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# UNICEF Australia Domestic Impact Report 2025

Creating an Australia where every child is healthy, educated,  
protected, respected and involved in planning their future.



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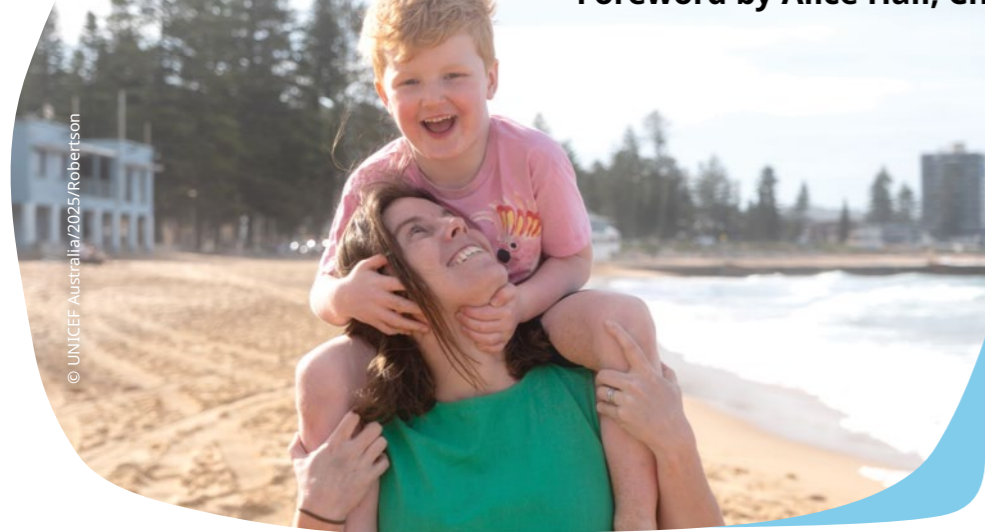
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## Acknowledgement of Country

UNICEF Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country of the land and communities in which we and our partners work throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to their lands, waters and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders past and present. We also acknowledge First Nations children and young people, who are the leaders of tomorrow.

# Together, building a stronger future for every child

Foreword by Alice Hall, Chief of Staff, UNICEF Australia



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Australia has the resources for every child to thrive, yet too many still face barriers that limit their potential. While many children have access to quality healthcare, education and family supports, persistent inequalities continue to place the greatest burden on those already at risk - including poverty, racism, intergenerational trauma and system failures.

In Australia, children in out-of-home care remain far more likely to experience homelessness or detention and those with a disability still face discrimination and barriers to full participation. Developmental vulnerability at school entry is rising and more young people are reporting mental health concerns, exacerbated by financial pressures on families. First Nations children continue to face systemic disadvantage, even as community-controlled organisations demonstrate the effectiveness of culturally grounded solutions that need sustained investment.

Safeguarding failures exposed in early learning settings in 2025 further highlight longstanding

weaknesses and the urgent need for stronger accountability and oversight across all systems responsible for children's safety.

In response, UNICEF Australia's strategic focus in 2025 continued to be ongoing advocacy with governments at all levels to ensure that children's rights and wellbeing are prioritised in policy and decision-making. Our research and evidence generation, engagement with children and young people and our collaboration with partners - including the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) and Minderoo Foundation on the flagship *The State of Australia's Children* report - demonstrated the power of collective advocacy in striving for meaningful change.

In 2025 UNICEF Australia influenced key reforms to protect children online and address climate change. Our advocacy helped shape new online safety codes, privacy protections and influenced several key reforms including the creation of Australia's first AI Safety Institute. We empowered young people to influence digital policy and improve

online safety through research, campaigns and resources for schools. On climate, we released new evidence on the impact of disasters on children, advocated for a national framework to protect young people and convened over 800 youth leaders to shape the 2025 National Statement on Climate Change. Our work at COP30 contributed to securing recognition of children's rights in global climate policy and we continue to champion youth voices and resilience in Australia's climate response. Across all our programs and initiatives, we directly engaged nearly 7,000 children and young people in 2025 - amplifying their voices in policy, research, and advocacy at every level.

UNICEF Australia would also like to thank all of the partners, collaborators and young people we worked with in 2025 who share our vision and have contributed to driving positive change for children in Australia.

As we look ahead to 2026, UNICEF Australia renews its commitment to advocate for every child - working alongside governments, partners, young people and communities to close persistent gaps and drive meaningful change.

Our vision is unwavering: to make children a national priority so every child grows up safe, healthy and hopeful. Guided by strong evidence and the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we will continue turning knowledge into action - building a stronger, fairer future for every child in Australia.

## 2025 highlights

### Creating better policies and stronger investments for children



11

government policies, practices or legislation influenced.



\$10 million

committed by the Australian Government to better support children and young people following advocacy by UNICEF Australia.

### Informing the conversation about children in Australia



7

new publications to guide better policies and programs for children and young people.



Media coverage generated

conversation about issues impacting children in Australia and highlighted the personal experiences and views of young people. Coverage featured in top tier outlets across TV, radio, print and online in every state and territory, reaching millions of Australians.

### The State of Australia's Children Report



Launched the inaugural *State of Australia's Children report*, delivered

in partnership with ARACY and Minderoo Foundation. The report brings together the latest public data (over 100 data sets) and the voices of over 2,000 children and young people to provide a comprehensive picture of how children in Australia are faring.

### Raising the voices of children and young people



6,966

children and young people consulted on key issues.



286,132

children engaged in school-based activities.

