



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

COVID-19: As told by WA children and young people

I am feeling



I am staying clean by washing
everyday, before and after eating
Keeping my hygiene up. It's
Very Important during this time.



I am feeling



Although Corona Virus separated
us, we are stronger together.

Recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

The Commissioner for Children and Young People WA acknowledges the unique culture and heritage of our Aboriginal peoples and the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made and continue to make to Western Australian society. For the purposes of this publication, the term 'Aboriginal' is intended to encompass the diverse cultures and identities of the First Peoples of Western Australia and also recognises those of Torres Strait Islander descent who call Western Australia home.

Alternative formats

On request, large print or alternative formats can be obtained from:

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Message from the Commissioner



Over the autumn of 2020, more than 800 WA children and young people shared with me how they were feeling during the COVID-19 pandemic and the many and varied impacts it had on their lives.

This publication captures how they felt impacted and how they coped, in their own words.

Children and young people are well aware of the world around them and absorb information and emotion from media reports, conversations with family and friends, and interactions within the community. The events of early 2020 were no different, when the COVID-19 pandemic raised some of the most significant challenges in recent history across the globe, including here in WA.

The comments that young people sent to me during this time helped my office to understand their experiences, and to shape several resources for parents and carers on how best to support them, and also for decision-makers in governments and communities on how to consider young people in planning WA's recovery phase.

In 2019 I launched my Speaking Out Survey, with almost 5,000 children and young people from across WA participating. As in past consultations, the results showed that the key factors that WA children and young people feel are important to their wellbeing are their family, friends, education, and recreational activities. These contributing factors to children and young people's sense of wellbeing have all been affected in some way during 2020.

The Speaking Out Survey will be conducted again in 2021, and given the timing, will provide a comparison of WA children and young people's wellbeing over this historic period. This comparative data will be important in monitoring for the longer term and ensuring that governments, communities and families can address impacts that arise.

Colin Pettit
Commissioner for Children
and Young People

Thank you to every young person who took the time to share their thoughts. These uncertain times have proved challenging for us all in many differing ways, however I have been impressed with the high level of insight, resilience and gratitude that children and young people have demonstrated throughout.

Overview

The Commissioner regularly hears from children and young people on a range of issues, through consultations, surveys, advisory committees and online platforms.

Recognising the gravity of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts being felt across the community, the Commissioner issued an open invitation for any WA children and young people to write in anonymously to share their views on the impacts they were feeling and what supports were helping them as events unfolded.

Children and young people were encouraged to submit their views through targeted communications by the Commissioner's office. Responses were received in three ways:

- online responses through the Commissioner's website
- DigiMe – an online avatar creator on the Commissioner's website
- 'Keeping safe on country' – hard copy art worksheets for remote communities.

The questions asked through DigiMe and the Commissioner's online email form were changed several times during the pandemic as the situation evolved:

- When you are worried about things, what do you do to stay positive?
- How has your day-to-day life been impacted by the coronavirus and what supports have helped you?
- What impact do you think the coronavirus pandemic will have for you (or your family) in the future?

Over 800 responses were received during March–June 2020 from children and young people across metropolitan, regional and remote areas of WA, ranging in age from 5 to 18 and including young people in contact with the youth justice system, living in care and in remote Aboriginal communities.

Through Playgroup WA and local government early years networks, the Commissioner also invited parents of pre-school age children to share how they felt their child's life had been impacted and some of these responses have also been included in this report.

Several key themes were clear in the responses from children and young people throughout March to June:

