

GAMUT Papers

**Walking the Walk: Can Child Friendly Cities
Promote Children's Independent Mobility?**

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Institutional Barriers and Enablers to Children's Independent Mobility (2006-2009)

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List of Acronyms and Definitions

CFC	Child Friendly City: any local government that undertakes an initiative to enshrine children's rights in decision-making around decisions
CFCI	Child Friendly City Initiative, the program established by the UN in 1996 to help implement the CRC at the local governance level
CIM	The right of children to move around in public space (walk, cycle, take public transport etc) without an adult accompaniment
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child, a formal commitment undertaken by most nations, including Australia, to uphold certain rights, established by the United Nations
DPCD	Department of Planning and Community Development, State Government of Victoria
GAMUT	Australasian Centre on the Governance and Management of Urban Transportation, funded by the Volvo Research and Education Foundation
GUIC	Growing Up in Cities project, an international research project on children, coordinated by UNICEF
HWP	Health and Wellbeing Plan, a policy document incorporating MEYP and MPHP
HWS	Health and Wellbeing Strategy, an alternate name for the HWP
IULA	International Union of Local Authorities, now called United Cities and Local Government
LPP	Local Planning Policies, found in Clause 22 of the Planning Scheme of each local government
LGA	Local Government Area. There are 79 local governments in Victoria, of which 31 are within Metropolitan Melbourne
MEYP	Municipal Early Years Plan, a policy document which has been developed by many local governments in Victoria
MPHP	Municipal Public Health Plan, increasingly replaced by HWP
MSD	Melbourne Statistical Division, comprising the urbanized portion of the 31 local governments in Metropolitan Melbourne
MSS	Municipal Strategic Statement, a policy document which must be developed by all local governments in Victoria, governing land use planning
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia, the peak body for urban and regional planning in Australia
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund, responsible for implementing the CRC, CFCI and the GUIC project
VicHealth	Victorian Health Promotion Foundation

Executive Summary

This final report summarizes the findings of a project undertaken for the Australasian Centre for the Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT), and follows on the report *From Battery-Reared to Free Range Children: Institutional Barriers and Enablers to Children's Independent Mobility in Victoria Australia* (Whitzman and Pike 2007). Our focus is Children's Independent Mobility (CIM), the right of children to walk, cycle, and use public transport to get to schools, shops, friend's houses, and other destinations, freely and without adult supervision. Our contention is that because of the drastic decline in CIM over the past two generations, children are at greater risk for physical and mental health problems, ranging from overweight and obesity to reduced development of everyday cognitive and problem-solving skills. It is also our contention that CIM is an issue that local governments must address in the context of health, community wellbeing and sustainable transport. Children are not only the transport decision-makers of the future, but current parental car dependency in ferrying their children impacts on transport decision-making – and public safety - today. We contend that children have the right to attain a set of 'graduated licenses' as they progress from freely roaming in their local street to freely roaming in their community. Furthermore, children have the right to influence local planning policies. Parents need to be supported in giving children progressive responsibilities, and local governments need to be supported by the state and national governments to ask children about safer and more accessible communities, and then follow up on their recommendations.

In the first report, we identified Child-Friendly Cities (CFC) initiatives as a promising practice undertaken by several local governments in Victoria, which had the potential to enable greater CIM. In this report, we dig deeper into the question of how CFC initiatives are influencing local planning policies and practices in Victoria, Australia. Specifically, we ask the question: **do child-friendly cities promote children's independent mobility?** We answer this question through three methods. First, we have undertaken a literature review on international best practice in relation to CFC, with a particular focus on any initiatives aimed at increasing CIM. Second, we have examined current planning and local policy documents in seven local governments that have child-friendly city initiatives, to see if policies to improve CIM have resulted from consulting with children. Third, we have interviewed local government planners to ascertain whether there is increased understanding of CIM as a result of CFC initiatives.

Our conclusion is that local government CFC initiatives do have a positive impact on both policies and local planners' understandings of children's right to freely use public space. **However, there is the need for State government to support further training, consultation, and legislative change at the local level, and to provide local governments with specific policy tools to improve CIM. There is also the need to evaluate places that have been affected by CFC initiatives, to determine whether they increase children's rights in the public realm.**

Acknowledgements

This report is the final product of a research project that began in March 2006 and concluded three and a half years later. Many students and research assistants have contributed ideas and energy that are reflected in this work. In particular, we acknowledge the contributions of PhD students Julie Rudner and Patrick Love, and research assistants Lucy Pike, Jana Perkovic and Vivian Romero. We also acknowledge the ideas and support received from Ben Rossiter, Lee Choon Siau, Roopa Umesh, and Fiona Tinney of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), Rachel Carlisle and Kelly-Ann Jolly from the Heart Foundation of Australia, Alison Knott and Frances Kelly of the City of Melbourne, and Maureen Imeson of the City of Port Phillip.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This research paper constitutes the second and final report of the research program Institutional Enablers to Children's Independent Mobility, which is supported by Volvo Research and Education Foundation through the Australasian Centre for Governance and Management of Urban Transport (GAMUT). GAMUT undertakes research and advocacy in order to assist society to move forward from a car dependent present to a sustainable transport future.

The overall aim of our research program has been to identify interventions that facilitate children's independent mobility within urban environments, and to determine whether there are principles across interventions that can be replicated in different settings. The theoretical focus is on the role both land use and social planning play in achieving higher levels of children's 'right to the city'. The spatial focus has been the State of Victoria, Australia.

Children's Independent Mobility (CIM) is the right of children¹ to walk, cycle, and use public transport to get to schools, shops, friend's houses, and other destinations, freely and without adult supervision (Hillman et al 1990). Our contention is that because of the drastic decline in CIM over the past two generations, children are at greater risk of physical and mental health problems, ranging from overweight and obesity to reduced development of everyday cognitive and problem-solving skills. It is also our contention that CIM is an issue that local governments must address in the context of citizenship rights and health and wellbeing as well as sustainable transport. Children are not only the transport decision-makers of the future, but current parental car dependency in ferrying their children has a big impact on transport decision-making – and public safety – today.

We contend that children should have the ability to attain a set of 'graduated licenses' from their parents as they progress from freely roaming in their local street to freely roaming in their community. Furthermore, children have the right to influence local planning policies. Parents need to be supported in giving children progressive responsibilities, and local governments need to be supported to ask children about safer and more accessible communities, and then follow up on their recommendations.

In the first phase of this research program (2006-07), we developed the rationale for supporting institutional efforts to increase children's independent mobility. We presented research findings on possible effective mechanisms to enable children's independent mobility and also identified key stakeholders, policies and programs to enabling children's independent mobility in Victoria. The first report, *From Battery-Reared to Free Range Children* (Whitzman and Pike 2007) was based on an international literature review, policy analysis, and interviews with key experts in planning and policy related to children's health and wellbeing.

In the first report, we identified Child-Friendly City (CFC) initiatives as a promising practice undertaken by several local governments in Victoria, which had the potential to enable greater CIM. In this report, we dig deeper into the question of how CFC initiatives are influencing local planning policies and practices in Victoria, Australia. Specifically, we ask the question: **can the development of child-friendly city initiatives promote children's independent mobility?**

¹ The term 'children' is used throughout this report to refer to people below the age of 18. The term 'youth' denotes teenagers aged between 13 and 25 and the term 'young children' is employed to differentiate children aged 7 and under. When quoting from government documents or the academic literature, these terms have not been altered.

We answer this question through three methods. First, we have undertaken a literature review on international best practice in relation to CFC, with a particular focus on any initiatives aimed at increasing CIM. Second, we have reviewed current planning and local policy documents in four local governments that have child-friendly city initiatives to see if policies to improve CIM have resulted from consulting with children. Our third method was to interview at least one strategic land use planner and one council officer whose responsibilities include planning for children's health and well being from each case study council. These research methods aim to answer whether the CFC commitment has led to policies and practices that might impact positively on CIM. The four case study sites are the local governments – the Cities of Melbourne, Brimbank, Port Phillip and Greater Bendigo, which have all formally committed to making their cities child friendly. They are all members of the UNICEF Asia-Pacific Child Friendly Cities Network, which is now working towards developing criteria and a process for accreditation. Their implementation process has varied.

- The City of Greater Bendigo is the first city in Australia which was recognised by UNICEF for its CFC activity in 2007 (City of Greater Bendigo 2009). Bendigo's programs are funded through the Communities for Children (C4C) program, a Commonwealth Government Initiative in which the Smith Family is a coordinating partner. Bendigo engaged the services of Dr Karen Malone² from the University of Wollongong to guide their implementation.
- The City of Melbourne Council endorsed CFC in September 2005, when they adopted their *Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2009* in which the principles of CFC were stated.
- The City of Port Phillip has been undertaking a CFC initiative for approximately five years.
- Like Bendigo, the City of Brimbank is undertaking a CFC program through a four year Communities for Children (C4C) project (2005 – 2009). They also engaged the services of Dr. Malone in the early stages.

This report incorporates an earlier piece of exploratory research undertaken by one of the authors (Mizrachi 2008) which studied three matching councils that had not explicitly undertaken CFC work, at least to our knowledge (see Figures 1 and 2). As it transpired, the City of Ballarat was in the beginning stages of actively pursuing CFC status. The earlier piece of research did not explicitly examine the impact of Child-Friendly Cities on CIM, since its focus was on attitudes, practices and policies related to children's rights.

For the purpose of this report, the Cities of Melbourne, Brimbank, Port Phillip and Bendigo will be referred as the 'intervention sites' because they constitute the primary focus of this inquiry. The Cities of Stonnington and Hobson's Bay will be referred to as 'control sites' as their function in this report is to essentially provide a point of comparison to the primary sites. In the case of the City of Ballarat, we do include some of their CFC policies in our section on good practice.

² Dr Malone, an international expert on children's environments and participation and is the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Director of GUIC and was regional network facilitator of UNICEF's CFC projects.

	% Young children (0-4)	% Children (5-14)	Average household income (p/w)	Density/hectare	Population
State of Victoria	6.2	13.1	\$1022	22.6	4,932,422
Melbourne Metropolitan area	6.3	12.6	\$1079	486.4	3,592,591
City of Melbourne	2.7	3.4	\$1081	2117.4	71,380
Port Phillip	4.6	5.6	\$1193	4390.0	85,096
<i>Stonnington</i>	4.9	8.4	\$1346	3715.0	89,883
Brimbank	6.5	14.1	\$921	1416.8	168,215
<i>Hobson's Bay</i>	6.6	12.8	\$1023	1321.0	81,459
Bendigo	6.2	14.3	\$833	32.3	93,252
<i>Ballarat</i>	6.3	13.5	\$839	119.5	85,196

Figure 1. Relevant information in relation to state and metropolitan averages, Intervention and control sites 2006 NB: control sites are italicized (Source: ABS 2007, & Regional Profile 2008)

As can be seen above, the Cities of Melbourne and Port Philip, both located in the central city, have very low proportions of children in relation to the Metropolitan Melbourne average. While there are pockets of low SES households in both LGAs, they are relatively wealthy on average. They also have much higher densities than the metropolitan average. Although the City of Stonnington, adjacent to these two LGAs, has a slightly higher proportion of children (still considerably lower than the average for the metropolitan region), it provides the closest demographic and geographic equivalent.

In contrast, the City of Brimbank, and its control site the City of Hobson's Bay, have a slightly higher proportion of children, especially school-aged children, than the metropolitan average. These middle western suburbs of metropolitan Melbourne, (Brimbank in particular) have lower average household incomes than the metropolitan average.

The two regional cities, Bendigo and Ballarat, located approximately 120 km northwest and west of metropolitan Melbourne respectively, are also compared. Their average household incomes are lower than the state average, while their proportions of children are similar to the state average.

The next chapter of the report will outline the relationships between children's rights in the international context and children's independent mobility. Following this, the analysis of the policies and practices of our seven local governments will test the hypothesis that CFC has the capacity to improve CIM outcomes.



