Conversations about rights and a Children’s Commissioner

You have a right to have a say... plus be safe and happy too!

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On behalf of:
Why hear from children and young people?

- Competent
- Experts
- Citizens
- Rights

'I have a right to make choices.' – girl (13 yrs)

'All children have a voice and a right to do certain things. We all want our voice to be heard and our opinions to be taken seriously.' – girl (11 yrs)
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Article 3
  - best interest

- Article 4
  - tell them

- Article 42
  - right to know
Article 12

‘Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.’

What lead to our conversations with children and young people?

- Still *no* Commissioner for Children and Young People in South Australia
- Child Development and Wellbeing Bill
Relevance to rights?

- Adults drafted the legislation
- Children and young people not involved
- Best interest
- Champion *for children & young people*
Conversation topics and aims

- **Rights**
  - at home
  - at school
  - in the community
  - Online

- **Commissioner**
  - personal qualities
  - work and focus
  - listening and amplifying
Design
- Learning, critical thinking, discussion, empowerment

Aligned to
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – the Early Years Framework for Australia*
- Australian Curriculum
Resources for facilitation and feedback

Videos, games, wristbands, postcards and booklets

Two Quizzes and self-mailers; ‘You have rights!’ and ‘Commissioner!’
Results – by 30 June 2015

917 RESPONSES
‘You have rights!’ quiz

1,654 RESPONSES
From children and young people in South Australia 4 – 18 years old

682 RESPONSES
‘Commissioner’ quiz

2 STORIES
From Barmera Primary School students

52 SELF-MAILERS
From young children and those with disability

1 SUBMISSION
From Mt Gambier Youth Advisory Group
Online quiz respondent profile

- 67% metro
- 33% country
- 45% male
- 55% female
- 4-18 year olds

Aboriginal, CALD, with disability, in youth detention, in out-of-home care
What’s important about rights…?

• @ home and @ school; in the community & online?
  – education
  – respect
  – privacy
  – safety
  – helping others
Quiz 1: You have rights!

5a] Life would be better for children and young people in the community if:

Percentage of responses

- Accepting/fair/inclusive: 7.8%
- Amenities/facilities: 19.6%
- Autonomy: 11.5%
- Care: 20.0%
- Child friendly community: 13.5%
- Environment: 4.4%
- Listen (voice): 3.3%
- Respect: 4.7%
- Safety: 35.7%
- Nothing/happy with community: 1.9%
- Don’t know, no response: 5.3%
Safety

21.5% Feel safe, protected, no crime

75% Want to be safe from violence, abuse or unfair treatment

76.4% Want to be treated with respect

70.9% Want to not be bullied or hassled by others

19.2% Knowing my rights makes me feel safer
What’s important about a Commissioner?

• Children’s Commissioner
  – should be someone who:
    • cares and likes children
    • knows (understands) and respects them
    • listens and takes them seriously
    • uses their feedback and amplifies their voices
  – should be a person that:
    • children can trust and have confidence in
    • will educate them, and adults, and speak out about their rights, needs and wellbeing
    • is visible so they can connect face to face
Children’s Commissioner

76.8% Should be someone I can trust

57.4% Should be a good listener

30% Listen, be there, understand, spend time with us, let us know what’s happening

20.5% Tell adults what children & young people need to be safe, strong, healthy & happy

29.6% Ask children & young people for their opinions; what matters to them

16.9% Make sure children & young people are safe, loved & cared for
What are we doing with the feedback?
Supporting partners:
Guardian for Children and Young People (SA)
Megan Mitchell, National Children’s Commissioner

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Thank you.