

The voices of children and young people with disability

ACYP - The Advocate for Children and Young People



- ACYP is the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young people.
- Zoë Robinson is the Advocate for Children and Young people in NSW.
- An advocate is someone who speaks up for you.
- Zoë represents all children and young people in NSW aged from 0-24.

What ACYP does?

The role of the office:

- Keep you and all children and young people in NSW safe, healthy, happy, connected and free from harm.
- Make sure you have a voice and are taken seriously.
- Tell decision makers what you said.
- Look at new ways we can better support you and all children and young people.
- Have a three year plan for how we can work together with children and young people across NSW.

Who have we heard from?

- ACYP has heard from over 34,000 children and young people about their views, ideas and opinions.
- 12,000 of the children and young people took part in face to face consultations.

Your right to have a voice

The aim of the consultations was to ensure that children and young people with disability in NSW had the opportunity to tell ACYP about the things that matter to them.

This falls in line with:

- The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- ACYP's Legal Act

It's **your right** to have a voice!

The consultations

From September 2019 to February 2020:

- ACYP consulted with 372 children and young people with disability in face to face consultations
- The children and young people were aged between 8 - 24

Where did we go to listen to you?

ACYP team travelled to Ballina, Lismore, Casino, Coffs Harbor, Greater Sydney and Grafton. Consultation participants were from:

- Schools
- Disability Employment Services (DES)
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses
- Community Organisations
- Sports Clubs/associations
- Services and support for children and young people

Consultation Questions - What did we ask?

1. What is working well for you and other children and young people in NSW?
2. What is not working well for you and other children and young people in NSW?
3. What would you like to change to make NSW a better place for children and young people?

Your feedback and the report

From these three questions, the ACYP team identified themes in your answers.

Themes are the subjects and ideas that you talked about in the consultations.

ACYP will release final report to the NSW Government in November 2020 to present and discuss your feedback to the three questions.

What did you tell us? – The themes

The themes – Subjects and ideas you talked about



Education



Health and the National Disability Insurance Scheme



Access and inclusion



Voice and Participation



Employment and training



Bullying and discrimination



Mental health

Secondary Themes – other subjects and ideas that matter to you

Accommodation & housing, Animals, Beaches Parks and outdoor spaces, Climate change and environmental issues, community festivals and events, Cost of living, Drought and Bushfires, Family and Friends, Hospitals and Physical healthcare, LGBTQIA+ and Technology.



*Accommodation
& housing*



Animals



*Beaches, parks &
outdoor spaces*



*Climate change
& environmental
issues*



*Community
festivals & events*



Cost of living



*Drought &
Bushfires*



Family & Friends



*Hospitals & physical
healthcare*



LGBTQIA+



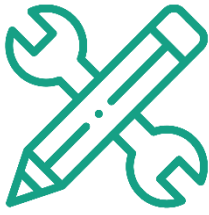
Technology



Education

Across all the consultations education was the top response for both things that were working well and also not working well for children and young people in NSW. Some of these things children and young people spoke about included:

- Having good supportive teachers
- Having the opportunity to learn new life skills
- Having access to music, art, sports and activities
- Having access to work experience
- Not being involved in the decision making around your education
- Not having the same opportunities as all children and young people in school
- Not having the correct supports in school
- Poor school facilities and school equipment
- Discrimination and bullying.



Employment and training

Young people talked about their concerns and frustrations regarding employment particularly for young people aged 15-24. Some of these included:

- Lack of job opportunities for young people with disabilities
- Discriminatory attitudes and behaviours during recruitment, and in the workplace, from employers and others
- Lack of awareness and understanding of disabilities
- Unrealistic expectations regarding previous work experience and qualifications
- Lack of assistance in finding, securing and maintaining employment.



Voice and Participation

Children and young people spoke about having their voices heard by decision makers in all aspects of their lives:

- Having opportunities to share views, ideas and opinions
- Being ignored - talking to teachers , workers or parents instead of being asked simple questions
- Not having the opportunity to have a voice or being asked your opinion
- Not being listened to, feeling invisible or disrespected
- Not being informed when decisions were being made on their behalf
- Not having the same opportunities as other children and young people to participate.



Health and the National Disability

Insurance Scheme

Children and young people spoke about the NDIS and some of their frustrations. These included:

- Good Health services that listen and understand
- Not getting the correct support needed
- Very complex system that is difficult
- Reliant on support from parents to access
- Having to apply every year and prove everything again
- A lack of funding for education
- A lack of funding for recreation and activity
- A lack of support to access funding.



Bullying and Discrimination

This was something that was raised in all consultations as a significant issue although some children and young people believed discrimination was something that was slowly improving. Some of the key things they spoke about were:

- Negative attitudes towards children and young people with disability
- Being ignored by peers, teachers and society
- Attitudes towards disability from the mainstream
- Bullying in school and in the workplace
- Cyber bullying
- Not having the same opportunities as other children and young people.



