



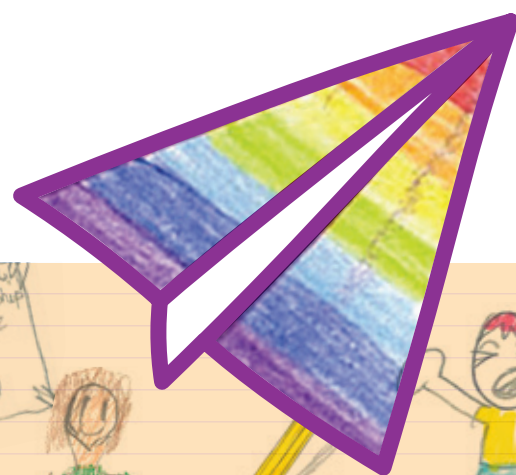
South Australian
Commissioner
for Children and
Young People
2025

ccyp.com.au

The Things That Matter 6

Views of 8-12 year olds on life,
school and community

PROJECT REPORT NO. 51 | JUNE 2025



The Commissioner's Role

The South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People is an independent statutory position, established under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* ('the Act'). The Commissioner's role includes advocating for systemic change to policies, programs and practices that impact the rights, development and wellbeing of South Australia's children and young people.

This work is informed by the experiences and issues of children and young people themselves, with a specific focus on those who struggle to have their voices heard.

The Commissioner's strategic agenda was formulated with direct input from children and young people. In particular, children and young people asked the Commissioner to facilitate their involvement in decision making, and to create opportunities for them to experience authentic participation.

The Commissioner is working with a number of partners on this agenda, including ways in which children and young people can have greater input into the design and delivery of policies, processes and practices that affect their lives.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the 17,533 South Australian school students aged 8–12 years who participated in the Commissioner's Student Voice Postcard Project in 2024. Thanks also to the teachers and school staff who supported their participation.

This report was released by the Acting Commissioner, following completion of Commissioner Helen Connolly's inaugural term (2017–2025). Thank you to the dedicated staff who finalised and saw the report to completion.

Please note: All quotes in this report are reproduced verbatim.

Suggested Citation

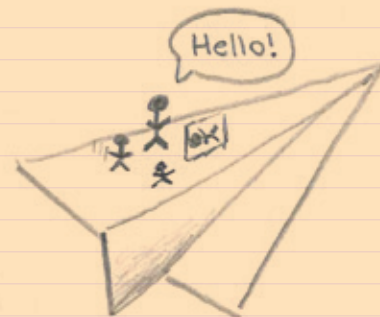
Connolly, H. Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia (2025). *The Things That Matter 6 – Views of 8–12 year olds on life, school and community*. June 2025.

All material presented in this publication is licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) with the exception of:

- photographs and images;
- the Commission's logo, any branding or trademarks;
- content or material provided by third parties; and
- where otherwise indicated.

Contents

Acting Commissioner's Foreword	4
Overview of student and school participation	6
Key messages	10
What do 8 to 12-year-olds say is their favourite thing to do?	14
What do 8 to 12-year-olds want to know more about?	18
What do 8 to 12-year-olds hope for the future?	23
What do 8 to 12-year-olds say would make their neighbourhood better for kids?	28
Reflections on gender	37
Conclusion	38



Acting Commissioner's Foreword

As Acting Commissioner for Children and Young People I'm delighted to write the foreword for this report on the 2024 Student Voice Postcards initiative.

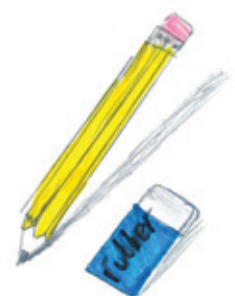
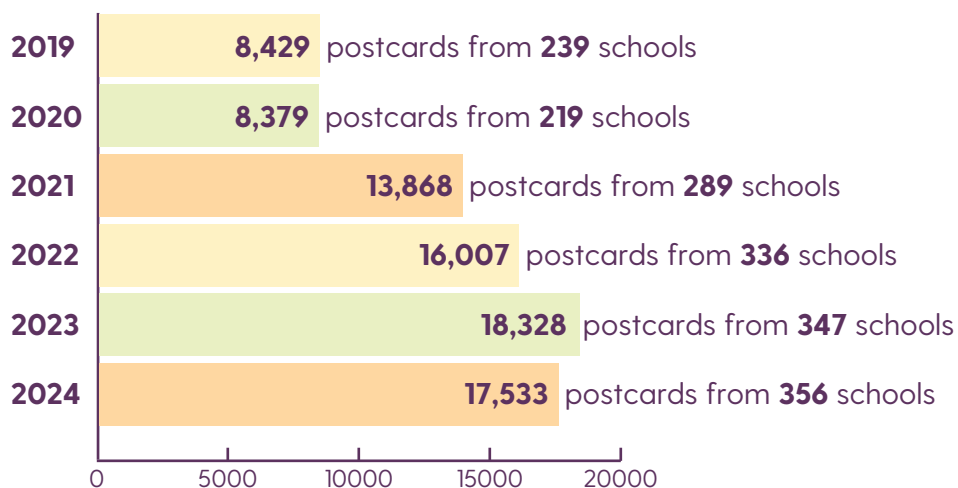
This is the sixth *Things That Matter* report produced by the inaugural Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly. It draws on the 17,533 postcard responses received from children throughout the state who participated in her annual Commissioner's Student Voice Postcards initiative last year. They did this with the support of their schools and teachers throughout terms 3 and 4 with a record number of 356 Government, Catholic and Independent schools participating.

Over the six years of the initiative, a total of 82,544 postcards were received from primary school-aged children across South Australia, with the number of postcards and the number of schools participating increasing substantially over time.

The postcards initiative has produced a large and important dataset, which has enabled views that come direct from SA children to be analysed, collated and presented to decision makers, policy makers and community and state leaders, to inform them on a vast array of topics relevant to children's lives.

This is significant considering that primary school children are rarely asked about their lives and views. Neither are they given many opportunities to have their voices heard. Participating in the postcards initiative also introduces this age group to the concept of what it means to have a voice and agency. Understanding that your view matters and that adults are listening and interested to hear what you think, can have a positive impact on how you engage with your community as a young person and citizen over time.

All-time participation since 2019





It sends the message that you have rights and that these rights entitle you to have input into decisions that directly affect you.

On behalf of Helen, I want to thank all 576 schools that have supported their students to participate in her postcards initiative at least once over the past six years. She was also sincerely grateful to the 44 schools that supported their students to participate every year since the postcards initiative commenced. These 'Champion Schools' were recognised for their continuous participation via an awards ceremony held in April this year.

Over the years many children have shared how much they enjoy participating and have written many messages of thanks and greetings. Some even drew a picture of Helen. She also received feedback from school leaders and teachers, highlighting the children's enjoyment of learning that they have a Commissioner and being able to tell her something about their lives.



In May 2025 the Student Voice Postcards initiative was brought to life in an exhibition presented in partnership with South Australia's DreamBIG Children's Festival, which celebrated 50 years this year as one of the most successful and largest children's festivals in the world.

This exhibition titled *Listen to Me* celebrated the empowering nature of this initiative and enabled children (and grownups) to explore the postcard responses in a highly interactive, fun-filled way.

The completed postcards will continue to be of significant and unique value to researchers, policy makers, and decision makers both here and overseas. They provide a snapshot view of what South Australian children in the 8–12 year age group say matters most to them at this particular time in their lives.

I am particularly pleased to see that children's engagement in creative activities has come through so strongly in these postcards. Their enjoyment of these activities highlights the need for us to provide all children with opportunities to take part in creative activities of all kinds.

I am sure you will find the contents of this report informative, heartwarming and thought-provoking in the same way that I have.

Mimi Crowe

Mimi Crowe

Acting Commissioner for Children
and Young People, South Australia

Overview of student and school participation

In 2024, postcards were received from 356 schools across South Australia. This number represents more than half (57%) of SA schools that have children in the 8–12 year old age group enrolled. This number is up from 347 schools in 2023.

17,533 postcards were received from children living in metropolitan, regional, rural, and remote locations attending Government, Catholic, and Independent schools. Children attended a diverse range of schools that included primary, primary/secondary combined, Area schools, Special Education schools, and Aboriginal/Anangu schools.

Similar numbers of girls and boys completed postcards in 2024. There were also some students who participated who were non-binary or described their gender in other ways, including those sharing their pronouns were she/they or they/them.

Each year children are asked to complete postcards with four questions as prompts. These questions vary from year to year to enable for a consideration of a broader range of issues, and also so children moving up in school years can respond to a different set of questions each year. Children are invited to write responses to the questions and to draw a picture.

