and sustainable environment;
- Participate in cultural and social events;
- Be supported, loved and cared for; and
- Be equal citizens with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability¹⁸⁴.

The International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities promotes nine building blocks to becoming a child-friendly city:

1. Children's participation – promoting children's active involvement in issues that affect them; listening to their views and taking them into consideration in decision-making processes.
2. A child-friendly legal framework – ensuring legislation, regulatory frameworks and procedures which consistently promote and protect the rights of children.
3. A city-wide Children's Rights Strategy – developing a detailed, comprehensive strategy or agenda for building a Child Friendly City, based on the Convention.
4. A Children's Rights Unit or coordinating mechanism – developing permanent structures in local government to ensure priority consideration of children's perspectives.
5. Child impact assessment and evaluation – ensuring that there is a systematic process to assess the impact of law, policy and practice on children – in advance, during and after implementation.
6. A children's budget – ensuring adequate resource commitment and budget analysis for children.
7. A regular State of the City's Children report – ensuring sufficient monitoring and data collection on the state of children and their rights.
8. Making children's rights known – ensuring awareness of children's rights among adults and children.
9. Independent advocacy for children – supporting non-government organizations and developing independent human rights institutions – children's ombudsmen or commissioners for children – to promote children's rights.

International Examples of Good Practice

The International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities (UNICEF) has identified a number of international examples of good practice in relation to child friendly city developments. Sites of good practice stretch from the Philippines, Africa, South America and the more

¹⁸⁴ http://www.childfriendlycities.org/resources/index_definition.html accessed on 27/08/05.

industrialized/developed nations of Denmark, England, New Zealand and Canada. Examples illustrated here are from the more developed countries, due to the greater similarities with Australia.

London, England

London has 1.65 million children aged under 18 years, which constitutes approximately one-fifth of the total population.

The “Mayor of London pledged to make London a child-friendly city by developing and implementing the Greater London Authority (GLA) Children and Young People’s Strategy with the active participation of young Londoners and within the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Strategy covers a projected implementation period of 10 years”.¹⁸⁵ The following steps have been undertaken since this Mayoral pledge:

- Child and youth consultations 2000-01 – over 3,000 children and young people were consulted by the Office of the Children’s Rights Commissioner for London
- Mayoral meeting – a meeting was organized between the mayor and children and young people to respond to the Mayor’s economic, development and transport strategies
- Transport for London developed a Children’s Action Plan
- Mayor’s question time with young people provides further opportunities for direct input into key policy decisions
- Draft strategy – the draft strategy was released in April 2003
- Final strategy is launched in January 2004

In January 2004, the *Making London Better for All Children and Young People – The Mayor’s Children and Young People Strategy* was released. Building on strategic partnerships with numerous agencies (including national, regional and local government and non-government agencies) this Strategy identified key focus areas, which included some of the following initiatives:

- Continue Meet the Mayor events for children and young people (Action Point 3.1.3)
- The Mayor will continue to add his support to the campaign to reduce the voting age in national and local elections to 16 years (Action Point 3.5.2)
- The Mayor’s Children and Young People Unit will undertake a program of Child Impact Assessments (Policy 4.1.3)
- The Mayor will encourage designs for an accessible city and enhancement of the public realm that recognizes the health needs of children and young people (Policy 5A.1)
- The Mayor will use his 100 Public Spaces Program to model and promote designs for an accessible city that recognizes the needs of children and young people (Action Point 5A.1.1)
- Through the London Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance the Mayor will ensure minimum standards for children’s play and education needs are addressed in a

¹⁸⁵ International Child Friendly Cities Secretariat (2003) *London Review*

London-wide and sub-regional basis. Planning obligations with developers should, where appropriate, fund facilities and services for children and young people, such as childcare facilities, play space or new open space (Action Point 5A.1.3)

This comprehensive plan (of 156 pages) identifies further goals and strategies for realizing the Mayor's vision of making London more child- and youth-friendly.

While not specifically related to the London Strategy, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), based in London, has produced numerous publications that promote children's and young people's participation in shaping the built environment. Funded by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, CABE has released the following publications:

- *Being Involved in School Design: a guide for school communities, local authorities, funders and design and constructions teams* (2004)
- *Involving Young People in the Design and Care of Urban Spaces*
- *Space for Learning: A Handbook for Education Spaces in Museums, Heritage Sites and Discovery Centres*

This series of publications and the contribution of CABE Education to research and training serves to support the London Strategy.

British Columbia, Canada

The Society for Children and Youth of British Columbia developed the Child and Youth Friendly Communities Initiative in 1999. The main purpose of this initiative was "To promote the concept of child and youth friendly communities and to help community groups, including children and young people themselves, assess their neighbourhoods through the eyes of young people and engage in activities that will improve children and youth in their local communities".¹⁸⁶

The five key objectives of this initiative included:

- To promote the child- and youth-friendly concept – this was achieved through conferences, media releases and the development of promotional and educational resources
- To develop tools with communities (including children and young people) such as child- and youth-friendly assessment checklists and to promote these tools – the 'Getting Started' and 'Planning for Action' checklists and community resources were developed as part of this objective and have been distributed to over 600 community groups and individuals
- To build expertise through a series of workshops, training programs, school curriculum resources and a series of publications – a series of conferences were held and training sessions conducted throughout the duration of the initiative
- To create networking opportunities through its website, newsletters and best practices and community successes – a specific child- and youth-friendly communities section

¹⁸⁶ International Child Friendly Cities Secretariat (2003) *Canadian Review*

has been added to the existing Society for Children and Youth website and articles have been included in a regular newsletter, with over 3,000 circulation

- To challenge communities and celebrate success – a Child and Youth Friendly Community Awards scheme has been developed as a method of recognizing innovative and effective practices.

Having secured ongoing funding, this initiative is now in a second phase. The increased recognition of the importance of child- and youth-friendly communities continued funding and interest in resources developed suggest that this initiative has been successful in achieving its original purpose.

