

# What Kids Say About Wellbeing





**Wellbeing**

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**Poverty**

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**Young Carers**

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**Regional Kids**

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**Inclusion and Diversity**

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**Gaming**

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**Transport**

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## Introduction

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*Wouldn't it be great to know what children and young people think – what they really think; what matters to them, what worries them, what they want for the future? When we talk about things like health, wellbeing, learning, play, work and the environment, what do these things mean to children and young people? What challenges are they facing?*

The easiest way to find out what children and young people think is to ask them, and in my role as South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People that's what I do. Information contained in this guide has been sourced from many conversations, discussions and consultations with children and young people of all ages and backgrounds living, studying and working throughout South Australia.

Many of us make decisions and take actions that affect children and young people's lives every day. We do this as parents, carers, community leaders, professionals, service providers and elected and appointed public representatives. What we decide and do, colours and affects how children and young people experience the world, as well as how they understand their place within it.

The following guide provides insights into what children and young people understand the word 'wellbeing' to mean. They have ideas on ways to better support children and young people who live in poverty and they need adults to know how important access to affordable transport is to ensure they can participate in all aspects of their lives – sport, hobbies, and other recreational and social activities. Inclusion and diversity are very important to today's young people who see themselves as part of a global community. Young Carers and regional kids are given a special focus because they have particular needs and while excessive gaming can be a problem for some people it can also be a great way for children and young people to connect and feel part of a community with a shared interest.





## Wellbeing

*‘Wellbeing’ is a word that is frequently used by adults in relation to children and young people. It appears in legislation, in policies and in mission statements, as a measure and indicator of impact.*

In conversations with the Commissioner, young people have said they value the support they receive to achieve and maintain their physical and mental health and that they think of wellbeing in this context. They also think of wellbeing in relation to their self-care and this is often accompanied by their desire for more information on how to assess and maintain wellbeing.

From these multiple and varied conversations it appears young people have generally identified a state of wellbeing as ‘having a strong sense of fulfilment’. This sense of fulfilment young people attribute to feelings of wellbeing may come from the removal of an outside pressure, such as finishing secondary education or from having achieved something, such as obtaining a place in university or securing a first job. It also encompasses the feeling of having a sense of purpose at either a personal, community, spiritual, or cultural level.

What is clear, is that young people really value the support they receive from individuals, friendship groups, school and the wider community, around achieving and maintaining their physical and mental health.

Although the word ‘wellbeing’ appears to be well understood by young people, and is increasingly used by education and health service providers, and their associated information channels and materials, the Commissioner was not confident that wellbeing is a word that resonates well with children, and is rarely raised by them directly.

To find out, in 2019, the Commissioner engaged with approximately 100 children aged 6–12 years, to determine what they understood was meant by the concept of ‘wellbeing’. This included what they thought the meaning of the word itself was, and whether it was one that resonated well with them.

When asked about their health, happiness and comfort, children fully understood what these terms meant. When asked about wellbeing, however, they did not. From a long list of words relating to wellbeing, they identified friendship, belonging and happiness as those most associated with their understanding of what it means to have, or achieve, a ‘state of wellbeing’.

Children said that using the words ‘health’ and ‘wellbeing’ interchangeably was confusing to them, as it seemed to suggest two different ideas. Children know what makes them happy, healthy and comfortable. They also know what makes them feel good and what doesn’t.

The Oxford dictionary defines wellbeing as ‘the state of being happy, healthy or comfortable’, so we asked children what these three things meant to them to help define what wellbeing meant to them specifically.

When children answered what being happy meant to them, they thought about what makes them personally happy. Children spoke about how they are happiest with friends, family and pets. They added that activities and things can make them happy. They identified that happiness is an emotion and that they felt it at certain moments and around certain things which made them feel happier in that moment, but qualified this by adding that these things were not necessarily a constant state of being.

No one answered that they’re always happy or never happy. Most of the responses from children around what happiness is to them were linked to activities they do in their free time, like playing sport or spending time with friends or family.

When children spoke about health, they mainly referenced being physically well. They emphasised that eating food like fruit and vegetables and exercising is healthy. Being healthy meant that they are well enough that they can do anything. That they are excited, strong and that they can do sport, have fun, be active and play.

They also mentioned having a healthy mindset, and that eating well and exercising can help create a healthy mindset.

When asked what being comfortable means to them, children said that they feel comfortable when they are relaxed. They spoke about comfort as being safe. They added that being comfortable is being at one with yourself and being settled. They said that to be comfortable you can be alone or with others, but you must feel safe and peaceful.

