

Better World Youth Summit Communique



SPRINT 6
What are the things you would change about your local area? Create six (6) different solutions to make it a place that would be the ideal environment for children and young people?



Work
Schools
- Schools
- Places of learning

What brought us here

All children and young people around the world have the right to live and grow up in a place where they can play, learn, access basic services, feel safe, have clean air and water, and a sustainable climate.

They are readjusting to life living with COVID, the rising costs of living and to a world which is being profoundly affected by climate change. At home here in Australia, children and young people are facing a 'generation-defining disruption' because of the pandemic as well as ongoing climate emergencies such as flooding and bushfires.

“ We can make a change, we can explore new ideas. From small things big change can happen. ”

– NSW Year 10 Student

Growing urbanisation, pollution, a lack of green and safe play spaces and increasing inequality for some of our most vulnerable young people, are serious issues we need to address. Importantly, we need to ensure that cities and communities are more equitable and sustainable for future generations.

To do this, the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children and young people must form an integral part of planning and building urban and rural environments of the future.

“

As we look to a new way of living post pandemic, we must include our youngest generations in planning and give young people a voice in the design of cities and communities. The Better World Youth Summit is the first step for UNICEF Australia and the Bupa Foundation in a national youth consultation process on what a Child Friendly Australia should look like.

Nicole Breeze, Director of Australia Programs at UNICEF Australia

A foundational touchpoint for UNICEF Australia was the youth-designed and led Better World Youth Summit that welcomed 150, Year 10 students from schools across Greater Sydney to share their perspectives on what would make a better world for Australian children.

Held in July, 2022 at Taronga Zoo, the Summit aimed to meaningfully involve children in young people and highlight their voices on issues that matter to them.

The Better World Youth Summit was proudly brought together by UNICEF Australia, the Bupa Foundation and hosted by the Taronga Conservation Society Australia. The Summit saw attendees participate in important activities and discussions around the intersection of environment and wellbeing and explored issues such as mental health, equity, climate change, and sustainability.



Who we are

About UNICEF

From the most remote island communities to the heart of war-torn conflict zones, every child has rights to survival, education, health care, shelter, good nutrition, safe water and protection from war and disaster. These universal rights are guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, but they are often threatened by poverty, violence and discrimination.

That's why UNICEF stands up as a global champion for children's rights. We protect and support millions of children around the world with our development programs, advocacy and rapid response during humanitarian emergencies. UNICEF Australia raises funds to finance life-changing programs for children in some of the world's most disadvantaged communities. We also work with governments and civil society partners to strengthen and advance the systems that protect children's rights.



About the partnership with the Bupa Foundation

“ Our partnership brings to life Bupa's commitment to making a better world by empowering children and young people to build a more sustainable and healthier future. ”

– Bupa Asia Pacific, Chief Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Officer, Roger Sharp.



Today I learnt the power that youth have on the community. It's about embracing our age, not as something that brings us down, but instead pulls us up. I think a better world looks like somewhere where we are unified as children and youth, we're included, and our ideas are heard.

Vaishnavi, 15



What young people told us

UNICEF Australia is dedicated to listening to and lifting up the voices of children and young people from across the world and here at home in Australia.

The participants of the summit participated in a range of different consultation methods to capture their views on what a community requires for them to thrive. These were consolidated into four main enablers and five key recommendations.

“Every child and young person has the right to participate and have their opinions included in decision-making processes that affect their lives.”

Article 12 of UN Convention of the Rights of the Child



What we heard:

1

Environment, parks and places

Promotion of a strong natural environment, addressing issues relating to climate change, access to green spaces, parks and playgrounds.

- WANTS:**
- Clean up local bushland
 - Vegetable gardens
 - Toy exchange/sharing
 - More gardens on building with sufficient sunlight
 - Outdoor leisure areas
 - More kinds of recycling bins
 - Reuse/purpose wasted food
 - Implementing wind turbines disguised as trees
 - More sports
 - Fun environments and parks

“Solving the issue of climate change will help ensure a sustainable and great world for future generations.”

“There's a lot of ways you can make the environment sustainable. There are sustainable solutions to everything.”

2

Facilities, services and spaces

Equitable and accessible services, maintained infrastructure and transportation, and spaces for young people.

- WANTS:**
- Easier access to facilities & transport
 - Tutoring/education facilities
 - Changing school times
 - Accessible community centre
 - More subsidised, ecofriendly public transport
 - Better path ways
 - Having more lights/streetlights – lighting along footpath – can be solar powered
 - Free mental health services
 - Mental health
 - break rooms in schools

“Making mental health resources more accessible involves the normalisation of mental health. Schools must educate students and make the idea of reaching out normal.”