Christchurch, New Zealand

Christchurch City Council (and New Zealand more generally), has sought to address identified limitations in approaches to engaging children and young people and the resulting environments 'unattractive and unsupportive' to children and young people. With approximately 35% of the population aged between 0 and 24 years in Christchurch, devising better ways of considering the needs of and providing opportunities for children and young people to participate in planning decisions was considered important.

The two main policy developments reflecting a commitment to children and young people have been:

1. The Agenda for Children, and
2. The Youth Development Strategy 'Aotearoa'.

The Agenda for Children

The vision of this Agenda was – 'Making New Zealand/Aotearoa (Maori word for New Zealand) a great place for children'. This Agenda adopts a 'whole of child approach' for 0 – 17 year olds and established the following objectives:

- Increase children's participation
- End child poverty
- Address violence in children's lives
- Improve central government structures and processes to enhance policy and service effectiveness for children
- Improve local government and community planning for children
- Enhance information, research and research collaboration relating to children.

Youth Development Strategy

The Youth Development Strategy provides a framework for responding to the needs of young people (12-24 years). The following are the objectives of this strategy:

- Ensure a consistent strengths-based youth development approach. Policies and programs should be designed to minimize risk factors (low self-esteem and lack of family support) and to enhance protective factors (such as supportive communities and positive social interactions)
- Develop the skills of those professionals who work with young people. To relate to young people requires an understanding of the rapidly changing world of young

people, youth culture and sub-cultures. Training is needed to ensure that professionals know how to trigger their participation and to be able to relate to them as equal partners

- Creating opportunities for young people to actively participate and engage. Healthy development of young people can be stimulated by creating opportunities for them to influence the outcomes of situations, solve problems, inform themselves and others, design and contribute to an activity or idea. Moreover, participation increases a person's sense of ownership and ensures that policies, services and programs meet the needs of young people
- Building knowledge about youth development through information and research. Effective and responsive programming depends on more and better information, especially on the trends that influence the lives and development of young people.

Tilburg, Netherlands

Tilburg is the sixth largest city in the Netherlands, with a population of approximately 200,000. Changes in recent times highlighted common trends in developed and industrialized cities - "The higher density of buildings, fewer open spaces and the increased traffic loads have made the urban environment increasingly unfriendly for children and youth. Unfortunately, recent urban developments have not been integrated into existing town planning priorities and attention has not been paid to the living conditions of children and youth".¹⁸⁷

The 'Growing Up in Tilburg' Youth Policy was developed in response to these concerns. This policy framework included some innovative strategies to engage children and young people and to enhance participation:

- Youth Ambassadors – Tilburg Council specifically rejected the notion of a youth council, in fear that it would not be truly representative of the diverse interests and needs of all young people. Instead, Youth Ambassadors were created to liaise with local young people and to feed information into the Council. A website was established to increase the reach of this initiative.
- Youth Press Agency – a youth press agency was established to collect data and information about young people and to publish a regular youth magazine.
- Community Evaluation – a community evaluation has been conceived that will look at the living conditions of young people in all areas of the municipality. Specific attention will be given to traffic problems, areas for play, and recreation and sports facilities, amongst other things.
- Independent Youth Centre – a long term initiative involves the establishment of an independent youth centre, which is totally run and managed by young people.
- Youth Ombuds-point – a youth ombuds-point was established as a central point for children and young people to come and learn about local municipal activities and services for children and young people.

What is perhaps most striking about these examples of good practice, is the breadth of strategies and the overall integration of diverse objectives. Improving child and youth

¹⁸⁷ International Child Friendly Cities Secretariat (2003) *Netherlands Review*

participation is central to each of the approaches listed. However, participation has been coupled with child poverty reduction, provision of more effective services, training and education for personnel involved in the built environment, greater prioritization of children and young people through establishment of specific portfolios, budgets and policies, and cooperation across layers of government (and with non-government organizations) to ensure effective coordination of service delivery.

National Examples of Good Practice

Before reflecting more specifically on associated developments and initiatives in NSW, a small number of significantly different national examples of good practice will be considered. This overview is necessarily limited and only serves to provide some illustration of relevant developments in Australia.

Growing Up in Cities Project – Braybrook, Melbourne

The Growing Up in Cities Project operates as part of the UNESCO Management of Social Transformations (MOST) initiative. The Asia-Pacific Director for the UNESCO MOST project (Dr Karen Malone) is based in Australia (currently at Wollongong University). During her doctoral studies, Karen was involved in a project in Braybrook (City Council of Maribyrnong). The project involved gaining a detailed understanding of young people's perceptions of the local area. Forty-four (44) young people aged between 10 and 15 years participated through drawings, discussions groups, walking tours, photographs, a photogrid and behaviour maps. Some of these young people served as consultants for the redesign of an open public space area following their contribution to the original project.

A further outcome of this project has been the development of the 'Streetspace' secondary school curriculum. The 'Streetspace' curriculum engages secondary school students in urban open space planning and design.

Other Growing Up in City sites include: Frankston and Abbotsford, Victoria.

Y-Space Website - Clearinghouse on Public Space

The Y-Space website is a clearinghouse of material on public space (predominantly focusing on the needs of young people). The Y-Space website was established by Dr Phil Crane in an attempt to draw together the vast array of local initiatives, academic research and evolving resources pertaining to young people and public space in Australia (and beyond). The website provides an invaluable tool for local practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and young people. Further to the benefits of providing a centralized resource database, the on-line forum provides opportunities for practitioners to utilise each other to develop solutions to local problems.

Griffith University Urban Research Program – Creating Child Friendly Cities Forum October 2004

In October 2004, Griffith University (Queensland) hosted a two-day forum on 'Creating Child Friendly Cities'. This forum, hosted by Professor Brendan Gleeson (Griffith University) brought together a collection of academics and practitioners from across Australia and New Zealand. Keynote speakers included:

- Dr Karen Malone
- Dr Claire Freeman (University of Otago)
- Dr Paul Tranter (University of NSW)

- Dr Kurt Iveson

A book following this conference is due to be released in the coming months. The publication, *Creating Child Friendly Cities*, will draw together numerous Australian (and international) developments relevant to the inquiry.

