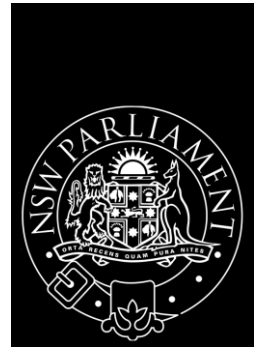


PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES



Committee on Children and Young People

Children, Young People and the Built Environment

Follow-up Inquiry

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Terms of reference

The Committee resolved on 26 August 2009 to conduct an inquiry with the following terms of reference:

That the Committee undertake a Follow-up Inquiry into its 2006 Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment by examining the Commissioner for Children and Young People and any other witnesses agreed by the Committee; and report to both Houses of Parliament on the Inquiry.

List of past and present Commissioners

- Ms Gillian Calvert** Commissioner from 1 June 1999 to 7 September 2009
Ms Calvert was Commissioner during the previous inquiry into Child, Young People and the Built Environment, and the reviews of the 2005-2006, 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 Annual Reports.
- Ms Gaye Phillips** Commissioner from 7 September 2009 to 13 November 2009
- Ms Jan McClelland** Acting Commissioner from 13 November 2009 to 21 June 2010
Ms McClelland was Acting Commissioner at the time of this inquiry's public hearing on 31 March 2010.
- Ms Megan Mitchell** Commissioner from 21 June 2010 to present
Ms Mitchell was Commissioner at the time of the review of the 2008-2009 Annual Report, and this inquiry's roundtable public hearing on 30 June 2010.

Chair's foreword

We have the resources, we have done the research, we have the knowledge and we have the Commission. It now behoves us as caring professionals to deliver measurable improvements to children and young people in New South Wales. This is a worthwhile investment as these people represent our future.¹

In commencing its follow-up inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, the Committee on Children and Young People (the Committee) was keen to hear what had happened in relation to the recommendations contained in the 2006 report of the same name². As encapsulated in the above quote from Fiona Robbé, representative of Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, the Committee heard evidence of what had happened in the intervening 4 years and what ought to be the focus moving forward.

In 2006, the Committee compiled its report into Children, Young People and the Built Environment with a focus on working towards child- and youth-friendly built environments. The report recognised the inter-disciplinary nature of the built environment landscape and the importance of engaging a whole of government response to the issues raised in order to achieve real change in the way children experience, and are consulted in relation to, the built environment.

As was noted in the 2006 report, the built environment is being continuously transformed, and those practitioners who work in the area of the built environment are constantly having to balance the needs of children and young people with other members of the community, as well as having reference to the diversity and multiplicity of the needs of children and young people themselves. The Committee heard evidence of what is risked if children are not properly consulted and considered in relation to the built environment: not just their physical development but their social, emotional and intellectual development can be compromised.

The Committee was pleased to hear that the work undertaken with respect to the 2006 report was still relevant, with the recommendations contained within that report considered by those who gave evidence to the Committee to be still pertinent in 2010. The importance of a collaborative approach to achieving change in the area of how children and young people interact with the built environment was emphasised, and the Committee was pleased to observe the leadership of the NSW Commission for Children and Young People in establishing the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group during the course of the follow-up inquiry. Initiatives such as the establishment of the Advisory Group will facilitate an exchange of ideas and provide a system of collaboration which will in turn deliver benefits to children and young people in the form of better consultation and an improved built environment in which to grow, learn and flourish.

It is important to recognise the vital role played by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People in achieving a coordinated response to the wide and varying needs – and rights – of children and young people in NSW. The Committee was pleased to observe the early work undertaken by the Commission in relation to the 2006 recommendations, and has been impressed with the enthusiasm with which the Commission has committed to achieving the outstanding recommendations during the course of this follow-up inquiry.

¹ Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 8.

² Committee on Children and Young People, *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, Report no. 8/53 – October 2006*

Chair's foreword

In considering recommendations for this 2010 report, it was not the Committee's intention to reiterate its 2006 recommendations, but rather to focus on the means of their implementation. As such, the 2010 recommendations concentrate on strategies for ensuring that the ongoing issues relating to children, young people and the built environment continue to be addressed.

I would like to thank all the individuals, government agencies and other organisations who contributed to this follow-up inquiry, particularly those who attended the hearing on 31 March 2010 and the roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010. These sources of information were invaluable to the Committee during its deliberations and in providing a framework for moving forward. The Committee would particularly like to thank Associate Professor Geoffrey Woolcock, Fiona Robbé and Peter McCue for their presentations, and Dr Kate Bishop for her guidance, during the roundtable discussion.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Members of the Committee for their contributions to the inquiry and deliberations on the report. The Committee was ably assisted in this task by the staff of the Secretariat.



Robert Coombs MP
Chair

List of recommendations

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• the mechanisms adopted by the commission in order to utilise expert advice and engage with stakeholders.	43
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.	44

Executive summary

The 2006 Report on Children, Young People and the Built Environment contained recommendations designed to achieve positive changes to the way in which children and young people experience, and are consulted in relation to, the built environment. This follow-up inquiry provides an overview of the achievements made in relation to those recommendations.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the original 2006 report into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. The aim of the 2006 inquiry, identifying developments in policy and practice that would enhance the built environment for the benefit of children and young people in NSW and to inform the wider debate both in Australia and internationally, is noted. The 2006 report found that the built environment plays an integral part in children's and adolescents' development.

The recommendations from the 2006 report are extracted, reminding the reader that the recommendations feature:

- improved regulation of the built environment to remove complexity and to identify the needs of various age groups,
- implementation of strategies to effectively engage children and young people in the planning process,
- the development of design guidelines which recognise the importance of the built environment to children and young people, and
- training and rewarding built environment professionals in order to promote the creation of child- and youth-friendly environments.

The proposed enhanced leadership role of the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People is highlighted, particularly recognising the suggested policy development role for the Commission and the recommended methodology of supporting the practical recommendations contained within the report through the mechanism of a steering committee.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the implementation of the recommendations prior to the commencement of the follow-up inquiry and during the follow-up inquiry. The impact of the 2006 report on the discourse of the built environment is referenced. The information that the Committee received during the review of the Annual Reports in relation to the progress the Commission was making with regard to the 2006 Report's recommendations is recognised, as is the publishing of *built4kids: a good practice guide to creating child-friendly built environments* in June 2009. *built4kids* was developed by the Commission in conjunction with Griffith University to particularly assist people working in planning related areas. *built4kids* highlights the importance of the built environment to children and young people and provides advice on appropriate ways to incorporate participation by children and young people in decision-making processes that affect them.

The progress made with respect to each of the recommendations contained within the 2006 report is reviewed. The work initially undertaken by the Commission, particularly the development of *built4kids* from 2006 through to 2009 and the Commission's collaboration with local councils, notably Wollongong City Council, is referenced.

There has been evidence of activity during the course of the follow-up inquiry with respect to the implementation of the 2006 recommendations, particularly in relation to the establishment of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group – which draws on one of the key tenets contained within the 2006 recommendations, being the establishment of a steering committee. The establishment of this Advisory Group addresses the concerns of a number of the stakeholders who emphasised the importance of a facilitated collaboration between the disparate professions in the built environment space when addressing the needs of children and young people.

Chapter 3 reviews other outcomes from the follow-up inquiry, particularly regarding associated issues that have come to light since the 2006 report. Of particular interest to the Committee is evidence in relation to the diverse needs of children from a variety of ages, and the utility of child impact statements, two issues which the Committee examined at length in the *Children and Young People Aged 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle* report. The promotional work that the Commission has undertaken in relation to *built4kids* is explored and the successful utilisation of the resource by some users is documented.

The Committee was interested to hear that the 2006 recommendations are still relevant, and was particularly pleased to observe the Commission's response to this evidence – being the establishment of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group. The Commission's leadership role in relation to the issues pertaining to children, young people and the built environment that was conferred in the 2006 report was confirmed during the follow up inquiry and supported by a number of stakeholders.

Chapter 4 focuses on the evidence the Committee received in relation to future action in the area of children, young people and the built environment. Stakeholders who gave evidence during the follow-up inquiry expressed a desire to build on the 2006 recommendation and to focus on turning the theory in relation to children, young people and the built environment into practice.

The importance of engaging stakeholders and the role of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group in working to achieve collaboration amongst built environment professionals are outlined as is the role of children as agents in this process. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is emphasised, with particular prominence afforded to Article 12 which provides for a greater role in decision-making processes for children and young people.

The role of the Commission in implementing the outstanding recommendations is promoted, with this chapter also containing the 2010 recommendations.

Chapter One - The Committee's original report

Background

- 1.1 On 26 May 2005 the Committee on Children and Young People (the Committee) resolved to undertake an inquiry into children, young people and the built environment. The aim of the inquiry was to identify developments in policy and practice that would enhance the built environment for children and young people in New South Wales, and to inform the wider debate within Australia and internationally on child- and youth-friendly environments.
- 1.2 Specifically, the Terms of Reference provided that the Committee was to inquire into:
 - trends, changes and issues for children and young people in the development, implementation and coordination of policy, design and planning for the built environment;
 - 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;
 - 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;
 - the role of the Commission for Children and Young People (the Commission) 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; and
 - any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee.
- 1.3 The inquiry received 57 submissions and held three hearings, during which evidence was taken from a range of public sector agencies and departments, local government representatives, academics, professionals and children and youth advocates.
- 1.4 The Committee also undertook two programs of site visits as part of the inquiry. The first of these was to Brisbane, where Committee Members met with representatives of the Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Commission for Children and Young People, and examined various CBD locations. The second was to various locations in Sydney's west, where the Committee visited several youth centres. Committee Members also attended the national *Future Shock Conference* that was organised by 2050 Young Future Leaders of the Built Environment.
- 1.5 In the course of the inquiry, the Committee also published three Issues Papers. These provided an overview of key concepts associated with the inquiry; discussed the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (the Convention) and the 'child-friendly cities movement'; and identified related developments in New South Wales such as 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*) and a forum sponsored by the Commission on child-friendly cities.

The Committee's report

- 1.6 The Committee's final report was published in October 2006 and focused on the relationship between children, young people and the built environment. It found that the built environment plays an integral part in child and adolescent development. Factors which contributed to personal growth, learning and the creation of strong communities were found to include:
- exciting, adventurous play spaces;
 - carefully considered childcare centres;
 - neighbourhood walkways and cycleways;
 - stimulating learning environments;
 - readily accessible public transport; and
 - strong, vibrant civic spaces and protected natural environments.
- 1.7 Although many children and young people in New South Wales enjoy a high standard of living and quality of built environments, concern was expressed in the report that future generations would not be so fortunate. Population growth, urbanisation - particularly higher density housing, reliance on motor vehicles - fear of strangers and the threat of public liability claims were identified as some of the factors that can affect and influence the built environment.
- 1.8 Evidence was also given to the inquiry that 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.
- 1.9 Failure to recognise the diverse needs of children and young people in terms of the built environment was found to have deleterious consequences such as:
- physical environment features contributing to the rising rates of children who are overweight or obese;
 - poorly built childcare facilities and schools directly affecting learning and behaviour; and
 - diminishing public space and play spaces inhibiting the development of motor skills and limiting opportunities for social interaction.
- 1.10 The report noted that balancing the needs of children and young people with those of other members of the community was a difficult, but important task. Furthermore, as the Australian population ages, it was identified that there was a risk that the built environment needs of children and young people would be overlooked.³

The Committee's recommendations

- 1.11 Given that creating child- and youth-friendly environments is the responsibility of many disciplines, government agencies and private companies, the Committee's report concluded that there could be no single, catch-all solution. As a starting point, the Committee suggested a framework for creating child- and youth-friendly environments by way of:
- improved regulation of the built environment to remove complexity and identify the needs of the various age groups;

³ Committee on Children and Young People, *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment*, Report no. 8/53 – October 2006, pp. ix, xvi & p. 44.

- the implementation of strategies to effectively engage children and young people in planning processes;
- the development of design guidelines which recognise the importance of the built environment to children and young people, particularly childcare facilities and public spaces; and
- training and rewarding built environment professionals in order to promote the creation of child- and youth-friendly environments.

1.12 Specific suggestions included:

- 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 to regulate development; and
- working with the development industry to quantify the financial costs and benefits of child- and youth-friendly environments.

1.13 A central tenet of the Committee's findings was the need for an enhanced leadership role for the Commission in respect of policy development and other projects relating to children, young people and the built environment.⁴ Specifically, the report made the following six recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The Commission seek to establish an inter-agency Steering Committee on Children, Young People and the Built Environment, with the role of considering and promoting key projects and initiatives, as recommended in the 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
- Disability Council of NSW
- Community Relations Commission
- Department of Aboriginal Affairs
- Relevant tertiary institutions offering built environment courses (including, but not limited to University of NSW, University of Sydney and University of Technology Sydney)

⁴ Committee on Children and Young People, *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, Report no. 8/53 – October 2006*, pp. ix & p.45.

- a youth representative (e.g., from the NSW Youth Advisory Council or the Commission's Young People's Reference Group).

The 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

The Commission 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 Commission 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 Streetwize Communications also be considered as a potential resource for built environment professionals.

Recommendation 3

The Commission 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.

(b) request the Minister for Planning to 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.

(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).

(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.

(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.

(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.

(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.

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.

(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'.

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

Housing

(k) review the adequacy of current building standards in relation to noise insulation and assess the trend towards child-free housing developments.

(l) review the progress of the Department of Housing's Young People's Housing Access Strategy.

(m) monitor the consequences of recent housing policies on children and young people across New South Wales.

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.

(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) 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.

(q) promote the outcomes of the project associated with security guard training, in consultation with the Commission for Community Relations.

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.

Recommendation 4

The Commission 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 Development Control Plans [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

The Committee's original report

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 Commission.

Recommendation 6

Funding for the Commission 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.⁵

Conclusion

1.14 The Chair observed in the foreword to the 2006 report that

By conducting this inquiry, it is hoped that not only will there be developments to 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.⁶

1.15 The 2006 report provided a comprehensive set of recommendations that provided the Commission for Children and Young People and various government agencies with a framework for achieving real change in the way in which children and young people not only experienced the built environment, but also the way in which they were consulted prior the development of the built environment.

⁵ Committee on Children and Young People, *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, Report no. 8/53 – October 2006*, p. xi - xiv.

⁶ Barbara Perry MP, Committee on Children and Young People, *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment, Report no. 8/53 – October 2006*, p. ix.

Chapter Two - Implementation of the 2006 recommendations

2.1 The 2006 report was well received by the built environment community⁷, with Associate Professor Woolcock noting the significant impact that the report had made in relation to policy considerations. Associate Professor Woolcock particularly recognised the practical impact of the report:

I say at the outset how much impact the inquiry has had. Many of the recommendations that came out of the original inquiry report have been taken up by various agencies, most noticeably the Commission that we have been working closely with at our centre, the Urban Research Program.⁸

2.2 Since the tabling of the report of the inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment in October 2006, a number of recommendations have been implemented either in full or in part by the Commission for Children and Young People, or by other agencies.

2.3 Many of the recommendations of the report were directed towards the Commission or to a steering committee to be convened by the Commission.

2.4 In its work on the follow-up inquiry, the Committee had reference to its past reviews of the Annual Reports of the Commission for Children and Young People, correspondence between the Commission and the Committee Secretariat, and convened two sessions at which it took evidence from experts and professionals in the area of the built environment, comprising of a hearing on 31 March 2010 and a roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010.

Review of the Annual Reports of the Commission

2.5 Section 28(1)(c) of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998* requires that the Committee examine each of the Commission's Annual Report and to report on its findings to Parliament. The reviews of the Commission's Annual Reports following the release of the 2006 Report into Children, Young People and the Built Environment revealed that some progress had been made in relation to the 2006 recommendations.

2.6 The review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report revealed that the Commission had consulted with more than 125 children in the preparation of its submission to the 2006 inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment,⁹ and that the Commission had commissioned Griffith University to develop a framework of indicators that could be used to monitor the child-friendliness of environments, as

⁷ ACT Children's Plan Community Network Forum, *Creating Child Friendly Environments – Resources and Annotated Bibliography*, June 2007 p. 2.; Council for the Care of Children, Government of South Australia, *Child and Youth Friendly Communities – Resource Information Sheet*, April 2010, p. 3; Emilio Martinez, *Diseño Inclusivo Y Participación Juvenil En Los Proyectos De Cualificación Del Medio Construido*, Revista Electrónica De Recursos En Internet Sobre Geografía Y Ciencias Sociales Universidad de Barcelona N^o 108, 1 De Mayo De 2008

⁸ Geoffrey Woolcock, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 2

⁹ Committee on Children and Young People. 2007. *Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 1/54, 8 November 2007, p. 22.

outlined in Recommendation 3(r)¹⁰. The Commission also reported that it was considering establishing a partnership with a local council as outlined in Recommendation 4 and that it had written to the agencies named in Recommendations 3(a) to 3(q) seeking their responses to the proposals outlined in those recommendations.¹¹ The then Commissioner indicated that she had considered and decided not to implement Recommendation 1, being the establishment of the multi-agency steering committee as she was confident that such a committee was not necessary to progressing the report's direction, noting the significant resourcing that such a committee would require.¹² The Commission also reported that additional funding options were being explored, pursuant to Recommendation 6.¹³

2.7 During the review of the 2006-2007 Annual Report, the Commission advised the Committee that in December 2007 it had entered into a joint project with the Wollongong City Council in relation to child-friendly communities, as outlined in Recommendation 4.¹⁴ Whilst the Commission had reported in 2005-2006 that the indicators that it was preparing in conjunction with Griffith University arose from Recommendation 3(r), by 2006-2007 it became apparent to the Committee that end users of the indicators had shifted from being the Commission, as outlined in Recommendation 3(r), to being built environment professionals, which would be more closely aligned with the child-friendly community indicators contemplated in Recommendation 3(e). The Commission advised that it had been testing and refining child-friendly community indicators to help local government assess how well they were doing in creating communities that enhanced children's wellbeing. The then Commissioner had delivered the keynote address at the Child Friendly Communities Conference,¹⁵ which could be considered part of the education process described in Recommendation 2.

2.8 The review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report outlined that the trial of the child-friendly community indicators and a good practice guide for children's participation in planning was now complete, with an expected publication of the indicators in May 2009.¹⁶ During the review, the then Commissioner described the publishing of the child-friendly community indicators – similar to the indicators contemplated in Recommendation 3(e) - and the amending of the planning legislation to incorporate child-friendly planning principles – Recommendation 5 - as the two priorities of the Commission arising from the 2006 Children, Young People and the Built Environment Report.¹⁷ The then Commissioner stated that the Commission had been hampered in its implementation of the recommendations as it had not received the separate funding the Committee had recommended.¹⁸

¹⁰ Committee on Children and Young People. 2007. *Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 1/54, 8 November 2007, p. 13.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 14.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Committee on Children and Young People. 2008. *Review of the 2006-2007 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 2/54, June 2008, p. 9.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶ Committee on Children and Young People. 2009. *Review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 3/54, May 2009, p. 9.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸ Ibid.

built4kids: a good practice guide to creating child-friendly environments

2.9 The child friendly community indicators and good practice guide for children's participation in planning that were developed by the Commission in conjunction with Griffith University were published in the Commission's document *built4kids: a good practice guide to creating child-friendly built environments ("built4kids")*. Reflecting on the Commission's achievements in relation to the implementation of the 2006 recommendations, the then Acting Commissioner observed at the hearing held on 31 March 2010 that:

Although no additional funding has been provided, the Commission has redirected a total of \$259,000 of its own resources between 2007 and 2010 to fund this work. A key outcome of the work has been the development and publication in June 2009 of *built4kids*, a resource for local governments and planners that reflects the thoughts and views of the children and young people about what is important to them in the built environment.¹⁹

2.10 The Commission published *built4kids* in June 2009, describing it as a user-friendly resource for people working in planning-related areas.²⁰ *built4kids* highlights the manner in which built environments are important to the well-being of children and young people, and provides information to assist with increasing their participation in the planning of built environments.

2.11 The guide includes a child-friendly indicator framework, together with case studies highlighting how children and young people have contributed to the development of the built environment in their community. Staff members from Griffith University were involved in developing the child-friendly community indicators. Wollongong City Council and a number of other councils also assisted the Commission by providing feedback on the use of draft child-friendly community indicators framework.²¹ The Commission describes *built4kids* as:

A complex piece of work involving research, extensive consultation with children and young people and local councils, development and piloting of indicators and publication and promotion of the resource.²²

2.12 *built4kids* can be used to:

- develop design guidelines or checklists for community projects;
- develop innovative built environment projects;
- renew or redevelop children's environments;
- assess development proposals;
- influence strategic directions and planning provisions;
- embed child-friendliness and children's participation into community processes and projects; and
- provide a framework for consulting with children and young people and the community.

¹⁹ Acting Commission, Jan McClelland, Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 2

²⁰ NSW Commission for Children and Young People. 2009. *built4kids: a good practice guide to creating child-friendly built environments*, Sydney, NSW.

²¹ Ibid., p. 60.

²² NSW Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, question 2.

- 2.13 At the hearing held on 31 March 2010, Fiona Robbé of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, described the gains that had been made in relation to the 2006 recommendations:

Since the original report on children and young people in the built environment in October 2006 I have asked myself, What has palpably changed in the design community in New South Wales since then? My observations are just casual but they are that we are seeing greater awareness of the many health and wellbeing issues of childhood and adolescence, with many providers being cognisant that they contribute to these issues... We are seeing small numbers of design professionals paying attention to participatory design processes with children and young people.²³

- 2.14 Ms Robbé also detailed the limited reach of the results from the 2006 report:

However, this is very slow in gaining momentum. We are seeing documents like *built4kids* and the *TAKING PARTicipation* kit as being helpful but not really filtering through to enough of these professionals. We are also seeing a very small number of councils championing child-friendly principles through a partnering process with the Children and Young People's Commission, for example, Wollongong Council... However, it is looking a bit slow. These changes are small... From my perspective, New South Wales appears to be lagging behind.²⁴

- 2.15 The Commission outlined its long history in promoting the development of child-friendly built environments in New South Wales, and particularly referenced the work undertaken in partnership with local councils and developing *built4kids*.²⁵ The Commission observed the lack of progress since the launch of *built4kids*:

The momentum in progressing this work slowed down in the latter part of 2009 and early 2010 due to a combination of factors including the departure of the long standing Commissioner and her replacement after only a short term and two major reviews of the Commission.²⁶

- 2.16 Following the launch of *built4kids*, the Committee determined to hold a follow-up inquiry into the 2006 inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. Observing that three and a half years had passed since the 2006 inquiry, the current Committee Chair stated that the aim of the current inquiry was to re-examine the recommendations contained within the 2006 report, to assess new research in the field and to collect additional evidence to develop further recommendations in relation to the key issues of the original inquiry.²⁷ The Chair advised that:

In revisiting the Committee's original inquiry, this follow-up inquiry will focus principally on to what extent the recommendations of the Committee's original inquiry have been implemented since the tabling of the report²⁸.

A review of the implementation of each of the 2006 recommendations

- 2.17 The Committee reviewed the implementation of each of the 2006 recommendations, with a discussion of the evidence the Committee received in relation to each of the recommendations provided below.

²³ Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010 p. 7

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

²⁵ NSW Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, question 2.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Robert Coombs MP, Chair of the Committee on Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 1.

²⁸ Ibid.

Recommendation 1

The Commission seek to establish an inter-agency Steering Committee on Children, Young People and the Built Environment, with the role of considering and promoting key projects and initiatives, as recommended in the 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*
- *Disability Council of NSW*
- *Community Relations Commission*
- *Department of Aboriginal Affairs*
- *Relevant tertiary institutions offering built environment courses (including, but not limited to University of NSW, University of Sydney and University of Technology Sydney)*
- *a youth representative (e.g., from the NSW Youth Advisory Council or the Commission's Young People's Reference Group).*

The 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.

- 2.18 As discussed above, during the review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report, the then Commissioner of Children and Young People, Gillian Calvert, advised the Committee that she had decided not to implement this recommendation. Ms Calvert indicated that she was confident that the Commission and its partner agencies could progress the report's directions using existing formal and informal mechanisms.²⁹
- 2.19 However, following two major reviews of the Commission, including a ministerial review of its functions and structure and a performance audit of the Working with Children Check undertaken by the Auditor General, the Acting Commissioner indicated during this inquiry's hearing on 31 March 2010 that the previous decision not to implement Recommendation 1 was not part of the Commission's new course of action, and the Commission would now work to progress the recommendations of the Committee:

²⁹ Gillian Calvert, then Commissioner for Children and Young People in Committee on Children and Young People, *Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 1/54, 8 November 2007, p.14

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The Commission will establish the interagency steering committee that was recommended by the Committee to oversee the built environment work, and invitations have already been extended to State Planning and local government agencies, who have agreed to come on to that steering committee.³⁰

2.20 The newly appointed Commissioner attended this inquiry's roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010 and outlined the importance of determining the appropriate composition of the Steering Committee, stating with reference to the Chair's comments on the establishment of the Steering Committee:

I understand that the previous Acting Commissioner agreed to do this, and to advance this at the appropriate point, which is absolutely terrific. In terms of the internal discussions we have had – and today I think we have seen this – there are many, many stakeholders in this space. I think one of the issues is to work out exactly who would be on this group and who else might be a group of critical friends that you might refer to from time to time. I think it needs to be small enough to be workable and, at the same time, there needs to be the capacity to refer to all those many players in this space when you need to.³¹

2.21 Members of the Committee were responsive to new Commissioner's concerns about the composition of the Steering Committee, with the Hon. Kayee Griffin MLC noting:

Given the original recommendation it would be too difficult, and obviously there is an opportunity to look at whether or not that recommendation is appropriate for the groups or whether there needs to be a committee and a subcommittee or whatever it might be.³²

The Rev. Hon. Fred Nile MLC made reference to the Commissioner's comments and remarked:

Perhaps the word "steering" needs to be given further thought. It sounds as if it is steering the Commissioner. Perhaps a "consultative" committee or an "advisory" committee might be better.³³

2.22 During the course of this inquiry the Commission indicated that it would establish a body that would perform the function of the steering committee outlined in Recommendation 1. Ms Lou-Anne Lind, Policy Manager at the Commission, wrote to the Committee Manager on 23 September 2010 confirming that letters of invitation have been dispatched to relevant NSW government and non-government organisations inviting representatives to participate on the Commission's Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group.³⁴ Ms Lind advised that the Advisory Group will be chaired by the Commissioner and secretariat support will be provided by the Commission's Policy Team. The inaugural meeting of the Advisory Group took place on Thursday 14 October 2010. The group includes the following agencies:

- NSW Department of Planning;

³⁰ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

³¹ Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p.26.

³² Kayee Griffin MLC, Deputy Chair Committee on Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 30 June 2010, p. 27.

³³ Fred Nile MLC, Member Committee on Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 30 June 2010, p. 27.

³⁴ Commission for Children and Young People, Letter from Commission to Committee on Children and Young People Secretariat, 23 September 2010.

- NSW Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet;
- NSW Local Government & Shires Association;
- Premier's Council on Active Living;
- Australian Institute of Landscape Architects;
- Royal Australian Institute of Architects;
- Planning Institute of Australia; and
- Dr Kate Bishop, visiting lecturer at the University of NSW.

2.23 The Committee observes the breadth of experience on the Advisory Group and notes this group's capacity to draw on the external expertise of "critical friends" as contemplated by the Commissioner in her evidence during this inquiry's roundtable discussion. The Committee looks forward to continuing to receive updates on the progress of the Advisory Group.

Recommendation 2

The Commission 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 Commission 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 Streetwize Communications also be considered as a potential resource for built environment professionals.

2.24 The Commission has conducted some seminars as outlined in Recommendation 2. Rather than focus on the *TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit*, the Commission has sought to use the seminars to promote its resource *built4kids*, with its focus not only on creating child-friendly environments, but also on involving children in the decision making process and incorporating the benefits of children's participation in the design process. The Committee recognises that the *TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit* has a broader application than *built4kids*. The *TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit* provides guidance when consulting with children generally, whereas *built4kids* focuses on consulting with children in relation to the built environment, and in addition provides child-friendly indicators that can be utilised by built environment professionals. *built4kids* is also a more contemporaneous document, being published in 2009 whereas the *TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit* was published in 2002.

2.25 The Commission reported during the inquiry that it held three specific seminars in August 2009 following the publication of *built4kids*.³⁵ In relation to holding a more extensive series of seminars, the then Acting Commissioner observed:

We are having a look at that recommendation ... we are having a look at the extent to which it is still feasible with our limited resources to conduct a wide number of seminars

³⁵ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p.6.

throughout the state. That is very resource intensive, so firstly what we want to do is to find out from local councils the areas that they want to focus on.³⁶

- 2.26 The Committee appreciates the importance of the *built4kids* resource in the promotion not only of child-friendly built environments, but also in advocating for the participation of children in decision-making processes.

Recommendation 3

The Commission 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:

3(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.

- 2.27 The Commission advised that the NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity was integrated with the NSW Physical Activity, Nutrition and Obesity Group in November 2008.³⁷ The Committee heard evidence from the Department of Planning that inter-agency work, of the type contemplated by Recommendation 3(a), was taking place between itself and the Department of Health. This work was “looking at obesity within the population and coming up with new residential areas that provide for a lot of active opportunities for people.”³⁸

- 2.28 The Committee regards interagency work, such as that evidenced between the Departments of Planning and Health, to be a key element in reducing obesity in NSW.

3(b) request the Minister for Planning to 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.

3(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).

- 2.29 As both of these recommendations relate to the Department of Planning and its existing publications, these recommendations have been considered together.

- 2.30 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission indicated that it was liaising with the Department of Planning in relation to the utilisation of documents pertaining to design processes that address the needs of children and include children in the consultation and decision making process.³⁹ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Planning, observed that his Department was

³⁶ Ibid., p.5.

³⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Letter from Commission to Committee on Children and Young People Secretariat, 06 May 2010.

³⁸ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 16.

³⁹ Commission for Children and Young People, Answers to questions on notice, 16 March 2010, pp. 3-4 and also Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010 p. 3.

committed to amending *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind* and *Child-friendly Environments* where appropriate:

We have indicated that we are more than happy to have those documents reviewed in consultation with the Commission and, where necessary, if they do require amendment we would be more than happy to commence that process.⁴⁰

2.31 The Committee is pleased to observe the interaction between the Commission and the Department of Planning in relation to the updating of *Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind* and *Child-friendly Environments* and looks forward to receiving updates from the Commission in relation to the outcomes from these discussions.

3(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.*

3(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.*

2.32 As the function of the Growth Centres Commission is now performed by Sydney's Growth Centres which is responsible to the Department of Planning, the Committee considered both of these recommendations concurrently.

2.33 The inquiry received evidence that the Commission had been liaising with the Department of Planning in relation to Recommendation 3(d). The then Acting Commissioner outlined that:

A further area where they [the Department of Planning] have agreed to assist the Commission is in relation to looking at incorporating child-friendly principles in planning for new growth areas, which was another of your recommendations that focused specifically on the Growth Commission. That function is now located within the Department of Planning and dialogue that is now occurring has that on the work plan as well.⁴¹

2.34 Specifically, the Commission reported that it had received advice from officers of the NSW Department of Planning that it may be more appropriate to incorporate child-friendly planning principles into guidelines and other policy documents rather than amend the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* or other environmental planning instruments such as the State environmental planning policies or the local environmental plans.⁴²

2.35 The Commission also advised that it was promoting *built4kids* with the Department of Planning with a view to its use in the planning and development of new growth areas in Sydney.⁴³

2.36 Tom Gellibrand reported that work was already underway in the growth areas to ensure that planning and development was being undertaken with the needs of children in mind:

There are great examples in terms of the growth centres, of which I could elaborate on if you want me to. Oran Park has recently been publicly opened; there are over 30

⁴⁰ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 15.

⁴¹ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 6.

⁴² Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 2

⁴³ Commission for Children and Young People, Answers to questions on notice, 16 March 2010, p. 4

kilometres of cycleways planned there that are incorporated into open space areas; cultural facilities; and adjoining schools with houses.⁴⁴

- 2.37 The Commission reported that it had met with the Department of Planning to progress the incorporation of child-friendly community indicators into Department of Planning tools for assessing land use plans, pursuant to Recommendation 3(e).⁴⁵ Mr Gellibrand described the challenges which arose from the use of indicators in relation to some planning work, in particular greenfield developments:

Planning for the greenfield areas is quite interesting because we are talking about converting very large dairy farms into new suburbs, so when you go to consult there is actually no-one there. We still work with councils and we put things on exhibition but the people you are consulting are often the ones who are selling and moving out. They are not the people who are moving in, so there often is not an extant community to mine information from. We tend to get representations from the established stakeholders – they are the departments, they could be housing groups, transport for action groups and people like that. Often the specific community groups, one of which would be young people, do not exist. That is not to say that we do not try to consult, but it is quite different because rural lands are being converted into residential lands. We still have an extensive consultation regime that we follow. In established areas, where the bulk of development is going to occur, there is a much greater opportunity and perhaps a greater need for consultation with young people.⁴⁶

- 2.38 Having described this difficulty, Mr Gellibrand went on to describe the benefits of the Department of Planning working closely with the Commission in order to gauge children's responses to new developments:

That is where I think the Commission really comes into its own. As an organisation we could specifically consult with young people. I am not sure how effective it would be and if we were to do that I would question the fact that we might need to also consult ethnic groups and perhaps other age groups. I am not sure how effective we would be at doing that ... As these densities go up the imperative for young people to have places to recreate actively and passively in a safe fashion becomes more important because there are a lot more people around ... If we consult broadly we will not always elicit responses from young people because it is a formal process and is perhaps not the domain of young people. We still consult schools and do things like that but it is up to the school to fire up the children to participate.

