



Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia

*Caring for the future growing up today*

# **Building** spaces and places for children and young people



## Alternative formats

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Commissioner for Children and Young People WA

Ground Floor, 1 Alvan Street

Subiaco WA 6008

Telephone: 08 6213 2297

Facsimile: 08 6213 2220

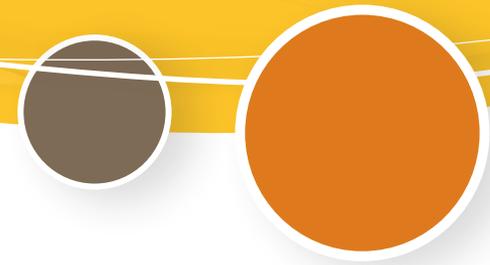
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Email: [info@ccyp.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@ccyp.wa.gov.au)

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## Message from the Commissioner

The built environment has a significant impact on children and young people's development, their quality of life and their experience and enjoyment of the world. Schools, houses, shops, walkways, railways, parks, recreational and community centres are all part of our built environment.

There is growing recognition of the links between the built environment and the community's health and wellbeing – urban design, transport, architecture, planning, developers and land development all play a fundamental role in shaping the built environment.

Western Australia's unique geographic and demographic landscape combined with our State's fast-paced growth and development means there are opportunities to shape and enhance the built environment and, in doing so, promote the wellbeing of children and young people in urban, regional and remote areas.

The role of Commissioner was established under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*. In carrying out my statutory responsibility, my role is to influence and promote the wellbeing of children and young people in Western Australia by ensuring policies, programs, services and laws take into account their needs.

This involves being an advocate for our youngest citizens and representing their needs to the community, government, not-for-profit organisations and industry. A key focus of my role as Commissioner is to promote the participation of children and young people.

*Building spaces and places for children and young people* seeks to provide practical information and promote and facilitate the active participation of children and young people in the planning and design of their communities and built environment.

This publication highlights positive examples of how working with children and young people can lead to better outcomes in the built environment. My aim is for the publication to complement other available resources in this area, some of which are suggested in the Resources section of the publication.

By engaging children and young people in designing and planning the built environment we can create cities, towns, neighbourhoods and communities across Western Australia that are engaging, inclusive, safe and accessible.



Michelle Scott  
Commissioner for Children and Young People



## Opening messages

### Message from the Government Architect

The built environment forms the stage on which the lives of our children are played out. It is the physical framework within which our children learn about society and its values. We are compelled to create an environment which fosters social interaction, spontaneous learning, sustainable responsibility, community worth and physical activity.

Our cities, towns and neighbourhoods can be enriched as places that embrace our children. The making of these places can include children's creative input resulting in an outcome that all can enjoy. The challenge is for decision makers and designers of our built environment to embrace this input at the outset of considerations and to open the door to the wonderful possibilities that it offers.

Our buildings, places and spaces have an indelible impact on the wellbeing of the young people of our society. We must shape the built environment with children and youth at the very heart of our considerations.

#### Steve Woodland



### Message from the President of the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)

WALGA is highly supportive of the Commissioner for Children and Young People's efforts in representing the needs and aspirations of younger Western Australians. This publication shows the importance of the built environment for children and young people, and how involving children and young people in decision making about the built environment can both empower children and young people and add value to projects. The examples showcased here, including examples from Local Government, are compelling.

Local Government has a critical role in the built environment, and as a sector brings commitment, skill and leadership in understanding and responding to local needs. Across the organisation Local Government works to create a bright future for children and young people through activities such as community and youth development, creating and maintaining parks, playgrounds and streetscapes, and considering and planning how spaces are used.

I believe an inclusive approach to community landscapes can help create places that are inspiring, enjoyable and practical. This is an area in which Local Government promotes and fosters the wellbeing of children and young people, now and into the future.

#### Mayor Troy Pickard



## Why involve children and young people in the built environment?

The built environment refers to everything around us that is constructed or adapted by humans. It includes all buildings, physical features and spaces where people play, learn, work and live. Schools, homes, parks, shopping centres, transport infrastructure, recreational and community facilities are all part of the built environment.

Consequently, the built environment impacts directly on children and young people (as it does on all of us). Research shows that the physical surroundings in which children and young people grow, influence and shape their interactions, development and experience of life into adulthood.

The places and spaces that children and young people inhabit fundamentally impact on their levels of fun and enjoyment of life. The built environment has the ability to inspire our imagination and exploration, but can also enable time for reflection as well as connection with friends, family and the community.

### What children and young people have told us about their built environment

In 2009, the Commissioner for Children and Young People undertook research that asked a broad range of children and young people what was important to their wellbeing. The findings drew on the views of nearly 1000 participants aged from five to 18 years living across Western Australia.<sup>1</sup> Many of the issues children and young people talked about were closely related to the built environment within the themes of fun and activity, being safe, independence, and acknowledgement and respect.

#### Fun and activity

Children and young people want the space and freedom to enjoy structured and unstructured activities, both indoors

and outdoors. It is important to them that parks, play areas and recreation facilities are engaging, fun and clean.

Facilities like these provide children and young people with opportunities to develop confidence, competence and a sense of achievement.

