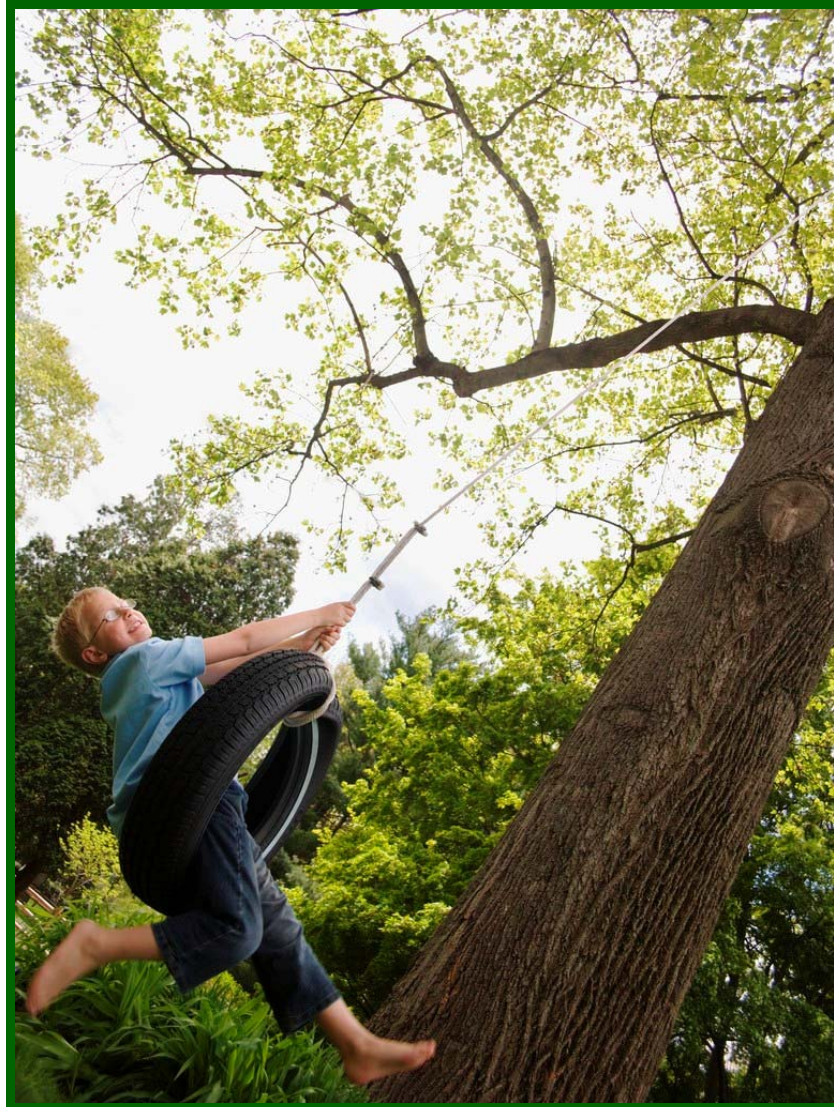


Come and Play Outside

a multi-disciplinary symposium



The University of Western Australia
28-29 September 2007, University Club Theatre Auditorium
Convenor: Dr Margaret Grose, The University of Melbourne



Australian Research Alliance
for Children & Youth



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



Institute of Advanced Studies

This symposium is co-sponsored by the Institute of Advanced Studies and ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth) ARC/NHMRC Research Network.



Come and Play Outside
The University of Western Australia - Perth
28 -29 September 2007

Program

27 September

6.00 – 7.00pm

Public Lecture – *Growing Up in a Risk Averse Society*

Tim Gill

Tim Gill is one of the UK's most noted thinkers and writers on childhood. His book *No Fear: Growing up in a Risk Averse Society* comes out in the spring of 2007.