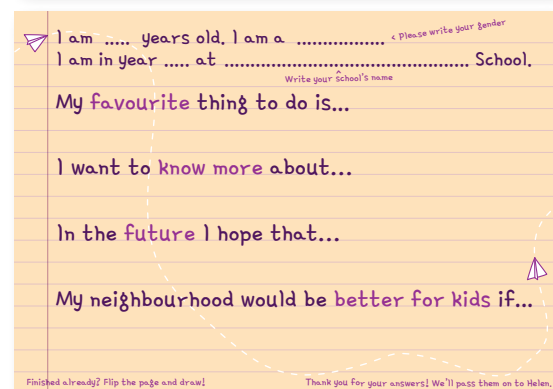
All children are encouraged to participate however they can. While most postcards contain handwritten and/or drawn responses, others have their responses scribed by an adult.

Some students respond using augmented and alternative communication or braille, or they type their responses.

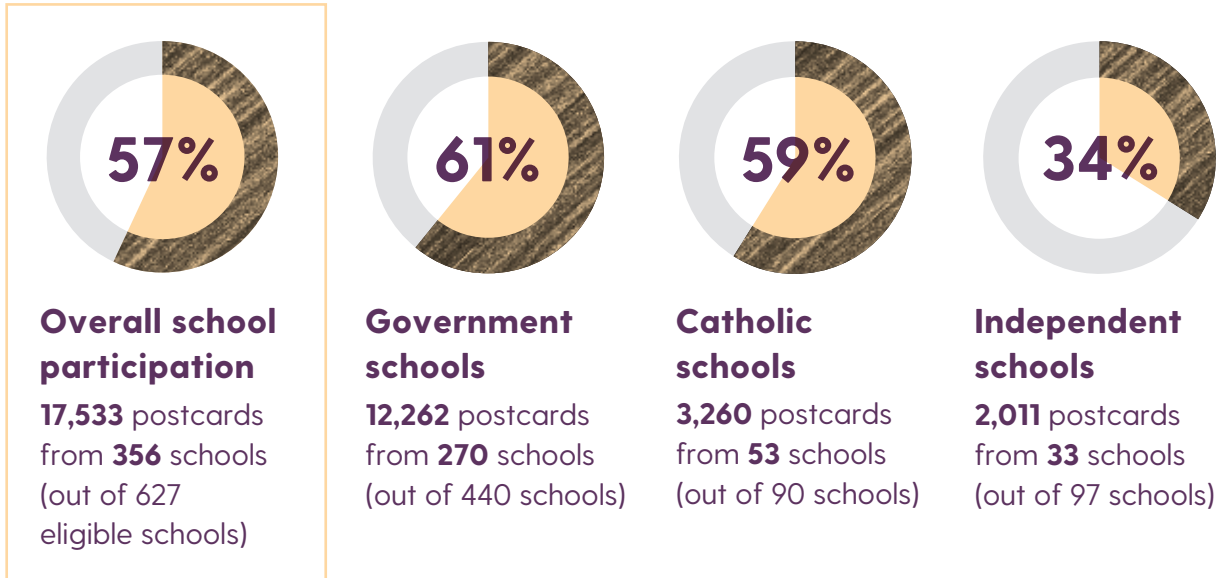
The 2024 postcard contained the following questions, along with an invitation to draw a picture (see graphic below).

A total of 627 schools across South Australia were sent postcard packs in Term 3 of 2024. This is the total number of schools operating in South Australia with children in the 8–12 year age group enrolled.

Of the schools participating in 2024, 30 were taking part for the first time.



Participation rates, by school sector

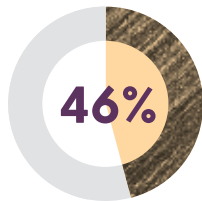


Participation by type of school

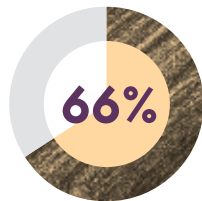
- 12,257 postcards from 265 primary schools
- 4,059 postcards from 51 primary/secondary combined schools
- 1,044 postcards from 27 Area schools
- 142 postcards from 11 Special Education schools
- 31 postcards from 2 Aboriginal/Anangu schools



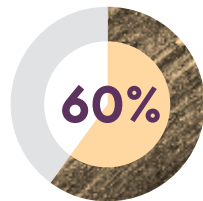
Participation rates, by Index of Educational Disadvantage* for government schools



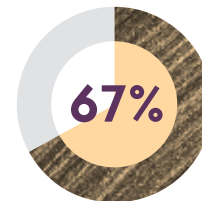
Category 1 schools
 625 postcards from 17 schools (out of 37 schools)



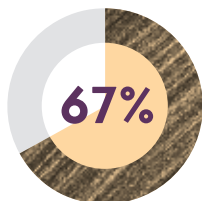
Category 2 schools
 1,646 postcards from 40 schools (out of 61 schools)



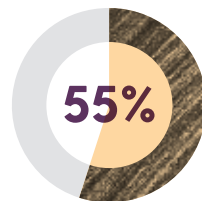
Category 3 schools
 1,343 postcards from 29 schools (out of 48 schools)



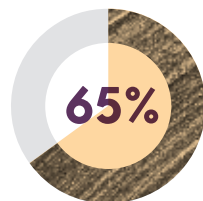
Category 4 schools
 2,420 postcards from 42 schools (out of 63 schools)



Category 5 schools
 2,093 postcards from 54 schools (out of 81 schools)

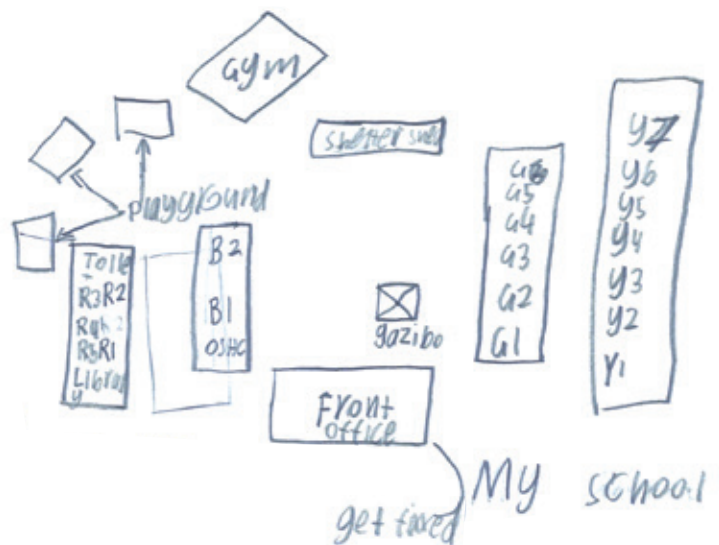


Category 6 schools
 2,336 postcards from 48 schools (out of 88 schools)

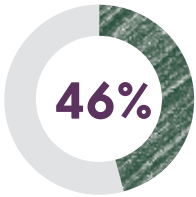


Category 7 schools
 1,799 postcards from 40 schools (out of 62 schools)

*The Index of Educational Disadvantage groups South Australian government schools into seven categories of relative disadvantage, with schools in Category 1 serving the most disadvantaged school communities, and Category 7 the least disadvantaged.



**Participation rates,
by South Australian
government regions**



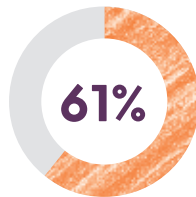
Adelaide Hills
714 postcards
from 17 schools
(out of 37 schools)



**Barossa,
Light and
Lower North**
725 postcards
from 18 schools
(out of 31 schools)



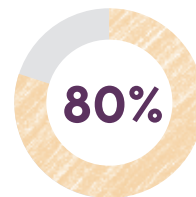
Eastern Adelaide
2,560 postcards
from 36 schools
(out of 61 schools)



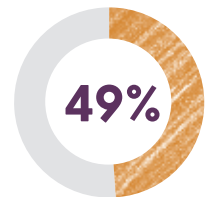
**Eyre and
Western**
919 postcards
from 23 schools
(out of 38 schools)



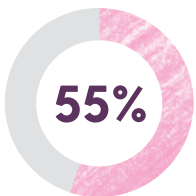
Far North
636 postcards
from 14 schools
(out of 28 schools)



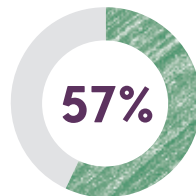
**Fleurieu &
Kangaroo
Island**
580 postcards
from 12 schools
(out of 15 schools)



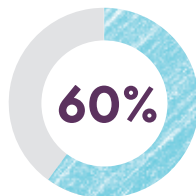
**Limestone
Coast**
586 postcards
from 19 schools
(out of 39 schools)



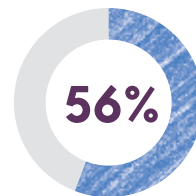
**Murray
and Mallee**
882 postcards
from 26 schools
(out of 47 schools)



**Northern
Adelaide**
3,733 postcards
from 62 schools
(out of 108 schools)



**Southern
Adelaide**
3,084 postcards
from 62 schools
(out of 103 schools)



**Western
Adelaide**
1,655 postcards
from 33 schools
(out of 59 schools)



**Yorke &
Mid North**
1,459 postcards
from 34 schools
(out of 61 schools)

Key messages

Above all else, children love to play – they especially love playing sport, playing on playgrounds and outdoors, and playing video games.