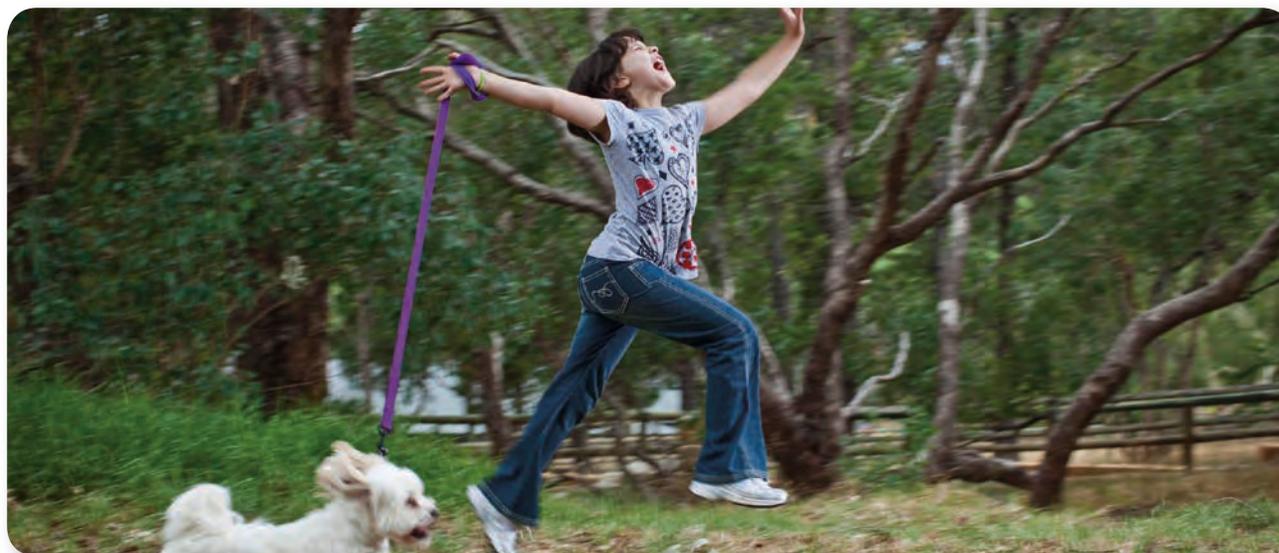
*"To stay fit I try to walk both my dogs everyday plus go for bike rides on the weekend."* girl 11

*"I suggest more sporting grounds or youth centres where kids can make friends and get involved in fun activities."* girl 15

The converse is that many of the barriers to children and young people participating in activities and being active are related to the built environment. Poor or too few recreation facilities, a lack of transport choices and concerns about personal safety are all barriers.

#### Being safe

Children and young people consistently say they need to feel both safe and secure. They want to feel part of their communities and neighbourhoods and want 'safe spaces' that enable them to participate in activities with some independence.



## Why involve children and young people in the built environment?

Feeling safe in public places and on public transport is an issue of concern for many children and young people. Children say that dirty or dangerous parks and poor play areas limit their ability to get out and play. Young people say they want opportunities to be able to safely explore public space without adults.

*"I like sports and riding my bike and going to the park but normally with my cousins or someone. I don't go by myself anymore because people have been hanging around down the park, down the road behind Coles."* boy 10

*"There's all rude stuff down there...graffiti...that's why we don't go to the park anymore."* girl 11

### Independence

Independence and freedom are important for children and young people and they generally want more opportunities to make decisions about their lives.

For younger children this includes being able to play outside in a less supervised or structured way. Young people want more freedom to choose how they spend their time, to make decisions for themselves and to learn to become independent.

*"[We need] places that kids can go to and have fun, because [xxx] is really boring and nothing for kids to do."* girl 11

*"Kids should be free to get out in the open, go by yourself, climb trees and things."* girl 15

Public transport that is safe, accessible and reliable is an important factor in enabling children and young people's independence. Young people like being able to get around by themselves without having to rely solely on parents for transport.

### Acknowledgement and respect

There is a clear message from children and young people that they want to be seen and to have opportunities to mix and integrate with the community, but also have safe spaces to be with their peers. They want a built environment that welcomes rather than excludes children and young people. Being acknowledged and listened to and having their ideas taken seriously make young people feel they are respected.

*"I get talked to a lot but not included."* young person



Image courtesy of Dylan Tarbett

## What makes a child and youth friendly built environment and why is it important?

There is growing awareness of the importance and benefits of designing and developing healthy, safe and inclusive places and spaces for children and young people. At the same time there is recognition that a built environment that is child and young people friendly and oriented creates an environment that is more liveable and inclusive for the whole community.

Child and youth friendly cities and places share a number of qualities and characteristics while also reflecting what is unique about a local place, community, geography, and culture.

Drawing on current research and evidence, the following have been identified as priority factors in designing spaces and buildings that will be used by children, young people and their families:

- enabling active and healthy lifestyles
- designing green and friendly public spaces
- providing child and young people friendly transport options
- designing safe places
- designing for multi-use and accessibility.

### Enabling active and healthy lifestyles

*“The way the built environment is designed can have a positive or negative impact on our health. Research shows that active lifestyles can be encouraged by how we design our streets, parks, recreational facilities and where we locate our homes, schools and shops.”<sup>2</sup>*

The health and other benefits of children and young people being physically active are well documented. Being physically active reduces the risk of poor health outcomes as well as improving general wellbeing.<sup>3</sup> There is also increasing evidence that physical activity for children and young people is associated with improved learning capacity, cognitive functioning, concentration and academic achievement.<sup>4</sup>

*“The best thing for your mind and body is to exercise.” girl 11*

*“I keep myself mentally active and healthy [by going] for a relaxing and refreshing walk down the beach. It lets my mind go at ease.” girl 12*

Yet children and young people today are less physically active and more overweight and obese than previous generations. The Western Australian Physical Activity Taskforce found in its most recent survey that less than half of school students undertake the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity for good health.<sup>5</sup>

In 2009, nearly one in four of those aged five to 15 years in Western Australia was overweight or obese.<sup>6</sup>

There is considerable evidence that the urban form of our neighbourhoods, towns and cities influences our health, including how active or sedentary we are.<sup>7 8 9 10 11</sup> Well-planned places can increase how many of us walk or cycle to shops, schools, parks, services, facilities and public transport.<sup>12</sup>

Health, urban design and planning professionals have started collaborating to identify built environment factors that promote active living (see Resources for publications and guidance). Factors enabling children and young people to have active and healthy lifestyles include:

- Well planned and connected walking and cycling routes with, for example, routes with slower and fewer cars and safe and accessible footpaths and crossings.
- Street networks that provide direct, safe and convenient access with, for example, attractive and welcoming streets and legible routes.
- Local destinations such as parks, recreation facilities, shops and schools that children and young people can walk and/or cycle to from home.
- Streets and streetscapes that offer natural and easy surveillance with more ‘eyes on the street’ for children and young people’s safety.<sup>13 14</sup>