Figure 2: Local Government Areas of Victoria

Key: Red – Intervention Councils, Green – Control Councils

(Source: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b7/Victoria_Local_Government_Areas.png, Retrieved 3 August 2009)

Chapter 2: Responding to Children’s Voices: Child-Friendly Cities and the Rights Based Approach to Children’s Independent Mobility

2.1 “Child Rescue”: Children’s Health, Well-being and Access to Public Space

A recent outpouring of both academic and policy literature examining the relationship between children’s health and wellbeing and the urban environment suggests that “child rescue” needs to become a priority for both planning research and practice (Gleeson and Sipe 2006 p 6; see also Bartlett 2005, Bartlett et al. 1999, Corsi 2002, Fuentes and Niimi 2002, Knowles-Yanez 2005, Malone 2006, Malone and Hasluck 1998, Racelis, Desiree and Aguirre 2002, Riggio 2002). This momentum can be attributed to three factors. First, there is a consensus amongst researchers that changes in the built and social environments have contributed to an alarming decline of children’s physical activity, leading to negative outcomes in children’s health and wellbeing (Catford and Caterson 2003; Gleeson 2006). Second, several scholars have expressed growing concern about the dichotomization of children and youth. ‘Children’ are seen as vulnerable and in need of adult protection, while ‘youth’ are seen as a danger or threat to the community. Children and youth have been forced to have a continually reduced presence in public space, and are seen as requiring segregation into supervised ‘child spaces’ such as playgrounds and sports fields (Fincher and Iveson 2008, Freeman 2006, UNICEF 2004, Valentine 1997, Simpson 1997). Third, United Nations directed initiatives have used a rights perspective to develop Child Friendly Cities policies and projects. In this alternate conception of children and youth, they are seen as a legitimate interest group, possessing the required capacities to competently assess their environment. They are encouraged to lend their voices to improve planning processes and local decision-making (Malone 2006, Bartlett 2005, Knowles-Yanez 2005, Corsi 2002, Raceles et al 2002, Riggio 2002, Fuentes and Niimi 2002, Bartlett et al 1999, Malone and Hasluck 1998).

There is perhaps no greater measure of freedom than the ‘right to the city’: “Of all specific liberties which may come into our minds when we hear the word freedom, freedom of movement is historically the oldest and also the most elementary” (Arendt 1968: 9). Many argue that children are at danger of losing this right, at least in wealthy Anglo-American societies such as the UK, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The most common measure of CIM is the journey to school. In 1974, 55% of children in one Melbourne-area school walked or bicycled to school, mostly by themselves or with other children. By 2005 that figure had dropped to 10%, while the proportion of children being driven by their parents rose to 89% (Peddie and Somerville 2005: 1). Similar declines have been noted in the UK (Hillman et al 1990), New Zealand (Tranter and Pawson 2001, Kingham and Ussher 2007), Canada (O’Brien et al 2003) and the US (Vanderbeck and Johnson 2000). However, other high income societies appear to be resisting this trend, with Japan and Scandinavia being two examples of societies where most children as young as five and six are able to travel autonomously to school (Malone 2007, Horelli 2001, Kytta 2004).

In discussing the impacts of this generational shift in CIM, the most common concern expressed is around individual children’s physical health (Gleeson and Sipe 2006). Internationally, rates of childhood overweight and obesity are reaching epidemic proportions owing to “a combination of over nourishment and underactivity” (Catford and Caterson 2003: 577). Particularly alarming is that the rates of childhood obesity and overweight are increasing rapidly: a 2003 study revealed that in a sample 1001 children between the ages of seven and

eleven, 7.9% were considered obese while 26.7% were either overweight or obese. This marks a significant increase from 1985 where 1.7% of children were obese and 12.1% were considered obese or overweight (Catford and Caterson 2003: 577). Childhood obesity tracks into adulthood and can contribute to other chronic conditions including cardiovascular disease, adult onset diabetes, and colon cancer (Catford and Caterson 2003: 577, Frank et al 2003: 78-79). Other Australian studies have revealed that 30% of children have low fitness levels, with 60% of children having moderate to poor fundamental motor skills (Timperio et al 2004: 21). Timperio et al (2004) also make a link between low levels of physical activity in adolescents and a range of health risk behaviours such as smoking and alcohol abuse (Timperio et al 2004).

Everyday physical activity such as walking to and from school has been shown in some settings to account for at least half of children's recommended 60 minutes of moderate physical exercise per day (Kingham and Ussher 2007). Yet a range of social, cultural, physical, economic and cultural factors, have been blamed for creating "obesogenic environments" (Catford and Caterson 2003: 578), communities where children's everyday exercise (whether it be in pursuit of a destination or spontaneous and unstructured play) is constrained.

Children's wellbeing is also threatened, ironically out of concern for their safety. Current planning policies, particularly strict zoning combined with the prioritization of car movement over all other modes of transport, have been accused of generating "divisive city environments in which the child has become marginalized and excluded" (Freeman 2006: 73). As children have adapted to this sedentary and adult dependent lifestyle, their capacity to become competent and independent users of their local environments has been affected. Purpose-built spaces such as playgrounds, which Hart calls "a paranoid attempt to create no risk environments" for children, are no substitute for a rich range of local environments in terms of the development of the children's intellectual, creative, social and emotional potential (Hart 2002: 135-146, see also Gill 2007).

Aside from these individual health and wellbeing costs, the decline in CIM is associated with a change in the societal conception of children. An article in *Good Weekend*, a national magazine, publicized the term "bubble-wrap generation", saying "middle class Australian boys and girls are like pampered prisoners – cosseted, constrained and constantly nagged...we don't just cushion them against life's blows, we bubble-wrap them" (Cadzow 2004: 18-22). Meyer Hillman, the leader of the 1990 foundational study that coined the term 'children's independent mobility' has also suggested that current parenting practices are producing "battery reared" rather than "free range" children (Hillman 2002). While young children are thus portrayed as innocent "angels", needing protection from life's evils to the extent of "containment" (Malone and Hasluck 1998: 25), older youth are often portrayed by media as "devils" (Valentine 1996a: 581). Whether fearful for children or fearful of youth, the net impact is to marginalize both in the public realm. Young people considered out of parental control might be subject to government mechanisms such as Truancy Watch or curfews (Malone and Hasluck 2002, see also Valentine 1996a and b). Young people might also be denied "legitimate user status" in shopping centres and recreation complexes, and become subject to additional rules or unequal treatment from security officers and police (Malone and Hasluck 1998: 34, see also Valentine 1996a and Sibley 1995).

2.2 Planning Responses, Children's Rights and Children's Independent Mobility

As Fincher and Iveson (2008: 107) note, “concerns about risks to and from young people” have resulted in limited planning responses: “fenced playgrounds which afford adult surveillance” are provided for younger children, while skate parks are seen as a “solution to the problem of boisterous teenagers”. These responses create an “archipelago of ‘safe’ spaces in a sea of adult-centric space” (ibid: 109). Specified ‘child-space’ ghettoizes children and “signals exclusion”, reinforcing societal conceptions rather than challenging them (Sibley 1995: 85). Local government in general appears locked into a culture of risk aversion. Regulatory overkill – public service messages that tell parents to hold the hand of children under 11 when crossing roads, banning ball playing on the street, even banning treehouses (Louv 2006) – reinforces this tendency towards sterile and bland environments (CABE 2007).

There is some hope that a new generation of planners might be given more freedom to ‘design in’ more exciting and emancipator local environments, rather than ‘design out’ risk. In the UK, the Commission on the Built Environment (CABE) has been active in advocating for local governments’ right to take risks in designing public space. Planning processes have also been challenged. Children should be seen as “different” from adults, but not “less than adults”, not only as “future citizens” but as “current citizens” (Simpson 1997: 908-09, see also Fincher and Iveson 2008 and Gleeson and Sipe 2006 in the Australian context). Children should be recognized as capable of understanding urban environments, and should be encouraged to contribute to decisions that affect their rights as citizens (MacNaughton et al 2003).

Italy provides us with some of the best examples of how the implementation of CFC has already had an impact on rates of CIM. In 2003 in Comune di Pistoia (Pistoia City Council) a major campaign was implemented to improve road safety for children and to lessen the levels of pollution caused by traffic. Children from two schools and one high school were involved in a project focused on their local Brana River. In the initial phase of the project children were involved in investigating the history and ecosystem of the environment along the river. The route was then given the name of a protected species of fish that the children had discovered, the stickleback. Another branch of the project involved securing safe routes round the school. This included sign-posting, the drawing of yellow bears (the CFC logo) on the pavements along the routes, and the placement of statues of “grandparent friends” at the entry to the school. Since 2000 there has been a marked increase in children walking to schools although the exact statistics are unknown.

In addition to this a further project was implemented called “the Meeting Square” which involved the children from the C. Collodi primary school taking over an unnamed square near their school that was being used as a car park. The route between the square and the school has been planted and cleared with the help of older students. The square has provided an important place for the children to meet and play, exchange messages, and go to school together. Corsi, from UNICEF at the Innocenti Research Centre in Florence described the improvements in CIM as: “measures to reduce speeds; the creation of highly recognizable road signs (sometimes using symbols chosen and designed by children); the widening and protection of sidewalks, and the creation of pedestrian areas and residential streets (also involving children). There has been considerable expansion of the cycle path network, mainly in city centres rather than suburban areas.”(Corsi 2002: 176)

2.3 The UN Convention on Rights of the Child

In the first phase of this research (Whitzman and Pike 2007), Child-Friendly Cities (CFC) was singled out from other Victorian policies and programs, as the one with the most potential to address CIM. It was the sole policy that took a rights based approach; explicitly referring to children's rights to public space. **It is hypothesised here that through the mobilisation and legitimisation of children's citizenship, significant inroads may be made in addressing declining rates of CIM.**

The rights basis of CFC comes from the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC), of which Australia is a signatory. CRC articles 3, 4, 6, 12 and 31 are of particular note, since they directly or indirectly reference CIM. These articles (outlined in Figure 3) address the child's general right to participation, and also their specific right to use public space.

Article 3:	<i>1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.</i>
Article 4:	<i>Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.</i>
Article 6:	<i>1. Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life. 2. Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.</i>
Article 12:	<i>1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. 2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.</i>
Article 31:	<i>1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. 2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity</i>

Figure 3. Relevant Articles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (Source: UNICEF 1989)

Articles 3 and 4 mean that all levels of government (including local and state) have a responsibility to enact laws and consultative processes to follow through on their commitment to children's rights and "the best interests of the child". Article 6 refers to the child's right to live a healthy life, without impediments to their survival and development. The right to a healthy

childhood has a strong link to policies supporting CIM. Article 12 sets the groundwork for children's right to participate in government decision-making. Article 31 is the basis for the "right to play" and the right to involvement in public spaces. Of particular note is the idea of the provision of "appropriate and equal opportunities" for this to occur in our cities and regions.

2.4 The Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI)

A specific UN Initiative on Child-Friendly Cities (CFCI) was conceived in response to the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, in recognition of global trends towards urbanization and the concern that urbanization can be detrimental to children's health and wellbeing. Throughout the late 1990s the CFCI gathered momentum (UNICEF 2008). In 2000 UNICEF set up the CFC Secretariat at its Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, Italy to support city authorities in changing practices unfriendly to children, into systems where children matter. UNICEF "promotes the implementation of the *Convention of the Rights of the Child* (CRC) at the level where it has the greatest direct impact on children's lives": local government (UNICEF 2004: 1, see also UNICEF 1989, Riggio 2002). Following the 2002 UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children, the *A World Fit for Children* report was published. Since 2000, the CFCI has been further strengthened by its partnership with the International Union of Local Authorities (now known as United Cities and Local Governments or UCLG).³ Many local governments hold the final responsibility for the elements that impact most significantly on children: education, health, housing, recreation and transport, amongst others.

