

# COMMISSIONER'S REGIONAL WRAP UP

## APY communities

Thank you to the APY communities that were so welcoming and allowed me to visit your schools and meet with children and young people. It was a privilege to visit 8 of the schools and meet children and young people from all ten schools and see first-hand what the children are learning and doing to be strong in two worlds.

I also want to thank the Minister for Education and Child Development, Susan Close MP and senior DECD staff for allowing me to accompany them. Given the complexity of travel across the APY lands and the logistics of accommodation, it would have been very difficult to make this trip alone. They were generous hosts and informative guides.



It was great to hear from principals and staff about their aspirations for education in the Anangu Lands Partnership and how they want to use data to drive improvement in the way they are teaching. Their focus on investing in the early years and supporting community and families as children's first teachers was positive. They realise that even more needs to be done to ensure that schools are seen by everyone in the community as a place where the community is encouraged to be part of the education experience for children.

## Where I went

My trip included visits to:

Pipalyatjara Anangu School  
Murputja Anangu School  
Amata Anangu School  
Pukatja/Ernabella Anangu School  
Kenmore Park Anangu School  
Fregon Anangu School  
Mimili Anangu School  
Indulkana Anangu School  
Umawa Fund My Idea Workshop and PYEC Meeting

## What I heard

I heard about the challenges in maintaining a consistent focus, stable relationships and teaching approach due to high staff turnover. This has an impact on children, who often need to adapt to new approaches and routines and make new relationships.

Given the strong link between attendance and learning, there is a strong focus on encouraging participation and supporting families to feel good in the school. This involves supporting the "Families as First Teachers (FaFT)" program and helping and supporting very young children to attend playgroups.

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.

## What I saw

I saw art and dance bringing school and community together as safe cultural practices to build relationships between school and community.

I saw how children and young people engaged with technology and when they did what an energetic learning environment was created.

I saw how schools and their infrastructure are more than places of education but safe and inviting hubs.

I saw how small SA is by meeting face-to-face with a young person at Pipalyatjara who I had previously spoken to on my School of the Air consultation.

## Highlights

The absolute highlight was attending the Fund My Idea session at Umuwa and meeting participants and hearing first-hand what they wanted for their communities. Young leaders from each school on the APY lands plus Yalata and Oak Valley schools attended to develop skills in designing and pitching an idea that would improve their community.

The young people overwhelmingly expressed a desire to live in a community where there is:

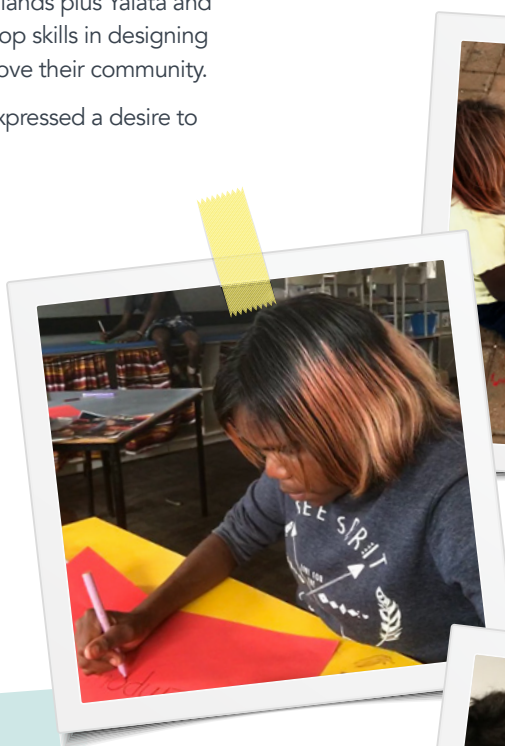
- no fighting
- culture is strong, and everyone is safe
- happy and active people
- people are learning and respectful
- fit and healthy
- clean and quiet
- jobs and things to do after school
- community infrastructure like youth sheds, bike tracks, softball cage

## Good things to build on

It would be great to continue investing in the leadership and development of the Fund My Idea participants to build relationships and trust with each other and to become a strong youth voice across APY. Over time they could engage with PYEC to develop participation expertise across the lands.

Explore new strategies and ways in which children and young people can take the leads in school activities such as reading to younger year levels or acting as buddies at school or developing resources for the whole community.

Anangu staff leading sessions being supported by non-Anangu staff is seen positively by students and further cements their positions as community leaders and role models. More opportunities for this to occur can only have positive results.



## Thank you.

“ Thank you to the principles and staff of each school and the Anangu staff who shared their wisdom and allowed me to observe them supporting children in the classroom and leading language classes. The respect of children towards them and the looks of complete engagement was inspiring. ”