Overview of the School and Learning Consultation

From July to November 2016, the Commissioner for Children and Young People undertook the office's largest consultation to date, the School and Learning Consultation.

The purpose of the School and Learning Consultation was to seek the views of Year 3 to Year 12 students enrolled in government, Catholic and independent schools across WA on the positive and negative factors that influence their engagement in education.

The consultation comprised two components: an individual electronic student survey and group discussions with students facilitated by the Commissioner's staff.

The survey enabled a large number of children and young people to participate in the consultation, with the group discussions enabling children and young people to express more wide-ranging and in-depth views on school and learning.

In total, 1,812 students across 98 schools participated in the survey and 1,174 students participated in the group discussion between July and November 2016. Schools from all nine geographic regions of WA were involved in the consultation.

Participation by students in the consultation was anonymous and voluntary. Active student and parent/guardian consent was required for participation in the consultation.

The survey questions were drawn from the New Zealand Youth 2000 Survey[16] and adapted to the Western Australian context, for a younger cohort of students and for students with disability attending education support centres. Each version of the survey was slightly different meaning that the different cohorts of students were not asked all the same questions.

Both the survey and group discussions were designed to canvas a broad range of factors identified by the literature review as associated with engagement and disengagement including:

• relationships with staff and students
• curriculum content
• safety
• health
• academic achievement
• attendance
• help and support
• pedagogy
• participation in school activities
• family situation and involvement.