These national developments have been specifically selected to reflect diverse approaches to tackling the various aspects of improving the built environment for children and young people. The Braybrook example demonstrates the merits of local participation of children and young people and the value that comes from effectively consulting with young people. The Y-Space website demonstrates how the Internet can be utilised to disseminate a broad range of resources, research and ideas about ways to engage young people in discussions on the built environment (in particular public space). Finally, the forum conducted by Griffith University (and the subsequent book on *Creating Child Friendly Cities*) demonstrates how there is scope to bring together academics and practitioners from various disciplines and backgrounds to further promote an understanding of the range of issues associated with children, young people and the built environment.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

ISSUES PAPER 3: Related Developments in New South Wales

Executive Summary

It is apparent that some exciting work is happening in relation to children, young people and the built environment nationally and internationally. The question now then, is how well is NSW 'performing' in comparison to these national and internal developments/projects? This question is not easily answered, as there are many (often disparate) developments in NSW worthy of recognition. The establishment of the Commission for Children and Young People, the NSW Youth Advisory Council, the NSW Youth Policy, design guidelines (including *Child-Friendly Environments* and *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind*, a recent half-day forum on child-friendly cities (sponsored by the Commission), the numerous local government youth advisory groups and specific developments in areas such as young people's access to shopping centres, are all consistent with key provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 'child friendly cities' movement.

Relevant Developments in New South Wales

There are numerous developments relevant to the built environment as they relate to children and young people.

Participation

Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child has been the catalyst of considerable work to ensure that children and young people are involved in decisions that affect their lives. Article 12 states:

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly or indirectly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules or national law.

Numerous benefits are said to flow from involving children and young people in decisions that affect their lives:

- Increases a sense of being part of the community and builds ownership of solutions to particular problems/issues;
- Enhances capabilities of decision-making;
- Builds connections to other young people and adults;
- Helps young people learn;
- Improves financial outcomes; and
- Shows and promotes talent.¹⁸⁸

While “public participation in planning is universally acknowledged as a good thing by local government and planners ... children and young people have not generally been included as ‘public’ for purposes of participation even though they usually constitute between 30 and 40% of the population. Consideration of children and young people has tended to be confined to issues relating to allocating resources and developments, public services and facilities such as building schools and sports fields”.¹⁸⁹

The following developments pertain to initiatives or policies consistent with the spirit of Article 12 of the Convention:

- NSW Youth Advisory Council – established in 1989, the NSW Youth Advisory Council consists of 12 part-time members (aged between 12-24 years), who are responsible (amongst other things) for advising the Minister on the planning, development, integration and implementation of Government policies and programs concerning young persons and to consult with young persons, community

¹⁸⁸ Burfoot, D. (2003) ‘Children and young people’s participation: Arguing for a better future’, Youth Studies Australia, Vol. 22, No. 3, Tasmania.

¹⁸⁹ Freeman, C; Aitken-Rose, E. and Johnston, R. (2004) Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in New Zealand, Report on Research Findings.

- groups and Government authorities on issues and policies concerning young persons.¹⁹⁰
- Establishment of the Commission for Children and Young People in 1998. A central function of the Commission is promoting the participation of children and young people in the making of decisions that affect their lives.¹⁹¹ Various Commission resources and initiatives have been in response to this function, including the *Taking PARTicipation Seriously* Kit, the *Ask the Children* series, the establishment of a *Participation Advisory Service* and the *Speak up, Speak Out Program*, which gives young people the opportunity to develop and practice advocacy skills.¹⁹²
 - NSW Youth Policy 2002-2006 *Working Together, Working for Young People* – published in 2002, the NSW Youth Policy identified participation as one of six key strategies. Strategy 1 – being seen, heard and valued seeks to “increase participation of young people in our community, and involving them in the decisions and processes that impact on their lives”.¹⁹³ This strategy identified various structures associated with the participation of children and young people (i.e. the 108 young people listed on the NSW Register of Boards and Committees, the 12,000 secondary school students involved in Student Representative Councils, local government youth councils) as well as proposing the re-development of the NSW Government’s Youth website, contributing to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme and supporting the development of the Indigenous Youth Network (amongst other things).

Further to these developments, there has been growing interest in and use of youth councils across local government areas in New South Wales. Sagers, Palmer, Royce, Wilson and Charlton suggest that “virtually all councils have some formal youth governance structures such as youth advisory groups or councils” (2004: 2). Examples of operating youth councils in NSW include:

- Albury City Youth Council has been set-up to provide opportunities for young people to achieve a sense of civic mindedness, leadership development, and personal achievement and have an active voice within Albury City Council and the Albury Community. Members of the Youth Council are nominated for a twelve-month term with appointments being made in July of each year. Objectives of the Youth Council include:
 - Represent and raise the profile of the young people within the community.
 - Foster a sense of community to advance the needs of young people in the Albury area.
 - Identify gaps within the system in relation to existing youth services and assist to fill these gaps.
 - Assist the Albury City Council in the formulation of policy on youth affairs.

¹⁹⁰ *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*, S 11 (1)

¹⁹¹ *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*

¹⁹² Roth, L. (2005) *Children’s Rights in NSW*, Background Paper No. 2/05, NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, Sydney.

¹⁹³ Pages 6 and 7, NSW Youth Policy 2002-2006.