VENUE: Octagon Theatre

28 September

Theatre Auditorium, University Club

9.00 am

Welcome to country – Joan Winch, Noongar Elder

9.10 am

**Welcome to UWA – Professor Alan Robson,
Vice-Chancellor, The University of Western Australia**

9.20 am

Introduction and Overview – Margaret Grose, Convenor

9.30 am

***Losers, Weepers: the extinction of experience and the diminishing
baseline***

Robert Pyle

Conservationist and author, USA

10.30 am

Morning Tea

11.00 am

***Children's Playspaces: implications and opportunities for
biodiversity***

Margaret Grose

The University of Melbourne

12.00

Lunch

1.00 pm

***Cultural Speed Bumps: getting kids out of the walled gardens and
into the streets***

Karen Malone

University of Wollongong

2.00 pm

***Natural play in the USA: 5000 US children tell us they want natural
playgrounds***

Ron King

The Natural Playgrounds Company, USA

3.00 pm

Afternoon Tea

- 3.30 pm ***Spoiling Play: barriers to natural play in Australian schools***
Karen Martin
The University of Western Australia
- 4.30pm **Close of Day 1**
- 29 September** **Theatre Auditorium, University Club**
- 9.00am **Day Two Welcome - Margaret Grose**
- 9.15 am ***Lobbying and Making the Case for Play: a personal perspective from the UK***
Tim Gill
Consultant and Author, UK
- 10.15am ***Property Law and Implications for Children's Play***
Cathy Sherry
University of New South Wales
- 11.15 am **Morning Tea**
- 11.45 pm ***Playing it naturally: the Danish experience***
Helle Nebelong
Danish Landscape Architect and Consultant
- 12.45 pm **Lunch**
- 2.00pm ***Childscapes: creating opportunities for children's play in Australian neighbourhoods***
Zoë Metherell
Mary Jeavons Landscape Architects, Melbourne
- 3.00pm ***Indigenous Perspective***
Noel Nannup
Indigenous Heritage Consultant
- 4.00pm **Goals for Research, Planning, and Design Panel (Tim Gill, Margaret Grose)**
- 4.30pm **Symposium closes followed by Sundowner**

Abstracts

Public Lecture -

Growing Up in a Risk Averse Society

Tim Gill

In his lecture, Tim will outline the dangers in pursuing a zero-risk childhood.

The zero-tolerance approach to childhood risk is growing across the developed world. It can be seen in almost every domain of children's lives, from playground accidents to child protection, anti-bullying initiatives and internet safety. Yet paradoxically, eliminating or minimising the risks to children may well leave them struggling to cope with life as they grow up.

Tim will reveal why risk elimination is becoming so prevalent, and how we can resist it. He will argue that parents, professionals and decision makers all need to become more tolerant of adversity: to accept that upsets, misfortune, uncertainty and even a little danger are all essential ingredients of a healthy, happy childhood.

Lobbying and Making the Case for Play: a personal perspective from the UK

Tim Gill

This paper describes the writer's experiences over the last dozen years of making the public policy case for play in the UK. The paper will start by looking at home zones, and the successful campaign to introduce into the UK this child-friendly street design based on ideas from the Netherlands. It moves on to a longer, more complex story: the ongoing efforts to raise the public policy profile of play. The moral of this story is that our greatest campaigning weapon is the power of our own childhood play experiences.

Children's Play-Spaces: implications and opportunities for biodiversity

Margaret Grose

Does the scenario for messy, nature play, which defies all of the prescriptive features so common around our suburbs, add to biodiversity as well? This session argues that in many settings there is that possibility, and suggests a like movement to that in horticulture today, where there is a world-wide trend for more emphasis on natural landscapes and wildflowers.

Natural play in the USA: 5000 US children tell us they want natural playgrounds

Ron King

This interactive session explores the myths surrounding playground equipment, uses thousands of interviews to get a good look at what children like doing outside and why, and provides a compelling

rationale for designing more natural play environments.

