

Commissioner
for Children and
Young People

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Our approach to engaging with SA business



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The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People is an **independent statutory position**, established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* ‘the Act’.

Our approach to engaging with SA business

The Act sets out the Commissioner's role including her responsibility to promote and advocate for the rights and interests of all children and young people in SA, and to promote the participation of children and young people in the making of decisions that affect their lives. The Act specifically requires the Commissioner to engage with those groups of children and young people whose ability to make their views known is limited for any reason.

This direct engagement with children and young people in seeking their views on policy process and practice is at the core of a child rights based approach. When their voices and views are amplified and supported by adults who value their participation then we have the foundation to ensure that the development and wellbeing of SA children is a community priority.

In the Commissioner's work she listens to the views of children and young people, collaborates with them and represents their diverse voices in the public arena with a special focus on those who struggle to have their voices heard. Her advocacy is directed by the experiences and issues that children and young people talk about and have asked her to focus on. A key objective of the work is to partner and collaborate with organisations and systems to include children and young people as stakeholders, and to incorporate their perspectives and views in policy and system reforms.

The Commissioner believes that the contribution of children and young people to the creation, design, implementation and evaluation of policies, systems and services that impact on them is essential. The Commissioner is committed to including children and young people from economically, socially, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in her work. She represents them in the public arena, to government, and to other decision makers.

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In order to include children and young people, the Commissioner works collaboratively with business to identify how to practically embed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) principles in to South Australian business practices. The Commissioner works with business on future sustainability strategies which rely to a large degree on making healthy, skilled, well-educated and creative workers and consumers. As current and future consumers, decision makers and community members, children are a stakeholder group that have an impact on business in all sectors. They have purchasing power and ability to assess when business is not acting in their best interests. They are affected as consumers of products and services by marketing practices, and by the impact that business activities have on local communities and the environment. Business development should not come at the expense of children, and all SA business can drive and promote children's interests.

In South Australia we want business activity that promotes children's rights, helps build strong, stable, healthy, well-educated communities and durable economic structures. Children are directly and indirectly affected by activities and opportunities of business and are important stakeholders and investors. Communities increasingly expect business to operate sustainably and responsibly, and demonstrate that Board and senior management are committed to social and environmental issues which include children's rights.

The Commissioner is interested in working with the SA business community to engage children and young people as capable citizens, who are able to meaningfully contribute and shape services and influence business decision making.

The Commissioner believes that when adults experience the competence of young people first hand and see them as legitimate and valuable contributors, then we build skills in both adults and young people. Young people bring energy and fresh perspectives and ideas. Adults bring experience and an understanding of systems. Working together creates a new energy, greater innovation, productivity and transparency.

Giving young people a significant role in influencing business at a leadership and decision making level is a progressive approach that recognises that young people are not only our future leaders, they are leading today. When business leaders include young people, transformative change is possible. Young people's knowledge, experiences, values and views are assets that, if embraced, can set a course for a thriving economy and community.

The Commissioner has made the following commitment to collaborate with key business and community leaders to:

- Develop practical actions for business to demonstrate its commitment to creating a state that values children.
- Support business to conduct due diligence regarding their impact on children's rights and demonstrate that they have taken measurable steps to embed young people's perspectives and views into their leadership, strategy development and operational activities.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People has the following goals when working with business:

- **Build** the capacity of business to connect with young people.
- **Facilitate** young people's engagement within business.
- **Build** broader community interest for youth participation.
- **Strengthen** relationships between young people and decision makers.

The Commissioner has three key outcomes when working with the business community:

1. **Create** pipelines and smooth transitions from learning to work.
2. **Support** the development of information for the community on future career opportunities.
3. **Promoting** 'thought diversity' in leadership and decision making through the participation of young people in finding solutions to current business challenges.

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Commissioner
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promote and protect
children's rights as
consumers and
stakeholders

South Australian business community

The participation of young people in finding solutions to current business challenges

Develop information for community on future career opportunities

Create pipelines and smooth transitions from learning to work

**We'd love to hear from you.
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