



Submission on the Local Government Participation and Elections Review

March 2024



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Introduction

As South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, I welcome the opportunity to provide a submission to the Local Government Participation and Elections Review (the Review).

My mandate is to promote and advocate at a systemic level for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all children and young people in South Australia. This includes ensuring South Australia meets its obligations in relation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Local councils play a critical role in realising children and young people's rights. Councils plan and provide for many services, facilities and spaces that shape community wellbeing and participation, including libraries, parks, and play and recreation facilities. Council decisions have a significant impact on children and young people's lives.

Children and young people under 18 years old make up 21% of South Australia's total population.¹ They are citizens and contributors with unique experiences, perspectives and knowledge about what makes spaces and communities inclusive, safe, fun and connected. However, children and young people have limited opportunities to shape the communities they live in, and their contributions are rarely regarded as equal to those of adults. Many children and young people want adults and institutions to show them greater respect, take their views seriously and act upon their perspectives and ideas.

Summary of recommendations

This submission draws on my extensive engagement with tens of thousands of children and young people across metropolitan and regional South Australia since 2017. I regularly gather insights from children and young people about what is important to them.

This includes engagement with my Advisory Council and state-wide Student Representative Council (SA SRC), as well as insights from children aged 8 to 12 years old as part of my annual Student Voice Postcards initiative. Excerpts of children's postcard responses and drawings are used throughout this submission, highlighting that young South Australians have valuable insights and want to have more of a say in shaping their communities. The excerpts are representative of more than 60,000 Student Voice postcards I have received from 8- to 12-year-olds across the state since 2019.

Building on the success of my Student Voice postcards, I launched an Early Years Postcards initiative in 2023 to engage with preschool-age children. In 2023, I asked children to draw a picture of their favourite place and tell me why it's special. The responses from children aged 2 to 5 years old demonstrate the importance of the facilities and services local councils provide in young children's lives, particularly parks, play spaces and libraries.

The Review is an opportunity to ensure local councils recognise children and young people of all ages as active citizens who have a right to have input into decisions that impact their lives. Without clear standards to guide and monitor the way local councils engage with children and young people, there is considerable variation across South

Australia's 68 councils in terms of child-friendly and youth-friendly engagement and practices.

Democracy works best when people of all ages and backgrounds actively engage with and participate in decision-making. Where this is not happening, this reflects how our political and education systems, institutions and processes are falling short in realising children and young people's rights.

Despite increasing investment in promoting elections to increase voter turnout and encourage nominations, there has been consistently low engagement with council elections across all age groups over recent years. This suggests that the focus of our investment needs to change if we are to address the key issues raised in the Discussion Paper. In particular, we must invest in ensuring children and young people of all ages experience real participation and inclusion in their everyday lives.

In light of the above, I recommend that the Review:

1. Establish mechanisms for children and young people of all ages to participate in their local communities as active citizens, with particular regard to:
 - a. The rights and active citizenship of children from birth to 12 years old.
 - b. Meaningful models of youth engagement and participation that are diverse and representative, have influence and deliver real change.
2. Lower the voting age to 16 years old for local government elections.
3. Engage with young people directly to better respond to their views and experiences, including in relation to:
 - a. Enrolment and voting.
 - b. The experiences of young candidates, including the barriers they face and the support they need.
4. Improve the provision of comprehensive civics and citizenship education and embed democratic principles and practices into schools.

I would be happy to further assist you as the Review progresses, particularly to ensure children and young people have opportunities to be heard. High school students from across South Australia who are members of my SA SRC are working on a campaign to lower the voting age for local council elections. They can provide further insights about the voting age and how local councils can better engage with young people. I encourage you to contact my office to discuss connecting with them.

Yours sincerely



Helen Connolly
Commissioner for Children and Young People
Adelaide, South Australia

1. Establish mechanisms for children and young people of all ages to participate in their local communities as active citizens, with particular regard to:
 - a. The rights and active citizenship of children from birth to 12 years old.

