



Government
of South Australia

Department for Communities
and Social Inclusion

It starts with YOUTH

2015 Youth Strategy
for South Australia

Message from the Minister

Young people help shape South Australia. Every day they contribute their talents, enthusiasm and creativity to making our State what it is. Look beyond today and it is young people who will shape our future and lead us into tomorrow. A focus on young South Australians is an investment in their development and participation, and that is an investment in the future of South Australia.

Through youthconnect 2010 - 2014, the South Australian Government identified 63 actions to improve the lives of young South Australians. youthconnect initiatives prioritised youth engagement and working with young people who are disadvantaged.

As youthconnect has now finished, the Government has decided to take a fresh approach to addressing the needs of young people. Building on youthconnect, which identified areas impacting on young people, our new Youth Strategy will focus on particular areas of concern to young people and on creating practical change.

Each year, a key issue will be identified and a working group established to apply a concentrated focus to understanding and responding to that issue. The working group will be comprised of representatives from relevant sectors, including those in high level positions external to government.

As Minister for Youth, I have heard from young people about the difficulties they face in accessing affordable accommodation - particularly across regional South Australia.

That's why in 2015 our area of focus will be homelessness - a significant issue for young South Australians and a key priority for this Government.



To support our focus on homelessness, we will also be considering the transition of young people from education to further education, training and employment – ensuring that young people are engaged in our communities, our education and training systems and our workforce; today and into the future.

More broadly, our Government is committed to engaging with young people and ensuring their views are listened to, captured and acted upon by Government. In order to facilitate new and creative methods of engaging with young people across South Australia, I have asked the Office for Youth to lead the development of a new model of youth engagement, in partnership with the youth sector.

Through this new model, the Government will identify future topics of focus and ensure that young people have a say in working out the best ways to achieve real results on the issues that impact on them.

I am excited about the opportunities that our new Youth Strategy presents and I look forward to working in partnership with you as we consider innovative solutions to complex problems.

Information on our approach to the homelessness, transitions and youth engagement projects is provided in this brochure.

Hon Zoe Bettison
Minister for Youth
January 2015

There are almost

270,000

young South Australians aged between 12 and 24 years or about 17 percent of the State's population.

Australian Bureau of Statistics
2011 Census data



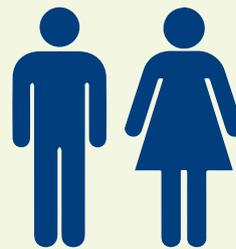
46,866

were born overseas



170,990

are engaged in full or part time education

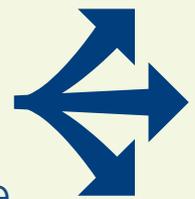


7,987

are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

55,709

live outside of Adelaide



5,660

have a disability



1,450

are homeless

Where do young people live?

9,300

4,800

10,400

10,500

5,700

9,900

64,750 Northern Adelaide

37,800 Eastern Adelaide

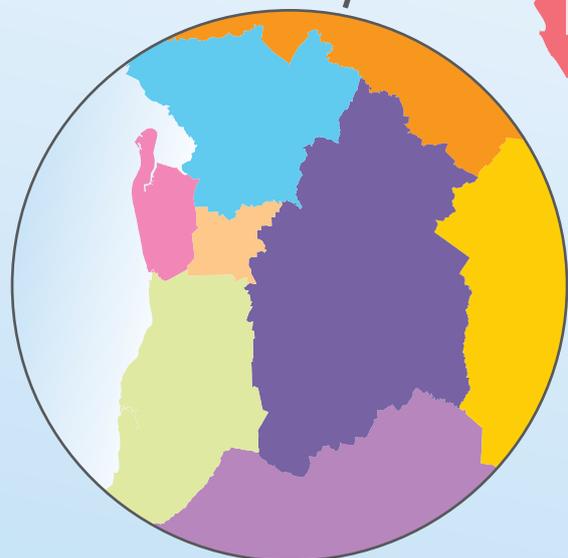
35,200 Western Adelaide

57,000 Southern Adelaide

11,490 Adelaide Hills

Total number of young people
aged 12 - 24 years.

Census data 2011



Mission Australia's 2014 Youth Survey found that in South Australia:

- **76%** of young people highly valued friendships and 75% highly valued family relationships
- **the majority** of respondents rated their family's ability to get along positively (54%) however one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships
- **young people cited** politics and societal values (34%) as important issues for Australia today as well as the economy and financial matters (26%), drugs (23%), mental health (18%) and discrimination (17%)
- **almost 47%** of young people believe where they live will affect the career opportunities available
- **achieving career success** was of high importance for 88% of respondents and more than 70 per cent ranked owning their own home as a key aspiration, with most feeling that these aspirations are achievable (60% and 71% respectively)
- **92% respondents** were studying full time but only 46% of young males plan to go to university, compared with more than 69% of young females
- **45% of young people indicated** coping with stress as the top issue of concern for them, for 44% school or study problems were a major concern and one in five indicated strong concerns about family conflict and depression
- **around 60%** of young people were positive or very positive about the future, with 10% feeling negative or very negative about the future.

Almost 80% of young people ranked education and hard work as the top two factors they believe will influence their career opportunities in the future.



Youth Homelessness

Simon's story

Simon was 14 when things got bad enough at home for him to leave. He lived most of the next three years on the street and in that time he got mixed up in drug use and the drugs got him into stealing.

