

South Australian
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People
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Regenerating Our Regions

Increasing participation of young people
in rural South Australia

PROJECT REPORT NO. 11 | MARCH 2020

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to the regional young people from the Barossa, Clare and Goyder communities who shared their experiences, insights and suggestions with me at the Regional Youth Voices Forum held at the historic Burra Town Hall on 28 August, 2019.

A selection of unedited quotes by these young people have been used throughout this report, ensuring their ideas and concerns have been faithfully communicated to those who have the capacity to consider this feedback and use their influence to implement changes suggested.

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Commissioner's Foreword

It's not difficult to appreciate that sustainability of South Australia's regional communities is intrinsically linked to the aspirations of regional young people, and whether they see a prosperous and fulfilling future for themselves within them.

Regional young people across South Australia are part of a global youth generation.

They know more than previous generations did about what they can achieve, what they want from leaders in their communities, and how they wish to be treated.

Through my conversations with them, it has become clear that many do not feel valued. Nor do they feel they are seen as important members of their own communities, deserving of opportunities to have their voices heard and ideas acted upon.

In fact, too many of the young people I have spoken with over the last three years have told me they don't feel valued or listened to at all. They are not invited to share their views and opinions on what would make them feel better about their lives, nor do they see a positive future in their communities, despite how committed they may personally be to achieving this.

Through my 2017 Listening Tour and 2018 Hopes and Dreams Tour, regional young people shared many concerns and issues with me which they

felt were difficult for them to raise with adults and leaders in their own local communities.

They also told me they wanted more opportunities to be part of solutions and to influence decisions which impact them directly. They also identified a number of critical issues that they feel must be addressed if they are to stay and thrive in their own communities.

My response to hearing their concerns was to bring a large number of them together in one place and conduct a Regional Youth Voices Forum. This Forum took a collective problem solving approach to issues regional young people are facing, and with which they themselves would identify as a group. The inherent value in bringing young people from the regions together in this way meant they could see firsthand how their collective strengths could be harnessed to send a strong message to those who are in a position to support them to make change.

They spoke about the value there was in developing relationships with peers, and in gaining a broader understanding of the common challenges regional young people face.



This included the benefits of being given an opportunity to come up with their own strategies and solutions to problems they identified, developed through the exchange of ideas and experiences with each other.

At the Forum, which was attended by 172 regional young South Australians including 150 students from years 8 and 9 (aged 12 to 14 years) their mutual desire to be connected was clear, as was their desire to harness their creative thinking and help drive change to build confident, regional communities in which they can thrive.

More specifically regional young people identified mental health, education, online behaviour, employment and job opportunities, as the key issues they face. These are the issues that cause them the greatest ongoing concern and which impact on them directly. In this report you will hear about each issue in depth, and about some of the solutions regional young people have proposed to address them.

If we are to support young regional South Australians to find futures in their communities, we must also involve them in finding solutions. We need to listen to what they have to say, and get to know what they're all about. Then we need to find ways to connect with them meaningfully, so they can put their collective energy, creativity and youthfulness to work.

By doing this you will be providing opportunities for these young people to be embedded in their local communities from a young age contributing to the communities they wish to build positive and purposeful lives within. Embedding regional young people as core stakeholders will increase the likelihood of regional sustainability.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Connolly'.

Helen Connolly

Commissioner for Children and Young People

Introduction

The Regional Youth Voices Forum reflected a significant collaboration between the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Youth Advisory Committees of the Barossa Valley, Clare and Gilbert and Goyder Councils.

The concept of a Regional Youth Voices Forum was developed by the Regional Council of Goyder's Youth Advisory Committee (Goyder YAC). It followed on from their highly successful 'Battle of the Bands' competition undertaken in partnership with my office, at which young people identified a need to provide a space where they could come together to talk about issues affecting them, and brainstorm possible solutions.

The Barossa Council's Youth Advisory Committee (Barossa YAC) and the Youth Action Committee of Clare and Gilbert Region (Clare YAC) had echoed similar sentiments in conversations I had undertaken with young people in these regions during my 2018 Hopes and Dreams Tour.

The Forum brought together 172 young people representing students from Burra Community School, Eudunda Area School, Nuriootpa High School and Clare High School. Students were from diverse cultural backgrounds with differing abilities and circumstances.

