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Office of the Advocate for  
Children & Young People

# The NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People

2022-2024





**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters and cultures.**

**We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.**

**We would also like to acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal people and culture within the NSW community.**

# Advocate's Foreword

**There are 2.5 million children and young people in the state of NSW. They learn, live and grow in this state. They dream, hope and lead in this state and importantly, they want to be seen in the policies and processes we have.**



Wherever children and young people are in this state they have a right to be heard, considered and should be reflected in our parliament, laws and governance.

Governments and businesses are layered with plans, project documents, proposals and strategies. Many focus on ensuring that customers and the people of NSW have the best facilities, services and opportunities. We want NSW to be the best state for people to thrive and live in.

This Plan acknowledges the work that the NSW Government has committed to for the benefit of children and young people. It asks the reader to see how they can commit to better serve children and young people in this space and it aims to hold us all, government, business, and the community, to account for the promises we have made to children and young people.

This Plan is special. It is co-designed by children and young people, it is their words and it focuses on their hopes and goals. It considers children and young people from across NSW and has a particular focus on our most vulnerable.

It is purposefully bold and hopeful, because children and young people are bold and they have, and deserve to, hope. We can agree that all children and young people should be given every opportunity to thrive, and to choose the outcomes and opportunities that they want. We also know that there may be stumbles along the way, and that we have a duty and obligation to support them through those times.

The team at ACYP are passionate about their work and this Plan. We are passionate because we have listened to children and young people, we have been challenged by them to do better and because they will hold us accountable. We are excited to work with government,

business and community to ensure children and young people are heard, and that we include them in the design, implementation and evaluation of our work.

I thank the many government agencies and the non-government sector for their work and their support of this Plan. I want to acknowledge the Ministers who are charged with ensuring children and young people are heard – both for their support of this Plan and the ongoing work they are focused on.

This is not ACYP's Plan. This is the Plan for the children and young people of NSW. We are forever grateful for their generosity of time and voice, for their honesty and for their bravery in telling us what we do well and what we need to do better.

We hope children and young people are proud of this Plan, we hope that government, business and community see how they can support children and young people better and we look forward to demonstrating positive outcomes.

The children and young people of NSW regularly highlight to us the importance of leading with love, empathy, and listening deeply.

We are certain that over the coming years they will continue to bring us new insights, tell us where the opportunity for change is and help us understand how best to solve the problems that are impacting on their lives. Our collective challenge as a community is to listen – both by creating spaces for children and young people to have their voices heard and ensuring that their perspectives are given weight and influence over the policies and decisions that impact their lives.

**Zoë Robinson**  
**Advocate for Children and Young People**

# NSW Youth Advisory Council, Chairperson's Foreword

**Governments, businesses, and communities are often swept up in the notion that children and young people are the future, and although I believe this to be true, it is not entirely accurate. Children and young people are not just the future, they are the here and the now - not a single moment needs to be wasted for children and young people to be given a voice in this state.**



I believe this Strategic Plan does just that. It is thoughtfully enriched by the voices of the children and young people of this state acting as an invaluable piece of material that is both purposeful and considered.

I would like to acknowledge the relevant Ministers for their support in the development of the Plan. I commend the Advocate for Children and Young People, Ms Zoë Robinson, for her development of the Plan, listening to children and young people, reflecting their voices and needs in this Plan, and being committed to encouraging government, business, and community to develop policies and deliver services to improve the lives of children and young people, to listen to children and young people and to feature them actively in decisions that affect them. I must particularly

mention the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People who have been instrumental in facilitating the Plan, and making the voices of children and young people central to their work.

Finally, I would like to thank the children and young people of NSW who have contributed to the Plan. My hope is that this Plan is reflective of our needs. As the 2021 NSW Youth Advisory Council Chairperson and a young person in this state, I feel proud of this Plan and I am confident in the commitments of ACYP and the NSW Government to carry out the goals outlined in this Plan with compassion, empathy and consideration for children and young people - today, tomorrow, and every day forward.

