

NSW Government Response to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children & Young People *Follow-Up Inquiry into Children, Young People & the Built Environment* Report

May 2011

Introduction

The NSW Government supports the well-being of children and young people through the work of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission). The Commission was established in 1999 under the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*.

The Commission works with NSW Government and non-government agencies providing policy advice, undertaking research, supporting the development of child-safe organisations and monitoring the NSW Working with Children Check. The Commission's independence within government is facilitated by a governance model through which it reports to a Parliamentary Joint Committee.

The purpose of the Follow-up Inquiry was to consider the progress of recommendations made by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People (the Committee) in its first Inquiry into *Children, Young People and the Built Environment* that took place in 2005 and 2006. In recognition of this, the NSW Government's response also includes commitments made by agencies during the Follow-up Inquiry hearings that relate to outstanding recommendations from the first Inquiry.

Recommendation 1

That the Commission for Children and Young People further promote built4kids and monitor the use of this resource.

Response: Supported.

The Commission will continue to work with local councils, NSW Government agencies, non-government organisations and industry peak bodies to promote the take-up and use of *built4kids*. This work will also be supported by members of the Commission's Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group (see response to Recommendation 2 for further information about the Advisory Group).

In 2011, a dedicated section on children, young people and the built environment will be created on the Commission's website to promote *built4kids*, as well as other relevant resources and information that relate to the Commission's work in this area.

At the start of April 2011, *built4kids* had been downloaded 74,000 times from the Commission's website. Due to the high level of interest in this publication, the Commission has funded the Urban Research Program at Griffith University to undertake a survey on the take-up and use of *built4kids* to support its work in continuing to promote this publication and monitor its use. The results of this survey will be made available to the Committee in 2011.

As part of further promoting the key messages and principles contained in *built4kids* about supporting the needs of children and young people in the built environment, the Commission will develop an education program targeting built environment professionals and social policy makers. Workshops will be held in the second half of 2011 and in 2012. The workshops will be recorded in a web-ready format and available online with accompanying materials for viewing at any time. The workshops will also be converted into Continuing Professional Development units for built environment professionals such as planners, architects and landscape architects.

In late 2010, the Commission funded the printing and publication of Healthy Cities Illawarra's *Child-Friendly by Design Resource Toolkit* which was officially launched in November 2010. The Toolkit complements and further promotes the work of *built4kids* by demonstrating how child-friendly indicators can be implemented and providing more targeted information to guide and direct practice. The Commission is currently working with Healthy Cities Illawarra to roll-out a series of training sessions to local councils across NSW in 2011.

The Commission is also an active member of the Child-Friendly Cities Network, a coalition of local councils in NSW committed to supporting the development of child-friendly built environments in NSW. Network members also support the Commission in promoting *built4kids* to local government.

Recommendation 2

That the Commission for Children and Young People utilise its Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group in the development of a strategy to disseminate to built environment professionals best practice approaches with respect to the impact of the built environment on children and young people.

Response: Supported

The Commission has established a Children, Young People and Built Environment Advisory Group which will continue to function over the next 18 months to two years. Membership of the Advisory Group consists of individuals and representatives from:

- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects
- Department of Premier and Cabinet: Division of Local Government
- Department of Premier and Cabinet: Planning
- Institute of Planning Australia: NSW Chapter
- Local Government and Shires Associations of New South Wales
- NSW Department of Health
- Premier's Council for Active Living
- Royal Institute of Architects: NSW Chapter
- University of New South Wales
- Dr Kate Bishop, researcher and consultant on children, young people and the built environment.

The Advisory Group met in October 2010 and again in March 2011. It will meet quarterly to support a coordinated approach to the promotion, education and provision of information to built environment professionals and social policy makers about the needs of children and young people in the built environment.

The Advisory Group's Terms of Reference are:

1. *Support the Commission to implement the recommendations from the second Parliamentary Inquiry into children, young people and the built environment.*
2. *Support the Commission to educate and inform relevant NSW Government agencies and practitioners (via the Institutes) about child-friendly built environments including:*
 - a. *Key elements that make up a child-friendly built environment.*
 - b. *Benefits of child-friendly built environments.*
 - c. *Impediments to creating child-friendly built environments.*
3. *Advise the Commission about key principles that could strengthen existing and future policy responses to support the development of child-friendly built environments in NSW.*
4. *Provide advice to the Commission on the development of a strategic and coordinated approach to achieve the above in the short-term, as well as sustainable strategies for the longer-term.*

The Advisory Group's work plan reflects the commitments made as part of the Follow-up Inquiry including: working with the Department of Premier and Cabinet: Planning to consider updating the *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind and Child-friendly Environments* publications; funding industry awards for child-friendly planning and design; promoting existing research and good practice (for example, materials available from Play England); and in partnership with Advisory Group members, seeking opportunities to influence and/or support further research and evaluation related to children, young people and the built environment.

Recommendation 3

That the Commission consider best practice in reporting its progress toward its built environment objectives including, but not exclusively:

- *a comparison of the actual performance achieved during the year with targets and objectives set;*
- *highlights of any major achievements as well as any significant shortcomings, setbacks or problems in performance;*
- *shared responsibilities for cross-agency performance issues and the agency's contribution to the joint outcomes; and*
- *the mechanisms adopted by the Commission in order to utilise expert advice and engage with stakeholders.*

Response: Supported.