The Regional Youth Voices Forum brought these young people to identify:

- 1 the main issues of concern to local young people
- 2 solutions to address the main issues identified; and
- 3 assets already in existence across the community that could be harnessed for change.

This report outlines what participants told us are the biggest challenges facing young people in their regional communities, what they think should be done to better support young people facing these challenges, and what assets their community has that could be used to address them.

Key Messages

Young people who attended the Commissioner's Regional Young Voices Forum said the four main issues they face, which are increasingly problematic to their wellbeing are:

- mental health
- education
- online behaviours; and
- employment and job opportunities.

Cutting across the four issues was an underlying view that adults in their regions don't listen to young people. They spoke about adults trivialising their issues, minimising or dismissing them as being 'just part of adolescence'.

Others said they had no opportunities to talk about things that concerned them. Many participants said they felt their issues were ignored by adults, and that the discussion about agriculture and the economy is the only one adults are having. They felt that the hopes, aspirations, passions and challenges relating to young people were being ignored and that these should have a much higher priority.



Regional Forum Facts and Figures



200km return travelled
by participants*



172 students



6 public high
schools attending



4 major challenges



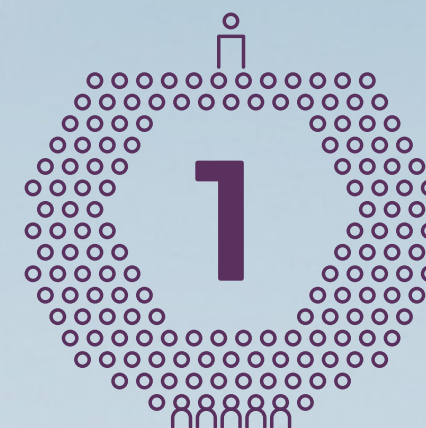
31 young Youth Action
Council members



18 young people from
the organising group



3 Youth Action Councils



1 town hall

Our Approach

The Commissioner's approach to engagement with children and young people is to consider them capable citizens who are able to contribute meaningfully to the decisions that impact their lives.

A workshop style approach was used, with participants and youth facilitators seated together around tables. This arrangement allowed participants to speak honestly and earnestly on the issues they wished to raise most, while not feeling influenced or concerned about the contributions they were making. The opportunity to speak directly to the Commissioner, meant young people were candid about their views.

To facilitate a safe and engaging discussion, the consultation was activity based, using a flexible mixed-method approach – identifying the challenges young people face as well as coming up with suggestions that factored in community assets that could be better utilised to make positive change.

The first activity involved taking 'a world café' approach to problem solving. This activity asked participants to think about which individuals, groups, institutions, physical spaces and local economies exist in their region, and how these assets could be harnessed to better meet the needs of young people.

The next activity involved brainstorming a list of challenges that young regional people face. This list was then categorised under the four main themes that emerged – mental health, education, online behaviour, and employment

and job opportunities. The Commissioner asked participants to discuss what they felt individuals, groups, schools and the broader community (including local and state government) could do to address their concerns.

A group of young panellists representing the Burra, Clare and Goyder Youth Advisory Councils were invited to share their insights and ideas around the value of youth participation, describing some of the barriers they initially faced and the strategies they devised to get around them.

Lastly, a local textile artist took the participants through a reflection activity that enabled them to have some fun, whilst thinking about the range of issues raised and regional assets identified that could be harnessed to help address and/or solve them.

In keeping with asset based community development, the Forum was held at a local venue – the historic Burra Town Hall. Catering was provided by the Burra Bowling Club with the panellists consisting of young people representing the Goyder, Clare and Barossa Youth Advisory Councils. The Forum also provided a community focus and demonstrated to participants the mobilising power that collective effort can offer young people in their region.



Core Challenges Identified

Mental Health

When participants were asked what issues they believe are affecting young people most across their community, mental health was the response most commonly identified.

The conversations around mental health revealed that some of the participants themselves had experienced mental health issues, as had many young people they knew. They spoke honestly about the different mental illnesses young people suffer, including 'depression', 'anxiety', 'self-harm (cutting)' and 'suicidal thoughts', with anxiety and depression the two most often raised.

Young people also spoke about what they see as the main challenges to maintaining good mental health – 'school', 'stress', 'lack of support', and 'lack of security'.

Many of the comments young people made in relation to their experiences of poor mental health involved feeling 'overwhelmed' and 'not supported by adults in their lives' including their teachers, coaches, and parents.