Things and people can make you more comfortable, but children said that being comfortable is about the individual. When children did mention others, they said they feel comfortable because they feel supported by others.

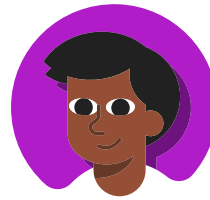
From her conversations with children and young people, the Commissioner heard that although wellbeing is a word and concept that adults use, this is not the case for children.

Although children recognise the word, they don't really comprehend its meaning, especially when it is used in different contexts. Children told the Commissioner that they want a more focused definition of wellbeing, and that they want to know what adults actually mean when they use this word.

Many children would like to see wellbeing broken down into words that they understand, or are familiar with, and use frequently. As is always the case, children and young people are the experts in their own lives. They said that when we create policies, processes and frameworks designed to support them, it is crucial that we include language that they understand.



*'I'm happy when I'm playing netball, hanging out with friends and when my club got the club rebuilt.'*



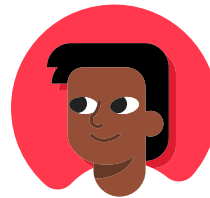
*'I feel healthy when I eat fruit and run.'*



*'Comfortable means that you are able to stay in position without fidgeting. When you are safe.'*



*'What helps you feel comfortable? When I belong in a community.'*



*'Keeping fit by fake wrestling with my friends and eating grapes and other stuff. Going for bike rides every morning is good for your body.'*

## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- Considering and being alert to **what children and young people mean and understand by terms** such as health, happiness, wellbeing, and being comfortable.
- Making sure you **use words that young people understand** and can relate to. Knowing that the term 'wellbeing' may not be meaningful to children.
- **Supporting** young people to achieve what they understand as being healthy and well.



## Poverty

*Young people said growing up poor changes your outlook on life: it affects the way you see the future and what you think is possible. It also sets children and young people apart from their peers, in both practical and social ways.*

Children and young people have told the Commissioner that their experience of poverty is different to that of adults. They talk about the difficulties they face in affording to get to school and sport, go on school excursions, or have an annual school photo taken. Others talk about having to 'lie to friends' and 'make excuses' about not being allowed to go to the movies, or do other activities with them, because it is 'too embarrassing to tell them they can't afford to go'.

The simplest of activities, like going to a friend's house, is not an option if you cannot afford the bus fare, have no car, or your parents have no money for petrol. It is these things that set children apart from each other, make them stand out, and highlight that their circumstances are different.

They talk about the high cost of uniforms and books, and household bills, food, health and medical bills, and about the high cost of housing, which can require them to relocate, with all the major disruption this entails.

Inability to afford materials such as a laptop or to pay for printing and basic requirements considered essential to enabling students to do their best work, achieve results and participate in education, mean those who go without are much more likely to struggle with school work and achieving good results.

Children and young people have told the Commissioner that there can be quite complex barriers to reaching out for help and getting support: young people often feel judged and embarrassed and blamed rather than supported.

Children and young people talk about poverty stress that can lead to arguing, with everyone in poor households constantly 'angry and upset', 'worried about eviction' and sometimes even 'fighting over food', and in serious situations, experiencing abuse. Others have said the focus on necessities means you 'don't get to do fun stuff with your family', or buy things that other kids have, like games, cool shoes and clothing, bikes and scooters.

Others are concerned about not being able to have people over because their house is run-down and small, or they feel uncomfortable and embarrassed for people to see it. Kids say that having things that other kids do is important.

For others, a haircut and shower products, soap and toothpaste, being 'able to take good care of yourself', hygiene and health, are very important and affected by poverty. They say the choice to be healthy isn't available to all families, impacting significantly on children's health and wellbeing over the long term. Health is a big issue, and there is a perception that free health care is virtually non-existent and highly inaccessible. Children and young people talked about waiting lists that are often 'months and months' long, and were concerned that poorer quality health care is being made available to them.

For young women, 'period poverty' was a real issue raised in a number of groups. Girls told us about missing school because they couldn't afford sanitary products. A number of girls spoke about the products being available at school, but that the process of accessing them was embarrassing and required a lot of self-disclosure, which many were not comfortable with.

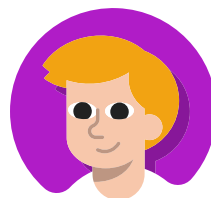
Not having 'enough lunch' or 'no clean clothes' were common issues faced by children living in poverty. Participants talked about being 'hungry' and 'smelly' and wearing 'shit shoes', explaining that these are the things poor kids are sometimes bullied over.

