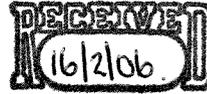




CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

City of Cultural Diversity



Enquiries: Lyn Frankovich
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Our Reference: Y-4-2

Mrs Barbara Perry, MP
Chairperson
Committee on Children and Young People
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mrs Perry,

Subject: Inquiry into Children, Young People and the Built Environment

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide input into the NSW Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People inquiry into children, young people and the built environment.

I understand the NSW Commission for Children and Young People will be making a submission and I would like to submit this letter in support of their submission.

Canterbury City has a significantly higher population density than all other Councils in NSW with a total population in excess of approximately 140,000 closely followed by Randwick and Parramatta. As a consequence, the high concentration of population places increased demands on services and resources in the City. In addition, we have a culturally diverse population with 44.3% of our population born in a non-English speaking country.

It is important for planners to take into account the views of young people and children in the built environment and create child-friendly infrastructure (roads, footpaths, recreational facilities, open space) responsive to the changing needs of today's children and young people. With reports of increasing levels of obesity in young people, it will be important to design footpaths which are conducive to exercise as a mode of transport as well as creating separate recreational facilities. Including the opportunity for incidental exercise into our urban environment will build safer and more resilient communities as people reclaim the streets for exercise and commuting (on bikes, skateboards, rollerblades). Safer streets will encourage parents to let their children walk to school and to the local parks. Some excellent examples can be found throughout the world as part of the Child Friendly Cities (UNICEF) Initiative.

In order to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, our urban environment needs to take into account the changing needs of young people. Shopping centre developers need to acknowledge that young people need a place in which to meet and socialise. They also need to incorporate affordable or free recreational activities for young people to increase their level of fitness, while at the same time reducing the opportunity for criminal behaviour.

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Creating child and young people friendly urban environments requires a cooperative approach between different levels of government if we are to create sustainable communities for future generations.

Our Canterbury Youth Council, comprised of 15 young people aged 12-25 years old, provides advice to Council on a variety of issues. Recently, Youth Council provided advice about the location of a potential new skate park for the area. Their views are also sought on such projects such as the school holiday program at the Youth Centre and the festival to celebrate Youth Week. We also have access to the views of families with young children through our Child and Family Interagency, Family Day Care program and 4 Child Care Centres. Each Child Care Centre can provide access to almost 60 families, for example.

Involving young people in decisions is essential to understand their needs and empower them as leaders in the future. Local Government and organisations such as the NSW Commission for Children and Young People are pivotal in getting the views of young people heard and incorporating these views into the policy making process.

For further information, please contact Lyn Frankovich, Acting Team Leader Youth Services, on 9789 9433.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jim Montague', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat messy, with some ink bleeding through the line.

Jim Montague
GENERAL MANAGER

8 February 2006