- Provide a recognised link between young people, Albury City and the general community.
- Provide and receive information through networks with local high schools, TAFE, University and existing youth services.
- Create opportunities to generate civic mindedness amongst young people and provide opportunities to have fun.
- Dubbo City Youth Council has operated since 1994 and currently has an active Council comprising of 17 members aged between 12 and 25. Composition of the Youth Council includes representatives from each of the five high schools located within Dubbo, student representatives from the Dubbo Senior Campus, community representatives and there are also positions set aside to be filled by TAFE and Charles Sturt University. The Dubbo City Youth Council receives full support from Dubbo City Council whom provide secretarial, financial and management support to the operations of the Youth Council. The Youth Council allows young people to have a say about issues that are affecting them in Dubbo. Each year, Dubbo City Council refers its Draft Management Plan to the Youth Council for comment. The Youth Council has also been quite active in making submissions in regards to the Draft Management Plan on youth and environmental matters. This coming year the Youth Council has decided to focus on several issues including lobbying for an upgrade of the BMX track facilities and skate park, raising the positive profile of youth in the community and organising a youth event.
- Forbes Council Youth Advisory Committee is currently being established to give young people in Forbes a voice to issues they feel are important in their community. It is open to all young people aged between 10 and 18 years who want to be actively involved in their community. Individuals do not need to be a member of the Youth Advisory Committee and can be involved just to work on specific youth projects. The committee consists of 10 members, six young people, two adult community members and two Forbes Shire councillors. The youth & community officer attends meetings in an ex-officio capacity. The objectives of the Advisory Committee include:
 - Oversee the provision of services to Forbes Shire youth through the Forbes Youth and Community Centre.
 - The Youth Action Council is fun, interactive and encourages ideas from young people within the community.
 - To advise Forbes Shire Council on issues and solutions affecting young people within Forbes.
 - To promote young people in a positive manner.
 - To work on the development and implementation of the community projects that benefit the Forbes community.
- Newcastle Youth Council provides an opportunity for young people aged between fifteen and twenty five to participate. The group is supported by Newcastle City Council who have recognised the importance of providing young people with a suitable forum to encourage input into community issues. Youth Council also provides an opportunity for young people to develop leadership skills through planning and staging

events during Youth Week each year and participating on Council committees such as the Community Safety Panel, Social Strategy Advisory Committee and the Australia Day Committee. The objectives of the Youth Council are to:

- reflect the interests of young people
- raise awareness on issues affecting young people
- organise activities in which young people can participate
- provide an advisory group for organisations wishing to develop programs and activities for young people
- allow for interaction between people with diverse interests and backgrounds.
- Shoalhaven Youth Advisory Committee was established in 1996. This was a result of Council's consultations with the community, including young people, who recommended that Council set up such a Committee to represent the interests & views of young people to Council & the community. Since 1996, over 60 local young people have participated in the Youth Advisory, both as nominated youth reps and as invited guests. So that young people from throughout the Shoalhaven can be involved, transport assistance is available & meetings can be held in various locations. Anyone aged 15 to 25 years living in the Shoalhaven region can be involved. Current activities include:
 - Participation in Youth Week Steering Committee & the Safer Community Action Team
 - The White Ribbon road safety campaign & other young driver safety strategies
 - The development of a draft Youth Suicide Prevention Plan for the Shoalhaven
 - Participation in the Nowra Skate Facility working group
 - Consultations with various Government Departments and other agencies
 - Youth Entertainment Project "Rock Fest" supporting local music & youth talent
 - Attendance at various National and state-wide youth gatherings and the subsequent implementation of appropriate local area actions & strategies

While numerous benefits from these practices can be achieved, as highlighted previously, Siggers et al caution that "some believe that the practice of youth participation can be problematic and dominated by school leaders, or have a 'hidden agenda' about the need to create good citizens" (2004: 15). Moreover, as was identified by Tilberg Municipal Council (Netherlands), participation confined to youth councils and advisory groups can exclude hard to reach or marginalized groups, which can distort the nature of the advice and input provided.

As will be shown, participation of children and young people is highlighted in building and design guidelines, but the actual practice of such participation is questioned.

Building and Design Guidelines

Another set of developments linked to children, young people and the built environment pertains to building and design guidelines. The development of guidelines is one way to influence built environment projects. In the past 10 years, there have been a small number

of key documents pertaining to the needs of children and young people in the built environment in New South Wales:

1. *Young People Today ... planning for their needs in public spaces* - The Department of Urban Affairs (now the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources) conducted research into the experiences of young people in Port Macquarie and facilitated a workshop with key local stakeholders. From this work, a set of urban design guidelines were recommended for use in Port Macquarie. These guidelines highlighted the need for accessible public transport, inclusive design, attention to surveillance and security and provision of public entertainment and expression.
2. *Urban Design Guidelines with young people in mind* - The Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and the Urban Design Advisory Service released these guidelines in September 1999. These guidelines built on the previous work in Port Macquarie and highlighted a key consideration regarding young people's use of public space – "young people have needs in public spaces which are similar to other community members, and that they would prefer to share space with other people rather than be isolated from them".¹⁹⁴ These guidelines identified eight key principles for urban design with young people in mind:
 - Getting there and around – maximising public transport routes and providing facilities for bike and skateboards will facilitate use of spaces by young people
 - Designing in all users – integrate, rather than segregating young people through the provision of wide spaces, seating for 'hanging out' and involvement young people in design discussions
 - Building liveliness – catering for a wide range of users through a mix of residential, retail, commercial and entertainment outlets/offers
 - Making safe places – adoption of crime prevention through environmental design principles to enhance perceived safety and increase activation and utilization of areas
 - The public stage – venues for self expression and public entertainment should be provided
 - Keeping public space public – maintenance of public spaces and avoidance of over-management through security guards and CCTV are recommended to retain public amenities
 - Separate but visible – provide conflict-generating activities separate, but within sight of other spaces
 - Basic services – provide basic services (toilets, public telephones) for young people to utilise.
3. *Child-friendly Environments* – the NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (in collaboration with the NSW Play Alliance) published this booklet in 1999, by way of an update on the previous, *Planning with Children in Mind* (1981) publication. This detailed document provides both research evidence and practical examples of numerous considerations in developing child-friendly environments. The book

¹⁹⁴ *Urban Design Guidelines* (1999), p.2

recognizes the developmental importance of play for children and the negative impacts of urbanization and high density housing on recreational options of children. Furthermore, attention is given to the need for stimulating, enjoyable and educational environments, as a means of assisting children with developmental tasks linked to balance, coordination, sight, hearing and understanding of the world.