I see a really important role for the Department and the Commission to work together so that when we are looking at urban renewal opportunities in an area we can ally our work with theirs and ask them to do some of that engagement for us and give us the general requirements of young people in an urban environment. Perhaps we can charge them or resource them – I would not commit to that this morning – but work with them so they can give us specific responses about what particular people in that community would like to see.⁴⁷

- 2.39 The Committee is pleased to observe the Department of Planning's commitment to working collaboratively with the Commission in order to achieve positive outcomes for children in relation to greenfield and urban developments. The Commission also gave evidence that it is keen to pursue a collaborative relationship with agencies

⁴⁴ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 16

⁴⁵ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 3.

⁴⁶ Tom Gellibrand, *op. cit.*, p. 17

⁴⁷ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 17

such as the Department of Planning, noting its broader mandate of promoting the views and interest of children across government and all of its human service agencies.⁴⁸

3(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.*

2.40 It was the view of the Commission that *built4kids* is a sufficient publication to promote participation in the development of environments with respect to this recommendation.⁴⁹

2.41 The inquiry revealed that the Planning Institute of Australia had produced a national position statement on the issue of child-friendly cities and had committed to four areas of action, two of which related to publications, one including developing a national guide on health spaces and places and the other relating to a Victorian publication on the impact of the built environment on people's health.⁵⁰

2.42 The Committee is pleased to hear of the Planning Institute of Australia's initiatives in this area.

3(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.*

2.43 In 2009 the Department of Education and Training introduced a new policy to enable the utilisation of school sporting and recreational facilities after school hours. The relevant policy is the *Community Use of School Facilities Policy*.⁵¹ There are two published procedures in relation to this policy, being *Community Partnerships for the Use of School Playing Fields Implementation Procedures*⁵² and *Community Use of School Facilities Implementation Procedures*⁵³.

2.44 The *Community Partnership for the Use of School Playing Fields* enables local councils to enter into agreements with schools in relation to ongoing agreements of more than 12 months to share school playing fields where there is an agreement by the local council to significantly invest in the maintenance and/or upgrade of a school playing field. The *Community Use of School Facilities* procedure provides for community organisations to enter into agreements of no more than 12 months to share facilities such as libraries, halls and sporting fields.

2.45 The Committee learnt of this policy and associated procedures with interest and looks forward to hearing from the Commission about the progress of partnerships between schools and local organisations and local councils.

⁴⁸ Commission for Children and Young People, Answers to questions after the hearing, 3 September 2010, p. 3.

⁴⁹ Commission for Children and Young People, Answers to questions on notice, 16 March 2010, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 6.

⁵¹ Department of Education, 31 August 2009. *Community Use of School Facilities Policy*, Department of Education, Reference Number PD/2009/0400/V01, Sydney.

⁵² Department of Education, September 2009, *Community Partnerships for the Use of School Playing Fields Implementation Procedures*, Department of Education, Sydney.

⁵³ Department of Education, September 2009, *Community Use of School Facilities Implementation Procedures*, Department of Education, Sydney.

3(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.

2.46 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission mentioned the work of Play England, which is an organisation from the United Kingdom established by the former National Children's Council and incorporated in the National Children's Bureau charity. The Commission reported that Play England is a body dedicated to the development and research of play provision for all children.⁵⁴ The Commission also stated that it is currently considering the work that has been undertaken by Play England.⁵⁵

2.47 The Committee's research in relation to Play England noted a program run by Play England, called Play Shaper, which is a government funded, national training program that helps create child-friendly communities. Play Shaper training days reportedly bring together local authorities, voluntary organisations, community groups, and a full range of their partners, to explore the importance of play in children's lives, and how participants can encourage it in their day-to-day work. Each Play Shaper training day is tailored to meet the specific requirements of the area in which it takes place and is designed to be a catalyst for change at a local level. At the end of the day-long workshop, participants identify actions they can take forward in their individual areas of work.

2.48 The Committee looks forward to hearing the Commission's consideration and assessment of the relevance to children and young people in New South Wales of Play England initiatives and any other good practice examples relevant to positive play and recreational spaces. The Committee will also be interested to hear from the Commission as to its strategies and priorities for measuring outcomes in relation to positive play and recreational spaces for children and young people.

3(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'.

2.49 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission reported that it had been advised by Community Services NSW that the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) had agreed and announced that there would be a new national system of regulation for children's services. The Commission advised that this would include nationally consistent standards and an assessment and rating system to provide a greater focus on quality improvement within the regulations. In the interim, the Commission advised that the current regulation would continue until 2012, when the new national system commences.⁵⁶

2.50 The Committee notes the introduction of nationally consistent standards and assessment in the area of regulating children's services. The Committee will follow with interest, through the usual reporting processes, the implementation of the national standards.

⁵⁴ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing 31 March 2010, page 3.

⁵⁵ Commission for Children and Young People, Letter from Commission to Committee on Children and Young People Secretariat, 9 August 2010, p.1.

⁵⁶ Commission for Children and Young People, Answer to question on notice, 16 March 2010, p. 4.

3(j) consult with Minister for Local Government about gathering together examples of good playground and recreational developments for dissemination to all councils.

2.51 The inquiry highlighted a number of initiatives in relation to better practice in playground and recreational development and useful methods for dissemination of these better practices.

2.52 The Commission recognised two resources developed by Kidsafe as including examples of better practice, being *Playground Safety Resource Kit* and the *Planning for Safer Playgrounds Industry Guide*.⁵⁷

2.53 In relation to the dissemination of better practice, Tom Gellibrand indicated during the course of the inquiry that his department could translate *built4kids* for local government.⁵⁸ The New South Wales Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, indicated that it could assist with the promotion of good practice:

In regard to how examples of good practice might be promoted, councils could be encouraged to place information on their websites, and regional organisations and other regional networks of councils could be encouraged to provide information to member councils.⁵⁹

2.54 Tracy Venaglia, of Wollongong City Council, provided evidence of informal networks which could be utilised or replicated in order to disseminate information:

We have an e-group setup where people can register on that and share stories, ideas, issues or might put out a question for response around something. There is certainly – I actually do not know the number registered currently but I think there are around 38 and some of those would be from the same council. Then at our network meetings we can have up to 20 councils represented. Again if it is held in the city here we get a greater representation than if we hold one in Newcastle or Wollongong, and that is just the nature of it. ... So some of it is about coming along and then going back to your council but having some contacts to follow up with by phone or whatnot. We certainly do that interstate as well; while we do not get together we have made contacts interstate with a number of councils.⁶⁰

2.55 Jennifer Thompson, also of Wollongong City Council, recognised the importance of local councils working together under the leadership of the Commission and the advantages of achieving some better practice consistency in relation to service delivery by local councils:

I think there is a lot of merit in councils working out ways of working together, and I think having that leadership from the Commission for Children and Young People ... I do think if you could get some consistency happening because for us, for example, in Wollongong – and most councils in Sydney are in the same boat – we have our LGA and we overlap or sit right next to Shellharbour and to all intents and purposes that is one city, so we work really cooperatively with Shellharbour as it happens and some of these agendas we have had as shared agendas, but foreseeably if you are looking how

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁸ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 18.

⁵⁹ New South Wales Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Answer to questions in lieu of attendance 31 March 2010, p.4.

⁶⁰ Tracy Venaglia, Coordinator, Community Development and Social Planning, Wollongong City Council, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 22.

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your citizens interact with citizens in the neighbouring LGA the more you can have some level of consistency across the state the better I think that would be.⁶¹

2.56 The Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, indicated that the Division would be able to assist in this type of feedback exercise. The Division considers that this is best done through conducting an electronic survey of all councils, with the Division reporting that it conducts both regular and ad hoc surveys of all councils on various issues.⁶²

2.57 The Committee was interested to hear of the various methods of communication that currently exist amongst local councils and was pleased that a number of agencies are considering ways of utilising these methods in the distribution of information, with these methods having the potential to be utilised in relation to promoting better practice playgrounds and recreational developments. Whilst it heard evidence as to the various methods of disseminating information, the Committee considers that, in the interest of effective project management, it is for the Commission and the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group to decide upon the most appropriate methods of communication according to the circumstances.

3(k) review the adequacy of current building standards in relation to noise insulation and assess the trend towards child-free housing developments.

2.58 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission reported that it was not aware of any child-free housing developments.⁶³ The Department of Planning reported that the current laws do not facilitate developments that seek to mandate a child-free environment:

This is an issue which is outside the scope of the planning legislative framework and is predominantly market-driven. A child-free housing development cannot be mandated through the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.⁶⁴

2.59 The Department of Planning also reported that its policies do not facilitate the exclusion of children from residential schemes. The department stated that it had one policy which discriminated in favour of aged people and people with a disability, but noted that this policy would not exclude children from the residence:

The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004* specifically provides for and encourages the supply and diversity of well designed residences for people who are ageing or disabled... The SEPP does not exclude children from the developments and a resident could live in one of these developments with their children or grandchildren.⁶⁵

2.60 The 2006 report called for a review of adequate building standards in relation to noise insulation.⁶⁶ During the course of this inquiry, the Committee has learnt that the Australian Building Codes Board is currently undertaking a Scoping Study on External Noise. The project is designed to determine if there is any need for a

⁶¹ Jennifer Thompson, Coordinator, Community Development and Social Planning, Wollongong City Council, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 22.

⁶² Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Answers to questions in lieu of appearing, 31 March 2010, p. 2.

⁶³ Commission for Children and Young People, Correspondence in response to questions, 10 March 2010, p.5.

⁶⁴ Department of Planning, Questions answered after hearing 31 March 2010, page 1.

⁶⁵ Department of Planning, Questions answered after hearing 31 March 2010, page 1.

⁶⁶ Committee on Children and Young People. 2006. *Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment*, Report No. 8/53, October 2006, Sydney p. 24

regulatory or non-regulatory solution in relation to minimising the intrusion of external noise into buildings. The scoping study outlines that individual councils and state governments are beginning to introduce acoustic requirements for buildings to reduce the impact of external noise, particularly for Class 2/3 buildings located in inner city areas, and residential buildings adjacent to transport corridors. The aim of the scoping study is to determine the current situation; if there is a need for a regulatory or non-regulatory solution or whether the status quo should prevail; the feasibility of a national solution and the appropriateness of including suitable provisions in the Building Code of Australia.⁶⁷

- 2.61 During the course of the inquiry, the Committee was pleased to hear that child-free housing developments were not a reality in New South Wales and that the Australian Building Codes Board was working to address insulation issues so that the noise carrying from households with children is not a cause of concern to residential neighbours. The Committee looks forward to hearing the outcomes from the Australian Building Codes Board's scoping study.

3(l) review the progress of the Department of Housing's Young People's Housing Access Strategy.

- 2.62 During the course of the inquiry the Committee heard evidence in relation to Housing NSW's Youth Action Plan. Housing NSW observed that it had a range of approaches to the issues that relate to young people who are residents in Housing NSW properties:

In 2008 Housing NSW completed a draft Housing NSW Youth Action Plan as part of a suite of client segment strategies ... initiatives include: the Links to Leadership program, the Youth Scholarships Program, the Housing NSW Young People Awards and a range of other youth engagement initiatives through the Building Stronger Communities Program.⁶⁸

- 2.63 Housing NSW also referred to the final Youth Action Plan covering the period 2010-2014, which was subject to departmental and Ministerial approval.⁶⁹ The Committee notes that the Youth Action Plan 2010-2014 was approved in April 2010 and relates to young people aged 12 to 24 years of age living in social housing, needing access to social housing or requiring other types of housing assistance. The Committee observes that the Plan was developed in consultation with young people, social housing tenants and peak youth bodies and that the Plan explicitly recognised the importance of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee was also pleased to observe that one of the Plan's intended outcomes was increased engagement by Housing NSW with young people in general.⁷⁰

- 2.64 The Committee looks forward to hearing about the success of the Youth Action Plan 2010-2014 in relation to young people achieving access to appropriate housing.

3(m) monitor the consequences of recent housing policies on children and young people across New South Wales.

- 2.65 The Committee heard evidence from Housing NSW in relation to the far-reaching impacts that a limited amount of low-cost housing stock may have on young people:

⁶⁷ Australian Building Codes Board. 2010. *Work Program Project: Scoping Study on External Noise*, www.abcb.gov.au/index.cfm?objectid=F34470B0-2943-11DE-9515001B2FB900AA, last accessed 1 October 2010

⁶⁸ Stephen McIntyre, Executive Director, Housing NSW, Transcript of evidence 31 March 2010, p. 8.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 9.

⁷⁰ Housing NSW. 2010. *Youth Action Plan 2010 – 2014*, Housing NSW, April 2010, Sydney pp. 3-4.

Low income households experiencing housing affordability stress may not have enough money left after paying for housing costs to cover other necessities of life. This increases the probability of financial hardship which can result in a wide range of negative outcomes for children and young people – such as missing out on school activities, being unable to participate in sporting or community activities, or going without healthy meals.⁷¹

- 2.66 The Committee also heard evidence that financial hardship can create stress that may contribute to health problems and impacts on family relationships, which in turn can impact on child health and safety:

Households experiencing affordability stress can be forced into frequent moves, which can be disruptive to children and young people's participation in education and training. A lack of affordable accommodation options increases the risk of homelessness for low income and vulnerable households. Young people living in households that are experiencing housing instability or homelessness are at high risk of low educational achievement.⁷²

- 2.67 Housing NSW informed the Committee that it is pursuing redevelopments in some areas where social housing is concentrated, particularly focusing on estates with high levels of disadvantage:

Evidence tells us that living in areas where disadvantage and social exclusion is concentrated can magnify the effects of that disadvantage. For example, children growing up in areas of high unemployment, poor literacy, violence and deprivation may have poor educational attainment, truancy and poor literacy and numeracy. These 'area effects' are linked to the intergenerational disadvantage and unemployment among some groups of social housing residents. ... The overall impact on young people can be limited horizons and a lack of opportunity to learn, engage and fulfil their potential.⁷³

- 2.68 Housing NSW also gave evidence that pursuing diversification redevelopments in areas where social housing is concentrated will not entirely address all aspects of disadvantage experienced by children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and that a whole of government response was important in addressing the consequences of disadvantage:

Tenure diversification is one mechanism for transforming disadvantage in social housing communities. However, tenure change itself may not improve life outcomes, including for children and young people. Housing NSW supports a whole of government approach as a key strategy to address entrenched social disadvantage in concentrated social housing areas. This involves physical redevelopment supported by community and government partnerships and strong community engagement.⁷⁴

- 2.69 The Committee heard with concern the impact that the limited amount of low-cost housing can have in relation to children and young people. The Committee recognised the importance Housing NSW placed on a whole of government response to addressing the outcomes that may be experienced by children who grow up in concentrated social housing areas.

⁷¹ Housing NSW, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 2.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁴ Housing NSW, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 4.

3(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.

- 2.70 During the course of the inquiry the then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People indicated that meetings were being organised between herself and representatives of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Planning Institute of Australia, the Property Council of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects to discuss progressing this recommendation.⁷⁵
- 2.71 The Committee notes that the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects are members of the Commission's newly constituted Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group.
- 2.72 During the course of its research, the Committee became aware of the Kidsafe Annual National Playspace Design Awards. These awards are designed to recognise excellence and innovation in the provision of safe, creative playspaces Australia-wide. The awards are open to service providers, design professionals, students, landscape contractors and playground providers in all sectors. Discussion of these awards and the appropriateness of supplementary awards for other child-and youth-friendly environments may be of interest to the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group. The Committee looks forward to the outcomes of the Advisory Group's discussions in relation to such awards.

3(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.

- 2.73 During the inquiry the then Acting Commissioner observed the importance of working to ensure that child-friendly principles are a required element in all areas of design work:

We need to educate design professionals, both at university and in the workforce. We need to make child-friendly principles and requirements more than a good idea; we need to make them mandatory so that they have to be followed with achievable outcomes and guidelines.

- 2.74 The Committee did not hear any further evidence as to how the Commission proposed this would be achieved. The Committee is pleased that the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects are members of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group and recognises the potential for progressing this recommendation through that Advisory Group. The Committee also notes the importance of working directly with the universities in order to produce skilled professionals capable of implementing any mandated inclusion of child-friendly principles and requirements. The Committee considers the Advisory Group to be well placed to develop a means of engaging with the universities in relation to appropriate changes to the university curricula.

3(p) review documentation and multi-media kits produced by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [CABE] (London, England) in relation to children,

⁷⁵ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

young people and the built environment and consider their relevance for curriculum development in New South Wales.

2.75 The Committee understands that the Commission has made reference to the CAGE document *What Makes a Good Neighbourhood?* in the Commission's development of *built4kids*.⁷⁶

2.76 In his discussion of child-friendly indicators during the inquiry's roundtable discussion, Associate Professor Woolcock observed that whilst such indicators are often focused on health and wellbeing, CAGE had undertaken work to measure children's sense of active participation in decision-making processes:

I think if we can get a broader focus into those reports, as has happened quite effectively in other places around the world – and London is most noticeable with its state of children annual report, where CAGE, the group in England, has had a big influence on the architecturally built environment, has had a major input into that report about five years ago about children actively involved in planning built environments, and they had a big turnaround about perceptions about how involved children and young people are in the built environment. It was a massive turnaround, really significant, going from about 10 per cent of the kids feeling they had any say in what happens in the built environment to 60 per cent to 70 per cent a few years later. So those broad indicators are critical but just as effective and arguably more practical are the ones we have been trying to work with, directed towards mainly local government implementation.⁷⁷

2.77 The Committee observed the impact of the work of CAGE in relation to the creation of *built4kids* and in the United Kingdom context, as outlined by Associate Professor Woolcock. The Committee is hopeful that a review by the Commission of the documentation and multi-media kits produced by CAGE will indicate the relevance of such resources in curriculum development in New South Wales.

3(q) promote the outcomes of the project associated with security guard training, in consultation with the Commission for Community Relations.

2.78 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission for Children and Young People advised the Committee that the Commission for Children and Young People had received advice from the Community Relations Commission about the security guard training project. The Community Relations Commission stated that it had been successful in securing enhancements in the training program for security guards to support them to better communicate and resolve conflict with young people from diverse backgrounds. The Community Relations Commission reported that this training program had been endorsed by the National Quality Council and Vocational Education and Training. The Community Relations Commission had promoted this training program via media release, which was circulated to the Youth Action and Policy Association, the NSW Youth Advisory Council and the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council on 8 April 2008.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Commission for Children and Young People, *built4kids: a good practice guide to creating child-friendly built environments*, Commission for Children and Young People, p. 61.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Woolcock, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 22.

⁷⁸ Commission for Children and Young People, Letter to Committee on Children and Young People Secretariat, 06 May 2010, p. 2.

2.79 The Committee was pleased to hear that the training project had been completed by the Community Relations Commission and looks forward to hearing about the impact of the training course and the benefits to children and young people.

3(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.

2.80 There was much discussion at the inquiry's roundtable about the use of indicators as a useful methodology for assessing the impact of the built environment on children and young people. Associate Professor Woolcock advised that *built4kids* was developed to include indicators that would act as a guide rather than as a definitive measuring tool:

That is the precise exercise we undertook with the Commission three years ago with the intention not necessarily for a set of hardcore quantitative indicators but certainly that local government would be the primary audience and also linking with the terrific work the Commission had undertaken to that point in asking the kids about the built environment and the things they valued. So there was a segment in their *built4kids* resource and there is a document on its own on the Commission's website, but there is a segment of that full report that is now captured in *built4kids*, which is a set of indicative indicators – without trying to sound too wordy on that – but more towards the notion of guidelines rather than hard and fast qualitative numerical indicators for the kind of environments that ought to define a child-friendly community.⁷⁹

2.81 Dr Kate Bishop, a design researcher and consultant, also recognised the research rigour that is required in the development of indicators, and added that as such, indicators relating to children and the built environment were some way off:

an indicator for a research community is a very specific research tool, it is a validated part of a measure. We are a long way from having a robust set of those that can comprehensively include all aspects of children's wellbeing in relation to the built environment. What you are talking about we can certainly marshal to some extent, which is really a series of quite precise operating principles, but they lack the robust research validation process, some of them do, that sits behind them.⁸⁰

2.82 Tom Gellibrand observed that it was possible, and reasonable, to include indicators in the design process with respect to the impact of the built environment on children, but that it was important not to add to the complexity of development assessment and approval in the process:

Potentially you could measure those designs or have the proponent measure their designs up against some agreed outcomes you would like to see, and that could go into the mix to make sure the issue had been addressed. In saying that, we have to be careful we are not putting another hurdle in the way of development, that we are not increasing the complexity of development assessment and development approval – the Government is all about simplifying that – but it is a reasonable thing to consider in new developments, subdivisions and developments that you might want to consider some sort of measurement.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Geoffrey Woolcock, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 22.

⁸⁰ Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 22

⁸¹ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General, Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 23.

2.83 Dr Bishop cautioned against the use of indicators as a checklist, recognising the variable nature of design and the inability of universal indicators to adequately address such variations:

Well, sites will vary enormously. It is unlikely that a universal set of indicators can possible take into account the variation across all of those design projects, and it would be dreadful to see them used as a weapon against the outcomes that we want for kids. It is difficult to assist with the interpretation of them and how they affect practice can be quite damaging.⁸²

2.84 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission provided evidence that the development of a set of indicators to demonstrate the impact of the built environment on children and young people is a complex task.⁸³ The Commission reported that it would first need to seek the services of an expert in child-friendly communities and planning as well as academics and researchers to develop a workable set of indicators, with the Commission also stating that it would then need to undertake extensive and on-going consultation with children and young people as well as with the relevant parts of the government and non-government sectors.⁸⁴ The Commission outlined that it would include in its policy and research program for 2010-2011 a scoping exercise to determine what would be required to measure the impact of the built environment on children and young people.⁸⁵ The Commission further reported that it would seek input from Associate Professor Woolcock and Dr Kate Bishop in this scoping exercise, estimating that the cost of the scoping exercise would be approximately \$45,000.⁸⁶

2.85 The Committee was pleased to hear the valuable and informative discussions at the roundtable and looks forward to the outcomes of the proposed work on the development of indicators that demonstrate the impact of the built environment on children and young people.

Recommendation 4

The Commission 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 Development Control Plans [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.

2.86 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission reported that it had partnered with Wollongong City Council in November 2007 to document its planning procedures, identify opportunities to improve participation with children and young people in decision-making and develop a 'good practice guide' for local government, with the results incorporated into *built4kids*.⁸⁷ The Commission also reported that it had trialled the child-friendly community indicators contained within *built4kids* with the cooperation of the following councils:

⁸² Kate Bishop, op. cit., p. 23.

⁸³ Commission for Children and Young People, Correspondence in relation to questions, 10 March 2010, p.6.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.6.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Response to Memorandum of Proceedings, 30 June 2010, p.1.

- Wollongong City Council,
- City of Sydney Council,
- Griffith City Council,
- Liverpool City Council,
- Port Stephens Council,⁸⁸

with the results informing the final *built4kids* published document.

- 2.87 During the inquiry, the Commission undertook to survey the local councils in New South Wales to ascertain the use of *built4kids* and to better understand how to support councils to implement the principles and practices outlined in *built4kids*.⁸⁹
- 2.88 The Committee recognises the work of the Commission in its collaboration with local councils and looks forward to the results of the survey, particularly in relation to any results relating to Development Control Plans for children's services, availability of fast food outlets and provision of playgrounds, parks and other recreational facilities. Also of interest, with respect to the survey results, will be information relating to the engagement of children and young people in master planning and reviewing relevant development applications.

Recommendation 5

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 Commission.

- 2.89 During the inquiry, the Committee heard evidence that the Department of Planning was keen to work with the Commission in relation to the incorporation of child-friendly principles into planning policies and processes, advising that it might be more appropriate to incorporate child-friendly principles into guidelines and other policy documents rather than through amendment of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*:

The Department of Planning has committed to consulting with the Commission on how we can incorporate child-friendly planning principles into planning policy and processes.

The Minister for Planning will consider the previous recommendation and whether or not it is desirable to incorporate child-friendly planning principles into planning legislation or instruments.

Given the nature and application of existing planning legislation and instruments, it may be more appropriate for the Department of Planning to incorporate child-friendly planning principles into guidelines and other policy documents rather than by amending the Planning Act.⁹⁰

- 2.90 As outlined above, Associate Professor Woolcock agreed that guidelines, rather than numerical indicators, were to be preferred when defining a child-friendly community.⁹¹
- 2.91 The Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, gave evidence that the Local Government Playground Grants program guidelines required

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.2.

⁹⁰ Department of Planning, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 1

⁹¹ Associate Professor Geoffrey Woolcock, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 22.

Implementation of the 2006 recommendations

councils to indicate in the initial round whether they had consulted children and young people and, in the second round, the guidelines were revised to require councils to indicate how they had consulted children and young people.⁹²

- 2.92 The Committee notes the Department of Planning's comments that it might be more appropriate to incorporate child-friendly principles into policies and processes rather than legislation, particularly in the context of Associate Professor Woolcock's comments that guidelines were to be preferred in the context of child-friendly environments and the Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet's remarks about the success of including child-friendly processes in program guidelines.
- 2.93 In welcoming the willingness on the part of the Department of Planning to work with the Commission in progressing this recommendation, the Committee looks forward to productive discussions which identify the best means of incorporating child-friendly principles into planning policies and processes.

Recommendation 6

Funding for the Commission 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.

- 2.94 Prior to the commencement of this inquiry, the Committee had heard from the Commissioner on an annual basis how the implementation of the recommendations from the 2006 inquiry was progressing. In particular, the Committee heard evidence about how funding was impacting the implementation of the recommendations. During the review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People, the then Commissioner Gillian Calvert observed that Recommendation 6 proposed that additional funding be provided to the Commission to undertake the projects recommended in the report, commenting that "additional funding options are being explored".⁹³
- 2.95 In its review of the 2006-2007 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People, the Committee heard evidence of how the recommendations were progressing, without receiving an update in relation to additional funding options that were reported to being explored during the 2005-2006 report review.
- 2.96 The review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People revealed that the Commission had not implemented all of the recommendations contained in the 2006 report because additional funding had not been received:

I think we were somewhat hampered in our ability to implement the recommendations because we did not get the separate funding that the Committee recommended. So, we were able to do some of the things that we thought important, but we were unable to do all of the things the Committee identified, for that reason.⁹⁴

⁹² Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Answers to questions in lieu of attendance, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

⁹³ Gillian Calvert, then Commissioner for Children, *Review of the 2005-2006 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 1/54, 8 November 2007, p. 14.

⁹⁴ Gillian Calvert, then Commissioner for Children, *Review of the 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People*, Report No. 3/54, May 2009, p. 25.

- 2.97 During the inquiry, the then Acting Commissioner, Jan McClelland, confirmed that the Commission had sought additional funding on two occasions without success.⁹⁵ Ms McClelland reported that the Commission had redirected approximately \$259,000 of its own resources between 2007 and 2010 in order to fund the work that was undertaken in relation the recommendations.⁹⁶
- 2.98 The Committee heard evidence from the then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Jan McClelland, in March 2010 that it estimated that it would require an additional \$540,000 to finalise the recommendations in the 2006 report, being for:
- Salaries: \$170,000;
 - External advice: \$30,000;
 - Research and evaluation: \$175,000;
 - Publications: \$75,000;
 - Education: \$60,000; and
 - Travel: \$30,000.⁹⁷
- 2.99 Notwithstanding the then Acting Commissioner's comments in relation to the cost of finalising the recommendations from the 2006 report, the Committee also heard evidence from the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Megan Mitchell, in September 2010 that the Commission had unfinished business, particularly in relation to the built environment, and that the Commission would continue to implement to the recommendations arising from the 2006 report, and doing so would take approximately 18 months.⁹⁸
- 2.100 The Committee was pleased to hear that the implementation of the recommendations that had been set for the Commission in the 2006 report were part of the Commission's work program for the upcoming 18 months.

Conclusion

- 2.101 At the commencement of this follow-up inquiry, the Committee was aware through the review of the previous three Annual Reports that the Commission had made some progress in relation to the recommendations outlined in the 2006 report. During the early stages of this inquiry it became apparent that the Commission's decision not to adopt Recommendation 1, the convening of the Steering Group, had substantially hampered the achievement of a number other recommendations, particularly with respect to Recommendation 3 and its 18 sub-recommendations. The Commission identified that its initial implementation of a number of the recommendations was also hampered by a lack of additional funding. During the course of the inquiry the Commission made undertakings to complete the work required that would see it implement the balance of the recommendations.
- 2.102 The Committee was pleased to observe during the course of the inquiry that several other agencies have initiated work relevant to the recommendations.

⁹⁵ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 2.

⁹⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 4.

⁹⁸ Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence in relation to the 2008-2009 Annual Review of the Commission for Children and Young People, 3 September 2010, p. 3

2.103 The following chapter will address what the follow-up inquiry revealed was important to progressing the aims of the 2006 report moving forward.

Chapter Three - Ongoing relevance of the 2006 Report and Recommendations

3.1 In addition to taking evidence on the status of the implementation of the 2006 recommendations, the Committee also heard from witnesses that many of the issues raised in the 2006 report were still the same and that the recommendations themselves remained relevant. Of those recommendations, it became apparent that Recommendation 1 would be instrumental in progressing the required information exchange required in relation to the outstanding recommendations and also as a means of addressing the ongoing importance of collaboration amongst the various disciplines in seeking to achieve real change in the way the built environment responds to the needs of children and young people.

2006 Recommendations still relevant

3.2 The feedback from the stakeholders who attended the hearing on 31 March 2010 and the roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010 was that the 2006 recommendations were still relevant. In fact the Committee heard that rather than diminishing in importance, the recommendations were now more important because of the impact on children's physical and mental health:

All of these recommendations are more important than they were 3 ½ years ago, as research tells us that our children are more unhealthy and more unhappy as time goes by, not less.⁹⁹

3.3 The Committee noted that the American Academy of Paediatrics' policy statement on the role of built environment in children's health is an example of the growing global commitment to acknowledging the impact of the built environment on children's health and a similar commitment to implementing a collaborative response to ensuring children are consulted and considered in the development of the built environment.¹⁰⁰

3.4 The Committee heard evidence of how the work of the Commission following the implementation of the recommendations had been utilised by other organisations.

3.5 The Commission informed the Committee that it had received feedback from a number of councils and other organisations that they are using *built4kids* indicators in a range of ways, with the Commission providing the example of Griffith City Council using the indicators in the development of a local park.¹⁰¹

3.6 The Commission also noted that the 2008 *Standards for the Care of Children and Adolescents in Health Services* by the Royal Australasian College of Physicians not only called for children and adolescents to be cared for in a safe and appropriate physical environment designed, furnished and decorated to meet their needs and developmental age, but it also recommended using the Commission's TAKING PARTicipation Seriously Kit as a resource to support involving and engaging children and young people in decision making.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

¹⁰¹ Commission for Children and Young People, Correspondence in response to questions, 10 March 2010, p.2.

¹⁰² Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

3.7 Wollongong City Council reported that it had embraced the child friendly initiatives embedded in the 2006 recommendations with the assistance of the Commission:

The Child Friendly Initiative has received considerable support within Council in the past three years. This is evidenced in:

- Council giving formal undertaking to progress the Child Friendly Initiative. This commitment is included in two of the organisations strategic plans that drive Council's activities for the coming years, the Management Plan 2009-2012 and the Social Plan 2007-2012.
- There has been an increased recognition of the importance of consulting with children and young people in built environment projects. It is now common place to consult with children in relation to developments such as playground design and skate park facilities as well as consider children and young people in the development of Council facilities and the revitalisation of public space.
- The importance of children's right to play and recreation is a key consideration in the development of the draft playground strategy.
- Children's participation in public art projects has increased with examples including the tree guards, artwork within playgrounds, murals at key recreations facilities.
- There has also been a general increase in awareness and commitment to considering children and young people in land-use planning. The *built4kids* document is used as a resource for Council Officers and is useful for new staff who may have limited knowledge of the child friendly initiative.¹⁰³

3.8 At the roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010, there was some discussion amongst the stakeholders as to why the issues identified in the 2006 report were still relevant and had not been effectively addressed in the years between the publishing of the 2006 report and the establishment of the follow-up inquiry. Fiona Robbé of the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects described three key reasons for this, being an overall ignorance of the report, a lack of funding to pursue child-friendly initiatives and a lack of analysis and critique of the achievements in relation to children and the built environment.¹⁰⁴ Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer for the Local Government and Shires Association agreed with Ms Robbé's assessment.¹⁰⁵

3.9 Recognising Ms Robbé's assessment that the 2006 recommendations were still relevant, and that there was a general ignorance of the report and its underpinning theories, such as the importance of consulting with children, there was agreement that the work already undertaken in relation to the 2006 recommendations ought to be promoted. The Division for Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, advised that the most appropriate method for promoting *built4kids* to local councils would be through the inclusion of *built4kids* on the Integrated Planning and Reporting page of the Division's website. The Division indicated that the website was being reviewed, but that the *built4kids* document would be uploaded following the

¹⁰³ Wollongong City Council, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Local Government and Shires Association, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 11.

website review process.¹⁰⁶ At the time of publishing this report, *built4kids* had been uploaded on the Division's website.¹⁰⁷

- 3.10 The Commission reported on the promotion work it had undertaken in relation to *built4kids*, stating that 120 hard copies had been distributed to key stakeholders and that between September 2009 and June 2010 the electronic copy of *built4kids* had been downloaded 45,000 times.¹⁰⁸
- 3.11 When invited to summarise the issues, Ms Dennis echoed the recommendations in the 2006 report when she pointed to the importance of involving children in decision making, reducing regulation and ensuring that there is a focus on the local level:
- I think we have said it all. It is embracing children in that decision-making space, making it less regulative and much more community based.¹⁰⁹

The steering committee approach

- 3.12 During the course of the Committee's inquiry, none of the stakeholders queried the steering committee approach to progressing the 2006 recommendations that had been a feature of the 2006 report. The Department of Planning indicated its willingness to participate in such a group during the hearing on 31 March 2010, with Tom Gellibrand, the Deputy Director-General, indicating that the Department could see significant benefit in participating in such a committee.¹¹⁰
- 3.13 Collaboration was recognised as an important feature of the proposed steering committee, with Dr Kate Bishop indicating the number of different disciplines that interact in the built environment space:
- The built environment is the result of an enormously complex process that intersects with an enormous number of professional communities. Those communities have limited knowledge of each other's practice, let alone the impact of their decisions on children.¹¹¹
- 3.14 The advantage of the steering committee approach to promoting collaboration was articulated by Peter McCue from the Premier's Council for Active Living, who reported that collaboration was most effective when it was introduced at the beginning of a process:
- From our experience of trying to promote interagency collaboration, interagency collaboration is most effective when it is established upfront and that those relationships are established right from conception ... My key message, from our experience of interagency collaboration, would be that those relationships and the process for ongoing maintenance of those relationships, are really established from commencement.¹¹²

¹⁰⁶ Commission for Children and Young People, Correspondence in response to questions, 10 March 2010, p.2.