Mental Health

Mental health was another area of great concern across the consultations:

- Good school councillors and Services to help
- Lack of awareness and education around mental health
- That mental issues being are not always recognised as a disability
- Lack of recognition of mental health issues for children and young people with disability
- Lack of school supports and understanding from staff and teachers
- It can be difficult to access support
- Not having support at early enough.



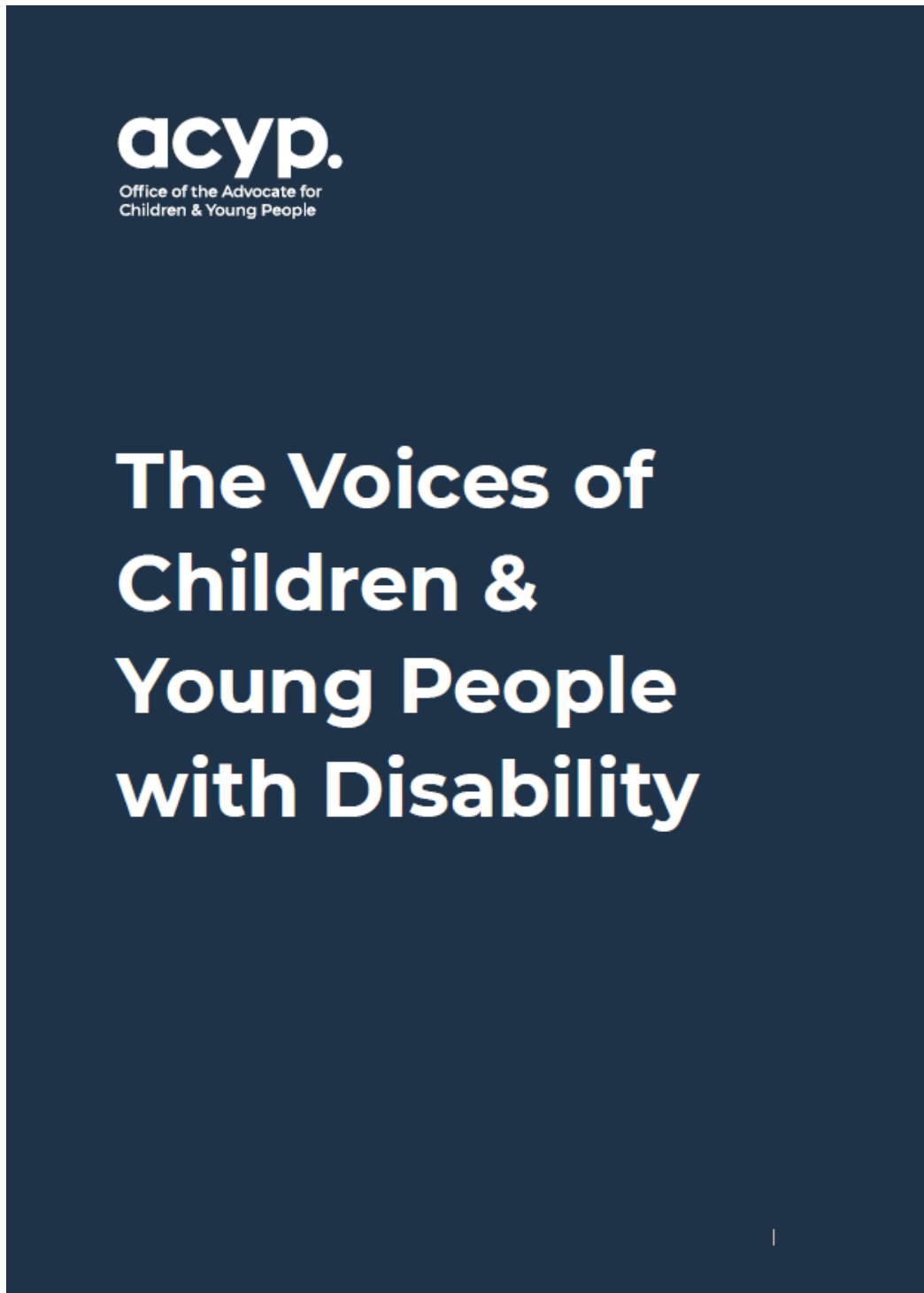
Access and Inclusion

Some children and young people spoke about having lots of sports and other activities available in their communities:

- Not being able to participate in mainstream activities
- Not having somewhere to go and hang out
- Not enough opportunities for activities in the community such as music, art and sports for children and young people with disability
- Access to more school holiday programs.
- Lack of public transport in rural and regional areas
- Being unable to get to school, work, services, appointments, programs and activities
- Cost of public transport for young people
- Access to buses and trains for people with physical disabilities
- Unhelpful and rude bus drivers.

The Report

The full report is 169 pages and talks about all of the great ideas that you have.



What happens next?

ACYP shares the report and feedback with:

- Government departments;
- Decision makers; and
- People that work with children and young people.

The report will help to guide them and better understand how we can work together to make NSW a better place for you and all children and young people.