Young people said growing up poor changes your outlook on life: it affects the way you see the future and what you think is possible for you. We heard that, for some young people, all they want is to 'have a good life', 'be healthy', or 'get friends'. Young people want those in power to understand that solutions to poverty must be found now, so that it can be eliminated once and for all.

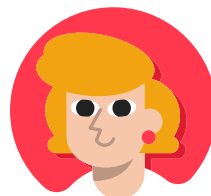
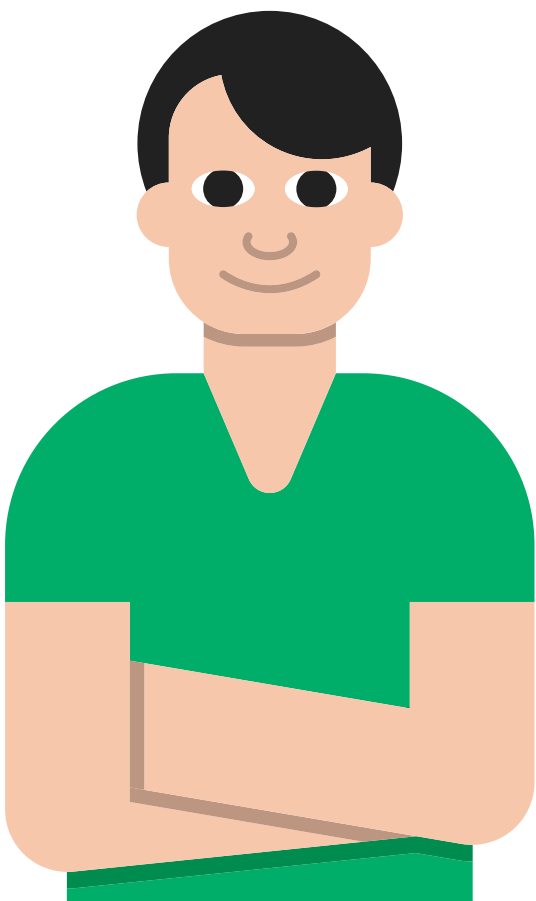
**Find out more in the Commissioner's *Leave No One Behind* report at [ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports](https://ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports)**



*'Poverty is solvable – every person who is forced to live in poverty is due to a failure in society.'*



*'Living in poverty can make a young person want to give up because they don't think that they belong.'*



*'You cannot live poor. You can survive, but that's not living.'*



*'It feels like schools punish you for being poor' – having to stay in class during school breaks so you can use the school's technology to get your work done, feels like a punishment rather than a support.'*

## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- **Understanding poverty** as one of the social determinants of health and considering how this knowledge can inform and improve practice.
- Understanding the **practical considerations** that young people living in poverty face, and how this may affect their access to and perceptions of health services, cost and value.
- Being aware of **government support systems and services**, and having relevant information to hand where it may assist.
- Making **information about costs** clear and accessible, and giving careful consideration to fees and financial matters, including payment options suitable to people's circumstances where they are in difficulty.



## Young Carers

*South Australian support agencies estimate there are more than 14,800 young people under the age of 18 who are required to take on caring roles for members of their family. While many young carers emphasise that their caring is a positive experience, it can also have negative impacts on other areas of their life. By better understanding the challenges young carers face, we can better support them.*

When groups of children are experiencing lives that are not as protected and happy as we would want them to be due to a set of common experiences and circumstances, we fail them. One such group of children is 'young carers' who provide significant amounts of care to people in their lives. The kind of care they provide can be physical, emotional and intimate personal care, and/or childcare. It can also include interpreting for a family member who is sick, has a disability, a mental illness, or a substance misuse issue, or be a combination of any or all of these.

In 2020, the Commissioner for Children and Young People published the report *Take Care* to examine what can be done in schools to support children and young people with caring responsibilities at home. The report also has broader relevance for other professionals and helpers who are part of the lives of young people who are also carers.

Many young carers emphasize that their caring role is a positive experience. However, research clearly indicates that, where a young carer is inadequately supported, the physical and mental strain that caring places on their health, wellbeing, and education outcomes is immense. In order to support young carers, we need a better understanding of the life circumstances they face on a daily basis.

While many of life's domains can be affected by caring responsibilities, children and young people invariably told the Commissioner about their experiences at school, describing it as either a sanctuary, or source of major distress. As a sanctuary, school provides a break from home and supports communication with other children and young people, as well as providing some young people with a regular connection to an adult who cares about them. However, the Commissioner has also heard about unsympathetic adults in education settings, and how stigma and shame adds to the pressures some young carers feel in the school environment.