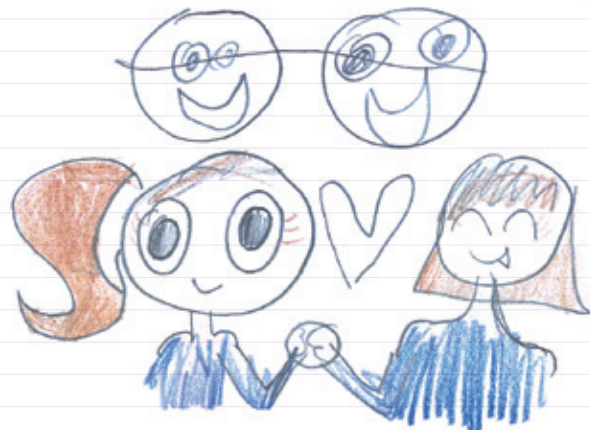
Children love animals. They enjoy spending time with them, want to know more about them, and are concerned about environmental impacts on them.



Children enjoy creative activities. They like drawing and painting, reading and writing, listening to and playing music, and the performing arts, and they want to know more about different forms of art.



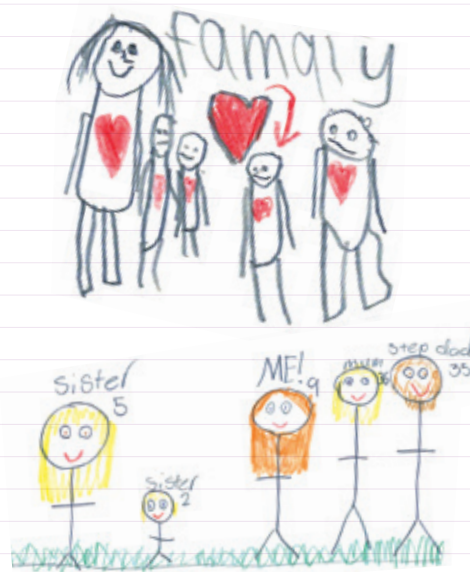
Children value kindness and want their neighbourhoods and the world more broadly to be kinder and for everyone to get along.



Children are concerned about safety in many forms – from the safety of their local streets through to ways of stopping wars.



Children care about their friends, families, and animals, and they enjoy spending time with them.



Children want the environment to be better cared for, with less littering, more action on climate change, and more nature and green spaces made available.

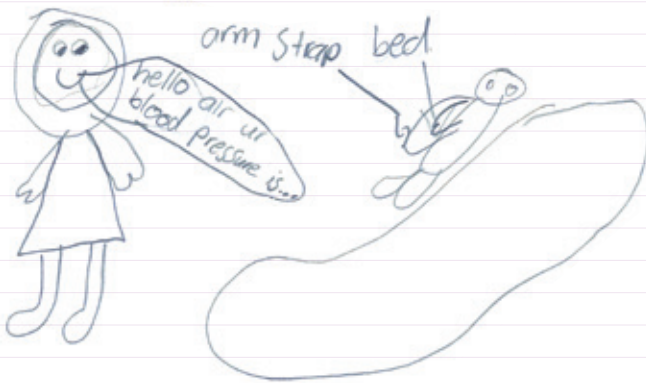


Children want better facilities and shops in their local neighbourhoods.



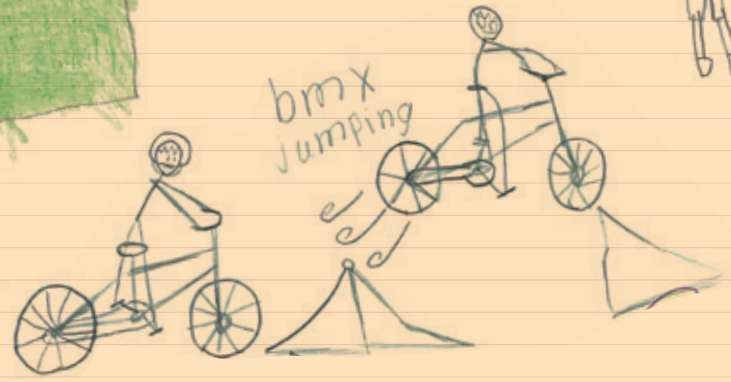
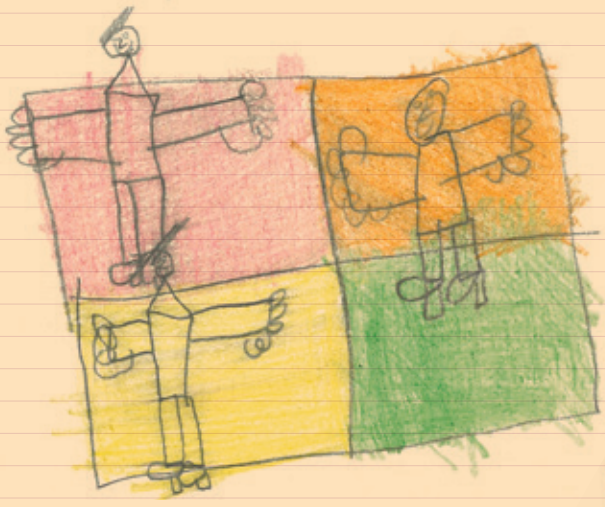
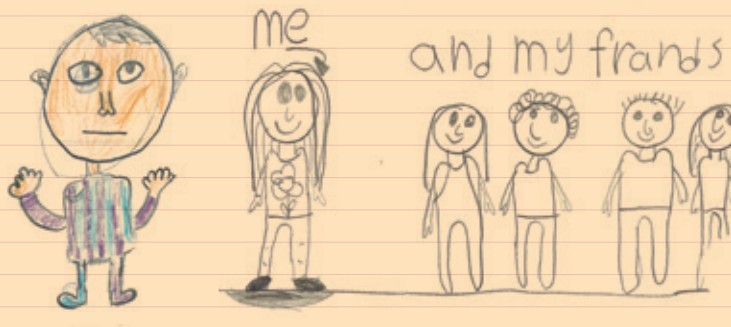
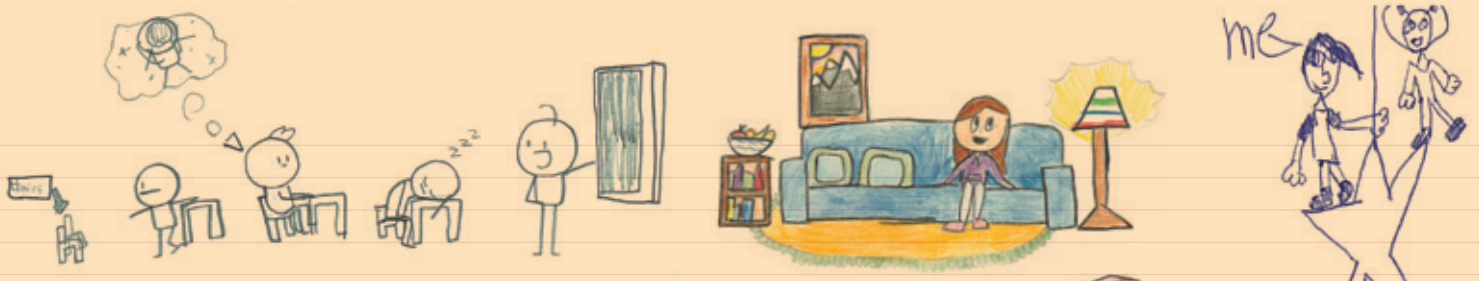
Children are interested in science. They particularly want to know more about space, nature, their bodies and their health. Some children said they want a science-related job in the future.

Children want to know more about all sorts of things, both at school and outside of school. They want school to be improved so it is better suited to them, including the learning content.



Children have diverse experiences and views that need to be considered and recognised.





What do 8 to 12-year-olds say is their favourite thing to do?

Sport, physical activity, and being outdoors

Playing, including video games

Spending time with friends, family, and animals

Creative activities, including art, reading and writing, and music

Nearly all children shared at least one of their favourite things to do, with some writing about many. They enjoyed a diverse range of activities, but most wrote about sport and being active, playing in a range of ways, spending time with others, and participating in different creative activities.

- “ Draw, Listen to music, Playing games. Watch TV, Baking, reading, Playing with my pets and friends. That’s all (By the way I like to bake vanilla cupcakes the most) =) (11, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ Draw and play video games with my friends also hang out with my lizard (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ Maths. (At school.) Reading, traveling, playing with my pets, and skateboarding. (9, non-binary – Adelaide Hills, Government)



Sport, physical activity, and being outdoors

Children frequently wrote that their favourite thing to do was sport, physical activity, and/or being outdoors. Sports they liked to play included soccer, football, netball, and basketball. They also named many other sports they enjoy such as swimming, gymnastics, cricket, athletics, and tennis.