Their responses reaffirmed research conducted by Mission Australia and the Black Dog Institute, which emphasised how stress, school, and study problems, can all impact on a young person's mental health.

'In 2016, the top three issues of personal concern for young people meeting the criteria for a probable serious mental illness were coping with stress, school or study problems and depression.' (Mission Australia, Black Dog Institute 2016)¹

Participants made a connection between 'bullying and mental health'. They said that if young people already feel overwhelmed and then also have negative relationships with their peers or adults, this can combine to impact heavily on their mental health.

A number of young people said they felt bullied by adults and felt misunderstood when they tried to discuss their mental health concerns.

'No-one understands, particularly the adults in our community.'

Social media was often spoken about in relation to mental health and there were concerns raised in relation to the standard response adults often made, such as 'simply stop using it' – a view they felt was most unhelpful and condescending.

*‘Stop linking all of
our teenage emotions
back to social media
- it’s not helpful.
We want support
not a lecture.’*

When asked how the challenge of poor mental health amongst young people could be addressed, participants said they wanted adults to understand – or try to understand – that it is the impact of the issues they face which is the problem.

They talked about wanting opportunities to take breaks when they are feeling overwhelmed and stressed; about wanting more open communication around mental health to occur across the whole community. They emphasised that this discussion needed to be about what individuals, community groups and government can all do to help young people suffering from poor mental health, not just keep talking about the fact that mental health issues exist.

They said that when young people are suffering from poor mental health they want to talk to someone they trust. Participants spoke about the need for more counsellors and trained health professionals to be available and easy to access.

In addition, they want the whole of their community to be equipped with the skills and confidence needed to respond to young people showing signs of poor mental health, well before they reach crisis point.

Education

Young people spoke at length about how education is proving particularly challenging for themselves and their peers. They describe this challenge as either not connecting well to the content they're expected to learn, or as breakdowns in teacher/student relations.

Young people spoke about their strong desire for relationships with teachers that are built on trust, care and understanding. Many young people described school as a place 'they don't particularly want to be'.

When participants discussed education they alluded to a feeling of being caught in a paradigm of fear and shame. They are fearful of continuing with their high school education and getting 'bad results', but are also worried they will be ashamed if they don't finish school and have to face the consequences of not doing so.

“ [I'm] wanting to drop out of school but [I] don't want to be homeless.’

The Commissioner heard that young people don't feel connected to much of the educational content they are being taught. They don't understand its purpose, or how it relates to their lives. Participants want to learn skills that will equip them for the future; that offer them a 'practical', 'outdoors', and/or 'hands-on' approach to life.

‘School can show us what's on offer and instil a sense of curiosity in learning and careers’.

Young people told us they want school to be a place where they can have fun while learning 'real life skills'. They want school to be a place of exploration not pressure. Somewhere they can express their desire for more activities and practice experiential learning.

‘There are not enough extra-curricular events.’

Young people talked about breakdowns in student and teacher relationships. They spoke about their belief that 'teachers don't help' and that 'teachers don't explain very well', sharing their frustration around the lack of support they experience.

“ ‘Teachers [are] bullying, yelling at kids and making them feel bad.’

“ ‘Most teachers [are] not wanting to spend extra time helping us’.

Many young people believe teachers are not invested in student's learning and that 'helping them learn seemed more like a chore'. They describe the relationships they have with teachers as adversarial, and felt most interactions were negative and reactionary responses to what they deemed fairly minor issues.

Young people suggested that consistent negative responses from teachers led to students feeling alienated and undermined. They described feeling like 'citizens whose rights were being diminished'.

Online Behaviour

As part of a global youth generation, regional young people in South Australia have the world at their fingertips. With geographic isolation, young people have told us that social media is a source of connectivity, and a platform upon which to build positive relationships. However, young people have also told us that when relationships between peers are negative, this will often manifest in the online space.

Young people spoke about the pressures of being online on how this included 'being judged' and 'comparing yourself with others'. They often see themselves as competitors, and felt this was being reinforced on social media platforms.

Many participants highlighted the need for adults to understand that competition and social comparison lie at the core of adolescent behaviour, and should therefore be addressed in ways that build, rather than challenge individual self-esteem.

