

Blueprint for a child and youth friendly Commonwealth



Being a kid should be fun



Kids are people too!

"Children should get lots of love, hugs and kisses. Kids need to be able to respect adults. Adults need to be more polite to children" ~ Jacob, 6



Commission for
Children & Young People
Queensland Government

Message from the Queensland Premier

Queensland prides itself on being a great place for children and young people. Our climate, our love of freedom, our generosity of spirit and our high regard for education make this state a wonderful place to grow and learn.

The Queensland Government is constantly striving to make our state an even brighter place for our young citizens. In 2000, I established the Commission for Children and Young People to protect the rights, interests and wellbeing of all Queenslanders under 18 years of age.

Queensland is positioning itself as the Smart State. Integral to this is that we encourage our children and young people to question, and to express their hopes and ambitions.

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is developing a tradition as an opportunity for children and youth to express their views.

Commonwealth Children's Summits were held at the past two CHOGM meetings, at Edinburgh, Scotland in 1997 and Durban, South Africa in 1999. Recommendations from the summits were presented to CHOGM delegates.

In 2001, my Government teamed up with the Commission for Children and Young People to give our youngsters a CHOGM forum. We set out to encourage them to put their issues on the CHOGM agenda in an enjoyable and interactive way.

Their platform was the Commonwealth People's Festival, which proceeded in Brisbane from 2-8 October 2001 despite the postponement of CHOGM.

Part of the Festival was dedicated to the 'Child and Youth Friendly Commonwealth'. During this time, children and young people shared their dreams of how their world could be improved.

The Government and the Commission worked alongside children, young people and non-government agencies to coordinate a program of children's activities and events. One-fifth of the floor space at the Commonwealth People's Centre - the venue for the Festival - was devoted to a Children's Activities Area which housed fun and interactive activities and exhibits for children and young people.

A highlight was the 'Dare to Care' electronic workshop, where young people could send us messages or draw computer images. They told us what they would value in a child and youth friendly Commonwealth. The electronic workshops, in combination with other workshops and interviews by our young 'roving reporters', gave us an insight into their priorities and concerns.

This report of the Child and Youth Friendly Commonwealth reflects the views expressed during the Commonwealth People's Festival. It gives a window into the thoughts of the children and young people who participated in the Festival. This is their "blueprint" for a child and youth friendly Commonwealth, and it challenges all of us who once were children to consider how we can make our community of Commonwealth nations a better place for the young.



Peter Beattie MP
Premier and Minister for Trade

March 2002



What does a 'child and youth friendly community' mean?

There is a lot of talk about 'child and youth friendly communities' these days. We asked children and young people what this means to them. They said "a place where we..."

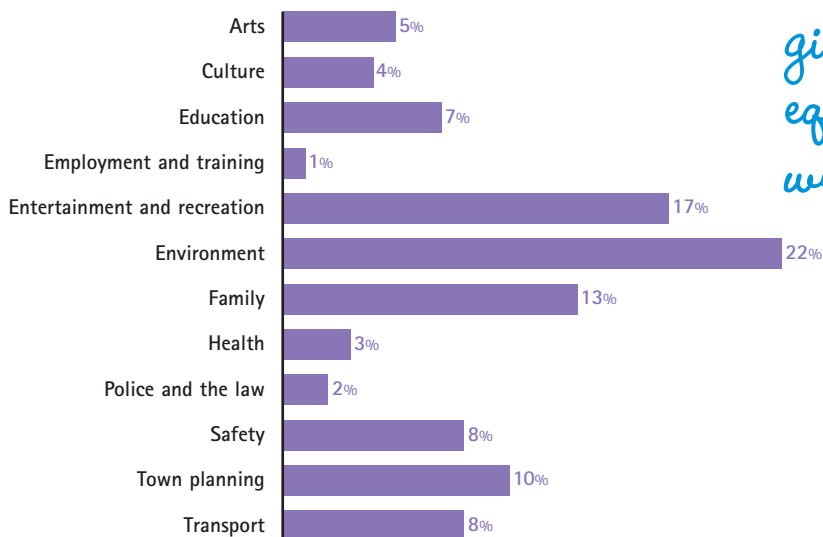
- * can enjoy the freedom of childhood
- * are not given more responsibility than we can handle
- * receive respect, particularly from authority figures
- * have opportunities to succeed
- * can get help from others if we fail
- * can have new experiences
- * are given choices
- * are not hurt
- * have a say, are listened to, and taken seriously
- * are not discriminated against or stereotyped on the basis of age

"A place that respects young people and treats them as equal participants"



To find out what a child and youth friendly community would look like in practice, we dared children and young people to:

- * observe what is and is not child and youth friendly about their community;
- * dream about the perfect community, town, village, city, world;
- * plan/create a vision for a child and youth friendly community; and
- * communicate the vision.