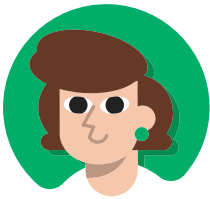
While children and young people can gain life skills that will assist them in the future as a result of their caring roles, their choices and opportunities can also be limited. Young carers talk about feeling sad and worried about what will happen if they don't do the caring, given there is not enough support to help their family member or them. They talk about having less time to engage in age-appropriate activities, friendships, and education opportunities than their peers. For many, this is compounded by the financial hardship that often accompanies chronic illness and disability, particularly as many of the children and young people are living in sole parent families.

Young carers also talk about the difficulty they face leaving the family home, getting a job and having financial independence, or dating and committing to intimate relationships. Young people said that it can be really difficult when they see their peers developing more independence. A number of young adults spoke about the conflict that arises from their parents' fears about their evolving independence.

Young carers also talk about the social stigma and misunderstanding associated with illness and disability across the community and how this isolates them. They talk about not wanting to be different or 'special' and wanting to blend in, and so keep silent and don't tell anyone about their situation. Many have said they don't want to be teased or bullied for being different and some speak about the fear of being taken away, or of their family member getting into trouble.

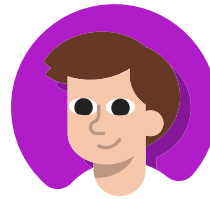
**Find out more in the Commissioner's *Take Care* report at [ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports](https://ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports)**





**Anna (17) lives alone with her mother who has bipolar disorder.** She regularly misses school to stay home with her mother when she is unwell. Anna says that she keeps a close eye on her mother to monitor her highs and lows. Anna also accompanies her mother to her GP appointments and will speak to the doctor if she notices any behavioural changes in her mother.

Recently, Anna had to contact mental health triage and this resulted in her mum being admitted into the psychiatric ward at the hospital. Anna missed a week of school. Anna said she wasn't sure whether this was because she was 'burnt out' from her caring responsibilities or because she is depressed, but she felt no motivation to return to school. Anna said her school doesn't check up on her anymore and she believes this is because they're used to her not attending and have given up on her.



**Toby (16) attended a large secondary school.**

Toby lives with his mother and two younger children. His mother suffers with severe depression, which can see her confined to her bed for 4-5 days at a time.

During this time Toby, along with his grandmother, is responsible for the younger children.

Toby's school provided him with the opportunity to complete his SACE studies flexibly through an Independent Learning Centre, which forms part of his school's Flexible Learning Options program.

This allowed Toby to complete his studies while maintaining his support and caring role for his family.

The school was able to develop a unit of study (workplace practices) to reflect the tasks involved with his caring role, and he was able to gain points towards his SACE.



## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- Considering and being alert to the possibility that a child may be taking on a caring role for other family members, and **asking about the impact on their lives.**
- **Asking children and young people about the supports they have available,** and what would make their life easier.
- Having information available on **young carer supports and referral pathways.**
- Ensuring **supports for young carers are included in material for adult patients** with chronic health conditions who are also parents.



## Regional Kids

*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. By listening to regional young people we can learn what is needed for our regions to support the lives and futures of regional young people.*

During regional visits young people have shared many concerns and issues with the Commissioner which they felt were difficult to raise with adults and leaders in their own local communities. They have told the Commissioner they want more opportunities to be part of solutions, and to influence decisions which impact them directly. They identified a number of critical issues that they feel must be addressed if they are to stay and thrive in their own communities.

Regional young people identified mental health, education, online behaviour, and 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. The Commissioner's *Regenerating our Regions* report (2020) examines each issue in depth, and presents some of the solutions regional young people have proposed to address them.

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

Given concerns about mental, sexual and physical health, it is important that these issues are explored further. Young people told us that there is a need for GPs with more expertise in working with young people. We also heard that they wanted more choice of doctors to enable them to see someone different to their parents. We heard that for specialists, young people often had to travel to the city and this was difficult due to a lack of affordable and accessible transport options. Young people spoke about their concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality in small communities, and the significant impact this had on their sexual health.

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.

Young people 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.

Young people want adults to understand – or try to understand – that it is the impact of the issues they face which is the problem.

Employment and job opportunities was another key issue identified by young people in regional areas. They 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.