The CFCI conceives its role as providing "a focal point for standardizing child friendly city methods and techniques that are succeeding on the ground" as it "collects, documents, distills and disseminates" child friendly governance practices and projects, providing an extensive database of CFC activities internationally (UNICEF 2008: Overview – CFC Secretariat). UNICEF emphasizes the importance of institutionalizing the concept of Child Friendly Cities in all levels of government and creating mechanisms for inter-departmental cooperation at the municipal level (UNICEF 2004: 2-3). CFC is not conceived as "an ideal end state or standard model" (UNICEF 2004: 2-3); it is a *process* of transforming government systems, rather than standardized series of initiatives (Riggio 2002: 45-6).

According to UNICEF, a Council must commit to several **outcomes** to assure its fulfilment of the Convention of the Rights of the Child. These "characteristics of a Child-Friendly City" are:

- Good access for all children to affordable, quality basic health services, clean water, adequate sanitation and solid waste removal
- Local authorities to ensure that policies, resources allocations and governance actions are made in a manner that is in the best interest of the children and their constituencies
- Safe environments and conditions that nurture the development of children of all ages with opportunities for recreation, learning, social interaction, psychological development and cultural expression

³ UCLG, comprising 112 national organizations across 200 cities, share UNICEF's belief in the importance of supporting women and children in local contexts around the globe. As such UCLG has been a key promoter of the rights of children since 1992 when the Mayors Defenders for Children Initiative was launched, which requested mayors and other leaders to pledge their support for the prioritization of children's needs, children's increased participation and the revision of legislation to protect children affected by war and other adverse circumstances.

- A sustainable future under equitable social and economic conditions and protection from the effects of environmental hazards and natural disasters
- That children have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their lives and are offered opportunities to express their opinions
- Special attention is given to disadvantaged children, such as those who are living or working on the streets, sexually exploited, living with disabilities or without adequate family support
- Non discrimination based on gender, ethnic background or social or economic status (Malone 2006: 21)

CFCs are defined as “a local system of good governance committed to fulfilling children’s **rights** 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 and education;
- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation;
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse;
- Walk safely on 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” (UNICEF 2008).

Thus the CFCI explicitly addresses children’s rights to “walk safely on the streets on their own, meet friends and play... and participate in cultural and social events”, all central aspects of CIM (UNICEF 2008).

The CFCI suggests a **framework** that cities should adopt to ensure a continued commitment to the rights, needs and voices of children in all facets of governance. However it also recognizes that local conditions vary substantially from city to city, and constantly change (Malone 2006: 21)⁴. This is also reflected in the diverse range of local government responses to the CFC: the organisation of youth councils; special advocates or ombudsman for children; child’s rights committees (whose activities may vary from advocacy, monitoring and policy development); municipal plans of action for children; data collection; redistribution of budget allocations and even participatory budgeting; institutional capacity building; and attempts to raise public awareness in order to change attitudes and perceptions of children views and needs (UNICEF 2008, Bartlett 2005). Bartlett claims that the most documented activity undertaken by municipalities in response to the CRC and CFCI, “perhaps because they appear to be the most obvious attention to children’s rights”, have been measures to enhance the participation and involvement of children in local governance such as Youth Councils (Bartlett 2005: 30). This is

⁴ For example, while in developing nations or low income nations the focus is first and foremost on achieving access to basic services for the poor, in high-income nations it is environmental and physical issues such as improving recreational spaces, green spaces, and making streets safer for young people.

reflected in the toolkit provided by CFC for building a child-friendly city (framework for action, lessons and contact information about other CFC municipalities as well as relevant research) (see Figure 4).

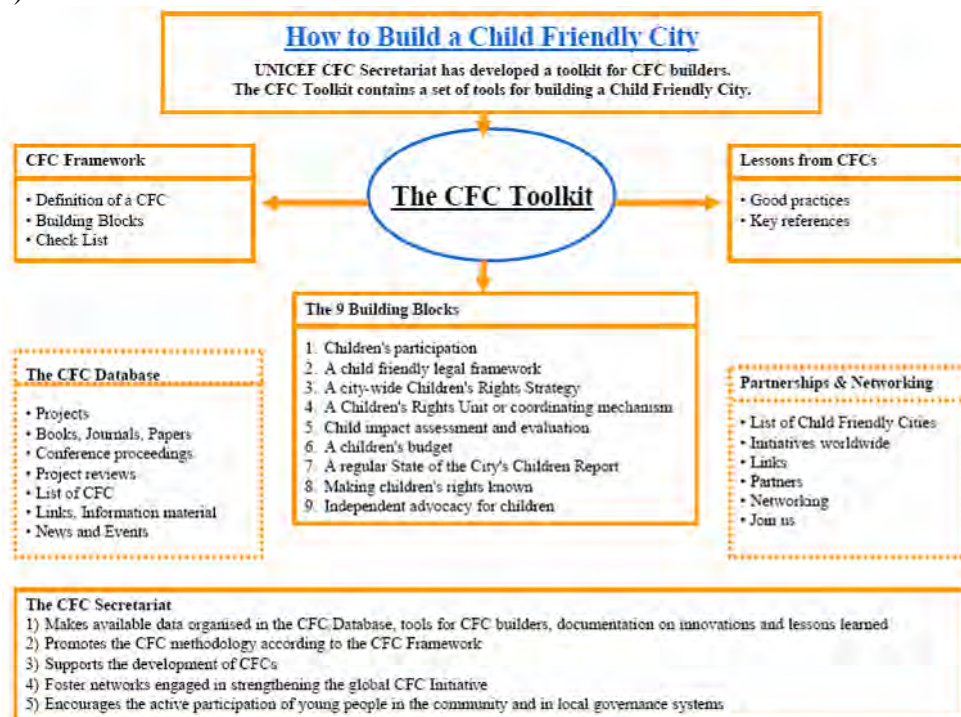


Figure 4: Child-friendly Cities Toolkit Schematic

Source: UNICEF 2008

2.5 Growing Up in Cities: Cross-cultural planning research relating to Children

The UNESCO-MOST *Growing Up in Cities* (GUIC) research project initially began in the early 1970s under the direction of Kevin Lynch, a noted urban planner and designer. It had an overarching research aim to explore how children perceive, value and use their local environment, in order to suggest planning policy recommendations to improve the quality of the urban environment for children (Lynch 1977, pp 1 & 81-3; Malone 2006, p 24; UNESCO-MOST 2008). This project was revived and extensively expanded in 1996 to support the political and governance approaches of the CFCI, further developing Lynch's "child-based methods of community development" (UNESCO-MOST 2008; see also Malone 2006, p 24; Chawla 2002). In its current incarnation, the GUIC project continues to build on Lynch's primary objective of understanding the built environment from the perspective of children to inform planning policy and practice, but also aims to provide practitioners with a "toolkit of principles, research methods and strategies" for engaging with children (UNESCO-MOST 2008; Driskell 2002; see also Malone 2006: 24). The GUIC rationale is premised on the understanding that "responding to children's rights is not just about adults' roles as stewards" and a recognition of "the capacity for children and youth to be *authentic participants* and the importance this has on their continued sense of connection to their community" (Malone 2006: 25) A significant outcome of the GUIC was the development of a set of social and physical *Indicators of Environment Quality* that were

produced from the perspectives of children (Figure 5), by distilling the project findings of (both the original and contemporary) GUIC case study sites (Chawla 2002, pp 221-3).⁵

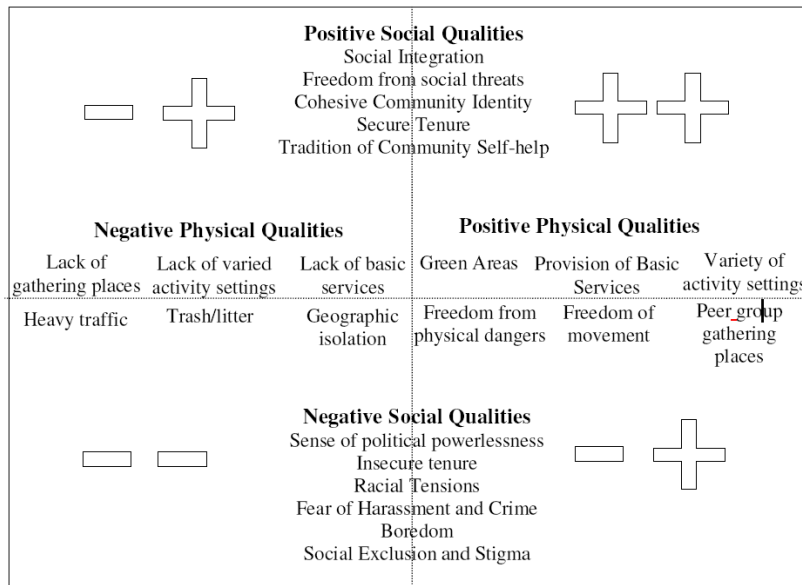


Figure 5: GUIC Indicators of Environmental Quality
Source: UNICEF IRC. International Secretariat for Child Friendly Cities 2003

2.6 Evaluating CFCs: A Research Gap?

Other than a specific strategy and budget, regular ‘State of the Children’ reports, and the commitment to children’s rights and participation in governance, the CFC framework currently does not provide a prescriptive model of policies or practices. Achieving official CFC status is equally hazy; there is no clear accreditation system. The CFCI is currently undertaking a review to address “how (or whether) this status can be certified” while contending that “It is clear that there cannot be a rigid international standard set of quantitative criteria or formal mechanism for defining a CFC” (posted on the UNICEF website, May 2008). Other than documentation of best practice case studies, the CFCI does not address how urban planning can respond to the CRC and support and promote CFCs. Furthermore, it does not state how one might evaluate or audit CFC initiatives and policies within a city, let alone compare across local governments.

While others have tried to remedy this with their own evaluation systems, they remain process, rather than outcome focused. Bartlett compiled an indispensable review of CFC best practice, from which she generated “22 useful lessons” to improve the future application of the CFC framework (Barlett 2005: 36-9). However, as Bartlett states: “Greater attention is given to the more colourful and press worthy initiatives than to the kind of administrative routines that are part of a long term commitment” (ibid: 36-7). Although the literature surveyed suggests general limitations and enablers that may influence the capacity of local governments to support and implement a CFC approach, such as resource constraints, competing priorities of municipal

⁵ However, it must be noted that a serious flaw in the design of these *Indicators of Environmental Quality* is that they are only based on the evaluations of children aged ten to fifteen years and consequently may not accurately reflect the needs and voices of young children.

governments, and so on, this does not appear to be based on empirical research but on observations, and sometimes, on *a priori* assumptions (Chawla 2002, Bartlett et al 1999).

2.7 A Model of Participatory Planning for CFCs in relation to CIM

In order to address the overarching research aim of this study, to investigate the extent to which Victorian local councils working with a CFC model are capable of improving CIM outcomes, a model must first be developed to ascertain what ideal CFC policies and practices should be. This model is based on the building blocks and accompanying checklists of UNICEF's *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action* (UNICEF 2004), the GUIC Indicators of Environmental Quality (Chawla 2002, Driskell 2002), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (specifically Articles 3, 4, 6, 12, 31). The model is comprised of three elements. The scope of this research covers two of these elements: what planning *policies* supporting CFC principles should look like, and what are *practices* planners should aspire to. Future research is required to address a final element of this model pertaining to the evaluation of CFC outcomes. It would ask what child friendly *places* would be like.⁶

2.7.1 Model Policies

Child-specific planning: The effectiveness of planning policies to address the GUIC Indicators and the CRC is dependent on the **explicit recognition of children as an interest group in urban planning policy**, thus rejecting the “trickle-down” approach to planning for children that assumes that adult-oriented decisions must necessarily result in good decisions for children (Bartlett 2005: 19). Planning to enhance the welfare of the general community is not enough; planning for children in this “neutral manner” without explicitly referring to them, fails to accommodate them (Simpson 1997: 920). For example, although Precinct Structure Plans or Urban Design Frameworks may aim to create quality public or community open spaces, the design may not be conducive to generating children's or youth gathering spaces. Thus, this neutral language masks the needs of children and the “often-conflicting interests involved” in relation to children and parents. It also makes it difficult to evaluate the outcomes of these plans for children because they were not considered in the design of these policies in the first place (ibid: 920).