¹⁰⁷ Go to www.dlg.nsw.gov.au, then click on the Integrated Planning and Reporting menu, then click on the Development and Support menu, then click on the link to Strategic Planning, then scroll down to the link to "Built4Kids: A guide to creating child-friendly built environments".

¹⁰⁸ Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p.20.

¹⁰⁹ Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Local Government and Shires Association, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 14.

¹¹⁰ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General, Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 14.

¹¹¹ Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 11.

¹¹² Peter McCue, Manager, Premier's Council for Active Living, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 15.

- 3.15 Whether the steering committee ought to compromise the same organisations as were listed in the first of the 2006 recommendations was considered, with the Commission reporting that it would be more useful to have a smaller core group that could have reference to a further list of organisations when necessary:

There are many, many stakeholders in this space. I think one of the issues is to work out exactly who would be on this group and who else might be a group of critical friends that you might refer to from time to time. I think it needs to be small enough to be workable and, at the same time, there needs to be the capacity to refer to all those many players in this space when you need to.¹¹³

- 3.16 Recognising the importance of collaboration between the various disciplines - such as planning, local government, architecture and education – when seeking to achieve greater recognition of the impact of the built environment on children, the Committee also heard evidence of supplementary approaches of collaboration. The Commission reported that the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils had established an interactive on-line consultation entitled *Western Sydney 2030* which allowed various organisations and interest groups to register their vision for Western Sydney in 2030.¹¹⁴

- 3.17 Furthermore, there was recognition amongst the stakeholders that addressing the needs of children and the built environment was part of a greater balancing act which involved allocating a limited pool of funds to a list of priorities. Housing NSW informed the Committee that balancing the need for additional housing for the many people on the waiting list with using funding to improve what is already there involved assessment and evaluation: "it is a balancing act. It is at the core of our strategy".¹¹⁵

The Commission's leadership role

- 3.18 During the course of the inquiry, the Commission indicated that it saw itself as an appropriate organisation to provide leadership on advice and education with respect to involving children in decision-making that affects them:

I think the Commission would be well placed, in particular, to provide continued advice and education on participatory practice with children and young people, at whatever stage of the planning process that is sensible, as consultation with children yields great benefits.¹¹⁶

- 3.19 The Commission acknowledged the need for this type of leadership, referring to enquiries it receives in relation to involving children in decision-making processes:

Agencies have advised the Commission that they need advice and support with the day-to-day practicalities of working with children and young people and supporting their participation in decision-making.¹¹⁷

- 3.20 Dr Bishop observed the advantages relating to the Commission taking the leadership role in relation to the steering committee, stating "It would be better I think probably to locate the authority over the steering committee in the Commission."¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p.26.

¹¹⁴ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ Stephen McIntyre, Executive Director, Housing NSW, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 9.

¹¹⁶ Megan Mitchell, op. cit., p.19.

¹¹⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 1.

¹¹⁸ Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 27.

Conclusion

- 3.21 The Committee listened with interest to evidence that was given about the difficulties experienced in implementing the 2006 recommendations, and was interested to hear that the stakeholders still thought that the 2006 recommendations were relevant and that much of the work undertaken to date with respect to the recommendations had been successful.
- 3.22 The Committee was also pleased to hear that the Commission's leadership role in progressing matters relating to children, young people and the built environment was endorsed not only by the Commission itself but by other stakeholders.
- 3.23 The Committee was particularly pleased with the decision by the Commission to implement Recommendation 1 from the 2006 report under the name of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group, albeit with a smaller membership than that recommended in the 2006 report. The Committee heard evidence that an advisory group of this nature would greatly assist in the collaborative work that was required to achieve a real, lasting and ongoing impact on the built environment, and the planning processes involved, to the benefit of children and young people.

Chapter Four - Future Action

- 4.1 The Committee had particular regard to the principal functions of the Commission, as outlined in section 11 of the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998*, and to its own functions, as outlined in section 28 of the Act, when conducting this follow-up inquiry. The Committee also had regard to the purpose of a follow-up inquiry, being the examination of the extent to which previous recommendations had been implemented, the examination of the ongoing relevance of those recommendations and the provision of new recommendations as necessary.
- 4.2 When considering what future action was required within the context of the follow-up inquiry, the Committee heard evidence that recognised the importance of ongoing research in relation to children, young people and the built environment, but which placed a clear emphasis on the need to deliver practical outcomes and turn theory into practice.

Building on the 2006 recommendations – turning theory into practice

- 4.3 There was a general enthusiasm to continue to build on the recommendations contained within the 2006 report:
- The issues in your first report have not fundamentally changed this time round but we do not need another report to some extent that leaves us in the same place. In this next round of recommendations and objectives it would be terrific to target something or focus something and set goals for some real achievement that moves us beyond what we all understand is an issue that needs attention.¹¹⁹
- 4.4 During the course of the inquiry the Committee heard evidence from the Commission that as the theory that underpinned the 2006 inquiry was still relevant, it was important for the research to focus on practice, rather than theory, with a focus on achieving practical change:
- A couple of interesting findings that have come out of the work that Griffith University and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth have been doing, they have looked at the research challenges that emerge from this area ... They are saying there needs to be more applied research looking at the links between the built environment and its impact on children – enough of the theory, let us start looking at what is really happening.¹²⁰
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the Commission's interest in engaging in practice-based research, other witnesses emphasised an even more practical approach for the future work plan. Fiona Robbé represented the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects at the inquiry's roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010, stating that whilst the appropriate research has been conducted and the relevant resources exist, the forward focus should now be on delivering results:
- We have the resources, we have done the research, we have the knowledge and we have the Commission. It now behoves us as caring professionals to deliver measurable improvements to children and young people in New South Wales.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 28.

¹²⁰ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 6.

¹²¹ Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 8.

- 4.6 Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer with the Local Government and Shires Association agreed with Ms Robb 's assessment, saying at the roundtable discussion: "I totally agree with Fiona; we know the theory but we are not delivering it"¹²².
- 4.7 Debra Langridge, Project Coordinator of Healthy Cities Illawarra's Child Friendly by Design Project, agreed with the assessment that it was time to use the existing research work to undertake practical work in the area of children and the built environment, observing that, unless this happened in a timely way, the momentum raised by the publishing of *built4kids* would be lost:
- Just in terms of recommendations, I think as a practitioner we are coming to a point where the turning of theory into practice is something we need to take on board. Not that we do not need, we certainly do need, ongoing research and an evidence-base, but for councils especially and for designers and people who are meant to be doing this work, in terms of involving children and young people, there seems to be a general awareness to some degree of what a child-friendly community or place looks like, but the how-to of doing that needs to have a greater focus. Unless we do that, the momentum that was raised through the *built4kids* resource will be lost. There is a small network of New South Wales councils that focus specifically on child-friendly cities and other non-government organisations – Healthy Cities is one of those – that have been purely set up because of self interest but agencies and networks like that will not continue unless there is an ongoing mode of turning the theory and the principles into the how-to. I suppose in terms of a recommendation I think that is something that needs more focus from here on in for future reference.¹²³
- 4.8 Dr Kate Bishop, independent researcher, echoed the sentiment that called for a future focus on action: "I would support the need to emphasise the how-to aspect of this next round of recommendations".¹²⁴
- 4.9 In order to achieve practical results, Fiona Robb  from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects called for greater education in relation to the Articles within the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child and for the winding back of the section 94 changes,¹²⁵ which have had a negative impact on the number of parks, playgrounds and other community facilities being built.¹²⁶
- 4.10 Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer with the Local Government and Shires Association, indicated that while there was a good understanding of the issues involved, it was difficult to know what action to implement to address the issues:
- We sort of know the issues – I do not think any council does not know the issues – we just do not know how to deliver better outcomes at a local level.¹²⁷
- 4.11 Debra Langridge, Project Coordinator at Healthy Cities Illawarra, outlined the importance of local councils collaborating with each other in order to achieve practical change in relation to children and the built environment:

¹²² Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Local Government and Shires Association, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 14.

¹²³ Debra Langridge, Project Coordinator, Child Friendly by Design Project, Healthy Cities Illawarra, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 28.

¹²⁴ Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 28.

¹²⁵ Being a reference to section 94 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which enables local councils or other consent authorities to levy contributions for public amenities and services required as a consequence of development. Recent changes to section 94 have seen a reduction in the amount of funds councils are able to levy.

¹²⁶ Fiona Robb , Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 8.

¹²⁷ Jennifer Dennis, op. cit., p. 15.

I think there is also the importance of then sharing those processes amongst the 152 councils. I think if people can see a demonstration of how something is being done, and that it is being done, and that nothing fell off in the process, that can be applied to where they are currently, regardless of size. I think that is the key to the process ... I think it is the sharing of examples and passing them on, so that people do not feel like they have to reinvent the wheel; there is already a protocol and process there. I think that is really important.¹²⁸

- 4.12 The Commission gave evidence that part of its future work plan was to focus on achieving practical change by drawing on existing research:

There is also a strong tradition of research in the area of children, youth and environments which has identified many attributes of children's environments which are salient to their well-being. The Commission's future work will seek to capitalise on this existing research and strengthen the links between children's environmental experience and their well-being.¹²⁹

- 4.13 The Commission indicated that one of the ways it would seek to assist in the practical work being done to effect positive change in the ways which children experience the built environment would be by liaising with local councils to find out how *built4kids* is being used and asking these councils how the Commission can provide further support:

The Commission wants to find out how *built4kids* is being used, what impact it is having on the work of local councils and how the Commission can further support local councils in working with children and young people. The Commission will also place this on the agenda of the inter-agency Steering Committee that will include government agencies, representatives from relevant industry sectors and local government.¹³⁰

- 4.14 In recognising the broad nature of the 2006 recommendations, the Committee appreciates the challenge of turning theory into practice. The Committee is of the view that the Commission and its Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group are well placed to address this issue.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Commission for Children and Young People further promote *built4kids* and monitor the use of this resource.

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.

Engaging stakeholders

- 4.15 The Committee has considered the comments made by Debra Langridge; the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Megan Mitchell; Tom Gellibrand;

¹²⁸ Debra Langridge, Project Coordinator, Child Friendly by Design Project, Healthy Cities Illawarra, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 26.

¹²⁹ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p 4.

¹³⁰ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p 1.

Peter McCue; the former Acting Commissioner Jan McClelland and Tracy Venaglia¹³¹ in relation to the importance of a collaborative response to the issues facing children and young people in relation to the built environment. The Committee is pleased that during the course of this inquiry the Commission for Children and Young People established its Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group. The Committee is hopeful that this Advisory Group will prove to be an effective mechanism for promoting not only children's involvement in the planning and production of the built environment, but also result in a built environment which is more responsive to the needs of children and young people of a variety of ages.

- 4.16 The Committee has also considered the comments made by Jennifer Thompson, Wollongong City Council and the Division for Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet in relation to formal and informal groups who share information about council practices with respect to built environment and child-consultation work¹³² and the utilisation of technology in order to disseminate information.¹³³ The Committee sees these existing forms of communication as a crucial way in which the disparate disciplines involved in creating the built environment can communicate in order to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.
- 4.17 As outlined in the paragraphs below on the importance of considering children on equal terms, the Committee is hopeful that in addition to the establishment of the Advisory Group, the Commission will also see involving children in any consultation process as an important part of engaging stakeholders. The Committee notes that at present there is not a children and/or young people's representative on the Advisory Group.

Considering children on equal terms

- 4.18 Any participants engaging in future action in relation to children and the built environment should be mindful of including children in the decision-making and consultation processes related to that action.
- 4.19 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention) was the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights - civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. Particularly relevant in relation to the practical implementation of research in the area of the built environment and children is Article 12 of the Convention which provides for meaningful input by children in relation to decision-making that affects them:

Article 12

1. State 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

¹³¹ Debra Langridge, op cit. pp. 26 and 28; Megan Mitchell, op cit., p. 19; Tom Gellibrand, Transcript of evidence 30 June 2010, pp. 11 and 14; Peter McCue, op cit., p. 15; Jan McClelland, op cit., p. 3 and Tracy Venaglia, op cit., p. 21.

¹³² Jennifer Thompson, Divisional Manager, Community, Cultural and Library Services, Wollongong City Council, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 23.

¹³³ Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Questions answered in lieu of appearing, 31 March 2010, p. 2.

through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.¹³⁴

4.20 Karen Malone, Chair of UNICEF's Child Friendly Asia Pacific Network and Professor of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Education at the University of Wollongong outlines the importance of including children in any process relating to their rights:

responding to children's rights is not just about adults' roles as stewards. It is also about recognising the capacity for children and youth to be *authentic participants* and the importance this has on their continued sense of connection to their community.¹³⁵

4.21 Evidence provided by representatives from local government emphasised the importance of tailoring processes of inclusion so that they reflect the capacity of children to provide input in planning and design processes. Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer at the Local Government and Shires Association sought to encourage artistic contributions from children, rather than attempting to use the same processes currently adopted for consultation in plan making.¹³⁶

4.22 During the review of the Commission's 2008-2009 Annual Report, the Committee observed the Commission's commitment to the principles articulated in the Convention.

4.23 The Committee heard how the Convention informs the Commission's purpose and focus:

the guiding principles contained in the Commission's legislation are aligned with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child. In particular, that the views of children are to be given serious consideration and taken into account in decisions that affect their lives (Article 12).¹³⁷

4.24 The Committee also had regard to how the Convention informs the Commission's actions, including its strategic planning process, its collaborative work with other agencies and its research into child-centred consultation and research practices:

Securing the rights of children under UN CROC is the responsibility of governments at all levels and the community. By working in partnership with government agencies, non-government organisations and individuals in the community, the Commission has a role in promoting UN CROC as part of its policy, research and advocacy work as well as through its projects... The Commission has integrated the principles of UNCROC into this current strategic planning process¹³⁸

4.25 The Committee is pleased to have heard evidence from the Commission of its commitment to children's rights, particularly as those rights arise out of Article 12 of the Convention, and the ways in which those rights inform the Commission's work programme, which will impact on the future work of the Commission in relation to children, young people and the built environment.

¹³⁴ United Nations. 1989. *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44.25 of 20 November 1989. The Convention was signed by Australia on 22 August 1990 and ratified on 17 December 1990.

¹³⁵ Karen Malone. 2006. "United Nations: a key player in a global movement for child friendly cities" in B. Gleeson and N. Sipe (eds) *Creating child friendly cities: reinstating kids in the city*, Routledge, Abingdon, p.25.

¹³⁶ Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Local Government and Shires Association, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 11.

¹³⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions on Notice, 3 September 2010, p. 18.

¹³⁸ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing 3 September 2010, p. 7

- 4.26 Not only does the Committee acknowledge the right of children and young people under Article 12 of the Convention to be actively involved in the decision making and planning of aspects of the built environment that affect children and young people, the Committee also recognises the importance of children being aware of their right to contribute to planning decisions made regarding them. The Committee will be interested to hear in future reports how the Commission proposes to increase rights awareness amongst children and young people.

Associated issues

- 4.27 Stakeholders informed the Committee that the issues raised in the 2006 report, as captured in the 2006 recommendations, were still relevant in 2010. In addition, the inquiry heard evidence of related issues that were of interest to the Committee.
- 4.28 An issue that was raised in the course of this inquiry, that was also a key feature of recommendation 57 in the Committee's *Children and Young People Aged 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle* Report (the Missing Middle Report), was that of child impact statements.¹³⁹ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Planning, reported that his Department did not have a specific policy in relation to child impact statements. He observed that imposing a blanket requirement for child impact statements would not necessarily be relevant to a large number of the applications to his Department.¹⁴⁰ The Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, also reported that it would not be practicable for the Division to receive child impact statements from 152 local councils on every initiative those councils implement. The Division gave evidence that it considered section 8 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, which contains the council's charter including that the council must promote, provide and plan for the needs of children, to be sufficient in the circumstances.¹⁴¹
- 4.29 The Committee wrote in its 2006 report about the importance of not seeing children as a homogenous group, but rather as a diverse group with a myriad of needs relating to their different ages and different circumstances. The Committee's findings in the Missing Middle Report¹⁴² in 2009 also underscored this issue. Again, during the follow-up inquiry, the importance of viewing children as a non-homogenous group was addressed. Associate Professor Woolcock described the shift in perception in the years following the 2006 report, and the importance of recognising the differing needs of children from differing age groups:

What was a reasonably universal and some might even say homogenous take on children as a broad spectrum is now much more nuanced around this impact and the difference particularly between early childhood, between children in primary school years and adolescence and the impact of all sorts of effects but including the built environment across that age spectrum.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Committee on Children and Young People, *Children and Young People 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle*, Report No. 5/54, September 2009, NSW Parliament, volume 2, pp. 86-88.

¹⁴⁰ Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General, Department of Planning, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 15.

¹⁴¹ Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Answers to questions in lieu of appearing, 31 March 2010, p. 5.

¹⁴² Committee on Children and Young People, *Children and Young People 9-14 Years in NSW: The Missing Middle*, Report No. 5/54, September 2009, NSW Parliament.

¹⁴³ Geoffrey Woolcock, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University, Transcript of evidence, 30 June 2010, p. 2.

Future Action

- 4.30 The then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Jan McClelland, advised that the Commission had been informed by Griffith University and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth that one of the key research challenges that had emerged in relation to children, young people and the built environment related to a disproportionate emphasis on the needs of younger children at the expense of older children. She observed that "there needs to be a much better balance between the needs of littlies, the young children, and adolescents – there needs to be greater balance there".¹⁴⁴ This echoes the findings of the Missing Middle Report.
- 4.31 Another issue that was brought to the Committee's attention during the inquiry included the work of the Commission's *Child Injury Prevention Reference Group*, which sought to investigate and prevent falls from buildings and structures, analysis of the off road use of motorcycles and seeking to implement safe alternative transport options for young people. The Committee was advised that membership of the group included the Commission for Children and Young People; Department of Health; Motor Accidents Authority; Office of Fair Trading; Roads and Traffic Authority; the University of NSW's Injury Risk management Research Centre; NRMA; Youthsafe; Kidsafe and the Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety.¹⁴⁵
- 4.32 In addition, the Commission highlighted the following statutory and policy developments during the course of the inquiry:
- the introduction of the *Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Act 2009*, with the Commission reporting that the impact of this legislation had been significant with respect to how strategic planning is conducted a local level;¹⁴⁶
 - amendments to the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* that commenced in 2009 which provide the legislative framework for high standard, four-sided, child-resistant barriers to be consistently applied to all newly constructed private pools in NSW;¹⁴⁷ and
 - the Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health's work on a Youth Health Policy for NSW Health which acknowledges the influence of the physical environment on young people's health.¹⁴⁸
- 4.33 These issues are not especially divergent from the issues identified in the 2006 report and serve as useful examples of the kinds of matters that the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group might address in its future work.

Role of the Commission

- 4.34 As this report has described, the 2006 report recommended an enhanced leadership role for the Commission in respect of policy development and other projects relating to children, young people and the built environment.
- 4.35 Over the course of this inquiry, the Committee has been pleased to hear evidence of the progress which the Commission has made in implementing the 2006

¹⁴⁴ Jan McClelland, Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ Commission for Children and Young People, Correspondence in response to questions, 10 March 2010, p.6.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.7.

¹⁴⁷ Commission for Children and Young People, Questions answered after hearing, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

recommendations and its intention to continue that work. The then Acting Commissioner informed the Committee in March 2010 that:

The Commissioner's Policy Manager ... and Senior Research Officer in the Commission have been instructed to make the built environment a priority in the Commission's policy and research plan and work program from the 2010-2011 year. The Commission will establish the interagency steering committee that was recommended by the Committee to oversee the built environment work.¹⁴⁹

4.36 In September 2010, during the Committee's review of the Commission's Annual Report, the Commissioner outlined the Commission's future priorities stating that:

...there is quite a lot of unfinished business that needs to be dealt with, in particular in the area of the built environment...I think that will take us probably another 18 months to complete the recommendations that have been set for the Commission to undertake.¹⁵⁰

4.37 Ongoing implementation of the 2006 recommendations constitutes a major project for the Commission over future reporting years. Accordingly it is the Committee's view that the Commission's Annual Report should adequately reflect both the processes undertaken and the progress made.

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.**

4.38 In this regard, the Committee is confident that the Commission will find examples of best practice in the guidance provided by the Audit Office of New South Wales and the Australian National Audit Office as well as those reports which have been commended in both the Premier's Annual Reports Awards and the Australasian Reporting Awards.

4.39 As described in Chapter 2 of this report, the Committee heard evidence of the Commission's previously unsuccessful attempts to secure funding for implementing

¹⁴⁹ Jan McClelland, then Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Transcript of evidence, 31 March 2010, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰ Committee on Children and Young People, *Review of the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People and the 2008 Annual Report of the Child Death Review Team*, October 2010, pp 31-32.

the 2006 recommendations. Whilst the Committee is pleased to see that the Commission now has undertaken to complete this work, it is mindful of the Commission's need to balance this with other policy and research priorities.

- 4.40 The Committee is diligent in its exercise of its oversight functions in relation to the Commission and will always carefully consider any funding issues which the Commission raises. The Committee notes that the Commission is currently engaged in a strategic planning exercise and that the Commissioner has indicated her willingness to advise the Committee of the resourcing implications following the outcome of that process.¹⁵¹

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.

Conclusion

- 4.41 In concluding this follow-up inquiry the Committee notes with approval the commitment of stakeholders at the inquiry's hearing on 31 March 2010 and roundtable discussion on 30 June 2010 to turn the theory that was identified in the 2006 report and elsewhere into a practical reality. These stakeholders underscored the importance of bringing together disparate disciplines in order to synthesise their knowledge and skills for the benefit of children and young people in the built environment.
- 4.42 Stakeholders have confirmed the Committee's belief that the Commission is well placed, and the most appropriate agency, to take a leadership role in this process. Having undertaken some important work in relation to the recommendations contained within the 2006 report prior to the commencement of this follow-up inquiry, most notably developing and publishing *built4kids* and liaising with Wollongong City Council in relation to Child Friendly Cities Initiative, the Commission has made impressive progress in relation to a number of the 2006 recommendations during the course of this follow-up inquiry. In particular, the Committee is pleased to note the establishment of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group. The Committee sees this as pivotal to the collaboration that is necessary in the built environment which requires diverse group of disciplines working to establish the built environment, but not always with the needs – and rights – of children in mind.
- 4.43 Noting the right of children to be involved in any process which impacts them as articulated in Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Committee is keen to see the active involvement of children in any collaborative process that seeks to improve children and young people's experience of the built environment.
- 4.44 The Committee was pleased to hear about work being done in relation to falls, swimming pools, strategic planning at a local government level, and the recognition of the impact of the built environment on children and young people's health. The

¹⁵¹ Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, *Review of the 2008-2009 Annual Report of the Commission for Children and Young People and the 2008 Annual Report of the Child Death Review Team*, Transcript of evidence, 3 September 2010, p. 7.

Committee sees these issues as matters that might be usefully addressed by the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group.

- 4.45 As described in the introduction of this chapter, implementation of the 2006 recommendations in no way precludes further research in this important area. The built environment continues to be transformed and ensuring that it meets the needs of children and young people will be an ongoing task of some complexity.
- 4.46 Through the establishment of the Children, Young People and the Built Environment Advisory Group, the Committee recognises that there will be an appropriate mechanism to assist the Commission to not only implement the 2006 recommendations but one which could serve as an important source of advice on what more might need to be done.
- 4.47 In this regard, it should be noted that whilst the current session of Parliament is approaching its expiry, the Committee on Children and Young People is a statutory committee of the NSW Parliament which will continue to exist whilst the relevant legislation is in force and Parliament continues to appoint members to serve on it. As such it will continue to monitor and review the work of the Commission and to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children, and report to both Houses of Parliament any changes that it thinks desirable to the functions and procedures of the Commission.
- 4.48 Both the built environment and the Commission's work in relation to it will continue to be within the Committee's terms of reference for monitoring and review or further inquiry should it resolve to do so.
- 4.49 Finally the Committee congratulates the previous Commissioner for Children and Young People, Gillian Calvert, for the previous work of the Commission in relation to *built4kids* and the collaboration with Wollongong City Council. The Committee was impressed with the commitment that the then Acting Commissioner, Jan McClelland, and the current Commissioner, Megan Mitchell, made to completing the implementation of the 2006 recommendations. Their leadership in the area of children, young people and the built environment is to be commended.

Appendix One – List of Witnesses

31 March 2010, Waratah Room, Parliament House

Organisation	Name	Position
Commission for Children and Young People	Ms Jan McClelland	Acting Commissioner
	Ms Lou-Anne Lind	Policy Manager
Housing NSW	Mr Stephen McIntyre	Executive Director, Assets Division
	Ms Nada Nasser	Director, Business Strategy
	Ms Galina Laurie	A/Manager, Estates Strategy Unit
Department of Planning	Mr Tom Gellibrand	Deputy Director-General, Plan Making and Urban Renewal
Wollongong City Council	Ms Tracy Venaglia	Coordinator, Community Development and Social Planning
	Ms Jennifer Thompson	Manager, Community, Cultural and Library Services

30 June 2010, Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Organisation	Name	Position
Griffith University	Dr Geoff Woolcock	Research Fellow, Urban Research Program
UNSW at ADFA	Dr Paul Tranter	Associate Professor, School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences
Local Government and Shires Association	Ms Jennifer Dennis	Policy Officer, Planning
Healthy Cities Illawarra	Ms Debra Langridge	Project Coordinator, Child Friendly by Design Project
Premier's Council for Active Living	Mr Peter McCue	Manager
Architects of Arcadia	Ms Fiona Robbé	Director
Division of Local Government	Ms Karen Paterson	Manager, Policy and Research
Department of Planning	Mr Tom Gellibrand	Deputy Director-General, Plan Making and Urban Renewal
	Ms Josephine Wing	Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal
Commission for Children and Young People	Ms Megan Mitchell	Commissioner
	Ms Lou-Anne Lind	Manager, Policy
	Ms Trish Malins	Manager, Research
	Dr Kate Bishop	Independent Researcher (Children, Youth & Environments)
Planning Institute of Australia	Ms Sarah Reilly	Social Planning Consultant

Appendix Two – Transcript of proceedings - 31 March 2010

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

—
At Sydney on Wednesday 31 March 2010

—
The Committee met at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

Mr R. D. Coombs (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. J. Ajaka
The Hon. K. F. Griffin
Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile

Legislative Assembly

Ms M. T. Andrews
Mr R. A. Furolo

CHAIR: I formally declare the meeting open and welcome the witnesses who are attending this morning. Before proceedings commence, I remind everyone to switch off their mobile phones as they can interfere with the Hansard recording equipment. If your phone is on silent mode, please switch it off completely. I will make opening remarks about the reasons for the Committee's follow-up inquiry into its 2006 report on children, young people and the built environment.

One of the main functions of the Committee under section 28 (1) (d) of the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 is to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children, and report to Parliament any changes, which the Committee thinks desirable, to the functions and procedures of the Commission. Pursuant to this function, the Committee's 2006 report contains six detailed recommendations and proposed an enhanced leadership role for the Commission in respect of policy development and other projects relating to children, young people and the built environment.

Three and a half years since that report, the Committee's current inquiry aims to re-examine these recommendations, assess new research in the field and collect additional evidence to develop further recommendations in relation to the key issues of the original inquiries. In revisiting the Committee's original inquiry, this follow-up inquiry will focus principally on to what extent the recommendations of the Committee's original inquiry have been implemented since the tabling of the report, and why it is that some of the Committee's key recommendations have not been implemented to date.

The forward-looking component of the inquiry is to establish, based on the expertise of witnesses, which of the Committee's original recommendations remain relevant in 2010, how they can be effectively implemented, and what positive and practical recommendations the Committee can now make with respect to the impact of the built environment on children and young people in New South Wales into the future.

On behalf of Committee members, at the outset of these proceedings I acknowledge the outstanding public service of the Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People, Ms Jan McClelland, who of course is before us now. Ms McClelland stepped into this important role at very, very short notice, having originally been engaged solely to undertake a review of the Commission. Committee members would like to stress that any concerns which they may have with the Commission's implementation with the original report's recommendations are not in any way a reflection on the Acting Commissioner's exercise of her leadership role at this difficult time for the Commission.

Again I thank the witnesses for appearing today. I am pleased that you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and a brochure entitled "Information for Witnesses Appearing before Parliamentary Committees".

JANETTE BELVA McCLELLAND, Acting Commissioner, Commission for Children and Young People, Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, 2010, and

LOU-ANNE LIND, Policy Manager, Commission for Children and Young People, Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Ms McClelland, as time is limited today, the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and will be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Ms McCLELLAND: Most certainly.

CHAIR: Ms Lind, it may be that we need to provide some written questions to you. Are you happy to answer those questions and have those questions and answers provided for the record?

Ms LIND: Yes, of course.

CHAIR: We have already acknowledged that we have received some written answers. If I may, we will spend approximately half an hour asking a few questions. You can see who the Committee members are, so we will get straight into it. First and foremost, could you please advise in detail the steps the Commission has actually taken to implement each of the Committee's recommendations? In particular, what, if anything, was done to implement the report's key recommendation of the establishment of the interagency Steering Committee for Children, Young People and the Built Environment with the role of considering and promoting key projects and initiatives?

Ms McCLELLAND: Thank you, Chair and Committee members, and thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on where the Commission is with this work. I particularly thank you for your kind words of the acknowledgement of my contribution. They are very much appreciated, particularly in this context. Before answering your question specifically, I might just give a broad overview of where we are up to.

CHAIR: I was remiss in not asking if you wanted to do that.

Ms McCLELLAND: That is okay. I will just set the context and then I will be more than happy to answer the specifics of each of the recommendations. You would be aware that the Commission has a long history of interest in the development of child-friendly built environments. That was reflected in its submission to your inquiry in 2005. Since the release of the Committee's inquiry report in 2006, the built environment has been an ongoing priority for the Commission.

Following the release of the Committee's report in late 2006 the Commission's focus has been on a number of areas—undertaking literature reviews of child-friendly built environments, consulting with children and young people, engaging with local government and developing a set of child-friendly community indicators to assist local councils and other organisations in planning and developing their built environment. Although no additional funding has been provided, the Commission has redirected a total of \$259,000 of its own resources between 2007 and 2010 to fund this work.

A key outcome of the work has been the development and publication in June 2009 of *built4kids*, a resource for local governments and planners that reflects the thoughts and views of children and young people about what is important to them in the built environment. The publication has been disseminated widely to local councils, government departments and professional organisations. Unfortunately, the momentum in progressing this work since that time appears to have slowed down and has been affected by a combination of factors, including the departure of the longstanding, long-serving Commissioner and the departure of her replacement after only a short time and two major reviews of the Commission for Children and Young People, including a ministerial review of its functions and structure and a major review of the Working with Children check undertaken by the Auditor-General.

These reviews have now set a clear course for the Commission and its work, and it is now time to get on with the work of the Commission for Children and Young People and progress the recommendations of the Committee. To this end the following action is being taken. The Commission's Policy Manager, Lou-Anne Lind, who has accompanied me here today, and the Senior Research Officer in the Commission, have been instructed to make the built environment a priority in the Commission's policy and research plan and work program for the 2010-2011 year. The Commission will establish the interagency steering committee that was recommended by the Committee to oversee the built environment work, and invitations have already been extended to State Planning and local government agencies, who have agreed to come on to that steering committee. I am meeting with key industry bodies commencing next week.

I am meeting with the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Planning Institute of Australia on 8 April to invite them to participate in the work and meetings are being organised for me to meet with the Property Council of Australia and the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects progressing those recommendations of the Committee's work as well.

More recently Lou-Anne has met with the Department of Planning and local government to progress the specific recommendations in relation to reviewing two publications that are the responsibility of the Department of Planning and to look at ways in which we can progress the recommendations concerning the incorporation of child-friendly policies and strategies in legislative regulatory reform programs. Following on from the release of *built4kids* to local councils and consistent with the Committee's recommendation that we find out what difference this is making to children's lives, we are now working with Professor Geoff Woolcock from Griffith University to develop a survey of all 152 councils to find out the extent to which they are firstly using the *built4kids* document, what impact it is having on children in young people and what more the Commission can do to assist them in their work in this area.

We are also working with Dr Kate Bishop from the University of New South Wales who is an expert in this area to assist the steering committee, which I mentioned earlier, in its work and to also look at how we might further progress the research into causal links between built environment and children's wellbeing, and I am happy to speak in more detail about that at a later stage. Through these processes and with the input of specialist advice, I think we have now got the matter back on track and I feel confident that we can be in a position to have addressed all the recommendations by June 2011, so that is setting the scene for you. It has been a significant piece of work. Your questions and your interest in

this area have certainly prompted some action, I do not dispute that, but I think it has been very helpful in refocusing the Commission and its work in this area.