One common problematic online behaviour mentioned by many participants is 'sexting'. They describe this behaviour as a real and everyday challenge for many young people, particularly girls.

Participants spoke about 'nudes' being asked for, persistently and frequently. The Commissioner heard about the immense pressure placed on 'girlfriends' to send nudes to their 'boyfriends', and how this creates an environment where girls are ostracised if they don't oblige.

*'Don't pressure
nudes please -> no -
DON'T ASK FOR NUDES.'*

A number of girls mentioned 'slut shaming' as a problematic behaviour they see happening in their local communities.

“ ‘Slut shaming is very bad here.’

Young women recognise this behaviour as a form of sexual harassment and want it to stop. They also feel the whole community can help by changing attitudes and mindsets and 'needs to respect young women' more.

'Don't sext me, respect me!'

Young people discussed that when it comes to being a victim of offensive online behaviour, they often don't know who to talk to. They spoke about wanting someone they trust and feel comfortable with to visit their school and discuss with them how social media can be used more safely. More than a presentation, they want to be engaged.

On a similar note, young people wanted adults in their lives to teach them how to use social media appropriately. They recognised in this that often young people - who are digital natives - have a better understanding of how the technology works but they felt adults had more experience of the different pitfalls there can be around relationships.

Young people seek the same guidance around respectful behaviour online as they do around what constitutes respectful behaviour offline. They want adults to provide advice on how to be respectful and responsible for themselves and others, and to offer them support as they go on that journey for the first time.

Other participants said that although they acknowledged they needed advice from adults about how to manage some online behaviours from peers, adults themselves needed young people to teach them about the issues they face online to be able to provide the right advice.

‘Educate adults on the cyber world so they can influence us about our online behaviour’.

Young people asserted that rather than adults giving them a hard time, applying fast rules about how long they should be online, they were more interested in having open and honest discussions about the impact their behaviours might have and what this might mean for them over the longer term.

‘Understand that apps like Facebook, everyone can see what you comment on or your bosses in the future can also look it up [and can see they] have done the wrong thing.’



Employment and Job Opportunities

Young people spoke about the need for more employment and job opportunities in their communities, and how the lack of both severely impacts their lives. Participants were unanimous in their view that there are very few jobs available to regional young people, and that mostly this related to having very few businesses in their home towns.

This scarcity of jobs and opportunities creates competition between young people and allows employers to be very selective. Public transport was also described as a real barrier for young people trying to find employment, limiting their ability to access jobs and opportunities outside their immediate community. Many young people said they regularly travelled 1-2 hours each day to attend school, sport and work. The irregular availability of buses and/or trains made time management very difficult, often limiting their opportunities as they grew older.

Participants also reported that when a young person does get a job, it is rare for an employer to provide any flexibility. Employers operate from a controlling point a view, continuously emphasising how 'extremely fortunate the young person is to have a job'. Young people

want and deserve 'jobs that allow them to also engage in out of school activities' so they can earn, learn and play.

Participants said another challenge for young people in their regional community is the connection between school and jobs. They want 'apprenticeships' and to 'use subjects to get employment'.

They also spoke about needing more support in applying for jobs and interviews. Many participants spoke negatively about work experience and the interview process. They were worried they did not have enough information about the jobs or careers of the future.

Participants recognised the role they could play in creating their own jobs and opportunities, discussing how they might create work for themselves by looking at dog walking jobs, or designing jobs that fulfilled local needs. Self-employment and starting their own business was something young people would like to know more about. They were interested in receiving guidance and training on establishing a business from people who knew what to do.

Recommendations

To remain solution-focussed, young people were asked to recommend how the community assets they had identified, could be harnessed to address the four major issues it was agreed most regional young people face.

Participants spoke about the responsibility all members of their communities have to being 'kinder', 'more caring' and 'more compassionate' toward young people, supporting them to take a more active and responsible role in their communities.

Young people defined this as 'helping' the community by allowing them 'to have a go at everything', encouraging them to 'be brave' and 'not be afraid of what other people think'. They want individuals to be 'proud' and 'confident' of their community, and for regional young people to be supported by making the community more inclusive of them.

This included recognising that the main issues identified would often combine to exacerbate and complicate their lives, creating negative experiences for regional young people. In supporting them to address the challenges they face, participants felt adults also needed to understand how issues often intersected in young people's lives. Allowing adults to be guided by the lived experience of regional young people who had found pathways through these issues, would make a real difference to prevention and recovery.

