

# URBAN THINKERS CAMPUS

THE CITY WE NEED



## SHAPING SPACES FOR GEN Z

International Forum Report

8 March 2017  
Canberra, Australia





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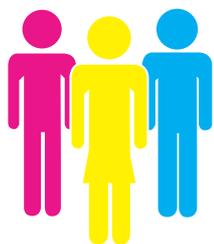
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# Urban Thinkers Campus in figures



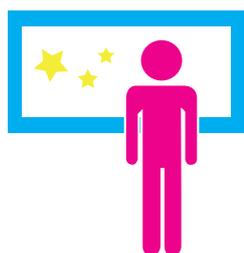
**8**  
countries  
represented



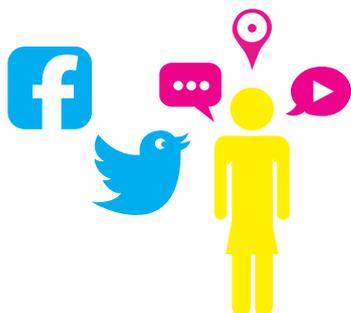
**120**  
participants



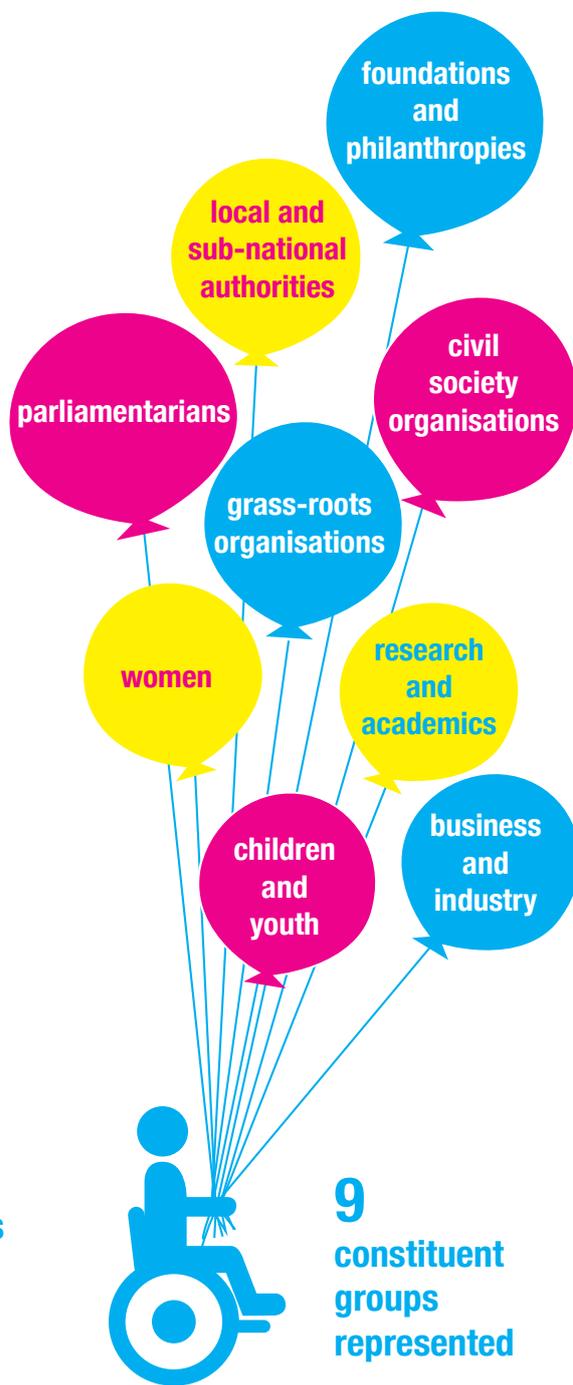
**39**  
organisations  
represented



**7**  
urban  
thinkers  
presentations



**>76,000**  
people  
reached on  
social media



**9**  
constituent  
groups  
represented

# about the Urban Thinkers Campus

## Introduction to Shaping Spaces for Gen Z

Urban living in the early part of the 21st century has not been good for children. The present generation in cities are the least fit and the fattest they have ever been. Social marginalisation, mental health issues and serious cardio-metabolic disorders have been on the rise in adolescence and early adulthood. On a more positive note, there is good international research evidence that many of these unwelcome facets of modern lifestyles for children could be eradicated through relatively small adjustments of the opportunities available to children, such as those that might be gained through active play and active travel to and from school.