CHAIR: Thank you. I had two questions but I think you have just done a wonderful job in answering those. There is nothing like a bit of ESP, so I will hand straight over to Kayee, who indicated she has some questions too.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: I think you have answered part of what I was going to ask you also. You mentioned that \$259,000 was redirected. Can you briefly outline what that money went towards? The Committee specifically recommended that funding for the Commission be reviewed to ensure that it was adequately resourced. Why did the Commission not advise of difficulties with funding in relation to doing that work?

Ms McCLELLAND: If I can answer the first part first—the \$259,000 is broken down as follows: \$66,000 in 2007-08 for staffing costs and the development of the indicator framework that was incorporated in *built4kids*; \$95,000 in 2008-09 for staffing costs and the production and promotion of *built4kids* and \$98,000 in 2009-10 for staffing costs, research and follow-up of the Committee's recommendations. That is the full amount over that period. I am advised that the Commission did seek additional funding on two occasions but unfortunately without success. I am also advised that the former Commissioner did allude to this on two occasions when she appeared before the Committee; one, I understand, was in October 2007 and on that occasion I am told specific reference was made as to why the steering committee had not been established at that stage because of funding and I am advised that a further statement was made in May 2009, so that is the situation there.

In the current climate the likelihood of our getting additional funding for this project, I think, is slim, particularly as we also have a number of significant recommendations from the Auditor-General's report relating to compliance monitoring and education of employers, volunteers and self-employed persons. We have looked at our financial situation and are committed to continuing to resource this project, which will require some funding for further research and staffing resources to progress the recommendations, but I feel confident that we can do that by redirecting some resources from within the Commission's current allocation of funds.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: When you seek the funding, you make a request through the Treasurer, do you? Is that the machinery?

Ms McCLELLAND: The funding process varies from year to year and I am advised that in the two financial years that the Commission was seeking funding the approach by Treasury in those years was to invite selected agencies to make bids for additional resources. If you did not get an invitation, you did not get a look in. In one of those years that request certainly did not come to us and it preceded the release of your Committee's report. In the following year the invitation was not forthcoming.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: In other words, it is difficult to get the extra funding the way the system is set up.

Ms McCLELLAND: It is very difficult and, as I said, I think the realistic position for the Commission is to assume that the additional funding will not be forthcoming. That is not to say that we cannot try again, but I do not think we can not proceed. I think we have

managed to find some funding in the years to date. It is now a question of maintaining that funding, if not at an enhanced level, to progress this work.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: If we can just follow through on that, as I understand it, and we have discussed this before, technically your Commission has two separate roles. The first role, if I can call it, is to ensure certification for appropriate persons to be employed within areas that involve young children and the second area is to assist young children with various matters for their wellbeing. Do I understand what you are saying is that because of the new recommendations and continued additional requirements for the certification process that is eating up a lot of your funding?

Ms McCLELLAND: No. I should make it clear. The Commission has been provided with additional funding for the certification processes, particularly in the light of the Wood inquiry and the recommendations of that inquiry that the categories of people who need to be checked has increased and particularly the changes in relation to checking of volunteers. The Commission has received additional funding for those additional checks, and the Commission has also received additional funding for a new technology information system to process those checks. My point is that, having received that additional funding, to receive additional funding for the other side of the work—

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: For part two it's creating a problem.

Ms McCLELLAND: I am not saying it is impossible but I think we have to be realistic in that context.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: So the fact that you have these two separate arms, my next question, I think you have answered it, is the fact that you received the additional funding for arm number one it is almost as if "you got your turn, you got your additional funding, you cannot receive it for part two, looking after the children". Are they being disadvantaged in a way because your Commission seems to be so focussed, if I can use that word, on the monitoring and certification side? Are the kids missing out?

Ms McCLELLAND: I do not believe they are and for these reasons. When I undertook the review of the functions and structure of the Commission it is very clear that the Commission needs to have a strong policy and research function. In fact, we recommended that those two functions be not only retained but more closely integrated so that the policy was supported by robust research and that there was a greater linkage between the work of those two areas. Michael Eyres, who was the co-reviewer, and I made strong recommendations about the retention of those functions. My view is, though, that there needs to be some refocusing of the priorities of those areas to focus on some key issues, rather than trying to spread the net so widely that you do not get the impact, and this provides an opportunity to start to do that.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: You mentioned earlier in your response that the Commission was going to commence its monitoring function and determine how the *built4kids* resource would be properly used, and then of course in your opening statement you indicated what is happening with that. Can you explain how you propose to undertake the monitoring? What are the steps that will be involved either by you or by Ms Lind?

Ms McCLELLAND: There are a couple of parts to this, and if I look at your Committee recommendations, and particularly given the Commission's focus to date on developing the *built4kids* resource, which had a number of indicators to be used by local government in informing their planning and provision of environments for children. The first thing we want to do is to follow up—that has been distributed to all local councils—the first thing we want to do is to find out how it is being used, in what way, and is there anything we can learn from that. What impact, if any, is it making on children? Do they have any data to inform us? Also, in what ways can the Commission further support local councils in progressing this work? That relates to one of your other recommendations relating to a series of seminars. There have been a few seminars that the Commission has conducted—not very many but nonetheless they have been conducted. We are having a look at that recommendation—and this comes back to your terms of reference that you outlined in your introductory remarks—we are having a look at the extent to which it is still feasible with our limited resources to conduct a wide number of seminars throughout the state. That is very resource intensive, so firstly what we want to do is to find out from local councils the areas that they want to focus on.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: How do you do that? Do you send them out a survey that you ask everyone to answer and then someone collates the information?

Ms McCLELLAND: Yes, that is the plan. In relation to the seminars, we are also exploring the opportunity of doing some online seminars, using modern technology, having some modules and having the opportunity for some interactive engagement. So that is also part of the work that Dr Bishop and Professor Woolcock will help us with as well.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: We talk about additional funding, and that is all lovely. Can you give us a figure? Realistically, if you have the magic ball or the magic wand and you wanted to implement this, get it up and running as soon as possible and really be able to put everything behind it, what sort of additional funding do you need? If you cannot answer that today, I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms McCLELLAND: I think I should take that on notice because particularly when I am exploring this area of research the funding varies quite widely. I am exploring a range of options that would set us in the right direction, so I would prefer to take that on notice if that is okay with you.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: On that basis, you might indicate—and I am only using this as an example—that \$500,000 extra would allow you to do this within this time frame, \$1 million would allow you to do the following extra within this time frame. If you could give us that sort of scenario it would be interesting for us as a Committee to know exactly how much money is needed to move it to certain stages.

Ms McCLELLAND: Okay. I am more than happy to do that.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I am interested in the *built4kids* resource and its relationship with local government. Do you see it primarily informing their social plan or do you see it informing their actual planning instruments, or both?

Ms McCLELLAND: Both. The work leading to *built4kids* built on some work that the Commission had done in looking at children's wellbeing and in surveying, I think it was

about 126 children about what is important to them. Both from the physical side of the built environment but also what it means to them in terms of their social interaction with their community, their friends, their lifestyle, their exercise regime or lack of, so all of those factors. Those indicators cover a wide range of views of children, and so we would hope that it influences both aspects.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Just to clarify, you see it having a role in informing councils when they are developing their planning controls that they should have a provision or section in there that deals with the issues raised in *built4kids*. So a development application gets submitted and it gets tested against a planning control that specifies that there be a specific program or service for children.

Ms McCLELLAND: It actually starts earlier than that. The *built4kids* publication encourages local councils to engage with children and young people in developing its planning regime and framework, and then using that participation to have provisions that would meet those objectives.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: I am really pleased that the Commission is making some positive moves on the *built4kids* environment. Are you aware of any practical outcomes of the Creating Child Friendly Cities Conference and, if so, has the Commission maintained contact with participants to see how that conference may have influenced issues around children and young people in the built environment?

Ms McCLELLAND: The former Commissioner actually spoke at that conference, and it was very shortly after the release of your report I understand, and she spoke prominently about this. There was an outcomes and directions statement produced as a result of that conference, and the urban research program at Griffith University, headed by Professor Geoff Woolcock, has taken carriage of the research relating to that, particularly the development of indicators, and he was involved in our *built4kids* indicators—that is one aspect of the conference. We maintain contact with him on a regular basis, and I have mentioned his name and number of times today as being someone who will help us progress this further. We also maintain contact with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth about a range of matters, but they were also a co-host of that conference, so we are in contact with them.

A couple of interesting findings that have come out of the work that Griffith University and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth have been doing, they have looked at the research challenges that emerge from this area and there are two points they are advising us on. They are saying there needs to be more applied research looking at the links between the built environment and its impact on children—enough of the theory, let us start looking at what is really happening. The second is that there needs to be a much better balance between the needs of the littlies, the young children, and adolescents—there needs to be a greater balance there.

The other thing that has come out of that is that the Planning Institute of Australia has produced a national position statement on the issue of child-friendly cities and has committed to four areas of action, two of which relate to publications, one includes developing a national guide on healthy spaces and places, and the other relates to a Victorian publication on the impact of built environments on people's health. They are important pieces of work that have come out of there as well.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Earlier you mentioned about the seminars. We had the impression that there had not been many, if any. You said there have been "some". Was it, one, two—

Ms McCLELLAND: There were three specific seminars, and I have the details here. The three seminars were held in August 2009. One was the National Investment for the Early Years, New South Wales group, held on 6 August 2009. Another one was for Lake Macquarie Council planning staff on 21 August 2009. Another was for members of the local council child-friendly cities network in August 2009. As well as that there have been some discussions with local councils but they are the three main seminars.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: It is very important that the New South Wales legislation cater for the child-friendly planning principles. There seems to have been a bit of a delay or lack of action in relating those principles to the Department of Planning. I understand you are seeking advice but there seems to have been some sort of a delay in moving more promptly in that area—that could be again with all the changes?

Ms McCLELLAND: The analysis that we have done since receiving your questions would suggest there was some communication with the Department of Planning in 2007 and 2008 and not much happened as a result of that, and quite frankly there has not been a lot of follow-up action. We have now got that back on track. Lou-Anne Lind has been meeting with the manager of Centres and Urban Renewal at the Department of Planning. They have agreed to come on to the steering committee. They have agreed to have a look at their publications in the light of our *built4kids* and the Committee's recommendations. They have also agreed to work with us to look at how they can incorporate child-friendly planning principles into planning processes and policies. A further area where they have agreed to assist the Commission is in relation to looking at incorporating child-friendly principles in planning for new growth areas, which was another of your recommendations that focused specifically on the Growth Commission. That function is now located within the Department of Planning and the dialogue that is now occurring has that on the work plan as well.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: That may mean some legislation or amendments to give it some weight?

Ms McCLELLAND: I am not an expert in planning so I would not want to commit the Government or the Planning Department to anything that is outside what is capable. The feedback I have received is that you are probably going to get more traction through incorporation in policy regulatory frameworks than necessarily legislation, but that is really beyond my area of expertise.

CHAIR: It is probable that we will send you some further questions in writing and your response to those would certainly be appreciated.

Ms McCLELLAND: Thank you and good luck in your work.

(The witnesses withdrew)

GALINA MARY LAURIE, Acting Manager, Estates Strategy Unit, Housing New South Wales, Liverpool Road, Ashfield,

STEPHEN JOHN McINTYRE, Executive Director, Assets Division, Housing New South Wales, Liverpool Road, Ashfield, and

NADA NASSER, Director, Business Strategy, Housing New South Wales, Liverpool Road, Ashfield, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: It is probable that Committee members will not get through the list of questions in the short time available to them. Are you prepared to answer any written questions that the Committee sends to you?

Mr McIntyre: Absolutely. That is not a problem at all.

CHAIR: Do you want to make an opening statement?

Mr McIntyre: I do. I am not sure whether it is too long. We have attempted to address some of the issues at least thematically which I thought might be more helpful, and if the Committee wants to dig into the detail or any individual questions we can do that today or whenever. Thank you for the opportunity for us to appear. This is clearly a critical issue and the opportunity to progress and talk about how Housing NSW is addressing the challenges facing young people and children living in social housing in New South Wales is important to us. Nada Nasser has considerable experience in developing youth strategies and, indeed, the Housing NSW Youth Action Plan, and that is a particular perspective she can bring to today's discussion. Equally, Galina Laurie is involved in community regeneration activities.

Young people, as you may well appreciate, are a key client group for Housing NSW. One fifth of public housing residents are aged 12 and 24 years. As at June 2009, 1.9 per cent of all leaseholders in public housing and 6.3 per cent of all leaseholders in community housing were aged between 16 and 24 years. Also, young people are significantly affected by homelessness. As at the 2006 Census, 28 per cent of homeless people in New South Wales were aged 12 to 24 years of age. In 2007-08 young people were the largest single group of Supported Accommodation Assistance Program [SAAP] users. 22.7 per cent of service users were aged 15 to 19 years and 13.7 per cent were aged 20 to 24 years.

Housing NSW is committed to providing children and young people with suitable and safe housing and building communities which support young people to develop their potential. I note that Housing NSW Design Requirements actually reflect a number of the principles contained in the *built4kids* guidelines which the Committee was just discussing. Further, it is our intention in Housing to have a closer look at those guidelines to see if we can more fully reflect some of those principles the next time we undertake a full review of our own design requirements. Housing NSW is also committed to engaging with and listening to young people about their experiences and needs, and to responding to these through a range of housing services and community engagement strategies.

In 2008 Housing NSW completed a draft Housing NSW Youth Action Plan as part of a suite of client segment strategies. While the plan is still in draft form, Housing NSW implemented a number of key priorities from 2006 to 2009 that were supported through

consultation with key stakeholders. These initiatives include: the Links to Leadership Program, the Youth Scholarships Program, the Housing NSW Young People Awards and a range of other youth engagement initiatives through the Building Stronger Communities Program. Housing NSW partnered with other agencies in a number of the initiatives to ensure that young people can access support when needed. I have a number of examples but one is Partnering with Community Services on the Young People Leaving Care trial which helps young people exiting care to secure and sustain independent living. We can also provide other examples.

Recently, the plan was revised to reflect new Government priorities under the Homelessness Action Plan, the State Plan and the Keep Them Safe reform. A final Youth Action Plan covering the period 2010-14 is subject to final departmental and Ministerial approval. The Plan has five themes aimed at ensuring: choices in housing products and services, support available when needed, pathways to address homelessness, voices of young people in future planning and connections to people and places. Housing NSW is also committed to strengthening child wellbeing and is working with a range of New South Wales Government agencies on the implementation of Keep Them Safe. Furthermore, Housing NSW collaborates on a range of across agency initiatives designed to protect and enhance the wellbeing of children.

Housing NSW is committed to building stronger communities and opportunities for young people living in social housing through a range of community engagement and capacity building initiatives. Since making its submission to the 2006 inquiry, where Housing NSW flagged the development of a new community regeneration strategy aimed at improving outcomes for people living in priority areas to help break the cycle of disadvantage, Housing NSW has implemented such an initiative. The Building Stronger Communities Program is being rolled out across seven priority locations, comprising 22 estate areas. It includes: Killarney Vale, Bateau Bay, Tumby Umbi on the Central Coast, Mt Druitt, Macquarie Fields, Claymore, Orange, Bathurst, Dubbo and Wagga Wagga. The initiative seeks to improve the physical environment, contribute to more positive social environments, provide better access to services and opportunities, and enable more social housing residents to access employment and training.

Young people have been engaged in the community regeneration planning process as well as decisions regarding built environment projects. For example, in Macquarie Fields in south-west Sydney, young people were involved in identifying the priorities for the location through a community visioning process. There have been many physical improvements funded as part of Building Stronger Communities, which have been of particular benefit to children, young people and their families. For example, in Bateau Bay, concerns with community safety have been addressed by \$250,000 worth of improvements to street lighting. Other major works include a new children's playground and in Dubbo, Lunar Park has had a \$200,000 upgrade.

Housing NSW is also undertaking major redevelopments in several disadvantaged estates. The purpose of these redevelopments is to create mixed communities and more positive social environments, which deliver outcomes for the young people living in those areas. One example is the Minto renewal project which involves the staged redevelopment of approximately 1,000 properties in the Minto public housing area in Sydney's south west, under a partnership between Housing NSW, Campbelltown City Council and Landcom. The project aims to renew Minto so that it looks like neighbouring suburbs with a mix of public and private housing. It is really indiscernible picking out the public housing from the private

housing. Importantly, the project will provide \$10 million worth of community facilities, including six new parks and a \$1.5 million community centre and childcare facilities. The Minto renewal project has a strong focus on community engagement and capacity building, and several activities have involved children and young people. In conclusion, I reiterate how pleased Housing NSW is to have the opportunity to update the Committee and we look forward to the outcomes of the inquiry.

CHAIR: What impact has the Housing for Health Program on Aboriginal communities?

Mr McINTYRE: The Housing for Health Program is actually implemented through the Department of Health rather than Housing NSW and we feel that representatives from Health would be better placed to respond to this particular question.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Going back to your opening statement, you indicated—and it was good to hear—that funding is being used to better improve the built environment with parks and so on. How do you balance the need for additional housing for the many people on the waiting list with using funding to improve what is already there? Is there a greater need to improve what is there for those who already live in the accommodation, such as young children, as opposed to using the money to acquire additional housing for those on the waiting lists?

Mr McINTYRE: It is a balancing act. It is at the core of our strategy, to be honest. We have an overriding responsibility to make sure that our dwellings are appropriately maintained and that they are safe and habitable for all the people who live in them, whether they are children, seniors or any of our client base. Obviously, managing our resources and making those decisions are critical. In that context, we tend to focus on making sure that our property portfolio is realigned to best meet our client requirements. That involves change in geographic location and bedroom mix. We have been working on that program now for some years. The boost that we have received in recent times through the Nation Building Program has obviously provided us with a tremendous opportunity to add considerable numbers of stock to the social housing portfolio, noting that the majority of housing will go over to community housing providers, with a small number being retained by the Aboriginal Housing Office and Housing New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy for you to take my following questions on notice, if you need to. Are you able to indicate how many young persons would be currently on a waiting list for housing, if there is such a waiting list?

Mr McINTYRE: We would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I am happy for you to do that. The figure that has been going around for some time is approximately 30,000-plus on the waiting list. How many would be children compared to adults? Could you take that on notice?

Mr McINTYRE: Yes.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Is there any indication of what amount of funding would be needed to seriously reduce that waiting list? If you had a magic wand and you could take all the funding you needed, what funding are you looking at to be able to progress and move

forward, especially having regard to what you said earlier about all the additional housing that is being built via the Federal Government grants?

Mr McINTYRE: What I would say is this, we provide housing assistance through a range of mechanisms. For some people public housing or community housing is the best outcome. For others it might be assistance to get into the private rental market through various other subsidies. We use a combination of housing and non-housing approaches to try to provide support to people with housing assistance needs. We will give you a fuller answer and take that on notice. It is not a straightforward matter of just using the number on the waiting list.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: That is why I pre-empted my questions by saying you could take them on notice. The statistics on the number of homeless children are frightening, especially when we hear about homeless children the age of 12. Are you able to indicate the reason for it? It is not just an issue of a lack of housing. There may be other fundamental issues that create a figure of that nature.

Ms LAURIE: We probably could give a fuller answer taking it on notice. My sense is that for children and young people the key cause of homelessness is family breakdown.

CHAIR: When Housing New South Wales property is transferred to community housing, what mechanism is used? Is it purchased by the community housing groups or does a lease apply? Basically, what is the mechanism to restate that relationship or ownership?

Mr McINTYRE: Traditionally the approach has been short-term leasing to the community housing providers and we have retained ownership of the properties. In addition, community housing providers have leased additional properties to meet their needs. Of more recent times the Government has made a decision to transfer the title of a number of properties to community housing providers with the intention of giving them an asset base that they can leverage to help grow their stock.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: One of the challenges for children and young people in disadvantaged communities, that is, those who are in private accommodation but qualify for public housing or social housing, is that overcrowding affects their ability to study, socialise and so on. They are approved for public housing but they cannot get in because there is not sufficient stock for families. You can take this question on notice. What percentage of new dwellings constructed by Housing New South Wales accommodate families with children, that is, dwellings of three bedrooms or more?

Mr McINTYRE: We will give you a fuller answer on that. What I can say is that our demographics are quite clear. The traditional family unit has been declining for some time as a key focus area. Seniors, whether couples or singles, are our fastest growing group that need our support through social housing. There is a range of others, such as single people, et cetera. It is complex. What it means though in terms of our portfolio is that we have unmet demand for one- and two-bedroom accommodation—that is our primary focus—and we tend to have, in a relative sense, an oversupply of three-bedroom accommodation. As you get to very large families, particularly Indigenous families, we could probably do with a little bit more of four- and five-bedroom properties as well.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Speaking from my own experience in my electorate, families with three, four, five or more children struggle enormously on the waiting list to get approval for an offer of accommodation. I am curious as to what percentage of your accommodation is available or has been constructed for them?

Mr McINTYRE: There would be a very considerable amount at the moment that would suit them. As we would all acknowledge, there are severe affordability problems at the moment in a number of the markets, which is unfortunate. We wish we could service more people. We have criteria for eligibility and we have a process to allocate in a particular priority order.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: In your opening statement you spoke about Building Stronger Communities. I understand that a review was scheduled for January 2010 in relation to Building Stronger Communities. Are you able to advise the Committee of the findings of that review?

Ms LAURIE: Housing New South Wales is currently considering a draft report from that review, which was undertaken in January and February of this year. The review focused mainly on how the initiative has been implemented rather than on the outcomes achieved because it is still too early to tell the outcomes. The review we conducted is intended to guide managed exit and sustainability strategies to ensure that we can smoothly transition from the funded initiative when the funding ceases at the end of this calendar year. In addition to that review, we will also shortly let a tender for the final evaluation, which is due to report in June of next year. That will focus on the outcomes achieved against the key result areas of the initiative. It will measure progress against baseline data, which was collected at the commencement of the initiative.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: You may not have this information at the moment. It may be information that you will have down the track. In terms of Building Stronger Communities and community regeneration plans, have you any evidence in relation to those plans improving the built environment for children and young people?

Ms LAURIE: Again, in terms of outcomes I do not know that we can tell you yet. In each of the priority locations under Building Stronger Communities [BSC], regeneration partnership plans have been developed in conjunction with local residents and other stakeholders who are there. The plans articulate the priorities that the community thinks need to be addressed, as well as ones that will deliver on the broader outcome areas that we are trying to achieve under BSC.

Each plan has a component, which focuses on initiatives that will improve the physical environment. For instance, the needs of children and young people might be taken into account, as Stephen said earlier, through their involvement in identifying the priorities: they say what they think is good or not so good about their community and how that might change. Then there are priority projects such as upgrading parks and playgrounds, which directly improve, I guess, recreational options for children, young people and their families. Also in each location community hubs have been either established or augmented. These can provide places where young people might meet or where service providers might come and deliver services to young people from within that community rather than having to go outside the community.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Are children and young people considered to be stakeholders in some of these discussions? Perhaps the issue may be about the need for parks and so on and for a community centre to provide some programs, but are children and young people considered to be specific stakeholders in any project that goes through?

Ms LAURIE: I think they very much are and I think there are specific activities arranged. It goes according to priority location. Each plan reflects the very local nature of what is going on in a particular place, but with strategies there are particular ways of engaging with young people to make sure their views are captured. They are absolutely considered to be stakeholders.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Are you in contact with the Commission for Children and Young People when engaging children and young people?

Ms NASSER: We work quite actively with the Commission for Children and Young People. It is a member of the Housing and Human Services senior officers group. The Commission participates regularly in the process around decision-making in housing policy and programs. We also partner with it on a number of strategies where we are partners with other agencies. For example, currently there is a partnership with Ageing Disability and Home Care with young carers where the Commission for Children and Young People, Housing NSW, and a number of other agencies are partnering. The Commission also provided advice on the Youth Action Plan on ways to consult young people as well as having input into the plan itself.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: In its submission to the 2006 built environment inquiry the Department of Housing mentioned the young people's housing access strategy 2006-2010 and the antisocial behaviour strategy project, one in which I am particularly interested. What is the current status of those projects?

Ms NASSER: As Stephen said in his opening, we developed a draft Youth Action Plan, which we were implementing as it was in draft form. We have been doing so for the last three or four years. We implemented a number of initiatives resulting out of priorities that were identified as priorities in the consultation process. My colleague Stephen mentioned a number of those in his statement. There were a couple of others that I can add. For example, the Links to Leadership program was a leadership initiative where we brought young people from around the state in social housing to look at building their leadership capacity. We also gave them the opportunity to contribute to the Youth Action Plan. It was also promoting a positive approach and their positive contribution as young people in social housing. There is also the Youth Scholarship Program. You may have recently seen *Australian Story*, *ABC Television* which highlighted one of the young people who received a youth scholarship, Lachlan McCarthy, who talked about the value of that program to him continuing his education.

We also partnered with a number of other agencies on the Young People Leaving Care project to help young people who are exiting community services care to secure and sustain their tenancies in social housing. We worked also with other agencies, for example, Juvenile Justice, about young people leaving juvenile detention facilities or those at risk of homelessness or at risk of entering those facilities. We worked with them on providing housing where other agencies provided the support to help them sustain those tenancies.

Recently we revised the plan to take into account recent reforms around homelessness, Keep Them Safe and other reforms. The plan currently is being considered by Government.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Stephen, you mentioned the regeneration in Macquarie Fields and Dubbo. That regeneration in fact involves the demolition of many buildings because of their poor quality—the area is almost like a slum. Some families, especially single mothers with children, are distressed as to where they go during that process. How do you cater for them?

Mr McINTYRE: On any of our projects we really have a close look at the options to achieve the outcomes. We are about trying to achieve outcomes that are best for the community and for our tenants who require our housing. Generally we go through quite an extensive options appraisal process. As we are forming our view about what we want to do, whether it is in those locations or anywhere else, obviously consultation with the community and with tenants is part of that process. There is no question that some people find this a confronting or traumatic experience. If it has been a place in which you have been living for a period of time, that is natural and we do not deny that. But we need to balance, I guess, the requirements of individual people who might have a particular affiliation with an area with the need to try to improve community social outcomes. It is a balancing act. We try to weigh that up in coming up with a decision. Certainly, where it is possible to rehouse people back in an area after regeneration activity, we can take those requests into consideration. Other people are happy to relocate perhaps to a nearby area where they are still close to other family, friends or facilities with which they have become acquainted. There is a balancing involved in that, but we are certainly sensitive to those issues.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Are those families rehoused temporarily?

Mr McINTYRE: Yes. If we have a major renewal or regeneration program, depending on the nature of the program, and we need to demolish houses as part of that program, certainly we would rehouse them. There is no question about that. We have a very clear policy around that. We would attempt to work with those individuals and families to try to best meet their needs.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: How successful has Housing New South Wales been in collaborating with the Premier's office et cetera to get some action on the Keep Them Safe five-year action plan?

Ms NASSER: Housing New South Wales has been an active partner in the Keep Them Safe reform. We are one of the key agencies that has established, through the Department of Human Services, a child wellbeing unit. That unit is working on early identification of risk so that we can respond and refer children and families to support services as well as to the helpline where the risk is significant. We have worked also in partnership with other agencies on a range of responses to improve our response to child wellbeing. For example, young people leaving care is one of the priorities that came out of the Wood Commission that is a priority project for Housing. We work on a range of initiatives around responding to children who are caught up in a domestic violence situation. We work on a range of initiatives that support that reform and we are key partners with Premier and Cabinet as well as a number of other agencies.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: You have mentioned already that you seek advice and work in with the Commission for Children and Young People. The answers the Committee has heard today certainly indicate that once again the Department of Housing does a lot more than just house people—I certainly speak from experience in my electorate. Could the Department benefit from increased input from the Commission for Children and Young People in order to develop the current range of programs for children and young people in housing?

Ms NASSER: We have quite an active relationship with the Commission. We would certainly welcome more input as appropriate in relation to the various policies where it can contribute.

Mr McINTYRE: It is not directly on the point, but that question triggered a thought with regard to an earlier question about large families and the difficulty of housing them. It is worth restating and picking up on the theme that we have a range of programs and services. I fleetingly mentioned private rental assistance, but things like our Rent Start program support a large number of families each year to get into private rental accommodation. Being on the waiting list for public housing is one option for families in need. However, we encourage all of those families and individuals to talk to us about whether other products or services might be able support them in the short term or be an alternative to public housing.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your valuable contribution. We could probably go on for much longer. At some stage I would like to discuss the current housing stimulus projects, the unfortunate public reaction that has been generated and what we might do to better educate the public. I am sure they would be much more sympathetic if they were privy to some of the facts and figures that you have explained today. Thank you for your contribution. We will provide written questions and we would very much appreciate your replies.

Mr McINTYRE: We welcome the work of the inquiry, so thank you very much for the opportunity to appear.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(Short adjournment)

THOMAS LLOYD GELLIBRAND, Deputy Director-General, Plan Making and Urban Renewal, Department of Planning, 23-33 Bridge Street, Sydney, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Because our time is limited today the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and will be made public. Would you be happy to provide written responses to any further questions?

Mr GELLIBRAND: Yes, I would.

CHAIR: We have already received some written answers from you. We can start questions by asking if you have any prepared notes or an introductory contribution that you would like to make?

Mr GELLIBRAND: I have a couple of introductory comments I would like to make, but of course I am available for questions. The Department of Planning is responsible for setting a broad strategic direction for planning across New South Wales as well as metropolitan Sydney. In doing so, we involve the community extensively in the development of those plans and related policies. We are responsible for setting the policies and strategic directions. We also assess some major development applications in New South Wales. We manage the State's heritage as well.

In some cases we prepare very specific and detailed local planning controls for certain areas. Whilst we have developed specific controls with some sectors of the community—seniors and people with a disability is one example of that—we do not generally focus on the specific elements of the community in our work. However, we are working with the Commission in relation to children, and that is an emerging relationship. It is obviously one that will provide us with significant benefit because the Commission provides us with a conduit, which we really do not have at the moment, to a particular sector in the community. We are looking forward to that relationship as it develops.

Our expectation will be that the Commission can communicate to us about specific requirements of children in a particular area, or specific requirements of children generally. Where we are involved in doing more detailed planning work, we can articulate that into our plans. Even though the Department plays a very important role in planning across New South Wales, there is a very, very important role for local government in planning specifically for sectors of our community. They do that across New South Wales. They utilise things such as local environmental plans, development control plans, contribution plans and social plans. I think they do quite a good job. That is my introduction. I will be happy to answer questions.

CHAIR: What interaction has the Department of Planning had with the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People concerning built environment planning? Are you aware of the Commission's child-friendly community indicators? If so, how does the Department incorporate them into strategic planning decisions?

Mr GELLIBRAND: In terms of the interaction with staff from the Commission, there was some interaction, I understand, following this Committee's hearings back in 2006. The people who would have been involved in those discussions are not with the Department anymore. Since that time the most recent discussions have occurred over the past weeks or

past months with Lou-Anne Lind and others in the Commission. We have been talking about some of the documents, some of their goals and objectives, and what the Department can do to take those on board in terms of its work.

The Commission has indicated to us that they are setting up a steering committee. We have indicated that we would be more than happy to participate and can see significant benefit in participating in that committee. We are also aware of the *built4kids* document. We have reviewed it. We have identified that there are key indicators in the document that can help to inform planning, which is good. We have also indicated that we will look at using that document almost as a filter for the policies that we already have. We look at our policies and we almost pour them through that document and ask ourselves whether there are specific things that we need to do to change some of our policies. Not all the policies are relevant. Aircraft noise is perhaps slightly less relevant, and things like that. But where it is relevant, we will look at reflecting the *built4kids* indicators.

In our discussions with the Commission we have also talked about the documents we have published in the past that specifically relate to young people. We have indicated that we are more than happy to have those documents reviewed in consultation with the Commission and, where necessary, if they do require amendment, we would be more than happy to commence that process.

CHAIR: It would appear that it is probable that the communication has to be strengthened in that area. We recently completed an inquiry into children aged 9 to 14 years. It was quite a lengthy inquiry and set recommendations. My recollection is that there are some planning matters there as well, so we might encourage the Commission to liaise with you to see what synergies there are there, and certainly any recommendations that might come as a result.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Earlier you referred to updating some of your publications regarding children. The Committee was unable to locate any document on the Department's website that relates specifically to children. Are there such documents?

Mr GELLIBRAND: There are documents that exist. They might not exist on the website, so it is a matter of putting them on. Some of the documents were produced several years ago and they have not been uploaded. We are able to do that, though.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: There are five or six, or 10, documents?

Mr GELLIBRAND: There are two, and I brought them with me today. The most specific document is entitled "*Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind*", and that was published in 1999. That is obviously some years ago, but it is still a very contemporary document. For its time the document was far reaching; it is a very good one, and I think it is still very current. That is something we want to discuss with the Commission. We can certainly make that document available, as well as look at putting it on our website.

The other document is entitled "*Child Friendly Environments*". The document was also produced by the then Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and its publication date was 1981. Again, it is a very useful source document, especially for local government when they are doing their more detailed planning.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: There has been a proposal for the mandatory completion of child impact statements in regard to all major development proposals in New South Wales. Does the Department have a policy on that proposal yet?

Mr GELLIBRAND: We do not have a specific policy on it. With major proposals that the Department of Planning is responsible for assessing, the Director-General issues specific requirements. Those requirements are developed through consultation across Government, within government agencies: most generally, the Roads and Traffic Authority, the Department of Agriculture, Investment & Industry, and organisations such as that, but there is also consultation with the Department of Housing, the Department of Community Services, et cetera. The Director-General's requirements seek to impose on proponents specific things that must be taken into account in developing their proposals. That is occurring, and that is quite an effective way of addressing a lot of the issues because we are getting the information from the experts.