Cultural speed bumps: getting kids out of the walled gardens and into the streets

Karen Malone

To support children to play outside we need to develop cultural speed bumps not asphalt speed humps. John Holt in his book *Escape from Childhood* describes childhood as taking place in a 'walled garden' – a place constructed by adults that is beautiful and where innocent children (like flowers) are protected and nurtured. The dark side of the walled garden is that it is also a place where children may not enter or leave of their own free will, where they have no rights, are kept in the dark and rendered powerless. With helicopter parents who have retreated to their suburban enclaves, the fortress street front and walled gardens deliver a strong message about protecting the precious beings inside. In this paper I will argue that a current return to a protectivist paradigm of childhood and its influence on parenting and architecture is breeding a generation of children who won't have the social, psychological, cultural or emotional skills to be competent and independent in the outside world. I will then through a number of national and international children's research projects illustrate that it is not the physical design of streets, traffic or crime rates but the culture of a community that is the greatest inhibitor to children's environmental independence. I will conclude with some suggestions on how a community might start to build cultural speed bumps.

Spoiling Play: barriers to natural play in Australian schools

Karen Martin

Australian school environments contain multiple areas ideal for children's play. Peer availability, access to large spaces and central location also add to the value of schools in providing play opportunities. However, with so many competing roles and responsibilities, schools often implement barriers restricting children's access to these areas. Data collected during The ACTIVE Schools project is used to identify the variety of play areas and opportunities available within school environments their suitability for play and barriers to the use of these areas for children's play. This presentation also includes summaries of children's physical activity levels while at school. Potential strategies to support and encourage play in the school environment are suggested.

Playing it naturally: the Danish experience

Helle Nebelong

Children are born connected with nature and prefer playing outside in natural surroundings where they can expand freely.

Play is much more than fun according to Danish Landscape Architect Helle Nebelong and designers

must live up to a wide range of demands to succeed in creating outdoor spaces that work for children.

This presentation takes us to several different play spaces in Copenhagen among others The Garden of Senses in Faelledparken, The Day Care Centre Murergaarden and the Nature Playground in Valbyparken, where nature plays an important role.

Childscapes: creating opportunities for children's play in Australian neighbourhoods

Zoë Metherell

How can we think outside the constraints to strategically plan and design for a range of rich childhood experiences in our local neighbourhoods?

This paper explores practical solutions which ensure that children of all ages have access to quality play opportunities within residential environments of all kinds. The paper outlines the diverse range of play activities which children need, in settings including school grounds and public open spaces. By thinking strategically, and working at various scales, we can overcome the existing constraints and provide opportunities for children and youth to engage with their local environments.

Losers, Weepers: the extinction of experience and the diminishing baseline

Robert Pyle

In some profound ways, the loss of local attributes may impoverish a natural/cultural setting as deeply as absolute extirpation. Extinction of Experience describes a progressive condition of disaffection and apathy following depletion of diversity in a cycle of loss begetting loss. As the baseline of common encounter shrinks, we become content with less and less. This talk explores how both phenomena combine to exacerbate nature-deficit disorder, and suggests some possible ways to find and keep what's left.

Property Law and Implications for Children's Play

Cathy Sherry

High rise and master planned communities will be home to millions of Australians and their children in the future. State governments with policies of urban consolidation favour strata development, while under-funded local councils are often attracted to master planned estates as a means of shifting infrastructure costs to the private sector. Both forms of development are governed by similar legislation which creates individual lots, common property and a collective organisation (owners corporation/body corporate or community association) to oversee the on-going management of the development. All communities have their own sets of by-laws which govern behaviour in the development. It is possible to regulate children's behaviour and play in a way that is not possible in ordinary suburban

development, for example by creating "no skateboarding, no ball games" by-laws. This paper will discuss the legal structure of high rise and master planned communities and the impact it can have on children.

Speaker Biographies

Tim Gill

Tim is one of the UK's leading thinkers on childhood and an effective advocate for change. His work focuses on children's play and free time. Tim's consultancy clients include Barnardo's, the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), Forestry Commission, Groundwork UK, Mayor of London, National Children's Bureau and Peabody Trust. His book *No Fear: Growing up in a risk-averse society* will be published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in 2007. Tim has had articles published by the Guardian, the Independent, the Ecologist, parenting magazines, Nursery World and academic journals, and appears regularly on radio and television. He is on the international advisory board for Children's Geographies.