3

Voice, culture and community

Supporting diversity, celebrating culture and empowering marginalised members of the community.

- WANTS:**
- Indigenous education centre
 - Praying areas in public spaces
 - School mix ups – kids from schools in the area can meet up
 - More diverse community programs and local community centre
 - VR spaces
 - Busking space for free
 - Youth leadership groups
 - A place for youth to speak to local MP about concerns

“We can support the voices of marginalised communities by creating easily accessible platforms where they can speak up and offer unique solutions and opinions on social issues affecting our world today.”

4

Opportunities, innovation and work

Local jobs, volunteering opportunities and embracing new technologies and innovations

- WANTS:**
- Making it easier to hire young adults/kids when it's their first job
 - NFTs
 - Create more opportunities for jobs and volunteering
 - More equal opportunities
 - Create more opportunities for youth to volunteer and voice their ideas”

“Invest in young people! Create better jobs and better quality jobs!”



PHOTO: © UNICEF Australia/2022/Moran

Our recommendations



INCLUDE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN COMMUNITY AND CITY BUILDING THROUGH OFFICIAL MECHANISMS TO DECISION MAKERS



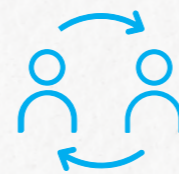
INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO MEANINGFULLY PARTICIPATE IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES



IMPROVE GREEN SPACES AND CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY PLACES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES



PRIORITISE MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES



SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TO LEARN ABOUT FIRST NATIONS CULTURE AND CONNECTION TO LAND



I definitely would like to see more of this kind of event in the future. A lot of our students need a chance to express their ideas. Some of the students, who hardly get heard in another forum, are being heard here. Asking those inquiry questions made them critically think and put them in a place of leadership.

Yussuf Ferkh, Year 10 Teacher at Punchbowl Boys High School



PHOTO: © UNICEF Australia/2022/Dixon

Our design process

The Better World Youth Summit was designed and led by a Steering Committee of young staff and volunteers from UNICEF Australia, the Bupa Foundation, and the Taronga Conservation Society Australia.

This ensured the sessions were relatable, meaningful and youth led.

The summit structure was designed to support informed participation from young people, regardless of previous knowledge, to include a range of opportunities to have their voices heard on different topics. The goal was to create a safe space for innovation, collaboration, and fun!

Topics discussed throughout the day were also aligned with the NSW Year 10 Curriculum and aimed to complement learnings from the classroom.