Case Study – Young People and Shopping Centres

Shopping Centres have emerged in recent decades as venues for young people to congregate, socialize and recreate. Shopping Centres play a vital role in the lives of many young people. Employment, low-cost (or free) recreation, safety, peer interaction, romantic attachment and the purchasing and consumption of goods and services, are but some of the reasons why young people utilize and visit Shopping Centres.

However, young people are not alone in their use of these facilities. People from diverse backgrounds with diverse interests and expectations intersect in Shopping Centres. Shopping Centre Managers, retailers, security personnel and shoppers of all ages have differing needs and expectations of Shopping Centres. For some, maximizing profit is the key objective; for others, the provision of a safe environment to consume and purchase will be important; while for others an enjoyable, easy shopping experience will be the goal. Not surprisingly then, Turner and Campbell concluded from their consultations with young people and security personnel, that “different individuals and groups have varying perceptions about the purpose of a Shopping Centre”.¹⁹⁵

These different opinions, perceptions and expectations have in recent years resulted in growing conflict in some Shopping Centres. In the report, *Hanging Out – negotiating young people’s use of public space*, it was suggested that adults who work in or use public space (such as Shopping Centres) were concerned about antisocial behaviour by young people and most adults believed that there were particular groups of young people who were not using public space in a suitable manner.¹⁹⁶

White suggests that these observations and perceptions, coupled with wider demonisation of young people have resulted in young people being excluded from use of public space. Perceptions and “images of anarchy, ‘ethnic youth gangs’, juvenile crime waves and various moral panics over the state of youths today, have gone hand-in-hand with concerted campaigns to make young people unwelcome in our ... Shopping Centres”.¹⁹⁷ The attention that young people receive due to their dress, behaviour, their limited consumption/spending and the perceptions of other users of Shopping Centres, has resulted in some young people being harassed or banned from Shopping Centres by security personnel and many young people feeling unwelcome in Shopping Centres.

This growing conflict has proven unsatisfactory with key stakeholders and users of Shopping Centres. Retailers are concerned that fearful or unhappy shoppers will take their business elsewhere, resulting in a loss of income; Shopping Centre Managers are concerned about

¹⁹⁵ Turner, S. and Campbell, S. (1999) *Consultation with Young People and Security Officers – Report*, Western Sydney Public Space Project, Youth Action and Policy Association.

¹⁹⁶ National Crime Prevention (1999) *Hanging out – negotiating young people’s use of public space*, Report Findings, Commonwealth, Attorney General’s Department, Canberra.

¹⁹⁷ White, R. (1997) *Regulating Youth Space – Are young people losing the struggle for a space of their own?*, *Alternative Law Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1.

occupancy rates of the stores and the impact of reduced income for retailers on occupancy rates; security personnel, engaged by Shopping Centre management, are concerned with safety (and perceptions of safety) of shoppers and maintaining an atmosphere conducive to consumption and spending; while young people seek enjoyment and entertainment.

Conflict between these different stakeholders is detrimental to maintaining a (profitable) harmonious environment, which can have consequences for all stakeholders. In recognition of the need to promote a harmonious environment and to reduce this growing tension, numerous creative proactive measures have evolved in many Shopping Centres.

Some of the recent developments adopted in New South Wales to prevent conflict between young people and shopping centre security, centre management and other centre users have included:

- Development of *Creating the Space for Dialogue – the NSW Youth Shopping Centre Protocol*: this publication was designed to provide a framework for the development of local shopping centre protocols and was funded by the NSW Attorney General's Crime Prevention Division and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia. Protocols seek to articulate conditions of entry, define acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and identify consequences for unacceptable behaviour. Various local protocols have been developed since the release of this document in 2003, including protocols in Penrith, Bondi Junction, Hurstville, Macarthur and Parramatta.¹⁹⁸
- Information for Shopping Centre Security Guards – through funding from the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme, a self-paced learning package has been developed for shopping centre security guards. This package was developed in 2004 to provide shopping centre security guards with some pertinent information on ways to prevent conflict with young people. This package is freely available from the Youth Action and Policy Association website.
- Forum on Young People and Shopping Centres – in February 2005 a forum was conducted for in excess of 150 shopping centre management, security, youth sector and police personnel. The forum provided opportunities to showcase numerous positive initiatives associated with young people's access and use of shopping centres. Presentations included: description of the new youth centre at Erina Fair shopping centre; discussion of the challenges in tackling media images and community perceptions that portray young people as threatening and violent; innovative approaches to shopping centre security and local projects increasing participation of young people in key decisions associated with the design and management of shopping centres.

Case Study – Public Private Partnership Approach to School Building

Nine new schools (seven primary, one secondary and one special needs) are to be built between 2007 and 2009 in locations across NSW (predominantly western and south-western Sydney, Central Coast and Maitland areas) in a public private partnership. NSW Treasury and NSW Department of Education and Training are jointly involved in the tendering process, which is due to be finalised in October 2005, with the contract being awarded in November-December 2005.

¹⁹⁸ Roth, L. ((2005) *Children's Rights in NSW*, Background Paper No. 2/05, NSW Parliamentary Library Research Service, Sydney.

The construction of schools provides a primary opportunity to engage children and young people in relevant aspects of the design. Numerous publications have been developed reflecting the views of children and young people on good school designs. Two such publications include:

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (2004) **Being Involved in School Design: a guide for school communities, local authorities, funders and design and construction teams**, London. This publication promotes the involvement of school communities in the design process. The publication cites key examples where positive outcomes were achieved through the meaningful participation of children and young people. Examples include:

- Westborough Primary School – “Like many schools it has been improved in an ad hoc manner over the years, with alterations often imposed rather than priorities by the school community. Legacies of this approach include uncoordinated development and poor use of funds”. To engage children (pupils) in aspects of the project, questionnaires were distributed to pupils; groups of pupils (aged 9-10 years) went on study visits to the architects offices to review models and discuss plans; and screens were erected during construction to enable pupils to observe stages of construction work.
- Wrockwardine Wood Junior School – “from the outset the school wanted to ... get children involved in the design and construction process”. Curriculum projects were developed to tie in with the design and construction of the new classrooms. Even school furniture designs involved the pupils.
- Kingsdale School – “Kingsdale School was in an advanced state of disrepair by the end of the 1990s. The buildings were handicapped by a lack of storage, narrow corridors, inadequate technological resources, and poor dining and staff facilities ... the new head teacher wondered how he could improve the school, whose poor physical condition reinforced the low morale of the pupils and staff. In spring 1998 ... the school’s aims [were re-written], focusing on the potential impact of environment improvements”. Every one of the pupils were consulted, which in part enabled “the design team to create a new kind of learning space, a more flexible education environment that combines inclusivity with spectacular architecture”

Department of Education and Skills (2003) **Schools for the Future: Exemplar Designs and Ideas**, London. This publication draws together 11 case studies that depict elements of key designs to promote learning. Learning clusters, outdoor classrooms, flexibility, adaptability, sustainability and inclusiveness are just some of the key principles canvassed in the publication.