While many councils in South Australia have a focus on youth programs and advisory groups for 12 to 25 year olds, there are very few mechanisms for councils to engage with children under 12 years old. Currently, local government tends to provide for children in terms of services rather than engaging them as active citizens. Young children are too often seen as future citizens rather than current citizens.

I recommend that the Review consider how councils can better engage with children and young people of all ages as part of their core business, with a particular focus on children under 12 years old. This means considering changes to institutions, policies and processes to view children and young people as active citizens from birth and facilitating opportunities for children to inform decision-making as critical stakeholders from a young age.

This is consistent with Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) that sets out every child's right to express their views and for their views to be taken seriously, regardless of their age. This is also consistent with the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education, which recognises children as 'social actors and agents rather than passive and vulnerable recipients of interventions'.² Reggio Emilia also has a strong focus on young children being an important part of their local communities, where their participation is valued.

Children can meaningfully participate and express their views on issues affecting them to inform policy when provided with the opportunity. Children have valuable insights about the programs, facilities and services that local councils provide. This includes the design of public spaces, parks and playgrounds, and the importance of bike tracks and jumps, libraries, active transport and road safety, waste management and litter. Children want to have more of a say in decision making, and for their right to be heard to be upheld by all levels of government, and in their schools and communities.

SA would be better for kids if...

they could help with decisions like what kind of playground would be good or places fun and not too expensive to go.

SA would be better for kids if... There was more places to Ride Your Bike, Scooter, Skate Board, Hover Board.

SA would be better for kids if... There were more wheelchair ability play grounds.

There is a growing body of research exploring effective engagement with young children as active citizens in collective decision making, including how local governments can support the participation of children under 5 years old outside of formal early learning settings.³ When children are included in decision making, there are many different benefits for individuals and communities. Building a culture where children are respected and valued has the potential to:

- Lead to better and more cost-effective decisions that are informed by the views and experiences of those who are affected the most.
- Improve quality of life for children and families by revitalising communities, promoting health and wellbeing, and addressing social exclusion, discrimination and inequity.
- Build trust and respect between different generations and between people and institutions.

Local government legislation as a whole, and the proposed Community Engagement Charter in particular, should:

- Be consistent with the UNCRC and recognise the rights of children of all ages.
- Involve young children as active citizens in their local government area.
- Provide the foundation for consistent child- and youth-friendly engagement, including through setting standards and targets and establishing requirements and monitoring mechanisms.
- Be prescriptive enough to spark shifts in how councils view and engage with children while also being flexible to be adapted to the needs of local communities, places and contexts.





Some local councils in South Australia and other jurisdictions are already successfully embedding child-friendly principles into practice. Campbelltown City Council, for example, appears to be an exception in South Australia in terms of recognising children and young people as active citizens in policy and planning with a focus on children's active participation, belonging, outdoor play, safety, education and health. Child Friendly Campbelltown was recognised by UNICEF Australia as a Child Friendly City in 2015.

Campbelltown City Council is currently seeking feedback on a draft Children's Plan 2024-2026 based around the themes of connections, play, neighbourhood and kid's ideas and voices. Campbelltown's broader Community Plan 2024 also includes commitments to:

- Continue Child Friendly Campbelltown's 'children's voices' goal in playground redevelopment consultations.
- Review Council's open and recreation spaces with a child-friendly lens including children's reviews.
- Review Council's built environment with a child-friendly lens.
- Facilitate an annual children's forum and an annual youth forum.
- Develop an easy read document for 'how to participate in Council decisions'.⁴

The Review should amend legislation so that child-friendly practice is the norm across all local councils rather than the exception. To guide consistent good practice, there is an opportunity to consider establishing a Child Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC) Charter for South Australia, similar to Victoria's CFCC Charter.

Victoria's Charter sets out principles underpinning actions that support communities to be child friendly, and guides organisations and individuals to 'improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of initiatives that support children to participate in civic life', 'amplify the

voice of the child in decision-making forums' and 'uplift Child Safety and Child Friendly organisational culture'.⁵ The Victorian Local Governance Association supports the CFCC movement across the state through the CFCC Advisory Group Network Meetings for organisations to share what they are doing and collaborate to embed the CFCC Charter in practice.