**Lua Pellegrini**  
Chairperson, 2021 NSW Youth Advisory Council

# Introduction

**The Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP) is committed to building a future where all children and young people are given the opportunity to thrive and reach their fullest potential. We want a community that celebrates the diversity of children and young people, encourages their participation in society and gives them every chance to flourish. ACYP invites the reader to join in this commitment.**

Under the *Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 (the Act)*, the Advocate is required to prepare, in consultation with the Minister(s), a three-year strategic plan for children and young people in NSW. The focus of *The Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-2024 (the Plan)* is to:

- 1 Elevate the voices of children and young people;**
- 2 Identify the key issues and needs that children and young people have articulated and provide them with an opportunity to influence the solutions; and**
- 3 Provide a roadmap that responds to their stated needs by identifying relevant Government priorities and initiatives.**

Over the past two years children and young people across NSW have faced unprecedented challenges – ranging from bushfires, floods and drought, right through to a global pandemic with extended lockdowns leading to periods of high youth unemployment and mental illness. There are toddlers who have not known life before disasters and some children entering their third year of school (Year 2) who have never had a full year in the classroom. The graduating class of 2021 spent much of their senior years learning from home. Some missed school camps, sports tournaments, birthdays or their first foray into university culture. Others missed weddings, funerals, or have been unable to visit overseas family members for more than two years.

These events have impacted children and young people, as well as their families and primary carers, in profound and unique ways, and addressing the flow-on repercussions will require a focused effort by the whole community. All of these challenges have been in addition to the normal everyday pressures associated with growing up in the modern world. Yet despite all of these added challenges, children and young people are resilient and resourceful. They continue to be a voice of hope in the community and to find new ways to engage, interact and overcome. Even in the midst of a state-wide lockdown last year, two in three young people in NSW told us that they generally feel positive about their lives overall.

Whilst 57% of young people described themselves as resilient, every day ACYP witnesses the strength, fortitude and adaptability of children and young people across NSW.

The content of this Plan is primarily driven by direct consultation with children and young people themselves. In this way, we are not relying on what we assume children and young people need and want, but speaking to them directly, ensuring they are co-designers in their future. Over the past six years, ACYP has been meeting with children young people wherever they are: in schools, at sporting events, in youth justice centres, through youth councils and wherever else we can reach them. We discussed what's working and not

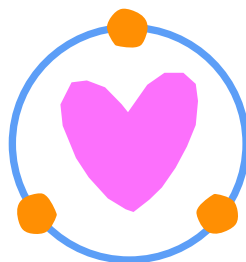
working well for them, where they would like to see change and what the priorities for the NSW Government should be. The findings from those consultations were the foundation of this Plan. For further detail, please see Annexure 1: *What children and young people have said*.

The Plan's six core commitment areas were developed in response to what children and young people told us was important to them, and these commitment areas will help to direct the NSW Government's efforts to better support and respond to children and young peoples' needs. They are also an invitation for all who serve children and young people to participate in building this future.

## **As such, under this Plan we commit to working together to build a NSW where children and young people have:**



**Hope for the future**



**Love, connection and safety**



**Health and wellbeing**



**A good standard of living**



**Environments for joy and fun**

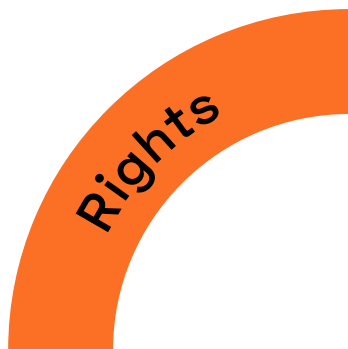


**Respect and acceptance**

In making these commitments, there are three core principles that guide the decisions we make and the work we do:



***Have we listened to children and young people, taken their point of view seriously and given them an opportunity to impact the outcome of decisions made about them?***



***Are we upholding and promoting children and young peoples' rights?***



***Are children and young people able to access this initiative or program?***

Each of the commitments has priority areas for action and goals associated with those priorities, which will be a focus over the course of the Plan. The progress against these goals will be measured by a series of indicators. In measuring progress as the Plan proceeds, we hold ourselves accountable to improving the lives of those we are committed to serve.