The NSW Commission for Children and Young People undertook consultation with children and young people as part of the NSW Department of Education and Training’s *Future Project: Excellence and Innovation* in early 2005. This report suggested that some students had less than favourable views of their school environment:

“Looks like a jail. Makes you feel like you are locked up ... trapped inside”

“All concrete and bars everywhere”

“At school we have no play equipment. Need playground equipment, slippery dip”

The report by the Commission notes comments made by Tony Vinson in the *Report of the Public Education Inquiry* (2005): "... when allowance has been made for other relevant factors, the physical state of a school is one effective predictor of student achievement. Research suggests that the quality of physical space affects self-esteem and student-teacher interactions, parental involvement, discipline and interpersonal relations".

Appendix 5: Committee Minutes



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 26 May 2005 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Ms Burnswoods (Vice-Chair), Mr Bartlett, Mr Cansdell, Mr Catanzaritti, Mr Collier, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale (left before vote), Ms Hopwood, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Apologies

Mrs Perry

Also in Attendance

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Kylie Rudd, Hilary Parker

The meeting commenced at 1.20pm.

In accordance with Schedule 1 Clause 2(3) of the *Commission for Children and People Act 1998*, it was agreed that the Vice-Chair would chair the meeting in Ms Perry's absence.

....

5. Inquiry Program

(a) *Children, Young People and the Built Environment*

The Vice-Chair addressed the Committee on the proposed inquiry into children, young people and the built environment. The Committee discussed the proposed subject of the inquiry. Ms Pavey stated her view that the proposed inquiry was not a matter of priority.

Moved Ms Judge, seconded by Ms Griffin that:

- (i) For the purpose of performing its statutory functions under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* in relation to the Commission, the Committee is to inquire into:
 1. trends, changes and issues for children and young people in the development, implementation and coordination of policy, design and planning for the built environment;
 2. the mechanisms available for monitoring and reporting on planning processes and decisions concerning the built environment, as they relate to and impact upon children and young people;

Committee Minutes

3. strategies to ensure that built environment issues affecting children and young people are readily identified and receive coordinated attention across portfolios and different levels of government;
4. the role of the Commission for Children and Young People in giving input to the Government and non-Government sectors on inclusive and integrated planning and policy-making for children and young people in the built environment;
5. any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee;

and report to both Houses of Parliament on the inquiry.

- (ii) In-principle approval be sought for the Committee to engage a consultant to provide expert assistance, not otherwise available to the Committee, for the duration of the inquiry and that a draft specification for the parameters of the consultancy be drafted for the Committee's approval.

Vote called for and taken on a show of hands.

AYES 6

Ms Burnswoods, Mr Bartlett, Mr Catanzaritti, Mr Collier, Ms Griffin, and Ms Judge.

NOES 3

Mr Cansdell, Mrs Hopwood and Ms Pavey.

Motion carried.

....



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 15 September 2005 at 1.15pm
Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Ms Burnswoods (Vice-Chair), Mr Bartlett, Mr Catanzaritti, Ms Griffin, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Apologies

Mr Cansdell, Mr Collier, Ms Hale, Ms Hopwood

Also in Attendance:

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Daniela Marzilli, Hilary Parker

The meeting commenced at 1.20pm.

....

3. Inquiry Program: Children, Young People and the Built Environment

The Chair addressed the Committee on the progress made to date regarding the inquiry into children, young people and the built environment. Discussion ensued. The Chair advised that there would be a need for a deliberative meeting on the 20 October (rather than the scheduled meeting for 13 October) in order that the consultant to the Committee, Mr Clancey, can brief the Members on the issues papers, currently being finalised. The Committee discussed the remainder of the program for public hearings and deliberative meetings.

Mrs Perry moved that the proposed resolution that:

the Committee advertise the inquiry and make a public call for submissions in the major daily newspapers with a closing date for submissions of 6-8 weeks after the date of the advertisement,

be amended as follows:

- i. That the Inquiry into Children and Young People and the Built Environment be advertised on Saturday 15 October 2005 in the major daily newspapers and a call made for public submissions with a closing date of 6-8 weeks after the date of the advertisement; and
- ii. That issues papers be circulated to Members prior to a deliberative meeting on 20 October 2005 and the consultant brief the Committee, with a view to the Committee adopting the papers.

Discussion ensued.

Resolution, as amended, moved by Ms Burnswoods, seconded by Ms Griffin.

It was clarified that the issues papers are to be placed on the Committee's inquiry website and provided as an information package to organisations and individuals interested in making a submission to the inquiry.

Proposed conference and site inspections

The Chair addressed the Committee on the late item concerning the Built Environment Inquiry. Discussion ensued.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Bartlett, seconded by Ms Judge, that a Committee delegation attend the "Future Shock" conference and conduct the site inspections and visits as follows and that a submission to the Speaker be submitted for approval.

- "Future Shock" – A conference being conducted by 2050 (the young professionals group of the Planning Institute of Australia) in Brisbane from 25-26 November 2005.
- Meeting with Mr Phil Crane, (a Queensland University of Technology academic responsible for the Yspace project in Brisbane);
- Inspection of the sites included in the Yspace project;
- Meetings with the local government and state government officials connected with the Yspace project;
- Visit to the Queensland Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The Secretariat will canvass Committee Members to check availability and interest in the proposed trip.