### Digital Safety and Wellbeing



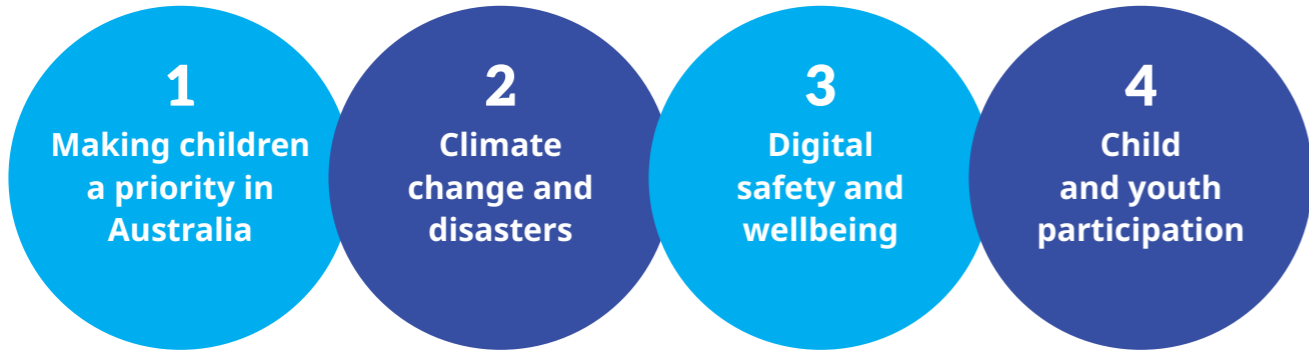
Developed a landmark report - *Algorithmic Kids*

pulling together the latest research on how AI is already impacting Aussie kids. Through this report and successful advocacy initiatives, including a keynote at the Digital Child Summit, we contributed to immediate action on our recommendation to establish Australia's first-ever AI Safety Institute.

# How we work in Australia

UNICEF Australia is working to create an Australia where every child is healthy, educated, protected, respected and participating in planning their future.

In 2025, UNICEF Australia had the following strategic areas of focus:

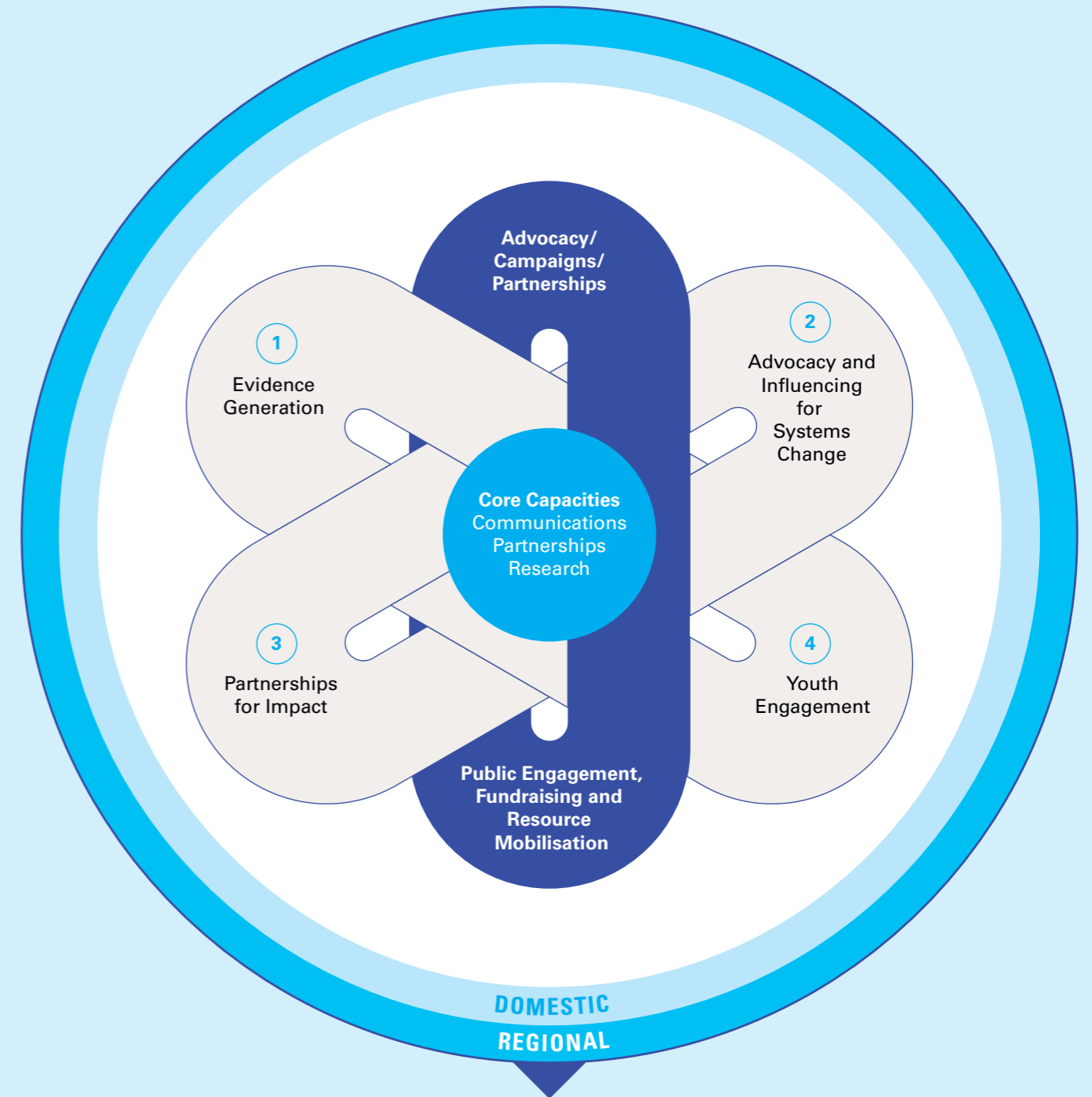


To achieve results for children, we:

 <p><b>Turn insights into action</b> by researching the situation for children and young people in Australia and using this evidence to inform and guide national decision-making to improve children's wellbeing.</p>	 <p><b>Connect with children and young people and elevate their voices</b> so they can have a say in policies and programs that shape their lives now and into the future.</p>	 <p><b>Partner for impact</b> to highlight critical gaps for vulnerable children. Together with our partners, we help drive greater investment in strategies that work to address inequality and disadvantage. Through partnerships with community organisations, non-government organisations, researchers, academics and the private sector, we drive change at scale.</p>	 <p><b>Advocate with all levels of government</b> to address inequality and chronic child rights issues in Australia and drive systemic changes for children.</p>	 <p><b>Shape public conversation and debates</b> about children through our research and insights, and as a strong voice in the media.</p>
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Our work is anchored in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and we strive to shape a better world for all children in Australia, no matter what.

# How we work to create positive and lasting change for children



**RESULTS FOR EVERY CHILD**

# Our impact for children in 2025

This year, UNICEF Australia has made big steps toward our theory of change; our roadmap for improving the lives of children in Australia.

**Involved and influential young leaders**



**6,966 children and young people consulted** on key issues

**Adoption of policy, practice, legislation and budgets that support children's rights**



**11 government policies, practices or legislation** influenced

**Evidence-based policy and programs for children**



**7 new publications** to guide better policies and programs for children and young people

**Direct benefits for children, families and communities**



**140 companies** have now been certified Family Friendly

**Increased public support for children**



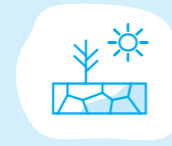
**Sustained media coverage** on issues affecting children, with one highlight being *The State of Australia's Children* report securing 443 media clips\*



**286,132 children engaged** in school-based activities



**\$10 million committed by the Australian Government** to better support children and young people following advocacy by UNICEF Australia



**Launch of the inaugural State of Australia's Children report**, bringing together the latest public data (over 100 data sets) and the voices of over 2,000 children



**500 parents and caregivers supported** with registering their child's birth

\*With our partners Minderoo Foundation and ARACY, *The State of Australia's Children* messages calling for change for children have had an estimated reach of over 51 million this year.



## Making children a national priority

UNICEF Australia strives to make children a national priority. Through our advocacy, research and reporting, public and civil society engagement, we call for closer attention on the issues that matter to children and ensure their wellbeing. These issues include child protection, child and youth wellbeing, youth justice, the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis and seeking to make Australian workplaces increasingly family friendly.

Every child in Australia deserves the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential. They should be valued, respected, supported, included and have their voices heard. At UNICEF Australia, we believe prioritising children's rights is essential, not only for the wellbeing of children, but for the health and progress of society as a whole. Yet for many children across the country, the promise of these rights remains unfulfilled, making our work more important than ever.



**1 in 5**

Young adults reporting high psychological distress and suicide remains the leading cause of death for those aged 15-24.<sup>1</sup>

**43%**

Family violence affects almost half of young people: affecting 43% of Australian youth aged 16-24-year-olds.<sup>2</sup>

**43%**

of young people worried about housing and money, and 62% believing they will be worse off than their parents.<sup>3</sup>

## The State of Australia's Children report

In 2025, UNICEF Australia launched the inaugural *State of Australia's Children* report, delivered in partnership with ARACY and supported by Minderoo Foundation. The report brings together the latest public data and the voices of children and young people to provide a comprehensive picture of how children in Australia are

far. Grounded in the *Australian Children's Wellbeing Index*, it examines outcomes across six wellbeing domains, the mega trends shaping children's futures and the conditions needed for all children to flourish.

The report's findings highlight areas of strength in Australia's public health, education and social

support systems as well as persistent inequities facing many children living in poverty, those in regional and remote locations, First Nations children, and those with lived experience of out-of-home care, homelessness or discrimination. This report is a call to action to address these gaps and ensure all children have the support they need. By making children a national priority we can ensure every child in Australia has a good start from the beginning.

The report was launched at Australian Parliament House on 24 November 2025 and featured contributions from several prominent Australian public figures, including senior government representatives, leading academics and two of UNICEF Australia's Young Ambassadors.

As the first national synthesis of its kind, the report has already attracted significant attention from government, researchers and sector partners. As well as being publicly supported by every Australian Children's Commissioner, Guardian and Advocate, it was the top 3 social issues report viewed on the Australian Policy Online (APO) in 2025.



**ABOVE** UNICEF Australia's Nicole Breeze, Chief Advocate for Children and Tony Stuart, Chief Executive Officer and Minderoo Foundation's co-chair and co-founder Nicola Forrest, AO with the Hon Patrick Gorman MP, Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister, at the Parliament House launch of *The State of Australia's Children* report.

UNICEF Australia, ARACY and partners conducted child and youth consultations throughout 2025 to complement existing data for this report - exploring gaps and hearing from age groups who are often underrepresented in consultation processes. This included:



**The State of Australia's Children Participatory Workshops**  
Play-based workshops conducted with children aged 3-11 to explore their wellbeing.



**The State of Australia's Children and Young People National Survey 2025**  
A national, online survey of more than 2,000 12-17-year-olds.



