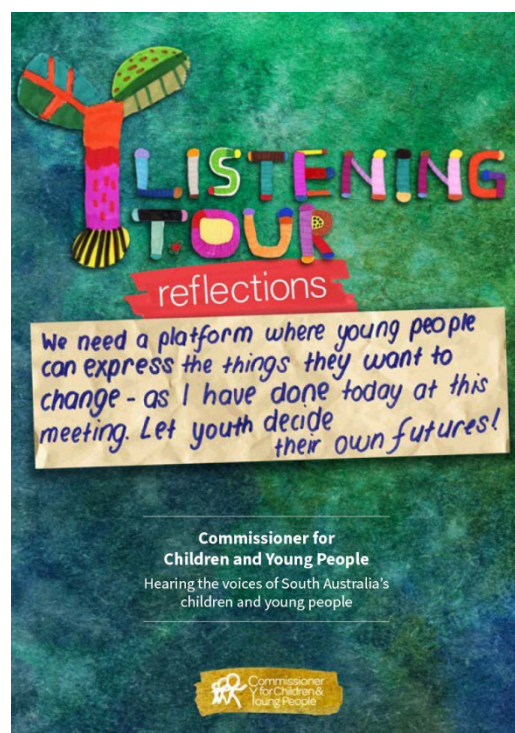


### Report Overview:

In 2017, the Commissioner undertook a listening tour of South Australia to meet, discuss and build relationships with children, young people, community service agencies, schools, preschools, child care centres, hospitals, libraries, places of worship and clubs. The aim of the tour was to find out what matters most to children and young people throughout South Australia and how their lives can be improved. This included finding out what they wanted their newly appointed Commissioner to advocate for on their behalf, and to let children and young know she is committed to having their voices heard and their experiences conveyed to those who make decisions about the services and supports they receive, and to ensure their rights are being upheld while being guided by and accountable to the children and young people of South Australia.



*"I am committed to continuing to engage, consult and collaborate with children and young people, and to work with other child advocates to represent their views and interests in the public arena."*

Commissioner for SA Children and Young People, Helen Connolly

### Methodology:

The consultations were undertaken over a period of three and half months (June/July/August 2017) via face-to-face conversations with 1,419 South Australian children and young people aged 2 – 25 years from a diversity of backgrounds and socio-economic situations. Of these 94 were one-on-one consultations and 78 were small group consultations. The views of children and young people participating were recorded in various ways and through a variety of engagement methods, including drawings and simple questionnaire's, with a focus was on being respectful, safe, inclusive and engaging at all times; ie drawing upon the principles of child-safe environments and raising awareness of the Commissioner's role amongst SA children and young people including how they can find out about and engage further with her work. The conversations and interactions with were built on principles gathered from a range of theories and modalities, such as social group work, strengths-based approaches and narrative techniques, with hosts providing invaluable assistance and insight that helped to facilitate each of the sessions.

Activities and materials were chosen for their engaging, fun, interactive and nonconfrontational qualities. They were also designed to be inclusive – taking into consideration age, communication needs, literacy levels and sensory needs. Cultural considerations were also a factor and these were often guided by hosts. Names were not recorded but children were asked to write their age next to their comments.

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The written reports and direct quotes for each of the 94 consultations of the Listening Tour were uploaded to secure, cloud based, qualitative research software called Dedoose. With this data, themes were identified and coded, creating a repository of the views and aspirations of the children and young people to be used to inform further work conducted by the Commission.

The tour visited remote and regional South Australia – Mount Gambier, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Port Lincoln, the Fleurieu Peninsula, and the Adelaide Plains and the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands where the Commissioner visited Pipalyatjara, Murputja, Amata, Pukatja/ Ernabella, Kenmore Park, Fregon, Mimili, Indulkana and Umuwa communities with the Minister for Education at the time, Susan Close MP.

## Findings:

- 403,337 children aged 0 to 18 years in SA in 2017
- 91,591 live outside of Adelaide
- 24,009 are from cultural or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- 17,048 identify as ATSI.

Majority are doing okay. Some have differing abilities. Some have complex communication needs. Some are doing it tough or are considered vulnerable.

### What's important to children and young people in SA?

1. School, education and learning
2. Family
3. Activities
4. Meeting places
5. Opportunities
6. Jobs
7. Friends

### What would you change in SA to make life better?

1. More opportunities
2. More positive relationships
3. Prioritising mental health
4. Equality
5. More help in planning for the future

### What should the Commissioner do to help make life better for South Australian children and young people?

1. Keep listening to kids
2. Help poor kids
3. Make sure everyone gets an education
4. Help stop bullying and cyberbullying
5. Create more opportunities for kids to make decisions, know about jobs, and be involved in their education, sport and other activities

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## Summary of Recommendations/Conclusions:

**There were no direct recommendations made, however, there were conclusions relating to key findings and key learnings recorded as follows:**

### **Key findings:**

- SA children and young people do have views, opinions, ideas, and solutions
- They are passionate, involved citizens with a global view, and want to participate in the decisions that impact on them and others, today and in the future.

### **Key learnings:**

- They are not used to be asked what is important to them
- “Consultation” doesn’t capture the interactive nature
- Hosts are essential to creating safe, support environments
- Good intentions can stifle young people
- More work is needed for all-inclusive participation

## Next Steps:

The children and young people of South Australia told their Commissioner what their priorities for action are, along with what expectations they have of her advocacy role. An action plan that takes their lead and works with children and young people and the broader South Australian community to realise their aspirations was developed from the listening tour. (See Front and Centre Strategic Plan).