

A Climate for Change

2019 Young
Ambassador
Report



This document is a child friendly version of
A Climate for Change - 2019 Young Ambassador Report.

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Agency and protects the rights of children all over the world. The rights of children are written in the Children's Convention. The Children's Convention includes all the things that children should have to grow up safe, happy and healthy.

We, the UNICEF Australia Young Ambassadors, felt that the voices of children and young people were not heard enough in decisions that are made in Australia. We decided to do something about that.

In 2018 we went around the country and listened to 1517 children and young people between 3 and 22 years old, and surveyed 1007 14 to 17 year olds.

We talk about the topics we heard about in our consultations - wellbeing, safety, learning, equality and the environment. When we talked about the environment we heard lots about climate change and so this became our spotlight topic. Children and young people also spoke to us about the media and trust in decision-makers, so we have included it in our report as well.





This is the UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador team for 2018-19 - Eva, Josh, Lachlan, Xavier, Atosha, Indiana, Ashleigh and Steve.



These are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are a plan to make a fairer world. They work together with children's rights. Examples of the SDGs include a good education, no hunger and a healthy environment.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing means a lot of things. We heard from children and young people that it can mean having friends, a home that you can live in, clean water and eating healthy. They also told us it meant being happy and not being sick.

Every child has the right to live a full life, privacy, be healthy, play and relax.

The SDGs that relate to children's wellbeing rights include:



There were two main ways that children and young people spoke to us about wellbeing. They often spoke about their mental health and physical health. Over half were worried about their mental health, while many were also concerned about physical health and fitness.

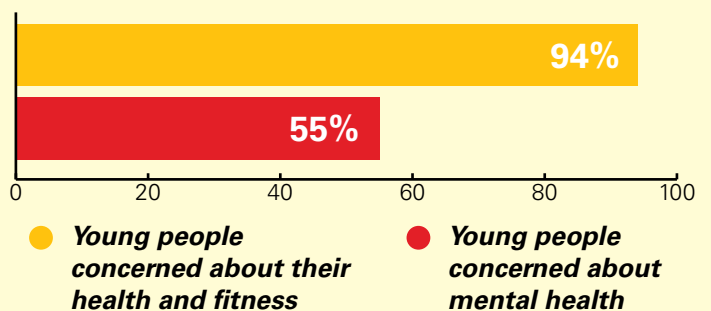
High school students told us that stress was not good for their mental health and was impacted with being more stressed. This was because they had more work to do.

That the way they treat us at school and their education system stresses us out and worries us more than they know

(Female, 15, James Nash State High School, QLD)

Often children and young people would go to their family and friends for support as they thought these relationships were important.

Young people told us that they wanted more help with their mental health.



Safety

Safety means to be free from danger or harm.

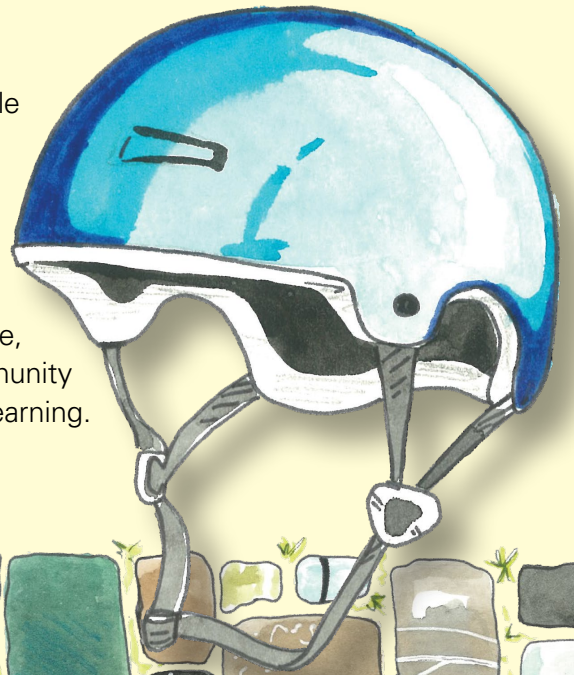
Children have the right to:

- Survive and develop healthily
- Be taken care of by their family
- Get and share information
- Privacy
- Be protected from bad things (violence, abuse, neglect, drugs, assault, being sold or treated badly)

SDGs that relate to safety:



Young people want to see plans that will help children feel more safe at home, in the community and when learning.



