

**Community Cultural Development NSW's**  
**Submission to the Committee on Children and Young People's**  
**Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment**

22 November 2005

**About CCDNSW**

Community Cultural Development NSW is a not-for-profit company that serves as the peak community cultural development organisation in NSW. We have three major programs – Indigenous, Cultural Diversity and Youth and we focus on the geographical areas of Western Sydney, the Illawarra, the Central Coast and the Lower Hunter regions. We provide information, advice, advocacy and training services. CCDNSW is also an active participant in national and international networks, which support the growth of ccd.

**Community Cultural Development**

Community cultural development (ccd) is an arts based practice where communities and artists collaborate to produce works which explore and express the aspirations, identity and concerns of communities. It covers an enormous range of activities which provide increased opportunities for communities to tell stories, build their creative skills and be active participants in the development of their own and our national culture.

**Youth Program of CCDNSW**

The Youth Program has coordinated several ccd projects, including the publication of an arts and cultural magazine in South West Sydney. A prime focus of the Youth Program is to promote youth participation in arts and community projects. In this sense participation means real, active and considered participation. It is very important that young participants shape the projects that they are working on. If they are not active participants, they will not 'own' the project, and the project will more than likely fail.

As the Youth Program Manager I firmly believe in promoting the idea of young people as creators and active participants in cultural and community activities, rather than the idea of young people as passive consumers of culture.

### **Impacts of the Built Environment**

As stated in the Committee's Issues Paper 1, "Failure to consider the needs of children and young people will render our built environment dangerous, inaccessible and unsatisfactory."(p 2, Issues Paper One)

Built Environment can mean so many things. In terms of CCDNSW and our work with a broad range of communities, issues of the Built Environment focus on public space, youth accommodation, and public housing. We are interested in how communities use parks, streets, hospitals, shops, and youth centres. Any place that the public accesses and uses on a regular basis.

There are definite links between the built environment and an individual's (and community's) well being. The environment can stimulate and bring happiness, and it

can also be quite depressing. There has been substantial research into hospital planning that shows that hospital design plays a significant part in the recovery time of patients – open, light and art filled spaces promote the health of patients, as do community development projects in children’s hospitals. The background papers provided by the Committee also mention the ongoing struggle to design the best community housing model – trying to improve on past disastrous models.

There is great potential for the built environment to “enliven, stimulate and create new possibilities for socialising and interaction.” (p5, Issues Paper One) This potential undoubtedly impacts on how communities work and how people understand each other.

#### Needs of Young People and the Built Environment

It is clear that issues of the Built Environment are not limited to how they affect young people. But it is recognised that young people occupy a special place in our communities – and are increasingly forming a large proportion of society. CCDNSW endorses the principle of youth participation in the planning and development of Built Environments.

This issue is tied closely with broader issues of the perception of young people by the wider community. A main issue of the perception that young people, especially when hanging out in groups, pose a threat to broader society. This is particularly true when we look at shopping centres. There are many stories of young men, in particular, being banned from shopping centres because of perceived problems. Recently, as part of an ArtStart project, a small zine was created by the Parks Community

Network, based in Prairiewood in Sydney's South West. Called T-WAY, the magazine raised the concerns of local young men who have had various run ins with security at the local mall.

From the magazine: "I walked out of the chemist at Stockies [the mall] only to be searched by a police officer who was not in uniform. He made me empty my pockets in the middle of the shopping center [sic]. After he didn't find anything he told me to leave."

This is also an issue of creating spaces that will continue to be used by, and relevant to, young people. An ideal space for young people is a place where they can meet up with each other and have access to the tools to express themselves – places for art making, skating, riding, playing. Another quote from T-WAY illustrates this point: "We come to the youth center [sic] because we get treated with respect. It's a place we can come to just relax and take it easy, and not have to worry about security or the police hasseling [sic] and intimidating us."

Young people should have space where they won't be moved along if they haven't got money to spend. And the wider community deserves public places where we can all exist without corporate intimidation.

As such, CCDNSW endorses the Child Friendly Cities movement, and are willing to assist the Committee on Children and Young People in any way we can.

**CCDNSW refers the Committee to the following publications:**

~ John Hawkes, The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability, Common Ground Publishing, 2001  
~ Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, 'Art and Wellbeing', Australia Council, 2004  
~ Graham Pitts, 'Public Art Public Housing', North Richmond Community Health Centre, 2004

For more information about this submission, please contact Cate Furey, Youth Program Manager, CCDNSW on 02 9764 6588 ext 6 or email [cate@ccdsw.org](mailto:cate@ccdsw.org)

More info on CCDNSW can be found at our site, [www.ccdsw.org](http://www.ccdsw.org)

Regards

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