# Process of Developing the Strategic Plan for Children and Young People

**This Plan is a whole-of-government strategy focused on ensuring that all children and young people in NSW aged 0-24 years are provided with the support and opportunities they need to thrive.**

However, as it is grounded in the articulated needs and hopes of children and young people, our aspiration is that this Plan could be used by business, non-government and community groups to guide their efforts to serve children and young people.

In preparation for the development of the Plan, ACYP conducted a review of The Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2016-2019, which was tabled in Parliament in May 2021. Overall, the review process found that significant and meaningful change had been made over the course of the previous plan to support the needs of children and young people across NSW. The review process allowed ACYP to consider where positive changes had occurred and continued areas for improvement in the future. Findings from that process have shaped the development of the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan.

Since 2015, ACYP has heard from over 41,000 children and young people - through face-to-face consultations, surveys and other engagement activities. This has included speaking to more than 12,300 children and young people in face-to-face consultations and engaging with over 28,700 through surveys and other participation activities. In the past 12 months alone, ACYP has

engaged with over 5,000 children and young people. Collectively, all of these voices have informed the development of *The Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-2024*.

In order to develop *The Strategic Plan for Children and Young People 2022-24*, ACYP began by undertaking a macro-analysis of this existing consultation data. In undertaking this analysis, ACYP considered what issues had remained important for children and young people over this period and what new issues had emerged. From this initial macro-analysis, we synthesised what we heard from children and young people into six core themes. While we asked children and young people to articulate both positives and negatives about their experiences, many of the conversations focused on the supports they needed and what issues they would like to see addressed. As such, the six core themes could be understood as the six main areas of concern that young people had raised. However, in building an equitable future for children and young people, it was important to take a strengths-based approach and articulate the 'ideal' rather than the 'issue', and it was on this basis that we developed the six commitments to children and young people.



# Six Commitments to Children and Young People

**The following section outlines in detail the six commitments that we are making to children and young people.**

Children and young people have articulated to us what it means for them to thrive and it is our intention to work collaboratively with Government, non-government and community stakeholders towards this future.

Each commitment area below is defined and then linked to a series of priority areas for action under which sit a series of goals. Each of the priority areas for action has been chosen based on the views of children and young people. We have also aimed to include some priority areas that may not have been directly raised by children and young people, either because they relate to children who would be too young to articulate their needs, or because the issue is systemic and directly impacts vulnerable groups of children and young people. This is a requirement under our Act.

Alongside each goal is a description of some of the work ACYP will undertake in order to progress the Plan. Throughout the course of the Plan, ACYP will continue to seek opportunities to further these goals by elevating the voices of children and young people and working alongside Government, business and the community sectors.

Each goal is further linked to one or more Government initiatives, noting that some initiatives are relevant to more than one goal and sit across multiple commitments. The full list of Government initiatives is detailed in Annexure 2: *How Government is responding to children and young people*.

We note that the Plan is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all the NSW Government's goals and initiatives that relate to children and young people. Rather, the focus of this Plan is to respond to the needs of children and young people by elevating key priority areas for focus and goals as articulated by them. It is our hope that the combined effort of these initiatives and other actions will together be effective in shifting the dial on the issues that are important to children and young people.

Progress against the goals will be tracked by a series of indicators. These have been drawn from a combination of publicly available data sets and ACYP surveys. In addition to the indicators linked to each goal, ACYP has developed a survey instrument to measure children and young people's perceptions of each commitment. The benchmark figures for how children and young people are tracking against each commitment is included in Annexure 1: *What children and young people have said*.

ACYP will monitor and track changes in each of the commitments and indicators through a series of annual progress reports. Regular tracking will allow ACYP to be responsive to the changing and emerging needs of children and young people. In addition, ACYP will focus on two commitment areas for each calendar year and work to elevate the voices of children and young people on the related priority areas throughout that period.



