

Hopes and Dreams

This fact sheet summarises key findings from the Queensland Family and Child Commission's Growing up in Queensland project. It links the findings to the Queensland Government's Our Future State priorities.



More than 7000 people between the ages of 4 and 18 participated in the Growing up in Queensland project. They responded to an online survey and participated in workshops, focus groups and other activities.

We asked young Queenslanders to tell us about their hopes and dreams for the future. They told us about the challenges they face and the support they need to achieve these goals.

Children and young people are keenly aware of the changing needs of the future workforce, including the impact of technological advances like automation and digitisation. They want to learn relevant skills from adults so they can contribute to a robust economy and modern society.

This creates the opportunity for decision makers to plan for the needs of Queensland's emerging workforce.



Education

Three quarters (76%) of survey respondents reported that education is important to them.

They spoke about their teachers positively and saw their support as important to succeeding at school, accessing further education and training, and fitting in at school.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students highly valued teachers who reflect their cultural heritage.

More than half (54%) of survey respondents said they worried about their school grades, while a third (34%) worried their academic ability could be a barrier to achieving their hopes and dreams.

They suggested parents and schools could put less pressure on them to succeed by:

- giving more time to complete tasks
- recognising competing priorities
- providing more opportunities to gain practical skills and for career directed learning.

What did children and young people say adults could do to help?

- take an active interest in their education and ask about what is happening in their lives
- provide guidance and support which takes into account children and young people's ideas and perspectives
- have open conversations about the causes of stress and provide useful coping strategies
- role model healthy ways to deal with stress.



Balance and free time

Children and young people spend over 30 hours a week at school and many participate in extracurricular activities. They raised the difficulty of balancing homework, extracurricular activities, spending time with family, caring for others and participating in leisure activities.

Focus group participants said they would like more diverse support systems to help alleviate stress and pressure arising from school. These include:

- access to adult mentors
- peer support mechanisms
- informal support groups external to school where they are able to seek help.

More than half (60%) of children and young people said they help care for a family member living in the same home, 28% help care for a family member living elsewhere and 12% help care for a neighbour.

Many (53%) survey respondents said caring for others did not stop them from doing other activities. For some, their caring responsibilities may have longer-term impacts due to less time to do homework (23%), go to school (5%) and do schoolwork in class (5%).



Planning for the future

Children and young people begin thinking about their careers at an early age and look to the adults in their lives as roles models.

They value talking to others about their plans for the future, particularly, with people already working in their field of interest.

When they consider their future plans, children and young people engage in meaningful conversations with a range of people, including:

- parents or carers (69%)
- friends (36%)
- family members (29%)
- teachers (26%).

Only 8% of those surveyed said they would talk to a school counsellor. In both primary and secondary schools, students often said they were unsure of who their career counsellor or guidance counsellor was and what their role was in assisting them to make decisions about their future.

Some (18%) survey respondents said a lack of information could stop them from achieving their hopes and dreams. They said they prefer talking to a person to get answers to their specific questions rather than accessing information online.



Life skills

Young Queenslanders said they need information and skills to prepare them for life beyond school.

In particular, they would like to know how to:

- apply for a rental property
- vote and where to get useful information about the political process
- budget and manage finances
- have good physical, mental and sexual health
- write a good resume and job application and how to succeed at job interviews.

What did children and young people say they need?

- clear and concise information
- practical education in schools
- guidance from adults.



Further education and training

Most (80%) children and young people said their future plans include further training or education.

They identified barriers which could prevent them from undertaking further education or training, including:

- financial difficulties (58%) – the high cost of moving away and living independently
- where they live (25%) – a lack of educational opportunities in schools, and low internet speeds and reliability impact their access to online training
- lack of jobs (38%) – in their local area now and in the future.

What did young Queenslanders say would improve their education and training opportunities?

- clear and relevant information about different career pathways
- education that meets their individual learning needs
- support to connect with community members who are experienced in their area of interest.



Employment

Nearly all (92%) children and young people surveyed are planning to get a job or look for work. They understand the importance of having opportunities to develop and demonstrate skills valued by employers. They said they need:

- on the job training
- opportunities to volunteer and gain skills
- affordable and accessible public transport to help them get to and from work
- more information about different career pathways and jobs to help them make informed decisions.

What did Queensland children and young people say would help?

- relevant information about different career options from a young age
- more opportunities to forge connections with industry professionals
- regular conversations about how to find pathways to careers that interest them.

RESPONDING TO WHAT WE HAVE HEARD

We know governments and communities are already responding to these issues. However, the way we respond should include the views of young Queenslanders.

To read the full report visit qfcc.qld.gov.au.