First review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People

Report of targeted Aboriginal stakeholder and community consultation

31 May 2023

Child Development Council

Government of South Australia

Acknowledgements

The Child Development Council acknowledges Aboriginal people as this state's first peoples, nations and traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia. The Council respects Aboriginal people's spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices that come from a deep connection with their traditional lands and waters. The Council acknowledges that Aboriginal people's cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws are of ongoing importance to them, and that Aboriginal people have made, and continue to make, a unique and irreplaceable contribution to this state.

Language and definitions

The term 'birth to 18 years' includes all babies, children and young people *under* 18 years as per the legislation.

The term 'Aboriginal' is used respectfully to refer to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people, adults, families and communities.

With thanks

The Child Development Council would like to thank the children and young people who participated in the consultations, for their views and invaluable insights.

We would also like to sincerely thank every individual and organisation that participated in the consultation process. Your passion for children and young people in South Australia is admirable and inspiring. We are grateful for your input into the review of the framework and for allowing us a view into your worlds.

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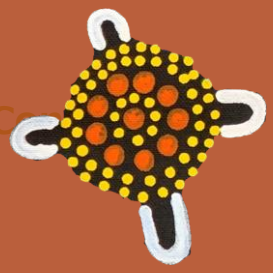
Report of targeted Aboriginal stakeholder and community consultation in regional and remote South Australia

Cover image:
Original artwork by Phillip Allen © 2021. Phil is a Palawa man of Poredarme Clan from Lutruwita.



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Overview

The Child Development Council was established on 15 February 2018 under Part 6 of the *Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016* (Act) as one of five oversight and advocacy bodies for children and young people (birth to 18 years) in South Australia (SA).

The Council's functions include:

- establishing and maintaining South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People (framework)
- reporting in accordance with the framework how children and young people (birth to 18 years) are faring at a population level in SA.

The framework provides a structure for the tracking and reporting of population-level outcomes in five legislated dimensions – health, safety, wellbeing, education and citizenship. The data being used to report outcomes in the five dimensions are mostly publicly available, secondary data from credible sources.

The framework was developed with extensive community consultation across SA in 2018 and 2019 prior to being gazetted and taking effect on 14 November 2019.

The Act provides that the framework must be reviewed at least once in each three-year period. The first review of the framework commenced in early 2022, with open consultation from 1 February to 30 June 2022. A total of 33 online surveys were completed and 12 formal submissions were received.

The framework should contain provisions designed to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and young people in each of the five dimensions (reg 12(2)(d)) and targeted community consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders and community members in regional and remote SA occurred from 1 June to 31 August 2022.

Face-to-face community consultation with Aboriginal individuals took place in Port Lincoln, Port Augusta, Adelaide, Mt Gambier, Riverland, Point Pearce and with NPY Women's Council directors in Alice Springs. Meetings were also held with individuals and organisations across SA. In total, more than 80 people engaged in the targeted consultation for the review.

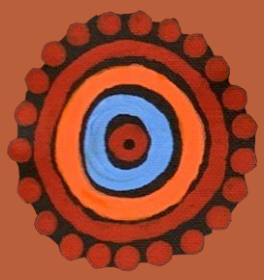
A key finding from the consultation process was that the Council and framework are not well known. Time was spent explaining the role of the Council and framework and how influential it can be for community to be a part of the review process. The framework can be used as a tool in planning and reporting on programs for children and young people and advocating for increased funding and service provision. With this context, community members were very generous with their time and engagement in the workshops.

There was a clear message from participants, that the Council's work is important and that there should be ongoing engagement with stakeholders and community members across regional and remote SA to inform the framework and the work of the Council.


Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands
Maralinga Lands
Yalata Lands
Port Augusta
Point Pearce
Port Lincoln
Riverland
Mt Gambier
South Australia

Community consultation matrix results

Community consultation matrix results



Five community consultation events were held, four in regional SA and one in metropolitan Adelaide. Meetings were also held with individual organisations across SA throughout the face-to-face consultation period from June to August 2022.