# 1. Hope for the future

**Children and young people's individual learning and interests are fostered through education, training and skills development which supports them to grow and prepares them for their future.**

**They are supported to be independent, engage in society and to join the workforce.**

**71% of children and young people said they felt hopeful about their future in general**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Stress and anxiety related to school or study	Decrease the level of stress and anxiety related to school or study.	64% of young people reported they experienced a lot or a moderate amount of stress related to their studies (2021) <sup>i</sup>	Work with the Department of Education, Independent Schools and Catholic Schools to highlight the nature of student stress and to share and disseminate supports and programs that children and young people say are helpful.	1.1; 1.2; 1.7; 1.10; 1.13; 1.15; 3.24; 3.28
Lack of practical life skills resources for young people	Increase access to practical life skills resources.	Number of downloads, views and dissemination of ACYP's Practical Life Skills Resources <sup>ii</sup>	Develop 4 practical life skills videos and a website linking to additional support. ACYP will launch each video and promote them widely.	1.1; 1.7; 3.15
Lack of employment opportunities for young people	Decrease difficulty for young people in finding work.	Nationally, the median length of time spent looking for work for those aged 15-24 is 15 weeks. (July 2021) <sup>iii</sup>		1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.11; 3.15
	Increase the number of young people in employment, education or training.	Nationally, 233,500 young people aged 15-24 reported having difficulty in finding work (2020) <sup>iv</sup>  89% of young people aged 15-24 are either fully or partially engaged in some form of employment, education, or training (2020) <sup>v</sup>	Work with Industry Peak Bodies to include young people in business planning and strategies.  Support Service NSW in the development of Careers NSW.	1.1; 1.3; 1.4; 1.5; 1.6; 1.11; 1.14; 3.15
Disengagement from education from early childhood to high school	Increase engagement in learning and education, including early childhood education and transition to school.	Nationally, 90% of eligible children were enrolled in preschool in the year before school (2017) <sup>vi</sup>		1.2; 1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 1.10; 1.11; 1.12; 1.13; 1.14; 1.15; 3.15; 3.27; 3.28
		92.8% of children aged 4-5 who were enrolled for 600hrs or more of preschool actually attended for 600hrs or more (2020) <sup>vii</sup>		
		74.9% attendance level. The proportion of full-time students in Year 1-10 whose attendance rate in Semester 1 is equal to or greater than 90 per cent (2019) <sup>viii</sup>	Work with Department of Education around ensuring that student voice is included in evaluation of the Behaviour Strategy.	
	Decrease school exclusion and suspensions.	Year 12 certification rate, 70% (2019) <sup>ix</sup>  Those awarded the HSC as a proportion of the total population for that age group  4.2% of students received a short suspension and 1.7% of students received a long suspension (2019) <sup>x</sup>		1.7; 1.8; 1.9; 1.13; 1.15; 3.24;