Issues concerning young people are not always relevant with some of these major development applications. Many of the applications we are involved in assessing involve coalmines in remote locations, the construction of power lines, easements or windfarms. There may be very limited community in those areas and many of the impacts tend to be focused on environmental impacts—for example, water quality, air quality, and transport movement. Imposing a blanket requirement for child impact statements is not necessarily relevant to a large number of the applications that the Department would see. It would have relevance in some cases. If it were uniformly applied, it could involve another step for industry to respond to that is not always necessary and could impose costs on those developers unnecessarily.

There are good examples of where the impact on young people is taken into consideration. The Government recently made a decision to refuse a major sandmining project on the Central Coast because of the significant potential impact on a school. It was thought inappropriate that that development should happen in that location, very much because of its potential impacts on young people.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: On their health?

Mr GELLIBRAND: On their health, and on their ability to learn because of potential interruptions with the school environment.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: There have been some problems with children falling from windows in high-rise buildings. Has that been part of your consideration with regard to the impact of buildings on children?

Mr GELLIBRAND: The controls around buildings are incorporated into many different documents. There is the Building Code of Australia, and there are specific building codes within each of the councils. The Department's role is not as close as that of local government. I would have to take on notice the question about anything specific we have done over the last six months—which is probably the period you are thinking about in terms of children falling from windows. I am more than happy to do that.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: I can relate to the Somersby sandmining proposal: it is in my electorate of Gosford. How is the Department influencing new developments, particularly

those in Sydney's new growth areas, to achieve positive built environment outcomes for children and young people?

Mr GELLIBRAND: The Department of Planning, as I mentioned in my introduction, does play a role in doing the detailed planning for some areas—not everywhere in New South Wales, but in some areas it does have that hands-on role. The area you mentioned is one of those areas. The northwest and southwest growth centres of Sydney are where the bulk of greenfields development will happen in Sydney over the next 25-odd years. In those areas the Department of Planning is now responsible for generating detailed precinct plans. It was done by the growth centres, which was part of the planning administration, but now the growth centres are purely within the overall Department of Planning.

In those areas we establish teams that look at the precinct plan. They generate the land-use plans, which show where different activities occur—such as roads, schools, health, open space, residential areas, et cetera. They do that in consultation with the relevant local council. They develop development control plans and contribution plans to ensure that those communities are provided with a high level of amenity. There is a high level of involvement with government agencies. The Growth Centres Commission is responsible for coordinating with the government agencies for the provision of the required public assets. That means working with the government agency. Say it is the Department of School Education. They have thresholds for the provision of schools, and we give them our data on what we think the growth profile is going to look like. There is a conversation about that, and then when they are preparing their total asset management plans, which are an important part of the process for bidding for Treasury funds, we ask them to put our requirements for schools into those plans. That then goes to Treasury, and the funding follows.

We have a very detailed involvement in the capital planning for the relevant state agencies and a very detailed involvement with local government. We sponsor people within the local council to help us with the local planning. We do not impose a plan on the council; we give them money to employ their own person, whom we deal with, and they help us with the exhibition of material.

There are some great examples in terms of the growth centres, which I could elaborate on if you want me to. Oran Park has recently been publicly opened; there are over 30 kilometres of cycleways planned there that are incorporated into open space areas; cultural facilities; and adjoining schools with houses. There are planned connections between Oran Park and Campbelltown. People say that is a terribly long distance, but it is a great distance to ride. A lot of close work was undertaken with the Department of Health in looking at obesity within the population and coming up with new residential areas that provide for a lot of active opportunities for people. We are also looking at making sure that we have enough land zoned for employment and industrial-type activities so that we can get people working closer to home.

That is a good example of the Department of Planning joining State Plan initiatives all the way through to local planning on the ground. There is an important initiative within the State Plan that is focused on getting jobs closer to home and targets have been given to the Department of Planning so that wherever possible we are trying to locate jobs close to these new residential areas.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Article 12 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires parties to the convention to ensure that a child is capable of

forming his or her own views and has the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, and that the views of the child are given due weight. The Department may be helped along the way with the steering committee that is being set up with the Commission for Children and Young People, but does the Department see children and young people being a group of stakeholders perhaps separate from some other groups? You just spoke about new developments and children and young people being involved in consideration of what sort of recreational areas there are, how they will fit together with work and home, and the types of facilities. This is particularly current for this Committee because of the inquiry we just completed about children in the middle years. Can the Department look at children and young people being a separate group of stakeholders when it is considering some of the quite massive developments in new growth areas and so on?

Mr GELLIBRAND: The short answer is yes. I would like to address the detail in two ways, the first of which is the spatial way. The Metropolitan Strategy provides the overall direction for growth in Sydney. It has a longstanding policy position that 70 per cent of the growth will happen in established areas and 30 per cent in greenfield areas. Planning for the greenfield areas is quite interesting because we are talking about converting very large dairy farms into new suburbs, so when you go to consult there is actually no-one there. We still work with councils and we put things on exhibition but the people you are consulting are often the ones who are selling and moving out. They are not the people who are moving in, so there often is not an extant community to mine information from. We tend to get representations from the established stakeholders—they are the departments, they could be housing groups, transport for action groups and people like that. Often the specific community groups, one of which would be young people, do not exist. That is not to say that we do not try to consult, but it is quite different because rural lands are being converted into residential lands. We still have an extensive consultation regime that we follow.

In the established areas, where the bulk of development is going to occur, there is a much greater opportunity and perhaps a greater need for consultation with young people. That is where I think the Commission really comes into its own. As an organisation we could specifically consult with young people. I am not sure how effective it would be and if we were to do that I would question the fact that we might need also to consult ethnic groups and perhaps other age groups. I am not sure how effective we would be at doing that. With the established areas we are taking existing suburbs, and in some cases industrial land and vacant government land, and converting it into renewed urban areas, generally with a higher density. As these densities go up the imperative for young people to have places to recreate actively and passively in a safe fashion becomes more important because there are a lot more people around. In those cases we will have a community we can talk to, so we can consult.

If we consult broadly we will not always elicit responses from young people because it is a formal process and is perhaps not the domain of young people. We still consult schools and do things like that but it is up to the school to fire up the children to participate. I see a really important role for the Department and the Commission to work together so that when we are looking at urban renewal opportunities in an area we can ally our work with theirs and ask them to do some of that engagement for us and give us the general requirements of young people in an urban environment. Perhaps we can charge them or resource them—I would not commit to that this morning—but work with them so they can give us specific responses about what particular people in that community would like to see. We are talking about very detailed plans about how the urban environment is going to change; where new buildings will go and how they touch the ground; what is happening to

the schools and whether they will be bigger or smaller and easier to get to; how people get to public transport areas, be they railway stations or strategic bus corridors, and how they do it safely and throughout the day; and how we can have active facilities for youth without creating a whole lot of problems for people who do not want to hear skateboard wheels and who do not want to see bicycles lying on the ground. There is a very important role for the Commission and the Department to make sure we are doing the right thing in the established areas of Sydney.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: With the development of planning documents with children in mind is there any thought being given to, or benefit in, the development of a state environment planning policy that would guide applicants or consent authorities in the planning and approvals process?

Mr GELLIBRAND: Initially we would see greater benefit in reviewing our existing policies against the *built4kids* document and any other document like that that the Commission has produced or is producing to see if and how they need to be changed to reflect the needs of young people. I think we would do that before we launched into a specific policy.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: I am thinking from a council's point of view. It is hard for the Commission to communicate effectively with all 152 councils and give them advice and suggestions about how they can incorporate the needs of children in their planning documents, whereas it might be easier if a council in its assessment process can simply reference an existing statewide set and say the applicant has to demonstrate compliance with these objectives.

Mr GELLIBRAND: It is possible to do that. The influencing of development is important but you need to ask yourself initially what sort of development you are seeking to impact on: is it commercial, retail, industrial, agricultural or mining? It is mainly the residential areas that we are talking about—

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: And possibly commercial.

Mr GELLIBRAND: —and how they relate to commercial areas and how people come in an out of those centres. There are provisions within the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* that require councils to look at community impacts. It is not about specifically pulling out requirements for particular groups, such as ethnic, aged or mobility, but those matters are requirements for councils to consider. Most councils will have development control plans covering all of their areas. I think initially we would work with the Commission to see what we could put out to councils. We maintain very close contact with councils. We have broadcast alerts and we have just finished a round of New South Wales when we would have personally met with about 70 per cent of the councils in the State—mayors, general managers and planning directors. We do that regularly, in fact at least twice a year. What you are talking about would be a very important agenda item. We could either be given the information by the Commission and do it on their behalf or we could take someone from the Commission and put them on that agenda. We have just finished one round so we will be out on the road again in six months time.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Going back to a matter that was raised earlier, let us look at this from the point of the lowest denominator. There are the Department of Planning,

local government councils, the Commission for Children and Young People and the *built4kids* policy. How do you see the three of you working together? Do you see yourselves working with the councils and later on working with the Commission? I am intrigued about whether the three of you are getting together sufficiently to ensure that at least an agreement or synergies come from the three of you and an understanding of how to proceed.

Mr GELLIBRAND: As I said before, we can translate *built4kids* for local government. In terms of influencing each of the development control plans that local government would have, it is a much more substantial exercise—I do not know exactly what the number is but I think we could assume between 500 and 1,000 of those plans exist across New South Wales. Most councils have a number of them, and there are 150-odd councils. So influencing each of those development control plans would be a considerable task. The Department's direct role, and we are doing the detailed planning for particular areas in the growth centres or in urban renewal areas inside Sydney, would be to work directly with the councils and make sure that those requirements of the Commission are translated and we can do that.

I think your question relates more to all of the other areas of New South Wales where the Department is not as directly involved with what is going to happen in those locations. It is not clear to me yet how we will do that but I would have thought the committee that will participate with the Commission for Young People will give us the direction in that regard. We need to work out what is the best way of influencing local government so that the user requirements of young people are taken on board in terms of planning and development and then once we have worked out that we can work out the best means of actually distributing that information or that requirement across New South Wales. I am just not too sure what it is yet. We have not turned our minds to exactly how we are going to influence local government across New South Wales.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: Again, just taking it on a basic level, if you look at something like a new area being built and then you look at the issues involving kids and the environment being built for kids and then you have the issues of, say, vandalism or graffiti, is the Department, with local government and with the Commission, looking at more appropriate ways of building those areas—whether it is the type of paints to be used, the types of materials to be used—from a safety, anti-vandalism point of view so that there is at least a grassroots minimum requirement for that?

Mr GELLIBRAND: I would say no, definitely not at the moment, and I would say probably no moving forward as well. It might not be the answer that you want to hear, but it is mainly because of just the level of detail. At the State Government level we are absolutely committed to making sure that where we are providing for new communities and new people that they do have access to health, education, housing, and that they have got access to appropriately safe and useful recreational grounds. But then you start getting into the levels of detail. If we are talking about an open space area, for instance, we will make sure that those areas are identified in the land zone, we will make sure that there are arrangements for buying that land or paying for that land in one way or another and we will also help councils and allow them to actually charge developers to provide basic services—be they a skateboard park or some open space basic levels of embellishment.

Then councils will get into the next level of detail, which is coming up with the specific designs, and most of the councils do that in consultation with the local community if they

exist—they usually do in established areas—and then they set about scheduling that capital investment and then they do it, and quite often they lead off with a minimal investment and then a few years later they might go back and renew part of it and embellish it, and they look at all those very specific details about surfaces that you cannot paint on, surfaces that can withstand quite a lot of stress and damage, and they change quite frequently. So many of the councils will be going through their twentieth or thirtieth or their fortieth iteration of open space design and development and how it integrates and how it incorporates into the built environment.

The Department has long gone at that stage. So we make sure that the bones are there and that they are in place and we make provisions for councils to raise funds to do works. But after those things have been developed they always need to be renewed, as sure as night follows day, and there are changes in regulation which will require sometimes things to be renewed—say, hard surfaces are to be replaced with soft surfaces, et cetera. We are not as involved unless there is a specific government program and then sometimes we get involved in doing assessments of grants and the provision of funds and checking how the funds are expended. But we do not tend to get involved in those capital works; our grant programs relate more to planning activities rather than development activities.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: It just concerns me that when you have got 152 councils they are all going out separately looking at that grassroots level where maybe an indicator from either the Commission or from your Department indicates that as at this stage this would be the appropriate level to look at so they do not all go off on a different tangent.

Mr GELLIBRAND: I have worked in local government. I worked at Blacktown for six and a half years at that council—obviously a very large and very capable council. You certainly had people there that were focused on open space and community services and in doing so they had young people in mind. There was absolutely nothing clearer than that—the needs of the child from basically six weeks, which was the earliest they took kids into care, all the way through to the older adolescent in terms of moving from skateboard parks into actually built-form community centres that they could start occupying in terms of graduation into employment, and those people out there—and certainly in other councils—would be very expert and could probably teach a lot of us, certainly the Department, a thing or two.

CHAIR: Unfortunately we are out of time. Thank you very much. I think it is probable that we will send you some written questions and we would really appreciate it if you could respond to them.

Mr GELLIBRAND: My pleasure. Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

TRACY GABRIELLE VENAGLIA, Coordinator, Community Development and Social Planning, Wollongong City Council, 42 Burelli Street, Wollongong, and

JENNIFER MARY THOMPSON, Divisional Manager, Community, Cultural and Library Services, Wollongong City Council, 42 Burelli Street, Wollongong, sworn and examined:

CHAIR: As time is limited today the Committee may wish to send you additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and be made public. Would you be happy to provide a written reply to any further questions?

Ms THOMPSON: Yes.

Ms VENAGLIA: Yes.

CHAIR: Have you got any supplementary comments or issues that you would like to explain to us?

Ms THOMPSON: We have had a bit of discussion around how we present the evidence. I guess one of the major discussions we have had around the whole issue around child-friendly cities is that we see the work that we do and the work that the State Government does and the work that a whole lot of other parts of this puzzle do needs to be interlinked and that that work sits within the broader culture of our community and attitudes around children, so it is a somewhat contested area. It is very complex. I think for us the issues around being clear about what is the role of local government, what is the role of the State, what is the role of the broader community, what is the role of private enterprise in terms of thinking about the built environment and urban planning and planning by the commercial sector as well, so it is a very complex and very layered arena that we are practicing in.

CHAIR: The Committee understands that Wollongong City Council worked with the New South Wales Commission for Children and Young People to develop child-friendly indicators for inclusion in its *built4kids* publication. Can you tell me how this relationship was initiated with the Commission?

Ms VENAGLIA: I think we had established a relationship prior to that just in terms of conversations around child-friendly cities. It is something Wollongong had become interested in and there was an invitation for a number of councils I think to trial some of the indicators and consider some of them in the work they were doing. So we were invited to be part of that, where we had some opportunities to trial the indicators and provided some feedback on those. So that was our primary involvement around the indicators in terms of the publication that resulted from those.

CHAIR: Before you did that work did you know of the Commission, its existence and the work that it engages in?

Ms VENAGLIA: Yes. I had worked in children services for a number of years so the Commission was quite—we were quite aware of some of the work they were doing.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Just following that up, what was the actual child-friendly project that you had? Did you actually have one project?

Ms VENAGLIA: We did. We looked at a Child-friendly Communities Project with the Commission, so that sat a little aside from *built4kids* although there was some connection, and that is where we actually undertook an audit of Wollongong City Council in terms of our processes, our planning, our policies and systems and looked at barriers and opportunities to create a child-friendly Wollongong, and we provided to the Commission reports around that. So it was looking at how we can, I guess, implement that in our council and hopefully from that there are some learnings for some other councils.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Was that the only one or are there other projects you are planning to work with the Commission to develop?

Ms VENAGLIA: Are we planning to?

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Yes.

Ms VENAGLIA: There is no formal arrangement to work with the Commission although from those projects we have established a relationship with the Commission, as we have with other local government authorities. Part of something that came from some of this work was a local government network that we established. It is a fairly informal network in terms of its terms of reference but it is where we bring together local governments that are interested in progressing the child-friendly initiative and share stories and best practice models, share some of the obstacles that we encounter in our work and ways that we can move forward around that. So that is an example of another arena that the Commission has had some involvement in, but as I say it is certainly a fairly informal arrangement but we think it is effective in terms of sharing some of those stories that councils are doing. Sometimes you need to tease out some of the issues that sit behind the documents in terms of how it really did work in practice or how you can move forward.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Has the Commission been a help to you?

Ms VENAGLIA: Yes. They have certainly attended, participated at times, presented at other times. Councils have presented and hopefully from the Commission's point of view, I imagine, although they are better able to say how it has been for them, but it gives them some more grassroots information about what is happening down there. But again it is early days. I guess from our point of view with child-friendly it is, as Ms Thompson said, incredibly complex. I am sure from the other witnesses, it is a very complex area. It has to be balanced with so many priorities. We are optimistic about where it can head but we are also very realistic about the time it takes to make significant change. We all have very conflicting priorities but I think certainly we are optimistic in our own local government area about what the possibilities could be.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: It sounds like your own experience in child services has been a very positive factor.

Ms VENAGLIA: In children services yes, but certainly when looking at service delivery it is quite different. I guess the sort of work we have been looking at is more around children as citizens and how children are in the city, as opposed to recipients of a service that we are providing, so that when we look at child-friendly we are not looking necessarily at child-specific areas but we are looking at children as they interact with their environment,

and that is for us why the built environment inquiry that was held in 2006 was such a significant directional change for us in starting to consider what is this built form and as a Local Government Authority how do we impact on children and young people's lives because we know that as a community we were becoming risk averse. Children were less visible in our community, less able to independently move about our city and that, as we know, has long-term consequences for their development. So we started to look more broadly. So whilst I had a background in terms of child development and childhood education, I saw myself much more in terms of planning then and looking at children in a very different role than I would have in an educative role.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: Continuing on from that, do you feel there would be merit in other councils adopting much the same attitude that Wollongong Council did in going into partnership with the Commission? Do you think arising out of this there could be some sort of a format that could be used with some flexibility across the State? Also, your project was one that was in an already established environment, was it not? It was not a green site at all.

Ms VENAGLIA: It was more around looking at full processes as opposed to a specific project—we certainly do some projects in spaces that are child-friendly and that was part of it, but a lot was looking more broadly at our policies because we do not have the luxury of just developing new space. Most of what we do is retrofitting what already exists so we are trying to work within an existing built form, to improve for children and young people, and of course the whole community. In terms of many of the issues that we were addressing for children and young people we will also then address for older people and people with disabilities because it is about moving safely and freely around the community. In terms of benefits, I think there are certainly some benefits of having resources and having some guidance and having stories shared. I do not know how you would template creating a child-friendly city at a local government level because there are so many factors that play out around planning and around project delivery.

The obstacle that I might face may be very different to another community, a rural community, an inner-city community, but I think the greatest change can be affected at a higher planning and policy level, at a statutory level. They are the things that I think have very good impact on what we then do at a grassroots level because, when you look at priorities, compliance around statutory and policy level is always a priority. So if we can make change there, then that will have a great impact. An example might be that obviously the planning instruments we apply, things like the standards, the codes and standards we comply with, we know there are some wonderful things historically we have been able to provide for children in communities that have happened quite naturally in our spaces. The current codes and practices do not allow that to happen.

Regardless of how much academic literature sits out there about how great it is to swing from a tree, it would be very difficult for a local government authority to install it. They would not install any piece of equipment that was not compliant. So if there were reviews around standards and are we actually doing well at that level, that would impact down.

Ms THOMPSON: Reinforcing what Tracy is saying, I think there is a lot of merit in councils working out ways of working together, and I think having that leadership from the Commission for Children and Young People—but I guess it is also then about working out where local government sits and where, as Tracy was saying, the state responsibility sits, and the parameters for that work to happen in as well. I do think if you could get some

consistency happening because for us, for example, in Wollongong—and most councils in Sydney are in the same boat—we have our LGA and we overlap or sit right next to Shellharbour and to all intents and purposes that is one city, so we work really cooperatively with Shellharbour as it happens and some of these agendas we have had as shared agendas, but foreseeably if you are looking at how your citizens interact with citizens in the neighbouring LGA the more you can have some level of consistency across the state the better I think that would be.

Ms VENAGLIA: I guess it is that bottom-up top-down approach if we are really going to bring about some good outcomes for children in terms of their city. We can do many things in one-off projects, where it might be about creating one space that we think, you know, is starting to look at a best practice model for considering children, and also then there is that policy level and quite strategic planning level. Together I think we will get good outcomes because some of the higher level stuff takes longer to realise, whereas it is good to also have some positive outcomes on projects with a time limit, they deliver a little quicker. Certainly for children to see that and for us to gain support locally around the initiative we have to also see things happening. So there needs to be a combination but when we look at even our strategic direction we are looking at a very long term. It is really not going to come about next year; it is going to be a long-term change.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: You spoke about an informal network that has been going for some time. How many councils are involved in that? Is it a mix of rural, regional and metropolitan councils?

Ms VENAGLIA: We have two ways. We have an e-group setup where people can register on that and share stories, ideas, issues or might put out a question for response around something. There is certainly—I actually do not know the number registered currently but I think there are around 38 and some of those would be from the same council. Then at our network meetings we can have up to 20 councils represented. Again if it is held in the city here we get a greater representation than if we hold one in Newcastle or Wollongong, and that is just the nature of it. What we have tried to do is move the location—we certainly have had rural people come in and out but there is a real cost impact for people to come to networks. So some of it is about coming along and then going back to your council but having some contacts to follow up with by phone or whatnot. We certainly do that interstate as well; while we do not get together we have made contacts interstate with a number of councils.

I do not know if any literature has been provided but there are a number of councils in Victoria that are moving forward around child-friendly cities. Some of that is because of the Communities for Children funding that has sort of initiated some of that direction, otherwise it has to be integrated into your already existing resources. There are not many councils, I think, that would be bringing on additional staff resources; they would be integrating into what currently happens. So New South Wales is a little different because there are a lot of councils that do not have Communities for Children money attached to them, so they are doing it within their existing social planning and strategic planning sort of areas. So it is different.

They come in and out. There is no requirement to attend on a regular basis. Some of it is about where it is located and some of it is about what is happening at that network: is it of interest? Some of our challenge is to sustain interest in that group, and that with any group or network can be difficult.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Have you had any projects across councils in your informal group? Have there been a couple of councils that have picked up a research project or anything like that?

Ms VENAGLIA: No, but that is an area that the network identified early on would be good and be positive. One of the areas we did some initial research in and we are contemplating its place, in terms of research, is that we know a lot of other States have things like the Walking to School Buses, which is really coordinated and well taken up. New South Wales does not seem to. Is there some capacity here for us to look at why we are different to other States? But again it is a case of having the resources to do some of the research. Certainly that is something I think the network would be interested in if we had the capacity to do that, and we would work with groups like the Commission or the Department of Local Government or the Ministry of Transport, whoever really is around the work that fits in with whatever their portfolio is.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Is there any involvement in your network with the Local Government and Shires Association?

Ms VENAGLIA: Not formally. It is very new, the network. We have not wanted to layer—we have not put any formalities around it. It is really about a group of professionals who get together because this is an area they want to progress. Perhaps in time it could evolve into something else. There are interest groups through the LGSA—I think that is one of the groups. There are certainly some frameworks that we could fit it into over time but I mean some of this is about the individuals who are driving things.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: But at this point they are not involved in your network?

Ms VENAGLIA: Not formally, no.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: It is a grassroots thing.

Ms VENAGLIA: It is very grassroots. It is really about—I mean we initiated it through a process where you can send out an invite to every council in New South Wales and it lands in somebody's in tray through a system and that is how we did it, and we got a response from there. Now some councils have taken it up and others have not. That is really the degree, but it certainly has the capacity to grow and develop and become more coordinated and more strategic in the way it works—early days.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Congratulations to you and Wollongong council on your engagement in this issue. I was wondering, through your own experiences and through your discussions with the network forum, what you think is the greatest challenge for local government to better engage and implement planning for children?

Ms VENAGLIA: That is a very big question: the greatest challenge?

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: It is simply resourcing? Financial? Coordination?

Ms VENAGLIA: No, I think it is more than that.

Ms THOMPSON: It is partly resourcing. From my point of view local government has a huge number of competing priorities—and I guess I will put it on the table that I have been with council for two years. I have only been in local government for two years and prior to that I was with TAFE—so quite a different working experience. The thing that has struck me—when I joined council it was just after the Parry report had been released, so in terms of what infrastructure, sustainability of infrastructure, where you put the capital dollars in infrastructure and how you, as Tracy said, also do some retrofitting, so for us it is about how do you get in among these competing priorities of where the resources should go, how do you ensure that there is a place at the table for ensuring that a child-friendly environment is part of it.

Mr ROBERT FUROLO: Perhaps training for councils as well would be important?

Ms VENAGLIA: Yes, and I think it is so multifaceted because council is one of the players; we are a key player but we are not the only player. In terms of major developments now council is not the consenting authority on those—that is a factor. I mean there are so many issues. I do not have the answers in terms of how we change it. I think while we are a risk-averse community, while the community is not well educated in the fact that really our community is not this incredibly dangerous and scary place for children, there is work to be done around that.

The media is incredibly powerful in the stranger danger message. We all know that is not the greatest risk to our children. Parents are struggling with is it a good thing if I let my child walk to the bus stop? Am I negligent? So there is that layer and that whole culture around children and do we see them as capable and competent people who can make decisions? I think we have moved to not seeing that. The pendulum is swinging back. In terms of within council, there was no problem with me going to any level of council and people not getting what child-friendly meant, and what they wanted for children. That was never an issue.

It was the easiest thing for people to say "I get that" because everyone has been a child, has a child or knows a child so we all have such good life experience to draw back on what it was like and what elements we see are missing now for our children. So that is a really easy thing I found to advocate for. It is when you get down to the real layers of what can you include in your development control plans? What are the priorities? How do you balance up some of the other issues with these? I think you just have to navigate through them. As we have said if things are happening at this policy level that we can infiltrate it is easier for us to then be the advocate who can also say "Actually, you know, we kind of have to comply with that. This is a direction." So I do not know if there can be more.

Transport is a massive issue when you look at children and how they move around their city. In Wollongong public transport is not the preferred option of transport, neither is walking! There is a lot of work for us to do around that.

CHAIR: Unfortunately it is not a perfect science.

Ms VENAGLIA: It is not a perfect science and I guess it is about how we plan strategically? What do we want our cities to look like in 25 years? How do we get there? What can we actually change now? What do we have to put off? Timing is the thing. If you look at a template, timing is critical. No point trying to push something if the timing is wrong.

It might be a great idea but if you have just had your development control plan done, it is unlikely that it is going to be put on as a priority project next week. You look at the cycle. And that is what we have found most effective for us to look at the cycle of when things are happening, and find a time. They are the sorts of things we share at our local government networks about timing. How do you get it in your management planning or your organisational planning? How do you build a relationship with your planners? I think it is a combination of policy even at a local government level and a combination of relationships, which is the way we work with everything. But certainly there is no fear around it and there is no massive obstacle to it. It is the how to?

CHAIR: We could carry on the discussion for quite a time but we have run out of time unfortunately. It is probable that you will get some further questions from the Committee and it would appreciate your answers.

Ms VENAGLIA: We should be optimistic about it but realistic. It is not just going to happen. In 10 years we could still sit at the table but we will have moved forward.

(The witnesses withdrew)

(The Committee adjourned at 12.23 p.m.)

Appendix Three – Transcript of proceedings - 30 June 2010

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

FOLLOW-UP INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

—

At Sydney on Wednesday 30 June 2010

—

The Committee met at 10.00 a.m.

—

PRESENT

Mr R. D. Coombs (Chair)

Legislative Council

The Hon. J. G. Ajaka
The Hon. K. F. Griffin
Reverend the Hon. F. J. Nile

Legislative Assembly

Ms M. T. Andrews

GEOFFREY WOOLCOCK, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University,

PAUL TRANTER, Associate Professor, School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Forces Academy,

JENNIFER DENNIS, Policy Officer, Planning, Local Government and Shires Associations, Level 8, 28 Margaret Street Sydney, and

DEBRA LANGRIDGE, Project Coordinator, Child Friendly by Design Project, Healthy Cities Illawarra, 63 Auburn Street Wollongong, sworn and examined:

PETER McCUE, Manager, Premier's Council for Active Living, level 3, 80 William Street Sydney,

FIONA ROBBÉ, Director, Architects of Arcadia, 108 Arcadia Road Arcadia,

KATE BISHOP, Independent Researcher (Children, Youth & Environments) advising the Commission for Children and Young People, 6 Sunnyridge Road Arcadia,

KAREN PATERSON, Manager, Policy and Research, Division of Local Government,

TOM GELLIBRAND, Deputy Director-General, Department of Planning, 115-123 Bridge Street Sydney,

JOSEPHINE WING, Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal, Department of Planning, 23-33 Bridge Street Sydney,

MEGAN MITCHELL, Commissioner for Children and Young People, level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney,

LOU-ANNE LIND, Manager, Policy, Commission for Children and Young People, level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney

TRISH MALINS, Manager, Research, Commission for Children and Young People, level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney, and

SARAH REILLY, Social Planning Consultant, Planning Institute of Australia, 12 Womerah Avenue Darlinghurst, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: I declare the roundtable open. We are pleased to meet the newly appointed New South Wales Commissioner for Children and Young People, Megan Mitchell. Megan informs me that this morning she has been in the position for all of 10 days. It is a pleasure to have her here today. I welcome you all and thank you for your interest in the issues that will be discussed at today's roundtable. As time will be limited today, we may seek your assistance to provide written answers to any questions that we do not have time to canvass during the roundtable timetable.

I would like to make some opening remarks about the program for today. The purpose of today's roundtable is to gain expert input into the Committee's Follow-up Inquiry

into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. We are keen to consider how the Committee might progress the relevant issues by providing concrete proposals for improvements and also to provide a basis on which the Committee may re-evaluate the relevance of its original recommendations.

To achieve this, we have arranged for today's roundtable to be conducted as two separate sessions. The first session will feature three presentations, which will provide some context for our discussion today. Firstly, we will hear from Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock, from the Urban Research Program at Griffith University, who will provide the international perspective, including the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative, and how this intersects with planning and local government processes. Secondly, we will hear from Mr Peter McCue, Manager of the Secretariat for the Premier's Council for Active Living, who will outline the New South Wales perspective and work of the Premier's Council for Active Living. Thirdly we will hear from Ms Fiona Robbé, from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, who will provide the local perspective and the reality of creating child-friendly built environments in New South Wales. These presentations will be followed by a discussion facilitated by Dr Kate Bishop.

The second session will feature a discussion of the issues raised in the recommendations arising from the 2006 Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment. I thank the Commission for Children and Young People for assisting in the development of today's program. Again I thank you all for appearing before the Committee today, I am advised you have been issued with a copy of the Committee's terms of reference and a brochure entitled Information for Witnesses Appearing before Parliamentary Committees. Is that correct?

ALL WITNESSES: Yes.

CHAIR: I call on the first presenter, Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock, who will commence the proceedings today.

Professor WOOLCOCK: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for the opportunity to present in front of this distinguished group of people. At the outset, I pay respects to the impact that this inquiry has had in the field of child-friendly cities or building child-friendly communities, particularly being in the world's most urbanised nation here in Australia, how significant it has been to put a genuine committed policy focus on the impact of the built environment, which has not been true of many other constituencies around the world or, indeed, here in Australia. I say at the outset how much impact the inquiry has had. Many of the recommendations that came out of the original inquiry report have been taken up by various agencies, most noticeably the Commission that we have been working closely with at our centre, the Urban Research Program. That is how I wanted to start.

In reference to how this presentation was to be titled, as stated by Robert, I wanted to draw on some of the influence that has come from the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative. I would like to turn the discussion quickly to what I think are important national issues driving the importance of the built and natural environments on children and young people's wellbeing captured in this popular title of child-friendly cities and communities. Some of that influence has no doubt come from the emphasis that is being driven by UNICEF in child-friendly cities but I think it is a reasonably minor one. I am happy to be taken up on that in our discussion if people have a different take on it, but my reading of it is that it has been a reasonably small influence in the notion of child-friendly cities being taken

up. I think some much more clearer things have driven what we would call a resurgent agenda, not just a research agenda but a policy agenda very much as well.

I think there are four key things and the things that I most focus on in terms of this greater interest in child-friendly cities is how children and young people's lives are affected by different urban trends and forms. I think that has been a particular salient issue in certainly our capital cities in Australia over the last decade or so when we are increasingly seeing more compact or denser cities, denser urban environments and a concern about what kind of effect that might have on children and young people. I know that is particularly pertinent here in the Sydney metropolitan area.

There is also a key theme that is being increasingly recognised about how those lives are impacted by the built environment differentially across the age spectrum, that is, across children and young people. What was a reasonably universal and some might even say homogenous take on children as a broad spectrum is now much more nuanced around this impact and the difference particularly between early childhood, between children in primary school years and adolescence and the impact of all sorts of effects but including the built environment across that age spectrum.

Another key thing—and I would be interested to see how we can take this up in today's roundtable discussion as it is particularly pertinent to contemporary social lives—is about the increasing use of information technologies and how I think they may have affected analysis of young people's sense of place. I think some of that is changing. I think there is a recognition still that young people do, not universally but do have still a sense of place in the physical and built environment in their lives but we know that is being now very much mediated still by the onslaught of new information technologies. That is a key thing that ought to be taken up. To date that has been an area that has been left to one side as a specialist area around people's interest in new technologies but I think there is a fundamental relationship between how new technologies are being used and children and young people's relationship with built and natural environments.

Then the final of these four key things is defining this resurgent agenda and that is how the urban physical environment can better children's lives. I think there has been a more concentrated focus of late on particularly child-friendly physical environments, how they can be built, whether that be from a more traditional playground structure through to whole educational institutions where children spend a good deal of their lives, such as schools. I just want to say from the outset that those four key things frame a lot of this resurgent agenda around child-friendly cities and communities. I acknowledge also from the outset, though, that the issue itself of building child-friendly cities is not a new one.