The table below provides a snapshot of the lived experience of participants who attended and participated in the face-to-face community consultation sessions.

Lived experience (alphabetical) profile of participants	Geographical location	
	Urban	Rural
	Adult	Adult
Apprentice or trainee		
Aboriginal	10	23
Chronic illness	2	4
Disability		1
Education (preschool, primary, secondary, home)	2	10
Education (college, TAFE, university)	6	13
Education (alternative eg flexible learning options)		
Homeless/at risk of homelessness		11
LGBTIQ		1
Mainstream		
Mental health issues		2
Migrant/refugee/new arrival/CALD		1
Out of home care		1
Young carers	1	1
Youth justice (contact)		
Working	11	33

This matrix has been adapted from a matrix designed by Alasdair Roy in 2017 and used with permission.

Youth forums

The Council partnered with the Youth Affairs Council of South Australia (YACSA) to deliver two **youth forums** in SA. This was an opportunity for children and young people to have input into the framework review.

The first forum was held in Whyalla during the school holidays, hosted by Plaza Youth. **Nine children and young people** participated, five were 11 years of age or under and four were 12-18 years of age. All of these children and young people identified as Aboriginal.

The second forum was held at Salisbury High School. A total of **19 students** aged 12-18 years participated. Three of these students identified as Aboriginal.

The children and young people were asked a series of questions to find out what they considered made **a good life.** They were also asked to advise if/how areas of the framework could be improved, from their lived experience and perspectives.

The children and young people said:

- they would like **better access** to free physical and mental health care services
- more **affordable housing** and **safe places** for them to go
- more **supports to feel connected** and cared for at home and school
- more **learning support** and better relationships with teachers
- more **opportunities** for young people to share their views
- more people who **care about**, support and understand children and young people.

The Council thanks YACSA and the children and young people for their involvement and engagement in the youth forums, and values the feedback provided.

See appendix for detailed report.

What we heard...

During the workshops participants found out about the Council and were introduced to the framework.

Workshop groups were then asked two questions to start the conversation:

- ***Do the measures tell us enough about the children and young people in this community?***
- ***Is the government getting the right information about children and young people in South Australia?***

Each workshop/meeting gave insight unique to that community. There were also many common themes, as illustrated in the word cloud below.

Findings from the community consultation included in the revised Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People include, and are not limited to:

- Recognition of Aboriginal data sovereignty
- Acknowledging the Uluru Statement from the Heart and accepting the invitation to walk together with Aboriginal Australians to build a better future for all
- A non-linear depiction of the framework dimensions, outcomes, indicators and measures
- Including the following in regard to Aboriginal children and young people:
    - the strong connections of Aboriginal children and young people to community, kin, family, country (land), culture, spirit and ancestry, and their bodies, including mind and emotions, form the foundation of strong identities and social and emotional wellbeing
    - traditionally, this has led to Aboriginal children and young people having unique obligations and responsibilities that further enhance their cultural connections. Knowledge about those obligations and responsibilities has sadly been compromised and for some Aboriginal communities, is presently sleeping.
    - there is hope that the knowledge will be woken and revived, so that it may evolve within communities. This is important because the disconnection from cultural obligations and knowledge is compounding the intergenerational trauma that Aboriginal Australians experience, intensifying the ongoing impacts of colonisation.
    - it is well understood that Aboriginal children and young people experience poorer outcomes. A range of initiatives have been introduced across all levels of government to improve outcomes for this group of children and young people. Closely monitoring the effectiveness of these initiatives and reporting specifically on how well Aboriginal children and young people are faring will remain a priority focus.
    - More than 10 new measures including these two:
        - Proportion of children and young people with acute rheumatic fever and/or rheumatic heart disease
        - Proportion of children and young people who had a free Indigenous health screen/assessment under the Closing the Gap health program/scheme.