A range of online resources provide guidance on engaging with children as active citizens and building child friendly cities and communities as part of the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities Initiative.⁶ The Child Friendly Cities & Communities programme has produced a [child rights impact assessment \(CRI\) template](#), with accompanying [guidance and advice](#), specifically for local government and partners. I encourage you to use these resources and case studies to inform consistent child-friendly practice in South Australia.

 SA would be better for kids if...
it was safer for kids to go to public places alone.

 SA would be better for kids if...
it had more public child-friendly facilities.



 SA would be better for kids if... The roads were more safe so kid's could cross without an adult.

SA would be better for kids if...
there should be more skateparks and libraries there should be more books.

 SA would be better for kids if...
there were more places to grow community gardens

- b. Meaningful models of youth engagement and participation that are diverse and representative, have influence and deliver real change.

Many but not all South Australian councils have a youth advisory council or committee, usually open for young people aged 12 to 25 to apply to be involved. These existing models of youth participation can provide useful insights into young people's priorities and experiences. However, they can vary across councils in terms of scope and influence, and they tend to engage those who are already engaged.

Adults often view the small number of young people who are given a seat at the table as the best and brightest and there is a perception that these young people have in some way earned their place. These formal structures are not necessarily attractive to most young people, in much the same way as they are not attractive to many adults. This doesn't mean young people don't want a chance to influence policy. It is more about these formal structures replicating the very structures where they do not see themselves represented, such as parliament and local councils.

While youth advisory groups and Youth Parliaments provide young people with opportunities to engage with and learn about democracy, they remain 'far too conventional to spark the type of fundamental shift that needs to occur to empower young people to shape and change our democracy to fit their needs'.⁷

Young people want to be informed, involved and empowered in decision making. Yet they are frequently excluded from policy discussions across a range of areas affecting their lives. The processes that local and state governments currently use to seek feedback from the community, including calls for formal submissions via Yoursay, are inaccessible to most young people. Many young people describe how leaders and decision makers dismiss their views or life experiences. They are frustrated with the limited action being taken to address many of the issues they see as critical to the wellbeing of their generation and future generations. These systemic barriers to youth participation are explored further in my 2023 [Issue Brief on Barriers to civic participation for children and young people](#).

"The government & world leaders hold our future, yet exclude us from shaping it. If we are to trust others, they should trust us and include us in what may very well shape our lives. Trust is a two-way street."
- 14 year old

We need to create a culture and environment where young people are trusted and heard as active citizens in the present rather than as 'future' citizens or leaders. We need to support adult leaders and decisionmakers to provide allyship and create space for young people to have genuine impact and influence.

The Review is an opportunity to explore different ways of increasing young people's participation in policy and decision making that are meaningful and:

- Have scale and are truly diverse, representative and go beyond the 'usual suspects' to include those who may generally be excluded from decision making or leadership programs.

- Are empowered to seek out legitimate democratically informed mandates from other young people. This includes through direct elections, which will help shift our culture towards voting and deliberative democracy.
- Are youth-led, linked to resources and adult allies for young people to articulate and pursue their own agenda, and able to exert political influence to achieve substantive change.⁸

Young Mayors programs are one model that should be given serious consideration in South Australia. Young Mayors programs are currently operating in Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales as part of a pilot program led by the Foundation for Young Australians in partnership with local councils and the University of Melbourne Centre for Cities and with guidance from Victoria and Queensland's electoral commissions. The program goes beyond providing young people 'a voice' and provides a platform to take action through training, mentoring and workshops, and funding to run local campaigns and projects.⁹

Young Mayors programs are democratically elected youth councils of 11- to 17-year-olds. They provide all young people in a community a chance to vote for other young people they want to represent them through direct elections. Elected Youth Council members are required to regularly consult with their constituents to make sure a diversity of views are heard. Emerging research from the United Kingdom highlights the following 'key ingredients' for a successful Young Mayors program:

- Opportunities to oversee and administer a budget or portion of a budget through participatory budgeting processes.
- Investment and support from local council staff members and elected members.
- Dedicated staff member to organise and support elected youth.
- Formalised and local democratic election process.
- Structures to continue consulting with the wider youth community.
- Access to meeting spaces and equipment.¹⁰

I wish grownups would... Respect children because we are all human beings.