"Give us activities, give us respect, give us equal treatment... and we will give it too"

We organised a 'Dare to Care' electronic workshop to take the concept of child and youth friendly communities one step further, and project a vision of a child and youth friendly Commonwealth.

Through the electronic workshop, which was on-line from mid-September until 8 October 2001, children and young people from across

the Commonwealth contributed their ideas in a format they felt comfortable with. These included electronic artwork, text messages, short videos and Powerpoint presentations featuring artwork.

To help children and young people come up with ideas, we suggested they think about some specific topics. The graph shows the topics we suggested and proportion of responses we received on each.

We received most submissions (22%) about the environment, followed by entertainment and recreation (17%) and family (13%). We think this indicates the activities and issues which interest children and young people the most, and the things they care most about.

We also obtained views about a child and youth friendly Commonwealth from interviews undertaken by high school students who featured as 'roving reporters' and film crew in the Brisbane Convention Centre, Southbank and South Brisbane.

Hundreds of children and young people also gave us lots of ideas about what is and is not child and youth friendly in fifteen art workshops which were held in the weeks leading up to CHOGM. The workshops - in drama, dance, painting, 3D-sculpture and computer animation - were attended by young people from Indigenous, Torres Strait Islander, Polynesian, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Russian, Chinese, Greek and differently abled backgrounds.

We were told that in a child and youth friendly Commonwealth...

Arts

- * There would be more opportunities to do art
- * Children's art would be treated with the same respect as art done by adults and put on display

"The art in our area could be seriously improved. Even I can paint better than the art they put in the library!" ~ Beau, 10



Culture

- * There would be greater celebration of our cultural diversity
- * Compassion would be shown to asylum seekers
- * A diverse range of interests would be promoted, not just sport
- * There would be a culture of caring for the less fortunate
- * There would be an exchange of ideas and freedom of speech and religion
- * Youth culture would be valued

"I think that there needs to be more cultural awareness to show the white community more about the indigenous culture in our country. If this happens I think a lot of racism will be controlled" ~ Cassidy, 15



Education

- * There would be more teachers and they would be kind and friendly
- * There would be less pressure at high school, especially regarding tertiary entrance scores
- * Schools would have good facilities, including good playground equipment and more computers
- * Schools would offer lots of extracurricular activities
- * There would be more schools to choose from and they would be easy to get to
- * Schools would not enforce rules for the sake of rules

"Education should not cost money" ~ Kacey, 12



Employment and training

- * There would be no child labour
- * There would be more training and tertiary education places provided to assist young people find employment

Entertainment and recreation

- * There would be more activities and lots of parks, cinemas, skate parks, parties and theme parks
- * There would be more 'G' rated movies and programs on TV for children and young people
- * Movie prices would be lower
- * There would be more entertainment and recreation facilities in the suburbs, rather than the city

"I'd like more stuff to do in my neighbourhood" ~ Liam, 7



"Every tree that is cut down people should plant two new trees!!" ~ Bianca, 15

Environment

- * The environment would be looked after and there would be no litter or pollution
- * Animals would be respected and endangered animals would be protected
- * There would be lots of free, open spaces
- * Beaches would be kept clean and free from syringes
- * A lot of things would be recycled

Let's keep the environment looking like this

"The environment is very, very important to me. We need to preserve it for future generations. Otherwise we will have nothing left" ~ Stephanie, 13



Family

- * Families would provide a protective and secure environment
- * Everyone would have a home and food, especially children
- * Grandparents would be involved in family life
- * There would be mutual respect between parents and children
- * Families would always be there for each other and support the hopes and dreams of children
- * Families would do lots of activities together

"Make sure that every child must live in a house (between 20 down to a baby)" ~ Josh, 9

Health

- * Immunisation would be compulsory
- * There would be more education about drugs and sexually transmitted diseases
- * There would be no drugs
- * Health care would be available to everyone
- * There would be cures for diseases
- * Everyone would have lots of healthy food to eat