There are lots of different things that make people feel safe. In consultations when asked *"What makes you feel safe?"* children and young people said things like their parents or their teachers.

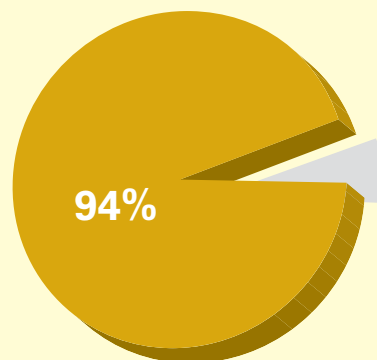
"I feel safe when everyone's being happy and kind but I don't feel safe when for example at school people are bullying each other"

(Female, Year 5, Vic).

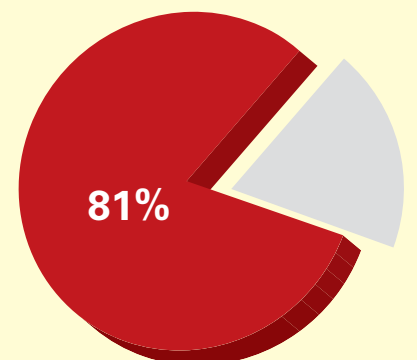
"Technology can affect you in a good way or a bad way like it can inspire you to do something but it could take away your social life and it could you may get like cyber bullied."

(Female, Year 6, Wodonga South Primary School, Vic).

The most often listed places where people felt safe were 'home', then 'bed', followed by 'school'. Young children told us that their 'parents' and 'teachers' helped them feel safe. Young people told us that their 'friends' and 'self' made them feel safe.



Percentage of young people aged 14 to 17 felt safe at home



Percentage of young people aged 14 to 17 felt safe online



Learning

Young people said that the main place they learn is at school, but that they also learn from the internet, their friends, family and from after-school activities.

Children have the right to:

- Access quality education
- Education that develops every child's talents and abilities

The SDG that relates to education:



Children and young people said their learning and education is very important BUT not all children have the same education. Young people saw that there were huge gaps in education because of money, where they live and how they're taught.

"I feel like you could give people different ways to teaching. Not everyone learns the exact same ways as another person"

(Female, Year 7, Toormina High School, NSW).



Practical life skills, like how to save money, were very important to children and young people, however thinking subjects like maths, English and science are still important.

"School needs more hands-on subjects... this is what they're going to use in life so why not start in school?"

(Male, Apollo House Community Centre, Dubbo, NSW).

Children and young people want teachers to make learning more fun so that they want to go to school and get a better quality education.

Equality

Equality is about treating everyone with respect, and having a fair chance in life.

Children have the right to:

- Be granted their rights regardless of race, religion, wealth or any other difference
- Receive extra support if they have a disability

SDGs that relate to equality:



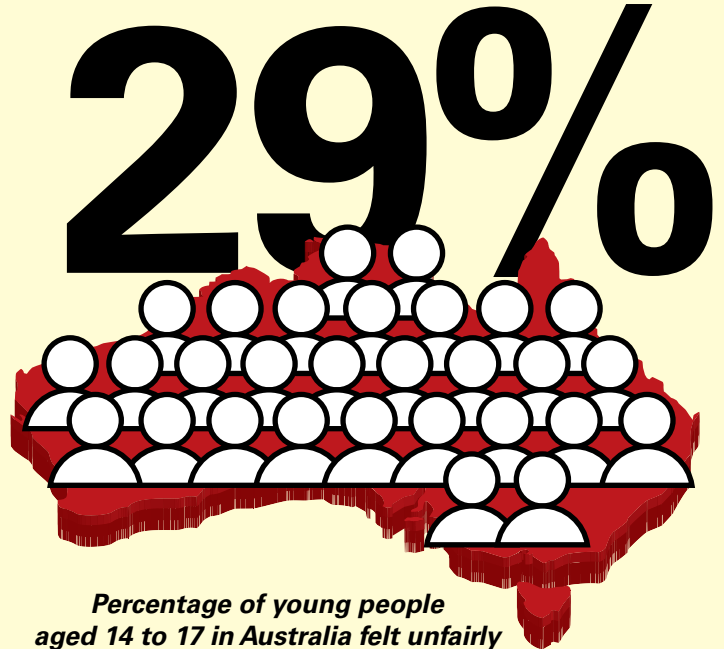
Children and young people told us that some of the reasons people are being treated unfairly in Australia include: gender, their background, if they have a disability, how much money they have, whether they like boys or girls and/or where their family is from.