Anyone who is serious about researching this issue, of course, must acknowledge some very important efforts, particularly in post-war Britain that drove a lot of this issue. The doyen of this issue was a fellow Colin Ward, who wrote arguably the most significant text ever written in this area *The Child in the City* in 1977 in a very different phase of urban development for our large Western cities which were characterised by a lot of grinding poverty in manufacturing belts close to central business districts and not the type of patterns of urban development that we have now but, nonetheless, drew attention to what had been a very much overlooked area not just in planning, but in design, in built environments, in all forms of understanding our urban environments.

That book—but also a number of others that have drawn attention through that post-war period in Europe and then more broadly around the world—was the culmination of this initiative, run out of UNICEF, or originally the United Nations and then taken up by the specific agency for children at the United Nations, UNICEF, around child-friendly cities. The initiative of the late 1970s and early 1980s that took root and still exists today still has a reasonably significant influence around the world, particularly in the sort of principles that had struck, a universal set of principles for child-friendly cities, that a number of cities have gone down the path of accreditation. I think that is probably where it has had most impact: its capacity to be a means of attracting, particularly at a local government level, local governments to take up that form of accreditation and have it as a means by which they own this issue of child-friendly communities—not just as a set of principles, but they are actually enacting them.

We have a number of examples of local governments that have taken that route in Australia. But, to hark back to what I said at the outset, I do not think it has had as much influence as it might originally have intended to have, in terms of accreditation. There are a lot of local governments that are very interested in the whole issue of child-friendly cities and child-friendly communities that are not necessarily attracted to the issue by going through a form of accreditation, but are interested in it from its capacity to be regenerating or renewing their local government if it is within the local communities across the board.

I think the real keys in terms of the national agenda, beyond the four things I framed it with earlier, are its connection to the notion of working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds. I know that disadvantage is debated in many quarters and exactly what disadvantage comprises. But, taking the broad concept of socioeconomic disadvantage, real attention has been struck back onto understanding the needs of disadvantaged children. We have a number of Federal and State-based programs that have been important contributors to that. I think that is also a critical part of the resurgent agenda. There is no doubt that we must pay tribute to key individuals in this area, and the fact that Fiona Stanley was the Australian of the Year in 2003 and the amount of attention that she herself, but particularly her institute, has been able to draw on this issue nationally, culminating in her current ongoing tenure as the Chair of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth. Fiona Stanley continues to put this issue well and truly on the policy agenda, and included in that is a very large concern for the impact of the built environment.

However, if we are really going to tackle this issue seriously—and again it is an issue that I talk about often in my presentations—we must understand children's relationship with the built environment by looking at the whole spectrum of issues that are impacting on children's and young people's wellbeing. We cannot segment this issue just on the sort of impacts we can have around the built environment; we must look at all the sorts of factors that are affecting children and young people. Undoubtedly, to use a colloquial statement of the day, the elephant in the room, if you like, around children and their relationship with the physical and built environment is this issue of risk and security.

In any forum in which I speak—or in which other people who are well known, much better known than myself, speak on this issue—no matter what their take is on children's relationship with the built environment, the one common thread of any of the discussion that ensues is the issue of confronting perceived risk. That is the bone of contention, if you like. A very well-known planner that is based in the city of London, Tim Gill, who has been a regular visitor to this country but a spokesperson around the world on creating child-friendly cities, wrote a book called *No Fear: Growing up in a risk averse society*. In the book he

draws very powerful and graphical attention to just how many barriers in the name of risk management have been put up in the way of children's capacity to engage with the built environment. But the quote that I am often fond of putting up in response to Tim's book—which was a very necessary contribution to this issue—comes from a newspaper's review, a columnist that would be seen as unashamedly right wing in his viewpoints. That columnist's response to the book was that we can take all these wonderful, embracing principles, but while we have the Daniel Morcombes, the Madeline McCanns, and these sorts of incidents, "pass me the bubble wrap": we are always going to need to protect our kids and show respect for the kind of risks that people are perceiving out there.

At times it does seem that it is an issue where the twain shall never meet, or that we cannot broker; it does seem to polarise very quickly. We simply have to confront it, because the impacts of it are immediately deleterious. Paul Tranter, who is here today at the roundtable, has plenty of evidence of his own about children's transport, about how perceived risks associated with even children walking to school now mean that we have one of the lowest percentages in the world of children being allowed to travel alone, or indeed to travel alone to places other than their schools. These are the immediate outcomes from perceived risk in safety management, and we have to deal with it. We have to deal with it, as in confronting that it is real, that it is real in the eyes of parents and that we cannot simply immediately diminish it, but we still have to deal with it with children's well-being foremost in our minds.

I will quickly return to that. In the time I have left I wanted to pick up on the significance of this issue of dealing with socioeconomic disadvantage and how important it is that these arguments around what we can do with our built and natural environments is very much part of the agenda that is growing in this country, and the research and data that is growing about what we understand about children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their upbringings. Arguably the most significant data set we now have in this country that has come with significant Federal Government support over the last few years has come in the form of the Australian Early Development Index. It has got a reasonable amount of attention, so I will not labour on it here. The index has now been funded for up to 98 per cent of coverage of children in their first year of school, assessing children across a whole string of competencies, not just academic competencies, in their first year of school. It is a teacher-assessed index, but it is a very important marker of what is going on for children and young people. The fact that it has this commitment to being undertaken every year and with that massive coverage of the country means we are going to know a lot more about what is going on for our children.

Particularly interesting in that study is looking at its actual effect on real communities. A large study that accompanies that index is a study looking at what are called the "off-diagonal communities"—that is, communities that are having children scoring well on these competencies but living in a disadvantaged area and/or, vice versa, children that are not scoring well and living in relatively advantaged areas. That study is going to tell us a lot about what is going on, and particularly environmental and community-level factors that might be impacting on children.

As I mentioned earlier, we have to come to terms with understanding high-density environments and children in outer suburbia, where the vast majority of young families and children are living. I do not think people across the board have really come to grips with what that is about. Some great work has been done of late out of South Australia using 10 different Australian outer suburban sites to look at this balance between work and life and

family. But we know that there is still a lot more to do there, in connecting children back more with their natural environments.

I am conscious of the time, and of the fact that I am not going to be able to cover as much ground as I would normally do in a presentation of this nature. But I hope I have raised some of the key issues that I think need to be confronted. I finish with one particular hobbyhorse of mine at the moment, along with a lot of other people. One of the big areas that we are yet to do—we have just scratched the surface in terms of impacting children and their relationship with the built environment—is getting inside school curricular. Whether that be from straightforward material about dealing with environmental change that all children and young people are confronting, or whether it be a more nuanced understanding of how a child's relationship happens with their local environment, I think we must do much more within the school environment. Too often this issue is being taken back out to children's non-school world—and that is important too—but they spend a considerable amount of time, without stating the obvious, in a school environment. All of us need to show much more fortitude in getting involved in this area. I finish there and thank you for the opportunity to contribute.

CHAIR: Thank you, Geoff, for your very detailed contribution. Mr Peter McCue is the next speaker. Peter is the Manager of the Premier's Council for Active Living.

Mr McCUE: Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I commence by extending my respects to Elders past and present, and I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting. This brief presentation was prepared by the New South Wales Premier's Council for Active Living [PCAL], by invitation from the Commission for Children and Young People. The purpose of the presentation is very much to provide an overview of PCAL's interagency work in trying to influence the built environment to promote active living and expand on the lessons learnt from that work.

PCAL aims to encourage more people in New South Wales to be more active more often. The Council works with government, business and community sectors to essentially promote greater involvement in active living across all population groups in New South Wales; build and strengthen the physical as well as social environments that facilitate and support active living, particularly incidental active living—movement throughout the day—as well as more formal activity—fitness and sports programs; and to ensure that government policies and strategies provide every opportunity for the citizens of New South Wales to embrace active living throughout all stages of their life.

PCAL comprises senior representatives from 12 New South Wales government agencies and members from the community sector. The Council provides an important forum for inter-agency and inter-sectoral collaboration, through the promotion and implementation of active living principles. PCAL's interagency membership provides a well-established forum to enhance links between infrastructure agencies, such as the Department of Planning and Transport New South Wales, as well as service-oriented agencies, such as the Commission. The Council's activities are very much informed by international best practice that recommend a high-level interagency collaboration as a key component of promoting health-enhancing activity as a comprehensive government response. Most other Australian States and Territories have a similar type of council of some description.

There is a rapidly growing body of evidence that shows that being active in everyday life not only has positive health impacts but also offers environmental, social and economic gains. However, the 2005-06 *New South Wales Child Health Survey* reported that only 25 per cent of children and young people between 5 and 15 years engaged in the recommended 60 minutes of movement each day. Not only that, 84 per cent of those children between 5 to 15 years engaged in more than the recommended two hours of passive screen time. Essentially, we have got the majority of children not being active and they are spending most of their time in front of screens as well.

PCAL's summarised in its *Why Active Living* statement the key evidence demonstrating the benefits of active living and the individual and social costs of a sedentary lifestyle. Essentially, inadequate physical activity is a serious health problem that results in poor health outcomes, that we are all well aware of, including obesity, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon and breast cancer, depression and further issues. The cost is significant. Chronic conditions impose enormous direct and indirect health costs. Heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes costs well over \$4 billion nationally in direct costs alone, and obesity costs \$2 billion nationally. Of those direct costs, \$1.5 billion have been linked quite recently to physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is a major contributing factor to obesity. Approximately 25 per cent of school students are either overweight or obese, and that figure has doubled in the last 20 years—I am sure you are well aware of that.

In Sydney, significantly, 55 per cent of car journeys are less than five kilometres, and 33 per cent are less than three kilometres. Since 1981 the proportion of children driven to school has doubled to more than 50 per cent, while the share of children walking and cycling has almost halved to about 20 per cent. These car trips to school have a significant bearing on the demand for second cars at home. The solution to these challenges is obviously to build more supportive not only social environments but physical environments that can build opportunities for physical activity back into everyday life.

Infrastructure Australia in its *State of Australian Cities 2010* report highlighted that the design of urban environments can contribute to the health and wellbeing of communities by supporting active living, physical activity through walking, cycling and using public transport, and opportunities to social interaction. These clear characteristics of urban environments have demonstrated strong evidence to links to physical activity, including mixed land use and higher density, footpath and cycleways and facilities for physical activity, street connectivity and design, transport infrastructure systems linking residential, commercial and business areas, neighbourhood safety, and aesthetics including access to public open spaces.

Recent Australian research has also demonstrated a negative relationship between urban sprawl and physical activity. For example, people living in outer Sydney suburbs tend to be 30 to 50 per cent more at risk of being overweight and 40 to 60 per cent less likely to be adequately active compared to their inner-city counterparts. There is widespread agreement that there are benefits in modifying the built environment to encourage healthy, active and more liveable communities. COAG's National Criteria for Capital City Strategic Planning Systems includes addressing health, liveability and community wellbeing. Here in New South Wales the University of New South Wales City Futures Research Centre has been awarded \$1.5 million recently in funding from NSW Health to establish a New South Wales Healthy Built Environments Program. As far as we know that is the first such collaboration between a health department and planning academics, not only in Australia but internationally as well.

There is also a growing body of evidence demonstrating the positive economic advantages of investment in active transport. For example, at the request of the New South Wales Premier, PCAL oversaw the development of the recently released New South Wales Bike Plan. Background studies were commissioned to inform the development of the bike plan including a cost-benefit analysis of building that infrastructure in selected cycle programs. Results clearly demonstrated significant positive returns for the proposed shared pathways that were highlighted as part of the plan.

Research summarised by the National Heart Foundation has identified a number of characteristics of the built environment that influence physical activity for children and young people, in particular children's walking is associated with close proximity to parks, good pedestrian infrastructure, traffic safety and parental influence. Following on from that a Transport NSW schools program was undertaken during 2006-07, which aimed to encourage active travel to and from school by students and their parents. Parent journey to work was found to be a key factor in influencing parents' decisions on how they and their children travelled to and from school. Importantly, the report concluded that the goals and strategies of active transport to school programs should extend to include the active travel of how parents get to work—we all know that incidentally from our own experiences.

PCAL's work in particular is to focus on the built environment. Our work specifically focusing on children and young people has been the development of guidelines for the external delivery of physical activities within schools and out-of-school hour centres. But since its inception in 2005, PCAL has prioritised work towards the development of more supportive built environments for active living for all the residents in New South Wales. More recently active transport has become a key priority as well. To facilitate greater coordination across agencies to promote active transport, the Council has hosted an ongoing high-level active transport roundtable since 2008, with executive representation from health, environment, transport and planning agencies.

The roundtable has led to the implementation of a number of active transport initiatives including: a new New South Wales State Plan active transport target; the development of interagency tools, such as a New South Wales-specific workplace travel plan; best practice active travel case studies; and a range of New South Wales government policy changes that have predominately focused on the workplace, such as mandatory provision of end-of-trip facilities within New South Wales government workplace refurbishments. That is quite important because if people are going to walk or cycle to work, then they need somewhere to get changed. As previously highlighted at the request of the New South Wales Premier, PCAL also oversaw the development and resourcing of an updated New South Wales bike plan. An interagency governance model jointly led by the New South Wales Roads and Traffic Authority and the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water was used to ensure that the bike plan generated not only the development of key strategic cycling infrastructure but also the behaviour change programs to utilise that infrastructure.

Another priority area in which PCAL has facilitated interagency collaboration has been the promotion of supportive urban environments for active living. Evidence-based active living indicators were prepared by PCAL and incorporated within the Division of Local Government's long-term integrated strategic reform manual. The intention of the indicators is to provide local councils with a selection of evidence-based measures that will help demonstrate progress towards the development of more supportive environments for active

living. Essentially, if a local council wants to work towards more supportive environments for active living, the evidence-based indicators will demonstrate that they are working towards those more supportive environments. There also have been Director-General requirements to consider active living principles within relevant State-significant projects, such as the Bonnyrigg housing redevelopment.

PCAL also has developed a number of resources to facilitate the implementation of healthy planning principles at the local government level, such as, designing places for active living as a web-based product that provides key design considerations for walking and cycling—public transport, streets, open spaces, shopping centres and workplaces—as well as links to key references and other resources for more detailed guidelines on specifications. Essentially, it is meant to be a library of the existing resources, and there are quite extensive resources across those environments. There are also New South Wales Better Practice case studies, demonstrating the translation of key design considerations into practice. More recently, Development and Active Living provide relevant matters of New South Wales development type for consideration in the preparation of local environment plans and development control plans and the assessment of major projects.

From that work we have learnt key lessons about trying to influence the built environment to provide more supportive environments for active living. Some of those lessons include: that the mere presence of infrastructure, such as a park or an open space, does not mean it will be utilised; the most effective strategies to promote increased active living incorporate not only the infrastructure change but also behaviour change programs to utilise that infrastructure; policies from a diverse range of agencies to cater for sometimes competing user groups influence decisions about the built environment; and advocacy is most certainly required to ensure consideration of children and young people are incorporated within the suite of competing priorities. There is a plethora of guidelines addressing how to influence the built environment for various purposes. Rather than trying to provide new guidelines, influencing the work that is currently underway provides an efficient use of limited resources.

For example, PCAL contributes to New South Wales Police crime prevention through environmental design training. What we are trying to do there is to demonstrate the need to balance risk aversion, as Geoff mentioned, with stimulating environments that promote social engagement. Face-to-face capacity building workshops have been well received by planners. What they have done is provide the opportunity to link with professionals from other agencies, so it has enhanced the opportunity for interagency collaboration. The rationale for design changes to planning policy and practice are much more readily understood if the key messages are translated to the language of that agency. For example, rather than trying to promote health-promoting physical activities, what that physical activity becomes once we provide a submission to the *Metro Strategy Review* would be walking and cycling for short trips in urban centres to support transport-related walking and cycling and public transport use. Obviously what we try to do is translate our key messages to the language that is used by the agencies that we are targeting.

In conclusion, PCAL's established interagency model makes it well placed to incorporate feedback from the children and young people commission in regard to how PCAL's built environment work can accommodate the views of children and young people. One practical example relates to PCAL's current work with the Division of Local Government to prepare a resource demonstrating how local councils can incorporate active living considerations within their response to the Division of Local Government's long-term

integrated strategic planning reform. The children and young people commission's membership of PCAL enhances the opportunity to ensure the views of children and young people would be incorporated into that resource.

CHAIR: Thank you, Peter, for your comprehensive report. We will now hear from Ms Fiona Robbé from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects.

Ms ROBBÉ: I particularly value addressing all of you today as a designer. As you know, I am addressing this inquiry as the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects representative. I am a specialist design professional who works across the full range of outdoor environments for children and young people. The work that my office does encompasses children's environments right across Australia. However, I am particularly keen to address child- and youth-friendly environments in New South Wales. Since the original report on children and young people in the built environment in October 2006 I have asked myself, What has palpably changed in the design community in New South Wales since then? My observations are just casual but they are that we are seeing greater awareness of the many health and wellbeing issues of childhood and adolescence, with many providers being cognisant that they contribute to these issues. They are asking themselves, What can be done? There are also numerous conferences and seminars that are meaningfully addressing child-friendly cities and better built environments for children and young people, as well as children's health and wellbeing considerations being added to the debate. This has helped raise awareness of these issues in New South Wales design communities.

We also are seeing advocacy and advisory bodies, such as Kidsafe, being better informed on many of these issues. This has had some positive flow-on effects. We are seeing small numbers of design professionals paying attention to participatory design processes with children and young people. However, this is very slow in gaining momentum. We are seeing documents like *built4kids* and the *TAKING PARTicipation* kit as being helpful but not really filtering through to enough of these professionals. We also are seeing a very small number of councils championing child-friendly principles through a partnering process with the children and young people commission, for example, Wollongong Council. This, again, helps start the process of change. However, it is looking a bit slow. These changes are small. I must admit that we are seeing more rapid changes in Victoria, Western Australia and Queensland on some of these fronts. From my perspective, New South Wales appears to be lagging behind.

In my experience from a design office, I see three overall issues blocking the original 2006 report recommendations from being implemented. I will summarise what they are and then I will unpack them in more detail. Firstly, there is an overall ignorance of the report but, much more importantly, its broader context, everything that the report stands for. Secondly, we are seeing a lack of funding to enact quality outcomes for children and young people across all levels of provision in the built environment. Thirdly, we are seeing a lack of analysis and critique of gains made on behalf of children and young people in the built environment. Just unpacking those three in a little bit more detail, dealing with the first issue: ignorance of the context of the 2006 report.

Our clients are generally unknowing about the *United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child* or the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, and many do not know of the existence of the children's commission of New South Wales. They reacted with surprise at all of these being mentioned. The same goes for participation processes with children in the

design process. This is uniform, be the client a school, a child-care centre, local government and even State government; we are seeing that ignorance across all levels of provision in the built environment. Admittedly, as designers we are dealing with people at the coalface. That is not to say that the higher echelons may not know about these issues, but the message is not getting through to the coalface and that is where we are most often delivering to children and young people.

The second issue is the lack of funding. Many clients are enthusiastic in their own right to do something better for children and young people in the built environment but struggle to gain sufficient funding to enact construction programs. The changes to section 94 funding for local government has meant that many parks, playgrounds and other community-minded facilities for children and young people are not being built. Schools and child-care centres have always relied on parents and grants to fund improvements to the built environment, and we notice how time and time again this frustrates quality outcomes for children. There is never enough money to effect good construction outcomes.

My third point is lack of analysis and evaluation. We notice a lack of rigour and systematic appraisal of recent projects for children and young people in the built environment. When a new project for children is built it should be carefully analysed to discover if it meets the needs of children and young people. Without rigour, without discussion or debate and criticism many items are created with good intentions but they do not meet children's needs. The question has to be asked: How would we know?

These three concerns are experienced in a sea of ever-increasing parental anxieties and concerns over their children's safety in the built environment in particular. These anxieties usually are experienced as an impediment to better outcomes for children and these are the sorts of issues both of you have raised as well. So what recommendations can be made? Again, I am offering this as a designer professional: we need to follow the original 2006 report's recommendations, which are very well laid out, particularly in chapter four, but we need a greater emphasis on education—education of providers of the built environment at all levels; the coalface being vital in this program. We also need to educate schools, child-care centres, local government, State government and advisory groups.

In addition, we need to educate design professionals, both at university and in the workforce. We need to make child-friendly principles and requirements more than a good idea; we need to make them mandatory so that they have to be followed with achievable outcomes and guidelines. We need to put real funding into children and young people's environments and this can be done in a number of ways: in education, in printed manuals and in construction budgets. We require evaluation tools to evaluate, test and measure the gains we are making for kids in the built environment. This needs children's input, of course, and the tools must be able to be applied by everyone.

All of these recommendations are more important than they were 3½ years ago, as research tells us that our children are more unhealthy and more unhappy as time goes by, not less. So we, as design professionals, look to the New South Wales Government to show strong, enhanced leadership on representing the interests of children and young people in the built environment. We are lagging behind the other States in Australia and, indeed, many other countries around the world. We have the resources, we have done the research, we have the knowledge and we have the Commission. It now behoves us as caring professionals to deliver measurable improvements to children and young people in

New South Wales. This is a worthwhile investment as these people represent our future. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. That was a well thought-out contribution. I am about to be relieved of my position, but the good news is that the very capable Dr Kate Bishop will lead discussion in this next section, based on the three contributions that you already have before you. We are due to conclude at 11.30, so we have 35 minutes of discussion time. I will now pass over to Kate.

Dr BISHOP: We are going to try and accomplish two tasks in the next session. I would like to give you all an opportunity to ask some questions of the speakers who have just given us three wonderful presentations, which have touched, between all three, the complexity of the issue that is children and the built environment. If you would all like to ask questions from your own particular perspectives and see if those questions identify the issues and draw to everybody's attention major issues for concern. That is the first task.

The second task is to begin to focus on a working definition that is useful to the Inquiry for the next round of recommendations and work generated by this parliamentary inquiry of the built environment—a working definition of the built environment; a more targeted, perhaps more focused approach for the next round. Does anybody from the floor have questions for any of our speakers or comments they would like to make in relation to the talks they have heard this morning?

Ms REILLY: I have two different issues. The first one is about neighbourhood development and community connectedness in communities. I think in urban sprawl there has been a bit of a loss of that where people do not see each other on the streets and are not building those relationships. Children might not be walking to school for a number of reasons; one is because they need to be driven to school for parents to get to work at 7.30 in the morning, or something like that, but also because there is not that whole sharing of children, like kid-sharing where people walk other children to school. I think as the urban sprawl has happened there has been less of that connection and people are not doing those sorts of community activities. Does anyone have anything to say on that?

Professor WOOLCOCK: I think there is general evidence about that across the urban landscape. I think there are dangers to demonising urban sprawl and accumulating a world of sins. I am not sure that it is necessarily a problem in only isolated areas that are characterised by urban sprawl, but it is a disturbing pattern. As Peter was saying, there is disassociation now with parents' work transport patterns and school transport patterns, but also overriding all that is this general sense of risk.

Ms REILLY: I was trying to make the point that you can make a great built environment but then you have to get people to at least work together.

Mr McCUE: Yes. The infrastructure alone is not the only solution.

Ms REILLY: The other thing is about whether young people are actually welcome in the built environment and whether there are spaces for young people—not necessarily little children but the older children—to hang out, to congregate and to be seen. The work that I do in the community, when you are working with the community, the residents, you see that they often do not like to see young people in the built environment and they get very upset

about young people skating in public, young people hanging out in public, and that is a really big issue as well that needs to be dealt with in our community. Firstly, we are not building spaces for young people and, secondly, if we do, no-one wants them to see them there. That is another issue we need to think about.

Mr McCUE: And that there are opportunities to try and build environments that accommodate the different age groups as well, rather than just put a park down there that caters for a limited age range.

Ms REILLY: That is right, and I think Melbourne has got some great examples, particularly around St Kilda where there are some fantastic examples of intergenerational activities happening and people being really happy about that.

Mr McCUE: That obviously promotes much greater community engagement across a greater range of ages.

Ms MITCHELL: Picking up on Sarah's point, there is an educative role for the media. Many of the impressions of young people are fuelled by the media. Risk is also taken up by the media and that helps to create anxiety, which then becomes a barrier. The educative role is very broad, and it is not only the domain of the kinds of people who are in this room.

Ms REILLY: I deal with it every day.

Mr McCUE: We also need to accept that we have had 50 years of designing around the automobile. It will take some time to address that environmental design.

Ms REILLY: If you look at a high-density urban environment—and I have a couple of good examples—there are much lower levels of obesity in children. That is because they walk to school, parks and pools. They do that because everything is close. I was not meaning to be awful about urban sprawl, but there are some obvious things happening in those environments that are forcing children to sit inside their house and watch television while both parents go to work with no after-school care and things like that

Mr GELLIBRAND: I would like to make an observation probably more as a parent than as a professional with the Department of Planning. There is a role for the department of school education in terms of this neighbourhood connectedness. Many parents are concerned about their kids going to school by themselves, principally because they are afraid that they will be run over by a car. That is different in places like Canberra, where you can penetrate an entire suburb without crossing a road. In Sydney you have to cross roads and that is a concern for most parents. The department of school education and the Roads and Traffic Authority obviously have programs for children to cross roads safely immediately outside school, that includes the crosswalk lollypop volunteers. That works quite well.

However, every now and then they run programs involving a "walking bus". One or two parents will take their turn guiding a conga line of kids through the suburbs. Those programs are really good for getting kids to school safely, but they also give parents a greater sense of confidence that their kids are being looked after. It starts to familiarise parents and children in the built environment with the fact that they can get to school safely. It also increases kids' independence over time. There are structural things we can do to our environment to improve opportunities for young people—built spaces, grade separated

roads and so on—but there are also softer initiatives that can be deployed through education programs.

Mr McCUE: I again stress that a coordinated approach is the best way to go. The built environment makes it safer to walk to school and then the behaviour change programs encourage the use of the safer route.

Dr TRANTER: I would like to pull a few themes together. Geoff mentioned risk, Peter mentioned the second car and Sarah mentioned the problem of parents not letting their children walk to school. One of the problems is that as parents we tend to adopt very individualistic responses to protecting our children. We drive our children to school to protect them from the parents who drive their children to school. We need to break out of those social traps. We can do that by getting a collective response at the community level. You can get the schools together, organise walking school buses and safe routes to school that will help parents to realise that it is a bit dumb to drive their kids to school because they are contributing to the problem. We can do that at a community level.

However, we also need to think about what the department of school education and the Department of Planning can do. You mentioned Canberra and the fact that suburbs there are designed so that kids can walk to school without crossing major roads. That is true. However, many local primary schools in Canberra are being closed and children must now travel a long way to get to school. One of the very important things in the built environment is that we do everything we can to keep local schools active and vibrant. I am not saying that we should never close a local school—if there is only one child that is probably a good reason to close it—but if we do close them we should retain the option to re-open them if the demography changes in that area.

Peter mentioned the second car. Many people need a second car because they drive their kids to school. However, if they thought about the huge amount of time devoted to keeping that second car supported they would realise that they would be better off working part time, not having the second car and walking their children to school. That would meet the active transport component. We assume that the car saves time. However, cars and speed generally steal our time and money. We need to rethink the way in which our transport systems do or do not save time. I have written on this if anyone is interested. The complex point is that the slower modes of transport—walking, cycling and public transport—save time and money, both at the individual and national or city level.

We should follow the example of many European cities with regard to ensuring that children are safer walking. The Austrian city of Graz has a 30 kilometre an hour speed limit across the entire city, except for major roads, which have a 50 kilometre an hour limit. Less than 50 per cent of the population supported that move when it was introduced and now more than 80 per cent support it. Of course, that makes it safer for everyone. It is very hard to kill someone if you run over them at 30 kilometres an hour. There is a big jump in risk after the speed increases to more than 30 kilometres an hour. If you run over someone at 55 kilometres an hour you have a 95 per cent chance of killing them. At 30 kilometres an hour it is only a 5 per cent chance. If I could make one suggestion to change the built environment it would be to reduce speed limits in residential streets and outside schools and shopping centres to 30 kilometres an hour or less.

Ms DENNIS: I would like to add some comments from a local government perspective. Fiona, your summary was excellent. From a local government point of view,

ignorance, lack of funding—especially the capping of section 94 levies—and lack of analysis is a very good summary of what is going on at the local government level. I would like to widen the conversation to how we involve children in the decision-making process that affects the built form. Some councils are doing it very well and getting awards for doing so. However, that is atypical. I have a couple of case studies that I will table involving councils that have actively engaged children at the primary school level in creative arts that has directly resulted in better outcomes.

The issue here from a local government perspective is what is effective and where you want to spend your money as councils to have an impact. One approach is a waste of time and I suggest we do not bother going there. I have read material about it, but I personally think it is a waste of time. The other area delivers outcomes. The area in which people are trying to engage children is in plan making. I refer to the environmental planning assessment process or the LEP/DCPs [Local Environmental Plan/Development Control Plan]. You need two degrees as an adult to understand that system. I suggest that you do that later. When we clean up that space kids may understand it. Most adults do not understand it.

The area in which we can get dividends and achieve better outcomes and make safer, liveable environments is in the delivery of better local infrastructure. Councils need money, training, education and also inspiration to do that. What children deliver to this space is imagination, art and creativity. If we harness the creativity and dreaming of children into how we design our skate parks and local spaces we will get engagement, safer spaces, less vandalism, less graffiti and fewer maintenance issues. We should turn the debate around and look at how to bring children into that space in a creative and artistic way not just a functional way. That may be a way ahead.

Children love to be engaged. The two examples I have are Penrith Council and Bankstown, where the children were creatively involved in telling councils what they wanted through an artistic process. Out of that came very functional outcomes. That is my contribution. I think let children be children. Let their imaginations drive it and let us use that to inform us how to make creative places where they will use them. Then I think we are in a more positive space in the debate.

Dr BISHOP: I am going to use that as a segue into the second task for this session. As you hear, this topic is enormously complex and the complexity is introduced in several different ways. Of course, first, the built environment itself is a complex thing, indoor or outdoor spaces, landscaped constructed, absolutely everything in the way of connection physically between. Then, as you can hear from this conversation, we never discuss it in isolation. We normally discuss it in relation to a series of outcomes like wellbeing, development, education playing, and in relation to a population group—children and young people in this instance. That immediately means that in isolating the built environment, that is a false isolation. It never works on its own to affect those outcomes. It always works in combination, with the social and the cultural contexts, the economic and the political environment together and it is always part of the interaction between all those contexts that affect the outcomes we are interested in.

The next point of complexity is that behind any environment that the children are experiencing are layers and layers of decisions made by layers and layers of decision-makers. The built environment is the result of an enormously complex process that intersects with an enormous number of professional communities. Those communities have

limited knowledge of each other's practice, let alone the impact of their decisions on children and in combination on children. The next point of complexity is introduced because this is happening within a policy and a regulatory environment. That introduces another group of stakeholders, three layers of government potentially, community groups, peak bodies, all of whom have a say in the final product.

Then, of course, we are dealing with children, who are not an homogenous group, and variations based on age, gender, ability, cultural background, socioeconomic circumstances all affect their needs from us as designers of their environments. Even variations at an individual level have a profound impact on the relationship a child has with its environment. A child's perception of the environment sits behind their sense of place, their sense of belonging or their sense of placelessness. These may sound like nebulous concepts but they are enormously powerful in the child-environment relationship and in the capacity for environments to be effective and successful in children's lives. Of course, children themselves are often not given the opportunity and certainly not consistently given the opportunity to affect these environments.

So, in the last round of this inquiry there was tremendous community engagement and the Committee was exposed to the breadth and depth of the complexity that is this issue. That resulted in a robust range of recommendations that the Commission was in large part charged with following through on. It is from its learned experience in trying to enact these recommendations in combination with a number of stakeholders that we reach this point, which is that they suggest we take a more targeted, a more strategic and more focused approach this time round and define the built environment, be quite specific in the slice of this complexity that we are going to target in this round of strategies and work so that we can achieve greater traction in the issue and hopefully greater outcomes for children and young people.

So, I am going to pick on people to start the ball rolling, Geoff. I would like you to think about which is the most sensible definition of the built environment from your perspective, which are the most important points of focus from your perspective and that you would like us to see addressed in this round of recommendations and work effort?

Professor WOOLCOCK: As you have already alluded to, it is a complex area and one should not shirk from the fact that the definition of built environments can be equally complex. One issue I want to emphasise, that I think we are often in danger of losing in talking about the built environment, is its connection with the natural environment. This is a particularly significant relationship we do not want to lose at all. It has been a problem even with some of the research that has characterised the area of children and cities to be so focused on the built environment that we lose that essential contact with nature. Paul Tranter and I were just speaking this morning about a book that Paul is about to have out later this year with Claire Freeman, a well-known writer based in New Zealand. Claire's chapter in that book on nature and children's connection with nature notes that some of our celebrity naturalists, like David Attenborough and co, all grew up in the city of London and their contact with nature was a very urban one, but taking snails into the kitchen and so forth, connecting with nature in the urban environment, is an absolutely crucial thing.

One of the outcomes of this recognition of children's disconnection with nature in relation to children living in urban environments has been to have some knee-jerk reactions—in some cases, not all—that we need to get children back out into nature, take them to the bush, or the American equivalent of a fellow whose books are best known and

who has been a visitor in this country a couple of months ago, Richard Louv, nature deficit disorder as he has coined the term in *Last Child in the Woods*, in the American context of getting kids back out into the woods. That might well be an important need but the reality of day-to-day life for urban children and young people is that their connection with nature is going to be a very urbanised one. That would be a strong principle I would like to hold on to in any definition we use of the work from here in terms of the built environment, that we do not lose that essential connection with natural environments.

My own director, Brendan Gleeson, has been well publicised in terms of his championing of the suburbs. One of the great virtues of Australian suburban living over time has been its essential connection with day-to-day nature. We want to retain that. There are some great things about that we do not want to lose in the push for density.

