



COMMISSIONER FOR
ABORIGINAL CHILDREN
& YOUNG PEOPLE

Youth Voices

Aboriginal children and young people

6 March 2023

Department for Education, Principals Day



Report Snapshot

38 forums state wide:

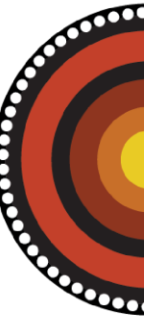
- 16 metro, 10 regional, 8 remote

574 Aboriginal children and young people:

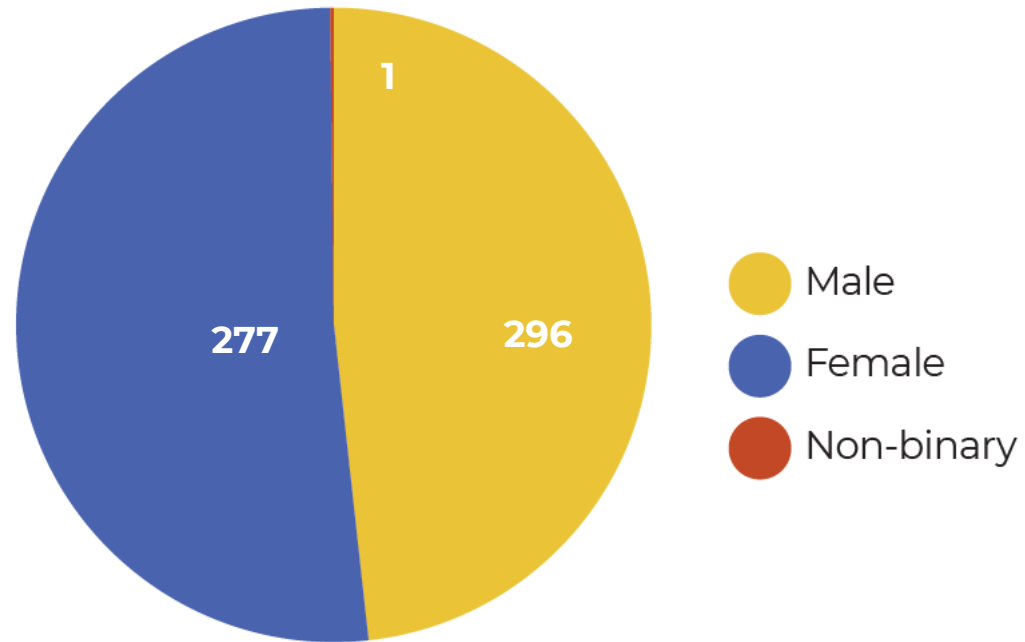
- 277 male, 296 female, 1 non-binary



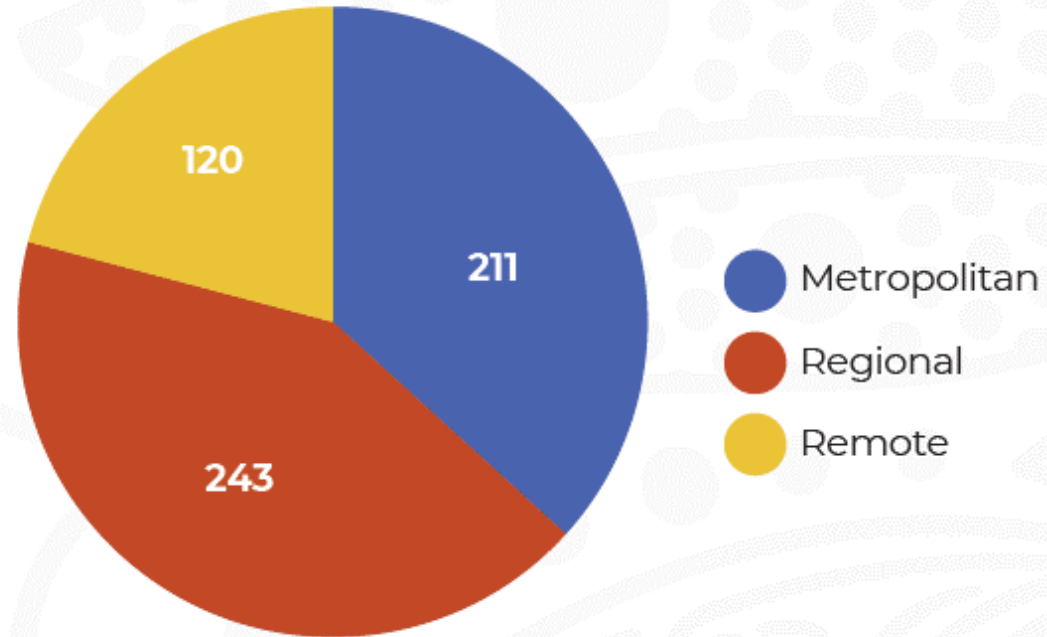
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Total Aboriginal children and young people who contributed to the Youth Voices Report



Youth Voices Report by region



Be Seen.
Be Heard.
Community
Conversations



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Key Topics

- Black Lives Matter
- COVID-19
- Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility
- Cultural Identity
- Disabilities
- Uluru Statement from the Heart