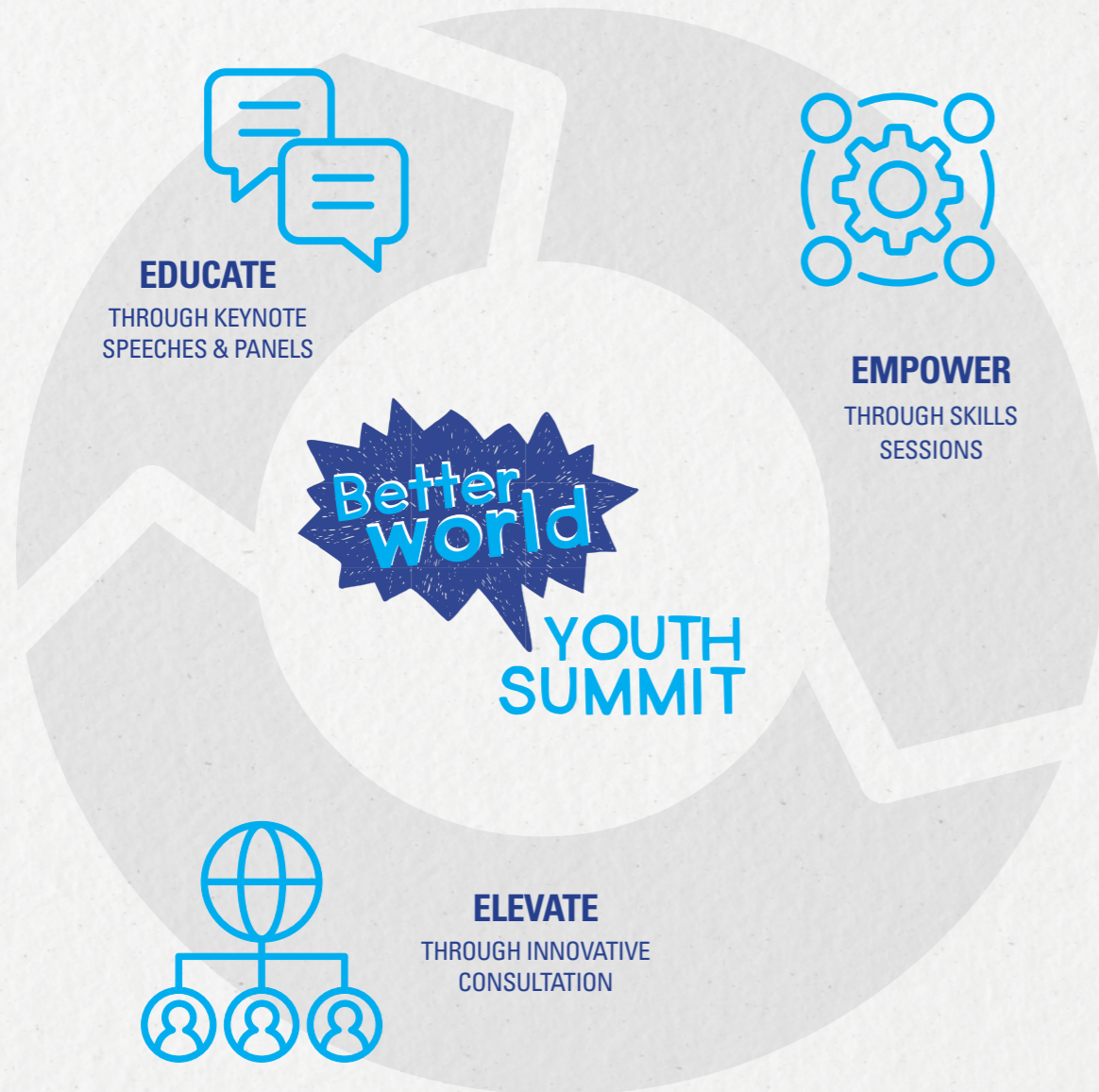


PHOTO: Jack Fu, Bupa SteerCo representative and Bianca Cruz, UNICEF Australia SteerCo representative, trial the U-Speak Zoo tour app ahead of the Summit. © UNICEF Australia/2022/Labade

Greater Sydney

Who was there

Ten schools from across Greater Sydney were invited to participate in the Summit at Taronga Zoo.

Schools were selected based on a range of criteria such as diverse representation, both independent and public schools, impacts of COVID-19 and the lockdowns, access to services and green spaces, and population of children and young people in the community. The Summit also aligns with the NSW Year 10 curriculum for Geography, Science, and Personal Development, Health and Physical Education.



If we want to see transformational policy and better program outcomes, young people must be involved from the beginning of the design process, up until the delivery phase. That's why we wanted to ensure that young people's perspectives on climate change, mental health and equity were the focus of the Summit, but also inspire other young people to join the change.

Bianca Cruz, 23, U-Speak Co-Creator and UNICEF Australia SteerCo representative.



“
My vision for a better world is bringing education, sustainability and accessibility (such as health services) for all groups within Australia and across the world, so everyone has a chance to reach their fullest potential.

Justin, 15

What comes next

In addition to the Summit, UNICEF Australia will be conducting additional consultation sessions with participating schools to ensure their voices were meaningfully captured and reflected. Our aim is to test recommendations and policy suggestions and to deep-dive into specific local enablers.

The consultations will be facilitated through UNICEF Australia’s interactive conversation-starter initiative, U-Speak. U-Speak has been developed around the UN Sustainable Development Goals and aims to facilitate organic and meaningful conversations on topics that young people care most about.

UNICEF Australia will also share the outcomes from the Summit and consultations with key decision-makers including governments, businesses, and community organisations, to ensure children and young people are heard when it comes to shaping our cities and communities of the future.



“
**If not us, who?
 Young people are the leaders of today.**

Jahin, 21, Panellist and UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador



Hopes for a better world

“ Take action on young people’s issues. ”

“ Our ideas get given to people who can actually make them happen. ”

“ To see real change, kindness and compassion. ”

“ Our sustainable ideas are implemented. ”

“ More voices. ”



Want to see the Better World Youth Summit in action?



Scan the QR code to hear directly from young people on the day!

UNICEF Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country of the land and communities in which we and our partners work throughout Australia, and their connection to their lands, waters, and communities. We pay respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures, and to Elders both past, present and emerging.



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