## 2. Love, connection and safety

**Children and young people feel safe, loved and nurtured.**

**They can connect and build friendships with others.**

**They feel that they belong to a wider community, social or cultural group.**

**They are free from neglect, abuse and violence.**

**81%** of children and young people said they had a **good relationship with their immediate family.**

**78%** of children and young people said they had a **good relationship with their friends.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Bullying and cyberbullying	Decrease the prevalence of bullying (including cyberbullying).	31% of young people reported experiencing bullying in the past 12 months (2021) <sup>xi</sup>	<p>Support the work of the eSafety Commissioner, including by disseminating eSafety resources via ACYP social media platforms.</p> <p>Conduct consultation on children and young people's experiences of social media and advocate on regulation.</p> <p>Engage with children and young people about their experiences of bullying.</p>	2.1; 2.2; 1.13; 5.24; 5.25
Domestic and Family Violence	Decrease the number of children and young people experiencing domestic or family violence.	9,805 children and young people were victims of domestic violence related assault according to offences recorded by NSW Police (Apr 2020-Mar 2021) <sup>xii</sup>	Work in partnership with the sector, with a focus on elevating the voices of children and young people who have been victims/survivors of domestic or family violence	2.3; 2.4; 2.8; 2.10; 2.11; 3.6; 4.4
Concerns around consent and respectful relationships	Create cultural shift in understanding of consent and respectful relationships.	<p>75% felt they had received sufficient information on sexual consent and respectful relationships (2021)<sup>xiii</sup></p> <p>58% agreed people their age who they know have respectful romantic and sexual relationships (2021)<sup>xiv</sup></p> <p>46% agree people of any age in the community have respectful romantic and sexual relationships (2021)<sup>xv</sup></p>	<p>Work with Department of Education around implementation of the Statement of Intent.</p> <p>Work with key stakeholders to improve access to additional consent education in schools.</p> <p>Continue to undertake consultation with children and young people around consent and respectful relationships, and represent their views to Government and the community.</p>	2.8.8; 2.9; 2.10
Lack of a sense of belonging	Increase number of children and young people reporting connection to a community or social group outside of their family.	<p>78% of young people gave a positive rating (7+/10) for the quality of their relationships with friends (2021)<sup>xvi</sup></p> <p>56% of young people gave a positive rating (7+/10) for the quality of their relationships with others in their community (outside of friends and family) (2021)<sup>xvii</sup></p>	Empower youth advisory councils across the state to encourage engagement in local events, activities and engagement with community, in particular through youth week.	1.7; 1.15; 1.16; 2.12; 2.13; 3.15; 5.1; 5.3; 5.6; 5.8; 5.9; 5.12; 5.14; 6.8.2



### 3. Health and wellbeing

**66%** of children and young people rated their overall physical health as good.

**55%** of children and young people rated their mental health as good.

**Children and young people's mental, physical and emotional health is nurtured and supported to enable them to flourish.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Support for children and their carers during the first 2000 days of life	Increase proportion of women attending their first antenatal visit within the first trimester.	79.6% of women in NSW attended their first antenatal visit within the 14 weeks of pregnancy  This figure was lower for those aged 19 and under at 71.5% (2019) <sup>xviii</sup>	Support the implementation of the First 2000 Days Strategy, such as promoting information about childhood health and development to parents and supporting targeted programs for young parents.	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5;
	Increase in the proportion of children having development checks at age 2, 3 and 4 years.	While not currently published, this figure will be available through the First 2000 Days Implementation Plan		
Childhood death and accidental injury	Decrease in deaths among infants and children.	Infant mortality rate 3.5 per 1,000 live births (2019) <sup>xix</sup>  Death rate per 100,000 population: Aged 0-4: 77.7 Aged 5-9: 7.0 Aged 10-14: 10.6 (2019) <sup>xx</sup>	The Advocate will continue to serve on the Child Death Review Team.  Work with the NSW Ombudsman, NSW Health, the Department of Communities and Justice and other organisations to implement the findings and recommendations of the Child Death Review Team.	3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.6;
	Decrease in childhood injury.	Hospitalised injury rate for those aged 0-14: 1,181.1 per 100,000 population (2018-19) <sup>xxi</sup>		
Suicide and self-injury	Decrease in suicide for children and young people.	126 deaths by suicide for those aged 24 and under in 2020 (2020) <sup>xxii</sup>	The Advocate will continue to participate in the Adolescent Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Interagency Meeting.	3.7; 3.8; 3.9; 3.10; 3.12; 3.13; 3.14; 3.15; 3.17; 3.21; 3.24; 3.27; 3.28; 3.31
	Decrease in intentional self-injury among children and young people.	Hospitalisations of those aged 15-24 due to intentional self-harm: 225.9 per 100,000 population (2018-19) <sup>xxiii</sup>		
Lack of informal mental health supports	Increase mental health literacy for adults who serve children and young people.	Completion rates of the Youth Mental Health First Aid course among Government agencies supporting children and young people  <i>*Note: Further work required to identify data sources for this indicator</i>	Work to promote the Youth Mental Health First Aid course and advocate for higher completion rates in NSW.  Empower local youth advisory councils to advocate for Teen Mental Health First Aid training.  Support the work of the Four You Alliance.	3.7; 3.11; 3.18; 3.19; 3.20; 3.21; 3.22; 3.24; 3.25;
	Increase capacity for young people to provide peer mental health support.	Number of young people had completed a teen mental health first aid course in the financial year 2020-21  <i>*Note: Further work required to identify data sources for this indicator</i>  72% were confident in their ability to support their friends with their mental and emotional wellbeing (% rating 7+/10) <sup>xxiv</sup>		