**A Youth Advisory Group**  
Made up of eight young people aged 16-25 from states and territories across the country.

### What children and young people across Australia told us:

"[My] family makes [me] happy...and sports."  
- Participant aged 8-11 years

"I am worried about not having enough... I feel sad because I feel bad for my dad because we are also like getting kicked out of our house. And even housing [commission], they don't want to give us."  
- Participant aged 8-11 years

"People bullying her [makes her unhappy] ... people bully me and I don't like it... I just walk away and tell somebody [when that happens]."  
- Participant aged 5-7 years

"Kids like me worry about big, big feelings that come in my head and lives around in my head... If you have a worry, you talk to your mum, and your worry gets smaller and smaller."  
- Participant aged 3-4 years

"Don't leave [children] out or exclude them... just ask them what they're uncomfortable about and make them feel like they belong."  
- Participant aged 8-11



The State of Australia's Children Participatory Workshop

### Making Australia family friendly: The Family Friendly Workplace Program:

The Family Friendly Workplace (FFW) initiative was established by UNICEF Australia and Parents at Work, together with a group of leading Australian employers in 2021. Its purpose is to advance building a family-friendly Australia by enabling more employers to adopt policies and practices that foster workplace cultures that are safe, inclusive and family-friendly. Key outcomes of this program to date include:







- **553 Australian workplaces** benchmarked against the National Work and Family Standards, surpassing our target of 500 and collectively employing approximately 846,960 Australians, including 311,274 women.
- **140 certified companies** positively impacted 1,164,250 employees through policy and practice changes.
- The second *National Working Families Survey Report* (2024) engaged **over 6,000 working families and carers**, supported by seven employer case studies showcasing the benefits of family-friendly policies across different industries.



### Defending the rights of children

**The 2025 federal election**  
In the lead up to the election and throughout the campaign, we called for children and young people to be put at the top of the national policy agenda. Families across the country were struggling in a cost-of-living crisis; children and young people were overlooked in our disaster responses; and children and young people were facing increased risk from bullying and online harm.

**UNICEF Australia's election platform called for six recommendations the Australian parliament could take to improve the lives of children in Australia:**

 <b>Reduce cost of living pressures</b> for families through universal childcare	 <b>Improve the quality, quantum and speed of disaster payments</b>	 <b>Ensure AI is safe and productive for children</b>
 <b>Take stronger action</b> to tackle online violence against children	 <b>A cabinet appointment for children</b>	 <b>Invest in climate smart systems and infrastructure for children.</b>

By the end of 2025, **three of our six recommendations had been acted on**, with the Australian Government committing to a universal early childhood education and care (ECEC) system, an Australian AI Safety Institute, and a National Anti-Bullying Taskforce.



**Early childhood education and care (ECEC)** - UNICEF Australia has worked throughout 2025 to advance two critical goals: making ECEC universally accessible, and ensuring that every child is safe in these environments. The year began with a significant positive milestone when the Federal Government announced increased investment in education through the Federal Budget. However, several high-profile safety breaches in childcare settings during the year galvanised public concern and reinforced the urgency of reform around child safety. UNICEF Australia responded with strong public statements highlighting the need for systemic change to prevent harm and ensure accountability, paired with policy submissions providing a pathway forward. The events of 2025 have shown that change is possible when policy, public awareness and political will converge. UNICEF Australia will continue to advance efforts that put children's rights and wellbeing at the centre of early learning, ensuring that every child can thrive in a learning environment that is both high-quality and free from harm.

**Children in the youth justice system** - We continue to add UNICEF Australia's voice to a chorus of support calling for reform in youth justice in Australia, namely through our participation in a federal Senate Inquiry, the Raise the Age campaign, correspondence with State and Territory governments, policy submissions, and public communications through social media. Reform on youth justice is moving in contradictory directions across States and Territories. Some are moving ahead with progressive reforms on the age of criminal

responsibility, while others are pursuing more punitive responses including introducing "Adult Crime, Adult Time" mandatory sentences for youth offenders. With an active federal Senate inquiry ongoing, we hope to capitalise on new momentum at the national level to see through youth justice reforms that better respect the rights of children. For UNICEF Australia, this means creating youth justice systems across Australia that intervene early and divert children away from detention, giving them the best chance to succeed.



### Addressing under-registration of births in Australia

In 2025, UNICEF Australia maintained a strategic focus on advocacy with governments to address the persistent challenge of the under-registration of births for children across Australia. The absence of a birth certificate can have immediate and enduring consequences, including barriers to enrolment in ECEC or sport in childhood, and paid employment or housing in adulthood.

Through this work we collected robust evidence and data, analysed the long-term impacts of delayed

birth certification, and engaged communities in New South Wales, South Australia and Queensland to amplify the voices of families most affected. The absence of a birth certificate can have immediate and enduring consequences, including restricted access to essential services and rights. Our ongoing collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Statistics, state Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages, and our community partner Pathfinders who run the National Aboriginal Birth Certificate Program, and other community organisations,

has enabled us to develop practical solutions and continue to advocate for systemic reform with decision-makers.

UNICEF Australia is grateful for the ongoing support of the Ian Potter Foundation, whose partnership has been critical to advancing this work. By connecting strategic advocacy, rigorous research, and community consultations, this work is driving progress towards universal birth registration, where every child in Australia can access their rights from the very beginning.



## Climate change and disasters

UNICEF Australia is championing action to prepare, protect and prioritise children in the face of the climate crisis and increasing climate-related disasters. We're generating research and evidence to strengthen systems and services, placing children at the centre of climate policies and investments, and empowering them to prepare for the future and lead climate action in their communities. This work includes policy submissions, research partnerships and targeted engagement with government and young people directly - highlighting that children need a dedicated focus and response before, during and after disasters to safeguard their wellbeing and rights.

Australia is highly vulnerable to climate change and children face significant risks. They are uniquely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, like air pollution, heatwaves and diseases. Decisions made today will shape their futures, yet they are often excluded from planning.