Key Messages

- We are proud to be Aboriginal
- Raise the Age!
- Stop Racism
- Pets are important
- Education is important
- Show up for us



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Black Lives Matter Movement

“(BLM) is a discussion that was needed to be brought up, people turn a blind eye to it, especially in Australia” – Female, Henley High School

“BLM is relevant to Australia, like the shooting of Walker (Kumanjayi). He was shot. He was my uncle” – Female, Whyalla Stuart High School

“Justice is important” – Male, Ernabella School



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Black Lives Matter Movement

- Aboriginal children and young people experience high levels of racism in the community and within educational environments
- Aboriginal young people understand the significant correlation between Black Lives Matter and the injustices suffered by Aboriginal people in Australia
- Aboriginal children and young people need truth-telling embedded in their curriculum and their schools



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COVID-19

“When lockdown came it was pretty rough. It ruined a lot of experiences for me. Education during COVID was useless for me because the teacher wasn't there” - Female, Christies Beach High School

“It affected our sports, holidays and our people” – Male, Port Augusta Secondary School

“The pandemic brought to light the usefulness of technology and how people can benefit from all the accessibility” – Male, Mark Oliphant College



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COVID-19

- Majority of Aboriginal children and young people were ambivalent to restrictions because they believe Aboriginal people have faced societal restrictions for hundreds of years
- There were large impacts on learning, education, social and emotional well-being
- Sports and social outlets provide positive experiences and keep Aboriginal young people connected within their communities



Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

“Imprisoning children will not and does not fix the issue. They need guidance, help or rehabilitation and a chance to improve and do better” – Male, Woodville High School

“They (youth offenders) probably have reasons why they’re doing that stuff like no bunda (money)” – Male, Adelaide Youth Justice Training Centre

“It makes me angry and sad. With some 10 year-olds, its about how they’ve been brought up. Maybe they didn’t have stability” – Female, Adelaide Youth Justice Training Centre



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Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

- Overwhelming consensus that age must be raised from 10 to 14 or higher
- Aboriginal children and young people are compassionate and have trauma-aware perspectives on the causes and solutions, they also believe racism plays a large role
- Aboriginal young people want better alternatives, rehabilitation and diversion programs to be provided
- Aboriginal young people shared many personal stories of being targeted by police and security
- Behaviour management processes at schools must not cause criminalisation of children and young people



Cultural Identity

“It’s pretty tough and scary as soon as you enter piranpa (white) world, its hard to go in two worlds. Here everybody knows who they are, they are strong in culture and family and no one says they’re better than others. There, you need to make it alone” –
Male, Pukatja

“It matters to know your language” – Female, Whyalla Stuart
High School

“I love my culture, it helps me connect to my family more” –
Male, Henley High School



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Cultural Identity

- Overwhelming sense of pride to be Aboriginal
- Aboriginal children and young people know that culture and family go hand in hand
- Aboriginal young people know that language is important and they want more opportunities to learn within their educational environments
- There are still high levels of stereotyping and judgment towards Aboriginal children and young people



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Invisible Disabilities

“Aboriginal students should be able to feel comfortable to ask and receive support needed from teachers” –
Female, Seaton High School

“There’s not enough empathy shown towards Aboriginal students and sometimes not enough support” – Male,
Port Lincoln High School

“People that don’t understand (invisible disabilities) are really mean about it” – Male, John Pirie Secondary School



Invisible Disabilities

- Aboriginal children and young people say it is important to raise awareness of invisible disabilities
- Many experienced delays in assessments and other school-based support
- Aboriginal young people feel unsupported and judged by teachers, especially when the default response to behaviours are suspensions, exclusions and expulsions
- Aboriginal young people say that more cultural programs within schools would benefit their learning
- Increasing the number of Aboriginal staff is important for Aboriginal children

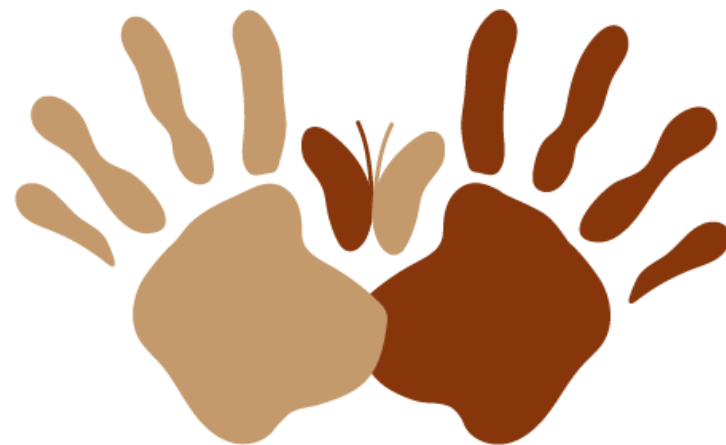


Uluru Statement from the Heart

- There is a significant lack of education on the Uluru Statement from the Heart amongst Aboriginal children and young people
- Aboriginal young people know that Aboriginal communities deserve Treaty and have been fighting for many decades
- To support Aboriginal students, they curriculum must be tailored to include significant social issues affecting their lives, families and communities



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CACYP SA: Youth Voices Report 2021

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