



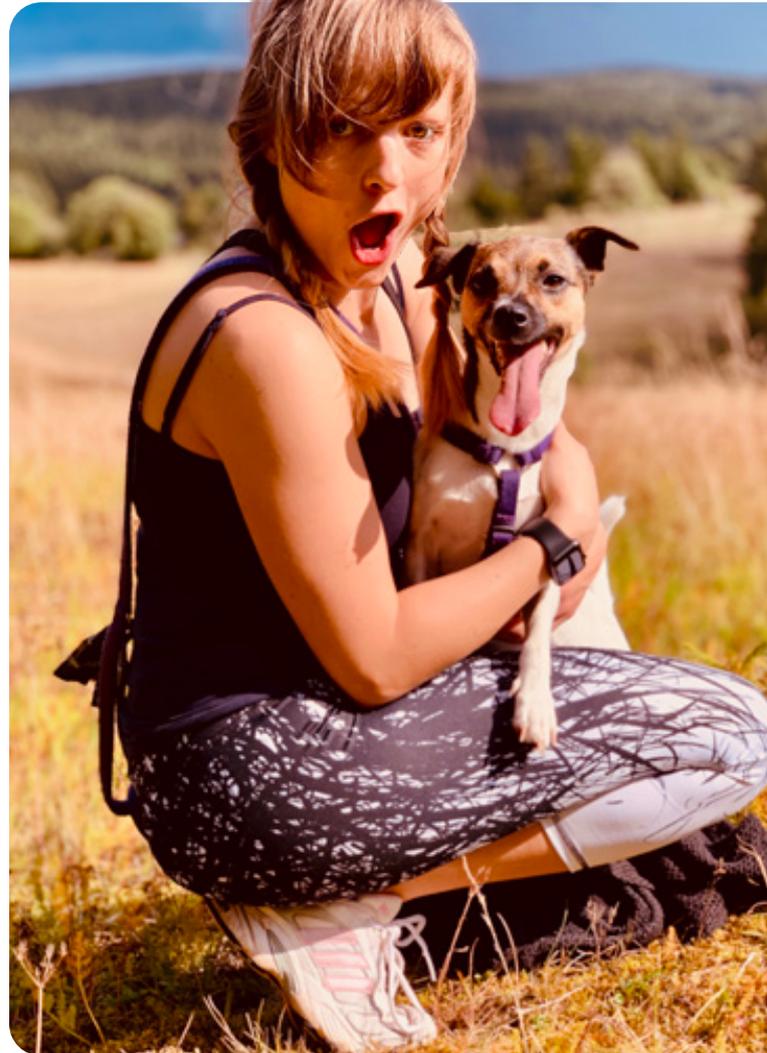
What SA Kids Have Told Us About the Environment

Commissioner for
Children & Young People
October 2020

Under Article 24 of the UNCRC, children have the right to good quality healthcare, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment to stay healthy. Children and young people have said that they are worried about pollution and plastics and the impact they're having on the environment and on their own health.

Having clean air, water and food is crucial for children and young people to ensure they can reach developmental goals. Current policies and practices are putting the environment at risk leading to an increased risk of contaminated food, air and water, increasing the burden on the health sector. They know that the cleaner and healthier the environment is, the healthier people are and the more productive they are.

Children and young people in South Australia see the degradation of the environment as a huge threat to their future. They want urgent action on climate change taken, more focus on renewable energy, and the elimination of fossil fuel dependency.



Key to children and young people's interest in the environment is their sense of justice. They recognise that poorer people, remote communities, and indigenous people will be most affected by climate change. Conversely they see that they might also benefit most from the development and introduction of renewable energy technology that reduces or eliminates our need for fossil fuel.

Young people are living with the knowledge that they are growing up in a world that will be environmentally worse off than it was for previous generations, through no fault of their own. They recognise the benefit of green spaces and of building liveable cities. They want access to natural spaces for play and wellbeing, and they want to be involved in community effort that is focused on protecting these places and spaces for future generations.

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They are deeply protective of their ability to be outdoors, and want more parks and recreational facilities that take advantage of the largely sunny weather South Australia provides.

Children and young people said that they recognise the impact of climate change and pollution on their local community. They include in this an increased incidence of obesity and chronic disease. They have many ideas on how to address this, and they want the tools to empower them to do so themselves. They also want to know how to access services that will help them to become more active and healthy while they are young.

'[We need] ...education on how to be environmentally friendly. Without a healthy and clean environment, future generations will not be able to live life to the fullest.'

- 'SA looks very nice now I would like it to stay like that for future. This is very important because when I was little I used to always go to the hills with my family on walks and bike rides. I want others to have the same opportunities as me.'*
- 'The government needs to consider our future. They need to start having a positive impact on the environment, because at this rate, our job in the future will be to live with the impact that past generations have left on our Earth. The government needs to address things such as climate change and realise this isn't science fiction - it's real life and if we don't do anything about it soon, it will be too late.'*
- 'Nature and fresh air - I've always liked going outside, [to] parks, [the] beach, being around everything that's natural and not man made and made of concrete. I like being around the colours. Everything is so bright, everything feels so fresh in your imagination but in real life... it makes me feel like I'm escaping from everything in that moment. Nothing else bothers me. Nothing from the past. It's just the sun and the plants.'*