SA would be better for kids if... the adults listen to us and take us seriously.

2. Lower the voting age to 16 years old for local government elections.

I recommend that local government legislation is amended to lower the voting age to 16 years old. While 16- and 17-year-olds should have the opportunity to vote in all elections, local government elections are a sensible place to start this reform. There is already a supplementary roll for council elections that allows residents and non-Australian citizens to vote if they have lived at a residential address for more than one month. Extending voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds will make democracy fairer, recognise young people's rights and strengthen young people's participation in issues affecting them.

I recognise and commend the youth-led Make it 16 campaign, which has been advocating nationally for Australia to join many countries around the world who have already lowered the voting age to 16.¹¹ This year's South Australian Student Representative Council (SA SRC) is working on a campaign to lower the local government voting age in South Australia. SA SRC members are currently surveying their peers about the local government voting age and these results will form the basis of their campaign strategy.

The voting age and other eligibility requirements have frequently changed throughout history.¹² Legislation should evolve to reflect the roles, responsibilities and expectations of young people today. At 16, young people can leave school, get a driver's license, get their own Medicare card, live independently and apply to join the defence force. The age of sexual consent is 17 in South Australian law (16 in most other Australian jurisdictions). Many young people work and pay taxes. Young people also contribute to social, cultural and economic life as volunteers, creators, consumers and citizens. They should therefore also be given the right to vote.

Arguments against lowering the age tend to rely more on prejudice and stereotypes than empirical evidence.¹³ Such arguments tend to imply that voting requires a certain level of knowledge, maturity and judgment, but such a standard is rarely applied to people 18 and over.

Lowering the voting age is an opportunity to strengthen civic engagement and better educate and enfranchise voters of all ages and future generations. It has the potential to encourage conversations about politics earlier in young people's lives, allowing greater opportunities to develop an understanding of and interest in democratic systems and processes from a young age.

Voting is a habit and there is evidence to suggest that 16 is a better age than 18 to first establish this habit.¹⁴ This is also an age where many young people are still at school. Schools can play a critical role in supporting young people to learn about local government processes and voting, including through comprehensive civics and citizenship education (see Recommendation 4).

Alongside lowering the voting age, there should also be more emphasis on how to make voting meaningful and helping young people feel confident and prepared to vote, including through engaging with young people directly about their views and experiences (see Recommendation 3).

Earlier enfranchisement is only one of many important steps towards a more inclusive democracy. Engagement with democracy should be understood as a range of

experiences that lead to rather than begin with the act of voting. Our current system does not take the political interests of children and young people who are under the voting age seriously. This needs to change, whether the voting age is lowered to 16 or remains 18.

As highlighted in Recommendation 1, we need to consider how to engage people of all ages and ensure children and young people experience participation and inclusion in their daily lives and in all interactions with all systems and services from a young age. Building trust in institutions and processes in this way is likely to help address the problems underlying ‘youth disengagement’ and low electoral participation.

“Voting laws – bring the age to vote down. But before this is done, people need to be educated on the political topics they will be voting about.”
- 15 year old

SA would be better for kids if...

We could vote in election days and if there were more activities for us to do.

3. Engage with young people directly to better respond to their views and experiences, including in relation to:
 - a. Enrolment and voting.

As noted in the Discussion Paper, low participation in local council elections is an issue for all age groups. Yet young people aged 18 to 24 years old are least likely to be enrolled. Data as at 30 September 2023 show that the total enrolment rate for all age groups is 97.3%, but only 76.4% for 18 year olds and 90.2% for 18-24 year olds.¹⁵

This should not necessarily be surprising, given that many young people describe how it can be difficult to ‘care about politics and voting’ when adults or institutions do not seem to respect their views or experiences. It does not seem reasonable to expect young people to enrol and vote without ensuring our systems and institutions are actively including, empowering and building trust with children and young people from a young age.

