

THIS PLACE I CALL HOME

*The views of children and young people on
growing up in Queensland*





ALL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO SPEAK ABOUT THE ISSUES AFFECTING THEIR LIVES AND TO BE LISTENED TO.

My name is Cheryl Vardon and I am the Principal Commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission. It is my job to make sure the Queensland Government and other leaders and decision makers consider the best interests of children and young people when carrying out their work. The first step is to actively listen to what children and young people have to say and include them when making decisions about their lives.

That's what the Growing up in Queensland project is all about. It provided Queenslanders aged 4 to 18 with the opportunity to share their thoughts, opinions and ideas on the things that matter to them.

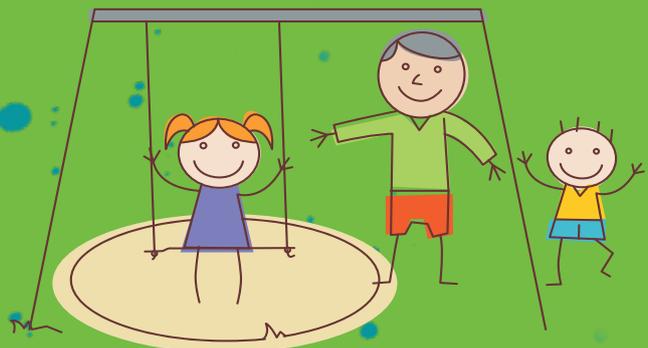
During the project, we visited more than 40 different communities, hearing from people in the Torres Strait Islands in the north, Longreach in the west, the Gold Coast in the south and many other places in between. We heard from more than 7000 children and young people – making it one of the largest projects of its type in Queensland.

We heard loud and clear about what matters to our younger generations. They told us what they like about their communities. They also told us what they worry about and how they would like leaders and decision makers to make Queensland an even greater place to grow up.

The most important thing young Queenslanders told us was that they want to be included, feel heard and have strong, positive relationships with other people.

This is a snapshot of what we heard. I want everyone to read the full report and find out what matters to children and young people and how we can work together to advance Queensland's future. I encourage you to read it too. It can be found on our website at www.qfcc.qld.gov.au.

Cheryl Vardon
Principal Commissioner
Queensland Family and Child Commission



What is it like growing up in Queensland?

OUR COMMUNITY

The best things about our community are:

- * people who are nice and friendly
- * fun things to do in our free time
- * community events and activities
- * sporting activities
- * good parks and recreation spaces
- * spending time with family.

We think community is:

- * the people who support us
- * coming together to celebrate and spend time at community events
- * helping one another in tough times
- * people from different cultures and religions
- * having common goals and interests
- * places to come together to share experiences and build trust.

We would like our community to have:

- * more affordable activities and creative arts activities
- * park equipment for children of all ages and all abilities
- * natural play spaces
- * better public transport
- * more safe places for us to spend time with our friends
- * youth friendly facilities.



OUR HOPES AND DREAMS

These things will help us achieve our goals:

- * work experience and volunteering opportunities to learn job skills
- * more entry level jobs
- * flexible work to fit around school and study
- * understanding the career and education pathways we can follow
- * having conversations about careers early and often
- * life skills like budgeting, applying for jobs and how to stay healthy
- * affordable and accessible public transport.

In the future we want to:

- * work
- * do further study and training
- * be successful
- * do something we like and are good at
- * have balance in our lives
- * be happy
- * have a family.

Things that could stop us reaching our goals:

- * lack of support from the adults in our lives
- * not learning the skills to prepare us for the future workforce
- * not receiving the information we need to make choices about the future
- * where we live
- * financial difficulties
- * slow internet speeds and Wi-Fi reliability
- * being put under constant pressure to do well
- * feeling like our choices aren't valued
- * our physical and mental health.

SURVEY RESULTS

78% said 'I feel safe in my neighbourhood or town.'

58% said there needs to be more safe places for children in their town.

55% can trust most people in their community.

51% said there is not enough support where they live.

SURVEY RESULTS

60% said they feel positive or very positive about their future.

These things are important for future success:

90% said 'my skills, talent and ability'

87% said 'my education'.

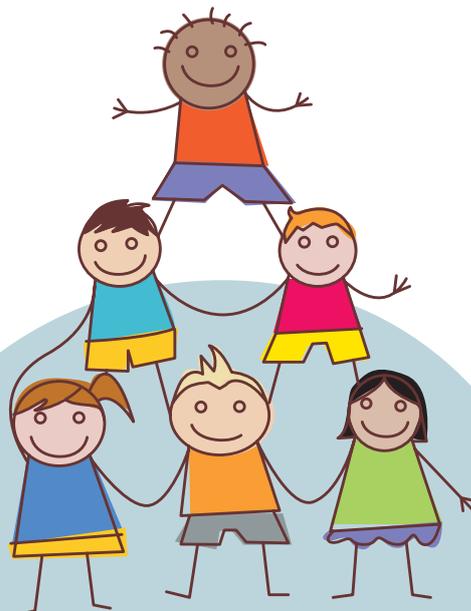
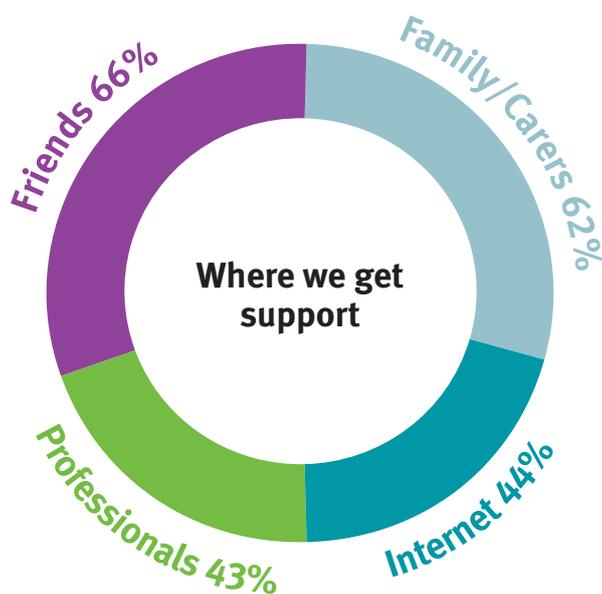
THE BIG PICTURE

