



Children's Advisory Workshop 'Come Play In The City'



Valuing Children
— INITIATIVE —

September 2023



At the Valuing Children Initiative, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of this country and its waters, particularly the Whadjuk Noongar people who's boodja we meet on.

We wish to pay respect to the Elders past, present and emerging, particularly our young people and future decision makers.

The Valuing Children Initiative wishes to acknowledge the rights of all koolankas (children) and endorse the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child.

We want to say to all children: that you matter and you are valued.



@Sasha Mortimore Photography

'Come Play in The City' Project

As a collaborative project, the Valuing Children Initiative is working with the Play Matters Collective, researchers and childhood experts from Curtin University's School of Education and Murdoch University's Early Childhood Studies. The goal of this collaboration is to develop a project that focuses on and improves play for all members of community within the city of Perth. These collaborators form the Play steering committee.

Research shows the importance of play, yet as we age we play less. There are many benefits for social, emotional and physical outcomes. In a city that strives to be welcoming and inclusive, this project provides ideas on engaging a whole community with fun and play as the tools.

As a crucial starting point the collaborators invited children and young people to the process with a children's advisory workshop:

Children's advisory:
development of
play concepts

Grant application
for partnership
investment
submitted

Successful grant
to plan January
2024 Play in
the City
activations

Young peoples' voices

Integral to the heart of the Valuing Children Initiative, the voice of children and young people is crucial to a thriving and successful future. Having young people involved in decision making and planning that will affect them not only encourages a sense of belonging, but there are many other benefits including healthy wellbeing, a sense of community, making an impact and skill building.

The play project started with an open invitation to the children and young people of Western Australia; to join a young persons' advisory workshop, focused on play within the city of Perth.



The advertisement was shared across social media channels, not for profit newsletters, staff meetings, local schools and children's groups. The aim was to invite 20-30 young people who represent this age group in Western Australia.

Young people were keen to be involved. On Saturday 19th August at Government House, 20 young people aged between 4- 17 years old and their guardians attended the Come Play in the City workshop. The workshop lasted 2 hours in duration and included a guided walk in the center of Perth, with refreshments and creative time for the young people to share their thoughts, opinions and ideas. The focus was on how they currently view the city and what play recommendations they would like to see developed within the city.



What did the young people say about the city?

There's hardly any play things to do in the city,
Hudson, 12y/o

The city is about going into shops, and it's dark and boring,
Darcy, 17y/o

The city needs to be more fun,
Annie, 8 y/o

I love the Aboriginal art in the city
Millen, 8y/o

The city is big,
Perry, 4 y/o

Its dangerous for kids in the city,
Tom, 14 y/o

The (interactive) screen at Myer is fun,
Hugh, 8y/o

The grass areas make us feel happy,
Skyla, 17 y/o



What ideas about play did the young people share?



3D floor art would be good here (Forest Chase)
Hugh, 8 y/o

I'd like to see happy rainbow colours
Millen, 8 y/o



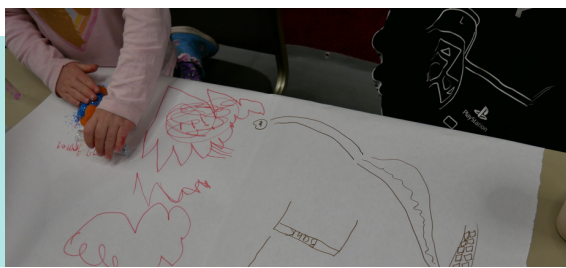
Rock climbing/zip lining on skyscrapers,
Jarvis, 8 y/o

