



# SUPPORTING PRE-SCHOOLERS TO HAVE A VOICE TOO!

*A message from The Commissioner for Children and Young People*

Not long after I commenced as South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People, I went on a tour of the state to talk with as many children and young people as I could. I wanted to hear firsthand what was going on in their lives and what they wanted me as their new Commissioner to do for them.

One of the key learnings I had from this '2017 Listening Tour' was just how few opportunities children and young people have to have their voices heard, particularly those in the 8-12 years age group.

To address this, I initiated an annual Student Postcard initiative. It was my way of providing these children with an opportunity to tell me, their Commissioner, what matters to them most and what they would like to change about their lives if they could. The responses have been fantastic and have guided me in my efforts to ensure I am doing my best to advocate in those areas SA children want change most.

***“Children in the 8-12 year old age group have shared their thoughts and ideas about what's great about being a kid in South Australia, as well as what's not. They've drawn fantastic pictures to illustrate their thoughts and ideas and sent me heart-warming and heart-wrenching messages that have been a mixture of insight, humour, and some sadness, many expressing their appreciation for the opportunity they've been given to have a voice. I now want to extend this opportunity to Early Learners.”***

The initiative has been well received with 324 of the states 354 primary schools participating last year with 15,669 postcards returned. This brings the total number of cards received since the initiative commenced in 2019 to over 40,000 providing a rich source of primary content for researchers, academics, decision makers and professionals.

Due to the success of my Student Postcards initiative for primary school children and at the request of many Early Year's teachers and educators, from this year I have decided to extend this state-wide engagement initiative to include pre-schoolers.

I'm keen to ensure that SA children in this Early Years age group are also provided with an opportunity to have a voice by asking them one simple question. What is your favourite place and why? They answer by drawing a picture and telling me why this is their favourite place.

If you are an Early Year's teacher in SA, you can expect to receive an email at the start of school Term 2, inviting you to support the initiative and providing you with a link to a downloadable copy of the postcard artwork. It will be sent with a request to support pre-school children to complete the task, scanning their finished responses and emailing them back to me before the start of Term 3. I look forward to working with you on this Early Years Postcards initiative.

Visit [commissionerspostcards.com.au](http://commissionerspostcards.com.au) to view a gallery of postcard responses and to download The Things That Matter summary reports.

For more information on the work of the Commissioner visit: [ccyp.com.au](http://ccyp.com.au)

Words: **Helen Connolly**

*Helen became South Australia's first Commissioner for Children and Young People in April 2017. The Commissioner promotes and advocates for the rights, development and wellbeing of all children and young people in South Australia, with a special focus to engage with and listen to children who aren't usually heard.*

