

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

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**By Jennifer Dennis, Policy Officer, Planning
20 July 2010**

The Local Government and Shires Associations have been asked to provide the case studies referred to in evidence at the round table meeting of the 30 June 2010.

The following case studies are provided below. These are:

- Kingswood Park 2008- Penrith City Council;
- Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program – Bankstown
- The Story Exchange 2009 – Penrith City Council;
- The Youth Engagement Strategy – Wlagett Shire Council.

Case study 1

Kingswood Park 2008 – Penrith Council

Penrith Council applied an integrated all of council model that involved the engagement with primary school children in the delivery and design of a local park. The input obtained from children in the process fundamentally changed the location and inspired the development of the park to become a useable and well frequented community asset.

Council engaged a number of artists (visual and dance performers) to engage with the students of the local primary school to 'image' a new playground, called Kingswood Park. The participatory process allowed the children to image a new playground that resulted in very practical ideas and workable outcome. The location of the park was moved to directly opposite the school, it involved a fenced area for small children, a sports area and an area for bikes. However the elements of the childrens' imagination were incorporating in the imagery in the park. This has delivered a well used space that incorporates useable and identifiable objects that the children relate to.

The integrated and creative approach adopted by council to deliver this project has been recognized by council as achieving a well accepted and community endorsed public space, that was previously subject to vandalism. Council has also recognized

that the project funding has been well spent and would apply the same approach in the development of similar projects.

This project was a recipient of a LGSA Cultural Award in 2009.

For more information go to <http://culturalawards2009.lgsa.org.au/projects/67-creative-community-engagement-in-kingswood-park>

Case Study 2

Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program– Bankstown Council

The project

Greenacre Town Centre Improvement Program (TCIP) is an integrated urban design/ public art project implemented by Bankstown Council in 2007. The aims of the project was to upgrade the town centre and develop a 'sense of community' and ownership of the town centre by engaging with the local community- including local children.

The new town centre provides an;

- Integrated Public artworks that have been influenced of local community- including the local children;
- improved purpose-designed gathering space in McGuigan Place, which can be utilized for staging of events; children's play, community gathering and meetings;
- changes to traffic flows to incorporate new 40km/h traffic controls and regularly spaced raised thresholds, slow the traffic and allow safe movement for the pedestrian;
- A tree planting program that includes the planting of advanced trees within the parking lane to maximize impact, provide shade and soften the appearance of the older-style building facades;
- Replacement of lighting, footway pavements and street furniture to reduce the maintenance costs; demands.

Greenacre project was achieved on a limited budget.

The process

The Greenacre TCIP Project provided an opportunity for council to encourage community engagement with a view to building stronger community harmony in Greenacre.

Greenacre typically illustrates the cultural diversity of South Western Sydney, comprising people with Arabic, Vietnamese, Indigenous and Anglo Celtic backgrounds with limited understanding of each others backgrounds.

Part of the project focused on the creation of a community-based public art process. This involved the artistic input from the children from the five local primary and two high schools. A local artist John Skennar's used the twin themes of 'Sharing The Knowledge' and 'Telling Your Story' to create five public artworks, based on input from the school children.

Students were given research tasks and then came together for digital-lab based workshops where they developed their ideas to the final artworks. This process drew on the attachment that children have to their physical environment- bridging the gap between the past and the present.

The artistic process resulted in a 'Sculpture Path' and two welcome walls that are pivotal to the overall urban design of the centre.

For more information <http://culturalawards2008.lgsa.org.au/projects/29-greenacre-town-centre-improvement-program-tcip>

Case Study 3:

The Story Exchange 2009 – Penrith City Council

The Story Exchange 2009 was a creative engagement project aimed at consulting children and young people about the strengths and needs of their neighbourhoods through digital media and story telling. The stories told by participants were used to inform the development of Neighbourhood Action Plans for Londonderry and Oxley Park. A Neighbourhood Action Plan covers social, economic and environment actions.

60 children participated in three creative workshops throughout April and May 2009 which were facilitated by professional artist facilitators. Workshops included digital photography and photo composition, use of photoshop, animation and story development. In a second series of workshops young people from Cranebrook and St Marys, guided by a professional film maker and a photographer, created short digital stories about their neighbourhoods.

The works explored themes of neighbourhood strength, pride in place, local identity and passion for the environment.

The outcomes were incorporated in Councils Neighbourhood Plans. This comprised practical suggestions, ranging from requests for more bins in the parks to the replacement of the play equipment, provision of gardens and more trees, to a request for a bike track and basket ball court.

Most of the suggestions were reasonable and achievable. Council has replaced the play equipment and bins and is in the process of considering the need for a basket ball court.

The Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), Londonderry Public School and Oxley Park Public School were key partners on the project.

This project was awarded LG Cultural Award 2010 – Programs Projects and Partnerships –Division C.

For more information <http://culturalawards2010.lgsa.org.au/projects/84-the-story-exchange-2009>

Case Study 4

Youth Engagement Strategy – Walgett Shire Council NSW

The Walgett Shire Councils produced a Five Year Plan - Youth Strategy 2009- 2014, in 2009. This Plan provides an overview on issues associated with young people – between 14 and 24 who live in this remote NSW region. Part of the process of developing this plan was the creation of a Youth Council in 2008 that contributed to the findings of the plan.

This plan provides an action plan for identifying issues and recommending improvements to the local infrastructure, such as the need for additional recreational areas. It also provides a youth inspired program to deliver more suitable services for the local youth.

Walgett Shire Council provides services to the towns of Walgett, Lightning Ridge and Collarenebri, and the surrounding rural areas – covering 22, 007 square kilometres and a population of approximately 8,300.

The Youth Strategy is a good example of a small rural council working with the local youth to improve the built environment and associated services to meet the needs of youth in that region.

This project awarded an Award for Excellence – Category Small Council (under 15,000 rate payers) Youth Engagement Category in the recent National Awards for Local Government.

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