## Designing green and friendly public spaces

*“For children and young people, parks and playgrounds are not just the conventional place to play, but, can also provide a place to socialise, be physically active, explore, have contact with nature, escape from indoors, or just be free from the encumbrances of an increasingly adult world.”<sup>15</sup>*

Public spaces create and provide opportunities for children and young people to play and explore. With our understanding of the role of play in child development, high quality public spaces should be an integral feature of the built environment.<sup>16</sup>

However, public spaces are not always welcoming or accommodating of children and young people. Instead, access to public space for children and young people is shrinking as parks and other play spaces are privatised or do not feature in new developments and suburbs.<sup>17 18 19</sup>

Teenagers’ experience of public space can be one of being designed out, often in subtle ways, as seats are removed or facilities cater predominantly for younger children and adults.<sup>20</sup> The Victorian Parliament Inquiry into Sustainable Urban Design in New Communities in Outer Suburbs reported that ‘the views of young people are infrequently considered in the planning and design of public spaces [and] the skate park frequently represents the quintessence of planning for youth’.<sup>21</sup>

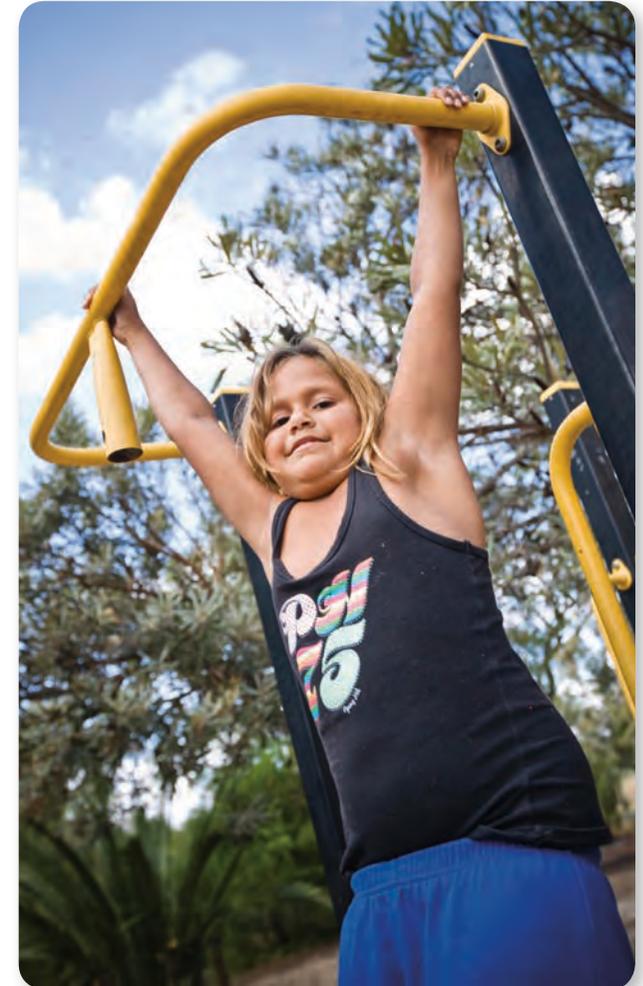
*“I live in a town that does not take into account the needs of the young population. They pitch their projects, eg. skate park at younger, high socio economic, not the young people who require services and lack the resources.” online poll<sup>22</sup>*

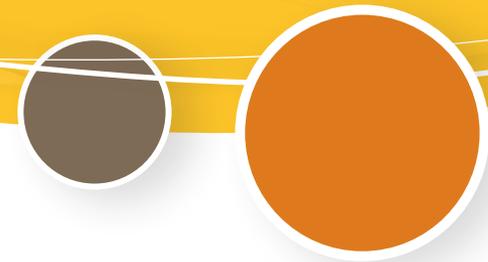
Many play areas in public spaces have the same design and features (described as ‘plastic fantastic’)<sup>23</sup> which limits the opportunities to engage and delight children.

We need to be designing innovative, adaptive and creative public spaces for children and young people. This includes providing green spaces for outdoor nature play, recognising that contact with nature contributes to children’s healthy development of sense, learning and creativity.<sup>24 25 26</sup> In *Last Child in the Woods*, Louv describes the trend of children spending less time playing outdoors and the range of behavioural problems resulting from what he calls ‘nature deficit disorder’ as a consequence of children’s lack of contact with nature.<sup>27</sup>

*“My mind really unwinds when I see, hear and feel nature all around me.” boy 11*

Evidence shows that high quality public spaces enhance people’s health and sense of wellbeing and as such are valuable assets for the community. Our built environment needs public spaces that invite and inspire children and young people, including ‘sensory rich experiences in outdoor and natural environments, domestic open spaces such as community gardens, and neighbourhood open spaces such as parks, playgrounds, playing fields, sports’ grounds, streets, city farms and natural green spaces’.<sup>28</sup>





## Providing child friendly transport options

*“The presence of a culture of cycling, walking and public transport are all meaningful indicators of children and young people’s independent access to community activities and spaces.”<sup>29</sup>*

Car use in Perth ranks among the highest in the world – around 80 per cent of all personal trips are made by car.<sup>30</sup> While the increased reliance on cars for transport reflects trends in cities around the world, it means children and young people are much more likely to be driven by their parents than walk or cycle themselves.<sup>31</sup>

We know the benefits of children and young people being physically active, however evidence also highlights the importance of children’s autonomous exploration of local environments for their social and mental development and the prevention of chronic diseases such as anxiety and depression.<sup>32 33</sup>

For children and young people, being independently mobile is an important part of growing up.