- “ play soccer because it is very fun when you play. (8, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ play netball with my friends. Play the piano and learn How to swim. (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ play cricket, gaming, tennis, footy and play with my dog (12, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

Children wrote about a range of other physical activities they enjoy including riding their bikes, horse riding, skateboarding, rollerskating, and riding their scooters. Others shared that they like running, climbing, and jumping, and being able to ‘swing on the swings’. Children also wrote about enjoying dancing generally, as well as many different forms of dance such as ‘cheer’ (cheerleading), hip hop, jazz, tap, and Irish dancing.



“ go to cheer and see my cheer friends.
see my school friends (10, girl – Western
Adelaide, Catholic)

“ One of my favourite things to do is ride my
bike around where I live and at the BMX track
(12, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

Several children wrote more broadly about their love of being ‘outside’ or ‘outdoors’, including being at the pool or beach, and outside enjoying nature. Some children’s favourite things to do involved other outside activities such as fishing and camping.

“ Play in nature and with my friends. And climb
trees. (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)

Playing, including video games

Many children wrote about their favourite thing to do as relating to playing in a broad range of ways. This was often simply expressed as ‘play’ or ‘playing’, or ‘play with my friends and family’.

Children enjoyed playing video games, like Roblox, Fortnite, and Minecraft, as well as watching – and sometimes creating – videos, including on YouTube.

“ Gaming, because It has so many experiences
and possibilities in gaming. Also that it
teaches lessons secretly (11, boy – Western
Adelaide, Independent)

“ Play fornite with my brother/vidio game.
(10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

“ to hang out with my mum and play my Xbox.
(10, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North,
Government)



Some children wrote more specifically about playing with toys, Lego, Play-Doh, and boardgames, such as chess. Some enjoyed activities like ‘model railroading’, racing remote control cars, or doing magic tricks.

“ draw, Playing with my dolls, laying in bed,
spending time with family and cuddling my
sqishmallows. (9, girl – Yorke and Mid North,
Government)



- “ Doing Lego in my bed room and bilding it. (8, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Catholic)
- “ Solving difficult puzzles (Rubik’s Cubes), watching Youtube, playing basketball, drawing maps and eating, playing chess (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

Spending time with friends, family, and animals

Many children shared that spending time with others was their favourite thing to do. This included spending time with friends, sometimes playing, doing sport or gaming together, or talking.

- “ Play netball with my friends. And play Roblox with my friends. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ play Roblox with my friends or older cousin. I listen to K-pop and spend time with friends. (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ Play footy because I get to do it with my friends. (11, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ I like spending time with friends and family. Spending time with my dog. (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Catholic)



Children often shared they liked spending time with their family generally. They sometimes specifically mentioned their dad, mum, brothers/sisters/siblings, cousins, aunties, uncles, and grandparents. Again, they liked to do things together like playing, including sport.

- “ hang out with my family and play games with all my siblings together. (8, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ to play with my Dad (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ See my cousiun’s, uncle’s, Auntie’s and granparent’s. (8, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Independent)

Another favourite thing children said they do is spending time with animals including family pets. While these were often references to playing with and walking dogs or puppies they also included playing with their cat or guinea pig, feeding their bunnies or sheep, ‘chasing goats’ and watching fish ‘swim around the tank’. Others wrote that one of their favourite things to do was ‘ride horses’ or ‘hug my chicken’.

- “ go outside and play with my goat and dogs (10, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ Play footy on a bigger field and play with pet’s. (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ teddies. (9, girl – Adelaide Hills, Independent)

Creative activities, including art, reading and writing, and music

Many children enjoyed creative activities and 'art', particularly things like drawing. They also named a whole range of activities like craft, painting, colouring, and sketching. Some liked doing crochet, knitting, and/or sewing, while others wrote about making bracelets, using loom bands, and making origami.

- “ create things for me and my friends and to draw. to be happy (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ going to my art classes because i love to draw and paint and make clay. (11, girl Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ I like to write stories and do art and get lost in it (11, girl – Far North, Government)
- “ craft and learn to crochet (10, she/they – Murray and Mallee, Government)

Children also enjoyed reading and 'making books' and liked to 'wright stories'. These were often mentioned alongside other creative activities.

- “ Reading. Because I'm really enjoy when I'm reading. And I love to read the storys in books (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ Draw, play netball & read books because it makes me feel calm and sometimes excited. (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Catholic)
- “ journaling because I like writing about my thoughts and putting pictures in (7, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

Music, performing arts, and cooking were also mentioned by several children. They shared that they enjoy singing as well as playing the guitar, piano, violin, and ukulele. They also enjoy listening to music, including Taylor Swift. Some mentioned performing arts like acting, while others wrote about their love of cooking and liking to 'bake yummy things'.



- “ sing, play, chat, dance, shop, act, design, create! draw and make. (8, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ p.e, colaring in, maths and paforming arts. (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ cook things and draw and go on walks (9, girl – Eyre and Western, Catholic)

And so much more...

Children named a diverse range of things that were their favourite thing to do. This included learning and going to school, as well as playing at school and drawing in class.

- “ play soccer, learn at school and hang out with my friends. (12, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Catholic)

A broad range of other things to do were mentioned at least once. Children shared that they enjoy farming and 'helping at sheering time', going on train rides, and travelling in general. They liked helping people, chatting with others, babysitting, and shopping. Others wrote about lying in bed and sleeping in, imagining and daydreaming, and having sleepovers and visiting other people's houses.

- “ farming because of the aguculture vehicels and the land (11, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ is going on lot's of holidays to diffrend places in the world. (10, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ babysitting little kids. (10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Independent)

What do 8 to 12-year-olds want to know more about?

Science

Maths

Sport and physical activity

Animals

The arts

History

Cultures and geography

Technology and gaming

Children wanted to know about a broad range of things and were interested in and curious about the world around them. They wanted to know more about what they were already learning at school, but also about a much broader range of topics outside school. Very few children left this question blank.

“ *space, olympic's, drama, art and math*
(9, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)

“ *math, hass, animals, and the world*
(8, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)

“ *Draw Anime and dog's, History, Art, dancing*
(9, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)

Science

Children most often wrote that they wanted to learn about 'science' generally or certain elements of science. They were particularly interested in space and the universe, wanting to know more about things like astronomy and black holes and how the solar system was created. Many more broadly shared they wanted to know more about 'space'.

“ *space exploration, robots, and rocket science*
(10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Independent)

“ *Sports and science about Earth and space*
(11, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

“ *How the universe started and different theors from different people, I think it's intriguing.* (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

Others were interested in nature and the environment, wanting to know more about the ocean and different kinds of plants. Some wanted to know about things like 'Photosynthesis and the water cycle', 'Water and Bubbles', 'how deep the ocean is', and 'what's down in the ocean'. Others were interested in plants, flowers, trees, and 'nature' generally.



The environment and climate change were also of interest to some children.

- “ *the oceans, I want to be a marine biologist and I want to learn more about the deep sea oceans too reef of coral (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *The envioment such as flower, forest’s, plant’s and mushrooms. (9, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)*
- “ *climate change & pollution and how to stop it (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)*

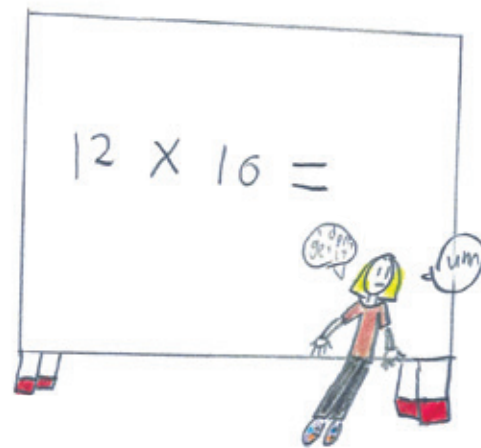
Some children wanted to know more about bodies and health. They wanted to know more about ‘my body’ and ‘the human body’. Some wanted to know about health and how to be healthy, as well as things like periods and puberty and ‘Growth and Development’.

- “ *me myself (how my body works) (8, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)*
- “ *puberty because I am scared (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)*
- “ *medicne and how it helps you. (11, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)*

Maths

Many children wanted to know more about ‘maths’ or ‘math’. They often wrote this generally, but some wanted to know about specific things relating to maths such as division, fractions and decimals, times tables, and counting.

- “ *division because it is hard to use it (8, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *decimals and how they can also be fractions and my division. (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *Skip counting and fractions so I’ll be better at maths (10, girl – Far North, Government)*



- “ *time tables fun because it’s fun but easy. (7, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)*
- “ *Maths and how i can upper my grades and to get smarter, to remember more maths stuff. (11, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Catholic)*

Others shared that they wanted to know more about maths in relation to algebra, graphs, larger numbers, and algorithms. One student shared that she wanted to know ‘all types of maths’.