I Am Me, But You Don`t See

Artist statement:

As a young person I feel like my life is being controlled and I`m told what and how my life should look like. People see me as a successful person or a higher type figure, yet I still feel alone in my life, even if I have all the family in the world, or the friends, I still feel isolated. I never wanted it, but it was presented to me: the loneliness, the suicidal thoughts. But the only thing I ever wanted was to be `ME`. I will choose when my time is ready and when I will ignite my light.

#Limitlessexhibition #photography #mylife #umeewarramedia #89.1fm @mozzie.warrior

Dre Ngatokorua is a Wangkangurru, Adnyamathnha, Kuyani, Luridja, Deiri, Yankunytjatara, Cook Island and Maori man, living and working in Port Augusta.

In 2022, Dre was named in South Australia's 40 under 40.

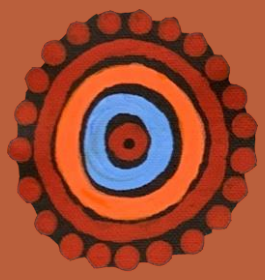
Dre provides a youth focus to the extensive work that he does at Umeewarra Radio and within the community, organising events, DJing, being an active board member for several organisations and much more.

Image used with permission.

Port Augusta

Kurdnatta (traditional name for Port Augusta), home of the Barngarla people, Dieri, Kokatha, Nukunu, Ngadjuri

- *Population: 14 000 people*
- *20% identify as Aboriginal*
- *approximately 34% of Aboriginal people are under 18 years*



The Port Augusta community has a strong desire to connect on a deeper level with culture and provide **more opportunities for cultural connection** for the children and young people of the region.

Port Augusta is a meeting point for many clan groups from the north of SA which can provide a more **complex community structure**. It is also a **central service point** for the north of the state.

Stakeholders would like more:

- **engagement** of families in schools
- **valuing** their children's **education**
- **support** for children and young people to **attend school regularly** from an early age.

Some attendees said that while there are excellent initiatives happening in schools, these would have **more impact with whole-of-community support**.

Students have responded positively to cultural programs and activities and the community would like to see more of these **cultural programs and activities to encourage school attendance**.

The fluctuating population can lead to:

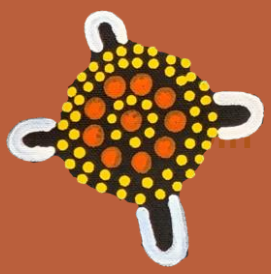
- overcrowding
- issues of domestic and family violence (DFV)
- misuse of alcohol and other drugs (AOD)
- increased gambling.

Children and young people may:

- not feel safe at home
- be less engaged in education
- experience food shortages
- self-place with other family members in search of safety, shelter and a meal.

Increased services to support better mental health outcomes for children and young people would be welcomed by stakeholders in Port Augusta. There is a **gap in services to support children and young people** who experience bullying and racism during and outside school hours.

Another challenge for young people is **accessing personal identification documents**. For various reasons it can be difficult to acquire identification documents to assist with getting a driver's license, work, further education etc. Service providers support where they can, but this requires the young person to know where and how to reach out for support.



Port Lincoln

Kallinyalla (traditional name for Port Lincoln), land of the Barngarla people, Nauo to the south and Wirangu up the west coast

- *Population: 14 500 people*
- *7% identify as Aboriginal*
- *Approximately 43% of Aboriginal people are under 18 years*

The central themes from the community consultation in Port Lincoln were:

- **youth homelessness**
- **multiple pregnancies** over short timeframes for some young people
- **hidden poverty** and the shame associated with severe but hidden socioeconomic disadvantage.[1]

Challenges include:

- accessing funding for activities such as enabling young people to attend **on Country** camps and building connections to culture
- an urgent need for more **access to mental health supports** for children and young people.

Many people are passionate about the **rights of Aboriginal children and young people**, with a strong desire to guarantee their voices are listened to and nurtured.

