



Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Speaking Out Survey 2025

The views of WA children
and young people on
their wellbeing

Listening to your
voices - showing what
is working, what is
not, and what needs
to change



**Youth summary
report**

ccyp.wa.gov.au



Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of children and young people

Thank you to every child and young person who took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2025. You gave your time, shared your experiences and told us what matters to you. Your views help decision makers understand what is happening for children and young people across WA. Your voices should lead to action.

Language

In this report, the term Aboriginal includes Western Australia's diverse Aboriginal language groups and recognises Torres Strait Islanders who live in Western Australia. The use of the term Aboriginal in this way does not imply that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are the same.

Acknowledgement of Country

I proudly acknowledge and pay respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Western Australia and acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation upon whose lands my office is located. I recognise the continuing connection to culture, lands, skies and waters, families and communities of all Aboriginal peoples. Together, my team and I also pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging young leaders. We recognise the knowledge, insights and capabilities of Aboriginal people and pay respect to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.

Who do we mean by children and young people?

Years 4-6

We call students in Years 4 to 6 children. They completed the child version of the survey.

Years 7-12

We call students in Years 7 to 12 young people. They completed the youth version of the survey.

Suggested citation: Commissioner for Children and Young People. (2026). Speaking Out Survey 2025: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing – Youth summary report. Commissioner for Children and Young People WA.

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**Children have a right
to talk and adults
should really listen
when we have
something to say."**

Boy aged 10,
outer regional



Commissioner's introduction

As the Commissioner for Children and Young People, I listen to your worries, ideas and experiences. I want to help make sure you are happy, healthy and safe.

It is important to me to hear directly from you about your wellbeing and the things that matter in your lives. Often adults make decisions about services, programs and policies that affect you, but you do not always get the chance to have a say. The Speaking Out Survey (SOS25) gives you that chance.

This is the third time we have done the survey. Asking you questions over time helps adults see what is changing, what is staying the same and what needs more attention.



Dr Jacqueline McGowan-Jones
Commissioner for Children and
Young People



**I really enjoyed meeting
so many of you and
hearing from you.
Thank you for giving
my team and I your
valuable views and
ideas."**

What we did

In 2025, my team and I travelled across WA and spoke to more than 17,000 children and young people. We visited schools from May to September 2025 asking you questions about many things that impact children and young people and hearing what is important to you. The survey was anonymous and done on tablets.

What you shared will help inform my work and support me to share your voices to try and make change.