UNICEF Australia advocates for children and young people to be prioritised in climate and disaster strategies. Their voices must be heard and they should be involved in decisions that affect their lives.

**932,886**

or one in six Australian children and young people, are impacted by disasters in an average year.<sup>4</sup>

**2020**

children born in this year are estimated to face on average two to seven times more extreme weather events than their grandparents.<sup>5</sup>

**23rd**

Australia has a 'very high' risk profile regarding disasters, ranked 23 out of 193 UN member states according to World Risk Index data.<sup>6</sup>

**19%**

the estimated amount of children and young people who experience mental health issues following a disaster.<sup>7</sup>



UNICEF Australia, Australian National University and Deloitte Access Economics at the Canberra report launch.



## 2025 Key achievements

### Measuring the impact of disasters on children and young people – Deloitte research

In 2025, UNICEF Australia continued to build the evidence base highlighting the unique vulnerabilities and needs of children in climate-induced disasters in Australia. In partnership with Deloitte Access Economics, we developed and published *The Economic and Social Impact of Disasters on Children and Young People* report, which followed on from our report published in 2024.

Together, these reports provide evidence on the impact of disasters, looking at different warming scenarios and how this influences the economic costs associated with disasters for children and young people. Using the findings of this research, we are advocating for State and Territory Governments to adopt a national framework for children and young people before and after disasters.

### Convenor of youth climate action - Local Conference of Youth and the 2025 National Statement

Local Conferences of Youth (LCOY) brings together young people to explore and discuss climate change and its impact on them. LCOYs are national conferences and are held around the world, with inputs collated to form both National Children and Youth Statements on Climate Change and the Global Youth Climate Statement, which is submitted to the Conference of Parties (COP) climate negotiations each year.

In 2025, we supported Australia's LCOY in partnership with UN Youth Australia and the Australian Youth for International Climate Engagement (AYFICE). The LCOY brought together over 800 children and young people through 27 consultations designed and led by young people, including UNICEF Australia Young Ambassadors.

#### These consultations informed the development of the 2025 National Statement of Children and Young People on Climate Change, which calls for:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership embedded across all stages of climate policy along with meaningful Pacific partnerships.
- Stronger action to reduce Australia's emissions in line with the global 1.5°C target.
- Youth-centred energy transition planning, with targeted education, green skills training and job pathways for a just transition.
- Greater investment in climate-resilient services and infrastructure across schools, hospitals, transport and housing, particularly in regional and rural areas.
- Meaningful opportunities to engage with young people at COP31, including a Children and Youth Advisory Taskforce.

“ This Statement carries the voices of a generation no longer willing to wait. A collective both diverse yet united, with clarity, courage and conviction. In our cities and regions, from coast to coast – across this continent, young people spoke not just of rising seas and broken systems but of what could be built in their place. ”

– LINCOLN AND LAYLA, UNICEF AUSTRALIA YOUNG AMBASSADORS

Consultations were held in every state and territory, spanning all capital cities and diverse regional locations such as Dubbo, Coffs Harbour, Gippsland, and Mackay. Contributions also came from the Uluru Youth Dialogue, enriching the national conversation with deep cultural insight. For the first time, our Dubbo consultation included children as young as 10, making it one of the youngest LCOY consultations globally – a powerful step toward inclusive climate dialogue.

### Australia Pacific Youth Climate Dialogue and the road to COP30

UNICEF Australia spearheaded the inaugural Australia Pacific Youth Climate Dialogue (APYCD). The event brought together 50 young climate leaders from across Oceania, enabling young people of diverse ages (18-28 years) and backgrounds to shape policy conversations. In October, UNICEF Australia's Young Ambassadors and delegates from the APYCD held 22 bilateral meetings with MPs and ministers, presenting the National Child and Youth Statement, and the outcomes of the APYCD, resulting in commitments to elevate youth voices, share the LCOY findings in Parliament, and foster ongoing engagement with young people.

UNICEF Australia attended COP30 with a focus on child-sensitive climate policy, partnerships, and youth engagement. We worked with Australian negotiators to secure recognition of children and young people in key COP30 decisions, including the Global Mutirão and Loss and Damage review, and achieved commitments for age-disaggregated data. We hosted two events at the Australian Pavilion, spoke on multiple panels, and engaged with public and private sector stakeholders on how we can combine to make climate policy and investment more child-sensitive.

By championing new alliances and collaborative platforms, UNICEF Australia has created opportunities for coordinated action, positioning children and young people as central stakeholders in climate decision-making. Our advocacy is strengthened by the integration of deep policy expertise and specialist knowledge in youth engagement, ensuring that the lived experiences and insights of young people directly inform our work. In 2025, we demonstrated a compelling proof of concept for effective youth engagement at scale - showing how meaningful participation can shape policy and build momentum ahead of future COPs. These efforts have reinforced UNICEF Australia's reputation as a trusted partner and a skilled convenor, able to bring together intergenerational stakeholders for collective impact.

UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador Lincoln, UNICEF Australia's Nishadh Rego and APYCD delegates with Hon Pat Conroy MP during the APYCD bilateral meetings.



# Digital safety and wellbeing

Building on years of work, UNICEF Australia is recognised as a leading voice in making Australia the safest place in the world for children online. Our unique approach combines research with young people, targeted advocacy, practical resources and tools for teachers and parents, and high impact campaigns.