These issues were the focus of discussion at the “Shaping Spaces for Gen Z” Urban Thinkers Campus which was organised by Urban Synergies Group and the Health Research Institute, University of Canberra on 8th March 2017. Hosted at the University of Canberra, Australia, the Campus focused on environments that foster healthy childhood development in the broadest sense of this term i.e. including mental and physical capacities, social and psychological development and connectedness to community. Child health, physical inactivity, environmental design, child empowerment and the right to play and interact were central themes.

## The City We Need principle(s) addressed

- The city we need is a healthy city
- The city we need is a safe city
- The city we need is socially inclusive
- The city we need is affordable and equitable
- The city we need is well played, walkable and transit-friendly
- The city we need is managed at the metropolitan level

The Urban Thinkers Campus (UTC) model is an initiative of UN-Habitat’s World Urban Campaign, conceived in 2014 as an open space for critical exchange between all stakeholders and partners which aims to promote sustainable urbanisation. It is also envisaged as a platform to advocate for enlightened planning and design of our cities and propose urban solutions in addressing urbanisation challenges to urban futures. The World Urban Campaign (WUC) is an advocacy and partnership platform to raise awareness about positive urban change in order to achieve green, productive, safe, healthy, inclusive, and well planned cities. Its goal is to ensure that the New Urban Agenda is the centrepiece in development policies. It is coordinated by UN-Habitat and driven by a large number of committed partners, currently more than 180 partners and networks from around the world.



# matrix of linkages

## TCWN 2.0 vs New Recommendations

This section provides ways Shaping Spaces for Gen Z original recommendations can be adapted in “The City We Need principles”, and how they can be integrated into practice regarding children and their right to play.

- **The city we need is socially inclusive** – Social inclusion will almost certainly increase with the implementation of safe access to destinations within short walking or cycling distances, generating more possibilities to allow the community to rediscover their local neighbourhoods. Awareness raising programs on child friendly spaces and places can lead to socially inclusive cities.
- **The city we need is well planned, walkable and transit-friendly** – Well-designed safe routes around schools, daily active transport built in, achieved by creating safer vehicle speeds near areas where children's play has priority. This also includes imaginative and pleasant transit stops with facilities and infrastructure provision that is child/family friendly.
- **The city we need is a safe city** – Safety should be promoted everywhere: at home, work, school and in public. This is even more important when it comes to children and their right to play. By focusing on actions that benefit the most vulnerable users of our cities we can have a best chance of creating safe cities for all.
- **The city we need is a healthy city** – It is common knowledge, though not necessarily common practice, that sustained good health is largely determined by maintaining a good lifestyle. Thus, a healthy city should support its citizens in practising the educated lifestyle, one that includes plenty of physical activity, good diet, adequate social engagement and time for relaxation. An educated lifestyle must be positioned as the key determinant for a healthy city, supported through good design. This covers not just the design and aesthetic appeal of the built environment but includes service provision and environmental health and biodiversity protection elements. Implementing and encouraging the child's right to play through safe access, well-designed routes around schools, sustainable and individualised play spaces and play-scapes for all ages and natural play in all schools, would not only help children be healthier now, but would represent a cost-effective investment in the health and lifestyle of the next generation of adults.





- **The city we need is affordable and equitable** – Every child deserves the right to play, no matter what economic or cultural background they are from. Children must be active participants in decision making and should be engaged meaningfully in planning and design processes. Effective outcomes can be achieved when creating and maintaining sustainable infrastructure for all ages. Equally distributed investments throughout the urban system enable children to socially connect to where they live and play.
- **The city we need is managed at the metropolitan level** – The coordinated collective roles of local government, key partners and NGOs from municipal level through to grassroots are critical for delivering the outcomes proposed by Shaping Spaces for Gen Z, that is, raising awareness of the right to play; creating opportunities for interaction within the heart of development; and enabling natural movement/play in all schools supported with loose material equipment.



# format

The Urban Thinkers Campus was introduced by three brief presentations to set the context for discussions during the workshop. Then, each of the three specific themes for discussion was introduced by a short presentation, followed by ten parallel round-table discussions, each led by an experienced table coordinator. Following these discussions a list of actions and recommendations were developed and carried forward to the short-listing stage, in the afternoon of the forum.

The three themes were:

1. Children and the built environment;
2. Designs around children's health; *and*
3. Play.

Table suggestions were then presented in plenary before moving on to the preliminary voting stage, to provide a short-list of priority proposals from each theme area to be carried forward to the **Reflection and Confirmation** as well as **Consensus** stages. The latter stages were carried out, after allowing time for reflection and further consideration, through separate sequential online surveys, posted to all participants at the workshop.



