

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: 801

21 August 2019

Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP  
Minister for Education  
Parliament House  
HOBART TAS 7000

email: [jeremy.rockliff@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:jeremy.rockliff@parliament.tas.gov.au)

Dear Minister

**Re: Review of the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians**

Thank you for your invitation to participate in a stakeholder forum to inform the review of the *Melbourne Declaration*, a joint declaration by the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments that sets a vision and goals for education in Australia.

Unfortunately, I am unable to attend either of the forums due to prior commitments associated with my CCYP Ambassador Program. I have, however, shared your invitation to participate in the young people specific forums, which are being held on 20<sup>th</sup> August in Devonport and 21<sup>st</sup> August in Hobart, with CCYP Ambassadors.

It is important that children and young people have meaningful opportunities to influence the future of school education including goals for improving educational outcomes. I commend you and your Department for providing this opportunity to children and young people in Tasmania, as I understand this opportunity may not have been afforded in other jurisdictions and may not have occurred here had it not been for your specific request. I am also pleased to note that some children and young people involved in the CCYP Ambassador Program will be participating in these forums after receiving the information in our regular flow of communication.

Established in April 2019, the CCYP Ambassador Program involves almost 200 children and young people aged between 9 and 17 years from diverse backgrounds and locations around Tasmania. CCYP Ambassadors help me to understand what is important for children and young people in their communities and regularly come together to discuss key issues with me at regional meetings. Education and related opportunities have been consistently highlighted as key themes in my discussions with CCYP Ambassadors to date. Other key themes include: climate change and the environment, bullying and mental health, equity and diversity, safety, participation and recognition of children and young people, and access to necessities, services and supports.

Because I am unable to attend a stakeholder forum, I thought it might be useful for me to share with you some examples of the key messages I have been hearing from CCYP Ambassadors about their experiences of education in Tasmania and their vision for its future.



Attachment A to this letter includes direct quotes from CCYP Ambassadors, which in my opinion are relevant to the Melbourne Declaration Review. Please note that these quotes are presented verbatim to accurately reflect the views of CCYP Ambassadors as conveyed to me in their own words.

You may also be interested to know that I have recently received a number of creative written and audio-visual projects from CCYP Ambassadors, which are also relevant to the future of education. I would be pleased to share these with you should you wish to meet and view them.

I hope this information is of assistance to you in your discussions with your interstate counterparts as you work to develop a contemporary national declaration on educational goals to guide national collaborative efforts over the coming years.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss any future opportunities for CCYP Ambassadors to further influence the future of education.

Kind regards

**Leanne McLean**

Commissioner for Children and Young People

*cc Tim Bullard, Secretary, Department of Education*

**Attached: Attachment A**



## ATTACHMENT A

### Review of the *Melbourne Declaration*

#### Observations and comments made by CCYP Ambassadors with relevance to education

##### Voices of children and young people in education

*Education system, this can be improved by letting kids have their say and instead of ignoring them.*

*Not everyone with mental challenges can't [can] do the basic curriculum without others making them feel like their not good Quiz night – I had the correct answer but the older people didn't believe me and we got the answer wrong.*

*We love the fact that you [CCYP] come to us – we love it that you come towards us and it's great that you take it to them [decision-makers], but we would love to see them come to us too...*

##### Meaningful and accessible engagement in learning

*School needs to be engaging/educational for the "KIDS".*

*All education should be equal.*

*Lots of people don't get a good education.*

*In Tasmania, students have the lowest rate of finishing grade 12 which can lead to poor employment outcomes. This issue is not just short-term for the children but can also have long-term effects. Ways to improve this would be increasing access to educational opportunities and having affordable academic resources. Another way could be providing assistance to families to keep children in the school system longer and help guide young people through the grades.*

*Accessibility to future pathways and further education.*

*The cost of University education is too high and is making it hard for all young people to attend.*

*More info on university study + high education.*



*I would like to see more facilities and education for young people to be active at a reasonable cost. For example the government could subsidise the cost of going to the gym or indoor rock-climbing/bouldering for young people. There are so many amazing ways to keep fit and healthy in Tasmania but often it is too expensive for families.*

*I believe that importance towards supporting more disadvantaged children can be improved by the education system. My cousin has down syndrome and she is well looked after at school but sometimes isn't getting taught the important things that she'll need to know for after she leaves school. At home we always are trying to teach her things like shopping and how to get a job, but some times that isn't enough. The education system needs to donate some money to allow these children to go out and experience the real life problems and obstacles that life will bring on after college.*