Sport and physical activity

Sport was something children also wanted to know more about. Many just named a sport they were interested in, such as soccer, football, netball, basketball, or gymnastics. Others wanted to know how to play new sports and the rules of different sports. Some wanted to know how to improve their skills and learn ‘more netball tricks’ and ‘skills for basketball’, and some wrote that they wanted to play professionally when they were older. Others were interested in professional sports teams such as the Thunderbirds netball team.

- “ *different games in PE and sports (11, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)*
- “ *how to play netball better! (7, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)*



- “ Soccer because I want to train to be in the team Adelaide united when I grow up. (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Other children wanted to know more broadly about physical activities like ‘how to run faster’ or ‘how to run without getting tired’. A few wanted to know specifically about Physical Education or PE.

Animals

Children wanted to know more about animals, with many simply writing ‘animals’. Others mentioned the names of all sorts of animals and wildlife: pets (dogs, cats, rabbits, fish), animals to ride (horses), farm animals (sheep, pigs), sea creatures (turtles, sharks), reptiles (snakes), and more unusual animals (capybaras, axolotls, tardigrades).

- “ Animals (especially horses and dogs) and woodwork. =) (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ Bunneys how they work and jump. (8, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ sealife animals because I don't know much about them and they seem interesting (9, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

Children wanted to know about caring for and looking after animals and how animals ‘talk to each other’, as well as ‘Australia's history with animals’. They wanted to know about ‘animals extinct and non extinct’.

- “ animals and insects because there are so many species of them. (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ cats such as How many are there in the world and How many breeds are there (11, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)

The arts

Some children were interested in different forms of the arts. They wanted to know about art techniques and skills, artists, and the history of art. They particularly wanted to know more about drawing, with others mentioning painting and colouring.

- “ Art and how to make my drawings look more realistic. (10, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ how to draw better drawings. (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ The different types of techniques in Art and more about the history of the Arts and just history in general. I also want to know more about the techniques of the Arts. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ different artiest not just painters also dances and singers (10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Independent)



Children wanted to know more about movies, including how they are made and 'How actors do crazy stunts'. Others wanted to know more about music – singing, guitars, piano, and drums. They were also interested in different types of designing, such as fashion design.

- “ How to learn more interesting musical instruments. (8, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

Some children wrote about wanting to know how to write stories or better stories or 'how to write books'. They also wanted to know more about reading.

History

Children were interested in knowing more about history generally or 'the past' or 'olden days'. They were interested in topics like world wars, Australian history, world history, art history, and sport history as well as Ancient Egypt, the Renaissance, and the Titanic. Some specifically mentioned HASS as a school subject of interest.

- “ History, because in the junior school we don't do history and I am very good with history. (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ the past not boring the exiting (9, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Independent)
- “ The past because I like learning about the past and I like to know what has changed. (10, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ what cruel things happened in the olden days and in wars. (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ hass to learn more and more things (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)

They were also interested in local history and the history of their school. They wanted to know 'why is the tank in two wells', more about 'the stansbury quarry', and 'how the school was made'.



Cultures and geography

Children wanted to know more about different countries, cultures, and languages, 'the world' and geography. They wanted to know about 'how different cultures act' and 'sports across the world'.

- “ the world and what places are like outside of austrai [Australia] (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ Geography Because I am really enjoying learning about traveling and different places! (9, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

A smaller number of children specified they wanted to know more about their own culture or their parents' culture, including about the country, language, and religion.

- “ Being a aboriginal person cause I am Arrente adnyamathanha and noongar (10, boy – Far North, Government)
- “ history of Vietnam because it's my Parents culture. (8, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ my family tree and learn my home language Malayalam. (11, boy - Northern Adelaide, Independent)





Technology and gaming

Children were interested in 'technology' and coding, and robots, computers, and AI. They wanted to know more about gaming and how video games are made.

- “ tech stuff and i want to know when the first gameboy was made (11, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ coding because there are no schools that I know that teach that. (11, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ vidio games and maybe building (9, boy – Adelaide Hills, Independent)

And so much more...

Children named so many things they were interested to know more about – such as careers and money, transport, cooking, and how to be a better person – that there are too many to name here.

They wanted to know how things work and how things are made, like 'how basketballs are made', 'were Rubbish goes when there picked up', 'why they stopped making money out of paper', and 'How long it would take to start a new project for a building'.

Some were interested in farming, while others wrote about a range of hobbies. They also wanted to know more about celebrities, family members and other people they knew, and who 'Helen' is and what she does.

- “ Docter, nurse life and more about what it is like in the parlament house what they do seems cool (12, girl – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ how to make and decarate a cake (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ crops and sheep because I want to be a farmer when I'm older. (12, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)



What do 8 to 12-year-olds hope for the future?

Have a job, especially as an athlete or professional

The world to be kind, safe, healthy, and happy

The environment to be better cared for

Be better at things like sport and learning

School is improved and they achieve at school

Things are cheaper and everyone has a house

Children have all sorts of hopes for the future – for themselves, for their families and friends, for their communities, and for the world more broadly. Many children want a ‘good job’ and a ‘good life’ in the future.

- “ *To get a good job to end global warming and establish world peace (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *no one will start any world wars, im getting a new pet, i won't get kidnapped, i will get in the olympics and i can swim (9, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)*
- “ *The human race isn't wiped out completely and the Earth isn't so polluted so that you cant see a blue sky. Flying cars! Also that I can become a teacher and have a family. (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)*

Only a small number of children did not share any hopes they had for the future.



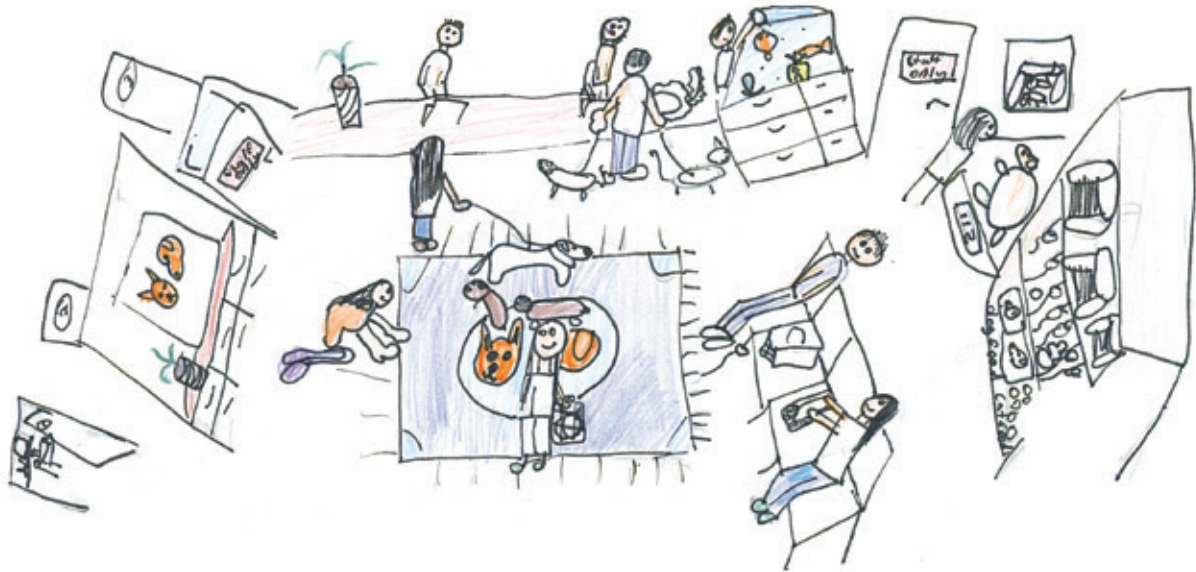
Have a job, especially as an athlete or professional

Children's hopes for the future often involved wanting a ‘job’, ‘work’ or a ‘good job’, while others wrote about a range of specific occupations. Some mentioned wanting their own business.

Being a professional athlete was mentioned by many children, particularly in soccer and football, as well as in netball, basketball, gymnastics, cricket, hockey, and a whole range of other sports.

- “ *I become a pro soccer player (10 boy – Eyre and Western, Independent)*
- “ *I can grow up and be a Afl Player (9, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)*
- “ *I can compete in the olympics for soccer and be a matilda and be like Mary Fowler. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)*

Others wrote about professional jobs such as being a teacher or vet. They wrote about being different sorts of scientists (like a marine biologist or palaeontologist), pilots, engineers and lawyers.



Some wrote about wanting medical jobs such as being a doctor, nurse, or dentist, along with a range of more specific medical professions like being a paramedic or cardiologist.

“ I can become a teacher, nurse or to play in the thunderbirds (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

“ im a wildlife scinest [scientist] (11, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)

Some children were focused on more practical jobs such as being a police officer, farmer, builder, chef or hairdresser.