Tim is an adviser on an inquiry into childhood set up in March 2007 by David Willetts MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education. He was Director of the Children's Play Council (now Play England) from 1997 to 2004, and led the first government-sponsored UK-wide review of children's play under the chairmanship of the Rt Hon Frank Dobson MP. This review shaped the Big Lottery Fund's £155 million Children's Play Initiative.

Tim lives in London with his partner and their eight-year-old daughter. His website is www.rethinkingchildhood.com

Margaret Grose

Margaret Grose is an ecologist and landscape architect, with a PhD in the ecophysiology of Australian plants. Margaret has worked at the Universities of Western Australia, Sydney, Oxford, and Cambridge. At Cambridge her work emphasised ecological theory, she taught in the Natural History Tripos, and was an Associate Fellow of Jesus College. Following her landscape architecture degree, she worked for an environmental company, and worked on ecological issues of current residential design. Her interest in children's play has grown out of research on public open space in Australian suburbs. She is Senior Lecturer in Landscape Architecture in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, and a Residential Tutor at Trinity College, University of Melbourne, where she lives in a corridor with 17 playful uni students. She has a daughter and a son.

Ron King

Ron King, AIA, is President of The Natural Playgrounds Company, LLC. He is a graduate of

Cornell University and the University of Pennsylvania Master of Architecture program. His firm is committed to helping children benefit from exposure to nature in more natural play environments, and to helping schools and communities find more viable, less costly alternatives to playground equipment. Clients include numerous private and corporate childcare centers, Head Start facilities, Montessori Schools, public schools, communities, and individuals throughout the US. Please refer to the company's website for more details: www.naturalplaygrounds.com

Karen Malone

Dr Karen Malone is the newly appointed head of Social Sciences in the Faculty of Education at University of Wollongong. She is also Asia-Pacific Director of the global UNESCO-MOST *Growing Up In Cities* (GUIC) project that focuses on children and youth evaluating their quality of life. Dr Malone is also an external consultant to UNICEF's Child-Friendly Cities (CFC) initiative and is currently chairing the committee developing a CFC network in the Asia-Pacific region. In the past ten year Dr Malone has attracted over 1.3 million dollars in research grants, awards and consultancies and published extensively focusing on children and youth studies, sustainable development, new learning, urbanisation and globalisation, and participatory research methodologies. Her most recent book is *Childspace* and she is currently completing a single authored book for Peter Lang on the transitions from childhood to youth in a postmodern world entitled: *From Hop Scotch to Hip Hop*. Her most recent research grants are from the *Australian Financial Markets Foundation for Children* for project where she will be researching with Aboriginal youth around issues of health, well-being and the meaning of place and *The Smith Family* where she will be focusing on how to design child-friendly cities with children identified as 'at risk'. She is an assistant editor on two major international journals, *Children's Geographies* and *Children, Youth and Environments*. She is the Australian member delegate to the IUCN and an executive member of the Australian UNESCO National Commission social science committee and in this capacity has represented Australia as delegate to UNESCO for the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development.

Karen Martin

Karen has a Bachelor of Science with a major in Anatomy and Human Biology from the University of Western Australia. Karen recently completed intensive data collection using accelerometers for her PhD, a project analysing the relationship between the school environment and children's physical activity behaviour while at school. With a keen interest in childhood health, Karen has completed various consultancies for government departments and health promotion agencies. This has incorporated literature reviews and updates including: benefits of physical activity for children; the relationship between physical activity and

academic achievement; youth smoking, facts and issues; physical activity and social determinants of health; and tobacco and cardiovascular disease. A recent grant from Healthway has allowed Karen and her colleagues to begin investigating the impact, implementation and uptake of healthy eating guidelines and policies in Western Australian schools.