Ramps for disability access
Jun, 15 y/o



They could do a big hopscotch on this street (St Georges Terrace)
Monty, 6 y/o

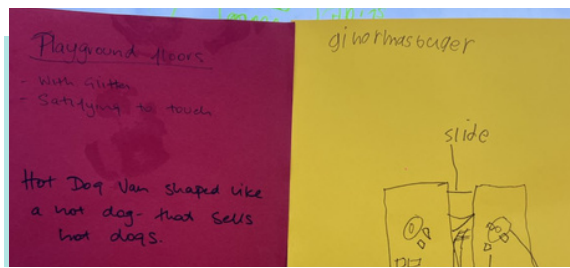
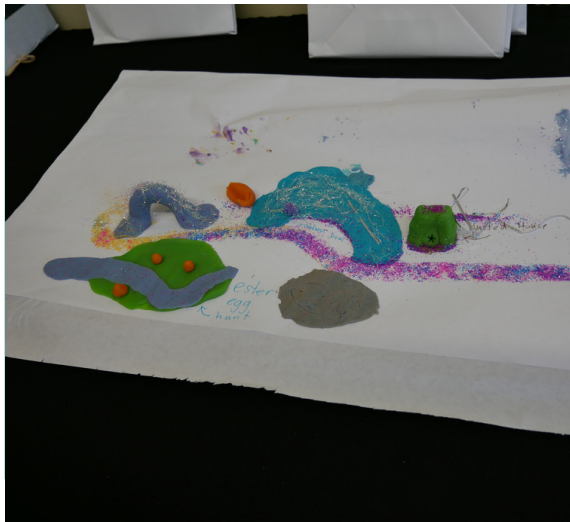
Hide and seek with a bird tower,
Theo, 8 y/o



A bridge for road crossing and celebration arch
Tom, 14 y/o

I love exploring the little windows,
Anne, 8 y/o

What recommendations did the young people share for 'Come Play In The City' Project?



Puzzles or trails would be fun for city play
Jun, 15 y/o

This park (Stirling Gardens) should have a big tree that kids are allowed to climb
Theo, 8 y/o

A musical path with lights is fun
Anne, 8 y/o

We need things to climb and build like monkey bars and cubby houses,
Millen, 8 y/o

We could have boat races in the water (Council House pond)
Jarvis, 8 y/o

Planting a garden park could include more colour
Hudson, 12 y/o

More Australian animals in the city
Perry, 4 y/o



The facilitating team reviewed the feedback that the children and young people provided and have summarised the following themes of interest:

Inclusive: Areas for all ages to enjoy the city were discussed. Optical illusions could be used on footpaths, glass windows and alleyways to create interest to a currently grey and concrete city. Structures to be set up at children's height, not always adult levels. The idea of mouse or fairy doors around the city would be a fun trail to follow and find them all.



Safety: The children discussed that the busy roads in the city felt unsafe. The garden areas felt more safe to children, as they were surrounded by trees, plants and grass rather than roads, cars and buildings. Children shared ideas for swings, monkey bars, and hide and seek opportunities within garden areas.



Nature: Children asked for gardens to be less formal in the city and include more play options, as the children enjoyed the Supreme Court Garden area, but as a manicured setting, trees could not be climbed on or explored. Ideas for garden areas were to have log seating, Parkour and climbing options, sculptures to play on.

Colour through art and Aboriginal designs were discussed in the form of sculptures, pathway design and structures to use such as a bridge. Children spoke of interactive art that would be fun to follow around the city and play with / on.





Music and sound were discussed. Children shared ideas for musical wind chimes in the trees, buildings to create different sounds through the city. Children spoke of a pathway that lit up as you navigated the route with musical keys. Activities they can dance on, enjoy different music and have fun.

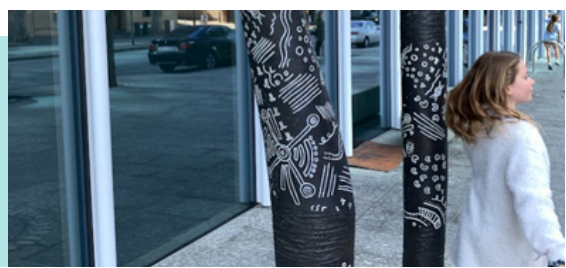
Simplicity: children found objects and structures to play on throughout the short guided tour, such as bike lock up bars, seating areas and retaining walls. Children climbed, balanced, swung and tumbled on these non-typical play but simple structures. Simple play ideas were shared such as hopscotch drawn onto the walkways.