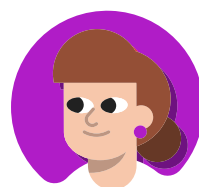
Young people also reported that when a young person does get a job, it is rare for an employer to provide any flexibility. Employers operate from a controlling point of view, continuously emphasising how 'extremely fortunate the young person is to have a job'. Young people want and deserve 'jobs that allow them to also engage in out of school activities' so they can earn, learn and play.

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

Many feel their issues are ignored by adults, that agriculture and the economy dominate, that their hopes, aspirations, passions and challenges are ignored and have no priority.

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'.

**Find out more in the Commissioner's *Regenerating Our Regions* report at [ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports](http://ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports)**



*'They need to change to give a little bit more respect to kids and pay a little more attention. I mean the kids are here to we are not invisible and we need some heads up in life.'*



*'One day I would like to confront the Prime Minister and tell him how people in Australia really feel. And all the things citizens see and want to change.'*



*'Coming from regional SA, we don't have very much exposure to bigger, better opportunities and we have to travel at least seven hours to get to the next major city (Adelaide), which costs a lot of money. So I think we should have more government help to fund learning opportunities...or just in general.'*

## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- Health providers are leaders and role models in the community. Your interactions with young people can help them to feel **heard, respected and understood** and influence their health literacy.
- **Be an advocate** for the needs of young people in the local community and use your networks to ensure they are considered when decisions are being made.
- Be sensitive to difficulties some young people have 'fitting in' and finding a trusted adult to confide in, and consider **extended appointment times or after hours appointments**.
- **Run a forum to hear directly from young people** on gaps and solutions in local health care.
- Have easy to understand **confidentiality policies** displayed in waiting areas that are explained to young people, to increase their comfort in using the services.
- **Review physical space** to assure ability to increase privacy for young people.



## Inclusion and Diversity

*More than perhaps any other generation, today's young people are acutely aware of the diversity of their peers, both in South Australia and around the world. The first truly global generation, children and young people value diversity and place a huge importance on personal identity.*

Inclusion and diversity are two of the main issues of interest SA children and young people have brought up with the Commissioner. Every young person defines inclusion in different ways, but a common thread is that they want the same opportunities as their peers, regardless of their economic or cultural background, their abilities, geographical location, gender, or ethnicity.

They understand that there is no true 'normal Australian', but that instead there are thousands of ways to be a unique and valued member of their community. Kids from migrant and Indigenous backgrounds told the Commissioner that keeping their traditions, languages, and cultures alive was very important to them.

Children and young people called for an Australia that truly reflects the diversity they see around them. They want more multicultural and queer-friendly youth spaces, and they want more diverse representation of society in politics and other leadership roles.

Children want an education system which places a greater emphasis on nurturing their individuality. One that allows them to pursue their own passions, including the delivery of courses that meaningfully tackle identity-based bullying.

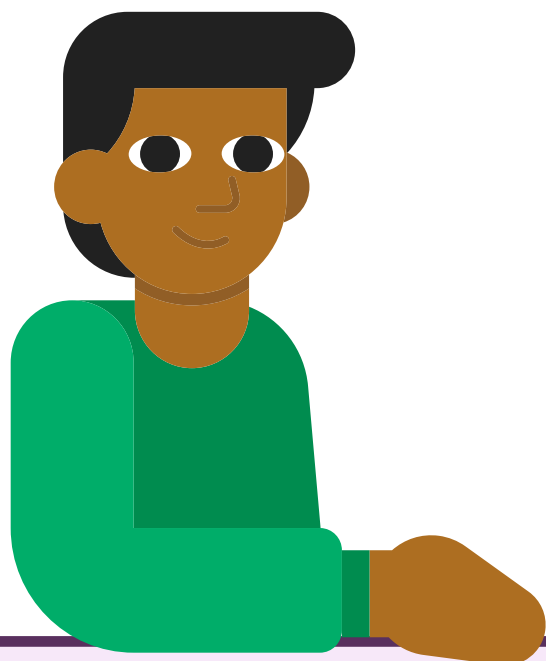
Children and young people want access to education, health care, and youth-centred spaces that are appropriate to them. In SA's regional centres, children and young people feel excluded from educational and job opportunities as a result of their isolation and a lack of well-connected transport options. In metro areas, LGBTQI+ and culturally-diverse young people want more accessible community places and spaces that are designed with their interests in mind. All over South Australia, young people want to feel welcomed in public spaces.

Young people from poorer families tell the Commissioner that higher education and work experience feels inaccessible to them. They are asking for more scholarship opportunities and for the establishment of local universities.