That said, young people’s disenfranchisement with traditional methods of civic participation should not necessarily be interpreted as disengagement from politics as a whole. Young people in the twenty-first century are engaged in many forms of civic and political participation beyond those that are institutional and traditional.¹⁶ This only underscores the importance of engaging with young people directly to better recognise and understand shifting citizenship norms and practices.

The Review should engage with young people directly to understand their perceptions and experiences, and seek to address the practical, cultural and attitudinal barriers to enrolment and voting in a way that meets young people's needs. This could include involving young people in reviewing the information that is currently publicly available regarding enrolment and voting for first time voters, which tends to be complex and confusing.¹⁷ There should be opportunities for young people to provide feedback on what they want to know, how this could be clearly communicated, and where this should be distributed to reach people their age.

Young people identify a range of barriers to enrolment and voting, including a lack of education and information about our political systems, electoral processes and why voting is important, as well as feeling excluded from decision-making, inaccessible places to vote, and family attitudes.

They also have a range of ideas about what adults and institutions need to do differently to support them to enrol and to feel prepared and confident to vote. They seek more targeted, practical and age-appropriate information and highlight the need for information to reach young people through the school education system and through both traditional and social media platforms.

Children and young people highlight the important role of schools in providing them with critical information and opportunities to enrol. Schools should be supported to assist young people to provisionally enrol as soon as they are eligible.

Another way to make it easier for young people to enrol is to allow people to enrol up to and on polling day, in line with recommendations from the Electoral Commission South Australia and practice in other jurisdictions. This is explored further in my [Submission on the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021](#).

“A lack of knowledge about the workings of our political system and a lack of knowledge about the candidates and parties values causes many young people to feel disengaged in politics”

– 17 year old

“Better education for teens leading up to the coming of age and being able to vote”

- 14 year old

“Having it [enrolment] open for a period of time closer to the election
Get kids to enrol at school when they turn 16”

- 17 year old

- b. The experiences of young candidates, including the barriers they face and the support they need.

In order to support young candidates and increase the representation of young people on local councils in the future, I recommend that the Office for Local Government engage directly with young candidates to better understand their experiences in past council elections.

One of the ideas raised in the 2019 Local Government reform was to require specific targets for nominations to increase representation of certain groups, including youth.¹⁸ While setting targets is well-intentioned, this alone is unlikely to have a positive impact on encouraging young people to run as a candidate or improve their experiences.

The Review would benefit from finding out more from young people generally why they would or would not run for local council in order to address these barriers. This is particularly important considering the high level of engagement amongst young people in their local communities outside of formal structures.

Consideration could also be given to establishing forums for young people who are thinking about running for council to connect with those who have previously run for council to share information and ideas.

In the lead up to the 2018 local council elections, I surveyed young candidates about their experiences, including key challenges, how they want to be supported, and what advice they would give to other young candidates. Young candidates identified a number of challenges, including:

- Doing everything yourself and managing time between work, study, campaigning, taking part in community meetings and candidate forums.
- Lack of funding and not being able to spend as much as other candidates.
- Interactions with currently elected members.

They were keen to be involved in encouraging more young candidates to run for council in future elections. However, they thought there should be tailored support, information and training available for younger people running for council. This included:

- Tips for campaigning and designing campaign materials, including about door-knocking and flyer distribution.
- Health and wellbeing support to manage stress, conflict and backlash.
- More opportunities to build networks and relationships with fellow councillors, ministers and other leaders.
- Training opportunities related to leadership, finance, strategic planning, time management, communication, and people management.
- Sessions about engaging with other young people in their communities.
- More recognition in the media.

In the lead up to the 2022 local council elections, I brought together young candidates to connect with each other, understand and navigate electoral processes, and to workshop the values, purpose and strengths of their campaigns.

While there is incredible diversity among young candidates, they share the experience of being in a different position to older candidates, including having different motivations, less access to resources, unique challenges and different ideas about how they could have been better supported. Their insights and experiences require particular attention.