In addition, planning for the ‘universal child’ is also not sufficient, as planning policies must recognise the needs and rights of children with disabilities and those experiencing social and economic disadvantage and discrimination, in accordance with the CFCI principle of non-discrimination (UNICEF 2004: 10-14).

Indicators: Planning policy that support CFCs must be accompanied by achievable targets, strategies and implementation mechanisms (UNICEF 2004: 11). **Ideally, CFC policy**

⁶ Fundamentally, a child friendly place would provide a supportive environment for children where they can exercise their rights as stipulated in the CRC: the right to explore, play, congregate, and access services and facilities. They would support every child's “inherent right to life”, to enjoy the “highest attainable standard of health” and a “standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development” (UNICEF 1989, Articles 2,6,24,27). A child friendly place guarantees the child's right to “rest and leisure” and “engage in play and recreational activities...and to participate freely in cultural life” (ibid: article 31).

would be monitored regularly (annually or biennially) in their success in achieving ‘positive’ social and physical attributes as informed by children. Social indicators might be measured in local surveys, observation of public spaces, or through other mechanisms such as focus groups:

- Social integration: Do children interact with different ages and cultures freely?
- Freedom from social threats: Do children feel comfortable using public spaces and in the private realm of their home? Or are they concerned about personal safety (assault, abduction, sexual assault) or harassment? Do they have experiences of harassment or assault in public space, and if so, where did they seek help and how was it addressed?
- Cohesive community identity: Do they feel part of a community, whether this be geographic (their neighbourhood) and/or cultural?
- Secure Tenure: Do they have adequate and appropriate housing rights?
- Community self-help/ public participation: Do they think their voices count? Are they considered in community improvement, and asked to contribute?

Physical indicators are more ‘objective’ but should include children’s assessments as well:

- Green areas: What is the distribution of green space, and are recreational areas considered adequate and appropriate by children (planners often measure the amount of green space on a map, but not their use and enjoyment)
- Freedom from physical dangers: What are statistics on traffic accidents involving children, and on assaults in public space?
- Provision of basic services: Are there shops, schools, recreation areas, and other basic needs in the vicinities where children live? Are they seen as accessible by children, or are there traffic or other barriers?
- Freedom of movement: Are children allowed to use spaces such as shopping malls or recreational facilities? Or are they barred because of age or lack of disposable income?
- Variety of activity settings: Related to the above, are children allowed to use the range of spaces in their communities (streams, fields, shops, workplaces), or are they expected to be content in playgrounds and school yards?
- Peer group gathering places: Also related to the above, are there places where children can gather freely, with benches or other seating arrangements?

Explicit recognition of children’s rights to public space: Planning policies should explicitly reflect the rights guaranteed by the CRC, as further outlined by the CFCI: support the best interests of children (CRC, Article 3), demonstrate local government’s commitment to children’s rights (CRC, Article 4), support children’s right to a healthy childhood (CRC, Article 6), promote children’s participation (CRC, Article 12) and support a child’s right to play freely (CRC, Article 31). In relation to Article 12, since children’s participation in local government planning and decision making is seen as the “very essence of the process of building a Child Friendly City”, it is expected that an ideal land use as well as social/health planning policy would involve “informing and involving children and respecting their views and experiences” (UNICEF 2004: 18). In parallel with Article 31, **planning policies that support CFC must not limit planning for children to ‘child specific spaces’** (such as playgrounds or children’s facilities), but adopt an approach whereby the entire city becomes a “social space” where children can be “part of the city’s life” (Ward 1978: 31).

Policy Integration: In order for CFC policies to work, they must be integrated with one another and not contradict one another. *Building Child Friendly Cities: A Framework for Action* stresses the need for strategies and policies pertaining to children to achieve both vertical and horizontal coordination (UNICEF 2004: 10-12) – that is, that all parts of a government must work together, and all levels of governance – from local to national - must work together. *Environments for Health*, a Victorian state policy, states “To have maximum impact, municipal public health planning must inform the content and be incorporated into the municipal Corporate Plan, and be integrated into all other Council plans”, including land use planning instruments (Department of Human Services 2001: 9). Specifically, children’s needs that come up in Public Health and Wellbeing Plans, Early Years Plans, and other health/social plans, should be addressed in Municipal Strategic Statements and other land use planning instruments.

An evaluation of CFC policies should be guided by this four-pronged model. To further simplify this evaluation process, this model is presented as a series of questions:

1. Does local government planning policy recognize children as a unique group with distinct rights and needs?
2. Does local government policy support the child’s right to a healthy childhood, including independent mobility?
3. Does local government endorse and promote child participation and involvement in local governance, where appropriate?
4. Does local government policy promote children’s ability to play freely in the city?
5. Is there a high level of coordination and integration between policies?
6. Is there any monitoring system in place that might be linked to the Growing Up in Cities environmental indicators?

2.7.2 Model Practices

Attitudes: Training for both land use and social planners on a rights based approach to planning for and with children is an essential component of CFCs (UNICEF 2004: 16-17). Land use planners need specific training on the implications of a rights based approach to their specific role in spatial planning. Local councillors and senior managers in most divisions should also receive training. It is not enough that those championing CFC within council have knowledge and implementation skills, particularly since turnover is high in local government.

Skill-sets: Recognizing the rights of children in policies is futile if planners are not equipped with the skills and methods to engage with children (Driskell 2002). As part of this training, all planners – including land use planners – should receive training on children’s consultation and participation, recognizing that children are capable of evaluating “their own urban environments and experiences, and to make a substantial contribution to urban governance on the basis of their evaluations... children and young people have a range of capacities which would be of value in reshaping their city” (Fincher and Iveson 2008: 111). Ideally, this would not be incorporated as an ‘extra’ skill, but as a central tenet of participatory planning.

An evaluation of CFC practices, looking at attitudes and skill-sets of planners, would include these questions:

1. Do planners have an understanding of children's rights and their implications for their specific planning role?
2. Do planners recognize and appreciate the connection between CFC and CIM?
3. Are planners adequately equipped to undertake appropriate and ethical consultation with children?
4. Are planners able to translate the broad CFC principles into specific local approaches, and able to incorporate planning for children into all plans for the shaping and reshaping of public spaces?

CHAPTER 3: Local Government Policies: Comparison between Intervention and Control Councils

This chapter will compare four local ‘intervention’ governments in Victoria, Australia which have explicitly committed to a CFC agenda, as well as a fifth local government that is pursuing CFC policies, with two similar ‘control’ governments, in order to ascertain whether the CFC has led to improved local government policy for children.

3.1 Policies chosen

In both intervention and control governments, a range of current policies were reviewed. The Council Plan sets out overall objectives and priorities for the local government. Sometimes it is informed by a Community Plan, which generally includes community consultation. The Municipal Public Health Plan (MPHP), or the Health and Wellbeing Plan (HWP) as they are more recently known, reflects public health objectives and priorities. Land use planning policies include the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) (governed by Clause 21 of the Victorian Planning Provisions) and other Local Planning Policies (LPPs) (governed by Clause 22), which set out land use planning objectives and create a framework for the review of development proposals. Under *Environments for Health*, the State Government encourages these three sets of policies to be aligned (Department of Human Services, 2001: 9). In addition to these plans, this policy review examined local government policy documents that deal specifically with the needs of children and young people, such as the Municipal Early Years Plans (MEYP - generally covering ages 0-5 or 0-8), and Youth Strategies (generally covering ages 14-25). Separate CFC policy was also reviewed if it had been developed (see Appendix 1 for the full list of policies reviewed for each council).

It should be noted at the onset, that most Victorian CFC initiatives are less than five years old. Moreover, measuring the extent of integration between the plans is complicated by the fact that plans are produced on different timelines and that there is no legislative requirement for the MSS, MPHP/HWP and Council Plans to explicitly refer to one another (it is encouraged, but not required, by State government policy). Council Plans generally run for three years, and new ones are being developed in all local governments in 2009. Our policy review may reflect the older Council Plans. In contrast, many MPHPs and HWPs have been renewed in the past two years, and are more likely to reflect recent CFC activity. Our policy review reflects different ‘generations’ of MEYP as some of the intervention municipalities have integrated their MEYP into their MPHP in recent years and the MEYP of the three control councils were developed in 2004-2005 (and expected to be redeveloped in 2009-10). Land use plans such as the MSS and LPPs are often modified, but as will be seen, the idea of children’s rights has not yet permeated either policy or practice in land use planning (though it should be noted that many of the case studies are currently undertaking a complete review of their MSS).

3.2 Do Policies Recognize Children as a Specific Group with Rights?

We found that the councils with CFC initiatives were more likely to do this than those without. Port Phillip provides a good example of this in their *Creating a Child Friendly Port Phillip Implementation Plan*, Goal 1: Whole Child Perspective. In Actions Arising, they include: “develop an Impact on Children Assessment Tool and guidelines for use when establishing

policy and services” and “include in the council report template a requirement to state the effects of any proposal on children” (City of Port Phillip 2005b: 1). Melbourne’s MPHP, *City Health 2005-2009*, says that council will “develop policy to legitimise children as stakeholders” and “develop procedures across council to engage children as legitimate stakeholders in the policy development cycle of councils” (City of Melbourne 2005b: 28, 29). Bendigo’s *Health and Wellbeing Strategy* reiterates that they are “committed to a local system of good governance to fulfilling children’s rights” and are “will continue to work in partnership with other organisations to establish a ‘child friendly orientation’ within its own organisation and also across the community” (City of Bendigo 2008b: 8, 9). Their ‘Priority Focus’ section mentions children with regard to building social capital and promoting social justice, especially for the disadvantaged (2008b: 22-27).

In contrast, although the municipalities without CFC initiatives – the Cities of Stonnington and Hobson’s Bay – seek to enhance opportunities to participate in community life in their MPHP’s, they fail to take a children’s rights based approach (City of Stonnington 2006: 32, 44-46, Hobson’s Bay City Council 2005a: 13 & 2005b: 1-2). While the City of Stonnington provides a wide range of health services for children and families, its Health and Wellbeing Plan only recognises “families”, not children, as a demographic target age group for particular strategies (2006: 44-46). This does not equate to explicitly recognising children as an interest group as the needs of children are not necessarily interchangeable with the needs of families

3.3 Do Policies Support CIM as part of a Children’s Right to a Healthy Childhood?

While all councils reviewed spoke about environmental, social, and economic determinants of children’s health and wellbeing, the Municipal Early Years Plans of the control councils were primarily focused on provision and delivery of specific services and facilities, maternal and child healthcare, child immunisation and the maintenance and management of ‘child specific spaces’ such as parks or playgrounds (however this finding may be consistent with the previous generation of MEYPs across Victoria generally) (City of Ballarat 2005, City of Stonnington 2004, Hobson’s Bay City Council 2005a). When issues of accessibility for children were raised, they were often ‘destination focused’ such as access to childcare and playgrounds. Although the relationship between the built environment and children’s health was acknowledged, the plans often failed to prescribe appropriate actions to impact on land use planning, often owing to vague wording or unspecified timelines. In contrast, the intervention councils have generally combined their Municipal Early Years Plan and their Municipal Public Health Plan and explicitly include CIM issues.