In relation to issues young people face online, participants spoke about the benefits of learning how to take a stand on social media, applying simple online safety techniques such as 'blocking someone if they're harassing you'.

The majority of participants said that being listened to is the most important support adults can offer. Young people repeatedly said they just wanted adults to have a greater understanding of who they are, and what they want – they wanted 'adults to listen'.

Participants connected listening with respect, believing that when they're not listened to their opinions or experiences cannot be taken into account. Young people spoke about adults giving them mixed messages; treating them like children while telling them to 'act like adults'. For young people this was confusing and upsetting. The desire to be trusted in the community, and 'trusted to be independent' was a prevailing sentiment expressed by many of the young participants.

Through community upskilling, they felt young people could become better educated and gain more confidence to make responsible decisions empowering them to do their part to ensure everyone is afforded the right to live a happy and safe life.

They said that peers, schools and the broader community had different roles to play in supporting them and that by working together they would have the greatest likelihood of having a positive impact on the day to day lives of South Australia's regional young people.

Peer Support

Participants want friendship groups to be more supportive of each other and to find opportunities to collaborate and harness their collective strengths. They said groups should be 'checking in on people (if they're lonely)' and for people to be ready to offer 'support and comfort to each other' (when this was needed).

Other participants spoke about ways in which young people can be supported when they're not coping well, such as 'trying to make them laugh/make them happy' or encouraging them to 'talk about it'.

Participants described the informal role young people currently play as peer to peer supporters, and how critical this is to their lives and those of their friends. They suggested more training on how to understand mental health symptoms and early warning signs would be invaluable, including information about what friends can do to help one another.

Young people emphasised that peers play an important role as 'first responders' when their friends are not doing so well. They also said that at times they are concerned about whether they should be 'letting someone in authority know a friend is struggling'.



This tension can cause distress for many young people, and knowing what to do and say, would give them much more confidence when faced with such situations.

How best to support a friend following a particular 'incident' was also talked about. Once the professionals have come and gone, how can friendship groups best support young people, in ways they want and need to be supported?

Young people also spoke about how they are often in a situation where they are both in need of support and providing support to other friends. They want help to deal with both; not as separate concerns, but as connected issues making up two sides of the same coin.

Participants also spoke about the unique way in which friendship groups can collaborate to create more employment and job opportunities. Young people suggested they could job share with friends, and that being able to do this might enable them to manage competing commitments. Or they could combine skills to 'start their own business'. Young people want to be able to create opportunities in their own communities, but need assistance and practical support to execute their ideas successfully.



School Support

Participants want schools to involve them more in finding solutions to problems young people face. They also want teachers to be supported and educated on issues affecting their student's lives. They want schools to have more adults who can teach the skills they need to deal with relationships and interpersonal issues. This includes providing considered and relevant advice when this is asked for, as well as providing someone who will listen to young people and accept them as they are; not undermine or trivialise their concerns, but instead treat them with respect and trust at all times.

Young people want to be engaged in conversations about issues that happen in their school communities. They also want to be included in working on the solutions and invited to think of different ways to help.

Suggestions included establishing school committees that are student led and run, with teachers invited to attend and listen, offering input when asked, but not allowed to interfere. This would give young people a mechanism to 'tell the teachers what students want, and have their ideas and opinions seriously considered.'

Participants want to enjoy their education experience. They want to 'be more active during the day and feel more involved in their learning'. They don't want to 'just copy from the board or watch another PowerPoint'.

Young people discussed their desire for teachers to 'take an interest in their whole life', and to work with them to maintain a balance; not place expectations on them that are unrealistic, particularly given some circumstances and situations. Flexibility around workload management was a frequent request.

Participants spoke about wanting to find meaning in their education. They want school to show them the world and what it offers, opening their eyes to opportunities that are, or will be, available to them.

In relation to jobs and careers, young people said that 'school can show us what's on offer [job opportunities]' and they can provide us with an idea of what is out there, including how they might work toward achieving a satisfying career. This requires staff who know about future work skills and career directions, being available at school.

Community Support

Participants highlighted the need for greater opportunities for youth participation in their communities. They want the community to listen to young people more often, and they want opportunities to collaborate. They particularly want far greater investment made in making public spaces inviting to every member of the community, including young people.