Homelessness was a problem that children wanted the government to help with.

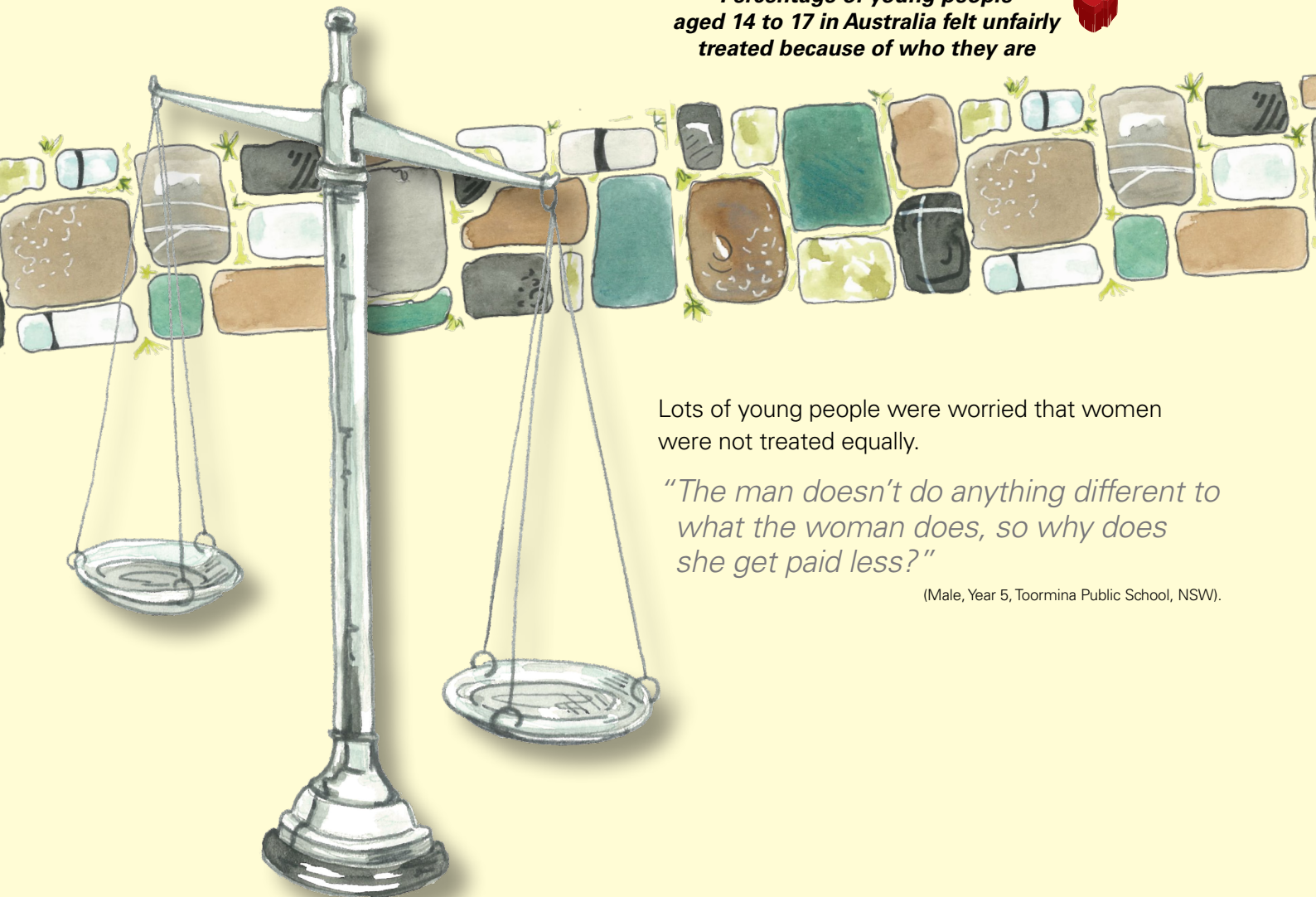
Young people believe it is important to give those who aren't treated equally opportunities.

"It's unfair to treat them differently and it could hurt their feelings"

(Male, Year 7, Bundaberg High School, Qld).



**Percentage of young people
aged 14 to 17 in Australia felt unfairly
treated because of who they are**



Lots of young people were worried that women were not treated equally.

"The man doesn't do anything different to what the woman does, so why does she get paid less?"