“ I can be a police person & help people (6, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

“ me and my friend make a car bussiness to make trays and fix cars and be a farmer (10, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

Others wanted to work in the arts or media, or in gaming and tech. They wanted to be artists, different types of designers, actors, and singers, as well as youtubers and game developers.

“ I am in a rock band and sing and play guitar with nice people and have 2 kids and write/draw comics. (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

“ I can be a rich youtuber and use that money to save the environment (11, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

Within the responses about what jobs they wanted there were many children who shared that they wanted to be successful – ‘a star’, ‘the best’, and/or famous. This was often written about by those wanting to be professional athletes, but also sometimes related to other jobs and careers including the arts.

The world to be kind, safe, healthy, and happy

In the future children wanted all people to be kind and nice, where people are respectful and everyone gets along. They also personally wanted to be a ‘good’ and kind person, where they help others, and where they are ‘Still nice to my family and im nice to my friends’.

“ The world will be a kinder, happer and better place. (9, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Independent)

“ people are kinder to each other and there won’t be so much vilonce. (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)



Some children specifically mentioned not wanting war and/or wanting peace. They wanted a world free of violence, danger, robberies, and kidnapping.

- “ *ther was no war and only kindness*
(9, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ *there is humen peace in the world no war no nothin* (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

Other children wrote about being healthy and happy, with some wanting this for themselves, their family, and/or the world more broadly. This included people not dying or getting sick and finding a cure for cancer.

- “ *The world is a happy & healthy place*
(10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

The environment to be better cared for

Children were concerned about the environment and wanted it to be better in the future. They were particularly concerned about pollution and litter, wanting a ‘cleaner environment’ where ‘No one is Littering’. They also wanted less pollution in the ocean and for people to stop ‘Hurting and killing animals’ and causing them to become extinct.

- “ *all of the environmental health problems are fixed so we can all live a happy healthy life.*
(12, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ *everyone stops polluting the oceans and that no more speices are hunted to extinktion.*
(10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ *Our planet reduces plastic on land and in the ocean.* (9, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

Several mentioned the impacts of climate change and global warming and the need for action. They wanted a future where ‘we dont have to worry about climate change’ and where ‘People start taking care of earth’. Some also mentioned the need for things like electric cars and that ‘we use renewable energy’.

- “ *we survive because our parents generation caused global warming or its peak* (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ *The inviroment will recover from the damage that us humans have caused*
(11, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ *Eletric cars are the only cars* (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)



Be better at things like sport and learning

In the future, some children shared that they hoped they would be better at, or good at, something. This was often written about in relation to sport, art, gaming, maths, spelling, reading, and coding.

- “ I get good at swimming, maths and other stuff (9, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ I can play cricket beter. (7, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ I will be better at my times table and listen better to my parents. (8, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

They wanted to learn, be ‘smart’, and know ‘lots of things’. This included learning how to play the guitar, race, and cook, as well as maths.

- “ I will know everything about division, fractions and the types of fractions. (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ I will learn interesting stuff that I don't know and want to know. (8, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

School is improved and they achieve at school

Children mentioned a broad range of things in relation to school, high school and attending university in the future. Some wanted improvements to be made to their school, such as learning about particular maths topics and coding, and having opportunities to play more sport. Others wanted no homework, to be able to work with their friends, or to have a specific teacher.

Some mentioned things like their school getting a school pet, chickens, or a ‘dog park on the oval’. Others wanted their school to have better playgrounds and a trampoline, and a school which ‘invests in heaters’.

- “ This shool can get fixed and more sport stuff and class stuff. (11, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ All kids are allowed to have fidgets in shool. children can do cooking in school (11, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

Some children were focused on their grades in primary school and high school, including being able to get into high school and getting good grades and graduating. Some mentioned specific high schools they were going to attend in the future, or that they wanted to attend. A small number wrote about going to university, including what they would study there.

- “ I will get a A+ in every clace. [class] (9, boy – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Government)
- “ I go to a good high school with good education (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ I go to university and that ill fit in at high-school and become an anatheisiologist or someone who helps kids or people. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)





Things are cheaper and everyone has a house

Children hoped that in the future things would be cheaper and 'inflation goes down'. They wrote about this in terms of the near future and their families, as well as a more distant future where they would be able 'to own my own house'.

They were also concerned about others and wanted everyone to have a home and 'fresh food and water'. They wanted to stop 'world hunger' and to 'End poorness'.

- “ *Im friendly kind and not homeles and I have a good life (10, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *I am able to afford the essentials (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *everybody can have a place to sleep and eat (9, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)*
- “ *the kids now get a home in the future because of the inflation in house prices (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)*

And so much more...

Children had hopes for many other things for the future. They wanted local facilities, shops, and services to be improved. They wanted more facilities but also for existing facilities to be fixed or improved.

Children also mentioned the family they have now as well as the family they want to have in the future, including wanting to 'have kids' or, for some, wanting to 'live on my own'. They wrote about their friends in terms of wanting to still be friends with their current friends, to have friends or have more friends, or to live, work, or travel with friends.

They also wanted to be able to participate in activities that they enjoy, such as sport, and to be able to get pets and animals they wanted, such as dogs, birds, rabbits, and horses. Some mentioned driving a car and getting their own car. They wrote about travelling and going on holiday to all sorts of places, including Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Italy, and Poland. Some also mentioned futuristic things, such as flying cars, or that 'they figure out how to live on mars'.

- “ *I am happy and live a good life and have a happy family (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)*
- “ *I will have lots of friends. (8, boy – Far North, Catholic)*
- “ *I hope that someday I get a golden retriever [retriever] and a new house. (11, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)*

What do 8 to 12-year-olds say would make their neighbourhood better for kids?

More and better places and things to do:

- More playgrounds and parks
- More sports facilities and equipment
- More fun places and things to do
- More facilities and shops
- Cleaner and greener spaces

Kinder, safer, and more connected communities:

- More children, more kindness, and more interactions
- Safer roads and streets
- Less ‘bad’ behaviour

Children mentioned all sorts of things that would make their neighbourhood better for kids. Many of their suggestions broadly related to the need for more places and things to do, particularly playgrounds, parks, and sports, or the need for improving the community, such as by doing more things together and having safer roads and streets.

“ Their was A really big nice wooden playgronnd for friend's to come together and hang out maybe even for Adults to Actully [think] That's a good idea (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

“ there was a crossing and a good park. + if everyone new each other (9, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

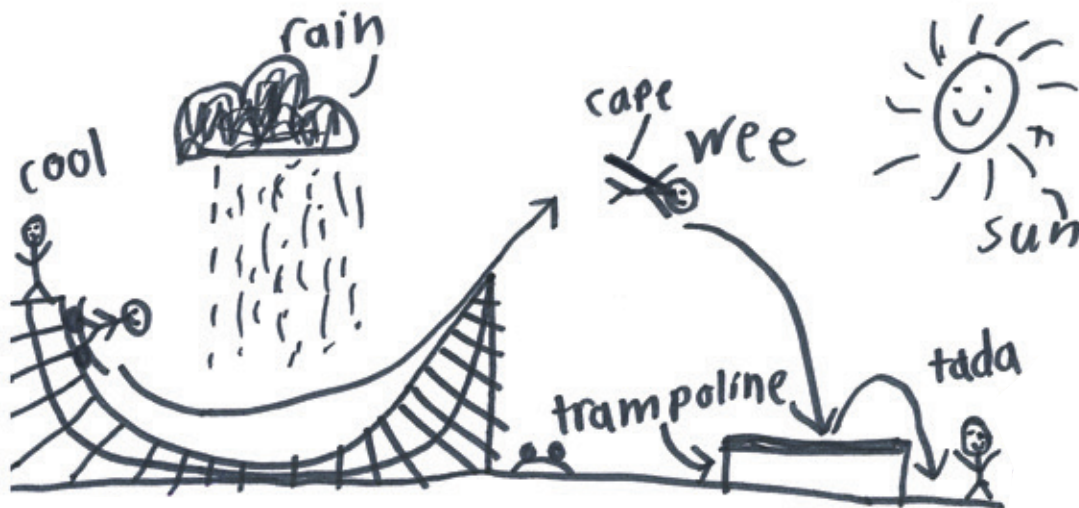
Responses were surprisingly similar across metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, including in terms of wanting more places and things to do, and better communities.

Most children had at least one suggestion for what would make their neighbourhood better for kids. However, there were some children who shared that their neighbourhood was ‘already amazing’ and that they wanted it to stay the same. A small number of children noted that they did not live in a neighbourhood, with some sharing that they lived on a farm.

More and better places and things to do

Overwhelmingly, children wrote about places and things to do, wanting more opportunities to play and be outdoors, doing fun activities in nice spaces with the right facilities and equipment.