Mental health

Education

Connection to friends

Family relationships

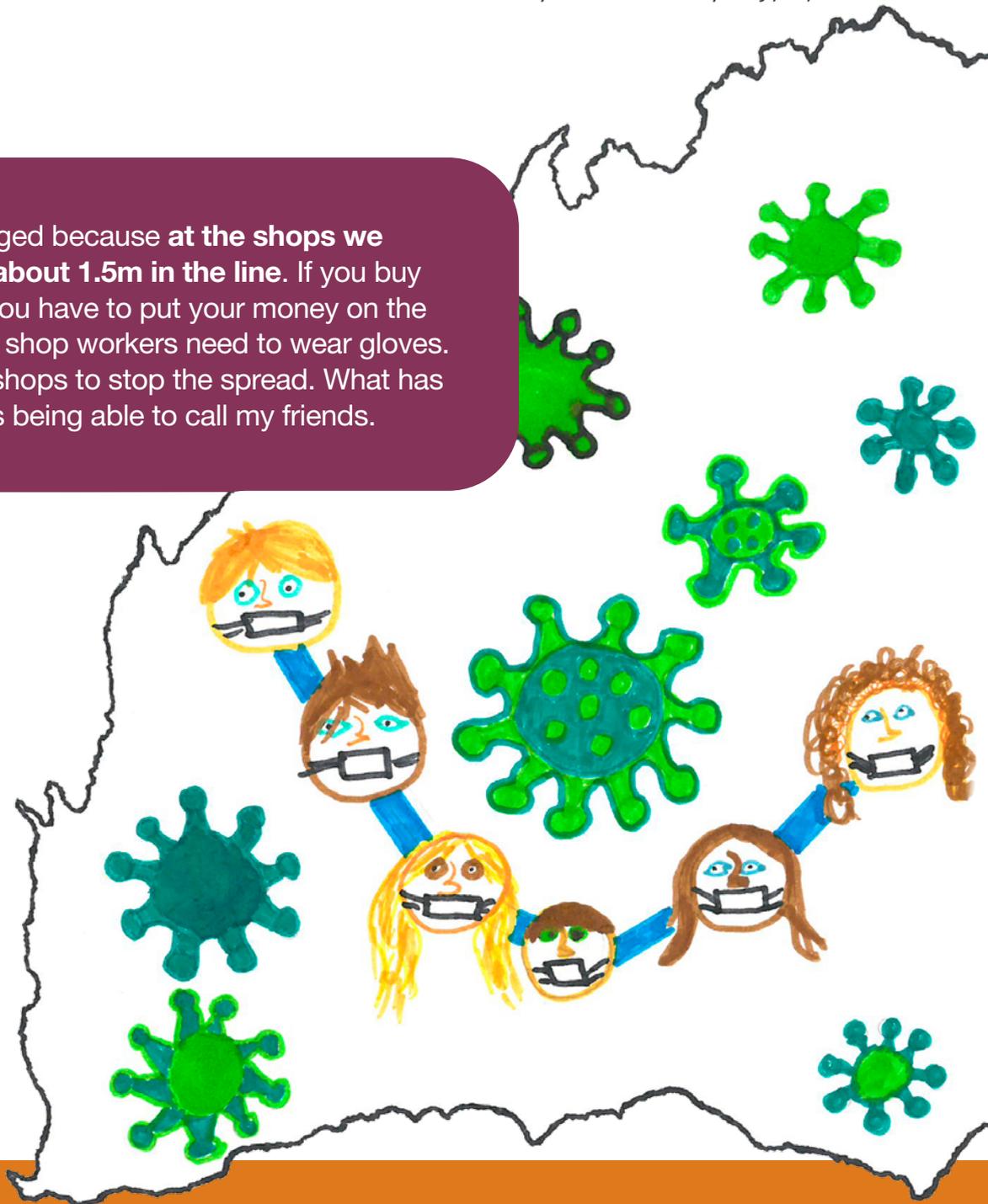
Recreation

Material basics

Information about coronavirus

Future impacts

My life changed because at the shops we have to be about 1.5m in the line. If you buy something you have to put your money on the desk. All the shop workers need to wear gloves. It helps the shops to stop the spread. What has helped me is being able to call my friends.



In addition to this publication, the views of WA children and young people were used to develop several resources published during the pandemic.

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia
May 2020

COVID-19 pandemic recovery

Assessing the impact on children and young people

All Western Australian children and young people will be impacted by the decisions made in the coming months to allow the State's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these impacts will be the result of strategies directly targeted at children and young people. However, many more impacts will be indirect and the consequences of decisions made that affect the lives of adult family members, the wellbeing of communities and the operations of service providers. Identifying and understanding these impacts will be crucial to effective decision making.

With 250,000 people under the age of 18 in Western Australia, one quarter of the State's population, decisions made by organisations today will have far-reaching social and economic impacts on children and young people, now and as future adults, across our community in the short and long term.