“I have a deep sense of community and would love to be able to share that with other young people and encourage them to get involved in their communities.”

– 23-year-old candidate (2018)

“I thought that I could provide a different perspective to the council and a different set of skills that they were lacking. Personally, I was quite lucky that I was able to schedule my work around my campaigning. I think for others, finding the time (outside of school or uni) and funding could be really problematic.”

– 23-year-old candidate (2018)

“Receive information and training that is specific to be a young local leader on council. Covering things such as: - You are only just starting your life and career, however, many of the other councillors are towards the end of theirs, so how should you conduct yourself differently and what should you watch out for to protect your future.”

- 21-year-old candidate (2018)

4. Improve the provision of comprehensive civics and citizenship education and embed democratic principles and practices into schools.

Many young people identify a lack of information and education as a barrier to enrolment and voting. Too many children and young people reach the end of their schooling without learning about human rights or the key systems and democratic processes affecting their lives. This is reflected in the most recent National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship (NAP–CC) results, which show only 53% of Year 6 students and only 38% of Year 10 students across Australia attained the proficient standard for civics and citizenship.¹⁹

Ensuring access to comprehensive civics and citizenship education is a critical part of building children and young people’s understanding, trust and engagement with all levels of government, including local government. This will also give effect to the Mparntwe Education Declaration’s aspiration for all young Australians to be ‘confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed citizens’.²⁰

Democratic ideals and values are not created by osmosis, but rather through learning and practising them. For children and young people to understand the importance of democracy, they need to have opportunities to participate in it. Education settings are

particularly important as a starting point for establishing youth participation and collective decision-making as a norm in the classroom and beyond.

Human rights education, as part of comprehensive civics and citizenship education, extends beyond learning about human rights to include:

- Learning *through* human rights (i.e., developing and experiencing values, attitudes and behaviours that reflect human rights principles);
- Learning *for* human rights (i.e., being empowered as active citizens to advocate for their own rights and the rights for others).²¹

We cannot expect children and young people to be informed about their rights if they are telling us that their rights are not consistently being upheld in their interactions with adults, schools and service systems.

Children and young people often describe a lack of voice, choice and influence they have at school. They want more opportunities to be heard in relation to how they learn, what they learn, where they learn, and the support they need to learn. Embedding democratic principles and processes in the classroom involves students in ‘building a strong classroom community, taking responsibility in cocreating curriculum, and engaging in critical dialogue on issues that impact their lives’.²²

In 2021, I launched [yChange](#), a curriculum-aligned, project-based, action civics resource for primary and secondary educators in South Australia. yChange involves students developing and undertaking a civics action project on an issue that matters to them in their local community. It encourages children and young people to build connections with decision makers across their school and community, including local councils. This is the kind of opportunity that needs to be available to all young people in South Australia, which will provide an important background to their engagement and participation in local government and beyond.

SA would be better for kids if...

People respect children the same as they do adults. As well as that I would like more childrens crossings.

I wish grownups would... let us have more rights and more of a say.

I wish grownups would... realise that I want to be part of the the Action!

- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, National, state and territory population. Estimated Resident Population by Single Year of Age, South Australia.
- ² C Bartholomaeus, C Gregoric, S Krieg, 'Young Children as Active Citizens in Australian Local Government: Possibilities and challenges from an Australian perspective', *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 2016, 48: 79-93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-016-0158-0>.
- ³ K Smith and C Kotsanas, 'Honouring young children's voices to enhance inclusive communities', *Journal of Urbanism*, 2014, 7(2): 187-211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549175.2013.820211>.
- ⁴ Campbelltown City Council, *Community Plan 2024*, accessed 6 March 2024, https://www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0034/862945/Community-Plan-2024.pdf.
- ⁵ *Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter*, Victorian Local Government Association, 2023, accessed 7 March 2023, https://www.vlga.org.au/sites/default/files/CFCC%20Charter_2023_0.pdf.
- ⁶ UNICEF, Child Friendly Cities Initiative website, accessed 6 March 2024, <https://www.childfriendlycities.org/>
- ⁷ Sarah Moulds, *Connected Parliaments: Reimagining Youth Engagement with Parliaments in Australia: Practical Toolkit and Call for Action*, Churchill Fellowship Report, 2023, accessed 19 March 2024, <https://churchilltrust.my.salesforce-sites.com/api/services/apexrest/v1/image/?id=069RF000005woY9YAI&forceDownload=Yes>, p 9.
- ⁸ Sarah Moulds, *Connected Parliaments*, Churchill Fellowship Report, 2023, p 30.
- ⁹ Foundation for Young Australians, Young Mayors, accessed 20 March 2024, <https://www.fya.org.au/program/young-mayors/>.
- ¹⁰ A Leaversley, M Acuto, M Whelan, P Burton, 'Young Mayors Program: Lessons from the United Kingdom', Melbourne Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne, Foundation for Young Australians, 2022, accessed 19 March 2024, <https://www.fya.org.au/app/uploads/2022/04/MC4C-Young-Mayors-Pitch-FOR-DISTRIBUTION.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Make It 16, *Lower the Voting Age: The case for 16 and 17 year olds voting in Australian elections and referendums*, 2023, accessed 19 March 2024, <https://raisely-images.imgix.net/make-it-16/uploads/make-it-16-campaign-policy-brief-digital-compressed-pdf-dca067.pdf>.
- ¹² Parliament of Australia, Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, Advisory report Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Lowering Voting Age and Increasing Voter Participation) Bill 2018, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Electoral_Matters/VotingAge/Advisory_report/section?id=committees%2Freportjnt%2F024195%2F26301.
- ¹³ Judith Bessant et al, Submission to the Inquiry into the Electoral Amendment Bill 2021 by the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety Committee in the Legislative Assembly, Australian Capital Territory, https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1942777/Submission-06-Professor-Judith-Bessant-and-29-others.pdf.
- ¹⁴ Generation Citizen, Young voters at the ballot Box: Amplifying Youth Activism to Lower the Voting Age in 2020 and Beyond A White Paper from Generation Citizen, 2021, <https://vote16usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020-Vote16USA-White-Paper-v2.10.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Electoral Commission South Australia, Quarterly enrolment by age group and population, 2023, accessed 6 March 2024, <https://www.ecsa.sa.gov.au/enrolment/enrolment-statistics?view=article&id=875:archive-quarterly-enrolment-by-age-group-and-population&catid=8:enrolment>.
- ¹⁶ Ariadne Vromen and Philippa Collin, 'Everyday youth participation? Contrasting views from Australian policymakers and young people', *Young Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 2010, 18(1):97-112, <https://doi.org/10.1177/110330880901800107>.
- ¹⁷ For example, Local Government Association of South Australia and Electoral Commission South Australia, Council Elections website, 'For first time voters', accessed 21 March 2024, <https://www.councilelections.sa.gov.au/enrol/how-to-enrol>.

¹⁸ South Australian Government, Local Government Reform Program 2019, List of ideas generated from public consultation, <https://www.dit.sa.gov.au/local-government/documents/office-of-local-government/local-gov-reform/local-government-reform-ideas-idea-consultation-summary2.pdf>.

¹⁹ Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, *National Assessment Program – Civics and Citizenship 2019 National Report*, 2020, accessed 5 February 2024, <https://nap.edu.au/docs/default-source/default-document-library/20210121-nap-cc-2019-public-report.pdf>.

²⁰ Department of Education, Skills and Employment, *The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration*, Australian Government, 2019, accessed 16 January 2024, <https://www.education.gov.au/alice-springs-mparntwe-education-declaration>.

²¹ Children’s Commissioner for Wales, *The Right Way: A Children’s Human Rights Approach to Education in Wales*, 2022, https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/TheRightWayEducation_ENG.pdf.

²² Julia Collins, M Hess and C Lowery, ‘Democratic Spaces: How teachers establish and sustain democracy and education in their classrooms’, *Democracy & Education*, 2019, 27(1): 1-12, <https://democracyeducationjournal.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1432&context=home>.