Regional young people would like more wheelchair-accessible buildings and facilities. One child told the Commissioner that they experience isolation because events are usually held at inaccessible locations. Another mentioned that in a town with no wheelchair-friendly buses, they must rely entirely on their carer to transport them to and from social events.

A young queer person in Adelaide said that they felt LGBTQI+ centred spaces were inaccessible to children and young people under the age of 18, because they are usually built around a drinking culture. Ultimately, young people want community spaces made available to them that have the diversity of young people in mind, with accessibility at the forefront of the design.

Young people oppose intolerance or racism they see around them. They are deeply committed to equality, and they're proud of Australia's reputation as a multicultural and inclusive society. Young people, particularly those of migrant and culturally-diverse backgrounds, told the Commissioner that respect and inclusion is very important to them. They want to be acknowledged for their unique experiences. For young Indigenous Australians, racism is a primary concern. They ask for more education and understanding from Australia's non-Indigenous population, and far more action on race-based bullying.



*'Involve all opinions regardless of origin/ethnicity/religion. Make an effort to involve people of greater diversity. Greater emphasis on equality, fair opportunity, inclusivity and acceptance.'*



*'Culture – make me feel like I belong – tradition is important.'*



*'Culture and heritage – the government and the people should start respecting our land and recognising our backgrounds and culture.'*

## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- Thinking about diversity and inclusion in your **interactions** with young people: diversity of race and cultural background, religion, ability, sexual orientation and gender identification. Being alert to identity-based bullying and the harms it can cause.
- Understanding the impact of different **language choices** which may be heard as supportive or excluding, which in turn may impact on patient care.
- Knowing that reflecting aspects of **your own background** and experience that are diverse can have a positive effect and be an example for young people.
- Knowing what **resources and services** you can refer children and young people to in your local area that answer young people's diverse needs and situations.
- **Promoting** inclusive, accessible and welcoming public spaces, work and scholarship opportunities for young people in your community.
- Acknowledging **Aboriginal/First Nations** people.
- Many services have signs up indicating that rudeness or violence towards staff is not acceptable. Signage and guidelines can also reflect **values and behaviour standards** more broadly.
- Recognising **special days and religious observances** across cultures, and showing respect for other cultures in day-to-day decisions and practice.



## Gaming

*Gaming and esports are gaining in popularity, and are clearly very important to many young people. We need to make the effort to understand what young people are playing, and encourage a healthy relationship with gaming and esports. We also need to take an inclusive view when developing services and initiatives that connect to the diversity of young people, and the diversity of sport and gaming, beyond the traditional.*

Children and young people have told the Commissioner that gaming and esports is an area in which they would like to see more resources provided at the local community level. Young people often speak to her about the value gaming offers them as a 'connector' to their social community, as a confidence building opportunity, and as a way of expressing their creativity.

No longer are gamers content to play on their computers at home. They want to come out into the community and play and/or compete with other gamers in public. Bringing young people together through gaming has benefits for young people of diverse abilities, genders and backgrounds.

For many young people, gaming is a way to build self-confidence, form friendships and connect with their peers and networks. It is increasingly becoming a mobile activity that is more public than private. Augmented reality games, for example, now invite players to find reference points using their mobile phones outside.

Just as with traditional sporting activities, competition gaming has a role for competitors, organisers, promoters, communicators and audiences. And like other community clubs, at their core is community spirit, having fun, improving skill development and achieving recognition.

The most dedicated gamers see potential for a future career in gaming, with prize money available in esports that is already considerable, and increasing year on year. These gamers wish to pursue esports in the same way those who are interested in soccer, tennis or football pursue professional careers.

It is becoming increasingly clear that esports and gaming offers future employment opportunities not just for professional players, but also for those interested to become game developers, sound engineers, broadcasters, commentators, referees and competition organisers and promoters, to name a few of the roles this burgeoning industry is creating.

SuperData, a gaming and technology research firm, estimated that ads and worldwide direct consumer spending on game video content would reach \$4.6 billion. Here in South Australia, a staggering 98% of households have computer games, and it's a similar picture right across Australia. In fact, more people are watching online video game play than major cable networks and subscription entertainment services, with an estimated 380 million viewers worldwide tuning in on DIY platforms such as YouTube Gaming and Amazon's Twitch. These figures put gaming at the heart of the entertainment business.