**Key digital reforms we've influenced include:**

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The Online Safety Codes

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The forthcoming Children's Online Privacy Code

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The creation of the first Australian AI Safety Institute



UNICEF Australia's John Livingstone, Katie Maskiell and UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador Chelsea at the Digital Childhoods Summit

**W**ith a constantly evolving digital environment, the momentum to make change in the online world for children is only gathering speed. To ensure the path forward benefits every Australian child, we are drawing together the voices of young people, sharing our work with both decision makers and tech companies, and aligning on action that leads to lasting impact. By inputting the views of young people directly into policy processes, they'll be better designed and more likely to positively impact Aussie kids.

**Key achievements**

- With the support of Telstra Foundation's Young and Connected Fund grant, we surveyed over 2,000 teenagers about their digital lives, from social media use, to privacy, AI, and mis/disinformation, detailed in our report *A Generation Online*. We also shared our raw data with policymakers working on the social media ban and the Children's Online Privacy Code.
- Partnering with the Alannah & Madeline Foundation to develop new media literacy resources for teachers and schools, supported by Telstra Foundation. The resources were rolled out to over 20,000 primary school students across the country.
- Launching our Pass the Mic campaign, reaching over 1 million young people and providing them with a platform to share their

**“ Social Media has had a positive impact as I finally found a way to communicate with others who I relate with as I'm autistic and don't fit in. ”**

**- 14, NSW, PASS THE MIC CAMPAIGN**

views on what social media means to them.

- Developing a landmark report – *Algorithmic Kids* - pulling together the latest research on how AI is already impacting Aussie kids. Through successful advocacy initiatives, including a keynote at the Digital Childhoods Summit, we saw immediate action on our recommendation to establish the first-ever Australian AI Safety Institute.
- Providing a platform for young people to speak publicly about this issue through sector webinars, events, policy submissions, blogs, and media commentary.
- Using high impact media and communications to focus the attention of decision-makers and increase public discourse about the unique needs of children in online spaces.



UNICEF Australia's survey of 2,000+ young Australians aged 13-17 found:

**36%** of young people have provided a false age when asked to verify their age online.

**86%** of young Australians take steps to protect their online privacy, but 1 in 7 do not engage in any protective measures.

**Over half (55%)** of young people are willing to provide personal information such as phone number, a photo/selfie, or parental contact information to social media platforms to create an account.

**72%** express discomfort with their personal data being collected by apps and websites and nearly the same amount (71%) are uncomfortable with their friends sharing content of them without their permission.

Many teens are aware of harmful content, with **71%** always/often avoiding certain websites or apps known for such risks.



2025 World Children's Day

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# Child and youth participation

Children and young people play a critical role in shaping and improving their communities, schools, and broader society. Their energy, innovative thinking and unique experiences are invaluable in helping to build a safer, more sustainable, and equitable future for all people – including new generations of children. By fostering and supporting their participation, UNICEF Australia is committed to strengthening the role of children and young people in driving meaningful social, political, and economic change, both now and in the years to come.



**35**

the number of Members of Parliament our Young Ambassadors engaged with.

**6,966**

children and young people consulted in our work to improve the lives of children in Australia.

**286,132**

children engaged in school-based activities.

## Young Ambassadors

The Young Ambassador Program trains young leaders from across Australia on policy processes, advocacy campaigning and how to drive change at scale with decision makers. Young Ambassadors lead consultations with children and young people across the country to understand their unique needs, concerns and hopes for the future.

UNICEF Australia's Young Ambassador Program had a new cohort of 11 ambassadors (pictured below) in 2025 and we supported these incredible young people to create youth-led impact for children through 115 engagements across political, educational, and community sectors. Their contributions included leading youth consultations, speaking on panels, participating in research, publishing articles online and in the press, presenting to schools and local communities and commenting in the media.

“The Young Ambassador program has helped me find my voice, connect with other passionate young people, and step more deeply into leadership grounded in culture, truth-telling, and community care.”

- SIAN, UNICEF AUSTRALIA YOUNG AMBASSADOR



ABOVE: Local Conference of Youth (LCOY) event at the UNICEF Australia office in Sydney.



The 2025/2026 UNICEF Australia Young Ambassadors (from left to right) - Reede (TAS), Princess (ACT), Charlotte (WA), Ashwini (NSW), Sian (QLD), Max (ACT), Layla (NSW), Lincoln (VIC), Peter (NT), Chelsea (SA), Todd (VIC)



CASE STUDY

Meet Reede

A standout for Young Ambassador, Reede, was attending the 2025 Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) Summit. As a proud descendant of the Trawlwoolway people who hadn't had the chance to grow up on Country, Reede embraced the summit as a powerful opportunity to reconnect with his heritage. In a youth empowerment session, Elders and young leaders came together to speak about the ripple effect of intergenerational leadership, asking participants what kind of ancestor they want to become.

In response to his experience, Reede wrote an article titled "How listening helped a youth ambassador to find his voice" which was published in Launceston's The Examiner.

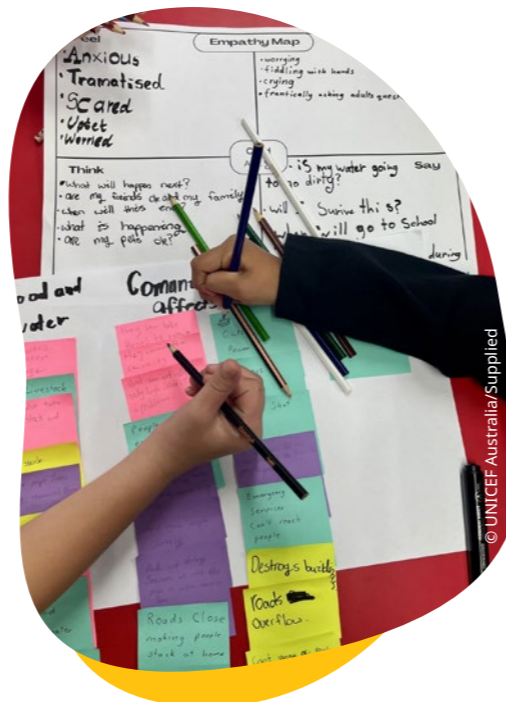
“That question reshaped my experience at the summit and changed how I view advocacy and leadership. Advocacy, at its core, is about making life better for the next generation.”