*“Active transport for children is not just about getting from point A to point B. It’s a chance for kids to ‘kick stones, pat the dog, dawdle with friends, build play houses and forts, dig the ground and swap notes about the old lady who lives in the spooky house on the corner’.”<sup>34</sup>*

Designing neighbourhoods with streets and roads that are safe and connected along with accessible and legible routes for walking and cycling will help facilitate independent mobility and active transport among

children and young people. Complementing this with accessible and safe public transport options will give children and young people transport choices.<sup>35</sup> Without these choices, we limit opportunity with

research showing that poor transport options adversely affect teenagers’ ‘access to job opportunities, social life, education, physical activity and independence’.<sup>36</sup>



## Designing safe places

*“Children and young people fear being the victim of assault or theft or around people behaving strangely – this aspect of kids’ lives is very poorly understood by the rest of the community, many of whom feel frightened by young people. But it is frightening and worrying to hear the extent to which kids feel frightened – and unwelcome – in public places.”<sup>37</sup>*

In the 2009 National Survey of Young Australians, nearly one-quarter of young people in Western Australia expressed concern about their personal safety.<sup>38</sup> Feeling safe in public spaces and on public transport is an issue of concern for children and young people and limits their ability to play, explore, get around and hang out outside.

Addressing our younger citizens’ concerns about safety in the built environment spans multiple sectors including transport, local government and sport and recreation.<sup>39</sup> Strategies for a safer built environment include:

- improving natural surveillance in street, parks and open spaces
- removing and deterring vandalism
- encouraging community ownership of parks and public spaces
- promoting housing design to promote street surveillance
- increasing walkability of neighbourhoods through the layout and connectivity of streets
- fostering a sense of community.<sup>40</sup>

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is being used in Australia and internationally to design safe and user-friendly places and spaces. CPTED is based on the theory that the proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime and an improvement in the quality of life.<sup>41</sup> CPTED can be

applied to designing out crime in a range of settings including residential environments, railway stations, shopping centres, public access ways, community facilities and city centres (see Resources).

Considering and including the needs and perspectives of children and young people in the design of the built environment can help create places and spaces that are safer for everyone.

## Designing for multi-use and accessibility

*“Inclusive design is the process by which places are planned, designed and built, managed and used, with people like us in mind. It creates places which we can all use with ease and dignity and where we have a sense of belonging.”<sup>42</sup>*

Children and young people want to be part of the community. Yet buildings, facilities and services are often not designed with them in mind as users. In some instances, the design and use of spaces directly excludes children and young people from accessing them.

Instead, buildings, services and facilities can be designed to be inclusive so that everyone in the community benefits. We need to make the most of the infrastructure we have in our communities and design facilities and buildings for accessibility and multi-use.

Where buildings and facilities are designed with children and young people as users, including and consulting with

them as part of the design process can deliver better outcomes. This approach can be used in the design of our schools, children’s services and youth facilities.

The Commission on Architecture and Built Environment (CABE), the United Kingdom government’s advisor on architecture, urban design and public space from 1999 to 2011, identified 10 criteria for good school design and creating well-designed learning environments for children and young people (see Resources). The first is to make a school the students and community can be proud of<sup>43</sup> by engaging children and young people in the design and planning of the facilities they will be using.



## Child Friendly Cities

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children and young people have a right to a clean and safe environment where they can play and rest and governments have a responsibility to create an environment where children and young people can grow and reach their potential. To meet this responsibility, it is vital to acknowledge children's right to influence decisions and express their opinions.

In response to the Convention, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has devised a framework for defining and developing child friendly communities - the Child Friendly Cities initiative.<sup>44</sup>

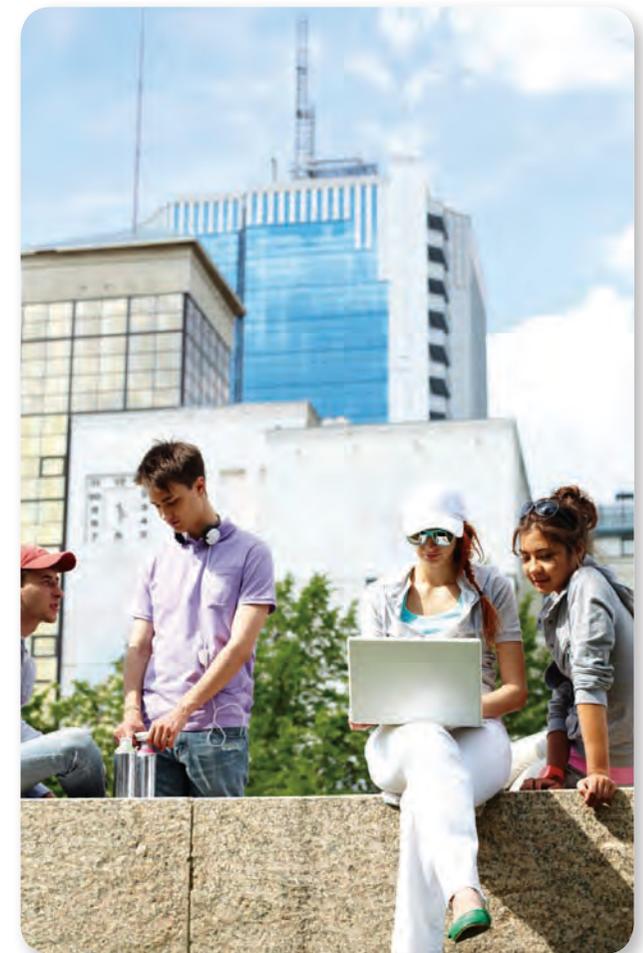
The UNICEF Child Friendly Cities initiative was launched in 1996 to act on the resolution passed during the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) which declared that the wellbeing of children was the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance.

A Child Friendly City guarantees the right of every young citizen to:

- influence decisions about their city
- express their opinion on the city they want
- participate in family, community and social life
- receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter
- drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation
- be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- walk safely in the streets on their own
- meet friends and play
- have green spaces for plants and animals
- live in an unpolluted environment

- participate in cultural and social events
- be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability.

The framework aims to guide cities and other systems of local governance in the inclusion of children's rights as a key component of their goals, policies, programs and structures to create urban environments that promote good health and wellbeing. Some cities in Australia and Western Australia have joined the framework and become Child Friendly Cities.