Dr BISHOP: So within our discussion you are centring us on the need to focus on urban environments. Are you talking public spaces, principally?

Professor WOOLCOCK: Principally.

Dr BISHOP: As we define where we might be going with this discussion I want to see what we might be jettisoning at the same time. It is unlikely the strategy we come up with can effect change usefully across all types of children and environments, for example - indoor settings - the need to support children's wellbeing in a childcare centre is completely different to supporting children's wellbeing in a hospital setting. I am going to pare back what we have been offered by speakers as we go along in terms of where we are centring our understanding of focus for this next round of work. Geoff has peak urban environments, large-scale public community spaces.

Professor WOOLCOCK: Urban public spaces, but certainly not to lose our important informal suburban green spaces, and I include in that backyards. The most prominent work anyone has done in our centre in the last five years, and it has been well publicised around the country, is a publication by an English town planning professor, *The Disappearing Australian Backyard*. It is a whole series of overhead shots of literally the disappearing Australian backyard. That has been a great source of active play for Australian children that we do not want to see lost as well.

Dr BISHOP: Now I am looking for a focus within that. Is there a particular point where the rubber hits the road for you in relation to public urban spaces that you think our efforts in this round should be centred on? As in regulatory environment, design practice, awareness training, all that sort of stuff is on the table at this point?

Professor WOOLCOCK: Let us just centre it then on formal and informal play and recreation public space, but I think by doing that, it is a fully broad coverage of the types of spaces I am talking about.

Dr BISHOP: And you want to effect regulation. Is there any particular work focus that you want to see done?

Professor WOOLCOCK: Yes, particularly effect a commitment to actually looking at measurable outcomes that are happening in those spaces.

Dr BISHOP: Measurable outcomes?

Professor WOOLCOCK: Yes, what is going on in them.

Dr BISHOP: Okay. Can we have a contribution from Paul in that regard?

Dr TRANTER: Yes, and thanks, Geoff, you have got me thinking there again about nature as well. One of the ways of looking at this is not to think about how we can define the built environment but to think about what our objectives are in terms of what we are trying to achieve for children and young people and also for all adults. I think play is the central component. Play is important for all of us. If adults forget to play, then forget life; it is the essence of life. What we should be aiming at is three broad things: one, to facilitate the freedom to playfully explore the environment—and active travel will come into that. Also, associated with that, play is a sense of connection and a sense of connection with people, other children, adults and nature, and also a sense that some risks are good.

The risk of falling over and grazing your knee is something that we should not be too precious about; in fact, we should encourage. The risk of a child falling off a cliff is a bit more serious. We need to think carefully about the difference between the risks that we want our children to be exposed to and the dangers that we want to make sure they avoid. There are those three points: play, connection and risk. They are the themes we should be thinking of in terms of what is important in the built environment for children.

Dr BISHOP: You seem, by implication, to be referring to the community environment and public urban space, both natural and constructed?

Dr TRANTER: Yes, I think at any scale, from inside your home to the backyards, the streets, the public squares and public transport. I think those principles will apply on any scale, if we get the principles right. We just apply them, whatever scale, to public and private spaces. I would not like to see a distinction between just a concentration on public spaces and private spaces. One of the major problems is that we do live in a privatised world and when we focus as parents on providing the best possible chance of giving our children a successful adulthood in a consumerist world—and I do not think that consumerist world will be around for much longer, I think we should be focusing on play, which is the best way to encourage children to grow into resilient human beings.

Dr BISHOP: Resourceful human beings?

Dr TRANTER: Yes, rather than causing them to be a nation of wimps, which we are developing at the moment.

Dr BISHOP: How about a planning perspective on this? What would be a useful focus?

Mr GELLIBRAND: I think it builds on what Paul is saying. We really have to connect the home because that is where it starts; it is the place where people live. We need to connect the home with the other places, which could be school, an open space, a beach, the shops or something in the neighbourhood. We need to connect people and their homes to those places in such a way that it can occur safely, so that you do not get squashed by a car or fall off a cliff, but that actually supports the development of young people and

children, so that when they are moving to a different place to live, they do so as independent human beings that are resilient human beings.

We have to connect their homes with these other places in such a way that we are actually fostering their longer-term development so they can participate so they are not, to use your words, wimps. That can be effected in a planning sense because a lot of those connections have a physical dimension.

Dr BISHOP: Your responsibility?

Mr GELLIBRAND: But they have a physical dimension, so you can address those things through some of the planning instruments, but they are not static phenomena; they are dynamic. A planning system can affect the shape of a suburb, the location of a road, the location of uses, open space, shops and things like that. But that, in itself, will not actually give you the connections that you are always after. It will not actually provide for people to then become increasingly independent as they grow, because the places need to be embellished; they need to change. Expectations change over time. Planning will take you partway on the journey but it will not deliver you all of the outcomes that you are after.

Dr BISHOP: The local government perspectives—you also travel part way on the journey. What is a useful focus for you?

Ms DENNIS: I would actually look at it from the point of view of the child, so it depends on the age of the child. I think there are three spaces - the play space, the meeting space and how-to-get-there space. The play space is the local park if you are little or the bigger park if you are bigger. In terms of the council's hierarchy, the local park, then the regional park and then the right level of sporting facilities for the right-age child is the key issue there. Getting feedback from kids on that is critical information so that you are matching the needs of the kids with the right sorts of facilities. That is the play space.

The other space that is really important for children is the meeting space, which is your local centres, your neighbourhood centres, the hang-out space and making the hang-out space for the youth being youth friendly is very important. We have examples at Coffs Harbour and a number of councils where they have tried to make it an inclusive space that is safe, that is not an alcoholic place, a place where kids can hang out. In the community plan that councils do, in the social planning that councils do, these things can absolutely be spelt out in how kids and youth live in those three spaces. The spaces are play space, meeting space and then how do you get there if the buses, the bike routes are in place for the kids to get there on their own so that parents do not have to continually drop them there.

I actually think it is quite simple in some ways. I think we actually look at it from the eyes of children and we look at how they see their space. That is totally derived by their age. When they are little, it is little. When they get bigger, it is bigger and then when they are big, it is the city. I actually think we should think of it the way they think of it and then we will be able to include their thinking in how we deliver better outcomes because we are not doing that well at all; we are not handling our youth at all well. I totally agree with Fiona; we know the theory but we are not delivering it.

Dr BISHOP: So that leads to another question. What would enable you to deliver it more effectively? What is missing in the landscape that could be supplemented in terms of the challenges you have?

Ms DENNIS: I think we have said it all. It is embracing children in that decision-making space, making it less regulative and much more community-based. I would put aside the development control plans—that is just not going to work for kids—and go back to the community planning and engagement process and use your public schools; go back to basics, go back to planning, basic planning: "How do you want to live in this area? Where are the hang-out spaces?"

It is not rocket science, any of it. As we all know, the problem is making it safe, useable and something the kids will want to engage in. That is the challenge because we know that parking, the conflict with traffic that these are all things that stop kids from being able to play in the neighbourhood. We sort of know the issues—I do not think any council does not know the issues—we just do not know how to deliver better outcomes at a local level. Back to Fiona's one, it is money, education and working collaboratively across the different expertise to get it more workable.

I would take it from a kid's perspective and, from the Commission's point of view, from a neighbourhood centre. From the Commission's point of view I would not be worried about public transport in the city. I would be looking at it from the local centre out, if you know what I mean. I would make that your terms of reference because I think that is how kids see it. Start inwards and work out. Then you might engage with kids and you might be able to solve it more systematically. Do you understand what I mean?

Dr BISHOP: Indeed. We touched on a range of different considerations and approaches to this, from big picture to little picture, from public to private space, connections in between, addressing risk, addressing the need for play and supporting the development of resilience and resourcefulness amongst our children, and increasing community engagement in the whole design process for the outcomes for kids, especially involving children and young people themselves in the processes of planning and design in order to achieve more effective and successful environments for them. Does anyone want to say anything about the qualities of the environments we should be addressing in this round of work, or any recommendation they have in mind as to how that should be handled?

Mr McCUE: That there is evidence that supports the criteria of the built environment that promotes physical activity, as I summarised. I think it varies, dependent upon age groups. So, I think we need to have a focus, if we are trying to encourage everyone to be active, that we dress an age-specific approach, in that it will not be the same across the entire age bracket.

Dr BISHOP: You remind me that another point you raised in your talk is the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the solutions we come up with, and perhaps strategies for how that can be better managed and how duplicate effort can be avoided, and streamlining of policies and recommendations, and all the rest of it. You seemed to touch on these matters as a need for going forward as well.

Mr McCUE: Most certainly, from our experience of trying to promote interagency that collaboration, interagency collaboration is most effective when it is established upfront and that those relationships are established right from conception, and that it is not something that is being thrown in at the end. After the environment is designed and built, then we need to add something to that already built environment. My key message, from our experience of interagency collaboration, would be that those relationships and the process for ongoing maintenance of those relationships, are really established from commencement.

Dr BISHOP: Fiona and Deb, do you want to add anything to where we are going with this, from your perspective?

Ms ROBBÉ: Yes. I was just thinking about what Peter was saying about that. Everyone contributing to the process is so important to the success of the outcome. That also builds on what Jennifer was saying: that we must build kids' participatory processes right through from the entire inception to completion of any of the principles we are talking about. Too often we are seeing kids involved perhaps at the beginning of a project and we are not seeing them in full engagement all the way through. Something that greatly worries me as a designer is that we may get a lot of ideas at the beginning, that the kids may never actually see those ideas and how those ideas travel through the design and construction processes, planning processes and regulatory processes, and that they are not meaningfully engaged in a lot of the outcomes that follow. I definitely think we need more of that in everything we are talking about.

But also, we are seeing simple things like walking, school buses, smaller programs for footpaths, community gathering centres, and all those sorts of provisions for children and young people quite often failing because we are not getting enough engagement and involvement all the way through from the local community. It goes beyond involving children; it is all levels of the community being involved. We cannot just say, "There's your skate park. Now everyone should be really happy". We find that there are all sorts of social issues and other issues that are resulting, because the box was ticked but nobody was engaged. We cannot just say, "There it is; have it." It does not work that way. It might work in a completely different way if we asked everyone involved. And we need to see further policy being put in place to get those processes fully happening at the beginning. That is how I see it, anyway.

Dr BISHOP: Gaps in the regulatory environment that we could address, and the need for greater community engagement that could be supported in a number of ways.

Ms ROBBÉ: Yes.

Dr BISHOP: I am conscious that the time has finished for this discussion. Thank you all.

CHAIR: I think the last couple of comments were extremely appropriate. I get the impression that we know what the issues are, but conveying them is a real problem for us. As someone said earlier, we need to lift the role and profile of the Commission. It really does come down to an educative thing, I think.

I will briefly relate a personal experience of mine. There was some antisocial behaviour in a particular area. We thought we did all the right things: we surveyed the kids,

we set up a management committee concerning the issue, and we got the kids involved. They all identified the need for a skate park. We got the funding for it. Then, at about five minutes to midnight, when it dawned on everyone that the skate park was going to be built at a certain location, we had 100 angry mothers and fathers protesting against it. Worse still, I knew some of them. Under normal circumstances, they would be considered good contributors to the community, but for some reason or other, even despite our best efforts, we were unable to convey that this was a positive thing. As I say, I think in our overall attempts to lift the profile of the Commission, an educative focus should be adopted in trying to overcome some of the many obstacles that people have already described.

(Short adjournment)

CHAIR: Simply put we are now going to have a general roundtable discussion. It will basically be a mixture of questions and comment. I invite the Hon. John Ajaka to be the first person to ask a question of each or any one of the participants present today.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: My question is directed to all and sundry. I have two main concerns. I am also speaking as a parent—I have six daughters.

Ms LANGRIDGE: Wow!

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I know. That is why I got into politics—to get away from them. I have noticed two things in particular over the years. Firstly, in relation to walking or cycling to school, I have noticed that we seem to have kindergarten to year 6 in one complete area and high schools in another area. No longer are older brothers and sisters walking with younger brothers and sisters to school, as occurred in my time. I have found that even some of the high schools seem to be broken down and put into two separate venues, with years 7 to 8 in one venue and years 9 to 12 in another venue. In our case, for example, we cannot have little ones walking to school in one direction and the older ones walking in another direction. The older ones do not have time to walk the younger ones in the opposite direction. What occurs is that we drive the younger ones to school and the older ones hop in the car and move along. Has any thought been given to those school scenarios that have kindergarten to year 12 and everyone walks together to school?

My second area of concern is that I drive around and see so many of these lovely, open space parks, thousands and thousands of square metres of open space, and nobody is there. It appears to me that open space parks do not work. There is nothing in them to attract people. If you do get 30 or 40 young people suddenly hovering around in those parks, the next thing you know the police are being called and there is half a riot because these kids were kicking a ball when they should not have been or yelling a little too loud. Nobody really goes to these open spaces. Are we wasting those open spaces by not turning them into something a little bit more constructive with indoor and outdoor facilities?

Mr McCUE: I will have a go at both. To start off with, the Department of Education and Training would obviously be the agency to respond to what is going on in trying to link primary schools and high schools. As part of the bike plan we deliberately tried to incorporate behaviour strategies in there to re-teach people how to ride bikes. Unfortunately, we are not getting those experiences of older siblings teaching younger siblings and riding on the streets, because the streets unfortunately are not perceived as a safe environment to play so they are not considered a play space any more.

Certainly as part of promoting the active travel to school, the evidence from the New South Wales TravelSmart program was quite clear that the parent journey to work was a strong predictor of how children would get to school and that separation would only accentuate that if you then had to get to two places. That would seem to make sense that going to one place would reduce the amount, but I am unaware of any work that has examined the difference between that. Certainly there are different strategies adopted for trying to promote walking and cycling to school for primary schools versus high schools. From the law's perspective there is an expectation that from 12 years of age children are considered to be able to safely ride on the road and are not entitled to ride on the footpath anymore. That is a legislative constraint in terms of that safety, particularly if we are crossing age brackets.

In terms of the open space, there is actually an interesting trend that we have got a gradual shift up in New South Wales for an increase in health participatory physical activity—so people participating in physical activity. What people tend to be doing though, is driving somewhere nice on weekends to go for a walk and a cycle. So we are naturally choosing quality destinations. The evidence is quite strong that open space in itself does not get people active; they need to be quality destinations. We have seen at the local council level a shift, partly due to maintenance costs, in closing down small parks and building big, quality destinations. But the same thing is happening though. People are now driving their families to those big, quality destinations. So we have got people active but unfortunately they are driving to that destination, and it is closing down a component of that neighbourhood. That is something that is a matter of concern. Certainly the evidence is quite strong that it is not just the parks; they need to be quality parks.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Professor Woolcock mentioned about the priority for risk and security. I mentioned this to him during the morning tea break and asked how we improve the situation for children. I have noticed, when talking about parks and playgrounds, a lot of councils—because of claims for accidents and so on—are closing down playgrounds and removing all the equipment. Some say the equipment is risky and could result in an accident, and I think that is a very sad development. Would someone like to comment on that?

Professor WOOLCOCK: I might respond with what we spoke about briefly in the break. I raise the issue because I think it has got multiple, manifold consequences. It is not just about physical risk and safety but that is still a core driver surrounding the issue. There are definitely some very heated discussions going on around the world about what are safe child-friendly spaces. A colleague that is working with us, and well-known in Australia on play spaces—a bit of a doyenne in this field—Prue Walsh, calls a lot of that equipment "plastic fantastic", she also uses great terms such as "safety Nazis", but areas that overly impose that risk premium on play spaces, and there is no doubt that will continue to be a contentious issue.

I was also wanting to highlight what I think is a broader discussion about what are generally safe and social environments. The example I just mentioned in the break would be worth probably raising here. Certainly a very popular part of my local world in Brisbane is South Bank. People might have misgivings about certain parts of South Bank and certain functions that it plays but overall it has a very positive viewpoint, and a big part of that is its adequate provision of safety and security. It puts an enormous amount of resources into that, not in the stereotypical way of stacking it with big body security forces and lots of

closed-circuit camera television but putting resources into lots of people-friendly security provisions so that people feel they can be there across a pretty large time cycle. You would have to say just on the amount of visitors right across the age spectrum who participate in South Bank's activities that it has been a very effective means. I still think it is one of the few examples we are able to draw on that has provided some of that safety. Typically we still hear, as we have heard here today, a number of examples where that friction arises and is not really resolved. We are going to need to find more examples. South Bank is one example on a very large scale. We are going to need to find more examples at a local scale.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: What did they do at South Bank to make it a better environment?

Professor WOOLCOCK: Like a lot of these things, it was social reform triggered by early incidents of assaults. In a sense, they were forced to grapple with this in a very public space post-Expo in Brisbane. They were forced to deal with what was a public outcry—South Bank is going to be Brisbane's playground and we do not want it to be known as a place where people can be easily assaulted and mugged. They were forced to deal with it. Often that is how change occurs. As a result of that, they have learnt. Apparently it is a very well regarded, world-class, security training program. It is not just traditional security methods—not quite the depth of this discussion in terms of children and young people—but they understand a lot more the social context of the people the security officers are dealing with and the security issues.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: My question is similar to comments I made during the break. This Committee has recently finished an inquiry about 9-to-14-year-olds, the middle years, and the differentiation between very young children, the middle years and older teens. This question is open to anyone to make a comment. How would you envisage trying to meld the ideas for open spaces for young children, the middle years who have different issues, and older teens? How would you envisage trying to get input from these three diverse groups? The inquiry showed that the 9-to-14-year-olds—the missing middle, as they are called, who are moving from primary to high school and face a range of other issues—once they leave primary school their needs for after-school activity are not catered for.

CHAIR: That is an important point to put on the record. The recently concluded report on the missing middle 9-to-14-year-olds was a far-reaching report. It dealt with issues we are facing here, although specifically focused on the middle age group. To our knowledge, it is the only report in the world undertaken by a Committee such as this. For those who have not read it, I recommended it as necessary reading. It could and, in my view, should be included in the discussions we are having here today. Did we lose your question?

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: How do you mix those three distinct groups of children and young people? Our inquiry showed the middle group had a greater distinction because of the issues they face. If we go down the path of getting children and young people participating at the beginning of the process, how do we get those three diverse groups involved?

Ms ROBBÉ: If I could speak to that, there is another study that has just recently been completed in Denmark titled, *Nowhere to Go*. That might be worth cross-referencing to your study. It looks very much at that age group and there may be commonalities between

the two. Again, it relates to what we were talking about before where this group said that their public space might be called the "meeting space". I thought that was coining a really good phrase. All these processes for finding out what we can do with these age groups has to start off with dialogue with those age groups. What the 9-to-14-year-olds might like to do in a city context may be very different to what they might do in a semi-rural context. So consultation and participation is going to drive the process ultimately. It must drive it because it is the only way we are going to get true engagement from those kids and true ownership in the outcomes for them.

That process of consultation can be augmented hugely by the research that is going on in this age group. What is happening in Denmark is that they are proposing different sorts of spaces for those children. They do not necessarily need to be separate from other spaces but there has to be a point of separation. They do not necessarily want to be seen as being younger. The outcomes are that these kids would still like to engage in playful behaviour but they do not want to be seen in playful behaviour where there might be toddlers, for instance. Swinging is huge on their agenda, particularly for girls. The study highlighted an interest in difference between the genders and what they want to do in this age group. That again is very interesting for us all to consider. Ball games were a focus for boys and for girls it was more socialising and an emphasis on particular activities like swinging and nooks for hanging out and gathering.

There is a body of evidence that is steadily growing. I believe with the right participatory approaches, again it would not be that hard to deliver. Quite a number of organisations and manufacturers are particularly targeting this age group in the equipment that they are providing. It is more robust equipment, more sophisticated. It is immensely sophisticated in its appearance. It is not meant to be tackled by a younger child. In fact, a younger child would not have the upper body strength half the time to even hop on this gear. So we are going beyond the skate park, if you like, and looking at both genders. It is all there. Everyone is kind of grappling with the same issues across the world.

Mrs LANGRIDGE: If I could give some practical examples of your point, in the Child Friendly by Design Project in the Illawarra we have done a lot of consultation in one area, the Shellharbour local government area in Albion Park, with kids from a number of different ages. We have gone into primary schools in lower and upper primary and then into high schools and talked with them about the community precinct that their schools surround. The community precinct, there is one in every local government area, is probably the nightmare place where nobody wants to be and no-one feels safe. That is the area that through Child Friendly by Design redesign principles we are trying to adapt and change. The work that we have done with kids has been amazing in that a number of different age groups have said, yes, they want spaces specifically for them, whether or not it is a skate park or a middle or early childhood design combination of natural and fixed play spaces, but there has been an overriding trend that kids want to be with kids of other ages to some degree.

With the skate park, a current and ongoing theme of a lot of the high school kids was that they wanted to also have a younger age group there. They wanted part of the skate park to be suitable for kids of younger ages so there could be a mentoring program. But also then a more difficult concept within the skate park for the older kids to have their time and play and space. But in the engagement itself we were able to do very similar things regardless of the ages. The community precinct is a large area, so that there is the capacity to have a number of different play spaces or sections that then can cater for different ages or different types of play. It means that for families it is a place where they will want to come

and be, and that is the feedback that they have been giving us, because they can bring their entire family with their two teenage kids and their middle-age child and their toddler to come to the one place and be able to enjoy the morning or the day or whatever it may be. There are other community facilities there like a library, a pool and a community centre. It is a destination point, as Peter was talking about, and obviously the most direct mode of transport will be by car.

In terms of the engagement process, we have found that by involving kids in that process they have already got a commitment to what that place will be like and that then leads to the issue of connectivity within communities, which Sarah was raising before. We are finding that if kids and young people are involved in the actual design and being respected in giving input into the process, that then leads to an ownership and a willingness to want to be there, which, therefore, connects them with the community but also can lead to issues of graffiti and those kinds of things being greatly reduced, because they have been part of the process of what has ended up being there. Just the process of consultation creates a sense of community about a place. I think we have been able to demonstrate in a number of different ways a number of processes and tools that can be used to be able to work down the road that Fiona has been talking about in terms of engaging children and young people in being able to have a say about what is there in their environment.

Ms DENNIS: Councils operate a lot of youth councils that targets that age group in particular. So from upper primary and lower secondary many councils have what is called youth council. Those kids that age come representing their school and they discuss all these issues and provide really good feedback to councils. I think they are the easiest group, for councils anyway, to engage with, because they usually have strong views about how they experience their own local environment. My research from our perspective is similar: the boys are the roamers and explorers. That age group knows the ins and outs of every park, every street; they use their bikes, they use their skates or their rollerblades and they go places. They have got good feedback; they know where there are holes in the pavement and so on and they tell councils those things. The girls tend to hang out in the shopping centres; they know the shopping centres really well. That is a bit sexist but the research is a bit that way. So that delivers really good feedback to councils, and that is happening quite regularly at a council level.

Dr BISHOP: For the Committee's benefit, you need to have in perspective what you are hearing here. Community engagement is the key. Design is always a collection of a compromise of a range of interests. But these people are speaking as though community engagement, especially with children and young people, is standard practice. It most definitely is not. It is a very rare project that welcomes children and young people's input throughout the life of the project. We often find clients quite reluctant to go down this path. If they go down it they might do it once with us, and that is it.

The problem is the report that you have got in hand is coming from young people who are not working in environments that have been the result of a participatory design process where they were included in the planning and execution of the environment around them. And it is still not standard practice; it is not consistent practice that children and young people are involved in the design and planning process. We would love that to change.

Ms MITCHELL: I would absolutely support that kind of initiative, and the Commission could be very active in that, building on the good examples and good outcomes that some areas and councils have experienced and, in particular to build advice around participation

of kids in different age groups. The middle years are a particular focus group which could link back to the built environment. The other thing is those kids grow up. We have had a bit of that conversation already. How do we adapt and change the environments as kids grow and change their demographics? I think the Commission would be well placed, in particular, to provide continued advice and education on participatory practice with children and young people, at whatever stage of the planning process that is sensible, as consultation with children yields great benefits.

I did want to alert the Committee that in terms of the *built4kids* initiative, my advice is that there have been around 45,000 hits on the website. That shows that there is significant interest. Whether people are using it to engage kids or not is not something we know and we also do not know how they are using it and where it might be strengthened. That is a piece of work we would like to do.

CHAIR: Without the counsel of my colleagues, I am trying to think it through, and it is probable that out of a gathering like this there will be a couple of recommendations at least, but I am very keen for us not to lose this moment and not to lose some of the good ideas that come from you and the various reports to which we are referring and I am wondering whether we could give our thoughts to the establishment of a steering committee. Taking into account Megan's contribution just then, it is probable that Megan would be in a good position to chair such a committee, if you saw it as appropriate. But the committee would be formed most definitely with experts such as you so that we can ensure that all those very, very good recommendations from the reports already done are put into some practical context. There will be other things that reports do not pick up. Maybe if we could have your thoughts about that and your comments as we go along.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: I might be right out of line with this but I was concerned that we are becoming more and more urbanised. No matter what city you go to in Australia you see high-rise apartments going up, which do not seem to be very child-friendly, and certainly there is no provision for open spaces within the grounds of those buildings. The first units were probably built in Sydney in the 1960s. I think it is a planning issue but it has concerned me for quite some time that no-one seems to be addressing this fact. I could be wrong but I will open it up.

CHAIR: Would anyone like to respond to that?

Mr GELLIBRAND: The observation is absolutely correct, there is no doubt about that whatsoever. Sydney, like most major cities, is experiencing growth and will continue to experience growth. Every second day in the *Sydney Morning Herald* there is some percentage comparison of how fast we are growing relative to everyone else. Putting that to one side, our estimates are that we will need another 700,000-odd dwellings over the next 25 years, and the policy position of the Government is that 70 per cent of that growth will happen in established areas and the rest will be in greenfield.

The development that happens in the established areas, as far as we are concerned, should be focused on areas that are well served by public transport and are well served by access to existing and future centres, and those centres are places where people can work and recreate. Your observation also about the manifestation of multiunit dwellings is correct, and they will only provide accommodation for certain family types. Most units have a mix of one, two and, in some cases, three-bedroom dwellings. So if you are a couple with nine

girls, I suspect you would not be living in an apartment block, you would be living in a greenfield area. The greenfield areas will provide great accommodation for people who want a more suburban experience and larger open spaces and people who have larger families. There will always be a choice in Sydney.

Families are increasingly living in multiunit dwellings and their access to open space over time will not necessarily change, but their "pro rata entitlement" will. Today we have 100 people using that space, but as time goes on that number will increase so there will be greater demand for it. We cannot keep providing more open space in these areas because it would be self-defeating—you would not be able to build buildings—so the environment must respond. It is responding, in that the new facilities for young people and families tend to be more dynamic. For example, the Ian Thorpe pool has a gymnasium, crèche, cafe and so on. They tend to be multipurpose. The Cook and Phillip Park Aquatic and Fitness Centre is probably the nearest facility to Parliament. It has a basketball court that can be adapted for netball, volleyball, yoga and so on. It also has activities for kids during the school holidays and so on.

In more densely populated areas you have a higher ratio of use for the open space, but increasingly there will be better access to higher-level facilities. The experience for people living in these higher density areas will be different. They will be less grubby; that is, people will have less exposure to the muddy environs of less formal open areas. Centennial Park will always exist and kids will be able to get muddy there, but there will be fewer opportunities in the more dense environments. The challenge is to ensure that as the density increases we are still capable of renewing, refurbishing and developing facilities that can accommodate the needs of that changing demographic. There will still be families, but they will be smaller families.

Ms REILLY: I am one of those people who has three children and who lives in a high-density environment—I live in Darlinghurst. There is not a fat kid in the area. Everybody walks everywhere and the parks are always full and active. They are really great parks. They have cafes, dog walking spaces, gym equipment and so on.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: They are not just open space.

Ms REILLY: No. We also have the harbour, which helps. People are out on the street a lot more and they know each other. That sounds unusual and people might not believe it, but people really do know each other. The other thing that happens in these environments is that places like schools are used much more. That has been a great policy shift in Victoria. I believe that is planned in New South Wales and that schools will become community facilities. Ovals, schools, playgrounds and pools will be opened to communities on weekends through agreements with local government and schools. As we become more urbanised that will have to happen more. Our schools will become great community facilities, which is what they are. Our school is full all weekend with people on the playground and on the grass.

The Hon. JOHN AJAKA: I apologise that I must leave. It was wonderful to meet everyone and I am looking forward to further input.

Professor WOOLCOCK: This is not really the pressure point. Sarah's example is great and it would be great to see more dense communities taking that path. However,

social and economic pressures mean that that will not happen in many areas. Some significant work is being done. In this place four years ago we held a child-friendly cities research conference. That was held on the back of the original report from the Inquiry. A colleague of mine, Bill Randolph at City Futures Research Centre, prepared a paper as part of that conference. There were reports on inner city issues for children and young people and on the middle and outer suburbs. Bill Randolph did the one on the middle suburbs. A couple of other pieces of work have resulted from that. That draws close attention to the issues for children and young people that we should be mindful of in denser environments.

A more recent report has been done out of Melbourne called *Vertical Living Kids* by colleagues at the University of Melbourne, in particular Caroline Whitzman from the Faculty of Architecture. That is of particular interest broadly speaking because it shows the gentrification of the CBD and surrounds in Melbourne. It paints a rosy but not naive picture of what life is like for children out free range to a certain time of night in the Melbourne CBD. They are pretty well resourced with their own casual spending money to get around Melbourne. Again, I do not think that it is the nub and they were not claiming that. It was focused deliberately on the inner city lives of children. Many were from double-income families or single-parent families and they were pretty mobile in a way that I do not think is true for children from less advantaged households.

CHAIR: Does anyone wish to make any further comment?

Mr GELLIBRAND: I would like to follow up my comments because I was describing density in a particular way. We should appreciate that increasing density does not always equate to the manifestation of high-rise buildings. You can increase densities very effectively with three, four and five- storey apartments. If you look at places around Victoria Park to the south of the CBD you can see some quite good results of that. With that higher density development you still get a good integration of public and private open space throughout. Interestingly, Victoria Park is not far from Sydney Park, which is at the bottom of St Peters-Newtown. Sarah might have been referring to that area. It is a fantastically utilised piece of open space with higher density accommodation. It has education facilities for kids on bikes in a mock traffic environment, remediated lands that now provide for a range of environmental outcomes in terms of water and it has really well designed, very active and highly used facilities for young kids. You can take kids there from zero all way through to their teens. However, it is supported by the density around it. Without that density it would be much less popular.

Mr McCUE: The evidence is strong that higher density increases participation in physical activity. It stresses the need for quality parks in that limited space that cater for a number of different age groups. When we do get that quality space it is certainly used. There are many examples of those parks being built and suddenly people filling them. That clearly demonstrates a latent demand. People wanted to be active and building that park brought out that participation. The Department of Education and Training introduced a policy last year for the use of its facilities after school as well.

CHAIR: Is the science such that it is possible to develop a set of child-friendly indicators? Is it possible for developers, local councils or those sorts of people to tick off on a set of indicators and get it right? Or is the issue so complex that some investigation needs to be done first on the environment in which the new structures will be built?

Professor WOOLCOCK: That is a slight dorothy dixer because that is the precise exercise we undertook with the Commission three years ago with the intention not necessarily for a set of hardcore quantitative indicators but certainly that local government would be the primary audience and also linking with the terrific work the Commission had undertaken to that point in asking the kids about the built environment and the things they valued. So, there was a segment in their *built4kids* resource and there is a document on its own on the Commission's website, but there is a segment of that full report that is now captured in *built4kids*, which is a set of indicative indicators—without trying to sound too wordy on that—but more towards the notion of guidelines rather than hard and fast qualitative numerical indicators for the kind of environments that ought to define a child-friendly community.

I think the science is such that a lot of those can be supported, and the feedback from local government is that that is a far more practical resource than some sort of secondary objective indicators of children's wellbeing. That is not to say that they are not vital too, and I also want to throw into discussion, but I think there is some real significance in having broad—whether nationwide or statewide—indicators of children's wellbeing, and I know the Commission, like other commissions around the country, is pulling together children's wellbeing annual reports and I think there is plenty of scope to incorporate the kinds of issues we have discussed today into those reports that are not typically in those reports.

That is, they are normally focused on traditional health and wellbeing indicators, individual markers, but I think if we can get a broader focus into those reports, as has happened quite effectively in other places around the world—and London is most noticeable with its state of children annual report, where CAGE [Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment], the group in England, has had a big influence on the architecturally built environment, has had a major input into that report about five years ago about children actively involved in planning built environments, and they had a big turnaround about perceptions about how involved children and young people are in the built environment. It was a massive turnaround, really significant, going from about 10 per cent of the kids feeling they had any say in what happens in the built environment to 60 per cent to 70 per cent a few years later. So those broad indicators are critical but just as effective and arguably more practical are the ones we have been trying to work with, directed towards mainly local government implementation.

Dr BISHOP: There is a bit of confusion about what an indicator is. It means totally different things to different sections of the community—an indicator for a research community is a very specific research tool, it is a validated part of a measure. We are a long way from having a robust set of those that can comprehensively include all aspects of children's wellbeing in relation to the built environment. What you are talking about we can certainly marshal to some extent, which is really a series of quite precise operating principles, but they lack the robust research validation process, some of them do, that sits behind them. So, we can do some of what you like.

Mr GELLIBRAND: I think it relates to your question about indicators. If we think about big pieces of public transport infrastructure—railway stations and bus interchanges—it is common practice for those things to be referred to NSW Police and they assess them against particular safety design criteria and they come back with a statement saying this is good or this needs to be changed. That is terrific, because you know, moving forward, it has been considered and is addressed.