(Male, Year 5, Toormina Public School, NSW).

Environment

Children and young people care about our environment. They told us about lots of different parts of the environment - from animals, trees and plants to sea life, to serious threats to the environment - climate change, pollution and rubbish.

Children have the right to good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment

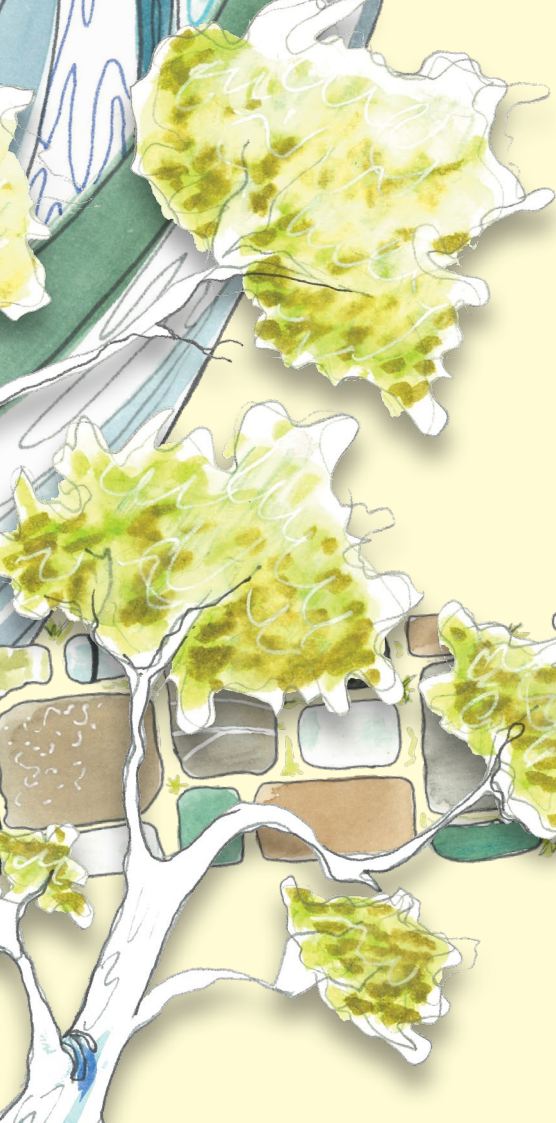
SDGs that relate to the environment:



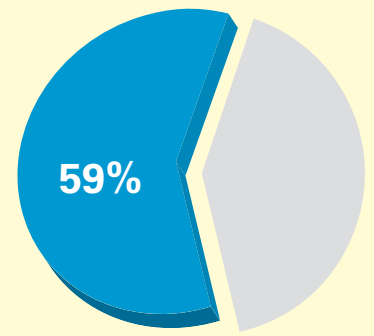
Children and young people told us that humans are creating pollution and climate change and that we need to take better care of the environment. We need to use less plastic and recycle to help animals and the ocean. We need new ways of energy that aren't coal.

- Climate Change is real!! ~~and~~ And will affect every single one of us in the world
- More needs to be done to ~~to~~ combat climate change

(Male, Year 11, St Leonard's College, Vic)



The issue seen as the largest threat to their safety was climate change (59% of 14-17 year olds surveyed).



Percentage of young people considered climate change to be the largest threat to their safety

Children and young people had the view that climate change is real and is caused by human activity.

- 73% of 14 to 17 year olds said that it is affecting the world "a lot" now
- 84% said "a lot" in the future

Children and young people were upset about no action being taken on climate change

- 75% of 14 to 17 year olds want Australia to take action on climate change
- 69% want Australia to reduce its carbon emissions

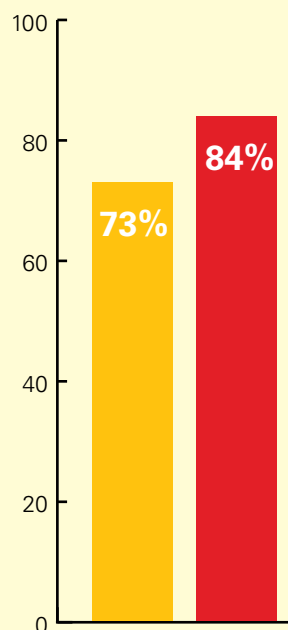


"PLASTIC! Single use plastic should be banned! Re-using and recycling should be a strict world policy."