A summary of the proceedings from the NSW Commission for Children and Young People's Child Friendly Cities Seminar on 27 June 2005, and a copy of *Generating the Future? The State of Local Government Planning for Children and Young People in New Zealand*, a report on research findings, were distributed for information.

....



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 20 October 2005 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Ms Burnswoods (Vice-Chair), Mr Bartlett, Mr Catanzaritti, Mr Cansdell, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Apologies

Mr Daley

Also in Attendance:

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Hilary Parker, Garner Clancey

The Chair opened the meeting at 1.18pm.

....

3. Children, Young People and the Built Environment Inquiry

The Chair introduced the consultant, Mr Garner Clancey, who briefed the Committee on the following issues papers: Issues Paper 1: Introduction and Overview; Issues Paper 2: The Child Friendly Cities Movement; Issues Paper 3: Related Developments in New South Wales.

The Committee discussed the Issues Papers and the timetable for the Inquiry.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Griffin, seconded by Ms Hopwood, that the Issues Papers be disclosed and posted on the website.

....



Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 10 November 2005 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Mr Bartlett, Mr Catanzaritti, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Apologies

Ms Burnswoods

Also in Attendance:

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Hilary Parker

The Chair opened the meeting at 1.20pm.

....

4. Inquiry Program

....

Built Environment Inquiry

- The Chair briefed the Committee on the program for Members travelling to Brisbane for site inspections, meetings and the Future Shock conference on 25 and 26 November 2005.
- Members who are aware of individuals or groups with a potential interest in the inquiry subject area can forward details to the Secretariat for inclusion in a targeted mail-out inviting submissions.

....



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 1 December 2005 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Mr Bartlett, Mr Cansdell, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Also in Attendance:

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Hilary Parker, Lluwannee George

The Chair opened the meeting at 1.20pm.

....

3. Inquiry Program

....

Built Environment Inquiry

The Chair addressed the Committee about the recent visit to Brisbane. Other Members who also attended contributed to the discussion.

....



Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 30 March 2006 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Mr Bartlett, Ms Burnswoods, Mr Cansdell, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Ms Judge and Ms Pavey.

Also in Attendance:

Helen Minnican, Pru Sheaves, Hilary Parker, Jennifer North

The Chair opened the meeting at 1.20pm.

....

3. Built Environment Inquiry

Witnesses: The Committee discussed the list of proposed witnesses and agreed to invite Canterbury, Wollongong and Richmond Valley Councils to give evidence. Further consideration will be given to inviting Ku-ring-gai Council, following consultation with Ms Hopwood.

Hearing days: The Secretariat undertook to canvass Members' availability in May and June for 2-3 hearing days and one day of site visits.

Site visits: The Committee discussed possible sites for visits of inspection.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Judge, seconded by Mr Daley that the Committee:

- submit a proposal to the Speaker for it to inspect the Minto Urban Renewal Project and the Miller Youth Centre; and
- investigate the possibility of meeting with Campbelltown Council and visiting a local Police Youth Club on the day of the site inspections.

Ms Hale undertook to provide the details of a contact person at Minto so that the Committee could hear the views of young people. Ms Pavey requested that information about provisions for youth at Erina Fair on the Central Coast be provided to Committee Members for their deliberations.

Publication of submissions: The Committee discussed requests from a number of agencies for permission to publish their submission to the inquiry.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Pavey, seconded by Ms Judge, that, with the exception of the Office of the Disability Council of NSW and any other agency wishing to release their

submission to the relevant Minister, the Committee advise agencies that its policy is to make submissions public at the time a witness gives evidence on their submission and those submissions which are not the subject of evidence are tabled at the end of the inquiry when the Committee reports.

....



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Tuesday 9 May 2006 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Mr Bartlett, Ms Burnswoods (Vice-Chair), Mr Cansdell, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Judge, Ms Pavey and Ms Sharpe.

Also in Attendance

Garner Clancey, Helen Minnican, Jennifer North, Hilary Parker, Pru Sheaves

PUBLIC HEARING

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Chair opened the public hearing at 1.15pm.

Brendan James Gleeson, Professor of Urban Management and Policy, Director of the Urban Research Program, Faculty of Environmental Science, Griffith University, Nathan, Queensland, took the oath. Professor Gleeson made an opening statement and was then questioned by the Chair and other Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew. The Committee adjourned at 2.15pm.



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Tuesday 16 May 2006 at 10.40am

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Ms Burnswoods (Acting Chair), Mr Cansdell, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Pavey and Ms Sharpe.

Also in Attendance

Garner Clancey, Helen Minnican, Hilary Parker, Pru Sheaves

Witnesses present

Dr Philip Crane, Mr Michael Manikas, Ms Lesley King, Dr Adrian Bauman, Dr Timothy Gill, Ms Sarah Reilly, Mr Ross Woodward, Ms Beverley Giegerl, Ms Julie Hegarty, Mr Christopher Johnson, Mr Paul Gilbertson, Ms Maura Boland

PUBLIC HEARING

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Acting Chair opened the public hearing at 10.40am.

Dr Philip Raymond Crane, Senior Lecturer, School of Humanities and Human Services, Queensland University of Technology, affirmed. Dr Crane made an opening statement and tabled an article titled "Desocialising Space: The Decline of the Public Realm in Western Sydney" by Brendan Gleeson, in the journal, *Social and Cultural Geography*, Volume 7, No. 1, February 2006. The Acting Chair questioned Dr Crane, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

Michael Anthony Manikas, Chairman, 2050, took the oath. Mr Manikas made an opening statement and was questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

At 12.00pm the Committee adjourned for a lunch break. The hearing resumed at 12.45pm.