The child impact assessment process outlined below will support the rights and wellbeing of children and young people by assisting agencies to consider how their decision making may:

- directly and indirectly impact children and young people
- have long-term social impacts on children and young people, their families, carers, service providers and communities

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia
May 2020

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic as a Child Safe Organisation

Children and young people have the right to be safe and feel safe wherever they are, at home and in organisations of all kinds. Recently, many organisations have had to change how they engage with children and young people, including altering service delivery to other platforms, suspending operations or ceasing to deliver. Creation of new support initiatives and reworking usual services as restrictions ease.

It is crucial for organisations to have strategies in place to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people. The Commissioner's [Child Safe Organisation](#) resources provide guidance on practice that are achievable, relevant and reliable to reducing the likelihood of children and young people experiencing harm when in the care of organisations.

Creating and maintaining a safe and family organisation is an ongoing process of learning, monitoring and reviewing. Different types of organisations will have varying levels of risk and levels of engagement with children and young people. Risk management strategies focused on identifying, preventing and mitigating risks to children and young people should be reviewed and enhanced during times of change.

Evolving safety risks at this time

A few new organisations can ensure safety in the face of operational changes by undertaking a thorough risk assessment. Safety risks for children and young people in organisations are impacted by situational, vulnerability and organisational factors. Examples

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia
May 2020

Supporting children and young people through the COVID-19 pandemic

There are 250,000 children and young people in Western Australia, representing 23 per cent of the total population. It is crucial that we understand how the COVID-19 pandemic, and our community response to it, is impacting them and how to best support their wellbeing. COVID-19 has caused sudden and unforeseen changes to the lives of children and young people worldwide. For many in WA, this has been their first experience of significant upheaval to everyday routines and being physically isolated from family members, friends and support networks. These changes have had immediate impacts on the wellbeing of children and young people across the state, which will need to be addressed in the short term. We must also consider the long-term impacts to their mental health and wellbeing, which will be more likely to impact vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Under the United Nations [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), all children and young people have the right to be heard and to have their views sought on all matters that impact them. It is critical that family, carers, service providers and decision makers continue to uphold these rights. Doing so will ensure they better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected children and young people and how best to support their now and into the future.

Although the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented, the research it is having on

Top tips for supporting children and young people right now

The Commissioner for Children and Young People is hearing from many children around WA on how their day-to-day lives are being impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Based on what they have said so far, here are some simple tips on how to support children and young people at this time:

- I talked to my parents and emailed my teachers, and they say that it is ok to feel anxious and concerned.
- Let them know who they can talk to about their experiences in more detail.
- Encourage social connections with friends and peers.
- Doing school from home is very difficult, but I'm positive in these uncertain times.

March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

Media coverage of the emerging global health crisis began to escalate in February and into March

“When people started talking about the coronavirus I started getting scared.”

Hey, how are you going? I have been really worried about what is going on with the corona virus. I was wondering if you would have any tips on staying positive with it?



I do things I like to take my mind of things that worry me. I also tell my mum and dad my emotions. I say to myself I am going to be OK.

“I read and watch the news to keep up to date with it. I was a bit unsettled from the bushfires then the coronavirus but now I am fine... BTN (Behind The News) helps me with their tips on how to deal with troubling news.”

“Coronavirus when will it stop, will we be able to school do stuff we like to do to sport?”

“Everything will be OK.”

“The first thing that changed was at school we now have to wash our hands about a hundred times a day! The next thing that changed was none of our winter sports are on now which means I can't do netball.”

People say that COVID-19 will kill you but I don't think so because if we wash our hands and stay at home you won't get sick. The best part of staying home is eating Easter eggs.

“When I am worried I listen to music. I also play games with my family and friends.”

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

“In my life the coronavirus has changed nothing yet except my fear because I’m a bit scared of it. To stay positive, look on the bright side and it will end soon.”

At school recently, kids have been joking about coronavirus, It makes me feel better but still doesn’t make my fear any less.

“Some of my family have to isolate and at my school we have to put a lot of germ buster on... People are not coming out of their houses and in **Jurien Bay** there is like no one outside. Some of my friends are not coming my school because of Covid 19. People are buying too much toilet paper and you don’t get... you know what I mean... but you don’t need that much toilet paper and it has been on the news.”

“I like how at school we have to hand sanitise our hands because it is good for hygiene.”

“It’s a bit scary.”