Technology was discussed in various ideas, for inclusivity for people with different needs or disability; to ensure the city is accessible for everyone. Digital screens were discussed that can be touch screen to play with sounds, designs, Australian animals, interactive maps, history of the area. Children showed an interest in sustainability and discussed the idea of a solar-panelled lights trail.



Community: Children saw the city as a place to bring people together. They spoke of a wishing well to collect money for charities and group activities such as gardening projects and city clean ups to work together to make things even better.



Visibility of the child in the city: Empowering children, building brighter cities. The young people mentioned the flags along St George's Terrace to display children's UN rights and the Arts to communicate their thoughts and ideas.



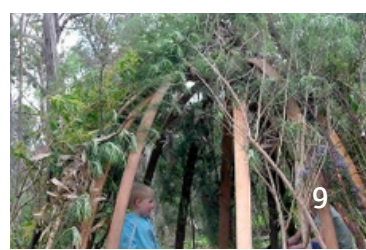
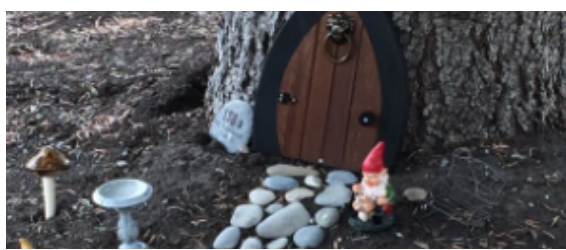
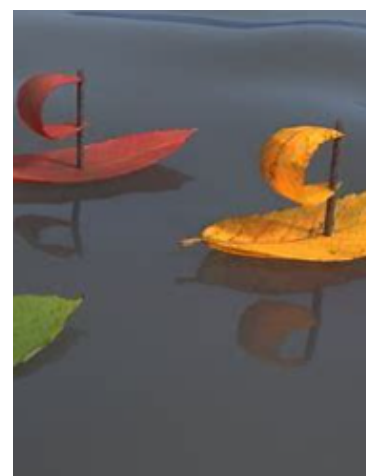
Based on the children's feedback from the advisory workshop, the proposed activations of play are listed:

1. Hopscotch on the Terrace
2. Play garden
3. Musical pathway
4. Little creatures door trail
5. Optical illusions
6. Window decals
7. Community planting
8. Water feature boat racing



These concepts will be proposed within the grant application to Lotterywest and The City of Perth.

In looping back the children's advisory feedback, the eight play activations were shared with the children and the group are excited to see their ideas come to fruition.



PLAY steering committee and partners



Dr. Madeleine Dobson is a Senior Lecturer of Early Childhood Education and Care in the School of Education at Curtin University. Her research interests include play-based learning, digital technologies, social justice, children's rights, and the implementation of trauma-informed and caring pedagogies across a range of educational contexts.



Dr Sanrda Hesterman is Director of Early Childhood Education at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia. Sandra teaches in the field of child development, language and literacies, and the design of early learning environments. She is a passionate advocate for children and young people's right to play across all levels of the WA community to promote their active citizenship, learning, and well-being.



Jayne Kaiko is an Early Childhood Teacher from W.A who has worked as a teacher in various roles with children for over 30 years. She has been a committee member of Early Childhood Australia WA for approximately 10 years and is currently on the steering committee for Play Matters Collective where she has passionately advocated for the rights of children. She is keen for a WA Play Strategy to be developed, meanwhile she is promoting the WA Play Statement and WA Play Charter.



Early Childhood
Australia



Marcelle Saratsis is a retired academic with the School of Education, Early Childhood Program at Curtin University, including previous lecturing positions at Edith Cowan University and The Northern Territory University in Darwin. Marcelle is a former president of Early Childhood Australia's WA Branch and currently a member of The Play Matters Collective.



The **Valuing Children Initiative** team led the play project and children's advisory in their advocacy role within the Perth community, bringing together collaborators to create positive social impact, in valuing children.





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Valuing children is everyone's responsibility

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