

SUBMISSION FOR INQUIRY ON CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, CONDUCTED BY THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE

LOCAL CONTEXT

The Mosman Municipality is located in Sydney's northern suburbs - about 6 kilometres from the Sydney GPO. The Municipality is bounded by the Middle Harbour in the north and north-east, Port Jackson in the east and south and the North Sydney Council area in the west.

The Mosman Municipality is predominantly a residential area. It has also some military use in the eastern section, significant bushlands and beaches along the harbours and some commercial areas. Major features include Sydney Harbour National Park, Taronga Zoo, HMAS Penguin Naval Depot, Mosman Art Gallery, Bridgepoint Shopping Centre and various exceptional beaches.

The Mosman Municipality has a total population of 28,420 persons on 8.74 km². The challenge Mosman Council is facing today is to continue to provide high standard facilities and services for a highly demanding community, from which over 5,000 are infants, children and youths under 17 years old (1,488 children aged 0 - 4 years; 3,619 children aged 5 - 17 years) - taking into account both the pressure from developers and the high value of land.

<http://www.id.com.au/mosman/atlas>

PLANNING FOR A CHILD FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

A child friendly community is one where children are valued, supported, respected and provided for, where children:

- * play a part in the community;
- * reach their full potential;
- * live well; and
- * are free from harm.

Strong, healthy communities that enhance children's development and wellbeing:

- * have services and social networks to support families;
 - * involve and respect its children;
 - * help modeling appropriate parenting behaviour;
 - * minimise Environmental risk factors to which children are exposed (like indoor and outdoor poor air quality; poor sanitation and hygiene; reduced dietary intake; food contamination; hazardous chemicals; exposure to radiation as to the UV component of sunlight; noise; poor building standards; others);
- and
- * take pride in its people and culture.

Mosman reflects its children and youth interests in MOSPLAN.

CHILDREN AND MOSPLAN;

ISSUES AFFECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - HOW ARE THESE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN MOSPLAN

Council's Strategic Management Plan is known as MOSPLAN. The purpose of MOSPLAN is to set the direction of the Council so that the community's needs and expectations are met in a planned, co-ordinated and cost-effective manner. MOSPLAN is divided into twelve programs which cover Council's principal activities. It links the programs and their objectives to the annual budget and to the forward financial plan, and is the basis of individual staff performance and work plans.

Mosman Council is committed to build a healthy future for all Mosman children. Within MOSPLAN 2005 - 2008 there are programs that specifically target children and young people:

PROGRAM 8 - Community Development and Services

(Sub-Program 8.03: Children/Family

Visionary Objectives To have a range of high quality, well promoted children's services and facilities that respond to the needs of children and families living and working in Mosman.

Sub-Program 8.04: Youth

Visionary Objectives To have young people in Mosman recognized and valued with an optimum quality of life, as members of equal standing in the community and to develop active empowerment and involvement through a variety of high quality, well promoted services and facilities that are responsive and relevant to their needs and culture.

Sub-Program 8.07: Early Childhood Health

Visionary Objectives To have a range of health programs and services that are accessible and responsive to the health needs of newly born infants in Mosman and that facilitate their optimum development and support their parents.)

But biological, economic and social factors greatly influence children's vulnerability to environmental risk factors in their different developmental stages, from conception to adolescence. Mosman policies take into account these factors and their interactions. As such, other programs within MOSPLAN 2005 - 2008 directly or indirectly affect children wellbeing, as for example the ones that contain the followings:

Sub-Program 3.05: Land Use Management Planning

Sub-Program 5.02: Atmospheric Environment

Sub-Program 5.07: Noise

Sub-Program 6.04: Disease Prevention

Sub-Program 7.02: Community Involvement in Crime Prevention Strategies and others.

All programs within MOSPLAN 2005 - 2008 have Attainable Objectives.

All programs have Key Performance Indicators and yearly targets that ensure the objectives are met.

Council reports quarterly on MOSPLAN.

Mosman Council submits annually a Statutory Report to the NSW Department of Local Government as part of its formal annual reporting obligations on Council's operations (including MOSPLAN).

CHILDREN AND MOSMAN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

Mosman Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 1998 is the main planning document for Mosman. The LEP is a statutory document that aims to protect the unique lifestyle and character of the area. The LEP controls development in Mosman and specifies where and how development can occur within different areas. It also identifies particular environmental considerations.

Today, over 20% of Mosman's local governmental area is covered by recreation reserves, national parks, bushland and open space. Another 10% is Military reserve and Taronga Zoo.

Residential and business zones cover about 50% of Mosman.

Under Mosman LEP 1998, childcare centres are permissible in most residential zones, all business zones, community uses zone and even some open space / public recreation zones.

However, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning announced a major overhaul of the NSW planning system aiming to improve the way local planning is done in NSW. The Department of Planning prepared a draft standard local environmental plan (LEP). Once finalised, all councils will use the standard LEP to prepare a new local plan for their area within the next five years.

Mosman Council already initiated the process needed to review its LEP. The new improved one is expected to better respond to the community needs, and as such, in the next two years will take place an extensive consultation and analysis of the community's issues and interests, including children and young people.

Knowing that latest urban design practices suggest that road networks should be well connected with local and regional facilities and activities and pedestrian and bicycle paths should have direct access to a destination, it is expected that the new LEP will increase even more the mix of land uses and densities, street connectivity and opportunities for walking and cycling - viable alternatives to the local use of the car.

Mosman Council is already proposing new walks and bicycle routes through out Mosman, to complement the existing ones and take full advantage of the scenic harbour views, residential streets, Federation and Harbour fortifications, parks, gardens and bushland. For the existing routes, Mosman Council has several brochures, available at Mosman Council, Mosman Library and Mosman Community Information Centre and to download from Council's website:

* Harbour to Spit Walks - a partnership project between community Walking Volunteers, Mosman Council, North Sydney Council, Manly Council, National Parks & Wildlife Service, Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, Department of Lands and Department of Planning:

<http://www.mosman.nsw.gov.au/planning/harbour-to-spit-walks.pdf>

* The Balmoral Self Guided Heritage Walk - gives information on items of heritage significance that can be seen as points of interest on the Balmoral walk. It also provides a map that might be of use to those people interested in the walk:

<http://www.mosman.nsw.gov.au/planning/balmoral-selfguided-heritage-walk.pdf>

CHILDREN SERVICES IN MOSMAN

Local Government organisations should play a major role in the provision of Children's Services. In Mosman, Council aims to achieve sustainable management of the City's resources and opportunities and to provide high quality, affordable services, responsive to the needs of the community and in partnership with the community, State and Federal Governments, educational institutions and the private sector.

Family Day Care / Long Day Care

Council facilitates a number of affordable long day care places at Pippies at Balmoral Childcare Centre for families of low to moderate income requiring childcare.

Another Council facilitated child care centre is planned to open in 2005-2006 at the former bowling club site in Alexander Avenue, Mosman (long day care centre for children aged 2 to 6 years). Ten affordable places are planned to be made available at this centre for families of low to moderate income.

Before and After School Care

Vacation Care

Mosman Occasional Childcare Centre

Mosman Council's Immunisation Clinic

Council's Children's Services aim to include children with special needs wherever possible. The North Sydney Children's Services Support and Resource Team (SUPS) facilitate access to mainstream, federally funded childcare for

children with disabilities, children from non-English speaking backgrounds and children of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent.

In order to enhance children creativity, social and physical development under the guidance of professional tutors, Council facilitates a number of courses for preschoolers (as Baby Ballet, Busy Little Bees, Art) and a number of courses that target school children up to 10 years of age (as Art, Tae Kwon Do, Creative Clay and Yoga).

All children facilities and services provided by Mosman council are evaluated at regular times by parents through an Evaluation Checklist, also available on Council's website. This checklist is provided to assist parents to determine which services meet their needs and expectations of quality and which services can be improved and in what areas.

Mosman Council continuously looks for new ways to increase Family Day Care places. As these issues require strategic and collaborative focus at the regional level, Mosman Council approached the subject along with other councils on Sydney's Northern Beaches (Manly, Pittwater and Warringah) with whom it forms SHOROC (the Shore Regional Organisation of Councils). The SHOROC Child Care Project, initiated in August 2004, aims to increase child care places throughout the region: <http://www.shoroc.nsw.gov.au/pdf/SHOROC-childcare-presentation-aug04.pdf>.

Moreover, Mosman Council prepared an easy to read, simple guide on How to set up a Childcare Centre in Mosman:

<http://www.mosman.nsw.gov.au/planning/childcare-setup.pdf>

The guide outlines the planning controls for childcare centres and other approvals that are required, as well as details of useful publications.

Mosman Area also has two venues that host Playgroups (Baptist Church and St. Luke's Church), providing parents and carers with an opportunity to meet other parents and carers, make friends and share ideas and experiences and babies and children aged 0 to school age come together in a relaxed and friendly environment.

YOUTH SERVICES IN MOSMAN

Mosman Youth Development Centre - a free community service for young people of high school age accessing the Mosman area. The Youth Centre provides a safe space for young people to relax, socialise and interact with other young people of the community.

The Youth Development Centre also manages a number of different activities, events and programs, such as:

- * Breakfast Club
- (during school term only)
- * School holiday programs
- * Summer and Winter Camps
- * Annual Shoreshocked Youth Week Festival

www.shoreshocked.com

Shoreshocked is Sydney's biggest free Youth Festival, held every year as part of DETYA Youth Week celebrations. Shoreshocked, running in various forms for over 10 years, is attracting over 10 000 fun loving people. Most of the "behind the scenes" of Shoreshocked is done by young volunteers. From the last Youth Committee, held on 12 October 2005, along with Mosman Council there were a number of other councils involved: Lane Cove Council, North Sydney Council and Willoughby Council.