“When coronavirus was first introduced, I was in a panicked state. I couldn’t relax for a second and my mind started racing. I couldn’t stop thinking of how I wouldn’t be able to see my friends, I couldn’t go outside and I couldn’t go to school... I hope that coronavirus goes away in time before it’s too late.”

I was a little worried because the news is overreacting a little bit but luckily my family and I live in a small town only about 50 people live here.

“The difference during COVID-19 is lining up at the shops because we have to stay 1.5 metres away. Also there is not many airplanes coming in. At school we have changed the hi fives to elbows or feet.”

“I talked to my parents and emailed my teachers, and they say that it is ok to feel anxious and concerned.”

- It is scary that anyone can contract it at anytime.
- It is also stressful seeing how many people have gotten Covid-19 on the news.

I am feeling



March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

March 1: Australia's first COVID-19 death was recorded in WA

"During coronavirus, my life changed a lot and it is still changing. School finished early and when we were still at school cleaners would come into our classroom often and clean the door handle. When we go to the shops, markers have been laid out to remind us to social distance ourselves. When people come back from Perth they have to self isolate for two weeks."

The coronavirus has changed my life in many different ways... my family has NEVER been so worried... My mum is way more stressed than ever because my brother and I are at school with lots of other students and she is worried we might get it.

"I am staying clean by washing everyday, before and after eating keeping my hygiene up. Its very important to look after ourselves during this time."

"We live day to day with our shopping and the time we all finish school and work there is nothing to buy at the shops to make for dinner."

The whole corona thing has got me thinking about family and friends and if they're okay. I don't know if there doing alright and if they sick or not.

"Buying groceries and other necessities... is sometimes a bit of a struggle with people hoarding... In terms of practising good hygiene, that hasn't been much of a problem because thankfully, I've grown up in a household which emphasises such behaviours. I've had to remind myself to stop touching my face though."

"Nothing has helped me why does covid-19 exist?"

"I want coronavirus to go away."

"Staying home and stay 1.5m apart and when you sneeze or cough you do it into your elbow and after we do that we use hand sanitiser. Also we should quarantine ourselves for 2 weeks or 14 days or 336 hours."

"I'm locked up in **detention**. I'm worried about my family."

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift



I am feeling



“This Covid-19 has made a lot of people stressed. So what a lot of people have been doing or should be doing is washing or sanitising your hands before eating, before you leave your house or school and after. I hope everybody stays safe and saves lives.”

I just wish the world could go back to the way it was.

Honestly the Covid-19 outbreak has really made me upset. I won't get to see my friends at school and I won't be able to go on fun excursions (eg school camp). I stay positive by thinking about my past happy memories.

WA schools remain open

March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

April 1: the WA Government introduced intrastate travel restrictions

“I feel safe when I am with my family during this time.”

“Mr Pettit I was worried because the Covid 19 spread really quick so I thought that it would come to us. I heard from BTN, which is a news show I watch with my teacher, to stay calm and listen to the rules I knew about that. Everything that the news said was important. Also, I was surprised because it came unexpectedly so many people were scared of it.”

The coronavirus has changed so many things. It has cancelled things I love doing, including tennis, hockey, and music. I am year 6 this year and our school camp may be cancelled. I am now getting kept home from school and doing school work at home.

“My mum lost her job but she has been looking for a job... I’ve been missing seeing my friends in real life thank you for listening.”

“It’s affected me by forcing me out of school for remote learning. I’m staying indoors as much as possible, with my family. We mostly only go out for groceries and to exercise, but there are the occasional times when someone would go out of the house for non-essential items such as wood for a wood work project. I am keeping mentally well by cycling as often as I need to, as well as indoor exercise and getting all my work done. I’ve been working remotely for about a week and a half now. It’s really testing our family connections, we have to put up with each other’s complaints and nuisances because we can’t afford to hate each other since we spend so much time with each other now.”

Personally for me school was sometimes a distraction from all my problems and now that I’m home I feel my mental health has spiralled a little bit and I’m oversleeping with no motivation to do anything... the only place I can go is work I thought I would be renewed and fresh but I just feel lazy and bored.

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

“As the numbers of the virus infections and deaths have grown I have been becoming more and more cautious, it’s now at the point where there are about 400 infections in Western Australia, I can’t trust anyone. I don’t trust that anyone around me doesn’t have it, simply because you just don’t know. My mental health has been fine recently, but I went three to four days without going outside and started to get easily agitated with my family members. My parents were worried about how long I could keep it up. I’ve been following all the advice on staying safe and staying well, but I just want it to be over. The quicker it’s over, the less I have to worry.”

