

# Littlies with sky-high ambitions

REBECCA DIGIROLAMO



**Katia**

**SCIENTIST**

“ Scientists do experiments. If I was a scientist, I would like to make things in the lab.

**Lenni**

**SUPREME COURT JUDGE**

“ Judges keep people safe.

**Aria**

**MARINE BIOLOGIST**

“ I want to be a Marine Biologist because I love dolphins. I want to keep them healthy.

START YOUNG: primary push for careers education

## KIDS' WISH LIST

### SA children aged 8-12:

- Get a good job
- Be a good person
- Learn and do well
- See the world

### Their top 10 jobs:

- Professional athlete
- Teacher
- Vet
- Scientist
- YouTuber
- Artist
- Doctor
- Actor
- Police



CAREER education must start in primary school, the state's leading child advocate says, after a survey of South Australian "tweens" revealed "getting a good job" tops their future aspirations list behind being a good person and travel.

Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly sought the feedback of more than 8400 children aged eight to 12 from across the state on their career goals in term four last year. "We have children in Year 3 telling us that a career is what matters to them most and yet we don't talk to them about it seriously until they're in Year 10," she said.

Ms Connolly's snapshot report into children's career aspirations, released today, shows that more than half of the children who responded said their dream job was in the arts, sports, working with animals, in health, or a Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths (STEM) field.

She said city tweens wanted to pursue jobs with a university qualification such as a scientist or engineer, while manual labour jobs – which didn't even make the top 10 for suburban children – were stand-out areas of interest for country SA children.

"We know that jobs and careers are generally explored in the middle-senior years of school ... however, many children often learn the basics about some jobs much earlier," Ms Connolly said.

She said research had shown 80 per cent of Year 4 students could state with a degree of accuracy what type of work they wanted to do.

More formalised career education was needed earlier on in children's lives, Ms Connolly said, to promote better long term engagement in learning and to debunk commonly held misconceptions about the types of jobs available to them, including gender stereotypes.

At inner city, all-girls Catholic R-12 school St Aloysius College, six-year-olds are being given the chance to gender-bend their concepts of women and men in the workplace and learn about all types of careers available to them. SAC career counsellor Louise Murphy has for the past three years adopted a UK approach in career education, using art lessons for the school's Year 1 students, who are visited by recent old scholars who have STEM-related careers.

More than 90 per cent of the Year 1 students involved have drawn women in traditionally male dominated industries.

By Year 3, SAC students prepare an oral presentation on future career goals in costume to their peers, with Year 8s by their side providing executive coaching – again a management role dominated by men.

"It's a really powerful way of showing the girls from quite early on that they can do anything and to think outside stereotypes limited by gender, culture or geography," Ms Murphy said.

A spokesman for the Education Department said high schools were encouraged to start formal careers education but primary schools were also encouraged to build learning about work life and career opportunities into lessons.