The Commission has developed a set of outcomes in partnership with its Advisory Group to monitor the progress of its work in this area. The outcomes hierarchy is at **Attachment A**. A set of results will be developed under each outcome together with members of the Commission's Advisory Group. The Commission will regularly report performance against these results to the Committee and will also provide information about performance against set targets, major achievements and shortcomings, cross-agency issues, accessing expert advice and engagement with stakeholders.

Recommendation 4

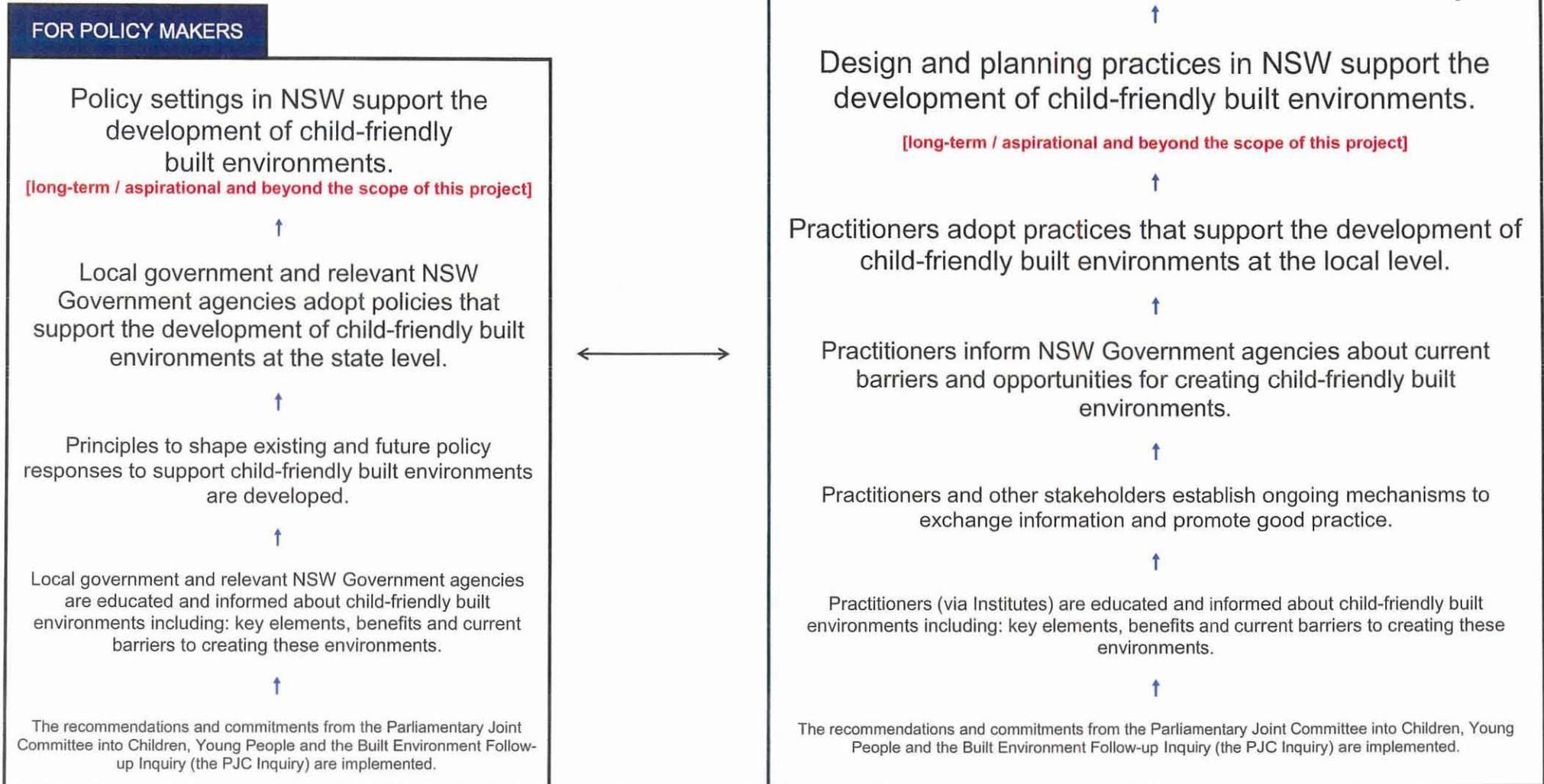
That the Commission advise the Committee on the outcomes of its strategic planning exercise and any structural or resourcing implications arising from that process.

Response: Supported.

The implementation of the recommendations from the Follow-up Inquiry is a priority under the Commission's strategic plan which is currently being finalised. While additional funds have not been provided to the Commission to support the implementation of the Committee's recommendations, the Commission has re-allocated internal resources to support the work required.

The Commission will continue to report to the Committee on its achievements and outcomes in this area through the regular Annual Reporting process.

ATTACHMENT A: OUTCOMES HIERARCHY



To Note: The Commission's definition of a "built environment" is based on the following:

1. The built environment encompasses both built and natural environments.
2. The Commission's focus is on built and natural environments that are accessed, not necessarily owned by, the public.