Your voice matters

17,000+

children and young
people engaged

92

suburbs and
towns visited

35,000km

travelled across
WA

122

schools visited

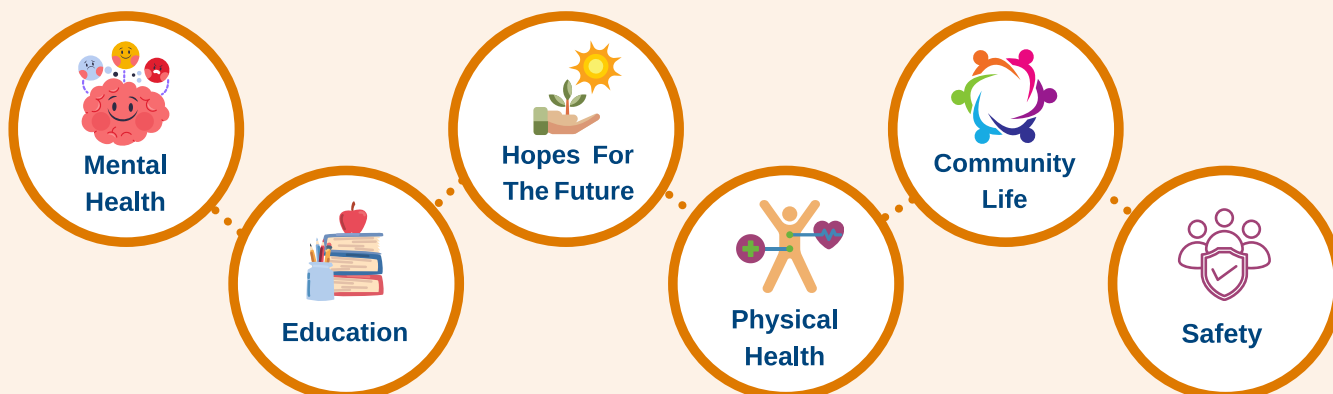
10

WA regions covered

142 days

of fieldwork

SOS asks about key areas of wellbeing



What you said

Children and young people across WA told us that they want to be healthy, safe, happy and listened to.

Being healthy

Many children said it can be hard to eat healthy food every day. Some children and young people missed breakfast or lunch, and many wanted more help with their health and wellbeing.

They said it is important that adults listen and believe them when something doesn't feel right.

Having people who care

Children and young people said having caring family members, friends and trusted adults is very important.

Many children felt loved and supported, but some young people said they needed more people they could talk to when they had worries or problems.



Make sure that we can be independent and know how to handle life and make decisions on our own."

Girl aged 16, outer regional

Feeling safe

Most children said they felt safe at home, which is great. But some young people said they did not always feel safe in places like public transport or when there were problems at home.

Children told us that feeling safe helps them feel happy and confident.

School and learning

Many children enjoyed school and liked learning. They wanted to do well and have good opportunities in the future.

Young people said they wanted adults to help them learn important life skills and trust them to make decisions as they grow up.



Families need communication, and it shouldn't be awkward to talk about your issues."

Girl aged 13, outer regional

Bullying

A lot of children and young people said bullying is a problem. They want schools and communities to do more to stop bullying and make everyone feel included and respected.



**1 in 4
students**
(from Years 4 to 12)
experienced bullying
several times a week



**Ban bullying and
make it against
the law."**

Girl aged 9, outer
regional



**Believing me,
listening to me when
I say something's
wrong."**

Girl aged 15, outer
regional

The big message

Children and young people told us that they want:

- Healthy food and support for their wellbeing
- Caring adults and good friends they can trust
- To feel safe at home, school and in their community
- Schools where everyone feels included and respected
- Adults to listen to them and take their ideas seriously
- More chances to make decisions and prepare for their future

Most importantly, children and young people told us they want adults to listen to them, believe them and help them when they need it.



Aboriginal children and young people

Aboriginal students' experiences were not always the same as those of non-Aboriginal students.

Many Aboriginal children and young people spoke proudly about their communities and culture, and said that they felt safe in their communities.

Some also said they face extra challenges including that they sometimes have a harder time getting the things they need to stay healthy and connected.

Years
4-6

6.7%

of children identified
as Aboriginal

34.9%

of Aboriginal children were
likely to identify that they
did well at school, compared
to 45.2% of non-Aboriginal
children

Years
7-12

5.8%

of young people identified
as Aboriginal

44.6%

of Aboriginal young people
were bullied because of culture
or skin colour, compared with
23.3% of non-Aboriginal
young people

Aboriginal children said they did not always have things like:

- Internet access
- Money for school activities
- Devices to use at home

They were also more likely to miss meals or not brush their teeth every day.

Aboriginal young people were more likely to:

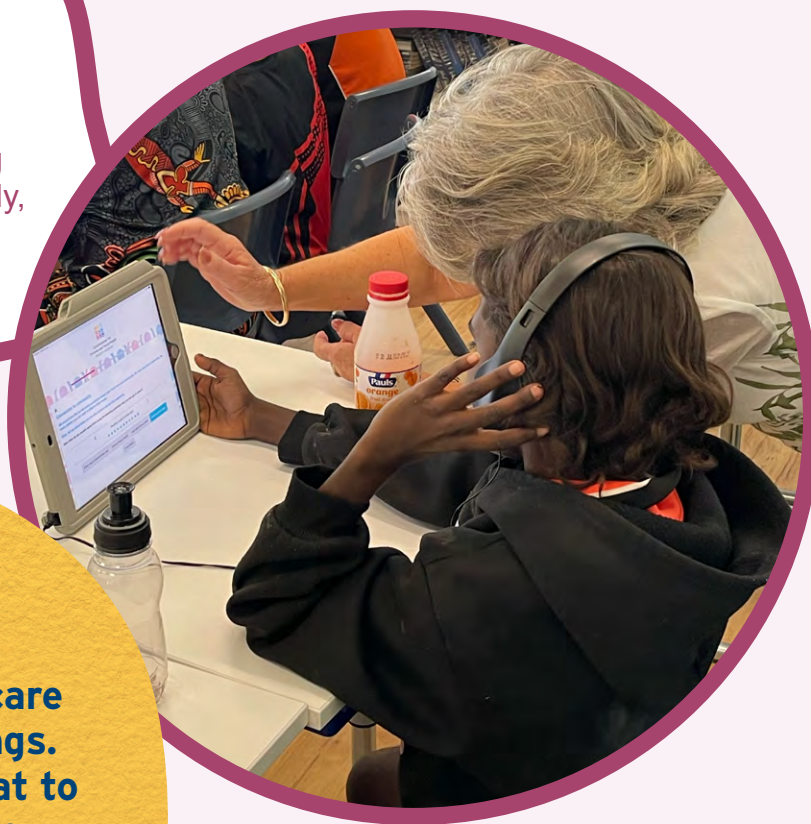
- Experience bullying because of their culture or skin colour
- Have trouble getting health support when they needed it
- Attend more than one school
- Experience violence in places like school, public spaces or on public transport

"Just ask if they are okay because just growing up alone is a mental struggle and everyone is struggling if you genuinely ask if they are okay they might talk but make sure you are nice about it because we don't trust easy"

Girl aged 14, metropolitan

The big message

Aboriginal children and young people want to be treated fairly, feel respected, and get the support they need when they ask for help.



I think adults should care about children's feelings. Like they tell them what to do without thinking how we feel about it. It's unfair how the adults get to be heard but not us."

Girl aged 10,
metropolitan

Talk about racism."

Girl aged 14,
inner regional

Children and young people from different cultures

Some children and young people come from families with different cultural backgrounds or speak another language at home.

Many of these children enjoyed learning, reading books and doing homework. Lots of these young people also hoped to go to university when they are older.

However, some of these children and young people said:

- They did not always know where to find help in their community
- They did not always have an adult they felt comfortable talking to
- They were more likely to be bullied because of their culture, skin colour or religion

The big message

Children and young people want everyone to feel welcome, included and respected, no matter where they come from.



People who have moved from somewhere should be included... a new person doesn't matter less."

Girl aged 11, metropolitan

Where you live matters

Children and young people said their experiences can be different depending on where they live.

Young people in regional and remote areas were more likely to:

- Feel sad or worried for a long time
- Miss school because of bullying
- Have fewer things like internet access or a family car

Children living in remote areas enjoyed spending time outdoors, but many also said there were not enough activities and places to go.

The big message

Children and young people want more opportunities, activities and support close to where they live.

Growing up changes things

The survey showed that children's experiences often changed as they got older.

Older students were less likely to:

- Enjoy school
- Feel connected to their community
- Have an adult they could talk to about serious problems
- Feel that school was important

Younger students were more likely to say they had a teacher who really cared about them.

The big message

As children grow up, they still need caring adults, support and opportunities to feel connected and valued.

Girls and boys sometimes have different experiences

The survey found that girls often reported more challenges with health, safety and wellbeing.

Girls were more likely to:

- Miss meals
- Feel less happy with their lives
- Feel they did not have an adult to talk to
- Stay away from home because of family problems
- Feel unsafe at school
- Feel they had less say in decisions about their lives

Boys were more likely to report being physically harmed.