The community wants greater **access to tertiary education options** for young people, whether that is support for travel to Adelaide or access closer to home.

The region has limited services that provide trauma informed, mental health, sexual health education and AOD awareness and treatment options.

There is a need for more:

- **supports** for early identification of, and intervention for, learners to support their engagement in school
- readily available **dental care and education for families about the importance of good nutrition on the developing brain**.

There has been a significant increase in young people **vaping**, with little education available about the negative effects of vaping on the body. Port Lincoln community members would like to see more supports for young people on the effects of vaping and AOD use.

There was a call for more services for **young people with disabilities** leaving school in regional areas, as there are currently limited options for them to access opportunities after school.

The community wants a stronger **connection to culture and Country** to build the knowledge of the future generations and respect for Elders and role models.

[1] The economic inequality in the community is significant, people shared stories of hidden shame surrounding the high rates of economic disadvantage in the region. The disparity between rich and poor, due in part to the strength of the tourism, agriculture, mining, fishing and manufacturing industries was evident.

Mt Gambier

Mt Gambier (Berrin) is on the land of the Boandik people

- *Population: 27 000 people*
- *2.8% identify as Aboriginal*
- *Approximately 44% of Aboriginal people are under 18 years*

The community consultation highlighted a strong desire for children and young people to thrive in the Mt Gambier region, and significant dedication from the stakeholders present to make this happen.

A strong theme was the desire for children and young people to be **strong in their culture** and have opportunities to flourish.

There was discussion of what 'healthy' looks like and of acknowledging **cultural healing practices** alongside conventional medical practice, to complement the growth of a child or young person and for greater connection to culture and family.

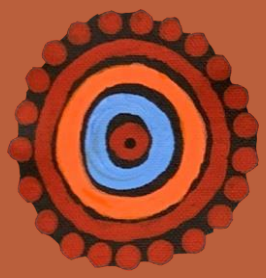
There was a passionate call to make sure all Aboriginal children and young people undertake the full list of **health screenings** available to them under the **Closing the Gap** health program. These screenings include extra **hearing checks** for young children and continued access to regular and free full medical checks throughout an Aboriginal person's life.

Mt Gambier schools offer several options for young people who need **alternative options to access schooling**; however, the community was concerned that the alternative options are not yet flexible enough to provide for the varying abilities of young people and individual learning styles. It was suggested that the Department for Education's 'One Plan' strategy be more consistently used for students as they transition from primary school to high school, to **support success in their education journey**.

There were concerns for young people who continue to navigate challenging experiences of **bullying and racism** while caught in a **cycle of poverty**. These issues may have led to instances of suicidal ideation that have not been properly managed. The community wants young people to be better **supported through mental health challenges in a culturally safe manner.**

Due to the geography of the location, Mt Gambier community stakeholders have good insights into the **challenges of being in a regional setting** versus a metropolitan or remote setting. There are considerable differences for Aboriginal children and young people in terms of their connection to culture and responsibilities depending on where they live. A one-size-fits-all approach to service delivery is not appropriate for Aboriginal children and young people to succeed in navigating life.

There was an emphasis on **building young people up to be ready for meaningful work.** Preparing organisations and businesses to take on more Aboriginal young people in roles with opportunities to upskill, and in roles with opportunities to positively impact the wider community.



Riverland

River Murray and Mallee Region traditional owners are the Ngawait, Ngaiawang, Nganguruku, Erawirung, Ngintait, and Ngarkat people

- *Population: approx 70 100*
- *4.2% identify as Aboriginal*
- *Approximately 39% of Aboriginal people are under 18 years*

The Riverland communities want to see **whole-of-community-led change** to support children and young people to grow up and thrive in the communities where they live.

The communities are advocating for **living on Country** options as part of acknowledging the importance of culture and connection in everyday life.