Lesley King, Executive Officer, New South Wales Centre for Overweight and Obesity, University of Sydney, Adrian Ernest Bauman, Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney, and Dr Timothy Paul Gill, Director, New South Wales Centre for Public Health Nutrition, University of Sydney all affirmed. Ms King, Professor Bauman and Dr Gill each made an opening statement and were then questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

Committee Minutes

Sarah Reilly, Social Planning Consultant, Planning Institute of Australia, affirmed. Ms Reilly made an opening statement and was then questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

Ross Keith Woodward, Deputy Director General, Department of Local Government, took the oath. Mr Woodward tabled three publications entitled *Social Community Planning Reporting Manual*, *Social Community Planning Reporting Guidelines* and *Youth Council Checklist*.

Mr Woodward was questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee. Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

At 2.45pm the Committee adjourned for a short break. The hearing resumed at 3.00pm.

Beverley Giegerl, Treasurer, and Julie Anne Hegarty, Executive Member, Local Government and Shires Associations, took the oath. Ms Giegerl made an opening statement then both witnesses were questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

Christopher Richard Johnson, Acting Executive Director for Cities and Centres, Department of Planning, affirmed. Mr Johnson made an opening statement then was questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

Paul Richard Gilbertson, Executive Director, Strategic Projects, Department of Housing, took the oath. Maura Clair Boland, Executive Director, Office of Community Housing, affirmed. Ms Boland made some opening comments. The Acting Chair then invited Mr Gilbertson to comment on the Bonnyrigg project, which was visited by Committee Members the previous day. Following Mr Gilbertson's response, both witnesses were questioned by the Acting Chair, followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Acting Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 5.18pm.



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Tuesday 13 June 2006 at 10.40am

Room 814/815, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Ms Burnswoods, Mr Cansdell, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale and Ms Pavey.

Apologies

Mr Bartlett, Mrs Hopwood, Ms Judge, Ms Sharpe

Also in Attendance

Helen Minnican, Hilary Parker

Witnesses present

Ms Prue Walsh, Ms Cleonie Quayle, Mr Jason Field, Mr James McDougall, Ms Elizabeth Mifsud, Mr Stephen Bray, Ms Kathleen Fennessy, Mr Gabriel Watts, Ms Marcia Waller, Ms Maria Bennett, Mr John Hession, Ms Joanne Petrovic, Mr Andy Sammut, Ms Meredith Harrison, Ms Kerry Hunt, Ms Gillian Calvert.

PUBLIC HEARING

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Chair opened the public hearing at 10.45am.

Ms Prudence Ann Walsh, Play Environment Consulting, took the oath and agreed to her submission being made public and included in the sworn evidence. She then made an opening statement. The Chair questioned Ms Walsh, followed by Members of the Committee. Ms Walsh provided a number of documents for the Committee's information: *The Productivity Argument for Investing in Young Children* by James Heckman, *Early Childhood Investment Yields Big Payoff* by Robert Lynch, *Designing Playgrounds for Play, Long-term Viability and Safety* by Prue Walsh, *Childhood Matters: a report on the inquiry into early childhood education* by the Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, and *Best Practice Guidelines in Early Childhood Physical Environments* by the NSW Department of Community Services.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

Ms Cleonie Dorothy Quayle, Policy Officer, and Mr Jason Christopher Field, Senior Policy Officer, New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council, affirmed. Ms Quayle agreed to the ALC's submission being made public and included as part of the sworn evidence. She then made an opening statement and tabled a supplementary submission to the Inquiry. The Chair questioned the witnesses followed by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

Mr James Duncan McDougall, Director of the National Children and Youth Law Centre; Ms Elizabeth Anne Mifsud, Volunteer Solicitor; and Mr Stephen Bray, Volunteer Solicitor, affirmed and Ms Kathleen Bridget Fennessy, Volunteer Solicitor, and Mr Gabriel Watts, Volunteer Solicitor, National Children and Youth Law Centre, took the oath. Mr McDougall agreed to the Centre's submission being made public and included in the sworn evidence. Ms Mifsud and Mr Watts made opening statements and then Members of the Committee questioned the witnesses.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

At 1.14pm, the Committee adjourned for a lunch break.

....

The hearing resumed at 1.55pm.

Ms Marcia Waller, Community Services Director, Willoughby City Council; Ms Maria Bennett, Children's Services Manager, Willoughby City Council; Mr John Joseph Hession, Strategic Planning Officer, Richmond Valley Council; and Ms Joanne Gail Petrovic, Community Projects Officer, Richmond Valley Council, took the oath. Mr Andy Sammut, Ms Meredith Harrison, Ms Kerry Rae Hunt, and Ms Tracy Venaglia affirmed.

The witnesses all agreed to their submissions being made public and included as part of the sworn evidence.

Ms Hunt, Mr Hession, Mr Sammut and Ms Waller made opening statements and Members of the Committee proceeded to question the witnesses.

Ms Hunt tabled the *Wollongong City Foreshore Master Plan Community Engagement Interim Report*, *Wollongong City Council's Social Data Research Project Report 2004*, and the *Towradgi Park Landscape Master Plan*.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witnesses and the witnesses withdrew.

The Chair then welcomed Pia Birac and Kim Stewart, trainees at the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, and Jacob Leung, a member of the Commission's Young People's Reference Group, who observed the hearing from the public gallery.

Ms Gillian Elizabeth Calvert, Commissioner, NSW Commission for Children and Young People, affirmed and agreed that her submission be made public and included as part of the sworn evidence. Ms Calvert made an opening statement and was then questioned by Members of the Committee.

Questioning concluded, the Chair thanked the witness and the witness withdrew.

The Committee adjourned at 4.13pm.



PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People

Thursday 28 September 2006 at 1.15pm

Room 1108, Parliament House

Members Present

Mrs Perry (Chair), Ms Burnswoods, Mr Daley, Ms Griffin, Ms Hale, Ms Pavey and Ms Sharpe

Apologies: Mr Bartlett, Ms Judge

Also in Attendance:

Pru Sheaves, Hilary Parker, Jennifer North

The Chair opened the meeting at 1.20pm.

....

3. Built Environment Inquiry

The Chair distributed copies of the Draft Report and asked Members to forward suggested amendments in writing to the Secretariat before the next deliberative meeting on 12 October 2006.

....