

COMMISSIONER'S REGIONAL WRAP UP

Port Augusta

Over the next five years, I will visit regional communities across South Australia to ensure young regional voices inform and contribute to my work.

I will ensure that local decision makers and service providers receive my regional wrap-up as a record of some of the views and opinions of local children and young people.

I encourage community leaders who are able to create opportunities to engage children and young people in ongoing dialogue as a tangible way of building community participation.

What I did...

My trip to Port Augusta was initiated by Port Augusta Secondary School (PASS) who enthusiastically accepted my invitation to meet with SAASTA schools following my attendance at the 2017 Power Cup. I was so impressed by the level of engagement of students involved in the Power Cup and its impact on educational outcomes, that I wrote to all schools participating to congratulate their students and express my interest in the program.

My Port Augusta trip coincided with the PASS Term 3 assembly, and I had the opportunity to not only meet with groups of students and classes but also present academic and community awards to many students and participate in a shared barbecue lunch.

PASS was very open and generous with their time, allowing access to various groups of students. I had small group discussions with the student well-being group as well as meetings over sausages and kangaroo at lunch time.

Who I saw

While in Port Augusta I also attended the School of the Air assembly and had conversations with some primary school children across the most remote parts of our State. It was an amazing experience and one that I will never forget. The children in these areas were very comfortable with the technology, and I was able to ask questions and

engage with the children relatively easy via webinar. The uniqueness of their situation and the warmth of their responses was fantastic as they are not often consulted.

Another highlight was my visit to Davenport Community for an after school consultation with children from 4-14 years old. This group was engaged, enthusiastic and had amazing artistic talent. They welcomed the consultation activity with openness and as a group showed how strong they are in their culture and language and how much they valued their education.



South Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People Helen Connolly with kids from the Davenport community.

In 2017 I commenced as South Australia's Commissioner for Children and Young People. My role is to position the needs, interests and well-being of children and young people front and centre in policy, practice and services affecting them.

In fulfilling my role I am committed to being a Commissioner who:

- engages in two-way discussions with children and young people
- connects to children and young people in both metro and rural areas
- meets children and young people in their spaces and in their time, and this includes at early learning centres, schools and community centres
- liaises with services and advocates alongside children and young people
- demonstrates respect and valuing of children through active involvement in all that I do.

Port Augusta

I also ensured that some young people outside of the education system were consulted and I had some very focused and deep discussions with young people supported by Mission Australia and Headspace. These young people had great insights into the challenges of balancing school and work, non-sport based recreation activities in the region and the role social media plays in friendships.

Who I heard

Young people expressed concern regarding the lack of things to do for individuals who don't play a sport. Many suggestions were made to improve the local community including:

- making the library more fun and interactive
- organising more music events
- more water parks
- range of different clubs not just sporting grounds
- improve school discos and more student involvement in the music and choice of dj and venue.

Also, young people wanted more opportunities for competition beyond sport with a focus on bringing music, art and dance competitions to Port Augusta.

Concerns about the cost of parents paying to enter sports venues to watch their children play was also on the minds of young people.

Some young women were concerned about the lack of female doctors to talk with about health problems and felt this impacted on access to health services. Headspace was valued by many young people as an important resource.

What I was asked to share

Some young people identified that Port Augusta was looking and feeling run down and shabby and that the infrastructure needed repair. The impact of this on the overall feel of the town and how young people felt about the town and their future was significant.

I was particularly struck by the gaming scene in Port Augusta and the potential to work with partners to develop a regional gaming event.

I think there is an excellent opportunity to work with local young people and industry and ICT partners to develop a regional gaming conference that can include all aspects of gaming including design, development and competition. It could be a real coup for the area and is worth exploring.



Helen Connolly with the South Australian Aboriginal Sports Training Academy students from Port Augusta Secondary School.

What we heard?

“ making library more fun and interactive ”