"When it comes to the older youth, sexually transmitted diseases are become (sic) a worry. Yes there is some education involved in this at schools but I don't believe there is enough done here because people just say 'it won't happen to me' because they underestimate the problem" ~ Mandy, 17



Police and the law

- * There would be less crime
- * Shops would not sell guns
- * There would be better interaction between the police and youth

"I think that the police service is a great program. However I think if I was in command of the police service I would create a special service. In this service it would have a couple of police officers to have fun with children. I know that the children of today are scared of the police. This way they will not be scared of them" ~ Christopher, 17

"I like where I live because it is safe and close to school. My neighbours are nice" ~ Qori, 7

Safety

- * Young people would feel safe to go out in their own suburbs, even at night
- * There would be more bike paths and more traffic lights on main roads
- * Cars would be more careful around pedestrians and children playing in the streets
- * Children would not be exposed to violence, fighting or abuse
- * There would be no terrorism

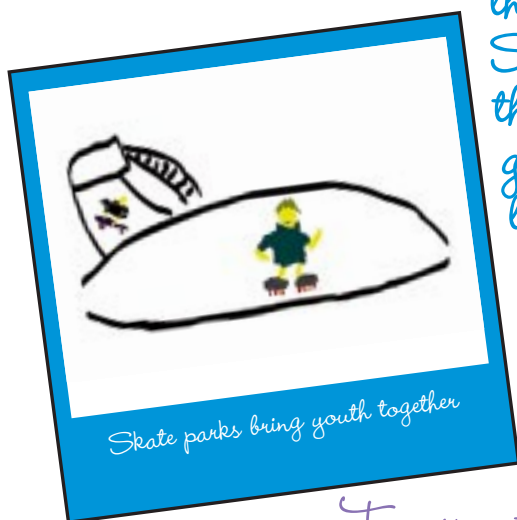


"Get people off the streets and run activities like dancing competitions, murals and provide a safe place to hang out. A youth centre would be good with adults who understand young people" ~ La Toya, 14

Town Planning

- * There would be lots of skateparks, libraries, sports centres, playground equipment and parks
- * Facilities would be well maintained and safe
- * Facilities would cater for a range of age groups
- * Housing would be made available to the poor

"Parks are important for children because they're fun and children don't get bored. Sometimes they get muddy around the taps so they should have cement under the taps. The grass needs to be mowed before it gets too long to stop children tripping." ~ Richie, 10



Transport

- * There would be more public transport, especially at night and in small towns
- * Public transport would be better looked after by everyone
- * There would be more information provided about public transport

"Some trains are too packed especially in the mornings. Can we please have more new trains? The old ones are very yucky" ~ Tahnee, 13

"Make more natural gas buses" ~ Callum, 9

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our partners at the Commonwealth People's Festival for helping us find out what children and young people want in a child and youth friendly Commonwealth.

- * Apple Computers
- * Association of Independent Schools of Queensland
- * Department of Families
- * Education Queensland
- * Hands On Art at the Boardwalk, Southbank
- * Harry's Collar
- * Inner Urban Youth Inter-Agency
- * International Year of the Volunteer
- * NAPCAN Qld
- * Office of Youth Affairs (Department of Employment and Training)
- * Queensland Catholic Education Commission
- * Queensland Health
- * Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service
- * Queensland Sciencentre
- * Queensland Youth Alliance
- * Save the Children
- * Sport and Recreation Queensland
- * Video Pro
- * Youth Affairs Network of Queensland



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- * The Murri School
- * Petrie Terrace Special Education Unit
- * Albert Park Flexi Centre
- * Coorparoo State School
- * Dakabin State High School
- * Bremer State High School
- * Woodridge State High School
- * Brisbane Central State School
- * Dutton Park State School
- * West End Sussex St Kindergarten/Preschool

We would also like to thank the unemployed young people who participated in the workshops and young people on Community Service Orders who helped provide administrative support for the event.

The views expressed in this report are those of the children and young people who attended the Commonwealth People's Festival and associated workshops. We are not claiming they are representative of all children and young people. Nor do they necessarily reflect the views of the Commission for Children and Young People or the Queensland Government.

You can view this report, as well as even more comments, artwork and video footage from the Commonwealth People's Festival on the Commission for Children and Young People's website at www.childcomm.qld.gov.au



**Commission for
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Queensland Government

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