- YOUNG AMBASSADOR, REEDE, ON FIRST NATIONS LEADERSHIP.

School engagement

Operation Earth Action delivers a fun and dynamic educational program focused on defending children's rights in a changing climate. Launched in partnership with Redlands school, the program aligns with the Stage 3 syllabus (years 5 and 6) to blend learning outcomes on disasters with real-world opportunities to influence child's rights through creative solution design. This year, UNICEF Australia engaged with over 600 young people in the program, reaching schools across New South Wales, Victoria, the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Over in-person and online state-based Semi Finals and a National Grand Final, students had the chance to share their solution prototypes and their experiences of natural disasters to a national audience. At the NSW Semi-Finals, participants presented their findings to students and staff at the UNICEF Australia headquarters. Students said they felt inspired learning about children's rights and "knowing that we as kids can take action in thinking up ideas".



“My favourite thing about Operation Earth Action was brainstorming different ideas and finally coming to our final product. I learnt how much damage natural disasters can actually do to children's lives and how often they actually happen.”

- STUDENT AT THE OPERATION EARTH ACTION NSW SEMI-FINALS



PICTURED HERE AND ABOVE: Students presenting their solution prototypes at the Operation Earth Action NSW Semi-Final

## World Children's Day

Every year, World Children's Day is celebrated on 20 November, marking the date the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was adopted. On World Children's Day 2025, we celebrated every child's right to play (Article 31 of UNCRC) and engaged with schools to protect and promote this right through our A Minute of Loudness campaign.

This year we had our largest ever group of schools engaged in A Minute of Loudness, with over 1,000 Australian schools, pre-schools and community organisations, and over 180,000 students celebrating their right to play. Schools and students participated through a range of tailored lesson resources for teachers on the importance of play, visits from our UNICEF Australia Ambassadors Emma McKeon and Storm and Ronan Keating, and the Minute of Loudness where students raised their voices through words, song and music.



World Children's Day teacher resources



## University Engagement

**University of Technology Sydney Partnership**  
Through a three-year partnership with the University of Technology Sydney's Transdisciplinary School, we co-created a challenge for undergraduate students focused on Reframing, Remixing, and Re-imagining Society.

This initiative brought together 650 students from diverse disciplines working collaboratively to unpack a real-world UNICEF Australia challenge - how to get more young people involved in climate change solutions.

**We posed key questions to students, including:**

- How might we empower and amplify the voices of children and young people in shaping climate action, ensuring their perspectives are integrated and their needs prioritised for a sustainable and just future?
- How might young people have greater influence in driving climate action?

In 2025, we heard from students a key area of focus was green skills, and the importance of sustainable career opportunities for young people and their role in shaping a climate-resilient future.



## UNICEF's global youth platform U-Report launched in Australia

In 2025, we launched U-Report Australia, UNICEF's digital community for young people across the country. U-Report Australia facilitates young people to raise their voice and share opinions on topics that matter to them. U-Report is a free, confidential digital polling platform open to anyone aged 14-24, and is available on three platforms - SMS, Instagram and Facebook Messenger. This ensures all young people can participate and contribute, irrespective of them being on social media.

Young people can answer polls on issues that affect them and have their voice heard in a safe digital space designed for them. In 2025 we heard from young people on a variety of topics, such as climate change, digital wellbeing, financial literacy, online influencing, civics education, wellbeing and youth engagement.

### Through U-Report we discovered:

- 59% of U-Reporters are not satisfied with their current level of financial literacy
- 78% of U-Reporters don't think children under 16-years-old should be allowed to be online influencers
- 68% of U-Reporters think the media doesn't adequately display LGBTQIA+ stories
- 84% of U-Reporters don't think the current level of civics education in the school curriculum is adequate

“ I would've loved to get taught about how the government works in general, especially regarding the three levels of government, beyond a simple Year 6 excursion to Parliament House. ”  
- U-REPORTER ON THE TOPIC OF CIVIC EDUCATION

As well as gathering statistics on key issues affecting young people, U-Report also collects their thoughts and opinions. U-Report Australia also involves young people in its strategic direction, seeking their involvement shaping the topics and questions, participating in the U-Report Steering Committee, and reaching youth from around Australia. U-Report Australia will continue into 2026, allowing more young people to raise their voice and be heard.



# Shaping the public conversation as a voice for children

2025 saw discussion in the media on issues impacting children and young people from 0-25 years of age, including child protection, physical and mental health, and education. UNICEF Australia provided a consistent authoritative voice advocating for the unique needs of young people, often generating and leading the discussion, and created space for young people to share their own experiences and views.

UNICEF Australia's Young Ambassadors played an active role in highlighting young voices from their states and territories, and participating in the launches of major reports, including Algorithmic Kids, Deloitte Access Economics analysis of social and economic impacts of disasters on young people; and The State of Australia's Children Report.

Together UNICEF Australia experts and young people advocated in media for action such as climate resilient education, health and protection services for children, more accountability by the tech sector to protect children online, and a National Early Years Commission for greater consistency in planning for and safeguarding young children.

2025 culminated in a national overview of children's wellbeing captured by The State of Australia's Children report, which was heavily featured in media at the time of launch and continues to be referenced in 2026. The coverage reached an estimated 51 million Australians across TV, radio, print, and online in metropolitan and regional areas, showcasing UNICEF Australia's partnership with leading child advocates Minderoo Foundation and ARACY.