More playgrounds and parks

Many children wrote about wanting more or better playgrounds and parks in their neighbourhoods. They wanted playgrounds which were bigger with 'more things to play with'. This included play equipment like swings, slides, flying foxes, seesaws, monkey bars, and sandpits. Some also noted the need for playgrounds to be upgraded or 'fixed'. They wanted playgrounds 'everywhere' which were easy to access and near where they lived.

- “ a big big big big play ground with a big jumpy castle. and a big slide (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ ther was a playgrand with a slide and swings I love swings (7, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ If we had a playground near where we live. (9, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ They add the Playground Back that they Took Away (11, boy – Limestone Coast, Government)

Children wanted 'a play grond for evryone', of all ages and abilities. A few specifically mentioned the need for sensory playgrounds and 'access to more Autism inclusive play spaces'.

- “ More things to do on playgrounds for older kids. Because Its kind of boring when I go. (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

“ the park around the corner had a playground that isn't just for two-year-olds and had full size soccer goals. (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

“ They added more things to do in playgrounds and disable friendly. None of the playgrounds near me have any wheelchair friendly activities to do. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

Children wanted bigger parks and more open spaces and fields to play on. They wanted 'a massive local park' with more things to do. Some also mentioned the need for more dog parks, more shade, and facilities like barbecues. As with playgrounds, they wanted parks to be close by and accessible for all children.

- “ we had a park and Less people building there (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ there was a giant bigger park near my house (9, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ There was a park near by, a skate park, dog park and more tree-s. (9, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)

They also specifically wanted more, bigger, and better bike parks and skate parks. They shared that they wanted 'a skate park because I like scootering' and 'a bike or anything with wheels track for anyone can go to'.

More sports facilities and equipment

Children wanted 'more things to do with sport', including more sports facilities, courts, and goals, more sporting equipment, and more opportunities to play sport. They specifically wanted more soccer fields, football ovals, netball courts, basketball courts, tennis courts, and cricket pitches, as well as 'a gym for kids to do swimming and gymnastics in' and to 'have things like little athletics'. They asked to 'upgrade the basketball hoops' and expressed the desire that 'we had a pool again'.

- “ they put a swimming pool and a soccer pitch because the neighbourhood will be more entertaining for kids. (10, boy – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ there is a netball cort nir the foot ball oval! (9, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ Better sporting faciltys and more play area for yonger kids. Seeing them happy makes me happy. (12, girl – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ we had a cricket pitch and footy goals at my local park. (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ We had 20 billion pools because my neighbourhood likes pools (7, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Independent)

More fun places and things to do

Children wrote about their neighbourhood being better for kids if it had more fun places and fun things for kids to do. This included a waterpark with waterslides, trampolines, beaches, amusement parks with rollercoasters, bowling alleys, cinemas, and zoos. They wanted a 'ginormis water Park' and 'a secret Playroom for only kids!'

- “ More stuff to do, like bowling, shops, restraunts, and water parks obviously. (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ In the Riverland we could have more family events like a trampolin park Ice skating (11, girl – Murray and Mallee, Catholic)
- “ We had more kid attractions like, water parks, cinemas and arcades. (12, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Government)
- “ it had a bounce park and a lolly shop for free (9, girl – Far North, Government)
- “ The movies opened again so I can wach stuff. I really miss the cinema. Give the Murray Bridge Cinema 1 million dollors so they can open up. (11, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)

Children also shared that their neighbourhoods would be better for kids 'if it had some funer stuff to do'. Some wanted 'more places for kids', 'things that would intrest them', and 'more after school activitys'.





More facilities and shops

Some children wrote about a wide range of facilities and shops that would make their neighbourhoods better for kids. This included there being more schools, libraries, and community centres, as well as more transport like trains. They also noted the need for 'more upkeep of facilities'. Children said they wanted things like footpaths, benches, and other community facilities to be improved.

- “ we have bigger Playgrounds, more nature more libarys, more schools, more houses, more animals and less killing animals (11, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)
- “ There was a community center. For everyone. There could be a play ground and people could have BBQs. (10, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)
- “ Biger (or smoother) footpaths to ride our bikes on (10, girl – Southern Adelaide, Government)
- “ If ovals had more toilets and modern facilities, I'd be satisfied. (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Government)

Children wrote about the need for more shops, including fast food places and restaurants, retail shops such as discount stores, and supermarkets or a 'Grocery store'. They also wanted shopping malls, clothing shops, ice cream shops and trucks, lolly shops, bakeries, pet shops, and surf shops.

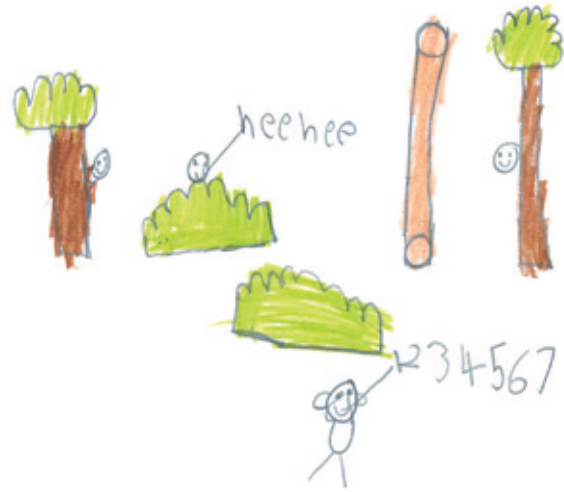


- “ There was a fast food restraunt in Kapunda like Mc donalds and KFC. (10, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ We had a big shopping mall! If we had more road crossings! Bring Target back! (10, girl – Yorke and Mid North, Catholic)
- “ they had more shopping centres and places for teenagers. “We” have no in between either “kiddy stuff” or sephora pleas make something for the middle like a shopping centre that is fun (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

Cleaner and greener spaces

Children wanted their neighbourhoods to be cleaner and greener. They were particularly concerned about rubbish and people littering. They more generally wanted their playgrounds and parks to be cleaner and wanted 'a cleaner place to hang'. Others stressed that people needed to 'pick up after their dogs'.

- “ if people took better care of that stuff including getting a fountain and taking how bad litter can be more seriously maybe getting more bins to help (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ no one litters because in my neighbourhood it has rubbish on the ground. (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Government)



Some children wanted greener neighbourhoods with more nature, trees, grass, and flowers. They wanted 'LOADS of greanary', 'more trees', and 'more grass to play on!'

- “ there was more programs to help nature in goolwa (10, girl – Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island, Independent)
- “ there were more fruit trees and gum trees and places to play. (8, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)

Kinder, safer, and more connected communities

Many children wrote about improving their neighbourhoods in terms of community and opportunities for interaction between people. They focused on having more children, more kindness, and more interactions, as well as having safer roads and streets, and less 'bad' behaviour.

More children, more kindness, and more interactions

To start with, children wanted more children in their neighbourhoods. Broadly, they wanted 'more kids', with some specifying this was so they could have more people to play with and make friends with.

- “ their were more kids in it and we knew each other. (8, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)

- “ there was other kids apart from my brother and my sister and the basketball court was closer to eight mile creek. (9, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ there was more children in my town (9, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

They also wanted positive interactions between children and amongst all people in their neighbourhoods more broadly. This included wanting people to be 'nice' and 'kind' and being treated with 'respect'. They wanted people to be 'more nicer to more kids', to be friendly, and that their neighbourhoods would be better for kids 'if people helped other people'.

- “ be nice and play games fairly (9, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ we got more respect and not get ignored by adults and teens (12, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)

Children shared their neighbourhood would be better for kids if 'they knew each other' and 'everyone is more conected'. They wanted children to be able to play together, have fun together, and be friends. They wanted a neighbourhood where people socialised and communicated, where 'our neighbours would meet up more' and there were more 'street parties'.

- “ kids came outside more, and play with eachother. (11, girl – Northern Adelaide, Government)

- “ kids will play together and include people in there games (7, boy – Eyre and Western, Government)
- “ we interacted with each other more (11, girl – Adelaide Hills, Government)
- “ We were all Freinds or if we had a playground for the little kids. Invite our families for dinner no matter what religion or race. (12, boy – Northern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ people didn't speed down the roads (11, she/they – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)
- “ there were slower speeds in the main street. (8, girl – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ More of the busy corner streets had children crossings (10, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Government)
- “ The drivers would wait for you to cross (9, boy – Adelaide Hills, Government)

Safer roads and streets

Children wrote that neighbourhoods would also be better for kids if they were safer. Children were particularly concerned about road safety and the speed of cars. They wanted slower speed limits, stricter road rules, and some or more speed cameras. They wanted more road crossings and stoplights, and bridges for busy roads. For some children, the amount of traffic on the road was also seen as making their neighbourhoods less safe for kids.

- “ cars stopped speeding on the roads and if there wasnt as much construction on the roads (11, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ it had footpaths to make is safer for kids (11, boy – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ We had bigger footpath for kids to ride their bikes not on the road (11, girl – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)
- “ people fixed the potholes so the paths & roads would be suitable to ride on with roller skates, scooters or bikes. (12, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)



They were concerned about safety for kids in terms of lighting and fences. They wanted more lights at night and security cameras, along with more fences and enclosed areas to keep children safe, including from dogs.