*I am passionate to see bullying and violence against children stamped out of schools and the wider community. This would mean children would feel safer in general and also help them with their education moving forward. I myself have been subjected to bullying verbally at school. I have also witnessed not only verbal bullying but also physical bullying and bullying on social media. Bullying has made me feel down and sad at times and no child should feel this way. I would like a safer environment for all.*

*People being bullied might not get a good education because they don't want to be here. It should change.*

*I live and go to school in an area where there are a lot of drugs easily available to young people and children and I can see this is a huge safety risk to people I go to school with and my closer friend groups. I want to keep young people safe. I see this is hugely impacting on Education and young peoples ability to gain work or finish school. Some people even come to school under the influence of drugs. This is a risk to themselves but also other innocent people and that's not fair on anyone.*

## **Curriculum**

*Curriculum-things that interest us.*

*Have a solid curriculum block about mental health and bullying that you speak about in depth.*

*More modern Curriculum.*

*Enforce drug and alcohol education so that younger kids don't start bad habits.  
Closing the gap between opportunities + access for Indigenous Australians (education + healthcare) + non-Indigenous Australians.*

*Education about different people (accuracy).*



*[C], an Aboriginal came to our school and educated us on Aboriginal culture. This should happen at more schools because it was interesting educational, and [C] is a LEGEND!!!!*

*Better education on other cultures.*

*Students need to improve on cultural education like Aboriginal education schools.*

*More education about Muslims and refugees so that there is less racism.*

*More educational classes for children higher up in their class.*

*Education on mental illness.*

*More education on lesser known aspects of safety.*

*More education on politics and climate change at school.*

*By getting better Music Education!*

*More sporting and education opportunities and facilities for rural and remote areas. (swimming pools, sport equipment and facilities, opportunities and exciting sports/ arts are far away) these are issues because schools should have facilities to develop children's talent to the full and opportunities are far away to do so.*

*Outdoor education within the public education system also needs a boost in funding. When my parents were in school they gained valuable life skills and memories through outdoor education. So many children would benefit from and enjoy an outdoor education class at my High School but it was axed due to a lack of funding.*

*Children's literacy is very important, in my opinion. Many children arrive at school with poor reading skills, often due to their parents not investing the time and energy in this area. An initial idea to remedy this situation is to send out letters to new parents, advising them of the importance of reading with their children and some practical steps they could take. Parents need to understand that learning to read early impacts a child's future educational and employment prospects.*

*I believe that education is the foundation of our society, but currently, our foundation is crumbling. Yes, we are learning about algebra in maths and cells in science but when my teacher asked my class 'who knows we have a federal election coming up?' not one person answered her. This is the flaw with our current education system. We are not being taught about the world issues that we are constantly facing, climate change, politics, terrorism. These are all things that we need to be aware of and we need to be actively involved in our society. If I could change one thing, I would change the priorities of our education. We need to be informed. We need to know how to vote. We need to know how to be a part of our community and contribute to our society. If we have these basic life skills we could go on to achieve truly great things.*



*I think it's important that kids grow up in a waste free Planet and have a nice future to look forward to. I also think it's important to have a kitchen garden program as the one at [primary school] is booming. We bake a lot of delicious healthy things and we grow everything in our own garden. I have learnt a lot about baking and gardening and I want others to know what that feels like. In our kitchen we cook Vegetarian dishes and share them around four big tables, and it is run by the best teachers. I want money put into education and kid's futures working on a waste free planet and I'm sure my whole school would love hearing someone saying "we can do it."*

*A famous quote stated that "Knowledge is power" and I would love to see the power of youth make an impact on Australia.*

*Education of people about the importance of our environment. If we don't act now in less than 100 years over half the earth's species would be extinct. This would be a great tragedy for the world and future generations. I think if we can educate people from a young age how important it is to care for our environment we can make Tasmania (and the world) a more sustainable place to live.*

*I would like to help get the message out that bullying is not ok in a work environment or education/learning environment. soon younger people will get a job and then they will find out that bullying is not ok and they thought it was ok because there wasn't much fuss or importance in bullying at school.*

*E-safety education in schools.*

*Drug education.*

*More places for education (e.g. science labs, recording rooms).*

*Agricultural education.*

*Rural education.*

*More awareness and education on what the greenhouse effect is and its conservation.*

*More extensive education.*

*More relevant curriculum.*