## Some examples of media coverage include:



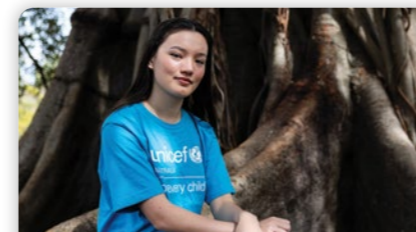
First Nations Young Ambassadors to represent Australia in UNICEF program  
[National Indigenous Times](#)



Teens bypassing online safety: what parents need to know.  
[Child Mags.com.au](#)



National register key in childcare overhaul.  
[The Courier Mail](#)



Layla's final year of school was disrupted by floods and fires. The toll of climate disasters on children is getting worse.  
[The Guardian](#)



Will age verification technology work?  
[Behind the News](#)



Child safety watchdog needs more bite: Unicef CEO Tony Stuart  
[Herald Sun](#)



Aussie teens are increasingly taking on "adult anxieties" - The State of Australia's Children report.  
[10 News +](#)



We break down everything you need to know about Australia's under-16 social media ban  
[The Guardian](#)



UNICEF ambassadors visit Bronte Public School for World Children's Day  
[7 News](#)



Landmark children's report - The State of Australia's Children report  
[Today](#)



Young UNICEF ambassador represents St George  
[St George and Sutherland Shire Leader](#)



World Children's Day: make some noise about what matters most  
[Kids News](#)

# Our policy work



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One of the ways UNICEF Australia helps to make change for children in Australia is through submissions to parliamentary committees, public statements, and appearances at senate committees and inquiries on issues relating to child rights in Australia.

**Submissions this year:**

1. [Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2025-26](#)
2. [The Energy, Food and Water Inquiry](#)
3. [The National Volunteer Incentive Scheme \(Climate Army\) Inquiry](#)
4. [The Senate Committee on Measuring Outcomes for First Nations Communities](#)
5. [The Child Safety Review](#)
6. [The Anti-Bullying Rapid Review](#)
7. [The consultation on the Children's Online Privacy Code](#)
8. [The consultation on giving fund reforms](#)
9. [Australia's Fourth Universal Periodic Review](#)
10. [The Climate Change Authority Annual Progress Report](#)
11. [The Productivity Commission's delivering quality care more efficiently interim report](#)
12. [The Productivity Commission's investing in cheaper, cleaner energy and the net zero transformation interim report](#)
13. [The Productivity Commission's inquiry into harnessing digital technology](#)
14. [The Senate Inquiry into the Internet Search Engine Services Online Safety Code](#)
15. [The Treasury's inquiry on a national approach to worker screening in the care and support economy](#)

# Our publications

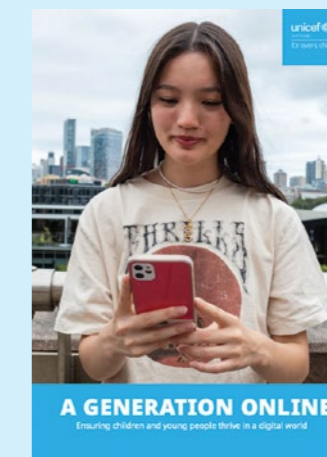
We create research and insights about children and young people to inform and guide decision makers. In 2025, UNICEF Australia and its partners released the following publications.



Building a Secure Future



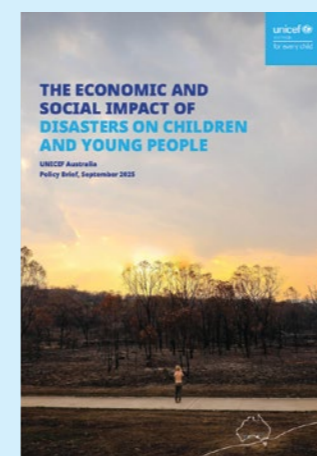
Algorithmic Kids



A Generation Online



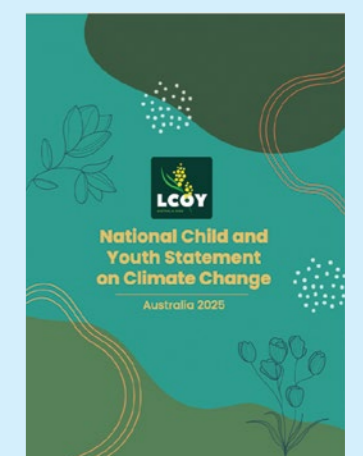
The economic and social impact of disasters on children and young people – research



The economic and social impact of disasters on children and young people - policy briefing



The State of Australia's Children report



National Child and Youth Statement on Climate Change Australia: Local Conference of Youth 2025

# Thank you to our partners and supporters

With the support of the Australian public, partners and collaborators, UNICEF Australia is able to make real change and impact for children and young people across the country.

Thank you to our community, academic and research, and private sector partnerships for working with us in 2025 to make a difference for children and young people.



## We would also like to thank the following major supporters of our work here in Australia:

- Bridging Hope Charity Foundation
- HOWATSON+COMPANY
- IKEA Australia
- Minderoo Foundation
- Telstra Foundation
- The Ian Potter Foundation
- The Office for Women

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# Endnotes

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UNICEF Australia is an Australian charity with a global footprint, working to help children and young people everywhere reach their full potential.

Here in Australia, we put UNICEF's experience working with children and young people around the world into practice on home soil. We use our voice and work with partners to champion children's rights, ensuring their voices are heard, and make sure every child is healthy, educated, protected, respected and involved in decisions that impact their lives.

**unicef**   
AUSTRALIA  
for every child

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