“ At night the streets would have more light and playgrounds are safe (12, girl – Southern Adelaide, Catholic)

Less ‘bad’ behaviour

Some children mentioned examples of behaviour that they did not want in their neighbourhood. This included criminal activity like stealing, robbing, and kidnapping, and ‘less bad people’, ‘creeps’, or ‘perverts’.

“ the people were not breaking into peoples houses. (8, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

“ There wasn’t crazy people going around at night. (10, boy – Eastern Adelaide, Catholic)

“ people are nicer and do not rob others or steal things from the shops. (10, boy – Far North, Government)

“ if there are no creeps or kidnapers (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Catholic)

“ all stuff like racism, vandalism, bullying and a whole lot of other things would stop. (10, boy – Yorke and Mid North, Government)

Others wrote about the need for less bullying and not being mean to others. They shared that their neighbourhood would be better for kids if ‘no one gets bullied’ and ‘Their not always mean’.

Some children had specific complaints about their neighbours’ behaviour. This included that their neighbours were mean to them, yelled at them, or were too loud. They wrote about neighbours who they saw as being ‘bad’, ‘dangrous’, and ‘noisy’.

“ if there wasn’t a man that lookes over are fence and comes into are back yard (10, boy – Western Adelaide, Government)

“ the neighbourhood doesn’t shout because an old lady shouted at me for getting my toy from the tree (10, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)

“ my rude neighbour across the road stops threatening me to call the cops on me for accidentally kicking the ball into his small light. (10, boy – Barossa, Light and Lower North, Government)

“ A. people stopped doing burn outs around our house B. our neighbors stopped having parties at night and C. houses weren’t so packed together. (9, girl – Northern Adelaide, Independent)



And so much more...

While many children's responses related to places and community as described above, they also offered other suggestions for how their neighbourhoods could be made better for kids.

Some wanted quieter roads and people, with 'not so much loud noises'. Others wanted things to be cheaper, and for everyone to have access to housing and food.

- “ it was more quieter in my neighbourhood and i think that would be a great idea (10, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ If more things (e.g houses, food) were cheeper so more families would be happy because their not struggling and are able to afford more things. (10, girl – Western Adelaide, Independent)

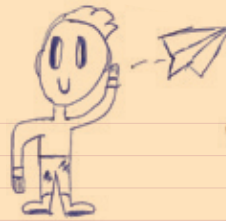
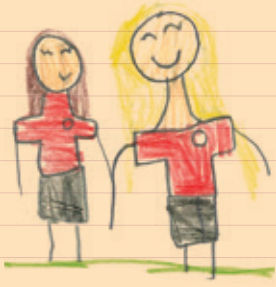
Others wanted more of a say on things and to have more freedom to spend time in their neighbourhood. They shared their neighbourhood would be better for kids if 'kids can have a say in stuff', including 'local builds'.

Some wanted things and people to be closer to their house, like a park or their school. They also wanted more animals in their neighbourhood. Others wrote about their desire for no smoking, drugs, or 'drunk' people.

- “ Parents wouldn't be so overprotective and just allow their kids to go outside and enjoy the world around us, alone or with friend. Like get outside! (12, girl – Southern Adelaide, Independent)
- “ they didn't live so far away from eachother (11, boy – Murray and Mallee, Government)
- “ there were more animals in the naberhood (10, girl – Limestone Coast, Government)
- “ no smoking and no vaeping (8, boy – Southern Adelaide, Government)



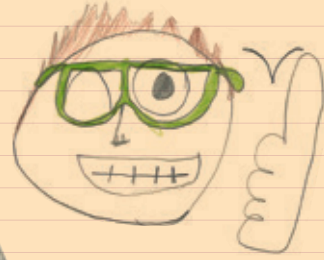
Im on the tigers team!



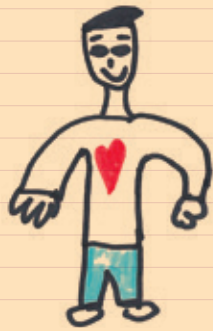
mouth protector
Jersey number

fody boots

striped yellow and black socks.



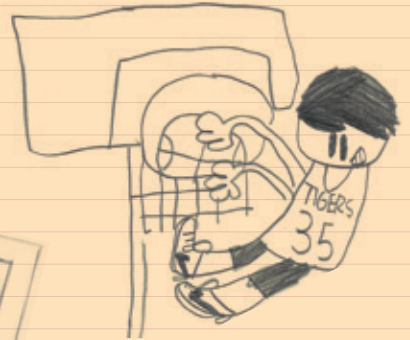
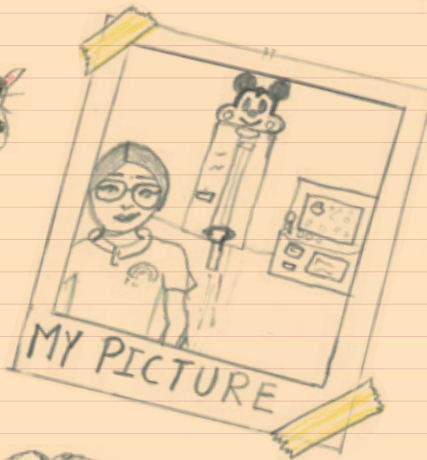
draw



I care about Pets.



Minecraft skin



Pug



Reflections on gender

In 2024, a similar number of girls and boys completed postcards. There were also some children who described their gender in other ways, such as non-binary, or shared that their pronouns were she/they or they/them. This report acknowledges the broad diversity of children's genders but offers some reflections focusing in on girls and boys, due to the number of responses that fell into these two genders.

Across all the question prompts, when specifically analysed by gender, girls and boys offered many similar responses, with the broad themes in the report reflecting this. However, there were sometimes notable differences between boys and girls in relation to some of the themes, reflecting social norms, expectations and stereotypes.

Children's favourite thing to do was most often related to sport and physical activity for boys and girls. However, girls were more likely than boys to mention enjoying a range of creative activities, whereas boys were more likely to mention gaming and were slightly more likely to mention sport. Girls were more likely to mention friends, animals, and reading, although these were also written about by some boys.

Children's responses about what they would like to know more about were more similar between girls and boys. Similar numbers of girls and boys mentioned things relating to science, which was the top response overall, as well as many of the other key topics. However, girls were more likely to mention animals and arts, and boys were more likely to mention technology and gaming and were slightly more likely to mention sport.

Responses were also similar by gender for what children hoped for in the future. Overall, they most often wrote about jobs they would like, a kinder world, and a better environment. Boys were more likely to write about wanting sport as a job in the future, whereas girls were more likely to write about becoming a professional, such as a teacher.

When responding to what they thought would make their neighbourhood better for kids, girls and boys both frequently mentioned the overarching themes of more and better places to go and things to do and a better community more broadly. The top response for both girls and boys was having more and better play-grounds and parks. Boys were slightly more likely to mention sports and sports facilities than girls, and girls were slightly more likely to mention more fun places and things to do more broadly.



Conclusion

In 2024, more than 17,500 children aged 8–12 years across South Australia took part in the annual Commissioner’s Student Voice Postcards initiative. Their responses provide clear insight their lives, including the conditions which shape them. They also expose patterns of systemic challenges that must be addressed.

Children described a lack of access to safe and inclusive public spaces. They asked for better playgrounds and parks, more sport facilities, safer roads and footpaths, more libraries and community centres, better transport, and improved lighting. These are infrastructure and planning issues that affect health, development and participation. The disparity between communities highlights long-standing inequities in how public resources are distributed.

Children spoke about the need for education that reflects their interests. They want to learn about science, the environment, creative arts, their bodies and the world around them. There is a clear demand for broader learning opportunities that foster engagement, critical thinking and creativity.

Children raised concerns about safety, housing insecurity, bullying and the effects of climate change. These are not abstract worries. They reflect daily experiences and an awareness of the systems that are meant to support them but often do not. Some children wrote about not having enough food or stable housing. Others expressed concern for the wellbeing of animals and the planet, linking environmental concerns to human behaviour.

These observations point to systemic challenges across planning, education, housing, community safety, environmental policy and social infrastructure.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People is an independent statutory role created to promote and advocate for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all children and young people living in South Australia, and to help bring about improvements to the systems that impact them most. This report is a core part of that work. It presents direct evidence of where systems are failing and where change is required.

Children are not passive recipients of adult decisions. They are active participants in their communities. They have clear visions for their lives and communities. It is practical, generous and grounded in fairness. They are ready to contribute. It is not enough just to ask children about their lives, action needs to be taken on what they say. When their views are taken seriously, systems improve for everyone. These are things that matter.

CHILDREN RULE!!!!



I wish we could write more



More gardens