There is less than 30 students in (school) and it’s a bad thing for my mum having to go through the COVID Clinic line to get to other places.



I feel like the COVID19 is a challenge for us to get through together, and we need to work together to get through it!

“Homeschooling for me is good... I keep positive by FaceTiming my friends and after my studies I usually bake or try to be productive and have fun. I also exercise everyday.”

There is only five year sixes and having friends at school, it’s more quiet on the streets... The bad things are people dying and my mum’s boss not paying her the full amount of money that she works for now she has to work three days a week now because that’s how much money my mum’s boss can pay her.

“Coronavirus has had a major impact on our **Geraldton** community over the past couple of months. Towards the end of February and at the start of March, our local shops were left almost bare and toilet paper and most basic food staples were hard to source. Our driving lessons were cancelled; work experience – cancelled; community sport like netball and AFL – cancelled. Lots of people lost their jobs and the line to get into Centrelink just about went around the block. Even though there were definitely some difficult times to come out of the recent coronavirus pandemic in our community, there have also been some good things to come out of our time in lockdown.”

Joint class response



March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

AUSTRALIA is doing well stopping the
virus coming in to the country

Remote indigenous community might
be at higher
risk from it.

I am feeling



“Covid-19 has had a big effect on everybody. Doing school from home is very difficult, but a positive in these uncertain times is that we are learning to adapt to new environments and we start to value our resources.”

The coronavirus has kept us at home and in doing so made us responsible for our own learning. So I think in that respect it helped us become independent learners.

“Online classes are a great option... I enjoy working from home and still being able to contact my teachers if I am in need of help.”

“I’m not allowed to be closer than 6 feet to each other. I have to stay at home... We have had eight cases in **Kalgoorlie** and it scary with all the cases that have built up in Australia.”

“I just thought I would share how the lockdown has affected my 22 month old. Firstly we don’t have any family around, so our social interaction is limited already. She’s at the age where she is wanting to interact and go to the park and she’s just restricted from that. Hopefully the play centres will be able to open really soon as the weather gets colder being able to be indoors for a play as well as outside would be great.” **Parent response**

Covid 19 has affected me greatly... I am very worried about getting and then giving the virus to my mum who cannot financially afford getting sick.

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

“At the moment I am at home not allowed by mum to see any friends, go to any shops. It was my birthday... my original plan was to go to Adventure World (a theme park in my area) with my best friend. But it was closed due to coronavirus, my plan b was to go to AQWA (our local aquarium) and an Escape Room. But those also were closed a week after we booked them due to coronavirus. We ended up doing a sleepover, with my best friend. During the sleepover, our power went out, and my mom ordered us food instead. She jokes now that I will remember this birthday for all the wrong reasons.”

I miss being able to play outside with my neighbours and play sport which has been hard to deal with but I've got my backyard where I can play darts and ping pong with my brother which is really good. I also miss being able to see all my friends but things like Discord, Netflix Party, Instagram and Skype make it easy to stay in contact. It sure is an interesting time but I think the reality of it all still hasn't hit me.

“Head above water. I'm keeping my sanity – mum says I've been gaming too much in lockdown but it keeps me sane.”

Despite staying at home for days on end, I am still kept occupied by school work. When I am finished with that, I go out to the park to practice soccer or work out in my room to stay fit... This pandemic has actually given me the time to expand and develop my hobbies while increasing the rate and efficiency of the work I do. I also get to spend more time with my family.

“I'm in year 12 – I'm meant to be at school, doing tests, exam prep, spending my last year at school surrounded by all my friends making good memories and enjoying the last year of school I'll ever have. However, now I am doing all this from home. Thank God for technology, as it makes it possible to access all course content and therefore I can stay on track with my studies, and contact my teachers if necessary. However, I am missing out on what makes school, school. Seeing your friends every day, seeing your teachers – FaceTime or Houseparty isn't the same. And its saddening to think we might not have the opportunity to enjoy all that our last year at school has to offers, and the uncertainty of if we will ever again. What helps me to stay positive is exercise, and the messages on Facebook sent around to support year 12s. Routine is integral for me to stay positive, and also the fact that by staying home, we are saving those vulnerable to the disease.”

