

Submission

No 6

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 9-14 YEARS IN NSW

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Submission to Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee Inquiry into Children and Young People 9-14 years in NSW

On behalf of Holroyd City Council

28 April 2008

At the meeting of 15 April 2008 Council resolved to make a submission to the Inquiry, based on a report to that meeting. The following information is based on results of community consultations, daily contact with and feedback from children and young people in the relevant age group, and regular staff discussions on the needs of this target group. Information has also been taken from the 2005-2009 Holroyd Social Plan.

What are the needs of Children and Young People in the middle years i.e. between 9-14 years of age?

- Structured and unstructured before and after school activities
- School holiday programs
- Activities and programs which cater for children and young people with a disability
- Homework assistance programs
- Safety fencing around parks and playgrounds
- Seating in parks to encourage adult supervision
- Shade structures in parks and playgrounds
- More sporting fields to encourage participation in active sporting programs and competitions
- Playground equipment suitable for 9-14 year olds
- Supervised social events and activities for 9-14 year olds on Friday and Saturday evenings
- Access to the internet
- Seats along bike tracks to rest on
- Specific recreational facilities such as skate parks and motorcross tracks
- Age-appropriate resources and spaces in public libraries
- Transition accommodation for 13-14 year olds at risk of homelessness
- Living skills programs for young people
- Appropriate support and counselling services in schools and community health centres
- Support and counselling services for parents including single parents

The extent to which the needs of children and young people vary according to age, gender and level of disadvantage

All children differ in their individual growth physically, emotionally, socially, cognitively and linguistically. The age range from 9 to 14 years old, gender and level of disadvantage must all be considered when planning services and programs, to ensure equitable access for all.

The activities services and support which provide opportunities for children and young people in the middle years to develop resilience

Activities and programs that offer recreation, safety, fun, self-esteem and socialisation will help to provide children with resilience. Such programs provide a level of comfort and security which allows the child to relax and develop. The programs need to meet the children's and young people's interests and to be affordable and local so transport does not become a barrier.

The extent to which changing workplace practices have impacted on children and young people in the middle years including possible changes to workplace practices which have potential to benefit children and young people in the middle years

More families are dual income or single parent therefore the need for out of school hours services is increasing. Services must ensure they cater for the older age group or the children tend to stay at home alone.

By making such services a positive experience for the 9-14 year olds they will have the opportunity to learn new skills, and participate in more activities, developing greater competence and confidence into adolescence.

Other impacts of the dual income trend include:

- Parents unable to spend enough time with their children
- Children needing to find other supportive adults as role models to complement the parental role
- Long hours at work often prevent parents from encouraging children to be involved in sporting programs, scouts/guides, and other after-school activities
- Lack of time for strong parent-child interaction can create a need for professional support and counselling services for children and young people

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