Port Phillip is perhaps the most developed in this regard. Its *Health and Wellbeing Plan* was the only one of the seven councils to focus explicitly on children’s traffic safety concerns, particularly the difficulty for children to cross major arterial roads (2007b: 34-35). One of the five goals of the *CFC Framework for Action* and accompanying *Implementation Plan* relates to “Improving Child Development, Health and Wellbeing” and seeks to address a broad spectrum of health related issues: inclusive communities, physical activity, safety, and access to services and facilities (2005a: 16, 2005b). It speaks of a “child’s right to grow up in healthy and supportive community environments” (City of Port Phillip 2005a: 5) and the need to “address specific playground, traffic and pedestrian health and safety issues raised through community consultation”, “promote sections of ‘Walks in Port Phillip’ ... that are suitable for children and

families”, and “improve community transport access for families and children with additional needs to enable them to access support services and reduce isolation” (2005b: 4). Port Phillip’s *Walk Plan 2005-10* refers to the importance of working with school communities to encourage high levels of walking and to educate children about the value of increased physical activity (2005: 25). Port Phillip also has a long term Health Promotion Plan for 1999 to 2020, *Creating a Healthy and Safer Port Phillip*. Under strategies related to Quality of Life, there are policy directions to review the safe routes to school program and to investigate transport requirements of different population groups (1999: 21).

Less explicitly, the City of Melbourne’s *City Health Plan* promises to “ensure the development and upgrade of open space in the city considers the needs of people of all ages” (2005b: 25). *Future Melbourne*, in its ambition to become a ‘Walking City’ recognises that “whether or not children are safe to walk is a real test of a walking city” and that a “child-friendly city enables children to walk to meet their own needs, including going to and from school and visiting friends rather than being driven by adults” (City of Melbourne 2009: Connected – 3 Walking City).

3.4 Do Policies Support Children’s Right to Participate in Decision-Making?

There are several good practice examples of government policy promoting consultation with children. Looking at the City of Melbourne for example, the *City Health* plan outlines “inclusion and participation” as one of its eight priority areas (2005b: 30). And while many of the clauses don’t explicitly refer to children, the ones that do are encouraging, such as the Action to “develop procedures across council to engage children as legitimate stakeholders in the policy development cycle of councils” (2005b: 29). Brimbank’s Youth Policy states their intent to: “value and seek opinions of young people to assist in their views and needs being taken into account in council planning, policy development and activities” (2008: 16). At Port Phillip, one of the key progress indicators for their CFC policy is to increase children’s participation in decision-making (2005b: 1). Likewise, the City of Ballarat’s report on *Becoming a Child and Family-Friendly City* recognised that children constituted an underrepresented age group in public consultation relative to their demographic weight in the community, insisting that “further views need to be sought from our Under 19 years” (2007b: 9-11).

In the councils without CFC initiatives, children’s participation is also present in policy documents, but is less explicit and also less well integrated. For instance, Stonnington’s *Youth Strategy* takes a rights based approach: in recognition that youth felt they were not “treated as a legitimate part of the community”, the strategy developed a series of actions to promote advocacy “with and on behalf of young people... for equal opportunity to exercise the privileges of citizenship” (City of Stonnington 2000: 6, 36). But Stonnington’s *Council Plan*, developed after the Youth Strategy, is much more vague: “encourage a City where all children and families are able to participate fully in a community which values and supports them” (2008a: 3). Their MPHP recognizes that particular groups in the community were underrepresented, such as people aged 20 to 30 and low socio-economic status groups, and consequently should be targeted in future,. But there is no mention of absent children’s voices (Stonnington 2006: 21-2).

In both control and intervention sites, the creation of the MSS, or any subsequent amendment, did not involve consultation with children. Another similarity in the control and CFC local governments, is that despite the varied extent to which policy promotes children’s

participation, there is considerably more focus on 14-24 year old youth, than the 0-12 year old band that CFC targets. This finding suggests that local governments do not yet fully accept children as current citizens, with opinions and a right to participate.

3.5 Do Policies Support Children’s Right to Play?

Children’s right to play is the most commonly supported aspect of CFC policies. Here, Bendigo and Melbourne are particularly developed in their policies. Bendigo’s *Health and Wellbeing Strategy*, under the theme of ‘Promoting Social Justice’, promises to “investigate programs to create social opportunities and events, and develop life and interpersonal skills among 8-12 year olds” (2008b: 26). More directly, Bendigo’s new *PlaySpace Strategy* provides an inclusive definition of play space which “refers to the entire site where play can occur” not just where playground equipment is located (2009b: 7). This definition includes elements such as “landscaping, paths, lighting, fencing, opens space...seating, shade structures, BBQ” as well as natural features such as boulders and logs (City of Bendigo: 2009b: 7). Its aim is to “provide a broad range of high quality play opportunities and experiences which stimulate the imagination and can be enjoyed by the whole community, regardless of age or ability”. (City of Bendigo 2009: 15).

Port Phillip’s *CFC Framework for Action* refers to “valuing play” as a ‘guiding principle’ of the framework (2005a: 8). It’s accompanying *Implementation Plan* includes actions to “maximise diverse play and physical activity opportunities for marginalised populations” and “develop criteria for child friendly buildings and developments” (City of Port Phillip 2005b: 3). Melbourne’s *City Health* plan, plans to “promote equity for early childhood years and marginalised groups” and “investigate the barriers preventing people from some sectors of the population (particularly children, young people and older people) participating in arts and cultural projects and programs” (2005b: 28, 31). For example, one of the Actions in the City of Melbourne *Health Plan 2005-009* is to “conduct integrated research across the city’s primary schools to determine the need for recreation and art areas for children in parks and open spaces”, and “provide a range of safe, challenging and fun play environments that encourage regular physical activity in consultation with a range of interested residents...including children” (2005b: 29).

3.6 Are Policies Integrated? The Land Use Planning Gap

The move towards integration of Public Health and Early Years planning has certainly been a factor in ensuring increased integration between children and health planning in those councils. As stated in Bendigo’s *Health and Wellbeing Strategy*, this approach “enables a coordinated and linked population health approach to strengthening health and wellbeing across the ages” (2008b: 3). CFC councils also focus on enhancing organizational capacity and understanding of health and children’s issues across Council. Port Phillip’s *CFC Implementation Plan* states the importance of “an agreement from all council departments that a whole child approach should be the basis for the development of all policies and services required” (2005a: 14). Likewise, one outcome of Ballarat’s *Becoming a Child and Family Friendly City* report is to “develop a set of child and family friendly criteria which will be used in all planning and decision-making” (2007b: 8).

Land use planning appears to be a barrier to an integrated ‘whole of government’ approach. The external evaluation of *Environments for Health* (CHASE 2006) pointed to particular frustrations expressed by local government stakeholders in linking in health promotion policies with Municipal Strategic Statements. The MSS has a strong legal standing, particularly when development decisions are appealed to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Moreover, like any land use plan, it has a strong focus on the built environment, and thus has the capacity to have a large direct impact on the physical indicators discussed in Chapter 2 (green areas, freedom from physical dangers, provision of basic services, freedom of movement, variety of activity settings, and peer group gathering places) as well as an indirect impact on social indicators (social integration, freedom from social threats, cohesive community identity, secure tenure, and community self-help).

All MSSs address, at least in a very general sense, these physical and social indicators. To give the example of social integration, Port Phillip’s MSS states it wishes to “encourage village atmosphere” and makes several references to social vibrancy and interaction (City of Port Phillip 2006: Clauses 21.04-1, 21.05-4, 21.05-10). In relation to a cohesive community identity, Brimbank’s MSS states as a key goal to “promote a sense of belonging and deepen community pride” and create “a strong identity” for itself (City of Brimbank 2006a: Clause 21.03-2). Bendigo’s MSS addresses freedom from physical dangers, in its aim to create a municipality where “the streets are safe and a pleasant place to walk... [and] laneways and arcades provide opportunities to explore and discover” (City of Greater Bendigo 2009: Clause 21.07-1). In fact, one of the four key aims of their MSS is to “improve pedestrian amenity and safety”, “accommodating pedestrian orientated activities” through the design of a high quality urban environment (City of Greater Bendigo 2006: Section 21.07-1).

However, while at a superficial level, many of the MSS policies tick the box, they fail to meet the requirements of the model for ideal CFC policy. The two notable impediments have already been discussed in previous chapters: no mention of children as a specific group with explicit rights and needs, and a tendency to assume that children belong in specific places, rather than throughout the city.

Figure 6 shows the frequency of occurrences of the terms: child, children, youth, young people, family and families⁷, in the MSS and Local Planning Policies of the intervention and control local governments’ land use planning schemes. The table also lists the particular Clause where the term was found. Looking at all seven councils we studied, there is little difference in control and intervention councils: there were eight uses of these terms in Stonnington, five in Hobson’s Bay and zero in Ballarat; nine in Melbourne, five in Brimbank, three in Port Phillip and zero in Bendigo.

Moreover, the references to children or youth hardly reinforce a rights agenda. When children are referred to, it is usually in relation to childcare, maternal and child health centres and playgrounds. For example, in Brimbank’s MSS, the three mentions of ‘children’ are all in the context of childcare centres, and similarly the two mentions of ‘family’ are in the context of family and community centres. Brimbank recognizes that “the policy context relating to young

⁷ Measuring the frequency that the term ‘family/families’ was raised, is not to suggest that these terms are interchangeable with ‘child’ or ‘youth’, but rather, recognizes that planning for the needs of families may, by implication, accommodate consideration of the needs of children. Likewise, the ambiguity of the term ‘young people’ is recognized as it could denote 12-15 year olds or older teenagers and people in their twenties.

people is characterized by fragmentation” (City of Brimbank 2008: 14). Integrating child-friendly policies into the MSS would go a long way towards addressing this fragmentation.

In both the control sample and in the CFC local government planning schemes, the unique needs and demands of children are lost in favour of a generic “public” or “community”. For example, despite a wealth of strategies and policies in place addressing the public realm, open space, and the provision and appropriate location of recreational, leisure and community facilities, the positive physical indicator of ‘Peer Gathering Places’ and a ‘Variety of Activity Settings’ have not been sufficiently addressed by any of the MSSs in relation to children and youth. There is one partial exception: Melbourne’s MSS, with the most references to ‘children’ and ‘youth’, which promotes a Youth Precinct and city Skate Park on Sandridge Bridge on the north bank of the Yarra River (2008b: Clause 21.05, 21.08) and also states their desire, in relation to amusement parlours, “to balance the need for youth entertainment venues with other functions of the city” (2008b: Clause 22.10).

Term	Frequency of Term in Clauses 21 and 22 (Location of term: Clause and Policy)			
	Child’ / ‘Children’	‘Youth’	‘Young People’	‘Family’ /‘Families’
<i>City of Stonnington</i>	1 (22.17-3 Forest Hill Precinct Policy)	0	1 (C21.03-1 Housing Needs) 1 (21.05-2 Community Services)	2 (C21.03-1 Housing Needs) 2 (C21.05-2 Community Services) 1 (C22.16-1 Institutional Uses Policy)
<i>City of Port Phillip</i>	1 (in reference to childcare only)	0	0	2 (C21.03 Municipal Wide Issues)
<i>City of Melbourne</i>	2 (C21.02 Profile) 1 (C21.05 Public Space)	1 (C21.05 Public Space) 1 (C21.08 Youth Precinct) 1(C 21.10 Amusement Parlours)	0	2 (C21.02 Profile, 1 (C21.04 Land Use)
<i>City of Brimbank</i>	1 (C21.02-1 Profile) 1 (C21.12) 1 (C22.06) NB: All in reference to childcare	0	0	1(C21.02-1 Profile family centres) 1 (C21.03-3 Family Centres)
<i>City of Hobson’s Bay</i>	0	1 (C21.13-2 Community Infrastructure – Other Actions)	1 (C21.14-2 Arts and Culture – Objective 1 - Strategies)	1 (C21.02-3 Profile of Hobson’s Bay – Population and Housing) 1 (C21.13-2 Community Infrastructure) 1 (C21.14-2 Arts and
<i>City of Ballarat</i>	0	0	0	0
<i>City of Bendigo</i>	0	0	0	0

Figure 6: Frequency of Child-Specific Terms in MSS, Clauses 21 and 22

3.7 Are there Monitoring Systems in Place?

With the exception of Port Phillip, there has been a consistent neglect of evaluation tools relating to outcomes, as the monitoring systems in place are generally focused on the policy processes and program outputs. In this light, monitoring systems are primarily limited to whether the actions of the plan have been implemented and on ensuring that the priorities of the plan

remain relevant; with the timing of the review dependent on the planning cycle of the policy in question. For instance, Brimbank's *Children's Plan* asserts that "Council aims to implement the Brimbank Children's Plan in accordance with the timelines identified in the Action Plan" and distinguishes between the annual review of the plan that seeks to "ensure that changing needs and priorities are considered, and that the plan is monitored effectively" while the "major review" is to occur three years later (2004a: 17).