March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

April 10-27: WA school holidays

“Started off great, got a nice sleep in everyday but now it’s just boring and tough. Hard to focus on any school work, lonely and the lack of face to face socialising is starting to impact my mental health. So what I do to stay sane is go for runs, bike rides or workouts so by the end of this I may not have the required school work done but I’ll be bulk, don’t you worry about that Commissioner.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought a lot of uncertainty into mine and all my fellow year 12’s lives. My school has strongly encouraged students to stay at home and continue schoolwork, even though all assessments are postponed. At first, this seemed scary to me, but I’ve grown to feel so much more secure and safe being able to stay in an environment that I’m in control of, especially in such an unpredictable time like this.

“The 2020 Schools Country Week was cancelled.”

We went and stayed with our nana out the bush and we had lots of fun because we could go outside and play. She has a big property on the river, we went fishing everyday we were not locked up but if we stayed in the city we would have been locked up in the house.



During COVID-19 I used the support of my family and friends to help me get through it. I read and watch the news to keep up to dated with it. I was a bit unsettled from the bushfires then the coronavirus but now I am fine. I am sad for my young cousins because they were stuck in a small apartment in Spain and couldn't go out for 2 months. BTN help me with there TIPs on how do deal with troubling news. Over all I was BORED!!!



Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

"I'm stuck at home with my grandparents and I have to work from home on my laptop. Living at home with two eighty year olds is quite concerning because even though I show no signs and haven't been outside since the 27th, there is still a level of paranoia that I might spread it and because of that I feel uneasy even in my own home. Continuing on the topic of staying at home working from home, it feels demeaning and depressing and I can't really explain why it just feels like that. The only real way I'm able to relieve any of these feelings is by talking to my friends over the internet and playing video games with them, as that's the only way I can see them now."

"Social life is one of the things that are most important to me. I don't go to school at the moment, and I miss my friends so much."

My parents have really supported me in this really hard time the have kept me entertained and brave. Home learning is hard especially without a teacher but I like that we can at least keep learning.

My life has changed a lot over the past few weeks. What helped me was I got to hang out with my family a bit more. What was very annoying was I didn't get to see any of my friends. How I got to speak to my friends was on the phone. What was sad for me was there is no more sport on the TV.

"The day that I left school and my friends, I was in tears about when I would go back to school and life would turn back to normal. But thankfully, I had my friends on Skype to talk to, my family to hug with, school work to continue and the birds and nature to calm me when I was feeling confused and worried. I hated being cooped up in a 2 bedroom apartment so I was keen to get outside again."

"My mum helps me know it is safe at home for now. My teacher helps online."

"Doing dance classes on Zoom."

I liked going bush
We went hunting
bush turkey

With my family .
With our family for

I am feeling 

March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

I am grateful for this quarantine because it has allowed me to have fun and communicate with my family in a way which would feel impossible during school days and busy days. During lockdown I have also been playing outside with my siblings more often and have been in touch with my friends by messaging them. Quarantine also made me feel depressed because it avoided me from playing with my friends and it stopped me from going to school... I hope another opportunity happens to communicate with my family more!

“Coronavirus has seemingly changed everything, the school closures in particular having had a large effect on my life. It’s a little bit of a struggle not seeing my friends each day and as a Year 12, the uncertainty of our grading and university entry has put everyone on edge. However, I’m coping by using social media to stay in touch with friends and just trusting that the powers that be will sort everything out – we have to have a little bit of uncertainty in our lives, right.”

“We doing well stopping the virus in the country.”

“I feel safe when I stay at home.”

“The news has helped me very much informing myself and my mother about Covid-19 and all the restrictions that are in place. My mum has helped me stay safe by reminding me to wash my hands or put hand sanitiser on. During Term 2 Microsoft teams has been helping me get my school work done. When I feel worried I think about when the pandemic is over and how everyday life would return back to normal.”

“What I do is to play with my dog and it’s also a great time to bond with your family. I know it’s hard for everyone but if we stay positive and help each other we can do this.#staypositive.”

“Nothing has helped me everything is going downhill.”

“I live in a little town which is far from COVID-19, that’s why I feel strong.”

“Staying inside has helped us all. By staying inside had helped some of it from spreading. What I did for fun was staying at home since we basically all had to.”

