2025–26 snapshot

Commissioner for Children and Young People
Western Australia

Commissioner's Message

Hi, I'm Dr Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Western Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, and I'm pleased to share some of the highlights from my latest Annual Report.





My job is to support children and young people across WA by:

- Making sure your voices, ideas and experiences are heard and respected.
- Keeping a close eye on the wellbeing of children and young people and speaking up about issues that affect them.
- Listening to children and young people and helping decision-makers understand what matters most to you.
- Making sure all children and young people are heard, especially those whose voices are often overlooked, including children in youth detention, children in care, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and those experiencing hardship.

A big part of my role is listening to children and young people about their lives, their concerns and their hopes for the future. What you tell me helps shape my work to make Western Australia a place where all children and young people can be safe, healthy, connected and supported to thrive.

Statistics on children and young people

656,987
children and young people live in Western Australia and make up one fifth of the state's population

Approximately 48,121 Aboriginal children and young people live in WA.

Around 157,000 children and young people in WA live in regional and remote areas.

Priority Areas

Throughout the year, I continued to speak out on issues that matter most to children and young people in Western Australia, including youth justice, health and mental health, child protection, education, poverty, homelessness and LGBTIQA+ issues.

You can read more about my key policy areas of focus on our website or check out our social media channels to see what I've been saying in the media about these issues.

Listening Tour

My team and I heard from 7326 children and young people across metropolitan and regional WA during visits to schools and community organisations. Some of these were forums where we talked about child rights and encouraged students to lead conversations, voice their concerns and share their opinions about where they live and the lives they lead.

Speaking Out Survey

Every few years, we ask children and young people across Western Australia about their lives through the Speaking Out Survey. In 2025, more than 17,000 students from Years 4 to 12 shared their thoughts about their health, safety, learning, relationships and hopes for the future.

This was the biggest Speaking Out Survey ever. It helps the Commissioner understand what matters most to children and young people and make sure their voices are heard when decisions are made.

The survey looks at three important areas of wellbeing: being healthy and connected, safe and supported, and learning and participating. The results will help guide future improvements for children and young people across WA.

Children and young people across WA told us that they want to be healthy, safe, happy and listened to.



Snapshot WA

During Youth Week WA 2026, we invited children and young people aged 8 to 17 to take part in Snapshot WA, a photography competition celebrating their lives, communities and experiences. Almost 300 young people shared photos showing the people, places and moments that are important to them. The competition gave children and young people a chance to tell their stories through pictures and show what life in Western Australia looks like from their point of view. Winners were announced in July 2026 and their photographs helped showcase the creativity and unique perspectives of young people across the State.

Visit our website

Complaints

It's important that children and young people know their voice matters and that they can speak up if something is worrying them. This year, we improved our website to make it easier for children and young people to make a complaint, share a concern, find information and get help when they need it. We want every child and young person to know they have the right to be heard, to ask for support and to feel safe speaking up about things that affect their lives.



Acknowledgement of Country

The Commissioner for Children and Young People proudly acknowledges and pays her respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters across Western Australia and acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation upon whose lands the Commissioner's office is located. She recognises the continuing connection to culture, lands, skies and waters, families and communities for all Aboriginal peoples. The Commissioner and her team also pay their respects to all Elders, past and present and emerging leaders. They recognise the knowledge, insights and capabilities of Aboriginal people, and pay respect to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.