Both the Cities of Greater Bendigo and Port Phillip attempt to go beyond this limited interpretation of monitoring by suggesting additional indicators by which program outputs of the plan can be measured (City of Greater Bendigo 2008b: 43, City of Port Phillip 2005b). Bendigo includes "criteria to guide the evaluation" of its *Health and Wellbeing Strategy*. However the measurability of these are unclear, such as the indicator "new activities and programs designed to build social and emotional resilience" are created for children aged 8 to 12 (City of Bendigo 2008b: 43). While this may be effective in evaluating how many programs had been developed, they may not necessarily take into account the number of children participating in them or their effectiveness in developing "social and emotional resilience".

The City of Port Phillip's *Creating a Child Friendly Port Phillip* project provides a better example by combining both process and outcome based "key progress indicators" with "objectives" and actions (City of Port Phillip 2005a: 20, 2005b). This approach provides a coherent framework within which to measure the progress of their CFC project with regards to both process and outcomes. For instance, the Goal to "Improve Child Development, Health and Wellbeing" includes progress indicators focused on outcomes such as "nutrition and weight measures" and "environmental outcomes" (City of Port Phillip 2005b: 2). When taken alone, these indicators appear vague as they are lacking targets; but when coupled with the accompanying objectives (such as to "provide safe and accessible environments" and "to maximise opportunities for interaction with the natural environment and open space") and the comprehensive list of related actions, a clear framework emerges to assess this Goal and the measurability of these indicators are clarified (City of Port Phillip 2005b).

Finally, monitoring and evaluation systems of the consultations with children are also mixed. The City of Greater Bendigo undertook an extensive consultation with 552 children from 2006-2008 to "find out what it is like for children growing up in Bendigo and identify their needs and aspirations" (2008a: 5). However, there were no actions or recommendations linked to the findings from the consultation. In contrast, the City of Ballarat's consultation with children resulted in a series of actionable recommendations, though they lacked timelines or responsible bodies to manage their implementation (2007b: 44-48). However, Ballarat's overarching strategic plan for the next 25 years, *Blueprint Ballarat*, and the *Health and Wellbeing Plan*, both include the implementation of these recommendations as a priority and action respectively, with the *Health and Wellbeing Plan* also listing the resources, timeline, lead council business unit and the partnerships involved (2007c: 21, 2007a: 10).

Chapter 4: Local Government Practices: Comparison between Intervention and Control Councils

It seems a drastic change may be required in governance culture to establish the child as a citizen, if we are to successfully address children's right to the city. Theoretically at least, we have seen that CFC provides the framework to make this shift. An evaluation of CFC practices therefore must observe changes in attitudes and skill-sets of planners, especially with regards to the rights based approach generally, and to children's participation, both in terms of consultation and in terms of promoting independent mobility in public space, specifically. In both intervention and control municipalities, we approached at least one council officer directly involved in either in a CFC initiative or in children's services (usually a social or health planner) and at least one land use planner. In the analysis that follows, we will simplify our two groups of interview participants as 'social planners' and 'land use planners'.

4.1 Do Planners Have an Understanding of Children's Rights in Relation to Their Work?

All the social planners in the intervention sample demonstrated a thorough understanding of the CFC framework and the rights based approach to addressing children's needs. Interviewees referred to the CFC Toolkit and the Building blocks, to the UNICEF website and to CFC networks and conferences. All the social planners interviewed worked in Child and Family Services or Community Care, the departments generally responsible for advocating the CFC agenda within their councils. Consequently, the commitment to CFC is still very much being driven from within that department. Brimbank City Council appears to have made progress in this respect as awareness and practice of CFC have spread beyond the host department to Community Safety. Social planners generally said, in the words of one, it is "a slow process of 'chipping away' at the other departments". One social planner complained that land use planners were still thinking of CFCs in terms of "child-sized street furniture".

The interviews, with the exception of Brimbank, suggest that for now, the CFC agenda remains somewhat contained within its department of origin. Indeed, the land use planners interviewed were rarely directly involved in the CFC initiative. It is worth noting however, that when compared to the control municipalities, **all CFC council land use planners had a more comprehensive understanding of the key principles of the CFC, such as children's participation and the rights based approach, even when they were not familiar with all the specific details of the framework.**

The knowledge differential between social and land use planners on the issue of CFC, while in some cases quite small, is telling. It is explained by the lack of information dissemination across councils which has led to uncertainty regarding the role land use planners should and could play with regards to this issue. Most interviewees agreed that the responsibility for disseminating information across councils usually falls to the instigators of initiatives, once the commitment had been passed through council, to spread the word by organizing forums. Again timing seems to have determined to a large extent the degree to which this understanding of the CFC agenda is widespread across the council's departments. All interviewees were asked to comment on the degree to which they thought staff at their councils were aware of their council's CFC commitment, and of the implications of it. Generally, interviewees stated that in

their opinions the awareness of CFC is still limited to the department in which the key advocates are positioned (such as Child and Family Services) and, sometimes, to higher level staff in other departments. For example in the cases of Melbourne and Brimbank, relatively new initiatives, land use planners said they have still yet to be truly involved. Interviews with Bendigo and Port Phillip land use planners suggested that they were more involved in the initiatives, and particularly in Bendigo, the land use planner had a thorough understanding of the CFC agenda, due no doubt also to the numerous council forums and workshops over the past two years.

All of the interviewees commented that it was still early days, since the roll out of the agenda across the whole of council is still in progress. For example Port Phillip demonstrated their commitment to improving attitudes with regards to children, referring to new council recruitment criteria requiring a “willingness to work with children” where deemed relevant.

Within the two councils without a CFC initiative, both land use planners described a Child Friendly Cities only in terms of its physical elements, although these generally corresponded to the physical aspects of a CFC as defined by UNICEF. None of the three ‘control’ council land use planners, including the Ballarat land use planner, described CFC as an ongoing process. All control site interviewees were asked directly what they perceived to be the appropriate degree that children should participate in planning and decision making. Two land use planners asserted that they “must” be consulted in urban planning processes, with one reporting that they “should” be consulted. However, children’s participation was viewed in the social welfare context of ensuring that a diversity of voices (including the new migrants, people suffering from disadvantage etc.) is able to influence planning decisions, rather than a basic human right. All three land use planners reported that in real life practice, planning for children is not given implicit value and is afforded a low priority in strategic land use planning. Moreover, they reported that children are rarely consulted, or are consulted as an afterthought. One interviewee suggested that the Planning Scheme and council policies are weighted towards families, so planning for children occurs via speaking to parents, suggesting that this might be considered an appropriate equivalent to talking to children themselves.

4.2 Do Planners Consider CIM in their Work?

One of the questions the interviewees from the intervention sample (but not the control councils) were asked was: “To what extent is children's independent mobility considered in your work?” The most optimistic responses with regards to CIM were found in both Bendigo and Brimbank. These councils were selected to participate in the Streets Ahead initiative funded by the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) as of 2008 which supports children’s active transport and independent mobility (VicHealth 2008). All interviews at these councils, perhaps as a by-product of their participation in the Streets Ahead Program, thought CIM should be a priority. Again, it is early days: while it is their intention to consult with children, as of interviews in March-April 2009, no consultations with children had yet taken place. Bendigo is currently forming an action committee with students from the five participating schools. This year students will identify barriers to CIM and in turn, devise strategies for overcoming them. A students’ forum will be implemented in the coming months. Our Bendigo informants commented that getting children talking about CIM might act as a trigger to questioning what their current routines and restrictions vis-à-vis active transport. In both cases it was suggested that Streets Ahead, while sitting loosely within council’s structure, would also play a key role in

implementing programs that already exist, such as the Safe Routes to School program supported by VicRoads (the state government organization responsible for major roads).

All four intervention local governments also referred to other programs or policies which aimed to target CIM. In Bendigo, under the TravelSmart program (now in its second year), the council is working with a local primary school. Again, since it is early days the success is not yet measurable. Also in Bendigo, the *Walk Bendigo* Program, an initiative to improve the walkability of the Central Business District, was mentioned. Although it doesn't target children specifically, it has had outcomes that impact on CIM. In one downtown street, pedestrians and cyclists have been given priority over cars. Power lines have also been placed underground to improve pedestrian amenity. Bendigo's *PlaySpace Strategy* (2009), mentioned in the policy chapter, is a new strategy aimed at ameliorating the quality of children's play spaces. It does this through policies that step beyond a limited vision of playgrounds, by for instance, promoting opportunities for social, creative and adventurous activities.

In Brimbank, in addition to the Streets Ahead program, there is a large budget to improve parks over the next few years. As discussed in the interviews, parks were deemed something tangible through which Brimbank hoped to demonstrate their commitment to improved safety of the community. Beyond providing safe leisure environments for the community, the interviewees stated that their intention in targeting perceptions of safety was also to increase independent access by children. In Port Phillip policies such as the *Walking Strategy* (2005) specifically target children. However for now such strategies are limited by not having an annual plan or monitoring strategy, which makes it difficult to secure the necessary resources to fund them. At Melbourne, policies relating to CIM have not yet been a priority focus despite their commitment to CFC. The interviews with Melbourne social and land use planners revealed that CIM is usually raised specifically from a safety perspective, and there is evidence that children are being restrained by adults because of safety concerns.

However, no council said CIM was a priority, and the phrase itself is still not widely used in any of the local governments. The reasons for this appear numerous. Certainly one common justification was that CIM only seems to gain council and media attention in relation to public concerns about safety, rather than due to concerns about children's rights to public space. Further, despite the commitment to the rights based approach in these local governments, the majority of interviewees confessed that linking this approach into policies and programs relating to children's use of public space was still a very new area. It is also worth noting that some interviewees also held views about CIM that demonstrated either a lack of understanding of CFC values or a disagreement with them. For the most part these were views expressed by land use planners, who responded to questions about CIM by describing how by including the needs of the mobility impaired in land-use planning, children's needs would also be met.

Finally, all interviewees commented that CIM, as with the CFC agenda more generally, required a huge mind shift from local government and the general public. The Australian Council of Education Research is currently doing a survey of all schools involved in Streets Ahead across Victoria to gauge the reception of the idea of CIM from students and parents. In Bendigo they have done a 500 person survey to get feedback in neighbourhood perceptions. This survey may provide base line data for perceptions of CIM.

4.3 Are Planners Equipped to undertake Consultation with Children?

Councils vary widely in terms of amount of training that has been offered in relation to CFC in general, and consultation with children in particular. The City of Bendigo is the most advanced in terms of the implementation of such training frameworks. Interviewees confirmed that there had been several organization-wide information sessions, involving David Engwicht and Karen Malone, two notable CFC advocates and scholars. Despite these well-attended sessions, interview participants still referred to a steep learning curve ahead.

In Brimbank workshops within Community Services have taken place, with Karen Malone as a speaker, but there have been no whole of council sessions as yet. In the City of Port Phillip, there have been forums in relation to the Children's Plan that discussed CFC. Several critical council officers were in attendance. Further council wide informational sessions are deemed necessary although these are yet to be planned, and their implementation appeared heavily dependent on the passion and resources of specific individuals who continue to drive the CFC agenda. At the City of Melbourne, no training programs had been planned as of the interviews in April 2009. Social planners interviewed said that the seeming broadness of the CFC framework was perceived as a problem in terms of implementing training systems.