My mother and the government has been kept me safe and they have been making sure that I was my hands but the government hasn’t just said that to me, he has said it to the other people in the world :)

“My whole family has followed the restrictions to prevent others getting sick, I can’t wait to see family and friends when everyone and everything gets back to normal.”

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

April 27: restrictions start to lift

“Coming back to school – this was the best news of all! This was good because I have a bright and colourful classroom and amazing teachers. It was amazing to see my friends again and was a hurricane of happiness.”

“Staying at home help a lot but it is great being back at school.”

I have been upset about staying at home because all of the rules, because well I know its for the best but it is still boring but we go for bike rides but now its just clearing up I am happy that I have not caught Covid and that I'm glad.

“The Coronavirus has made everything a LOT harder. It has made us go out less, and we can't go outside as much, or go to the park or public restaurants and the shops. It is very stressful knowing that there is a huge virus going on right outside. My encouraging friends and parents, teachers, siblings, cousins, grandparents, etc, have told me that the coronavirus will eventually go away and stop, like all other outbreaks, plagues and viruses.”

“I felt quite worried and scared about what was going to happen next because Australia went from bush fires to Covid19 to isolation and now we are back at school! When this all started and the toilet paper and types of food were disappearing it was a scary time I think for all the children at school. It was weird to be going to school with lots of other people you don't know the school is going to close or carry on going.”



March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

School returns for Term 2

“My family helped me the most, if I was with my sister playing I forgot about the whole thing.”

“When I went back to school I was as enthusiastic as a new born bunny! I love school life and seeing my friends. Now that Western Australia is lifting the restrictions that had been put down, I realised that this situation was getting better and that I always reminded myself when things felt impossible that we are all in this together.”

Things that changed during the pandemic of Covid-19 that I personally liked: I loved the fact that shops and schools closed which made the spread slow down. I also loved that I could spend a little time alone without the stress.

“I was staying with my mum at **(Gascoyne Junction)**... I didn't go to school for a while, we have to clean our hands all day. Especially when we went back to school. I'm glad that no one got sick with the virus where I live.”

“My whole family has followed the restrictions to prevent others getting sick, I can't wait to see family and friends when everyone and everything gets back to normal.”

“I am grateful for FaceTiming my mum and I get to do physio and speech online... Technology has allowed me to do stuff that are important to me.”

“Staying home has helped me thinking I'm safe and protected. Also getting all the essential items to stay safe. I was very bored at home but staying with my family got me closer to my family. Getting closer to my dad. Using hand sanitiser and washing hands regularly. This had made me feel I'm safe from what's happening around me.”

My mum and dad have been helping me keep calm and, luckily, WA is recovering fast.

“Knowing we were in this together made me feel better about the situation because we were all in the same position.”

“Less cases, more people recovering, positive vibes, video chatting with friends.”

Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift

“I think it is great that the restrictions are starting to lift. It means that there is more social time and it means I don’t need to keep staring at a computer. But I also think it is still necessary for the hygiene precautions and think that most or all people should use a mask on public transport whether or not they are sick themselves just to be on the safe side. Aside from this I think WA is handling things really well.”

“I think the biggest impact the coronavirus pandemic will have for my family and I would be career wise. I would not be able to get a proper education if I keep having to have to learn from home... I am very wary of the restrictions being eased; as it would be nice and all, but it would also put everyone at a higher risk. All it would take is one small mistake that when unnoticed, then there would be an immediate problem.”

I am feeling



“I think the restrictions should stay, for the safety of the state. They should stay at least until there are no known cases for two full weeks. Then I would be okay with them easing the restrictions a little bit. A second wave is certainly something we shouldn’t have to deal with if we have avoid it.”

The news helped me because it told me about WA and it told me how many cases there were. My mum and dad helped me, they kept me safe. Seesaw helped me to do some work.

“I found it difficult to get back to work after being in quarantine for a month. Although everything is getting better, I still find it difficult to get used to being around so many people again. In truth, I think I’m just overwhelmed at the moment.”

I feel bad in Jigalong and home sick for Purnu because I miss my family and my friends.



March
April

Term 1 of school

April
May

Schools move to online learning

May 18: Phase 2 - further lifting of restrictions

“There should be better plans in place before something like this happens again.”