Some young people also said that people should be more accepting of different genders and identities.

The big message

Children and young people want everyone to be treated kindly, feel safe, and be accepted for who they are.

What we heard

You told us about the things that matter in your everyday lives – from feeling safe and supported, to school, mental health, friendships, technology and your local communities.

You want:

- Fairness and respect for everyone
- An end to bullying and racism
- Adults who listen and help when you need support
- Safe schools, homes and communities
- More opportunities to learn, participate and achieve your goals
- Communities where everyone feels welcome and included

Most importantly, you want to be heard, respected and supported to thrive and be your best selves.



Just being more accepting of people who don't apply to normal genders and gender roles because we can easily be bullied for it."

Student aged 14,
metropolitan

What you told us

We asked you what adults can do better.

Here are some of your thoughts:

"Allowing more freedom, and allowing us to hang out with our friends more often, letting us make more of our own decisions"

Boy aged 14, metropolitan

"Believing me, listening to me when I say somethings wrong, see the signs before it gets bad again, less workload from schools, less expectations from everyone."

Girl aged 15, outer regional

**More street lights and crossings.
More public transport to help get around.
More public toilets!!"**

Girl aged 15, metropolitan

Find ways to understand teens and children better even if we can't understand ourselves and also to stop criminalising technology."

Boy aged 15, very remote

What we heard on repeat

- Listen to us and believe us when we say something is wrong
- We want safe, supportive people we can talk to
- Make schools places where we feel safe, included and respected
- Give us more opportunities to make decisions and have a say in our lives
- Make sure children and young people in every part of WA have access to the support, services and opportunities we need

My recommendations to government about the wellbeing of children and young people

Sharing your voice through the Speaking Out Survey shows where things are going well and where change is needed. I have made 5 recommendations to government based on what you told me.

- 1 Make sure WA laws clearly protect children's rights, like being safe, being treated fairly and having a say in decisions that affect them
- 2 Create a plan that all government departments must follow and work together to help children, young people and families stay healthy, safe and supported
- 3 Put rules into WA law that make sure organisations keep children safe, listen to them, and act quickly if something goes wrong
- 4 Review how schools, services and programs support children and young people and make sure they match what WA law says about fairness, safety, inclusion and children's rights
- 5 Create a statewide health campaign that teaches young people about healthy eating, staying active, mental health, respectful relationships, sexual health, and staying safe around alcohol and drugs, using information that is appropriate for your age

Why what I recommend to government is important

The aim is to help make sure every child and young person in WA feels safe, supported, included and heard – no matter where they live or what their background is.



What happens now?

The Speaking Out Survey shows that children and young people do not all have the same experiences or opportunities. Where you live, your gender and whether you are Aboriginal or from a different cultural background can all shape your experience.

My team and I will keep looking at what you told us, alongside other research, to understand what is behind these differences and where things need to change.

We will keep listening to children and young people and sharing your ideas with people who make decisions.

Your voices help show adults what is working, what is not, and what needs to happen next.

**Your
voice
matters**

**“
We have feelings and
emotions, and challenges in
our lives. Stop comparing
us to other people.
Everyone has their
own challenges.”**

Girl aged 13,
metropolitan

If you found anything in this report upsetting, you can contact the support services below.

For immediate or urgent help, please call 000 for emergency services.

24-hour services

13YARN

If you, or someone you know, are feeling worried or no good, we encourage you to contact 13YARN on 13 92 76 (24/7) and talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.

Kids Helpline

Provides 24/7 free online and phone counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25.

Telephone: 1800 551 800
www.kidshelpline.com.au

Lifeline

Offers suicide prevention support by phone or online chat.

Telephone: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au

Mental Health Emergency Response Line

Provides a rapid response to mental health emergencies.

Telephone: 1300 555 788 (Metro)
Telephone: 1800 676 822 (Country)

Alternative formats

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



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ISBN: 978-1-7636912-8-5

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