We worry about:

- * bullying and cyberbullying
- * mental health
- * drugs and alcohol
- * the environment and climate change.

Our advice to adults:

- * take the time to listen
- * check in to see if we're okay
- * you don't always need to solve the problem for us
- * try to understand the issue from our perspective
- * trust us
- * be open minded and forgiving
- * recognise we need balance, between school and the other things in our lives
- * try not to judge, assume or interrupt
- * if you are changing things ask us what information we need and be ready to answer our questions
- * celebrate small things as well as big things.



WHAT DID YOUNG QUEENSLANDERS SAY THEY NEEDED FROM ADULTS?

We need adults to:

- * be present, pay attention and make time for us
- * listen without judgement and take us seriously
- * have open conversations about:
 - what is happening in our lives especially at school and with our friends
 - what they can do to support us
- * work with us to come up with solutions
- * provide us with clear and relevant information that includes where to get help and where to report problems
- * create and provide access to programs and training to help us support our friends
- * provide opportunities for us to have a say and to take action on issues that are important to us.

Welcoming and inclusive communities

balance in
our lives

support to
manage stress

green spaces
and parks

HUMAN CONNECTIONS

Life skills

TO HELP FIND
SOLUTIONS

A VOICE

Youth friendly spaces

skills for the future

We want

mentors

different
options and
pathways
to reach our
goals

fair treatment
for everyone

TO HAVE A SAY IN DECISIONS

Playgrounds for people of
all ages and abilities

safe places to
be with friends

employment experience

FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS

ABOUT GROWING UP IN QUEENSLAND

We wanted to know what life is like for children and young people growing up in Queensland today. So we asked three big questions:

1. What is life like growing up in your community?

We asked about their relationships with friends and family, how safe and supported they feel and where they spend their time.

2. What are your hopes and dreams?

We asked about their career goals and what can help or stop them achieving their hopes and dreams.

3. What is the big picture?

We asked children and young people about the issues that worry them and how they think we should work together to fix them.

HOW DID WE LISTEN?

We wanted to hear from as many young Queenslanders as possible. We came up with five different ways they could tell us their thoughts. These included:

- * an online survey for 13 - 18 year-olds
- * a teacher- and librarian-led artwork activity for 4 - 6 year-olds
- * written responses to individual questions for 7 - 18 year-olds
- * school-based focus groups for 7 - 18 year-olds
- * youth group workshops for 13 - 18 year-olds.

WHO ARE YOUNG QUEENSLANDERS?¹

There are

1,149,645

people aged between 0 and 18 years living in Queensland

63%

live in South East Queensland

7%

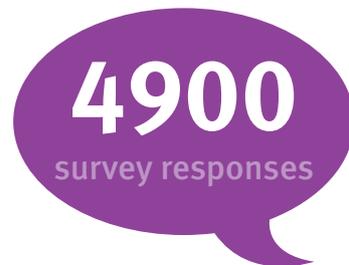
are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Gender

49% are female  **51%** are male

HOW MANY VOICES DID WE HEAR?

There were more than:



written responses to 5 different postcard questions



¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Census of Population and Housing. TableBuilder*. Findings based on use of ABS TableBuilder data.

‘I think it is important for all young people to make a difference in our world. Whether it is helping the environment or caring for people, they deserve the right to make a difference or change the way we look at things.’

Postcard response,
South East Queensland

HOW TO HAVE YOUR SAY

If you want to get involved in having your say and making a difference in your local community, try exploring these options:

Check if your school has a Student Representative Council and how you can join.

Contact your local council to see if they have a youth advisory group or youth council you can join. Ask how to apply and how you can raise issues that are important to you and others your age.

Visit www.ymcabrisbane.org/queensland-youth-parliament-home and www.qld.gov.au/atsi/education-training/indigenous-youth-leadership-program to see how you can be involved in the Queensland Government’s Youth Parliament and Indigenous Youth Leadership Program.

If you’re aged 13 - 24, register with the Queensland Government’s Youth eHub to keep up-to-date with the ways you can participate and have your say www.e-hub.engagementhub.com.au.

Write to your federal and state members of parliament and local government representatives to tell them what you think about the things that matter to you.

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