“Covid has reinforced the hygiene I’ve taught my kids. My 11 year-old in particular has absorbed the idea of community responsibility.” **Parent response**

I feel like the COVID19 is a challenge for us to get through together, and we need to work together to get through it!

“Through the pandemic, many things changed within our small town of **Kellerberrin**... Having to social distance from people who we would usually be able to hug or have a chat with was abnormal. If it continues like this, or there is another outbreak in our area, I think it will be hard on everybody.”

“In the future, my family will be more careful with what they touch, and the amount of hand sanitiser will most definitely increase. I believe my family will not feel as safe as they were before.”



I am feeling



Easter school holidays

May
June

Term 2 of school

Restrictions begin to lift



“I think that things are definitely looking up for my mum’s business and she will be getting a lot more business and new clients which makes me feel a lot better because she had no income during the coronavirus but was luckily granted the Job Keeper finance. I am still employed and working so nothing has changed for me but my mental health has definitely improved since being able to go outside and see my friends, being able to get out and not be cooped up is so refreshing.”

“I will never take my privilege of living in such a beautiful healthy city for granted again, just stepping outside and feeling that fresh air and sun rays is amazing. I am certainly in the headspace I want to be and have big goals and plans for the future.”

I think it will make us be more careful in the future, and that we will still be trying to social distance a bit. Thank you for your help.

“It’s OK because we will get through it together.”

“I have concerns about my future career, as the loss of jobs will mean people with more experience are more likely to get a job. Which means even starting to get my first job at 14 or 15, will be a struggle. Although I hope prices for houses stay down while the economy is getting back on track, so people my age can buy an affordable house, as future prices for houses are estimated to come with a lifetime of debt.”

For my family and I it hasn’t affected us much as we live in a Western Australian rural town and have our business with the same demand. I do think there needs to be more action taken in regards to homeschooling and mental health awareness.

“Now humans can learn from this virus, and next time will react better and more productively.”



I am feeling 😞

“For the future I hope that the values and lessons people have learnt from this pandemic continue to be relevant, used on a daily basis and taught to future generations to keep the world united and working together as a whole to get through tough times just as we did during this pandemic.”

“Although this is effecting everyone in different ways, we’ve all come together to improve our conditions and I’m proud of how the community has handled it.”

The coronavirus pandemic was and still is what I believe to be a very hard time for many individuals around the world. It is definitely an event that will go down in history and be taught in schools in the future.

I am worried about the future of society mostly, I worry that we will go back to normal even though this pandemic has shown us that the normal we had wasn't working.

“I also think its cool that people are including kids in things to do with the pandemic, but I don't think adults are actually going to do anything the kids think of, but that's how it has always been. The adults dismiss the kids as they say they are less experienced, but kids see everything more as an opportunity to be creative, unlike the adults.”

Regional travel throughout most of WA returns

WA children and young people say thanks

“Family and friends have kept me company during coronavirus.”

Parents are good and they help us during corona and nurses, and like teachers, and many more people help us so thanks to them.

“The sanitising was a really good idea and about crowded areas being closed... I think that people are doing a really good job to save Australia and the world.”

I'm very glad that we are allowed to have gatherings again and I would just like to say thank you for everything.

“I've remained positive that the government is doing everything in their power to help stop the spread of COVID-19... So thank you for doing everything you guys can to help stop the spread and prevent more deaths I know there will most likely be a lot more people will be infected and die around the world. I'm staying positive that we will get through this together.”

“I thank the nurses and doctors so much for putting hours in to sort stuff out.”

“I just want to say a very huge thank you to all the people who kept us informed to people who made us keep going and made us laugh.”

I have been receiving a lot of care from the school and my parents. I say a big thanks to the frontline workers.

“Supermarket employees, frontline workers, news and government.”



My parents ,my friends ,my teachers and my brother have all helped me get through this situation .I also try to stay positive which helps me too.

The story of COVID-19 continues, and any long-term impacts on children and young people are yet to be known.

The Commissioner's next Speaking Out Survey is planned for early 2021 and will provide comparative data to the inaugural 2019 survey, giving an indication of how thousands of WA children and young people saw their wellbeing both before and after the events of 2020.

Thank you to all of the organisations in WA who assisted in inviting children and young people to share their views, including the Department of Education, Department of Justice, Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia, local governments, Youth Advisory Councils, Girl Guides WA and Playgroup WA as well as the Commissioner's Advisory Committees.



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