# key outcomes of Shaping Spaces for Gen Z

The most highly supported proposals for action from each of the three theme areas were:

## **Addressing children and the built environment**

- Safe access, well-designed routes around schools-daily active transport built in. This could be achieved by creating safer speeds (30 km/h or 15 km/h) near areas where children's play has priority. App' games that are playful and encourage children to be outside and active can help raise awareness and function as an individualised tool to encourage children to be more active.

## **Addressing designs around children's health**

- Play infrastructure for all ages, co-designed best practice learning from overseas. This can be accomplished by the introduction of weekend pop-up road closures e.g. Reclaiming the streets initiative-introducing temporary play spaces for all. Co- design opportunities in government processes and community based initiatives can empower children. On a grassroots level, creative "Kids at Play" signage, designed by the communities can be used on local streets to promote speed reduction, fostering unique community characteristics to emerge.

## **Addressing play**

- Environmental movement/play in all schools, supported with loose material/equipment e.g. bark, logs, pipes, pots, mugs, spoons. This can be delivered in an integrated way as part of the promotion and awareness raising of importance of play. This coordinated approach could be delivered as part of the ACT Government preventative health coordinator office. A strategy is required to target governments, stakeholders, communities and schools.

Following on from the top three proposals, we recommend an integrated system-wide approach to the challenge as this has the potential to directly impact not just the top three priority issues but many others that emerged during the discussion as well. Whilst the above were the top-rated proposals, two further proposals from each theme area also received significant support and may also be worthy of consideration for implementation. These were (in rank order):

## **Children and the built environment**

- Design and place "Kids at Play" signage to promote speed reduction on streets; *and*
- Co-location of amenities including local shops and play spaces.

## **Designs around children's health**

- Apply Co-design and engagement principles in school curriculum to ensure children's engagement and ownership of initiatives that are relevant to their overall health and well-being; *and*
- Safe walking and cycling paths (map and smartphone apps) QR coded check-points, social school support element.

## **Play**

- Safer speeds (30km/h or 15km/h) near areas where children's play has priority; *and*
- Promote awareness of the importance of play and related strategies by targeting governments, stakeholders, communities and schools.

# monitoring

## 1. Safe access, well-designed routes around schools - daily active transport built in methods for data collection

- Applying the Australia's Heart Foundations Active Living Impact Checklist;
- Direct observation/measurement, visualization and photography;
- Residents feedback session on safety perception; *and*
- Official statistics – active transport infrastructure built after the Urban Thinkers Campus.

### Indicators

- Number of schools in the city with well-designed walking/cycling to school routes;
- Percent of residents that give positive feedback on issues;
- Number of places (schools) with new active travel infrastructure; *and*
- Proportion of children using active transport to and from school.

## 2. Play infrastructure for all ages, co-designed government and community-based initiatives methods for data collection

- Interview with community-based initiatives;
- Official statistics: health, social services, social incivilities, crime; *and*
- Direct observation/measurement.

### Indicators

- Number of activities promoted by the government in conjunction with community-based initiatives; *and*
- Percentage of residents involved in co-design opportunities.

## 3. Environmental movement/play in all schools supported with loose material equipment (promotion and awareness-raising of importance of play) Methods for data collection

- Survey – children, parents, schools;
- Interview school heads; *and*
- Official statistics: health, mental health, absence from school and social problems.

### Indicators

- Residents can list at least two health and well-being related reasons why play spaces are important;
- Number/ proportion of schools that approach this subject in their curriculum/ daily activities with children;
- Presence of funding designated to support this action; *and*
- Number/ proportion of schools that provide and use loose material and other equipment for kids to play.



# key actors

It was clear also from discussions at the Forum that all sectors have a role to play, including some stakeholder groups not present at the forum. That said, the following key actors can be identified because of their particular role in society or the specific expertise that they can bring to bear.



## **Local and sub-national authorities**

- Have a responsibility to promote the social, cultural diversity and economy of the region; *and*
- Ensure that the built (and natural) environment and services support the needs of residents, including infrastructure, public transport and safe and accessible public spaces.

## **School communities**

- Have a primary role to provide education and developmental opportunities for **all** children; *and*
- Can enable awareness raising and support among parents.

## **Children and youth**

- Have the most inquisitive and resourceful minds that we have available to us and we should engage children themselves in shaping spaces for their future.