### 3. Health and Wellbeing (continued)

**Children and young people's mental, physical and emotional health is nurtured and supported to enable them to flourish.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus (continued):

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Long waiting times for professional mental health supports	Decrease waiting time for professional mental health supports.	<p>Headspace wait times: 25.5 days is the average wait for the first therapy session (Nationally, 2018)<sup>xv</sup></p> <p><i>*Note: Further work required to identify data sources for this indicator</i></p>	Work with relevant agencies to advocate for tracking of wait times for young people to receive professional mental health support.	3.7; 3.23; 3.25; 3.28; 3.29; 3.30; 3.31;
Lack of support for young people experiencing addiction or problematic use of alcohol and other drugs	Increase access to youth specific services to support young people who had engagement with alcohol and other drugs.	ACYP would establish a baseline understanding of current access and make recommendations to improve this over time.	Work to understand children and young people's level of access to existing supports, particularly in regional areas, and identify any barriers to participation.	3.23; 3.32;
COVID-19 public health response for children and young people	Increase access to and uptake of COVID-19 vaccination in accordance with public health advice.	Vaccination rates for children and young people will be included as the vaccine becomes available to a wider age cohort of children and young people.	<p>Throughout the pandemic ACYP has worked alongside NSW Health to ensure communications are targeted to young people and that they are getting the information they need.</p> <p>ACYP has and will continue to engage children and young people to ensure NSW Government decision making includes their voices.</p>	3.33; 3.34



## 4. A good standard of living

**Children and young people are provided with the necessities they need to thrive.**

**Children and young people do not live in poverty and are provided with adequate services and resources to operate in society.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

**92%** said they had a safe and secure place to live and sleep.

**85%** said they were able to eat a healthy and balanced diet if they wanted to.

**89%** said they had enough clothing and other items that they need for their day-to-day life.

**85%** said they could easily access services and support (such as transport and healthcare).

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Childhood poverty	Decrease the number of children and young people living in poverty.	17.7% of children and 13.4% of young people in NSW live in poverty (2019) <sup>xxvi</sup>	Support the work of Anti-Poverty Week - highlighting childhood poverty in NSW.  Support agencies to track the extent of childhood poverty in NSW.	4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.7
Financial instability and the cost of living	Decrease the number of young people reporting financial instability.	31% of young people who live independently report financial difficulties (noting those experiencing homelessness and acute financial difficulties are less likely to be able to access the survey) (2021) <sup>xxvii</sup>	Support young people to access information and resources about financial counselling.  Work in partnership with Revenue NSW to support inclusion of children and young people's voices to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement of the Hardship Support program.	4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 4.7;
Inability to access safe, stable and affordable accommodation	Decrease the number of young people reporting difficulty in finding safe, stable and affordable accommodation.	Nationally, 28% of those aged 15-24 and 45% of those living independently, lived in lower income households experiencing housing stress (2017-18) <sup>xxviii</sup>	Work in partnership with the Real Estate Institute and other relevant stakeholders, to develop greater awareness and knowledge about Rent Choice products which are available for young people.  Support the dissemination of information about renters' rights amongst young people.	4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.8; 3.15
Youth homelessness	Decrease youth homelessness.	13,005 or 0.6% of children and young people 0-24 experienced homelessness <sup>xxix</sup>  This figure is based on the 2016 Census. Updated figures for the 2021 census will become the benchmark figures when provided. However, we note the next census will occur outside the reporting period for this strategic plan.  In June 2021, 12,990 children and young people aged 0-24 accessed specialist homelessness services, representing 52.8% of the total number of clients accessing support <sup>xxx</sup>	Continue to work collaboratively with government, NGOs and the business community to increase the availability and accessibility of youth foyers, and other models designed and proven to work with young people .  Support the dissemination of communications around Link2Home and crisis support services.	4.4; 4.5; 4.6; 4.8; 3.15
Lack of transport in regional areas	Increase children and young people's access to transport in regional areas.	ACYP will track children and young people's self-reported access to transport	Work with the Office of Regional Youth and Transport NSW to increase understanding about available concessions and learner driver licensing programs.	4.2; 4.3; 4.9; 4.10; 4.11



