

Welcome to the Commissioner's *Face to Face* report for 2014–15.

This publication is one way in which I report back to the children and young people of Western Australia on what you have told me throughout the year, at meetings, events and through consultations, and what I have done with the information you shared with me.

A record number of WA children and young people were involved in sharing their views with my office this year, and I thank each and every one of you.

Children and young people have a valuable insight into matters that affect them, and it is my role to ensure your voices are heard.

In the coming year I will be working on a number of consultation projects, including speaking with children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, looking into the reasons why school doesn't work for some students and how young people use social media.

I am always interested to hear from children and young people on issues impacting your lives, your ideas and opinions. At the end of this publication you will find information on how you can contact me.

You can keep up-to-date with my work through my website, www.ccyw.gov.au or through Twitter – follow me at [@CCYPWA](https://twitter.com/CCYPWA).



JENNI PERKINS
Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People



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Acting Commissioner for Children
and Young People Western Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people have always taken part in many of my office's consultations, this year I wanted to focus on hearing their specific views on what is important to them, how they see their lives and their hopes for the future.

There are more than 36,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people living in Western Australia and while many are leading happy and healthy lives, some continue to experience disadvantage.

You said:

"My life is about loving my own family members [so] respect others and love one another, be kind to each other and love your family."

"My culture is who I am, it is a part of everything I do. It connects me to my family and makes me unique..."

"If you don't go to school you can't learn stuff to get a job."

"Some Aboriginal kids get a fair go, some don't. What happens to the kids that don't get a fair go?"

"I would make it so that everyone is treated the same and people don't judge us Aboriginals 'cause we have different coloured skin."



Students from Beagle Bay working on song lyrics.



Children creating artwork at Two People's Bay in the Great Southern region.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

My work:

- ⦿ More than 1,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people had their say through 17 face to face consultations and a state-wide online survey.
- ⦿ My office created three publications from the consultation which will be released in August 2015 – a report for Parliament, a community report called *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Speak Out*, and a profile of 12 Aboriginal young people who are working hard to support their community and build a positive future, called *This Is Me*.
- ⦿ I met with Aboriginal children and young people in Geraldton, Northam, Narrogin, Bunbury, Midland and the Kimberley and encouraged them to participate in the online survey.
- ⦿ I released policy briefs on Aboriginal children and young people's education, their health, and regional and remote living.
- ⦿ I attended the launch of the Community Arts Network's Noongar Pop Culture 2 project in Narrogin.
- ⦿ I supported Reconciliation Week through the Street Banner Project in Perth.



In Meekatharra young people shared with the Commissioner what they need to achieve their goals.



Students from the Fremantle area worked on song lyrics, then a local artist helped set these lyrics to music and the students even starred in their own music video!

Creating child-safe organisations

It is important that children and young people feel safe when they are in the care of organisations and when they are part of organised activities outside of the home.

We want to make sure child safety is a priority and that adults listen to children and young people when they are worried or feeling unsafe.

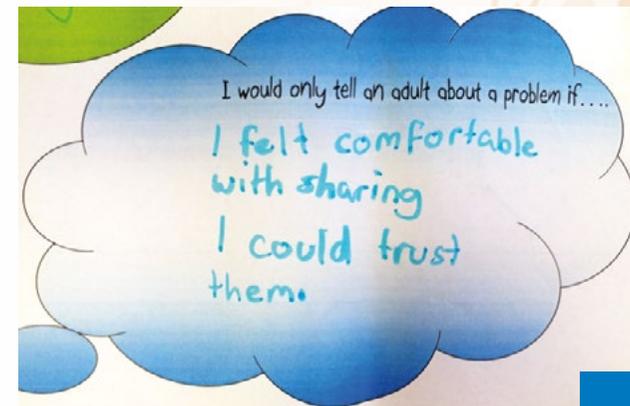
In the last year, I asked 365 children and young people about what a child-safe organisation means to them.

You said:

- “People in charge understanding our special needs.”
- “Is this place going to be fun for kids?”
- “If we get hurt will we be looked after?”
- “I would only go if I went with my friends – not alone.”
- “Knowing everyone will be around your age.”
- “Know who I can talk to if I don’t feel safe.”
- “Understand and listen to what I say and believe me.”



It is important children feel safe when in the care of organisations outside of their home.

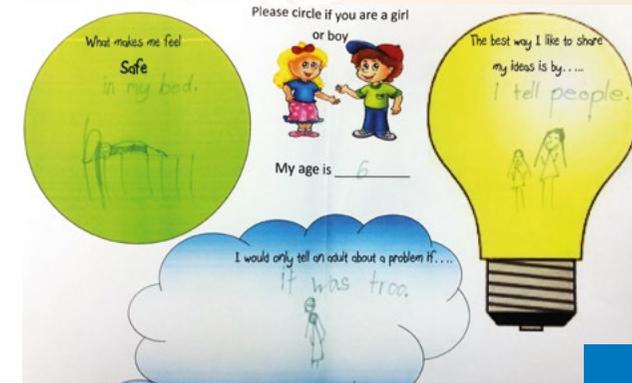


Some of the feedback from children and young people about staying safe.