## **Research and academia**

- Are primary innovators and problem solvers;
- Have capacity to develop pilot projects or test proof-of-concept proposals before roll-out to the wider community; *and*
- Have the resources and expertise to provide specialist training.

## **Media**

- Can be an important vehicle for public education and awareness-raising.

## **Businesses and industry**

- Bring entrepreneurial opportunity to solve particular problems or can support initiatives with more flexible workplace policy.

## **Civil society and grass-roots organisations**

- Have considerable existing capacity that, effectively targeted, could support many aspects of the change agenda with minimal impact on additional resource requirements.

## **Parliamentarians**

- Provide active leadership and advocate for children's rights as part of an integrated decision making process across policies; *and*
- Raise awareness and become a patron.

## outstanding issues

There was wide consensus that urgent action was needed. However, it is crucial to understand the significant barriers to overcome in order to deliver beneficial change. These barriers were considered as part of the round-table discussions.

Key barriers under the theme 'children and the built environment' were:

1. Safety – mainly from cars but also 'stranger danger' and personal injury whilst using equipment;
2. Time – of parents and teachers and also within curriculum;
3. Timeframes, funding priorities and fiscal prudence within Government; *and*
4. Lack of community and shared responsibility.

Key barriers under the theme 'designs around children's health' were:

1. Not enough natural play space or time to use it;
2. Lack of involvement of children and parents/ guardians/ schools in design of healthy activities and spaces; *and*
3. Can the school community make informed choices and contributions to the education process.

Key barriers under the theme 'play' were:

1. Physical education and play not valued enough or allocated sufficient time;
2. Loss of well-maintained play space and lack of play equipment; *and*
3. Resources to facilitate play or sporting activities.



# representation at the Urban Thinkers Campus

## Master of Ceremony

- Dr. Anthony Burton, Heart Foundation ACT and Canberra Urban and Regional Futures, University of Canberra

## Speakers

- Meegan Fitzharris MLA Minister for Health, Minister for Higher Education, Training and Research and Minister for Transport Canberra and City Services, Australia
- Dr. Tong Liu, Yale University, USA & China
- Dr. Paul Kelly, Chief Health Officer, ACT Government, Australia
- Prof. Tom Cochrane, University of Canberra (UC), Australia
- Mr Gregor H. Mews, Founding Director, Urban Synergies Group, Australia
- Dr. Lisa Sharoun, Co-Founder, Cross Culture Design Lab, UC, Australia
- Associate Prof. Paul Tranter, UNSW Canberra, Australia

## List of Table Coordinators

- Prof. Rachel Davey - Director, Health Research Institute at UC, Australia
- Ms Jodie Griffiths-Cook - Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner- ACT Human Rights Commission, Australia
- Ms Annie Kentwell - Active Living Coordinator, Heart Foundation ACT, Australia
- Ms Michelle Narracott - Executive Director, ACT Government, Australia
- Ms Edwina Robinson - Communication Manager, Office of the Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability, Australia
- Mr Gregor H. Mews on behalf of Ms Karen Wright - President of Planning Institute of Australia ACT, Australia
- Ms Aline Peres dos Santos, Urban Synergies Group, Australia & Brasil
- Mr Leon Arundell, Chair, Living Streets Canberra, Australia
- Mr Liam Lilly, Executive Officer, SEE-Change, Australia
- Dr. Kate Auty, Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability, Australia

## List of organisations represented

- Members of the public
- SAP - Institute for Digital Government
- Commissioner for the Environment and Sustainability, Australia
- University of Canberra
- Australian Capital Territory Government
- Kitchengarden Foundation
- Belconnen Community Centre
- Deakin University
- Chung Yuan University
- Woden Community Service
- Woodlandswetlands
- ACT Greens MLA office
- Australian National University
- Active Learning
- Capital Health Network ACT
- Health Care Compliance Association
- Public Advocate and Commissioner for children and young people
- South Australia Young Government
- Community Services
- SEE-change Youth Parliament
- Yale University
- Heart Foundation ACT
- Urban Synergies Group
- Families ACT
- Coordinare
- Blueearth Foundation
- ISG Projects
- Cross Culture Design Lab
- National Capital Authority
- YMCA
- Education ACT
- Australian Indigenous Doctors Association
- TEDx Canberra
- UNSW Canberra
- Physical Activity Foundation
- Planning Institute of Australia
- Living streets Canberra
- ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association
- Australian Primary Principals Association

# voices for change



# sponsor

Proud key sponsor



Proudly presented by



The organisers wish to express gratitude to our key sponsor the ACT Government and inkind supporters making this event successful. This includes the following organisations: ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Association, Australian Primary Principals Association, ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment, Cross Culture Design Lab, Heart Foundation, Living Streets Canberra, Planning Institute of Australia, See-Change and World Urban Campaign.