Turning now to skill-sets that relate to consulting in children, the disparities between the non-CFC and the CFC local governments are pronounced. For example, the City of Brimbank has undertaken specific training on consulting with the children for staff within Community Services. Interviewees also mentioned staff training on Aged-Friendly Cities, as well as other training on best practice in community consultation. Brimbank is also currently planning neighbourhood consultation with children and adults as part of their Streets Ahead project. At the City of Port Phillip, there has been significant training for every team within the Child and Family Services on increasing children's participation, respecting children and consultation with children. Team leaders and coordinators also participated in workshops on ethical engagement with children and respecting children, and the image of the child, this year. Following this they also provided a workshop on how to engage children in key issues, such as traffic safety. They have also been looking at kids with reduced verbal or motor skills and how they might be able to participate. The (past) Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and senior staff from other departments such as Parks, have all attended workshops on consultation with children. Likewise, the City of Ballarat held a professional development in-service for 30 people around consulting with children. This session was facilitated by Dr. Jonathon Sargeant, Assistant Professor for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Bond University. The City is currently developing a children consultation framework with the aim of enhancing the organisations capacity to engage with children.

There was a sense in all councils that there was still plenty of room for improvement in this area. For instance, for the *Future Melbourne* ten year Council Plan developed in the past two years, consultations took place with 1600 people including some young people, and one school. However, children were not directly targeted. The City of Melbourne is attempting to address this in the next budget through a council resolution about skilling up other staff in consulting with children respectfully and ethically. The majority of land use planners and social planners from the control sample cited insufficient resources, lack of training on how to engage with children and time constraints as the main barriers to consulting with children. It was also suggested that senior council officers and councillors would be sceptical of participatory processes involving children and that their perspectives would not be considered credible.

CHAPTER 5: Analysis of Research Findings and Conclusions

5.1 Enablers to Children’s Independent Mobility and Rights to the City

For many local governments, children constitute a significant proportion of their constituency. Mounting media and societal attention given to the issue of children’s needs, especially in relation to worrying statistical evidence on childhood obesity, has helped councils garner support for undertaking novel approaches to planning for children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, at a State level, the Victorian Charter of Human Rights as well as the new Office for Children and their initiatives, were deemed important sources of inspiration by several interviewees.

One of the key enablers was a general shift in local governance towards a willingness to investigate new issues. This viewpoint was reiterated in both policies, such as the HWPs, and in interviews with planners. Likewise, many interviewees stressed that if land use planning was broadened in scope to greater emphasise social and health planning, this would more likely facilitate the incorporation of planning for children. However, it was also recognised that such changes to the MSS, and to the culture of land use planning in general, would have to be supported, and perhaps driven, by state government. In this respect, state government was often cited as a potential enabler as it can offer guidance and funding and impose particular requirements on local governments. Land use planners also suggested that structure plans and urban design frameworks could be an easier means to integrate CFC into land use planning than the MSS.

Having a commitment to Child Friendly Cities adopted by council, was viewed by interviewees in the CFC councils as being a critical step. Progressive leadership by both senior council officers and councillors was considered essential to success. One interviewee in Brimbank spoke about the possibility of life-span planning as it has already implemented in the leisure area (i.e. planning for certain groups through their whole lives) as providing a mechanism to ‘mainstream’ CFC planning. Another ‘mainstreaming’ option suggested by interviewees was the introduction of council wide mechanisms such as a child impact assessment, or at the very least, a social impact assessment that explicitly considered children’s needs and rights, to be used in all council decision making. Recognition from UNICEF of CFC policies was deemed both a potential enabler and also a barrier. From many interviewees’ perspectives, the UNICEF framework provides a process with international legitimacy, which is critical to enabling local government departments to ‘sell’ the process from a political point of view. Interviewees expressed the belief that the accreditation gives the process credibility or ‘legs’. But for many interview participants, the culture change that CFC demanded was too onerous, and the benefits of this recognition too vague.

5.2 Barriers to Children’s Independent Mobility and Rights to the City

One of the recurring issues with commitment to and implementation of CFC in all the local governments surveyed, was the dual issue of a relatively conservative planning system coupled with deeply ingrained societal and staff perceptions with regards to children and their rights. In all interviews and within the policies, there was an understanding that commitment to the full spectrum of implications of committing to CFC would take a great deal of time and training. Council policy and practice confirmed local government’s recognition of their role in

helping to instigate this shift, by creating an informed and engaged community. But the money and commitment to begin on this long road is still lacking at the local governance level.

As discussed in Chapter 3, there is also a lingering disconnect between land use and social/ health planning. For now land use planning remains focused on reacting to development applications, rather than the issue that led to the development of the planning profession in the late 19th century: thinking proactively about urban health, supportive environments, and the betterment of society. In order to make the CFC agenda effective and meaningful to children, land use planning must act proactively on children's rights. The land use planners interviewed were quick to point out that local government autonomy to consider social and health issues in their MSS was greatly restricted by state government, which ultimately determines land use planning priorities. Accordingly, they argued, the Planning Scheme has a narrow range focus, concentrated on issues related to development and amenity (conceptualised as perceived impact on land values) and the integration of social, health and economic issues are only considered from that perspective. A related issue raised by land use planners when considering children's participatory rights is that public consultation process in land use planning is generally narrow. Legally, councils are only required to undertake advertising, notification and submission processes. As it is, many councils already go above and beyond this minimum standard for significant strategic planning projects and MSS reviews, but proactive participatory practices in land use planning are still weak. Another structural barrier is the gap in policies for children 8-14 years. While consulting with youth is relatively well-established, and consulting with parents as a proxy for consulting with children 0-5 is at least considered, this age group constitutes the 'lost children'.

Then there are issues with individuals, which are often related to structural issues. In general, CFC is driven by one or two key advocates. When they leave, the institutional memory is lost. Having one department lead CFC is normal, but competing priorities within departments, especially those involving the annual council budget, can lead to tensions. The 'silo-planning' nature found in all governance creates an organisational culture within local councils that is un conducive to CFC governance. The 'silos' are worsened in local governments, such as Brimbank, where different departments are in different buildings and even in different suburbs.

Local government CFC advocates such as those in Bendigo and Brimbank suggested that while the CFCI had been an inspiration, they intended to develop their CFC policies in parallel with local needs rather than any interest in accreditation. Several interviewees suggested that until CFC is legislated at the state level like the Disability Discrimination Act, it would neither achieve traction or significant outcomes at the local governance level.

5.2.1 Monitoring and evaluation procedures

One issue, with repercussions well beyond the State of Victoria, is that the CFC framework is so vague and intangible, with little research evaluating built environment impacts of policies and practices. Several advocates interviewed said that if UNICEF provided clearer evaluation criteria, that that alone would create momentum. Many of the CFC council interviewees have been involved in with CFC Asia Pacific Network and are part of a group developing a set of monitoring and evaluation criteria for the region, although this work may take several years.

The relevance of an insufficient accountability system was demonstrated in one of the local governments when a recent round of surveys and focus group sessions sought to discover whether they had 'made a difference' in terms of children. The Council was disappointed by the

response rate and unfortunately a lot of people still weren't aware about CFC. At all councils, council resolutions are tracked and assessed through an online system bi-annually, however only a small number of resolutions target CFC. Some councils also had CFC implementation plans with actionable tasks. However many interviewees conceded that the evaluation process is lacking in this area and that it was not given enough priority. Again this was related to the intangible nature of the CFC framework. Brimbank planned to adopt a CFC Action Plan to be signed off and adopted by the council by the end of 2009. This would provide a bi-annual reporting structure for initiatives.

5.2.2 Resourcing

An additional barrier to implementation was both perceived and actual resource allocations. The issue relates to both to allocation of funds and of staff. At present local governments receive no State government funding for CFC initiatives and therefore councils must be supported through municipal budgets, which are in turn dependent on regressive property taxes. Particularly in poorer councils like Brimbank and Hobson's Bay, the ability for departments to attract funding and staff is under pressure. Only through State and National level prioritisation, policy and a clearer CFC framework will resourcing begin to be addressed.

5.2.3 Sustainability

The final barrier to committing to CFC, is local governments' ability to sustain the momentum and priority focus of this commitment over time. As outlined in the Chapter 1, CFC is conceived as a 'process'. Further, as addressed above, this initiative demands a huge culture shift, one that most acknowledge will require many years to instil. As such, the worry is that while the initiative is new, or while key advocates feel passionately about the issues of children's rights, the issue may well remain at the fore. However, over time how do you maintain the momentum and the required resource allocations for acting on recommendations?

5.3 Limitations

Although an examination of four CFC case study Councils was appropriate for an introductory study, the findings of these case studies may not necessarily reflect the circumstances and organisational culture and experience of an established CFC local government. A further repercussion of assessing an initiative in its early stages has been that it has not been possible to assess the outcomes of specific programs. In coming years this research should be revisited with a focus on CIM outcomes from CFC policy, including an emphasis on child-friendly *places*.

It should be noted again that although Ballarat was approached as a 'control' government, we were misinformed. It is actually actively pursuing CFC policies.

An additional limitation of this study was the local government focus of this phase of the research. Given the inter-connectedness of the multiple tiers of government in Australia, and our recognition of the need for a 'whole of government' approach to addressing the issue of planning for and with children, this broader context needs attention. Issues such as the neglect of children's needs and voices in the State land use plan for the metropolitan region, *Melbourne*

2030, for example, should be addressed in tandem with the issues addressed at the local government level in this research.

5.4 Conclusions and Future Research Directions

The first conclusion is that developing a CFC initiative does appear to have a positive impact on planning policy for children, particularly amongst social development and health promotion policies. The research uncovered, at least in some councils, a move away from the depiction of children as either vulnerable or dangerous, and with this, a lessening of the ideological foundation to spatially segregate children and to control, regulate and restrict their use of public space. However, despite the recognition of positive changes, the findings were not conclusive due to a lack of consistency across CFC councils and a small set of intervention and control sites. Also, positive directions in social and health planning are not yet mirrored by policy change in land use planning.

The second conclusion is that CFC does have a positive impact on planning attitudes and skill-sets with regards for planning for and with children. The key impact is that awareness and understanding of children's place in planning, and their citizenship, is greatly increased. As discussed in Chapter 4, the most significant changes were found in the department in which the agenda initially resided, such as Family and Children Services or Community Care. The findings from interviews revealed that attitudes towards and understanding of children's rights and needs were substantially improved in these areas. Attitudes from staffers in other departments varied, oftentimes in relation to time constraints, or integration and communication between departments. With regard to planners' skill-sets vis-à-vis the CFC agenda, the interviews again uncovered wide variations. Given the relative novelty of a CFC agenda in Victorian local councils, this is hardly surprising. Notwithstanding the variations with regard to both skill-sets and attitudes, it is possible to conclude that a CFC initiative does reshape how planners view planning for and with children.

We return now to the link established in Chapter 2 between changes in policies and practices in the areas addressed above, and increased rates of CIM. Having established that CFC is creating positive changes in the areas of policy and practices, it is possible to draw conclusions on CFC's potential role in improving rates of CIM. In doing so, it is interesting to revisit the specific attitudes towards CIM as uncovered in the interviews (Chapter 4). As outlined, specific attitudes towards CIM varied. However, these variations appeared determined by the stage of the council's CFC implementation; such that in cases where councils had already rolled out the CFC agenda council-wide, CIM was considered a higher priority than in councils where the CFC agenda remained confined within a single department. **This finding suggests that CFC has an as yet largely unrealized potential to have an impact on CIM.** Due to the variations listed above, this research falls short of pronouncing CFC as a *proven* approach to addressing CIM. Nonetheless, the findings in this report establish that the connection between a right's based approach to planning and improved rates of CIM is certainly a *promising* one.