## Involving children and young people in planning and designing the built environment

As citizens, children and young people want to be involved in making decisions about the things that affect their lives and the world around them. Importantly, they want to be involved in a real and meaningful way and for there to be clarity about the purpose and scope of their involvement.

With a growing body of evidence on the benefits of a built environment that is child and young people friendly, questions about how to involve children and young people in planning and designing the built environment are being raised.

In response, seven examples of Western Australian projects and initiatives are showcased here which engage children and young people in shaping and designing their built environment.

The examples demonstrate how children and young people's involvement can benefit individuals, organisations and the community. Children and young people often have unique insights, can offer creative solutions and their involvement can enrich decision-making processes and outcomes.

### Involving children and young people

Participatory processes are increasingly being used to shape and plan the built environment. However, younger citizens are often not included in these processes or are only consulted about child and youth specific facilities, so their perspective is missing in wider consultations.

Yet children and young people can be involved throughout the life cycle of built environment projects – from scoping and defining a project brief to its implementation and delivery. Only involving children and young people at the later stage (or not at all) of a project

is a missed opportunity in terms of their insight and experience, as the showcased examples highlight.

The challenge for practitioners working in the built environment is to be inclusive in planning and designing spaces and places. The Commissioner for Children and Young People has developed participation guidelines – *Involving Children and Young People: Participation Guidelines* – to encourage and support practitioners and organisations working with children and young people to involve them in ways that are inclusive and effective.

### Showcase

The following case studies show the positive outcomes arising from involving and engaging with children and young people in the built environment. More examples of projects and initiatives that involve and engage children and young people are showcased on the Commissioner's website ([ccyp.wa.gov.au](http://ccyp.wa.gov.au)). Please contact the Commissioner's office if you are involved with or know of other positive examples in Western Australia.

Name	Partners	Location	Project
Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School	Edgar Idle Wade Architects Department of Education WA	Picton	Friendly buildings
New Children's Hospital Project	Princess Margaret Hospital Department of Health	Nedlands	Friendly buildings
Halls Creek Walk	Urban Design + Landscape Architecture / LandCorp	Halls Creek	Inclusive public space
Kadidjiny Park	City of Melville and Ecoscape	Melville	Inclusive public space
Child Friendly City	City of Subiaco	Subiaco	Participatory community
Us and our community	Beckenham Primary School	Beckenham	Participatory design
iBuild Project	Curtin University and Commissioner for Children and Young People	Curtin University	Participatory design

## Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School

Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School in Picton, east of Bunbury, has been developed as an innovative learning environment for primary school children.

When it was first established in 1996, students were taught in transportable and demountable buildings located in Carey Park on parkland leased from the City of Bunbury. In 2002, Edgar Idle Wade Architects were appointed lead consultant by the Government of Western Australia, the School Board and principal, and Noongar elders to design and develop a new school.

The project brief aimed to develop a school to provide a cultural setting supporting programs for children in literacy and numeracy, achieving high attendance levels and providing an expression of traditional ways.

A full consultation was facilitated by the architects, starting with a meeting to outline how the planning process worked, to establish a program that enabled listening and sharing and provided educational opportunities throughout the process. The groups taking part in the consultation included learners (school children), Noongar elders, the School Board (principal and parents) and teaching staff, Departments of Education and Training and Housing and Works, and the City of Bunbury.

School children actively influenced and contributed to the design and development of the primary school through:

- Introductory sessions were held with each class outlining what an architect does, talking about the kind of buildings students liked visiting and why, and discussing how they would be involved in the planning and design of their new school.
- Lesson plans were established by the teachers to enable students to talk about their visions and dreams for their new school, with each class using a different medium to share their ideas with the architects in a focus session.

- Copies of the artwork were provided by children for reference and inclusion in the final design brief and images used throughout the planning process.
- Sessions to share the design concepts were held with the children to provide opportunities for them to see how their ideas were being incorporated into their new school design.
- Three family and community meetings were held with the final meeting walking students and families through the first stages of the new buildings at the new site as they were being erected.



Images courtesy of Edgar Idle Wade Architects

## Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School

While based on the State Government's Generic Brief for Primary Schools, Djidi Djidi – meaning Willy Wagtail – has been designed to ensure the school represents the aspirations and visions of the Noongar community, celebrates the group's rich cultural heritage and engenders an ownership by the school community. Some of the features in the school's design that were developed through the inclusive approach were:

- Outdoor learning spaces where students gather in protected areas and interact with the natural environment surrounding the school.
- Learning spaces designed to support the small learning groups in schools conducive with large Aboriginal student population, with garden areas established for each learning space.
- Colours and textures, plus an educational 'Percent for Art' program, informed by the natural bushland setting and cultural heritage as a backdrop to an enriching learning environment.



*"Amazing things can happen when people of all ages and cultural backgrounds enter into creative dialogue based on Djidi Djidi's ethos of respect, relationships and responsibility. This project is a testament to engendering confidence in sharing, the power of listening and valuing children's opinion."*

Philip Idle, Director, Edgar Idle Wade Architects

*"Djidi Djidi Primary School was a direct result of extensive community consultation and community support. A full consultation process was facilitated to ensure the school represented the aspirations and visions of the Noongar community, celebrated the group's rich cultural heritage and engendered an ownership by the school community."* Justin Grasso, Principal, Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School



Images courtesy of Edgar Idle Wade Architects

## New Children's Hospital Project

The development of a New Children's Hospital (NCH) was announced by the State Government in 2010 to replace the Princess Margaret Hospital for Children (PMH) in Perth. In order to create a patient and family-centred paediatric health service, children, young people and families have been directly involved in the planning and design process of the new facility.

The NCH Project implemented a Child and Youth Participation Strategy from December 2009 to October 2010 to generate and develop recommendations from children and young people (who were mostly current or past patients of PMH). As part of this, the NCH Project team conducted a range of activities including surveys, focus groups and forums to develop recommendations for the planning phase of the project. For example, children and young people have contributed through:

- Surveys with patients including those from rural areas, surveys via Radio Lollipop and an art survey with young children.
- Focus groups with ethnic young people, focus groups with Aboriginal young people and focus groups and interviews with patients in the mental health inpatient unit.