# social media cloud

**Thomas Bevitt** @TcBevitt Follow

"Making walking and cycling to school the norm again" Meegan Fitzharris MLA ACT Govt. Feeling inspired #SS4GenZ #UrbanThinkers

**UrbanSynergiesGroup** @usg\_gregor Following

Children are the experts of their local neighborhoods! @GregMews UrbanThinkers Campus Australia @UniCanberra #SS4GenZ



**Urban Synergies Group** Published by Aline Peres [?] · 11 March · Share

First #UrbanThinkers Campus for Asia Pacific was held in Canberra on the 8th of March 2017. More than 100 participants engaged in discussing actions and solutions to transform our cities into healthy and playful environments for all. Check out our short video from the event 'Shaping Spaces for Generation Z'. More to come! 😊



Urban Thinkers Campus for Asia Pacific

**UrbanSynergiesGroup** @usg\_gregor · Mar 7

Happening now: #UrbanThinkers w/ Prof. Tong Liu demonstrating the importance of emotional intelligence for kids. #ss4GenZ @urbancampaign

**Jodie Griffiths-Cook** @PACYPC · Mar 7

Prof Tong Liu (Yale Uni) quotes Dorothy Law Nolte 'Children learn what they live' #UrbanThinkers #SS4GenZ

**Edwina** @edwinakrobinson · Mar 7

Healthy kids make healthy adults -Paul Kelly ACT Chief Health Officer #UrbanThinkers #SSforGenZ @EnvComm\_ACT @MeeganFitzMLA @AILA\_National

**Dr Anthony Burton** @ABandAssociates · Mar 7

Children's and young people commissioner @PACYPC with her children's and young people's hat on #SS4GenZ #UrbanThinkers

Dr Anthony Burton and 1 other Retweeted

**Aline Peres** @alineperes\_s · Mar 7

"If we can get environments right for kids, we can make them better for everybody" @GregMews #UrbanThinkers #SS4GenZ



**World Urban Campaign** @urbancampaign Follow

Happening next week on 8 March in Canberra - the #UrbanThinkers Campus hosted by @usg\_gregor Find out more here: [ow.ly/42ym309tmBq](http://ow.ly/42ym309tmBq)



**UrbanSynergiesGroup** @usg\_gregor · Mar 7

Children's obesity is collective responsibility. #UrbanThinkers #SS4GenZ Prof Tom Cochrane @UniCanberra

Kate Auty and 2 others liked



**Dr Anthony Burton** @ABandAssociates · Mar 7

Children today walk less today than ever before @usg\_gregor #UrbanThinkers #SS4GenZ



**Dr Anthony Burton**  
@ABandAssociates

Following

Slow speed play streets. Can you imagine the possibility? Reclaiming streets for people, not for cars. #urbanthinkers #SS4GenZ



**UrbanSynergiesGroup**  
@usg\_gregor

Following

Paul Tranter "risk for children not to experience risk" sharing findings from using loose objects in playgrounds #UrbanThinkers #SSforGenZ



Urban Synergies Group shared Cross-Cultural Design Lab's photo.

Published by Daniella A Muse (?) · 15 March ·

Great collaborative spirit, Urban Synergies Group with Cross-Cultural Design Lab, Health Research Institute University of Canberra and Yale University. Be apart of the magic...

<https://www.facebook.com/greg.mews/posts/10155195095284434>



Lab

Like Page



**UrbanSynergiesGroup** @usg\_gregor · Mar 7

No time for children, leads to illness - we are facing a crisis in China @urbancampaign #UrbanThinkers #SSforGenZ @UniCanberra



**Brian Lee-Archer** @brianla1 · Mar 7

Fantastic day #urbanthinkers #ss4genz thx @usg\_gregor great insight for importance of kids play in #communities17 & #smartcities @sapsidg



**Aline Peres** @alineperes\_s · Mar 7

Healthy kids = healthy futures Dr. Paul Kelly, Chief Healthy Officer, ACT, delivering his speech @ #UrbanThinkers Campus #SS4GenZ

## further information

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and get LinkedIn @[urbansynergiesgroup](https://www.linkedin.com/company/urbansynergiesgroup)

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*“Play is the way children  
make sense of the world  
in which they live!”*

**Maxim Gorky**

