

Commissioner Releases 2018 Consultative Committee Report **20 March 2019**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Leanne McLean today released the Listening to Children and Young People in Tasmania 2018 Report.

The Report was compiled from the views and input of the 46 Statewide members of the Commissioner's Consultative Committee.

"My thanks and appreciation to former Interim Commissioner David Clements who facilitated much of the Council's work in 2018 and strongly advocated for the views of children and young people to be sought out and given the recognition they deserve," Commissioner McLean said.

"In December 2018, I had the opportunity to Council members - it is abundantly clear that children and young people are concerned by multiple and complex issues.

"The ideas, knowledge and opinions so generously shared by Council members demonstrate to me just how critical the views of our youngest citizens are to creating a bright future for Tasmania."

Summary of Themes from the Listening to Children and Young People in Tasmania 2018 Report:

Children and young people's participation: Council members talked about the importance of providing opportunities for children and young people to express their views and to influence decisions that affect them. They expressed their commitment to becoming informed, active, empowered and engaged citizens and spoke about their interest in having access to child and young person friendly information to help them understand democratic processes and information about how they can truly influence decision making processes (e.g. child and young person friendly Parliament of Tasmania website).

Access to services and support: Council members said improved access to programs, services and supports would enable children and young people to more actively participate in their communities. Members talked a lot about the need for improvements to public transport systems to meet the needs of children and young people. They identified a number of challenges related to the availability, timeliness and overcrowding of buses. Members also said they would like improved access to financial assistance to allow them to participate in organised sport and recreation, increased recreational spaces for children and young people, access to low cost or free driving lessons, and more information about the services and supports that are available to children and young people when and if they need them.

Education and employment: Council members talked a lot about their experiences at school. Discussions often focused on the positive supports available in Tasmanian schools to educate



and prepare students for future employment and participation in society. Members emphasised the importance of schools adopting a flexible approach to supporting and meeting students' needs and interests –including flexible teaching approaches, specialised teachers and availability of subjects relevant to the interests and possible career paths of students. They mentioned the expansion of high schools to year 12 was a good step forward in supporting flexible student engagement. Members were keenly aware of the need to develop skills that are applicable and transferrable to changing working environments to prepare them for future employment – more work experience opportunities, as well as life skills education to prepare them for the transition to adulthood: how to pay bills, register for a tax file number, enrol to vote, develop a resume or obtain a driver's licence.

Bullying and mental health: Bullying, including cyber-bullying, frequently emerged as an area of significant ongoing concern for the Council. Members said current support systems and methods to address and respond to bullying are not working as well as they could be. Some members called for increased accountability for those who bully but also acknowledged the critical importance of understanding the underlying causes of bullying behaviours and providing the necessary supports to the children and young people involved and their families. Access to social work and psychological support in schools was raised as a matter of importance.

“I also had the opportunity to discuss with Council members how we might enhance the voice of children and young people in the future,” Commissioner McLean said.

“I very much look forward to continuing this discussion in 2019 and working together to increase the role children and young people have in shaping our society and future.

“I look forward to continuing to speak with children and young people across Tasmania about their experiences, priorities and aspirations.”

Media Contact: A.Mark Thomas, M&M Communications, 0422 006 732

Media contact: