

Treasury

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2 February 2023

Re: Measuring What Matters

As South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, my mandate under the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* is to advocate for the rights, interests and wellbeing of all children and young people in South Australia. It is also my role to ensure that the State, at all levels of government, satisfies its international obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Thank you for the opportunity to inform how the Australian government 'measures what matters' to Australians. I welcome the Treasury's focus on the broader range of social and environmental factors that influence community wellbeing and quality of life beyond traditional macroeconomic indicators.

I am writing to highlight the importance of including a range of measures specific to children and young people's wellbeing and outcomes. Considering the rights and interests of future generations and improving the visibility of children and young people in indicators is critical to ensuring a complete picture of wellbeing and progress. Doing so is also likely to improve key longer-term outcomes, including intergenerational equity and prosperity.

Since 2017, I have engaged directly with thousands of young South Australians about the diverse issues that affect their lives. My annual student voice postcards initiative asks thousands of 8 to 12 year olds to share their hopes and dreams, their concerns and what matters most to them.¹ As summarised in my **Things that Matter** reports, children often feel underestimated and overlooked; they want adults to show more interest in the things they care about and to understand that life growing up today is different compared to when they grew up.

Our youngest citizens are aware of the need to plan in the interests of future generations. They fear that adults are too often making short-term decisions in their own interests rather than in the interest of the whole community. They want decision makers to be future focused and to think about the planet, people, prosperity, and

peace, equally and interdependently. They want fully integrated solutions that address problems simultaneously and comprehensively, taking into account the most vulnerable in our societies.

Without ‘future-proofing’ measures of wellbeing and progress, we risk focusing purely on the crises of today, rather than planning for how to manage and mitigate the challenges of tomorrow.

As you know, a significant proportion of government spending is based on ‘failure demand’ⁱⁱ – demand that could be avoided if there was greater investment in addressing the root causes of challenges such as poverty, housing and job insecurity, and climate change. This includes spending on social welfare payments, the healthcare or criminal justice systems.

In 2015, Wales was the first country in the world to introduce a *Well-Being of Future Generations Act*. The Act requires collaboration across public services towards seven national wellbeing goals, including prosperity, equity, cohesive communities, thriving culture and global responsibility. These goals are things children and young people would like to see governments focus on, and the Welsh government reports annually on progress against these goals, including a specific report on the wellbeing of children.ⁱⁱⁱ

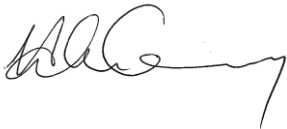
The Welsh Act ensures that policy makers and service designers consider the impact of their decisions on future generations by balancing short-term needs with long term goals; preventing problems from occurring or worsening; working collaboratively; and involving diverse people in policy making. As such, it provides a useful starting point in order to ensure that the interests of future generations are prioritised when exploring better ways to measure what matters.

I encourage you to consider the adequacy of existing measures in relation to children and young people’s health, wellbeing, safety, education, participation and citizenship, as well as what new measures might be needed to address any gaps. Particular consideration should be given to measures that capture children and young people’s views and experiences and provide genuine opportunities for them to have a say on issues that are of greatest concern to them. Doing so will not only give effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), but also build trust by improving the sustainability and accountability of decision-making.

I also provide the following links and attach the latest Snapshot reports on what children told me in the 2021 postcards in the hope that this can assist in determining what measures matter to children and young people:

1. [The Things That Matter – Views of 8-12 year olds on life, school and community \(2020\)](#)
2. [The Things That Matter 2 – Views of 8-12 year olds on life, school and community \(2021\)](#)
3. [The Things That Matter 3 – Views of 8-12 year olds on life, school and community \(2022\)](#)
4. [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Inclusion and Diversity – You Tube](#)
5. [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Civics and Leadership – You Tube](#)
6. [What SA Kids Have Told Us About the Environment – You Tube](#)
7. [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Learning – You Tube](#)
8. [What SA Kids Have Told Us About Play – You Tube](#)

Yours sincerely,



Helen Connolly

Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia

ⁱ Helen Connolly, Commissioner for Children and Young People South Australia, 2022. Things that Matter 3: Views of 8-12 year olds on life, school and community. Available at <https://www.ccyp.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/The-Things-That-Matter-3-Views-of-8-12-Year-Olds-on-Life-School-and-Community.pdf>. Previous Things that Matter reports available at <https://www.ccyp.com.au/ccyp-reports/>.

ⁱⁱ Wellbeing Economy Alliance, 2021. Failure Demand: Counting the true costs of an unjust and unsustainable economic system. Available at https://weall.org/wp-content/uploads/FailureDemand_FinalReport_September2021.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ Welsh Government, 2022. Wellbeing of Wales, 2022: children and young people's wellbeing. Available at <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing-main-points-html>.

THE THINGS THAT MATTER TO CHILDREN



What SA Children say about Wellbeing

- ✓ Find out more about what happens at school
- ✓ Expand the curriculum to include more variety
- ✓ Make education affordable for everyone
- ✓ Support children who are struggling

Across government, business, and community, the views, perspectives, and experiences of primary aged children need to be included. This snapshot is designed to support the capacity for this to occur.

The findings have been drawn directly from consultation undertaken in 2021 with South Australian children aged 8–12 years. It is presented in this snapshot format to help inform decision makers, researchers, policy makers, and others who have an interest in understanding what children in this age group think and need.

Regardless of where they live, children aged 8 to 12 years share many of the same interests, passions, aspirations, and ideas for how to build a better world.

Children across South Australia wrote about wanting to be taken seriously by adults and be provided with more opportunities to have a say at every level of decision-making – in their homes, schools, and local community, as well as at all levels of government and service systems.

They were clear that when adults listen to their imaginations, creative perspectives, and big ideas, this not only improves their own wellbeing, self-confidence, and trust in adults, it also benefits their whole school and community.

Across all ages, genders and regions, children identified changes that could be made at the family, school,



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community and systemic levels to make the world a better place. Their postcard responses reflected how much they care for the people and environment around them, and articulated a clear vision for a fair, inclusive, and kinder world; one where everyone belongs and has a say. Their ideas included eliminating ‘racism’, ‘sexism’ ‘homophobia and transphobia’ and creating communities where ‘we are all equal’, particularly ‘men and women’ and ‘adults and kids’.

Climate change, natural disasters, mental health, and a global pandemic, are just some of the complex issues permeating the lives of children in primary school today. While new and emerging trends have always shaped children’s lives, the differences between those responding in 2021 and those who responded in 2020 and 2019, is the impact that fast paced changes in technological, cultural, political, and environmental aspects of life is having on children growing up in the twenty-first century.

WHAT SA CHILDREN SAY ABOUT WELLBEING

Children want us to understand that the decisions we make affect younger generations and consequently they want to be provided with information and opportunities to influence decision-making, including decisions being made about and at school.

Beyond their connections with friends, family and their culture, children tell us about their relationships at school with their teachers and friends. Many children wanted us to know more about what happens to them at school, and they often describe wanting to make school safer and say this could be achieved by having more chill out spots, canteen options, fidgets, and 'life skills' lessons.

As we might expect, what kids want us to know about school varies. Some students wish school was more challenging, and that students could be 'grouped by skill, not age'. Others want their schoolwork to be a bit easier. Some children want school to start and finish earlier so that kids can spend more time with family, enjoy longer breaks during the day, have more long weekends, and take more holidays. Others wrote about wanting school to start later, so they could sleep for a bit longer.

Most want less homework or 'more time in which to do it'. Others focused on their relationships at school, including how they are treated with some sharing that they are sometimes being bullied, or find themselves being a bully, and that they don't like this or teachers who embarrass them.



For many children, school is the focus of their ideas for a better world. They gave a range of suggestions relating to ways to improve access to education for all and providing more support for those who are struggling with education costs and learning. They suggested that changing the structure of the school day and expanding the curriculum would help and that these are changes that would improve their overall school experience. Their ideas included the way timetables and classrooms are decided upon, as well as the physical environment and school facilities that are made available to students.

Some children wanted to see more sport and PE lessons each week, along with longer break times and longer lessons to help them be 'more prepared for when we leave school'. They were interested in 'cooking' and 'technology and gaming' courses, and wanted these to be offered earlier than when they get to high school. They also wanted financial literacy lessons to be incorporated into their primary school curriculum.

Common suggestions to improve school facilities and classroom environments included ensuring every school had a 'proper canteen', an 'oval' and 'a swimming pool' as well as ways to ensure there was 'less vandalism' of school property.

Children were eager to express that they're 'a good kid' and 'not naughty', 'trying their best' and 'getting better' at certain sports, schools subjects and other activities. Others focused on their relationships at school, including how they are treated or treat others. Some children shared that they are sometimes both bullied or find themselves being a bully, and that they needed help from adults with this. A small number of children focused on how much they enjoyed, or did not enjoy, home schooling in the context of COVID-19. Others wrote about where they want to go when they reach high school.

“ how rudely and how bad boys mainly treat girls at school because it can make you feel embarrassed, scared and upset.”
– 11 year old, female, Eastern Adelaide

“ that I am not a boy who has bad marks or who is very naughty.” – 10 year old male, Eastern Adelaide

Children wanted the cost of school to be far cheaper, and for there to be ‘more chances for people in need’ to ‘start at a school they can afford to stay at’. They spoke about the need for more flexible learning along with better programs for students who move between schools, those living with disability, and those who have health issues such as anxiety or depression.

“ A program for people who are moving schools to make them feel better and for people with health issues and Anxiety and depression to have a person to help!”

– 9 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

“ Less fights and some or more class pets. Every class in every school had a class pet and if the government made it easier to get class pets.” – 10 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

“ School and what is going on in the world and what is my future going to be like.” – 10 year old, male, Murray and Mallee

“ that they are not always right and that school is very hard for us and that we know when you talk about us and it hurts.” – 11 year old, female, Limestone Coast

“ we were able to do things like good tech earlier on, so we would be more prepared for when we leave school.” – 11 year old, female, Southern Adelaide



For more information on *The Things That Matter To Children* see other snapshots in this series:

- What SA Children say about the C word
- What SA Children say about Looking After the Planet
- What SA Children say about Grownups

Available for download from:

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What SA Children say about Looking After the Planet

- ✓ We must create a sustainable future
- ✓ Climate Change is affecting the Earth's environment
- ✓ People and places, plants and animals, need us to act now
- ✓ We all need to ride bikes and drive electric cars
- ✓ Adults can't expect us to clean up their mess

Across government, business, and community, the views, perspectives, and experiences of primary school aged children need to be included. This snapshot is designed to support the capacity for this to occur.

The findings are drawn directly from consultation undertaken with South Australian children in 2021. It is presented in this snapshot format to inform decision makers, researchers, policy makers, and others who have an interest in understanding what children aged 8 to 12 years think and need.

Regardless of where they live, South Australian children aged 8 to 12 years share many of the same interests, passions, aspirations, and ideas for how to build a better world. Children from across the State want to be taken seriously and to be provided with more opportunities to have a say at every level of decision-making – in their homes, schools, and local community, as well as at all levels of government, with opportunities to have input into the service systems being designed for them including how they're being delivered.

They were clear that adults listening to their unique imaginations, creative perspectives and big ideas not only improves their own wellbeing, self-confidence, and trust in adults, it also benefits the whole school and community.



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From metropolitan Adelaide to regional and remote communities, children wanted grownups to know more about them, their lives, and their interests. Those in metropolitan areas wanted grownups to know more about what they are good at, as well as what their aspirations for the future are. Those in regional towns and communities focused more on grownups knowing about the kind of person they are, how they feel, and when they do and don't need support.

Climate change, natural disasters, mental health, and a global pandemic are just some of the complex issues that permeate the lives of children in our primary schools today. While new and emerging trends have always shaped children's lives, the differences between the responses received on the 2021 postcards and those received in 2019 and 2020 reveal just how much the fast pace of technological, cultural, political, and environmental change is impacting children's lives in the twenty-first century.

WHAT SA CHILDREN SAY ABOUT LOOKING AFTER THE PLANET

If we fail to listen to what children in this age group are telling us, we risk alienating them at a time in their lives when they are seeking reassurance that the adults in their lives can be trusted. By listening, empathising, and validating their experiences, we will be building enduring relationships grounded in trust and hope for the future, reinforcing the message that children are valuable stakeholders and citizens who have a right to be heard and have their ideas acted upon.

The environment was a top concern for many children in this age-group. The postcard responses made many mentions of nature, the planet, climate change and global warming. A majority of 8 to 12 year olds told the Commissioner that they're really worried about pollution and the impact climate change is having on their communities. They care about people and places, and plants and animals, and they worry that environmental disasters like fires and floods will continue to impact on all of these.

There was a real sense of frustration that their generation will live with the consequences of a lack of action from previous generations. They believe adults and leaders today are not doing enough and fear they will be left with the responsibility of fixing the 'mess' that has been made by older generations.

Drawings of planet Earth were common. While some children depicted Earth as happy and smiling, surrounded by love hearts, or people holding hands, others drew the planet on fire, or had contrasting pictures of their ideal healthy planet sitting alongside a more grim 'reality' showing a planet that was 'dying'.

It was common for children to want to 'clean up all the rubbish' and to stop littering altogether, seeing this as one of the most visible and tangible signs of environmental damage that could be addressed. Children also wrote more generally about the impact of global warming, with many outlining specific actions they believe must be taken to protect animals, oceans, and the planet if we are to make a better and 'more sustainable future'. Specific actions they proposed

ranged from stopping pollution and the cutting down of trees, to reducing plastic use and ensuring 'most things like cars and food products were more environmentally friendly' and 'sustainable'.

For other 8 to 12 year olds a better world would use more renewable and sustainable energy sources, rather than 'greenhouse gases' or fossil fuels. Many want to see changes made to the transport system to reduce carbon emissions and help increase the affordability and uptake of bicycles and electric cars.

“ if we used less fossil fuels or found more sustainable energy sources, sexism and racism rates go down, we stopped destroying the land, water, air.” – 12 year old, male, Barossa, Light and Lower North

“ The government and grownups cared about our future and didn't just ignore the fact that we are ruining earth, and basically just making a bad future for the next generation.” – 11 year old, female, Adelaide Hills

“ if you used bikes, not cars, or if you take the pollution out of cars.” – 9 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

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- **What SA Children say about Wellbeing**

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THE THINGS THAT MATTER TO CHILDREN

What SA Children say about Grownups

- ✓ Adults need to listen to children more
- ✓ Adults need to know more about them
- ✓ Children know more than adults think they do
- ✓ Children love what adults do for them
- ✓ Adults need to do the right thing too

Across government, business, and community, the views, perspectives, and experiences of primary school aged children need to be included. This snapshot is designed to support the capacity for this to occur.

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Regardless of where they live, South Australian children aged 8 to 12 years share many of the same interests, passions, aspirations, and ideas for how to build a better world. Children from across the State want to be taken seriously and to be provided with more opportunities to have a say at every level of decision-making – in their homes, schools, and local community, as well as at all levels of government, with opportunities to have input into the service systems being designed for them including how they're being delivered.

Children were clear that adults listening to their unique imaginations, creative perspectives and big ideas not only improves their own wellbeing, self-confidence and trust in adults, it also benefits the whole school and community.



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From metropolitan Adelaide to regional and remote communities, children wanted grownups to know more about them, their lives, and their interests. Those in metropolitan areas wanted grownups to know more about what they are good at as well as what their aspirations are for the future. Those in regional towns and communities focused on grownups knowing more about the kind of person they are, how they feel, and when they do and don't need support.

Climate change, natural disasters, mental health and a global pandemic are just some of the complex issues that permeate the lives of children in our primary schools today. While new and emerging trends have always shaped children's lives, the differences between the responses received on the 2021 postcards and those received in 2019 and 2020 reveal just how much the fast pace of technological, cultural, political, and environmental change is impacting children's lives in the twenty-first century.

If we fail to listen to what children in this age group are telling us about their experiences, we risk alienating them at a time in their lives when they seek reassurance that they can trust the adults around them. By listening, empathising and validating their experiences, we help build enduring relationships grounded in trust and full of hope for the future, reinforcing the message that children are valuable stakeholders and important citizens who have a right to have their ideas heard and acted upon.

What do 8-12 year olds want grownups to know?

- More about who they are, what they care about, their feelings and aspirations.
- That kids have ideas and rights, can be trusted and should be taken seriously.
- That kids love and appreciate what grownups do for them.
- That grownups need to look after the environment, children, and each other better.
- That sometimes kids need more help and at other times they need their independence and privacy.
- More about what happens at school.
- What it's like being a kid in the 21st century.
- The importance of playing and spending time with other children.
- How the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact their lives.



“ That we may be small, but we have big ideas and ways to make them work.”
– 12 year old, female, Yorke and Mid North

“ Kids aren’t just for show. We have so much to do in this world.” – 10 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

Across regions, ages and genders, children want grownups to know more about them individually and to show more interest in their lives. Common responses included knowing ‘who I am’, ‘what I can do’, ‘what I love’ and ‘what is going on in my life’ at school and at home. Kids want grownups to know and value children’s interests, hobbies and ‘favourite things’ as well as what they’re good at and what they care most about.

Children also want grownups to know more about the kind of person they are with many 8 to 12 year olds, describing themselves as caring, kind, funny, powerful, strong and brave. They highlighted their roles as good friends and caring siblings too and emphasised how much smarter they are than grownups think and that they ‘can be trusted’ and are ‘always willing to help’.

“ That I’m more than a little girl. I’m not only a girl. I’m a sister, a daughter, and a friendly friend.” – 10 year old, female, Adelaide Hills

“ That I’m good at sports. I like to create things, read books and that I like nature. I really want parents to know it’s not good to litter.” – 9 year old, female, Yorke and Mid North

“ that I will help anyone in need and you can trust me.” – 12 year old, male, Northern Adelaide

They also wanted grownups to know more about ‘who their friends are’ and who the other important people in their life are, such as family members and teachers. Others wanted grownups to know their

birthday and how old they are. Some spoke about grownups knowing more about their gender identity and preferring pronouns when they're being addressed by adults. There were some who wanted grownups to understand the importance of their culture and languages, particularly when English is not their first language and they wanted grownups to spell and pronounce their name correctly.

“ how to say my chinese name!”

– 7 year old, female, Eastern Adelaide

Wanting grownups to know ‘how I feel’ was another common response, including when kids feel safe and happy, as well as when they're scared or uncomfortable, or hurt, upset, or feeling sick.

For many 8 to 12 year olds it was important that grownups, especially those closest to them, show more interest in their day to day lives, particularly in how they're doing at school.

Children living with diverse chronic illnesses and disabilities wrote about wanting grownups to understand their illness or disability better; how it affects their education, relationships, engagement and participation in learning. They also wanted grownups to understand how their illness or disability affects their interest and capacity to participate in sport and in other activities at school, home, and across the community.

“ I have asthma and I don't like running.”

– 10 year old, female, Southern Adelaide

“ I have autism and that I need help with specific things.” – 12 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

“ That im shy unless im around people I trust, I have anxiety and autism.”

– 11 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

In addition to knowing children for who they are now, many 8 to 12 year olds said they want grownups to know ‘who’ and ‘what’ they want to be when they grow up.



These responses ranged from a general wish for adults to see their ‘skills’ and ‘potential’ to more specific aspirations for future jobs.

One of the most common things that kids wanted adults to know was that kids have ideas, ‘kids have a voice’, kids have rights, are ‘our own people’ and ‘our opinions count too’. Many 8-12 year olds described often feeling ‘underestimated’ and that they want adults to listen to them, take them seriously and to ‘let kids do things’, ‘know things’ and ‘speak for themselves’. They wanted to emphasise that they are ‘trying their best’ and that it can be difficult to live up to the expectations, comparisons and pressure that are placed on them by even the most well-meaning grownups.

“ that kids have a voice about things and we will try our hardest to show & express the voice we have that we get told to hide.” – 13 year old, female, Murray and Mallee

“ kids can make mistakes too, but they may also be right so you need to consider their opinions.” – 12 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

“ that they are not always right and that school is very hard for us and that we know when you talk about us and it hurts.” – 11 year old, male, Adelaide Hills

At the same time, there were many children who highlighted the need for grownups to ‘do better’, particularly when it comes to looking after the environment, children, and each other. Some 8 to 12 year olds wrote explicitly about how much kids look up to adults, seeing them powerful role models ‘for better or worse’, especially when it comes to knowing how they should treat other people and the planet.

“ that they can do anything even though they are really old.” – 8 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

They also wanted grownups to care for them and to avoid or stop doing certain things, including ‘bossing kids around’ and ‘yelling at kids’. They were also concerned about health, with some children seeking to remind adults that ‘smoking is bad for you’.

“ that when we are upset or feeling not our best. when you help that feeling still stays with us!” – 11 year old, female, Limestone Coast

“ the world is a good and fun place, not every one is bad and everyone is good at something.” – 12 year old, female, Northern Adelaide

A number of 8 to 12 year olds used this question as an opportunity to express their fears and concerns about the future, particularly that of the planet.



This included wanting grownups to know that ‘the world is dying’, that it’s ‘not good to litter’ and ‘we won’t survive’, ‘there will be no water’ and ‘ice caps will melt’.

They wanted grownups to know ‘how to save the planet’, including how to ‘save vulnerable animal species and plant species’, ‘stop pollution’ and ‘stop cutting down trees’. There was a sense that if only adults knew about these things, they would surely do more to address these issues.