Feedback and recommendations were received on patient room design, parent accommodation, family facilities, recreation, waiting areas, disability access, Aboriginal family support services, mental health inpatient unit, bathroom facilities and retail and inpatient entertainment.

Tailoring the approach to participation and engagement has enabled children and young people from different ages and backgrounds, and with different medical and health conditions, to contribute to the project. Reports and recommendations were developed from the consultations and reviewed for inclusion in the Functional Design Brief.

A Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was established to provide guidance on how to consult with children and young people, and provide recommendations for the

NCH based on their experiences as past and present patients. The committee members include current and past patients of PMH aged 12 to 17 years with the committee meeting monthly at the Commissioner for Children and Young People's Our Space meeting rooms.

To date the YAC has provided advice on the NCH design, the project logo and website, transitioning from adolescent to adult care, hospital school services and the outpatient reform project.

Directly involving service users in the project and learning from their experiences has enabled the NCH Project team to identify key design features, services and facilities that will greatly improve the experiences of patients and their families in a new paediatric hospital.

*"I believe the Youth Advisory Committee is important because it is a way of getting the kids' voices heard. Also, it is a way to show that it is a 'children's' hospital, so it should be advised by children."*

Matthew, 13 years

*"Being a member of the Youth Advisory Committee for the NCH is awesome because it's an opportunity to give feedback about being in hospital (I have had quite a bit of experience), make the experience better for the children of WA and put our own personal stamp on the project."*

Tess, 14 years

*"I became a part of the Youth Advisory Committee because I believe that if you're looking for suggestions on how to build a children's hospital, who better to ask than the kids themselves?"* Shannon, 16 years



Image courtesy of New Children's Hospital Project

*"From the very beginning we realised the need for the new children's hospital to be 'child and adolescent focused and family centred', and so adopted this as our first planning principle. We wanted to make the planning engagement with children and youth real, so that they could have genuine input into the design of the new hospital. Child and youth consultation has been incorporated into the planning of the new hospital and will continue throughout the design phase. It is expected that consultation with children and youth will continue to drive our planning and our clinicians to achieve a truly outstanding children's hospital."* Philip Aylward, Chief Executive, Child and Adolescent Health Service

## Kadidjiny Park

Kadidjiny Park is an imaginative parkland and playscape developed on the former Melville Primary School site. The City of Melville purchased the site, which is almost four hectares, from the Education Department in 2006 when the school was relocated and the new park opened in November 2010. Kadidjiny is a Noongar word meaning ‘learning, thinking, listening’.

The park, designed by landscape architects Ecoscape, provides an interactive, multi-use, open public space catering for residents of all ages.

The park includes a nature-play inspired playscape with unique elements such as musical instruments, an undulating, softfall terrain intended to promote imaginative and active play, embankment slides, sand play equipment, as well as barbecues, picnic facilities, boardwalks, a wetland area, an amphitheatre-style seating area, self-cleaning universal access toilets, exercise equipment, public artworks and walking paths. The parklands celebrate the local vegetation communities of the Swan River Plain through a series of rehabilitated ecosystems that have culminated in the planting of over 40,000 indigenous plants and trees grown from seed collected in the local region.

Children, young people and local residents were involved in the site’s redevelopment and continue to be involved in the management of the Park Hall (the former school library) through the MORE community group. MORE, which formed in 2002 as the Melville Outdoor Recreation Emergency group to lobby the Council for the site to become a park with community facilities, has played a key role in involving children and young people in the park’s design, planning and use. This includes mentoring young people through Switch Youth Events – a group established following the consultation process for the park.

During the planning process for the park, workshop forums were held with students from the next door

Melville Primary School, with discussions and worksheets for children to articulate their ideas and preferences for the park. Local children and young people contributed ideas on the design, landscape and use of the park at brainstorming and idea sessions organised by MORE. More than 300 students from Melville Primary School planted 150 trees during the park’s construction and students from Melville Senior High School contributed to the public artwork in the park.



Images courtesy of City of Melville

## Kadidjiny Park

Engaging younger citizens in the park's development has fostered community ownership and created a space that is used by everyone, including children and young people.

*"I have enjoyed being involved in the process and planning of the park, with our community. I know that others feel their views and opinions have been heard. I now feel a sense of pride and achievement that the park has met our needs it has become a great place for us to go to. I thank those that allowed us to be involved in the planning and hope that young people have the opportunity in their communities to be heard."*  
Blake Thompson, Chair, Switch Youth Events

*"We took our boys there on the weekend and they had an awesome time! They especially liked the big round mesh swing and slides, then they got their scooters out of the back of the car and rode all around the hilly tracks for ages. There's lots of shady trees and benches, too. This place is great for older kids as well as there is so much space to kick the footy and play cricket!"* Family using the park

*"Walking through Kadidjiny's playscape, it's a colourful wonderland that caters for all age groups with traditional and new-concept equipment from soft rolling hills and mounds to sand pits, interactive play elements and spider net as well as a giant bird nest swing and embankment slides that wind their way down natural hill lookouts – all within view of the barbecues and picnic mounds. The playscape is an integration of creativity, function and exploration, balancing nature play elements with playground equipment in a natural setting."*  
Mayor Russell Aubrey, City of Melville



Images courtesy of City of Melville

## Halls Creek Town Walk

LandCorp appointed Urban Design + Landscape Architecture (UDLA) to coordinate and guide a community inspired opportunity in Halls Creek as part of its ongoing residential development involvement within the region. The project, part of Landcorp's Bridge Road Residential Development, was undertaken in close consultation with the Shire of Halls Creek.

The Halls Creek Town Walk is a walk trail comprising nine interpretive stations around the town each marked with hand-crafted wooden totem poles designed by Indigenous elders, associated family and school children. The start of the walk is marked by a large community mosaic artwork depicting country and a Local Bush Food Garden was established as part of the route to raise awareness of the local, edible, plant species in Halls Creek.

