

# Inquiry - Children, Young People and the Built Environment

by the Children and Young People Joint Committee

## SUBMISSION FROM ANA CORPUZ

- **NSW Youth Policy** – Strategy 3 seems to focus only on special groups of young people or areas with known problems. As usual, non-problematic, normal kids are forgotten. I would like to see the implementation of this strategy expanded to the provision of lasting and concrete benefits for all - not just to those areas or groups that require special attention. To implement projects designed only for special groups or areas is simply the government doing its job – there is a disease so a cure is needed. If the government wants to talk about implementing a framework policy for all young people, the government will have to go one step higher and that is to ensure that all kids are given equal attention and equal share of the pie – vulnerable or not. For example, ensure provision of public space for kids just to simply hang around and do things they would enjoy and where they could be safe and relaxed. It could be that for every x number of kids in a designated population or measured area, a corresponding amount of public space conveniently located is reserved and allocated for them. This principle is the same as what local government planners follow in allocating a certain amount of space for a particular development eg density requirements. It is not rocket science.
- **Circular – Urban Design Guidelines to Accommodate Young People** – the level of implementation of this Circular is not monitored. Is it simply a piece of paper gathering dust? What has been the impact of this in local government planning? What about creating permanent and formal linkages/mechanisms between local government, DLG and Dept of Planning to give teeth to this initiative?
- **Child Friendly Cities** – legislate setting up of Children’s Council in every local government. Currently, children consultative groups are normally just committees of a transient nature with no real power to influence planning and decision making, and also usually allocated very minimal budgets (if any). Issues Paper 3 talks about numerous disparate initiatives in NSW. I believe that permanent, substantial and meaningful involvement of children

will only come about if there is comprehensive commitment by the government. This is possible via a change in legislation (perhaps to the Local Government Act, etc) making it a statutory requirement for local government councils to set up a Children's Council which will pave the way for real involvement of children and not simply as a tokenistic organizational initiative or strategy. This Children's Council will represent anything and everything concerning children and will meet regularly with the Mayor to discuss and address issues to ensure input of the 'children agenda' into every aspect (strategic and operational) of Council planning and decision making. The number of members will be up to each Council to decide but the legislation should set a minimum number of members, age bracket, minimum number of meetings and also prescribe a set of core issues that should be regularly examined. The Children's Council will also be tasked with representing their LGA and giving an annual briefing to State Government on children's issues in their LGA and what needs to be done, thereby recommending projects of their LGA that might require funding from state government. This could be done in the form of an Annual State Forum of Childrens' Council Representatives with no less than the Minister for Young People in attendance. In effect, this might replace or work together with the Advisory Council for Young People.