The communities are calling for recognition of the **barriers** Aboriginal children and young people come up against when accessing services or attempting to fit into the wider community.

The Department for Education has a varied and skilled workforce with **strong links to culture** at its disposal. Community members want to see this better utilised to support children and young people to have **greater connection to their culture through schooling**, while also encouraging and supporting family to be more engaged in their children's education.

Local **role models** have a vital function in communities. They model responsibility in supporting children and young people to grow up strong in culture and connected to family and Country. It is important to ensure that people fulfilling such roles are recognised, validated and valued.

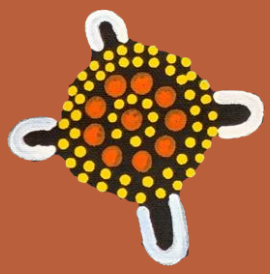
With a range of experiences, the strongest desires that came through were those of **belonging, having a place to feel connected to** and being able to share this with children and young people.

The communities want places for children and young people that they can feel proud to call home.

Point Pearce

Point Pearce is the home of the Nharangga people the area known as Bookooyanna.

- *Population: 420 people*



Meeting with the Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation provided an insight into the challenges faced by small communities. One significant shift being experienced is funding being directed away from small communities into larger regional towns.

There was a sense of **fatigue** from a continual fight for community, the future of the children and young people and being in a state of limbo.

From being over-consulted to having to cope with dwindling health and education resourcing, **the community refuses to give up the fight.**

A **new youth space** designed and mostly run by young people with adult support to **build capacity and ownership** is close to opening. This will provide children and young people a space where they can spend time on things that interest them in their home community.

Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation is developing a strategic plan that will see **Aboriginal owned and run businesses increase capacity** to develop existing skills in the community.

Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation is advocating for **longer funding terms for communities**, to take back some control over how they spend for their community.

They want to create **more options for young people after school to stay on their land** instead of having to leave the community to escape the poverty cycle.

The corporation invited us to lunch with a women's group at the Point Pearce Aboriginal Health centre.

While tucking into a meal of chicken curry these women shared stories of frustration that services in their community to support children to thrive are now lacking. They recounted the past when the school was a hub within the community. These women showed immense strength in continuing to fight for their children and young people and **their rights to stay on their land**.

Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY), Maralinga & Yalata Lands

- *Population: approximately 2 700 people live within the APY, Maralinga and Yalata Lands*
- *Approximately 32% of Aboriginal people are under 18 years*

'Anangu children will be strong in their learning, their Kurunpa (spirit) and their Tjurkurpa (connection to Country). Anangu will be in the driver's seat as leaders in education. We will create a new way in education, with Anangu and Piranpa working together.'

Our vision, PYEC

A **strong connection to culture, family and language** is evident in the APY, with a commitment from Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Education Committee (PYEC) to deliver **two-way learning** in as many schools as possible across the lands.

The PYEC continues to build on this **connection to culture and language** and engage young people in school for as long as possible.

One great challenge for the lands, is securing **work for young people who are finishing school in fields that are relevant or of interest**, not to fill gaps in servicing communities. **Opportunities of interest** would give young people the option to stay in their home communities and not rely on welfare payments.

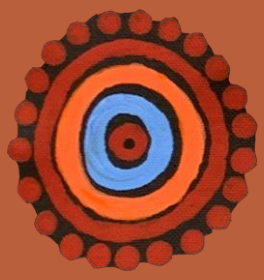
Inappropriate housing designs for desert conditions and community living has caused, and continues to cause, issues of overcrowding, DFV and misuse of AOD.

The **cost of living** in remote locations is taking a toll on families and **impacting on the nutritional health of children and young people**. In turn, these factors impact on success at school.

The NPY Women's Council is advocating for an agreement between Western Australia, the Northern Territory and South Australia child protection systems to create a better-connected system. The objective is that children and young people should not be taken away from the community and family that they know, for extended periods of time.