They said they want to be engaged in discussions and decisions that affect young people across their community. They suggested 'all schools could work better together and make a video about what's important to young people' so that parents, carers and guardians have a better understanding of who they are, and what's important to them.

Young people spoke about the importance of 'getting to know people in the community', including opportunities for inter-generational relations to help develop a better understanding of the challenges different age-groups face.

Participants discussed the need for more investment in public spaces and places in their regions too, and that these spaces and places needed to be welcoming to children, young people, and older and younger adults – that way everyone feels included and that they belong.

Young people particularly want to see 'more safe spaces outside of school or home' and more 'fun activities in the community' held more regularly. They want activities presented outside of school and for all ages. Youthful regions that are connected, creative and confident, where citizens are proud of their communities, and where young people can thrive, are the values they would like to see reflected in the world around them.

Government Support

Participants felt the most important support governments could provide was in the area of education. Participants want teachers to be provided with more training on how to respond to issues facing young people, and on how to develop creative ways to engage young people in learning and decision-making.

Young people want to learn and explore ideas in ways that stick, not feel overwhelmed and stressed by school work and homework. A number of participants recommended the curriculum be made less dense; allowing more time to be allocated to learning material. They want more flexibility, more agency and more understanding to be afforded them while at school.

Young people spoke about wanting more teachers in rural areas who have contemporary skills; 'teachers who are fresh and who enjoy teaching', and who are 'open to new ways of doing things'.

Young people in regional communities said they often feel 'left behind' and 'disconnected'. They want critical adults in their lives, including teachers, counsellors and parents to support them better, and to work on connecting them with their communities.

They felt this could be achieved through taking approaches and making decisions that actively support young people to develop their confidence – using communication channels and devising campaigns that promote positive, respectful relations with young people as well as between peers.

They said there is also the need to encourage young people to become active citizens and to experience how they can change their communities positively through their citizenship and community engagement.

Next Steps

There are many ideas contained in this report and much clarity around what regional young people consider to be the major issues they face in their lives.

It is easy for this information to be pushed to the back burner, which is why the challenge for all of us now is to acknowledge the honesty and positive energy with which these young people have engaged, and with an expectation their voices will be heard.

This means taking the suggestions this report contains seriously. It also means involving young people in the design of strategies that could be put in place to bring about the solutions they have proposed.

There is nothing in this report that is extreme or unreasonable. All the suggestions are achievable, if we believe in young people and trust them to be part of the solution.

By doing so we send a strong message that they are valued, and that we want them to build their futures in their own communities. We want them to be hopeful and positive about the future.

The regional young people who attended the Regional Youth Voices Forum shared their experience and their ideas. They approached the task with optimism and with a sense of purpose. They went away with a strong belief that what they contributed could

bring about change in their own lives. At the conclusion of the Forum they described how proud they felt about their capacity to articulate their concerns for adults with whom they interact at school, work, sport, hobbies and at home. They demonstrated a willingness to communicate with adults more regularly, and were committed to becoming active and responsible citizens within their own communities.

By listening to young people, and by getting to know them better, we foster their interest and capacity to participate in communities. This in turn helps to strengthen our democratic institutions and structures, and help build a strong State for all.

As a critical stakeholder and/or regional community leader, it is my hope you will devise a range of strategies to support regional young people in the ways they have suggested.

I hope too that these can be developed and implemented quickly so young people can see a commitment to addressing their concerns. I look forward to hearing how you have facilitated this and taken the steps needed to support young people living in regional South Australia to not just survive, but thrive.

Endnote

- 1 Mission Australia (2017). Youth mental health report: youth survey 2012-16. Retrieved from Analysis and Policy Observatory Website: <https://apo.org.au/node/75809>

Who are we?

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').

The Commissioner promotes and advocates for the rights, development and well-being of all children and young people in South Australia. The Commissioner is committed to advocating for children and young people's involvement in decision-making that affects them, giving particular consideration to the needs of vulnerable and at-risk children and young people.

A key objective of The Commissioner for Children and Young People is to position children and young people's interests, development and wellbeing front and centre in public policy and community life and to advocate to decision makers to change laws, policy, systems and practice in favour of children and young people.

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. Much of her advocacy is directed by the experiences and issues that children and young people talk about and have asked her to focus on.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says children and young people have a right to have a say on all issues that affect them and for their views to be taken seriously.






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