The project, which began in 2006 and opened in October 2009, sought to positively educate children and young people about the area in which they live (e.g. local plants and bush tucker) and their town's rich cultural heritage. It also aimed to bring generations together by encouraging young people to work closely with elders in the community and learn from their stories and experiences (and vice versa).



A 'hands on', collaborative and culturally sensitive approach was taken to engage the community through the planning, design and implementation phases of the project. Taking time to listen and discuss design scenarios with the community, meeting and talking with young people and elders, and visiting the local schools to involve them in the project were all important factors in building trust and respect locally.

Children and young people were involved in the design of the Walk through a variety of activities including:

- School children contributed to painting and decorating totems in their own style and manner, with each school requesting one or two wooden totems to decorate.
- Workshops with elders were an opportunity for young people to learn more about cultural and historical stories.
- Young children had their footprint and family names placed on the totems, a suggestion made by elders, representing the majority of families in town.
- Young people from the TAFE painted intricate themes of their own choice on locally selected rocks which were used as artwork for the community mosaic.
- Children and young people helped to plant tucker trees in the Bush Garden, learning about the plants and what they produced.



Images courtesy of UDLA



## Halls Creek Town Walk

Engaging with people across generations highlighted that the Halls Creek Aboriginal community had a different concept of recreation, compared to more urban communities. Local people made more use of their country and open space for recreation and, as such, the concept of a defined, small park (typically provided within a subdivision) would not benefit the community. This understanding and insight informed the development of the Town Walk concept.

*"The walk has been a source of pride for the town – particularly for the Aboriginal artists and school students involved in decorating the totem poles and creating the central mosaic in Centennial Park."* Siobhan K Casson, Language Development Officer, Kimberley Language Resource Centre. (Letter of support for artists and community members who contributed, 1 February 2010)

*"What began as a plan to create new public spaces in Halls Creek has evolved into an opportunity to bring the town together and provide both residents and visitors with a deeper understanding of both Halls Creek and the region,"* Hilary Woodley, LandCorp Regional Manager (Kimberley) (*Halls Creek Herald*, 3 November 2009)

*"Halls Creek and the wider community were the designers of the walk...a perfect opportunity for the town and district to display some of the community's qualities through stories, history, traditions, art and local painting."* Greg Grabasch, UDLA Principal Landscape Architect and Town Walk Co-ordinator.



Images courtesy of UDLA

## A Child Friendly Subiaco

Child Friendly Cities is a global movement to ensure children are recognised as equal citizens in their communities. Child Friendly Cities encourages governments to consider the rights and wishes of children at all levels of planning and implementation of decision making.

The City of Subiaco joined the Child Friendly City initiative in 2007 and has since developed a *Child Friendly Cities Plan* which places a strong focus on creating opportunities for children to fully participate in the planning and development of the city.

The City acknowledges that strong family relationships are important for child development and community wellbeing. It also recognises that families with young children have the right to be involved in issues and decisions that affect their quality of life – now and into the future.

Consultation with children is an important part of the City's focus when developing projects with children and young people. Facilitating participation has involved using child and young people friendly approaches including surveys, creative workshops, drama, play, drawing, discussions and forums. The City has approached and involved children and young people through different forums including schools, play groups, community groups, disability services and out-of-school care.

Children and young people have participated in many consultations from city-wide strategic planning processes to site-specific designs and plans. The City consulted widely with the community as part of its community visioning project, Think2030, with children and young people representing a large proportion of the 3700 responses to the Council. Children and young people's views were gathered through surveys, face-to-face consultations, an interactive computer program, and an art competition and collage – the level of response from children and young people was a

positive demonstration of their strong voice in the local community. Similarly, children and young people were consulted with for the City's *Strategic Management Plan* and involved in developing a child/youth friendly version of the *Community Plan*.

The City has engaged with children and young people on the redevelopment of specific sites and play spaces, including an upgrade to the playground in Lake Jualbup, Shenton Park, and development of the Mueller Park play space. Children have taken a role in compiling and producing the Children's Adventure Map of Subiaco.

The Child Friendly City plan places a strong emphasis on valuing and involving children as active citizens. The City has found that engaging with children and young people creates ownership and vested interest and results in relevant and usable outcomes.

*"Thanks for listening to us."*

Child involved in Lake Jualbup playground consultation



*"It is good that we can tell the adults what we want, and then they can do it!"* Child involved in Lake Jualbup playground consultation

*"It is terrific that these activities are provided as they expose children to experiences they may otherwise not have."* Parent

*"Children and young people are valued community members and have a right to contribute to decision making regarding the development of our community. In fact, they probably have a bigger vested interest because they are our future decision makers and community leaders, and will be living in the community long after we are gone. Besides, we enjoy their input with a fresh and honest way of looking at things."* Janette Spencer, Manager Community Development, City of Subiaco



Images courtesy of City of Subiaco

## Us and our community, Beckenham Primary School

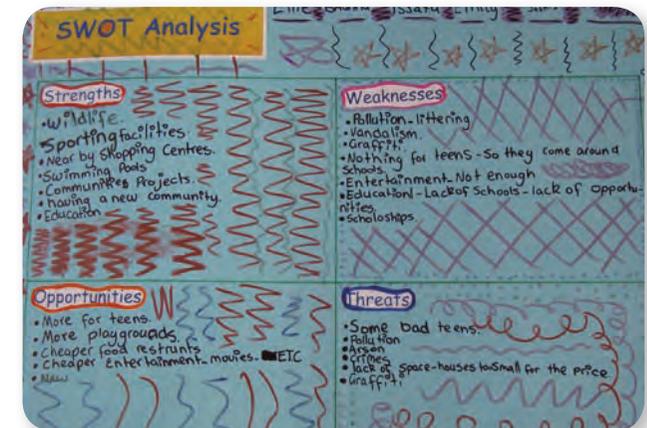
Students from Beckenham Primary School Student Representative Council were appointed as the Commissioner for Children and Young People's metropolitan advisory committee in 2010. As part of their work, they held an 'Us and our community' Kids Talk Fest in 2010 with 40 students from primary schools across the City of Gosnells taking part. Kids Talk Fest was an opportunity for children aged 10 to 14 years to come together to discuss community issues that were important to them and have their voices heard on community issues. A day of activities culminated with students talking about and building models of their 'perfect community'.