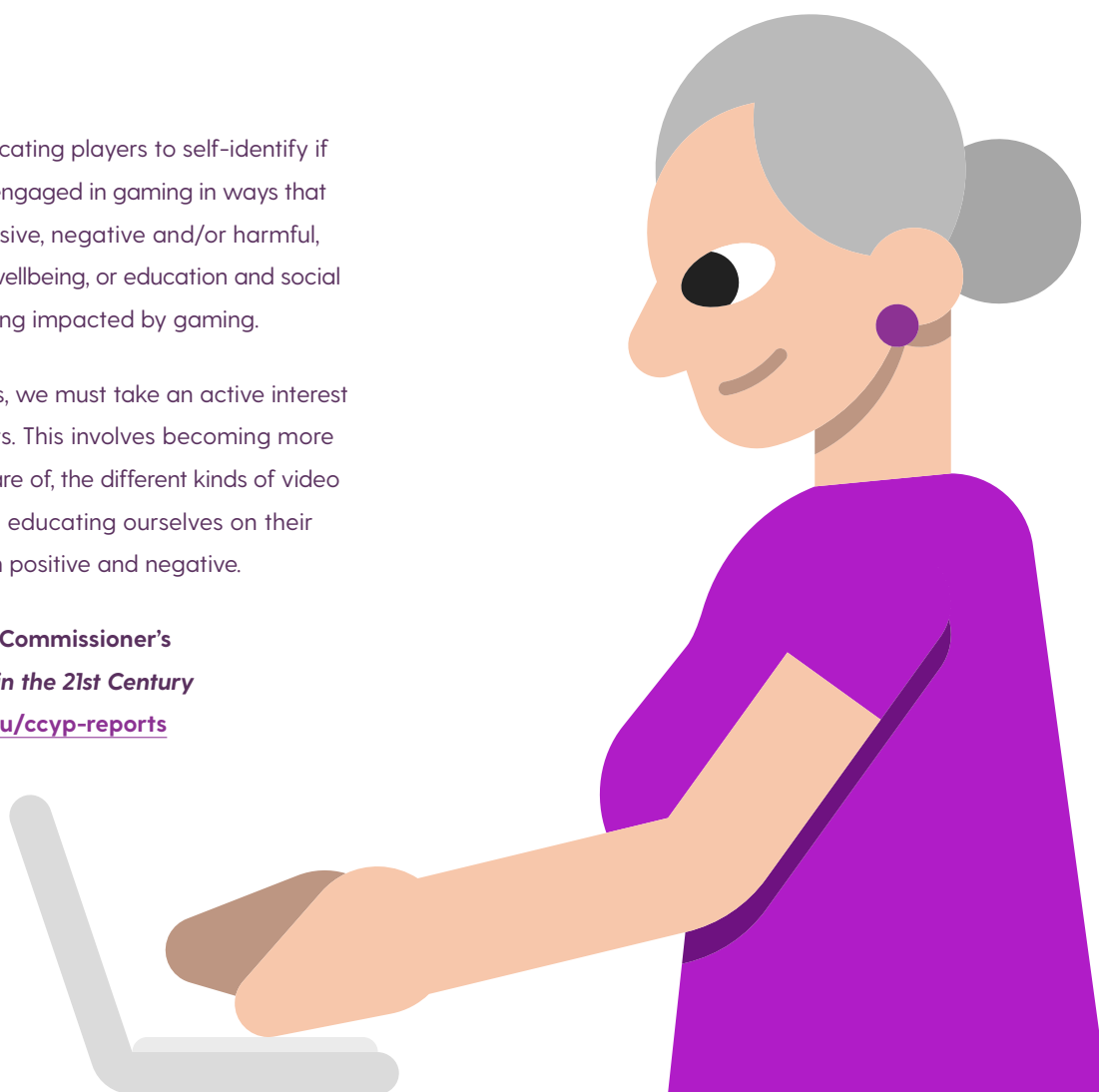
The research community is divided on the impacts of video games on young people and the possible link between exposure to games translating to violent behaviours. There are, however, real concerns regarding addiction to gaming, or gaming that blurs the lines between online and offline realities, and socially aggressive online behaviours. Others have concerns about particular game narratives or poor gaming experience, including being trolled, bullied or vilified by peers.

Like other activities that young people engage with, adults must consider the associated risks, discuss these with players, and develop risk management approaches. This may require adults to take precautionary steps, including taking an interest in who and what children and young people are engaging with online, noticing negative behaviours that appear to be linked to online gaming, and ensuring young people know where to seek support.

This also includes educating players to self-identify if they find themselves engaged in gaming in ways that have become aggressive, negative and/or harmful, or if their health and wellbeing, or education and social commitments, are being impacted by gaming.