You might want to consider a similar approach for the issue of young people. If you are doing a particular thing, have you done it in such a way with those people in mind? It brings in the question of the idea of indicators or it brings in the *built4kids* manual or it brings into consideration maybe a *built4kids* manual that is augmented by the Department of Planning's guidelines. There must be some research that indicates a whole lot of documents go to the matter of accommodating young people or designing for young people or building for young people. If you stack them all together—you would have a big mess obviously—and you try to synthesise them in a document, which I think *built4kids* is seeking to do, you could then have the basis upon which to measure certain things.

The things I am talking about are the doing things. I am talking about new developments. Where things exist you have to take a different approach but if someone is proposing a large thing, a substantial residential subdivision or, say, the Carlton and United Brewery site at the end of Broadway. It is a substantial development, that involves a number of buildings, public and private open space, access to roads, and access to facilities. Potentially you could measure those designs or have the proponent measure their designs up against some agreed outcomes you would like to see, and that could go into the mix to make sure the issue had been addressed. In saying that, we have to be careful we are not putting another hurdle in the way of development, that we are not increasing the complexity of development assessment and development approval—the Government is all about simplifying that—but it is a reasonable thing to consider in new developments, subdivisions and developments that you might want to consider some sort of measurement.

Dr BISHOP: It is a bit of a worry when a raft of indicators like that is used as a checklist. It can be interpreted minimally for indicators—

CHAIR: Or become a bit homogenous.

Dr BISHOP: Well, sites will vary enormously. It is unlikely that a universal set of indicators can possibly take into account the variation across all those design projects, and it would be dreadful to see them used as a weapon against the outcomes that we want for kids. It is difficult to assist with the interpretation of them and how they affect practice can be quite damaging.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Just following up that discussion and the earlier one about high-rise buildings, if they are child-friendly accommodation should there be a limit on high-rise levels? We do talk about having 20-story blocks at Ku-ring-gai, and I think they have cut them back to 10 levels already. Should they be limited to three levels? What is a child-friendly block of units, what height should they be?

Ms REILLY: Developers will not make any money, which is what they are all about, mostly. That will make it hard.

Mr GELLIBRAND: I do not think this is what the Reverend is referring to, but the Building Code of Australia certainly has controls over windows and kids falling out of windows, so that is absolutely an issue that is addressed already through regulation, to make sure that kids do not fall out of buildings, which is important. I am not aware of the research that says that a building of three, five, seven or 10 stories is more or less kid friendly than one that is smaller. I am not aware of that.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Perhaps we should do that then, again from the children's point of view?

Mr GELLIBRAND: I think it is reasonable to say for a lot of the higher density developments the frequency of families with more than one or two children is less, purely as a consequence of the built form. But I do not know that that translates necessarily that they are not friendly environments or conducive to children.

Ms DENNIS: Perhaps the issue with housing targets and trying to comply with the Department of Planning's standards for housing targets in certain areas, but I think the wider debate is social mix and getting the right household size that is relevant for the area. Where the debate is, is the high-rise development providing the right combination of household sizes relevant to the Local Government and Shires Associations? How many two-bedroom, three-bedroom, four-bedroom units are there and is that an appropriate mix given what else is in the suburb already? So, it is a complex argument about social mix but I think it is relevant what the proportion of that new housing might be in a suburb that already exists.

So, when you are looking at planning in the suburbs you need to ensure there are enough areas for low-density housing that accommodate large households with children. I think as long as you do your planning well, an area can accommodate high-rise development but it is a mix. Of course, some councils are concerned that that mix is not right but I do not think there should be universal height limitations. I do not think that is an answer, but I think there is a good argument, are we getting the right mix and are we providing appropriate housing for the different types of households within a suburb, of which some will have children and some do not.

Dr TRANTER: I go back to your question about the child-friendly city indicators and follow up on one of Kate's points. I think it is very important that it does not turn into a tick-a-box exercise. The critical thing is whether people engage in the child-friendly city concept with the right spirit. If they are doing it with the right spirit, then the checklist is less important. Also, there is a child impact assessment tool that was designed for the Commissioner for Children in New Zealand that might be worth looking at as a way of getting a range of organisations to think about what they do and how that might impact on children.

I think the question about the spirit is possibly addressed by getting people to understand the value of a child-friendly city approach. We know it is valuable for the children so if we can get more child-friendly cities, they will be happier and they will be healthier. Their development, not just their physical development but their social, emotional and intellectual development will be better, so you can argue on that sense. Their sense of place will be enhanced, so it is good for the children; that is one thing. It is also good for a whole range of other groups. It is good for the parents because if parents can live in an environment where children are freer to walk and cycle everywhere, parents get their lives back. They do not have to drive their kids everywhere.

Today in Australia parents spend about twice the amount of time transporting and supervising children than as they did a generation ago. So there is a lot of time and money cost involved with parents. We have heard this before but the community benefits because the presence of children, especially out and about on the streets, is a very important way of

generating local neighbourhood-based community. Children are very effective at breaking down that learned reserve between adults, and you will know that if you have ever gone for a walk with a child. If you have not got a child, a cute dog works almost as well. The last thing, of course, is that it is great for the environment, both now and in the future. If we have less traffic on the road there is less congestion, less road crashes and less pollution, and importantly there is less fuel used and that is going to be a critical issue as oil vulnerability starts to bite—just watch this space; it will happen. There are a lot of ways in which we can sell child-friendly cities. It is not just about children; it is about everyone, now and in the future.

Ms MARIE ANDREWS: In the opening remarks some of the speakers commented that some other States were doing better than New South Wales in providing child-friendly cities or suburbs. I am wondering if anyone can comment on how that was done? Was it done through legislation or regulation?

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: And is it true?

Ms ROBBÉ: I think the comment originally came from me. It was not so much on the child-friendly cities debate. It was more in policy development on inclusion. Because with the other States we are seeing a greater emphasis on social inclusion at the community level, that very often translates directly to outcomes for children. That is where we are seeing a shift between the other States and New South Wales. It is not so much on the Child Friendly Cities Initiative. Sometimes it is driven by an angle of trying to have people with disabilities more included in facilities, but it works for everyone.

That is what is so marvellous about those policies. It is at a local government level. We, as designers, would start a design project, say in Perth, and we would get a whole stack of policy documents on how to include the community in our park design, to the point where even at the level of getting comments or getting the community to come in and start the participatory processes, information needs to go out in five languages. I have never seen that in Sydney, where we are trying to engage the community through the different languages that happen around a park. That is really where we are seeing the change, not so much in, yes, they have more child-friendly cities, although they might have.

Professor WOOLCOCK: Just to validate the point that Fiona made, if I had had longer I would have said it in mine as well—and it is important to trace this—it is based in terms of its affiliation with the United Nations. The UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative came very much from the impetus of another academic, Karen Malone, originally based in Melbourne, now at Wollongong, who has been a long time chief proponent advocating for that and was behind a lot of the linking with local governments in Victoria. That was a key element to that and why a number, Bendigo and Brimbank, got some very publicised efforts underway and are still doing it under that kind of framework. There is also an important historical and cultural aspect in Victorian local government, that they have always had a much stronger community set of services branch roots to them than is true of local government elsewhere in the country. That was also fertile ground for a lot of this work to make an impact in Victoria. I just throw that in also.

Ms REILLY: Melbourne is a really good example of where they do this. In particular, in the city in their urban design they actually use stairways, chairs and things like that as recreational spaces for kids as well. So kids on skateboards can skateboard down stair

alleys in certain areas because street skating is actually more popular now than a skate park. Intergenerational spaces like along the St Kilda boardwalk are where older people can walk, little children can scooter and people can ride their cycles all at the same time in those sorts of spaces. You see that a lot in the actual urban design, which is the public space we were talking about before, in Melbourne than you do in Sydney. I think Sydney is really not very progressive in that regard.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: What are the difficulties with engaging local government or people within the Sydney metropolitan area as opposed to rural and regional New South Wales? Mention was just made of getting information in a number of languages. Where I live 130 languages are spoken, with perhaps 10 major languages. How do you engage a community, whether it is parents or children, when English is not the first language, in addition to the differences between rural and regional New South Wales and metropolitan Sydney? Ticking the boxes was referred to earlier. How do you know that you are going to get, not necessarily the quantity but the quality, as a general point of discussion?

Ms DENNIS: I know this is not typical but Bankstown Council won an award for engaging with different social and racial backgrounds when it was developing the Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Plan. It went to the primary schools and used an integrated arts program to engage the children, of which the children represented many different backgrounds. They had to do two projects. They had to talk about where they came from, where they belonged and how they saw their belongings. They had to bring the story of where they came from and design something for the town centre.

Out of that arts program—they had a set of artists—they developed a whole public arts display in the Greenacre Town Centre. The artwork that the children did was integrated into the town centre, which created community belonging. They established a set of really beautiful public art features. Out of that urban design process the kids of that school felt engaged. That became their sense of place and their sense of community. That was a very innovative way for that council to engage with cross-cultural groups and give them a say in how they built their centre. That particular council won an award for that. But that is a good example of how it can be done. I think that story needs to be shared with other councils.

Ms REILLY: I did a consultation program in the Canterbury local government area, and it is quite difficult to consult with different cultural backgrounds. The best way to do it is to go to where the people are, to go through the existing community service organisations that represent different cultural groups, to help you find representatives in the community. I think once they have someone they identify with, it helps a lot more. Public meetings do not work; we all know that. Going through those existing networks in the community is what I find works.

Dr BISHOP: On-the-ground consultation, we find, is a lot like research: you have to develop the methods and techniques that are applicable, with the community that is going to be involved, and they need to flex with the circumstance you are working with, the age group you are working with, the availability of people, et cetera, et cetera. It is usually managed best beginning at the level with the local council, not from on high—not making assumptions about what you will find when you work with the council, but working with the council specifically and working through their networks, all the work they have already done, setting up relationships, and work accordingly, and capitalise on that. I cannot see the day when we can handle community engagement from on high—a series of universal recommendations that are applicable to all projects. That would miss the point of

community consultation anyway, because every community is different and the way they want to participate can vary as well.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: In terms of consultation at the grassroots level, if you talk about local government, there are 152 councils in New South Wales, with a mix of rural and regional, ranging from very large metropolitan councils to very small shires. If the boxes can be well understood and you are going to get worth out of them being ticked, how do you manage that across such a diverse range of local government areas? If you use Bankstown or Canterbury as an example, or some of the large metropolitan councils, they are probably more involved in a range of consultation and have some form of network already set up that has some youth involvement, or they have children's services, or whatever it might be. In a number of the shire councils, for instance, they do not necessarily have all those community services and they have, obviously, a smaller staff and a smaller number of residents in the area. How do you think you could manage having something that will fit both, and getting the right answers from a large council or a large area and a smaller area where the funding is very different? Using local government as an example, quite a lot of their responsibilities are different as well.

Ms DENNIS: I was just going through all the awards for these things to prepare for today. The other case study I did not bring was one of the smallest councils in rural New South Wales that won an award for youth engagement. It is not always the capacity of the council. I think there is this will, or the right people in the right place who want to do it. I think the problem goes back to education: wanting to do it and having the tools to do it, but not actually the size of the council itself. It does not take that much to engage with the community; it just takes an expectation and the desire to do it. It is not just a capacity issue. I think learning, innovating and sharing ideas across a sector is the way to do it—not just being constrained by the capacity. I am happy to give the other example, which was a remote council that won the award for work in Aboriginal communities. It was all to do with one council officer's work, which achieved a huge outcome. I think there are individual stories. The issue is: How do you change the whole sector by individual stories? Education, I suppose.

Mrs LANGRIDGE: Building on that, I think there is also the importance of then sharing those processes amongst the 152 councils. I think if people can see a demonstration of how something is being done, and that it can be done, and that nothing fell off in the process, that can then be applied to where they are currently, regardless of the size. I think that is the key to the process. Working with kids and young people can be an incredibly rewarding experience. With the work we have been doing, the principal architect with Australand, or the social planner at council, or the playgroup mum, all contributed so much that everybody around the table came away with a great sense of, "That was a brilliant process to be a part of. We need to make it part of our everyday work practice." I think it is the sharing of examples and passing them on, so that people do not feel like they have to reinvent the wheel; there is already a protocol and the process there. I think that is really important.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: I have a general question regarding this problem that children do not play outside and do not walk to school. Should we be promoting the Safe Houses program and Neighbourhood Watch programs so that parents feel their community is safer and there is more community engagement?

Mr McCUE: There is no question, from a physical activity perspective, that a community's sense of safety increases as parents allow their children to be outdoors. So any program that increases safety would be a good thing, from a physical activity perspective.

Professor WOOLCOCK: I absolutely support that there should be any move to increase engagement, but I simply throw a note of caution about the kind of threshold that might be still there in the kind of era we are going through. We might be going through changing times, as Paul has said, but it does not look like there is any slowing of what is called "turbo" childhood, where everything is locked in to a 24/7 cycle about a child's life. There are a lot of children living across all socioeconomic statuses across society that have their childhood programmed so much that it is not even an option that they are thinking about playing outside or doing something, because it is all locked in to the week, the month, the year. I, as a parent as much as a researcher, do not see any sign of that slowing. If anything, I see it probably increasing. Speaking broadly, while we live in the kind of economy and capitalist system that we do, to me that is an inevitable outcome until some really significant things change.

CHAIR: I think we are probably out of time and have reached the point where we can start to sum up. Could I ask if anyone has a point that they specifically came to the table to make today but have not been given the opportunity to do so?

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Or any recommendations.

CHAIR: We can start with that. I mentioned one recommendation: the establishment of a steering committee. It is not like you are nailing your colours to the mast, or anything like that. I understand that there would have to be a level of detail. In fact, the Committee has not even had a discussion about it, so there might be some problems with it. But as a general thing, it is not difficult to understand the concept of it: It would be a vehicle to better ensure that some of the recommendations that have come from our very good reports get to the stage of implementation, and to ensure that we remain contemporary. Does anyone have any disagreement with that? If not, we will flesh that through a little more, in full consultation with the Commissioner. We might get some paperwork out to you, then we will draw up a draft terms of reference, and talk about participants and all that sort of thing that needs to occur, and further progress the suggestions at that level.

Ms MITCHELL: May I make a comment about that? I understand the previous Acting Commissioner agreed to do is, and to advance this at the appropriate point, which is absolutely terrific. In terms of the internal discussions we have had—and today I think we have seen this—there are many, many stakeholders in this space. I think one of the issues is to work out exactly who would be on this group and who else might be a group of critical friends that you might refer to from time to time. I think it needs to be small enough to be workable and, at the same time, there needs to be the capacity to refer to all those many players in this space when you need to. That would be my comment.

CHAIR: Are there any further recommendations?

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Do people have any suggestions for the order of priorities to guide the work of the Commission?

CHAIR: That is a good suggestion. The Committee would encourage those of you with an order of priorities to lodge that with the Commission. Now has anyone got any views on what should be the order of priorities in developing a work plan for a steering committee, considering the recommendations set out in the Committee's 2006 report? In fact, rather than putting that very difficult question to participants today, people should come back to us on that question. Participants might prefer some time to think about priority issues but it does relate to the Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile's suggestion.

Ms MITCHELL: In terms of developing that terms of reference and talking to the various stakeholders about the priorities that would form part of that exercise, and then go out more fulsomely for comment?

CHAIR: Yes, it is an all bottoms up approach to me.

Ms MITCHELL: Yes, if people are happy with that.

Dr BISHOP: To my mind I just see a problem in relation to how this is set up. You cannot have the Commission at the mercy continually of an overarching steering committee. It would be better I think probably to locate the authority over the steering committee in the Commission. The Commission has to operate within its own expertise, capacity, resources and people constraints. The committee will have much too large agendas so the steering committee needs to be a focused collection and probably used quite strategically through this process to comment on very specific projects rather than a nebulous collection of people that leans hard on the Commission to do things it simply cannot follow through on.

CHAIR: Absolutely. It would be a supportive mechanism—

Dr BISHOP: To the Commission, rather than the other way around.

CHAIR: Exactly. They are the sorts of things that need to be very clearly spelt out in our correspondence to people in trying to develop the best structure.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Can I go back one step in relation to the steering committee? Recommendation No. 1 lists a range of groups to be represented. I would imagine that one of the first things, which we cannot obviously decide on here today, would be to see if those people around this table have very relevant ideas on whether that recommendation still stands as the most appropriate groups to be on a steering committee. Has that changed since the original recommendation? I do not think it is something we could make a decision about today.

Dr BISHOP: I have a view on it. I think the approach that has been discussed already by the Commissioner; a targeted nucleus of continuous input is terrific with satellite groups that can be pulled together around specific issues. It is not that all of those people in that original group need to be at the table on all issues all the time, yet they will have very salient viewpoints that need to be included in relation to specific projects as things progress. So it is probably not that all those people need to be at the table in the first committee—it could be reduced substantially—but they are not excluded.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: No.

Dr BISHOP: You could bring them to the table quite quickly with the idea of satellite groups that can be called upon.

The Hon. KAYEE GRIFFIN: Given the original recommendation it would be too difficult, and obviously there is an opportunity to look at whether or not that recommendation is appropriate for the groups or whether there needs to be a committee and a subcommittee or whatever it might be.

Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE: Perhaps the word "steering" needs to be given further thought. It sounds as if it is steering the Commissioner. Perhaps a "consultative" committee or an "advisory" committee might be better.

CHAIR: Those comments have been taken into account in the best possible spirit and we will work towards that particular structure. Does anyone wish to say anything further?

Mrs LANGRIDGE: Just in terms of recommendations, I think as a practitioner we are coming to a point where the turning of theory into practice is something we need to take on board. Not that we do not need, we certainly do need, ongoing research and evidence-base, but for councils especially and for designers and people who are meant to be doing this work, in terms of involving children and young people, there seems to be a general awareness to some degree of what a child-friendly community or place looks like, but the how-to of doing that needs to have a greater focus. Unless we do that, the momentum that was raised through the *built4kids* resource will continue to be lost. There is a small network of New South Wales councils that focus specifically on child-friendly cities and other non-government organisations—Healthy Cities is one of those—that have been purely set up because of self interest but agencies and networks like that will not continue unless there is an ongoing mode of turning the theory and the principles into the how-to. I suppose in terms of a recommendation I think that is something that needs more focus from here on in for future reference.

CHAIR: That is a reasonable comment. Does anyone want to comment on that?

Mr McCUE: In terms of reinforcing that from the Premier's Council for Active Living experience in trying to integrate active living principles into the way New South Wales government agencies do their business, we initially had to state the case for *Why Active Living*. So we prepared a *Why Active Living* statement some years ago that collated that evidence. Now we have moved on to a point, through professional development and developing resources, to more a: What is active living? That *Why Active Living* has really turned into: This is how you do it! I reinforce that that is a good place to go.

CHAIR: Does anyone have anything further to say?

Dr BISHOP: Yes. I would support the need to emphasise the how-to aspect of this next round of recommendations. The issues in your first report have not fundamentally changed this time round but we do not need another report to some extent that leaves us in the same place. In this next round of recommendations and objectives it would be terrific to target something or focus something as set goals for some real achievement that moves us beyond what we all understand is an issue that needs attention.

CHAIR: There being no further comments, I thank you all for your participation today. It has been a very positive experience and it puts us in good stead to be able to interlink some of those very difficult and complex things we have discussed. Do all participants give the Committee permission to make public what has been said at today's roundtable? Is there anything confidential in what has been discussed? As all participants are nodding assent, the answer is that you do give permission and there is no confidential information. As time is limited today, the Committee may wish to send you some additional questions in writing, the replies to which will form part of your evidence and be made public. Are participants happy to provide a written reply to any further questions? As all participants are nodding assent, there is no problem with that.

CHAIR: I now declare this roundtable closed.

(The Committee adjourned at 1.20 p.m.)

Appendix Four – Committee Minutes

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 22)

Tuesday 12 May 2009 at 1.30 p.m.

Waratah Room, Parliament House.

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)

Ms Marie Andrews MP Mr Robert Furolo MP

Rev the Hon Fred Nile MLC

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5. Future Inquiry Topics

The Committee considered topics for possible future Inquiries:

ii) A follow-up Report on the Committee's Inquiry into Children and the Built Environment.

Resolved, on the motion of the Ms Griffin, seconded by Reverend Nile:

That the Secretariat commence background research regarding both of the suggested inquiries and provide information to the Committee at the next meeting.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 23)

Wednesday 26 August 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Waratah Room, Parliament House.

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)

Ms Marie Andrews MP Mr Steve Cansdell MP

Hon John Ajaka MLC Rev the Hon Fred Nile MLC

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8. Future Inquiry Topics

The Committee considered topics for possible future Inquiries:

ii) A follow-up Report on the Committee's Inquiry into Children and the Built Environment.

The Chair referred to the briefing note distributed by email and at the meeting. He proposed that the Inquiry would largely revolve around the June 2009 Report of the Commission for Children and Young People titled "*Built 4 Kids: A good practice guide to creating child –friendly built environments*, prepared in response to the Committee's 2006 Report, which was previously distributed by mail to Members.

Resolved, on the motion of the Reverend Nile, seconded by Ms Griffin:

That the Committee undertake a follow-up Inquiry into its 2006 Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment by examining the Commissioner for Children and Young People and any other witnesses agreed by the Committee.

Mr Keenan said that it was anticipated that this Report could be tabled in December 2009, or early in the first sitting of 2010, depending on when the Committee would like to have hearings.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 26)

Tuesday 1 December 2009 at 12.30 p.m.

Room 1043 Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon John Ajaka MLC Ms Marie Andrews MP
Mr Steve Cansdell MP

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6. Children, Young People and the Built Environment Follow up Inquiry

The Chair noted that staff of the Commission had advised that they are working with the Local Government & Shires Association to employ staff to test out the Child Safe Child Friendly indicators within Council settings.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Griffin, seconded by Mr Cansdell:

That the Committee write to the Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People seeking further information about the testing of the Child Safe Child Friendly indicators, including details as to who will be working in which Councils, and when the testing is to take place.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 28)

Wednesday 31 March 2010 at 9.30 a.m.

Waratah Room, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon John Ajaka MLC Ms Marie Andrews MP
Mr Robert Furolo MP Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC

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2. Witnesses appearing at public hearing

i) List of Witnesses for Hearing

The Chair referred to the Memorandum emailed to Members on 23 March 2010.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Furolo, seconded by Ms Andrews:

That the Committee endorses the attendance at today's public hearing of the organisations indicated on the hearing schedule.

The Chair noted that witnesses had been sent the list of indicative questions, which had previously been distributed to Members.

ii) Roundtable hearing and approval for witness travel arrangements and/or video link-up

Ms Griffin noted the geographic spread of Councils suggested for the roundtable. She expressed concern that only Councils which already had undertaken work relating to children, young people and the built environment had been included, but not Councils which might be trying to initiate projects.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Furolo seconded by Mr Ajaka:

That the Committee hold a roundtable public hearing, and endorses the attendance of the organisations and individuals indicated in the draft list of witnesses distributed to Members; and,

That the Secretariat consider inviting other Councils from areas other than those covered by those Councils currently proposed.

The Chair noted that some witnesses may need to be reimbursed for travelling to the hearing from interstate.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Ajaka, seconded Ms Griffin:

That, if required, the Committee seek the approval of the Speaker for the reimbursement of travel expenses of witnesses.

The Chair noted that some witnesses may wish to appear at the roundtable hearing via video link-up, as authorised under Legislative Assembly Standing Order 295(2).

Resolved on the motion of Mr Furolo, seconded Ms Andrews:

That, where interstate witnesses are not able to attend the hearing in person, the Committee agrees to hear their evidence via video link-up.

iii) Response to Questions on Notice from the Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People.

The Chair noted the receipt of the responses from Ms Jan McClelland, and that they had been distributed to members on 10 March 2010 via email.

iv) Department of Local Government

The Chair noted that representatives of the Department of Local Government were unable to attend at the hearing, and proposed that the Committee forward to the Department the proposed list of written questions which had been distributed to Members.

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded by Ms Andrews:

That the Committee endorses the forwarding to the Department of Local Government the questions relating to the Inquiry as agreed.

v) Aboriginal Affairs NSW

The Chair noted the response of Aboriginal Affairs NSW declining the Committee's invitation to attend the hearing; the correspondence from the Chair requesting reconsideration; and that, while Aboriginal Affairs NSW had ultimately agreed to appear, representatives were unable to do so on the date of the hearing.

The Chair proposed that the Committee forward to Aboriginal Affairs NSW the proposed list of written questions which had been distributed to Members.

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded by Ms Andrews:

That the Committee write to Aboriginal Affairs NSW forwarding questions relating to the Inquiry.

...

10. Public hearing for Children, Young People and the Built Environment Follow-up Inquiry

The Chair declared the hearing open at 10.00 a.m. and made an opening statement.

The following witnesses were affirmed and examined:

Ms Janette Belva McClelland, Acting Commissioner, Commission for Children and Young People; and

Ms Lou-Anne Lind, Policy Manager, Commission for Children and Young People.

Evidence concluded, the witnesses withdrew.

The following witnesses were affirmed and examined:

Mr Stephen John McIntyre, Executive Director, Assets, Housing NSW;
Ms Galina Mary Laurie, Acting Manager, Estates Strategy, Housing NSW; and
Ms Nada Nasser, Director, Business Strategy, Housing NSW.
Evidence concluded, the witnesses withdrew.

At 11.00 a.m. the Chair adjourned the hearing for morning tea.

At 11.23 a.m. the following witness was affirmed and examined:

Mr Thomas Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General Plan Making and Urban Renewal,
Department of Planning.

Mr Gellibrand tabled the following documents:

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

NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. 1999. *Urban design guidelines with young
people in mind*, Sydney, Australia.

Evidence concluded, the witness withdrew.

At 11.55 a.m. Mr Ajaka withdrew.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

Ms Tracy Gabrielle Venaglia, Co-ordinator, Community Services and Social Planning Team,
Wollongong City Council; and

Ms Jennifer Mary Thompson, Divisional Manager, Community Cultural and Library Services
and Library Services, Wollongong City Council.

Evidence concluded, the witnesses withdrew.

The hearing concluded.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Andrews, seconded Mr Furolo:

That the transcript of the witnesses' evidence be published on the Committee's
website, after making corrections for recording inaccuracy, together with the answers
to any questions taken on notice in the course of today's hearing.

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded Mr Furolo:

That the Committee accept the documents tabled as evidence by Mr Tom Gellibrand,
NSW Department of Planning.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 29)

Thursday 13 May 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Room 1254, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)

Hon John Ajaka MLC Ms Marie Andrews MP

Mr Steve Cansdell MP Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC

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5. Roundtable for Follow-up Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded by Ms Andrews:

That the Committee:

- endorse the attendance at the roundtable of all those agencies and organisations referred to in the Committee's 2006 Recommendation 1 as well as additional witnesses recommended by the Commission and by Ms Griffin;
- endorse the draft program as distributed;
- write to the Division of Local Government requesting a representative attend at the roundtable;
- table an interim Report prior to Parliament rising on 25 June 2010; and
- delay site visits to Councils until the Committee is in receipt of the material from the Commission's State-wide survey of Local Government Authorities in the latter part of 2010.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No 30)

Wednesday 30 June 2010 at 9.15 a.m.

Jubilee Room, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair)	Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon John Ajaka MLC	Ms Marie Andrews MP
Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC	

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2. Correspondence

iii) From Housing NSW re corrections to evidence

The Chair informed Members that, following on from the public hearing on 31 March 2010, Housing NSW provided material which included statistics on public housing waiting lists. This was then published on the Committee's website. However, subsequently they had sent information which showed that the confirmed figures were quite considerably **less** than the original figures.

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded by Ms Andrews:

That the original material provided to the Committee by Housing NSW be removed from the Committee's website, and the correct material be published on the website.

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6. Roundtable for Follow-up Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

The Chair noted the following outline for the day's proceedings:

- Welcome and swearing in
- Presentations from each of the following -
 - Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock (Urban Research Program, Griffith University) - the international perspective, including the UNICEF Child-friendly

Cities Initiative and how this intersects with planning and local government processes;

- Mr Peter McCue (Manager of the Premier's Council on Active Living) - the NSW perspective and the work of the PCAL; and
 - Ms Fiona Robbé (Australian Institute of Landscape Architects) - the local perspective and the reality of creating child-friendly built environments in NSW.
- Discussion based on the presentations, facilitated by Dr Kate Bishop
 - Break
 - Questions to ascertain which of the Committee's 2006 Recommendations are still relevant and propose priorities and mechanisms for future action.
 - Close at 1.30 pm

Resolved on the motion of Rev Nile, seconded by Mr Ajaka:

That the proceedings be conducted as outlined by the Chair.

...

10. Roundtable Hearing

The Chair declared the hearing open at 10.00 a.m. and made an opening statement.

The following witnesses were sworn and examined:

Geoffrey Woolcock, Research Fellow, Urban Research Program, Griffith University;
Paul Tranter, Associate Professor, School of Physical, Environmental and Mathematical Sciences, University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Forces Academy;
Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Planning, Local Government and Shires Associations, Level 8, 28 Margaret Street Sydney; and
Debra Langridge, Policy Coordinator, Child Friendly by Design Project, Healthy Cities Illawarra, 63 Auburn Street Wollongong.

The following witnesses were affirmed and examined:

Peter Mccue, Manager, Premier's Council for Active Living, level 3, 80 William Street Sydney;
Fiona Robbé, Director, Architects of Arcadia, 108 Arcadia Road Arcadia;
Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher, Commission for Children and Young People, 6 Sunnyridge Road, Arcadia;
Karen Paterson, Manager, Policy and Research, Division of Local Government;
Tom Gellibrand, Deputy Director-General, Department of Planning, 115-123 Bridge Street Sydney;
Josephine Wing, Manager, Centres and Urban Renewal, Department of Planning, 23-33 Bridge Street Sydney;
Megan Mitchell, Commissioner for Children and Young People, Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney;
Lou-Anne Lind, Manager, Policy, Commission for Children and Young People, Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney;
Trish Malins, Manager, Research, Commission for Children and Young People, Level 2, 407 Elizabeth Street Sydney, and
Sarah Reilly, Social Planning Consultant, Planning Institute of Australia, 12 Womerah Avenue Darlinghurst.

At 10.05 a.m. Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock, Urban Research Program at Griffith University delivered a presentation entitled: 'The international perspective including the UNICEF Child-friendly Cities Initiative'.

At 10.20 a.m. Mr Peter McCue, Premier's Council for Active Living, gave a presentation entitled: 'The NSW perspective and the work of the Premier's Council for Active Living'.

At 10.35 a.m. Ms Fiona Robbé, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, gave a presentation entitled: 'The local perspective and the reality of creating child-friendly built environments in NSW'.

At 10.50 a.m. Dr Kate Bishop, Independent Researcher (Children, Youth & Environments) invited witnesses to comment in a roundtable discussion on the presentations.

At 11.30 a.m. the Chair adjourned the hearing for morning tea.

At 12.00 p.m. the Chair reconvened the proceedings. He noted that the first Recommendation arising from the 2006 Inquiry involved the establishment of an Inter-agency Steering Committee to consider and promote key projects and initiatives as recommended in the 2006 Report. He asked Members to address questions to witnesses concerning the Committee's recommendations with a view to assisting the work plan of the Steering Committee. He also invited witnesses to raise any questions further to the previous presentations and discussion.

At 12.35 p.m. Mr Ajaka withdrew.

The Chair noted that as time was limited, the Committee might wish to send witnesses some additional questions in writing, the replies to which would form part of their evidence and be made public. He asked witnesses if they agreed to provide a written reply to any further questions. The witnesses agreed.

Resolved on the motion of Ms Andrews, seconded by Rev Nile:

That the transcript of the witnesses' evidence be published on the Committee's website, after making corrections for recording inaccuracy, together with the answers to any questions taken on notice in the course of today's hearing.

Evidence concluded and the witnesses withdrew.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No. 32)

Thursday 21 October 2010 at 9.15 a.m.
Room 1254, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair)	Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon John Ajaka MLC	Ms Marie Andrews MP
Mr Robert Furolo MP	

...

3. Children Young People and the Built Environment – Follow-up Inquiry:

a) Chair's Draft Report

Resolved on the motion of Mr Furolo, seconded by Ms Griffin:

That the draft report be circulated and that it be considered at the Committee's next meeting.

b) Correspondence from the Director-General of Transport NSW and from Dr Chlöe Mason

Resolved on the motion of Ms Griffin, seconded by Mr Furolo:

That the Committee Secretariat acknowledges the correspondence received from the Director-General of Transport NSW and Dr Chlöe Mason, noting that the information that they provided was considered by the Committee at its recent meeting; and that following the publication of the Committee's follow-up report on Children, Young People and the Built Environment, the Committee Secretariat send copies of the report to both correspondents for their information.

Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee on Children and Young People (No. 33)

Wednesday 10 November 2010 at 9.15 a.m.
Waratah Room, Parliament House

Members Present

Mr Robert Coombs MP (Chair) Hon Kayee Griffin MLC (Deputy Chair)
Hon John Ajaka MLC Ms Marie Andrews MP
Mr Steve Cansdell MP

The Chair opened the meeting at 9.24 a.m.

Apologies

Mr Robert Furolo MP, Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC.

2. Consideration of the Chair's Draft Report: *Children Young People and the Built Environment – Follow-up Inquiry*:

The Committee agreed to consider the Report *in globo*.

Resolved on the motion of Mr Ajaka, seconded by Mr Cansdell: That:

- the draft Report be adopted *in globo* to be the Report of the Committee and that it be signed by the Chair and presented to the House;
- the Chair and the Secretariat be permitted to correct stylistic, typographical and grammatical errors; and
- once tabled, the Report be placed on the Committee's website.

Appendix Five – Reference List

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Emilio Martinez, *Diseño Inclusivo Y Participación Juvenil En Los Proyectos De Cualificación Del Medio Construido*, Revista Electrónica De Recursos En Internet Sobre Geografía Y Ciencias Sociales Universidad de Barcelona N° 108, 1 De Mayo De 2008

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