- * Alcohol and Other Drug information forums
- * Sexual Health and other development information forums
- * Parent networks and support groups

Council staff provides information and referral for both young people and the community; they can act as an advocate for youth needs and be available for young people and adults to consult them on youth issues. Staff has access to youth networks throughout the region, so if there is anyone in the community with youth related issues then they are encouraged to contact the Youth Development Centre and speak to one of the staff members. They can also assist with employment and education problems, resumes and referrals to other government facilities.

The Youth Centre Webpace:

www.schools.ash.org.au/mosyouth

In December of 1999 Mosman Municipal Council received a grant from the Centenary of Federation's Community Grant Trust to fund the Mosman Youth Centenary of Federation Internet Project in celebration of Australia's National Federation. It was directed to purchase IT equipment and to create and maintain a youth webpace, relevant to the specific needs and interests of young people in Mosman area.

Mosman Youth Forum - a group of local young people interested in advocating the needs of the youth in the Mosman area as well as acting as a consultative committee for Youth Development Centre. Through Mosman Youth Forum, young people can have their say on issues that affect young people in Mosman as well as providing input into the running of the Youth Development Centre.

Working together with the other SHOROC Councils, with Clubs NSW and with Northern Beaches Health Promotion, Mosman Council developed a booklet in order to increase the awareness amongst young people and their parents about their responsibilities for safe partying. The No Regrets Safe Party Tips booklet (<http://www.shoroc.nsw.gov.au/pdf/SafePartyTips.pdf>) was just launched in 2005 and will be distributed to school leavers and young people throughout the region. Rather than discouraging young people having fun, Councils are promoting strategies for teenagers and parents to create safer environments for young people to celebrate. The booklet reinforces the work of the NSW Police and Education providers in presenting the key messages relating to safe partying.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND OTHER KEY FACILITIES IN MOSMAN

The current Recreation Strategy is another important and relevant document that reflects the recreation needs and desires of the Mosman Community for the 0-5 year timeframe in the categories of Sporting Facilities, Youth Facilities, Playgrounds, Aquatic Facilities, Informal Recreation Areas, Hockey Facilities and Disability Access. Here are some other facilities that are of high interest for Mosman children:

The 17 public playgrounds.

These playgrounds vary from simple swings and climbing structures to the latest in playground equipment and play design incorporating public art, educational features and equipment for junior and senior users. Council has adopted a playground improvement program which will see all playgrounds in Mosman progressively updated. Council's vision is for its playgrounds to be gathering places enjoyed by families, children and their carers and providing opportunities for socialisation, physical challenge, imagination and relaxation.

Mosman's sporting fields available for casual or seasonal use:

Allan Border Oval - Myahgah Rd.; Balmoral Oval - The Esplanade, Balmoral;
Georges Heights Oval - Suakin Drive; Middle Head Oval - Middle Head Rd.; Rawson Oval - Cross St.

The Balmoral Oval Skate Park opened in March 2005. The facility, located at the Southern end of Balmoral Beach, behind the oval, is designed for skateboards, bikes, rollerblades and scooters.

The Mosman Swim Centre, located in Vista Street, Mosman, adjoins a street-front café and features a 6 lane 25m indoor heated pool, with change rooms and showers. The public swimming pool is owned by Mosman Council and managed on Council's behalf by contract managers.

Mosman Council Library - that continuously aims to improve services to young adults, particularly students, through the provision of quality stock and services.

Mosman Library is a member of the Shorelink Library Network (<http://webcat.shore.shorelink.nsw.gov.au>), a computer network that links the libraries of Mosman, Lane Cove, Manly, Stanton (North Sydney) and Willoughby. Within Mosman Library, the Local Studies Section includes current and retrospective material on Mosman, people, places and events. Exhibitions are on display throughout the year. Workshops and outreach activities are held regularly.

Council endeavours to have these facilities maintained to a high level at all times.

ROLE OF COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Mosman Council welcomes the Committee's initiative to gather information from Local Government.

The Commission on Children and Young People will also help even more by

Disseminating, on a regular bases, any related important information to local authorities;

Facilitating better access to sponsors and funding grants
(e.g. in Mosman's specific case, places to apply for the funds needed in order to increase the space available for certain services in high demand such as: Child Care and Immunisation Clinic)

Providing examples of best practices - strategies (research findings, implementation, result evaluation etc) that can be adopted locally to improve services to the community, planning processes or the build environment
(e.g. improving building accessibility / ramps etc. for mothers with young children etc.)