A SWOT analysis by students of their local community found:

- Strengths: students liked living close to their schools, friends, shops, open public spaces and sporting facilities.
- Weaknesses: they were concerned about road and safety issues as well as vandalism, graffiti, littering and a need for more activities and venues for teenagers and young people.
- Opportunities: reflected a wish for more community and youth facilities with students wanting safe communities and opportunities to get to know and look after each other.
- Threats: the environment – including plants, waterways and animals – and lack of open spaces were seen by students as potential threats to a healthy and safe lifestyle and community. Vandalism, graffiti, arson, damaging properties and hoons were also threats.

Students created a collage of the community they wanted to live in. Their ideas included:

- "Places where we can walk to schools, parks, sporting facilities and shops in the area we live."
- "Communities where homes and facilities are close together, with more walkways and bikeways around the community."
- "We like having small shops in our community, where people know each other, not just big shopping centres."
- "We think community gardens bring people of all ages together. It would be nice to have a shared plot where everyone could grow vegetables and fruit and maybe share or trade the things we grow."



Images courtesy of Beckenham Primary School

## iBuild

Curtin University School of Architecture and the Commissioner for Children and Young People partnered to undertake iBuild – a project that brought together fourth-year architecture students with children and young people in 2010.

iBuild aimed to give children and young people an opportunity to create and design spaces that appealed to them and have a say about how their communities could be improved. At the same time it gave architecture students 'hands on' experience in child centred and child friendly participatory processes.

In a workshop setting, architecture students worked with their 'clients' – 17 children and young people aged six to 17 years – to develop their ideas and concepts for the built environment. The concepts generated were exciting, creative, fun and expressive.

A visioning exercise and a range of creative activities, such as drawing and modelling with building blocks, were used to bring children and young people's ideas to life. From this, the architecture students developed concepts and created an iBuild display. The displays were launched during Architecture Week by the Commissioner for Children and Young People, State Government Architect Steve Woodland and the head of Curtin University School of Architecture, Dr Sarah McGann.

The project gave the architecture students a greater understanding of the benefits of consulting with children and young people. Students said they were more aware of the capacity children had to contribute to both creative and practical aspects of built environment design.

The information gained from the workshop is being used by the Commissioner to help inform her work in the built environment area.

*"As a parent it was lovely to see my little boy have a chance to share in something where he was completely in his element. Building, inventing and constructing is his passion, and the project provided a unique opportunity for him to explore and delight in this interest."*  
Parent of participant

*"Through iBuild, I discovered children have an entirely different way of thinking and through them we have the ability to redefine our methods of design, opening new doors."* Architecture student

*"This is an amazing learning experience for me...I never expected to learn so much from kids, 7 year old kids!"*  
Architecture student





## Resources

**UNICEF Child Friendly Cities** – information on how to build child friendly communities and cities, [www.childfriendlycities.org/](http://www.childfriendlycities.org/) [www.childfriendlyasiapacific.net/](http://www.childfriendlyasiapacific.net/)

**UNESCO Growing up in cities** – an international program to involve children, young people and governments in improving local environments, [www.unesco.org/most/guic/guicmain.htm](http://www.unesco.org/most/guic/guicmain.htm)

**Healthy Spaces and Places** – a national guide for planning, designing and creating sustainable communities that encourage healthy living, [www.healthyplaces.org.au](http://www.healthyplaces.org.au)

**Nature Play WA** – helping Western Australian children and their families connect with nature to help build stronger, healthier communities, [www.natureplay.org.au](http://www.natureplay.org.au)

**Play England** – resources and ideas to develop, manage and sustain the places where children play, [www.playengland.org.uk](http://www.playengland.org.uk)

**Community Gardens WA** – information about where to find and how to start a community garden in Western Australia, [www.communitygardenswa.org.au](http://www.communitygardenswa.org.au)

**Kitchen Garden Foundation** – Stephanie Alexander's kitchen garden project in schools, [www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au](http://www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au)

**Australian Institute of Architects** – resource with information for schools and students on the human-made environment, [www.architecture.com.au/i-cms?page=57](http://www.architecture.com.au/i-cms?page=57)

**Commission Architecture and Built Environment (CABE)** – the United Kingdom government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space from 1999 to 2011, [www.cabe.org.uk](http://www.cabe.org.uk)

**Commission for Children and Young People NSW – BUILT4KIDS** – a good practice guide to creating child friendly environments, [www.kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/Built4Kids\\_complete.pdf](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/Built4Kids_complete.pdf)

**Office of Crime Prevention, Designing Out Crime Planning Guidelines** – [www.crimeprevention.wa.gov.au/content.php?page=Designing%20Out%20Crime](http://www.crimeprevention.wa.gov.au/content.php?page=Designing%20Out%20Crime)

**Department of Planning WA** – design elements of good neighbourhoods in Liveable Neighbourhoods, [www.planning.wa.gov.au/Plans+and+policies/Publications/1594.aspx](http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/Plans+and+policies/Publications/1594.aspx)

**Planning Institute of Australia** – the Institute's policy position on child friendly communities, [www.planning.org.au/policy/child-friendly-communities/child-friendly-communities](http://www.planning.org.au/policy/child-friendly-communities/child-friendly-communities)

**Committee on the Rights of the Child, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights** – body of independent experts that monitors implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by its State parties, [www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/)

**Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Involving Children and Young People: Participation Guidelines** – a guide to involving children and young people, [www.cryp.wa.gov.au/content/Participation%20Guidelines.aspx](http://www.cryp.wa.gov.au/content/Participation%20Guidelines.aspx)

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Commissioner for Children and Young People  
Western Australia

Ground Floor, 1 Alvan Street, Subiaco WA 6008

Telephone 08 6213 2297 Facsimile 08 6213 2220

Email [info@ccyp.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@ccyp.wa.gov.au) **Freecall 1800 072 444**

**[ccyp.wa.gov.au](http://ccyp.wa.gov.au)**

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