



Commissioner for Children and Young People's Regional Engagement

ccyp.com.au

Growing confident, connected, creative regional kids



As part of a global youth generation, regional young people in South Australia know more than prior generations about what they can achieve and about what they can expect from leaders in their community, including how they want to be treated.

This presents a significant opportunity for community leaders to harness the enthusiasm and support of children and young people, nurturing their desire to be connected to their communities, excited about the future, and committed to contributing to strategies designed to foster their community's long term sustainability.

Since commencing as South Australia's Inaugural Commissioner for Children and Young People, I have engaged and consulted with children and young people in the following regional communities throughout South Australia:

Adelaide Hills, Adelaide Plains, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, Barossa Valley, Ceduna, Fleurieu Peninsula, Limestone Coast, Mid Murray, Mount Gambier, Murray Bridge, Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Port Lincoln, Riverland, Whyalla, and Yorke Peninsula.

Regional children and young people told me about:

- freedom of movement and easy access to outdoor pursuits in their communities
- feeling proud of where they live and feeling good about what was around them and how visitors perceived their town
- not necessarily wanting to leave their towns, but feeling there would be more opportunities available to them if they did; and
- their concerns about the pressure of living independently and away from family.

This summary document is an extract from my full *Hopes and Dreams Report*. It provides a snapshot view of what regional children and young people have told me they want adults to facilitate in their regions including suggestions on how this might be achieved. I am sure you will find their ideas both informative and inspiring.

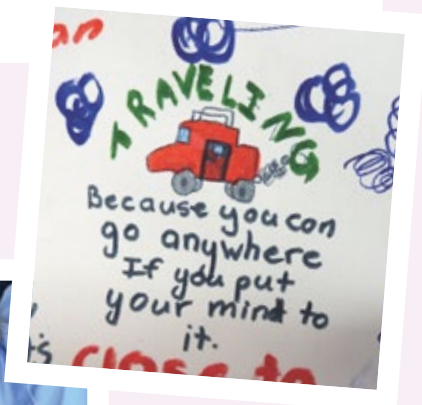
Yours sincerely,

Helen Connolly
Commissioner for Children and Young People

10 issues identified by SA regional children and young people

Across the regions young people told me they want the following:

- 1** To finish their schooling and get good grades and go on to university, TAFE and various training organisations, but still be able to live in their regional community.
- 2** To obtain their driving licence and buy a car to get around the issues they face relating to poor local transport options. Lack of transport impacts significantly on their lives, including their ability to get and maintain a job or be able to attend recreational or social engagements.
- 3** To have greater subject choice at school, and access to work experience and further education options so that regional kids can be as competitive as city kids for jobs and courses on offer.
- 4** To have expanded job choices with less of the “who you know” determining whether you are able to access work experience, with options to work in different industries and roles that will enable young people to build their skills and confidence.
- 5** Reliable and more affordable Internet access including free Wi-Fi locations so they can access education portals as well as pursue online training courses, job seeking and social connections.
- 6** More privacy and confidentiality in relation to their health, particularly sexual health.
- 7** More activities designed specifically for young people, and many more local places for young people to go, particularly those that don't require travel to major cities.
- 8** More recreational options for older children who have completed primary school.
- 9** Access to teachers and classes in art, music and drama to help develop talents in these areas.
- 10** More leadership opportunities for young people including involvement in local decision making from a younger age.



7 practical ideas for making regional communities more youth focussed

1 Your **local council** could be asked to look at **what space/s could be made available** for young people to “be” in. This could be part of an existing space or be a space that is purpose-built with input from young people in the community.

2 Many **libraries** are already looking at how to **make part of their space more youth centric** and this could be extended to community orientated public spaces and facilities that a youth lens could be applied to. This could include working closely with local young people to **identify appropriate local places that appeal to them**, and which by developing as youth specific spaces would produce exciting outcomes for the whole community.

3 Your **local business community** could look at working with high schools to **provide a structured work experience program** that can showcase what is available locally. This would provide support for young people to be offered employment opportunities without a heavy reliance upon strong family networks.

4 Establishing a **local Youth Advisory Group** consisting of strong, active, passionate and committed young people will provide an organised structure through which regional young people can express their ideas and concerns. The YAG would be well placed to develop a campaign to create a more inclusive community for young people and creating awareness around what young people naturally bring, such as a youthful energy and enthusiasm to learn and to contribute to sustainable futures.



5 Identifying **local child and youth participation champions** within regional development areas or local councils and community groups, will support local adults to embrace a culture of participation by young people and help identify ways to promote respect and acknowledgement of the agenda issues that are identified by young people as being in need of action.

6 Consider opportunities to advocate for **arts/creative based programs** in partnership with local youth agencies or service clubs, and create a local art prize for young artists in partnership with the regional newspaper exhibiting entries in Council Chambers.

7 All regional communities should find ways to **seek feedback and views directly from young people**. This could be in the form of formal meetings like a Youth Advisory Committee but this is not the only strategy. Equally important are less formal meetings convened to discuss a specific issue. Other inclusive ideas they mentioned were having message boards in public places or asking groups that currently work with young people to support them to facilitate conversations about local community issues.

5 ways to grow confident, connected and creative regional kids

To build a strong state where regional kids are confident, connected and creative, adults need to involve children and young people in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of systems and services which are intended to meet their needs.

Achieving this requires adults to:

- 1 regard children and young people as **capable citizens** who are able to contribute meaningfully to the decisions that impact on their lives
- 2 **facilitate their participation** through engaging them directly and by amplifying their voices
- 3 improve children and young people's **participation in decisions** that impact on them, thereby future proofing our democratic institutions and structures

- 4 improve young people's self-confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills by **creating more opportunities** for them to participate in decision-making; and
- 5 support children and young people to **feel they belong and are valued members** of their community.

Some examples

- Regional career expo in each local community to showcase opportunities with a focus on students who are completing Year 9.
- Work experience exchange with local government and boarding schools.

To read the full Hopes and Dreams Report visit www.cryp.com.au/reports



For more information, visit ccyp.com.au

All illustrations and photographs appearing throughout this report have been reproduced with permission.

© 2019 SA Commissioner for Children and Young People.

All rights reserved.

CPSN SR0035-2019-02-02