For more information on *The Things That Matter To Children* see other snapshots in this series:

- **What SA Children say about the C word**
- **What SA Children say about Looking After the Planet**
- **What SA Children say about Wellbeing**

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What SA Children say about the C word

- ✓ The world would be better without COVID
- ✓ Need to know more about vaccines
- ✓ Missing loved ones and social occasions
- ✓ We all need to do the right thing

Across government, business, and community, the views, perspectives, and experiences of primary school aged children need to be included. This snapshot is designed to support this to occur.

The findings have been drawn directly from consultation undertaken in 2021 with South Australian children between the ages of 8 and 12 years. It is presented in this snapshot form to inform decision makers, researchers, policy makers, and others who have an interest in understanding what children in this age group think and need.

Regardless of where they live, 8 to 12 year olds share many of the same interests, passions, aspirations, and ideas for ways to make the world a better place. Although their postcard responses were consistent with those received in 2019 and 2020, there were differences between those living in regional, rural, and metropolitan communities, reflecting the diversity of the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which children live.

Children across all regions wrote about the importance of being taken seriously and being given more opportunities to have a say about decisions affecting them at every level of decision-making. In their homes, schools, and local communities, through to all levels of government and service systems they want to be heard and have their ideas acted upon. They were clear that adults listening to their unique imaginations, creative perspectives and big ideas not only improves their own



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wellbeing, self-confidence, and trust in adults, it also benefits their whole school and community.

Climate change, natural disasters, mental health, and a global pandemic are just some of the complex issues that permeate their lives. While new and emerging trends have always shaped children's experiences, the differences between 2021 postcards compared to those from 2019 and 2020, reveal how the fast pace of technological, cultural, political, and environmental change is impacting on children growing up in the twenty-first century.

If we fail to listen to what children in this age group are telling us, we risk alienating them at a time in their lives when they're seeking reassurance that they can place their trust in adults. By listening, empathising, and validating their life experiences, we help to build enduring relationships with children that are grounded in trust and hope for the future, reinforcing the message that they are valuable stakeholders and important citizens who have rights that must be upheld.

WHAT SA CHILDREN SAY ABOUT THE C WORD

COVID-19 vaccinations became available in 2021, and children expressed diverse views which echoed the broader public debate around their use. These views ranged from welcoming vaccinations as an important part of protecting people's health, to voicing concerns about a lack of information being made available to children in a format they can understand about how they can access the vaccines, and how they may be affected by them over the short or long term.

A significant number of 8 to 12 year olds expressed the view that the world would be better if COVID-19 'was gone', 'wasn't a thing' or 'never existed'. They wrote about wanting 'COVID to go away' so that 'I can see my nana', 'hug my friends at school' or 'stop worrying about my dad dieing'.

Children shared a range of concerns related to COVID including fears about 'lots of people getting really sick' to being tired of wearing masks or being distressed about the separation from loved ones who lived across national and international borders.

“ Covid was gon. so that my step Dad could come back from India.” – 10 year old, female, Barossa, Light and Lower North

A number of 8 to 12 year olds reflected on feeling both fear and anticipation at the prospect of state borders being re-opened at the end of 2021. These were views shared alongside mask-wearing and people's overall health, as well as the need for continued isolation and separation from loved ones who they wanted to see in person.

Others were frustrated by the ongoing impacts the pandemic on their social lives and wanted to be able to go to 'more parties' and 'do the things I love' again. While most children wrote about wanting the borders to re-open and for the lockdowns to end, there were some children who felt there should be more done to 'get rid of COVID', including enforcing lockdowns if these were necessary.

As was the case in the postcard responses received in 2020, children in regional South Australia were more likely than those in metropolitan Adelaide to write about the pandemic. They focused on the impact restrictions were having on their relationships and on their ability to participate in the things they love doing. COVID-related postcards from metropolitan areas focused more on the wearing of masks and getting vaccinations.

Other children wanted everyone to 'take Covid more seriously' and 'do the right thing' to reduce the risk of COVID transmission. This included adhering to social distancing, practising better hygiene, and wearing masks more often, and correctly.

Given that the distribution of the 2021 postcards coincided with the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines in South Australia, some children wanted there to be 'no anti-vaxxers' and for more people to 'get jabbed' to 'protect the community'. Others were concerned about needing to get vaccinated and wanted vaccines to be tested more for children their age before being made available.

“ we didnt have covid-19 stoping us from doing the things we love.” – 11 year old, female, Yorke and Mid North

“ there where (were) not any corona virus and no ristrictions, nothing is cancelled.” – 11 year old, female, Eyre and Western

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