Strength in connection to culture and language should be celebrated and supported by governments, it should be a priority that families are able to live on their land and thrive.

Summary of themes



What we heard

'One needs to travel the roads to understand the roads.'

Point Pearce Aboriginal Corporation Chair

Communities across SA made it clear that they wanted to see **ongoing engagement** with the Council. They want the Council **to visit on a regular basis to provide updates** on the outcomes for children and young people **and to hear what is happening in the communities**.

It is important for communities to feel like they are being **listened to** and that the voices of the regional and remote South Australians are **shared with governments**.

Always listen

Regional and remote communities hope that when representatives from organisations and/or government agencies come to their land there is a **shared exchange of information** both ways. Visitors should be mindful of the way they interact with a community and the people who live there, and collaborate with communities for a **shared outcome**.

It is also fundamentally important that Aboriginal children and young people are heard in the work of the Council, and all other agencies and organisations across SA.

Other areas raised with a specific focus on how children and young people are faring included:

- Acknowledging and understanding the **differences in cultural engagement and responsibilities** between Aboriginal children and young people who live in urban, regional and remote settings
- Cultural engagement and responsibility will always have significant impact on Aboriginal children and young people in **linking them back to culture and community**

- Linking back and being connected to culture and community will have a positive influence on **engagement in formal education, health and work settings**
- It should be the **responsibility of the service provider** to create provision for these engagements and see the broader impact of positive engagement at a deeper level.

Regional and remote areas in SA are actively calling for more resources in the health, education and job opportunity space for children and young people.

Community members want to see **better use of resourcing** and more **advocacy for the same quality of service** available in metropolitan Adelaide to:

- support children and young people to have the **opportunity to stay on Country** and continuing to build connection to land and culture
- grow children and young people up to be **confident in their place** in Australian life.

What constitutes a home?

Many Aboriginal **young people self-place** with different family members for a variety of reasons including social, safety, access to school/services/jobs etc.

This can place an extra burden on the household that they choose to stay in, commonly referred to as couch-surfing.

For communities, the negative **impact can be significant**. Increasing the occupancy rates of homes beyond capacity leads to **financial stress** on households and/or **unresolved issues** in the home that the child or young person left.

Communities have asked for extra support from the Government of South Australia for **services for young people** to help understand their reasons for leaving home and to provide independence to young people who have limited options.

South Australians want the best for children and young people. The rural and regional communities want that message to get to government, and they want to see government **engage with the communities on the ground**.

Appendix

Child Development Council Consultations: Key information

The Youth Affairs Council of South Australia partnered with the Child Development Council to consult children and young people to inform the first review of South Australia's Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People. Two consultations were conducted, one in Whyalla and one in Salisbury North.

Participants

28 Children and young people consulted

- **5** Children (11 years of age or under)
- **23** Young people (12-18 years of age)
- **12** Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people

Requirements for a good life

Participants' responses across the five dimensions provide an insight into what children and young people feel are the essential elements to have a good life.

Health	Safety	Wellbeing	Education	Citizenship
Eating and sleeping well, exercising, accessing healthcare, feeling good, feeling connected with others, and learning.	Having a safe home, people that care, support and protect you, and people you trust.	Having strong connections with family and friends, having a variety of people that care about and support you and doing things that you enjoy like hobbies or sport.	Having easy access to school, support with learning, friends, good relationships with teachers, and learning that is fun as well as feeling comfortable in class and school.	Having opportunities and support to be active in your community and share your views, and have them listened to, valued, and considered.

Areas for improvement

Participants identified elements within the five dimensions that they think need more focus and support to make SA a better place to live for children and young people.

Health	Safety	Wellbeing	Education	Citizenship
Healthier diets and more free care for physical and mental health.	More affordable housing, caring parents and safe public places for young people.	More support to feel connected and cared for at home and school, and more opportunities to do things young people enjoy.	More learning support and better relationships with teachers.	More opportunities for young people to share their views and more people who care about, support and understand young people.