As community leaders, we must take an active interest in gaming and esports. This involves becoming more familiar with, and aware of, the different kinds of video games available, and educating ourselves on their potential impact, both positive and negative.

Find out more in the Commissioner's *Community Building in the 21st Century* report at [ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports](http://ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports)



## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- Considering **using children and young people's interest in gaming**, where relevant, as an option to engage them and build rapport to explore their health concerns.
- Considering **excessive gaming** as a health concern and looking for signs of unhealthy gaming behaviour that may require specialist intervention.
- Taking opportunities, where they may arise, to upskill parents in looking out for the **risks of gambling** in kids' games.
- Becoming familiar with, and aware of, the **different kinds of video games** available, and becoming more informed on their potential impact, both positive and negative.
- Being informed on the **value and role of gaming** beyond entertainment in young people's lives, and being open to the positive as well as negative impacts.
- Considering having **gaming magazines** among other reading material available in waiting areas to help alleviate anxiety.
- Having **self-help material** available for parents to support their children in dealing with potential video game addiction.



## Transport

*Transport is critical to young people's ability to engage in school, work, sport and other interests, but more could be done to support young people's access to affordable and accessible transport options.*

The ability to travel independently through public transport, or a driver's licence, is important to children and young people. In particular, public transport is a subject that unites children and young people across both metropolitan Adelaide and regional SA.

Public transport availability and affordability underpins children and young peoples' capacity and ability to engage with school, employment, sport, interests and recreation, as well as impacting on their access to health services, especially independently. When transport is lacking, unreliable, unsafe or unaffordable, it has a disproportionate impact on young people's lives.

A number of children and young people have spoken to the Commissioner about their experiences on public transport. They have said that they feel unsafe and unwelcome. Many have said that, at times, if they have forgotten their student identity cards or haven't got enough money for a fare, but really need to get home, they feel that the transport system is 'cruel' and 'unkind' and wants to punish them rather than be supportive.

Once they are old enough to drive, a driver's licence can be very important for young people, who see it as a mark of independence. The ability to drive opens up access to services, jobs, and socialising. However, many young people face various barriers to obtaining their Provisional licence under strict state laws, which require 75 hours of practice time logged during the Learner's phase.

Young people in regional areas, where driving is the most necessary, have the most trouble finding an instructor or other adult able to supervise their practice. So too do young people with working parents. Some young people said that due to difficulties with obtaining a car licence, they instead opt for the less-safe motorbike licence.

Teens suggested that a service of some kind could connect older people willing to help young people get their license with new drivers. Others called for the fees (currently \$67 for a 24 month Learner's permit first issue and \$161/\$90.50 (concession) for a 3 year provisional drivers licence first issue) to be lowered, so that poorer teens are able to get their licences too.

Young people are also concerned about the safety and accessibility of transport options. Some feel that a lack of consistent and well-connected public transport options constrains their ability to get around without a car. Teenagers who are too young, or unable to drive for other reasons, are forced to rely on their parents or guardians as chaperones. Others feel that public transport is too expensive.

Particularly in the regions, many feel that the lack of metropolitan systems connecting the regions to each other, and to the metropolitan Adelaide area, keep them from seeing family and friends and accessing jobs and educational opportunities. A similar feeling comes from young people in Gawler, the Hills, and outer suburbs.

A common refrain is to make transport cheaper or free. Some suggest this be for all children under a certain age, others for all students. Some simply told the Commissioner that their only transport options were too much. One child said the only bus out of her town cost \$7 each trip (over the course of a work-week, going to and from a job could therefore cost \$70).

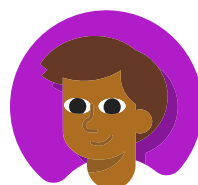




*'I want to pass my driving licence because I love to drive and then my mum & dad won't have to take me everywhere because we live out of town.'*



*'Transportation – a more consistent transportation system so youth and any one for that matter can get to Adelaide or Gawler to shop, work, complete courses, hang out with friends and live, just live!'*



*'Make the transport like flying to be cheaper, to [come] and go from Whyalla, because Whyalla is a beautiful place and we want it to be easily accessible for everyone. I would love to visit my family in Geelong or sister in QLD more but it's too expensive to fly. I would also love to have the opportunity to work somewhere but I have to still wait a couple years.'*

## Things I can do as an adult to make a difference to children and young people's wellbeing

- **Knowing and understanding** the significance of independent and accessible transport for young people. Thinking about transport questions when making referrals and service recommendations.
- **Including transport information** for young people attending your practice or health service (such as bus stop information/routes on the practice website, and parking information).