

Welcome to the Commissioner's Face to Face report for 2013–14.

This publication is for you, the children and young people of Western Australia.

This is my first year as Commissioner for Children and Young People, following on from Michelle Scott, who met with many children and young people during her six years in this role.

Your comments, ideas and views are important in helping to make Western Australia a better place for children and young people.

I would like to thank all of you who were involved in an advisory committee, a research project or in talking with me in the last year.

This report outlines what children and young people have told the Commissioner in 2013–14 and what has happened as a result.

I hope that you enjoy this report and I encourage you to continue to speak up and have your say on the issues that concern you.

You can keep up to date on what I am up to through my website at ccyp.wa.gov.au



JENNI PERKINS
Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People



Jenni Perkins with Ryan,
Jackson, Alen and Kaleb (on Bike)
at Stratton Edge.



Youth health

In 2013, we began a project to talk with young people about their views and experiences with health services.

A health service can be a doctor, a school nurse, a hospital or any other person that helps young people stay healthy.

We looked at some services that are already doing a good job at providing a health service to young people and talked with people involved in health about how we could all improve.

You said:

“Be kind and listen to our problem. We may be young but we have a voice too and we would like to voice it to get the help we need.”

“I expect the same level of treatment that my parents get...but more casual.”

“Some understanding of the health system needs to be brought into the school system.”

“Happy is an important part of being healthy.”

My work:

- ⦿ More than 1,000 young people had a say about health services, which was a great result and helped me to get a wide range of views.
- ⦿ I released a report called [Speaking Out About Youth Health](#), which captures the views of the young people consulted.
- ⦿ We developed a [Position Statement on Youth Health](#) which shows where we can improve services for young people to make them more youth-friendly.
- ⦿ Together with the Telethon Kids Institute, I co-hosted a seminar for around 50 people working with young people and health to discuss the next steps for youth health in WA.
- ⦿ The feedback I have had so far from the position statement and seminar tells me that there is support for a number of actions to improve services which I will explore further in the coming year.



Many children and young people told me that exercise and social relationships were important for their health.

Living with disability

It is estimated that 8.3 per cent of Western Australia’s children and young people are living with disability.

In the last year we wanted to provide an opportunity for children and young people with disability to speak about issues that they felt were most important.

You said:

“Those with a disability are not limited, it just opens other doors of unimaginable abilities, talent and potential.”

“Having a disability doesn’t make us weaker it’s just more challenging. We have to be given a chance and not treated like we are dumb.”

“Listen to our stories – there is no such thing as normal.”

“Having a disability affects the whole family. My family get tired and need a break. My needs come first every day because I need so much help.”

My work:

- ⦿ We ran an online survey and had face-to-face consultations with children and young people with disability. There were 233 children and young people with disability who took part in the project, ranging in age from six to 18 years.
- ⦿ We released a document called [Speaking Out About Disability](#) which captures the views of the children and young people consulted.
- ⦿ We ran a seminar encouraging the participation of children and young people with disability in decisions that affect them. This seminar included presentations from two young women with disability.
- ⦿ We presented the findings from our survey to Inclusion WA.
- ⦿ We made a submission to the Disability Discrimination Commissioner at the Australian Human Rights Commission about how people with disability can be better supported by the criminal justice system.

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Isabella, Sue, Sarah and Mary share their thoughts as part of the children and young people with disability consultation project.



Rose and John working on artwork as part of the disability consultation project undertaken this year.

Living in regional and remote Western Australia

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Western Australia is a large state, with more than 150,000 children and young people living in a regional or remote community. While many of the issues raised by children and young people in the regions are similar to those in the city, some experiences and views can be quite different. In the last year there was an opportunity to work with AWESOME Arts to consult children and young people living in regional WA in a fun and innovative way.

You said:

“The community is small, not big enough to be a city ... nice and cozy.”

“(We need) better places for kids to hang out.”

“It’s small, so you don’t have to travel far to see your friends.”

“I don’t want so many people to come to work here because I don’t want (the town) to become a city. There are too many people in cities. I feel like I know everyone here.”

My work:

- AWESOME Arts worked with more than 260 children and young people between the ages of four and 16 across 12 locations in WA. Teams of two artists visited each community for two weeks and worked with local children and young people and some amazing art works were created.
- We released a report called *Speaking Out About Living in Regional and Remote WA* which captures the views of the children and young people consulted.
- I included a regional visit in the 2014 Thinker in Residence program so that Dr Michael Ungar of Canada had the opportunity to meet with and hear from children and young people and those who work with them in regional WA.
- I met with children and young people in Mandurah and Kalgoorlie as part of my regional visit program.
- I appointed Katanning Senior High School students from Years 8 to 12 as one of my advisory committees for 2013 and Mandurah Youth Centre as one of my advisory committees for 2014.



The AWESOME Arts teams worked with children and young people across regional WA.

Photo credit: Jarred Seng.



Kallum of Paraburdoo ‘Maneuvering within the spider web of light’.

Photo credit: Jarred Seng.

Creativity

Perth International Arts Festival

Seven WA schools contributed to the 2014 Perth Festival finale, a symphony called 'Between the Desert and the Deep Blue Sea' (Some of the musical score written by young people for this has been used as the background for this document.)

In the project, students used sounds from their lives to create music that was sent to composer Tod Machover. The names of students who had their music used in the symphony were shown on the video display behind the orchestra when their music was played. Tod Machover acknowledged the excellent contributions of all students, but especially recognised Year 10 student from Woodvale, Heather, whose music was included without any other accompaniment or alteration.

Advisory Committees

In the last year I had the pleasure of working with four Advisory Committees, who reported to me on issues that are important to the children and young people in their communities.

- ⦿ The Sacred Heart Advisory Committee (students from Year 6) made a video on their findings from a consultation with their peers in the community. *"I think that you have to get out there and participate to really be part of the community!" Pascal*
- ⦿ The Y2Y Advisory Committee (young people who were part of a peer support and youth development program for children of parents with mental illness) produced a video to help kids talk about and understand mental illness in the community. *"Just find someone to talk to, because you're not alone." Britlee*
- ⦿ The Katanning Senior High School Advisory Committee (students from years 8 to 12) organised and held workshops with students from neighbouring schools to talk about bullying. *"We all wanted to get out there. See what was happening around us, how people were handling it... We wanted to learn and expand on our knowledge." Report by Sheridan, Ashleigh and Rebecca.*
- ⦿ The Rockingham Advisory Committee (members of the City of Rockingham's Youth Advisory and Junior Councils) ran a series of photography workshops to encourage young people to photograph their favourite and least favourite places in the community. *"I enjoyed listening to everyone's ideas and everyone listening to mine." Rockingham Advisory Committee member*



Inglewood Primary School students who contributed to the 'Between the Desert and the Deep Blue Sea' symphony with teacher Peter Gilchrist at the Perth International Arts Festival.

Our Year In Pictures

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Students from Quinns Baptist College work on their Advisory Committee project.



Alix shares her story as part of the Y2Y Advisory Committee project.



Image by Jess, mentored by Caitlin Worthington, was part of the Home Is Where My Heart Is 2013 exhibition.



Students from the Sacred Heart Primary School Advisory Committee with their feedback for the Commissioner.

Our Year In Pictures



Acting Commissioner Jenni Perkins with students of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community High School.



Thomas and Callum from Churchlands Senior High School performed at a Children's Week seminar.



Boyd and Kain from Katanning talk with former Commissioner Michelle Scott.



Acting Commissioner Jenni Perkins with members of Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club.