Furthermore, this research suggests that the potential of a right's based approach to act as a mechanism to alter societal perceptions of children and ultimately increase rates of children's independent mobility in Victoria, is dependent on several factors. This chapter has categorised these into challenges concerning attitudinal issues and challenges concerning structural issues. Attitudinal issues relating to local government staff and to society at large in terms of changing mind-sets, addressing the disconnect between health and land use planning, and issues

surrounding addressing child specific issues as distinct from community issues. The structural issues concern the reliance on key advocates, the CFC framework itself, auditing issues, resourcing and finally the initiative's sustainability over time.

As established in Chapter 1, there is a pressing urgency for local governments to begin to seriously address CIM. The aforementioned current trends with regards to CIM and conceptualisation of the child are not without major repercussion for children's development and health. The deeply intertwined causes and consequences of CIM, as previously discussed, consist of issues such as: neighbourhood safety (real and perceived), traffic safety (real and perceived), and household transport options and factors relating to social and cultural norms, socio-demographics, parental attitudes, children's attitudes, and perceptions of peers and institutions such as schools. The plethora of health risks coupled with the negative impacts of reduced CIM on our children's development have already provided some local governments with the rationale to tackle CIM. However the challenges outlined must be addressed so that all levels of government can redress the current invisibility of children on the political and urban landscape, and remedy declining rates of CIM.

Finally, a key future area of research is a regional approach to the issue of children's place in planning. Given the extent of metropolitan Melbourne, for instance, covered by children throughout their quotidian routines of journeying between school, extra-curricular activities and play, the municipality-centric approach to CFC is perhaps questionable. Certainly research into a more coordinated approach at the local level between municipalities across Melbourne, and throughout Victoria, is needed.

5.5 Recommendations

The findings of this research have been distilled into a set of planning policy recommendations, to promote CFC implementation in Victorian local governments.

5.5.1 Recommendations to Local Government

- Training and staff development at the local government level, particularly amongst senior land use staff and politicians, is needed on: the concept of a CFC and children's rights, how land use planning policies can be integrated with social and health planning for children, consulting with children, and how to evaluate outcomes of CFC initiatives;
- Related to this, the development of simple tools for local government land use planners, including statutory and strategic planners, to include children's needs in relation to land use planning instruments; including a child impact assessment, or at least inclusion of children's needs and rights in Social Impact Assessment, to be applied to all council policies and practices, to be used in the assessment of major development proposals and planning scheme amendments and reviews.
- Further integration of Health and Wellbeing Plans with land use planning policies, as recommended by *Environments for Health*; eg., the MSS should incorporate social and health issues addressed in HWPs that would directly and indirectly create supportive environments for children;

- Local governments should integrate both MEYPs and Youth Plans with their Health and Wellbeing Plans, their land use plans, and ideally, their Council Plans. This does not mean that a separate Child Friendly City Action Plan is not also required.
- Planning policy pertaining to children should be accompanied by achievable targets, strategies and implementation mechanisms, as well as monitoring and implementation mechanisms;
- Local government should address resourcing with regards to CFC budget and staffing allocations. Further, local governments, guided by the umbrella functions of DDA Officers and Sustainability Officers, should consider a Children’s Officer role with council wide exposure and responsibilities who could work pro-actively across projects.
- Local governments should incorporate child consultation and participation in all major strategic land use planning processes
- Investigate possibilities for prominent CFC researchers to work in partnership with local governments.
- Local governments should support key staff involvement in the CFC Asia Pacific Network
- Council budgets must reflect the resource requirements of genuine children’s consultation, and also following up on recommendations

5.5.2 Recommendations to State Government

- Training at the state government level, particularly for staff in health, social and land use planning, on Child Friendly Cities and how it can be applied to their policies, particularly regional and metropolitan planning
- An amendment to the State Planning Policy Framework to explicitly refer to the rights of children to use and enjoy public space.
- A requirement for MSS to be integrated with HWP and Council Plans, and to explicitly refer to the needs of ‘children’ and ‘youth’.
- State government should investigate the possibility of providing minimum standards of consultation with children on proactive social, health and land use planning.
- Develop State Government guidelines of ‘best practice’ on children’s consultation and CFC best practice

5.5.3 Other Recommendations

- PIA should include the integration of children’s right to participation in accreditation criteria for University courses;

- Universities should integrate children's rights to the city in subjects such as strategic planning, public consultation, and transportation;
- PIA, the Victorian Local Governance Association, and the Municipal Association of Victoria, should organise professional development opportunities in this area.

Appendix 1: Intervention and Control Councils: Policies Examined

Control Councils	
City of Stonnington	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of the Stonnington Planning Scheme • City of Stonnington Council Plan 2008-2012 • Health and Wellbeing in Stonnington: Municipal Public Health Plan 2006-2009 • The City of Stonnington Municipal Early Years Plan 2004-2009 • The Youth Strategy Plan and Action Plan of the City Of Stonnington: 2000 & Beyond
Hobson's Bay City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of the Hobson's Planning Scheme • Council Plan 2005 – 2009 [Revised June 2008]: Building the Future • Health and Wellbeing Plan: Hobson's Bay Municipal Public Health Plan 2007-2011 • Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2007-2008 • Hobson's Bay City Council Municipal Early years Plan 2005 – 2008 • Municipal Early Years Action Plan 2007-2008
City of Ballarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of Ballarat Planning Scheme • City of Ballarat Council Plan 2008 to 2013 • Health and Wellbeing Plan 2007 – 2009 • City of Ballarat Municipal Early Years Plan (2005) • Blueprint Ballarat (2007) • City of Ballarat: Becoming a Child and Family Friendly City: Report on Findings 2007
Intervention Councils	
City of Port Phillip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of the Port Phillip Planning Scheme • City of Port Phillip Council Plan 2007-2008 • Health and Wellbeing Plan, 2007-2011 • Municipal Early Years Plan, 2005-2009 • Creating a Child Friendly Port Phillip, Implementation Plan 2005 - 2009 • Creating a Child Friendly Port Phillip, Framework for Action 2005 - 2009 • Creating a Healthy and Safer Port Phillip, August 1999 • City of Port Phillip Walk Plan 2005-2010 • Improving Community Participation in Port Phillip: Toolkit for Participatory Techniques, (2001) • Respecting Children as Citizens in Local Government Participation: Participation in Policies and Services, Executive Summary December 2007
City of Melbourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of the Melbourne Planning Scheme • Municipal Early Years Plan (2005) • Future Melbourne (2009) • City Health 2005-2009, Municipal Public Health Plan • A City for Young People – Young People's Policy 2005-2009 • Communities Services Committee Report, Child Friendly City [2008] • Towards a better 'Public Melbourne' [draft urban design Strategy 2006] • City Plan 2010 (2001)
City of Brimbank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of the Brimbank's Planning Scheme • Council Plan 2006-2010 • Youth Policy and Action Plan 2008-13 • Children Plan (2004), Volumes 1 and 2 • Municipal Public Health Plan 2004-2006
City of Greater Bendigo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clause 21 (MSS) and Clause 22 (Local Planning Policies) of Bendigo Planning Scheme • Council Plan 2005-2009 • Health and Wellbeing Strategy (incorporating the Municipal Early Years Plan) 2008-2011 • Blueprint Ballarat (2007) • Building A Child Friendly City: Children's Consultations Final Report (2006) • Play Space Strategy 2009-14

Appendix 2: List of Interviewees

City of Greater Bendigo

- Phillip DeAraugo, Manager of Strategy
- Maureen Tessier, Family and Wellbeing Coordinator
- Heather Beaver, Streets Ahead Project Officer

City of Brimbank

- Michelle Wyatt, Strategic Planner
- John MacDonagh, Manager Community Care
- Rene Burke, Coordinator Family and Early Years
- James Sherry, Community Safety Planner

City of Melbourne

- Alison Knott, Senior Policy Officer, Family and Children's Services
- Geoff Lawler, Director of Sustainability and Regulatory Services

City of Port Phillip

- Meg Selman, Sustainable Transport Officer
- Maureen Imeson, Family & Children's Services Development Officer

City of Ballarat

All four interview participants from the City of Ballarat requested that their names be kept confidential. Their position titles are:

- Strategic Planner
- Acting Coordinator, Community Planning and Development
- Best Start Community Facilitator
- Manager, Child Family and Youth Services

City of Hobson's Bay

Both interview participants, from the City of Hobson's Bay requested that their identities remain completely anonymous. One of the interview participants work in the land use planning department and the other is an officer in the social/community planning department.

City of Stonnington

One of the interview participants requested that they remain anonymous. The interviewee works in the land use planning department.

- Karen Watson, Manager Corporate and Community Planning

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Institutional Enablers to Children's Independent Mobility (Stage 2): Child Friendly Cities

Note: These interviews will have an open-ended question format. If, in responding to one of these questions the participant raises an issue that is not addressed in this list of questions, the researcher will ask the participant to provide further detail/comment, allowing for greater flexibility to pursue issues and modify the research design if necessary. Likewise, if the respondent's answer is not clear, a follow-up question will be asked.

Interview questions: strategic planners from local councils

Note: Interview participants from the control sample were not asked questions 3, 4, 5 and 9.

1. What were the main motivators behind your council's decision to commit to a child friendly city agenda? How did this process start? How did it get on council's agenda? Was your Strategic Planning Department consulted? Were children involved?
 - 1.a. (For the City of Port Phillip Council: What are the key reasons behind your council's decision to adopt its own version of UNICEF's child friendly city initiative?)
2. How would you describe the value and level of importance given to strategic planning for children within the strategic planning department and within your council's broader strategic policy agenda?
3. In planning for children, what age set are you most focused on? Why?
4. Since committing to a child friendly cities program, have any training/guidance programs been implemented for the planning staff? If so, what has their focus been and how would you rate their effectiveness?
5. To what extent is children's independent mobility considered? What particular policies and programs have been implemented and do you have any evidence of their success?
6. Could you please explain the process involved in preparing the Municipal Strategic Statement? How are the strategic priorities of the MSS selected?
7. Are the policies and strategies of the Municipal Public Health Plan and Municipal Early Years Plan integrated with the Council Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement? Why or why not? Do you think they should be, or that they will be?
8. How would you describe the level of children's participation in planning consultations? Can you give any examples? What changes have occurred as a result of these consultations?
9. What are the systems used to evaluate/audit your child-friendly cities programs/ initiatives?

10. What do you think are the institutional barriers and enablers to strategic planning for child friendly cities at your council? What do you think are the next steps that local government could take on this issue?

Is there any further information that you would like to add that you believe to be relevant to this topic?

Interview questions: community/ social health planners from local councils

Note: Interview participants from the control sample were not asked questions 3, 4, 5 and 9.

1. What were the main motivators behind your council's decision to commit to a child friendly city agenda? How did this process start? How did it get on council's agenda? Were children involved?

1.a. (For the City of Port Phillip Council: What are the key reasons behind your council's decision to adopt its own version of UNICEF's child friendly city initiative?)

2. Which department was most involved in developing CFC policy? Was your Strategic Planning Department consulted?

3. In planning for children, what age set are you most focused on? Why?

4. Since committing to a child friendly cities program, have any training/guidance programs been implemented for the planning staff? If so, what has their focus been and how would you rate their effectiveness?

5. To what extent is children's independent mobility considered? What particular policies and programs have been implemented, and do you have any evidence of their success?

6. Could you please explain the process involved in preparing the MPHP and MEYP? How are the strategic priorities of the selected?

7. Are the policies and strategies of the Municipal Public Health Plan and Municipal Early Years Plan integrated with the Council Plan and Municipal Strategic Statement? Why or why not? Do you think they should be, or that they will be?

8. How would you describe the level of children's participation in planning consultations? Can you give any examples? What changes have occurred as a result of these consultations?

9. What are the systems used to evaluate/audit your child-friendly cities programs/ initiatives?

10. What do you think are the institutional barriers and enablers to strategic planning for child friendly cities at your council? What do you think are the next steps that local government could take on this issue?

Is there any further information that you would like to add that you believe to be relevant to this topic?

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