## 5. Environments for joy and fun

**Children and young people have spaces and opportunities to engage in activities for recreation and leisure.**

**These spaces are enjoyable, welcoming and safe.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

**62%** of children and young people in NSW said they feel satisfied they can participate in fun activities.

**63%** of children and young people in NSW said they feel safe in public areas around the community.

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Lack of access to organised activities for socially excluded children and young people	Increase opportunities for children and young people to participate in organised recreational activities. In particular, those engaged with Youth Justice, in out-of-home care, refugees, asylum seekers and those with disability.	62% of young people are satisfied with their ability to participate in fun activities (% rating 7+/10) (2021) <sup>xxxii</sup>	Work with Youth Justice, Create NSW, the NSW Office of Sport and other relevant organisations to determine what activities are available to children and young people in these cohorts and remove any barriers to participation.  Continue to coordinate and promote NSW Children's Week and NSW Youth Week, which aim to grow children and young people's participation and inclusion in community life through a variety of activities.	5.1; 5.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8; 5.9; 5.10; 5.11; 5.12; 5.14; 5.17; 6.4
Lack of safe, youth friendly and accessible spaces	Increase access to child and youth friendly spaces to gather, play, and study.	59% of young people are satisfied with their ability to access public spaces to relax, meet with friends, study, or spend time alone. (% rating 7+/10) (2021) <sup>xxxii</sup>	Work collaboratively with the Office of Children's Guardian around implementation of the Child Safe Standards.	5.16; 5.17; 5.18; 5.9; 5.10
	Increase the safety of public spaces.	63% of young people feel safe in public areas around their community (those rating feelings of safety as 7+/10) (2021) <sup>xxxiii</sup>	Support youth advisory councils to highlight areas of their local communities where children and young people feel unsafe and empower them to take action at a local level through advocacy training.	5.19; 5.20; 5.21; 5.22; 5.23
		70% of young people feel safe online (those rating feelings of safety as 7+/10) (2021) <sup>xxxiv</sup>	Promote the Everyone Can Play resources to youth advisory councils and local governments across NSW.  Promote existing materials about online safety.	5.24; 5.25





## 6. Respect and acceptance

63% of children and young people said they felt respected in their local community.

64% of children and young people said they felt accepted in their local community.

**Children and young people feel respected, accepted and included in society.**

**They are part of a community that supports them to be proud of their culture, diversity and individual identity. They are free from discrimination, racism and structural violence.**

We commit to the following key areas of focus:

Priority areas for action	Goals	Indicator (including baseline)	ACYP's Commitment/Actions	Government Initiatives
Racism and discrimination related to age, disability, religion, gender or sexuality	Increase the number of children and young people reporting that they feel respected and accepted.	63% of young people were satisfied with the level of respect they feel in their local community  64% were satisfied with the level of acceptance they feel in their local community (2021) <sup>xxxv</sup>	Work collaboratively across government to identify structural and systemic issues and advocate for changes that will create a service system which is more responsive to children and young people's needs.  Collaborate with relevant agencies and organisations to increase children and young people awareness of their rights, including through ACYP's advocacy training program.	6.1; 6.4; 6.5; 6.6; 6.7; 1.15
	Decrease the number of children and young people experiencing racism or discrimination due to age, disability, religion, gender or sexuality.	33% of young people had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months (2021) <sup>xxxvi</sup>	Provide Child Rights training to adults who serve children and young people across NSW.  Support and promote development of anti-racism initiatives.  Consult with young people who identify as being part of the LGBTQIA+ community and elevate their voices.  Disseminate resources to support children and young people's participation and the development of youth advisory councils at the local level, including ACYP's participation charter, participation guide, youth advisory council guide and other child rights resources.	6.2; 6.3;
Overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the Youth Justice and out-of-home care systems	Decrease in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal Children and young people in the out-of-home care system.	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people were 9.5 times more likely to be in out-of-home care than non-Aboriginal children and young people (2019) <sup>xxxvii</sup>	Elevate the voices of children and young people in the out-of-home care system, through consultations and related advocacy.	6.8; 6.9; 6.10; 3.23
	Decrease in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children and young people in the Youth Justice system.	Average daily number of young people in custody with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background: was 112, representing 45% of all young people in custody (2019-2020) <sup>xxxviii</sup>	Continue to work in collaboration with Youth Justice NSW to elevate the voices of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system.	6.11; 6.12; 6.13; 1.15; 2.8.8; 3.23



# Endnotes

- i ACYP 2021 Strategic Plan Survey.
- ii These resources are in development and are not yet published. ACYP will include these figures in subsequent tracking reports.
- iii Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Table 14d. Median duration of job search by age and duration of job search' [data set], [Labour Force Australia, Detailed](#), ABS website, September 2021, accessed 31 October 2021.  
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- iv Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Table 16: Main difficulty in finding work by age of unemployed persons' [data set], [Participation, Job Search and Mobility, Australia](#), ABS website, February 2021, accessed 7 October 2021.
- v Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Table 34: Highest educational attainment: Level by engagement in employment or study, Persons aged 15-24 years' [data set], [Education and Work, Australia](#), ABS website, 9 May 2021, accessed 7 October 2021.
- vi Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), [Australia's Children: in brief](#), AIHW website, December 2019, accessed 1 September 2021.
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- viii Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 'School attendance' [data set], [National Report on Schooling in Australia - data portal](#), ACARA website, 2019, accessed 7 October 2021.
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- x NSW Department of Education, 'Suspensions and Expulsions 2019' [data set], [Suspensions and Expulsions in NSW government schools \(2005-2021\)](#), NSW Department of Education Data Hub website, 2019, accessed 7 October 2021.
- xi ACYP 2021 Strategic Plan Survey.
- xii NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), 'Domestic Violence statistics for NSW - June 2021' [data set], [Domestic Violence](#), BOCSAR website, 2021, accessed 7 October 2021.
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- xx NSW Health, 'Deaths from all causes (2019)' [data set], [HealthStats NSW](#), HealthStats NSW website, 2020, accessed 7 October 2021.
- xxi NSW Health, 'Injury and poisoning hospitalisations by leading cause (2018-19)' [data set], [HealthStats NSW](#), 2020, accessed 7 October 2021.
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- xxiv ACYP 2021 Strategic Plan Survey.

- xxv headspace, [Increasing demand in youth mental health: A rising tide of need](#), headspace, 2019, accessed 7 October 2021.
- xxvi Y Vidyattama, R Tanton and NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS), [Mapping Economic Disadvantage in NSW](#), NATSEM, Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis (IGPA), University of Canberra, 2019.
- xxvii ACYP 2021, Strategic Plan Survey.
- xxviii Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), [Australia's youth: Housing stress](#), AIHW website, 2021, accessed 1 September 2021.
- xxix Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 'Table 4.2 – Homeless operational groups and other marginal housing, New South Wales – Sex by age of person – 2016' [data set], [Census of Population and Housing Estimating Homelessness](#), ABS website, 2016, accessed 1 September 2021.
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*Note: This figure is based on analysis data in the Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services (2020) and includes children 'in out-of-home-care and other supported care' to include children on permanent care Table 16A.2.*
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## REFERENCE

**Office:**

Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People

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