Creating child-safe organisations

My work:

- ⦿ I formed a Reference Group of people from government and community organisations that work with children and young people to inform me in this project.
- ⦿ I produced a report, [Creating Child-Safe Organisations](#), which describes what children and young people want from organisations to make them feel safe.
- ⦿ I distributed this report widely and encouraged organisations to make changes based on the views of children and young people.
- ⦿ I am continuing to work in this area and will be creating resources for children and families.



One of the responses from children and young people about feeling safe.



Having friends with them was the number one thing that children and young people said made them feel safe when joining activities outside of the home.

Living in regional and remote Western Australia

In the last year I was lucky to be able to visit a number of communities and towns in regional WA, meeting local children and young people, their families and the people who support them.

While growing up in a regional area has many advantages, it is important to make sure that children in these areas have access to the services they need and their views are taken into account.

You said:

The importance of staying in school and the need for young people to get the best access to education that they can was a key theme across all of these communities.

My work:

Fitzroy Valley District High School

- ⦿ The student council presented the findings of their student survey, which outlined their wish for a big playground that included a skate park.
- ⦿ High school students said the things they enjoy about living in Fitzroy Crossing included the river, hunting and fishing, and playing sports such as football and basketball.
- ⦿ They also told me they would like to see less rubbish, more buses, more activities and less children missing school, especially boys.



The Acting Commissioner with Principal Justin Grasso and students from Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School, Bunbury.



Students from Kununurra District High School welcomed the Acting Commissioner to their ANZAC Day service.

Living in regional and remote Western Australia

Newton Moore Senior High School

- ⦿ These students said they love the natural environment around Bunbury, the great weather and beaches.
- ⦿ They suggested more festivals or fun activities specifically for young people, especially in winter, and programs like Bushrangers that help young people to work together and help the community.
- ⦿ In Bunbury and Collie I also visited Wilson Park Primary School and Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School.

Wyndham District High School

- ⦿ The members of the Advisory Committee took me on a town tour – including a stop for a slushy! The Bastion lookout was a favourite place.
- ⦿ The students said they would like to see more community facilities and activities for young people in the Wyndham area.

Kununurra District High School

- ⦿ I enjoyed the ANZAC ceremony organised by the student council.
- ⦿ Students said they enjoyed the unique features and remoteness of living in the Kimberley, including being close to friends and the lack of traffic.
- ⦿ Ideas to improve their town included cleaning up rubbish and graffiti, creating a safe house stocked with food (like a children's refuge), and greater alcohol restrictions.

In the last year I also visited Northam, Narrogin and Geraldton to meet with young people as part of my Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander consultation.

Advisory Committees

It has been a privilege to work with five Advisory Committees over 2014–15. I really enjoyed being able to meet with these students in their classrooms or youth centres and getting to understand what the local issues are. These committees worked with me in 2014:

- ⊙ **The Quinns Baptist College Advisory Committee** presented their 'Us and Our Community' project in the form of a quiz show recorded on DVD. More than 200 local children were surveyed, outlining what they liked best about living in the northern suburbs of Perth. Beaches, walkways and open spaces, as well as sporting facilities and clubs, all featured highly.
- ⊙ **Stratton Edge Advisory Committee** was a group of around 150 young people aged between 12 and 17 who attended the local Stratton Youth Centre. The group held several workshops to complete a mural at their skate park and recorded a short film with stories of local young people. I was really pleased to attend the unveiling of this mural and see the care that had gone into it.
- ⊙ **The City of Mandurah Youth Development Services Advisory Committee** included young people aged between 12 and 17 who attended a drop in centre, drama and boxing programs at their local youth centre. This group surveyed local young people about living in Mandurah.



Students from Quinns Baptist College, who created a quiz show DVD to present their 'Us and Our Community' project findings, with the Acting Commissioner.



Stratton Edge Advisory Committee members Ryan, Jackson, Alen and Kaleb with the Acting Commissioner at the launch of their skate park mural.

Advisory Committees

In 2015, I appointed two Advisory Committees who are working throughout the year on their 'Us and Our Community' projects and providing feedback on some of my other projects:

- ⦿ **The School of Special Needs: Sensory** is a group of 16 high school students from across Perth who are deaf, deafblind, blind or vision impaired. This group is looking at the impact of social media on young people with sensory loss. I have met with this group and am very interested in what their research will discover.
- ⦿ **The Wyndham District High School Student Leadership Team Advisory Committee** includes 10 children from across the junior and senior years. This group is looking at the issue of respect. It was great to hear several members of this group speaking confidently during an interview on ABC radio about their work.



The Acting Commissioner with the Sensory Advisory Committee.



Wyndham Advisory Committee members and teacher Stuey Nelson took the Acting Commissioner and staff member Rene Reddingius to The Bastion lookout.

Our year in pictures



Artwork by Ingrid, aged 12, winner of the Commissioner's Choice Art prize during Children's Week 2014.



The Acting Commissioner at a celebration for Millennium Kids.



Talking with students from Newton Moore Senior High School's leadership team.



Visiting Northam Residential College.



The Acting Commissioner with 2014 WA Young Person of the Year and winner of the Commissioner's Participate Award, Estelle Clarke.

How to contact me

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The imagery used as background for this publication was created by Aboriginal children and young people as part of my state-wide consultation.