Zoë Metherell

Zoë Metherell is a senior landscape architect at Mary Jeavons Landscape Architects (MJLA). Zoë has an honours degree in Landscape Architecture from RMIT and a Master of Environment from Melbourne University. Her master's thesis examined the biodiversity of freeway landscapes and was undertaken with the Australian Research Centre for Urban Ecology. In 2006 Zoe was awarded the Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Award for Sustainability and Environmental Writing.

Zoë is a registered landscape architect and has received several awards from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects. At MJLA Zoë has explored her interest in the design of children's spaces and environmental sustainability. Her work includes large scale masterplanning projects for sites like Elwood Foreshore as well as design of schools, early childhood centres and parks.

Noel Nannup

Noel Nannup is an Indigenous Heritage Consultant and was one of Australia's first Aboriginal park rangers. During his 11 years as a ranger (1978-1989), Noel actively participated in managing and conserving areas with strong links to Aboriginal culture, such as the Geikie Gorge National Park and Millstream Chichester National Park. Through tours focusing on Aboriginal culture, Noel was able to educate tourists in the importance of conserving this rich heritage.

Results from Noel's work with have included the mapping of ancient Noongar dreaming trails, development of the Wagin Aboriginal Reserve Cultural Museum and the Aboriginal component of the Narrogin Heritage Park, recording the oral history of Aboriginal culture in the Dryandra area and the teaching activities kit Exploring the Woodlands with Noongars.

Helle Nebelong

Helle Nebelong – a Danish Landscape Architect and Master of Public Management – has created children's outdoor spaces for more than twenty years. Her work is based on experiences and observations from her own childhood and from her roles as a mother and a designer. For more than ten years, she has worked for the City of Copenhagen now as a private consultant. She runs her practice www.sansehaver.dk, since 1990, that specialises in the design of natural spaces for children, young disabled people and the elderly. Helle is President of

the Danish Playground Association, Vice-president of International Play Association Denmark and since 2007 member of the Leadership Team for the Nature Action Collaborative for Children, NACC.

Robert Pyle

Bob Pyle received a B.S. in Nature Perception and Protection and M.S. in Nature Interpretation from the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. in conservation ecology from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. In 1971, during a Fulbright Fellowship at the Monks Wood Experimental Station in England, Pyle founded the Xerces Society for invertebrate conservation, and later chaired its Monarch Project. A lifelong conservationist, he received a 1997 Distinguished Service Award from the Society for Conservation Biology, and the 2004 John Adams Comstock Award from the Lepidopterists' Society.

Bob has worked as butterfly conservation consultant for the government of Papua New Guinea, Northwest Land Steward for The Nature Conservancy, and visiting professor or writer in residence at Utah State, Portland State, and Oregon State universities, the universities of Virginia, Alaska and Montana, and Evergreen State, Lewis & Clark, Sweet Briar, and Peninsula colleges. Most recently he served as Kittredge Distinguishing Writer at the University of Montana. He has lectured, keynoted, and read in many cities and countries, taught numerous field courses and writing seminars all over the U.S., and appeared on NPR's "E-Town" and "All Things Considered" as well as "Good Morning America." He lives along Gray's River, a tributary of the Lower Columbia River, with botanist and silkscreen artist Thea Linnaea Pyle.

His books have won numerous awards including the John Burroughs Medal for Distinguished Nature Writing, a Guggenheim Fellowship and many others.

Cathy Sherry

Cathy Sherry is a Lecturer in the Faculty of Law, University of New South Wales, Australia. She is a graduate of the University of Sydney, having completed the final year of her LLB at Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London.

Cathy has worked as a Legal Officer at the New South Wales Law Reform Commission and briefly in private practice. She teaches Property, Equity and Trusts 1, Property and Equity 2, Children and the Law and Strata and Community Title Law. She is currently completing a postgraduate degree on high rise and master planned communities in Australia. She is a member of the Australian College of Community Association Lawyers (ACCAL) and a regular presenter of continuing legal education seminars for the profession. Cathy is the co-author of the *Butterworths Conveyancing Service* with Professor Chris Rossiter and the Hon Justice PW Young.