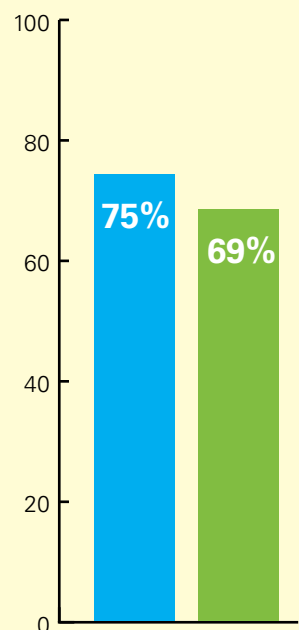
(Female, Year 7, Northcote High School, Vic)

"The government could develop our renewable energy resources so that like, every house runs on solar energy or wind energy."

(Female, Year 5, Ryde Public School, NSW)



- **Believe climate change is affecting the world "a lot" now**
- **Believe climate change will affect the world "a lot" in the future**



- **Want Australia to take action on climate change**
- **Want Australia to reduce its carbon emissions**

Media/trust

Young people get the news from all sorts of places. They get it from newspapers and watching the news on TV, but they also get it online from places like Facebook and Youtube.

Children have the right to reliable information from the media.

Most young people feel like the news isn't always honest, and that sometimes they make things up or exaggerated.

All the young people we talked to felt like the government and the media didn't listen to them.

"I reckon the news threatens your safety because it can make people scared or anxious all the time. Like car crashes, murders, terrorist attacks."

(Male, Year 6, Hewett Primary School, SA)

They also told us that they would trust the government more if they stopped fighting and talked to young people.

"They say that they are going to do something and they just don't do it."

(Male, Year 5, Wodonga South Primary School, Vic)

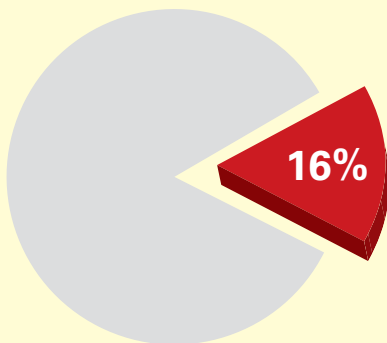
"I think, maybe more collaboration between different kinds of groups would help."

(Female, Year 10, Radford College, ACT).

"If they're trying their best, well their best ain't good enough"

(Female, Year 7, Toormina High School, NSW)

Only 16 percent trust social media news to be "accurate, unbiased and truthful"



Percentage of young people trusting social media to be truthful



Summary

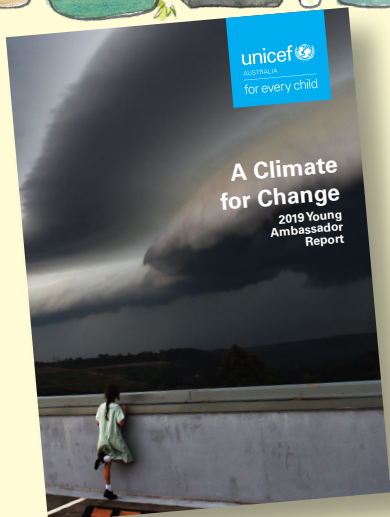
Children and young people told us that:

- Being physically healthy and mentally healthy is really important and young people are likely to go to friends and family for help;
- It is important that children and young people feel safe at home and at school;
- School and learning is needed but some children and young people don't get as good of an education. Schools need to make sure all students are learning equally;
- It is wrong to treat people unfairly because they are different;
- We need to help the environment quickly by using less plastic, recycling and finding new ways to get power;
- The media isn't very trustworthy; and
- Politicians don't listen to them.

Plan for Action

We want decision-makers and leaders in the community to:

- Create a plan and begin action on tackling climate change;
- Make sure that every child is safe to learn, both at home and in the community;
- Develop teacher training to make sure every child has a better quality education;
- Make sure every child grows up happy and healthy - with good services to help their wellbeing; and
- Make a fair society - fix child poverty so every child can do better at school and in their community.



The Young Ambassadors are taking what they've heard from children and young people to decision-makers in Canberra at Parliament House.



This child friendly version was prepared by Young Ambassadors Indiana Hehir, Ashleigh Armstrong and Eva Massey, with support from Vanessa Kutcher, Child and Youth Participation Coordinator and Josh Brittain, Young Ambassador at UNICEF Australia.

Illustrations by Nanny Potts Illustration and design by Catapult Advertising. Pty Ltd

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for every child