His first contact with the criminal justice system was when he was fifteen. Then again at sixteen. Hard enough to deal with these problems, let alone turn his life around. So what did? The right services in the right place. People with skill and passion. People who believed it was possible to turn a life like his around.

He's living in a flat with his girlfriend these days, thanks to those people. He's off the drugs. He's at TAFE training to be a chef. He still needs support but he's got that support and he's on his way.

Why homelessness?

Homelessness is an issue for a significant number of young people in South Australia. On any given day around 1,450 young South Australians are homeless. Homelessness services receive a constant demand for services. Other support services are also in demand to address the many other issues that homeless young people face, including substance misuse, disengagement from education and training, mental health problems, family breakdown and/or violence and an increased chance of contact with the criminal justice system.

Homeless young people are less likely to aspire to university or a career of their choice than their peers and are more likely to experience stress, family conflict and depression. Being homeless has a significant impact on a young person's ability to engage in the social and economic life of the community, not just in the short term but over the course of their lives.

What will It Starts with YOUth do?

The Government has engaged the Service to Youth Council (SYC) to form the SA Youth Homelessness Working Group, which will also include representatives of the South Australian Government and leaders from across the economy in sectors including property development, real estate, education and training, industry and social services.

By mid-2015 the Working Group will develop a framework that will outline the most effective ways to stop young people moving into homelessness and also to support them to move out of it. Actions formulated from this framework will focus not only on reducing homelessness but also on improving housing accessibility and affordability for young people in SA.

The Working Group will produce a white paper that outlines its findings and the proposed new framework for delivering an impactful, real, sustained improvement to the lives of young people in South Australia.



Facts about homelessness

- On Census night 2011, almost 56 out of every 10,000 people aged 12-18 and 88 out of every 10,000 Australians aged 19-24 were recorded as being homeless.
- Family conflict and breakdown is the main cause of youth homelessness in Australia.
- Young people aged between 12 and 18 are the largest group experiencing homelessness.
- Specialist youth homelessness services have insufficient beds to meet demand, and are forced to turn away one in two people who contact them for help.
- Homelessness has large costs to the Australian community in terms of health, justice and community services and this cost (of homelessness) increases the longer a person has been homeless.
- Mental illness among young people experiencing homelessness is higher than in the broader population of young people in Australia.



Successful Transitions – A Youth Mentoring Program

Struggling to make the transition

Unemployment can start a vicious cycle for young people. Leaving school early or struggling to make the transition from school to further education or employment can be the start of that cycle, leading to long-term financial hardship, increased likelihood of physical and mental health issues and an increased probability of involvement in the criminal justice system.

The power of mentoring

Existing research presents convincing evidence that structured mentoring and intensive case management can have powerful and lasting positive effects in improving behavioural, academic and vocational outcomes for disengaged young people.

Our commitment

The South Australian Government is committed to ensuring young people have the services and supports they need to make a successful transition into the workplace or further learning. A range of State Government funded programs and services support this commitment, including the recently

launched Jobs4Youth program, the Regional Student Internship Program targeting country students, the Innovative Community Action Networks (ICAN), and the Skills for All training initiative.

Successful transitions

To complement these existing government initiatives, the Office for Youth is funding a new structured mentoring program, Successful Transitions, that will specifically support vulnerable and severely disengaged young people aged 17- 24 to successfully transition into further education, vocational training or secure employment.

The Successful Transitions program will ensure young people have access to a range of services that connect them to meaningful employment and learning in their local area. Some of these services may include: assessment and counselling; work and life skills development; remedial education; vocational placements; community building activities; and other material/ human resources where required.



Program funding will be targeted to particular regions with large numbers of disengaged and unemployed young people. The Successful Transitions program will commence in mid-2015 and will be delivered by specialist youth services who have the necessary experience and knowledge to support vulnerable and marginalised young people.

Facts about transitions

Applying strategies to overcome disadvantage while young people are still in school is the most effective form of intervention and is less intensive than trying to address the issue once a young person becomes chronically homeless.

Tia's story

15 year old Tia was having problems at home and ran away to Ceduna, over 400km away, to live with her boyfriend. She tried attending school in Ceduna but couldn't settle. She went on Centrelink benefits. A counsellor in the school mentoring service encouraged her to try a TAFE course.

Tia did, but then her father passed away suddenly and she left Ceduna. It surprised everyone when she returned to Ceduna and re-engaged with her mentor. She didn't go back to TAFE but her mentor supported her through all the practical and emotional stresses of applying for a job as a trainee in a medical service, and then continued to support her after she got the job.

Tia has been working for six months now. She no longer needs Centrelink nor does she need a healthcare card. The medical service is supporting her to do a Certificate III in Aged Care. Feedback from the hospital indicates that the elderly people that she serves meals to love her bubbly personality and the patients and staff at the hospital find her a breath of fresh air.



Facts about engagement

21% of 18-24 year olds feel able to have a say within community on important issues all or most of the time.

A New Model of Youth Engagement

‘Engaging with young people and getting our views across is one very important way of helping to rebuild that sense of connection between us, the school and the community in which we live. It is an opportunity to feel respected and be confident that our views are being taken seriously.’ Young person, World Youth Forum

What is youth engagement?

Youth engagement is about giving young people a voice. It is about providing young people with a safe place to come together and share their ideas about how to deal with issues that affect them. Young people who are engaged build life and leadership skills. They connect and contribute to their community.

A new model of youth engagement

During 2015 a new model of youth engagement will be developed for South Australia that will enable young people to inform the government’s youth agenda and to engage in government decisions that affect them.

Representatives from youth sector peak bodies, youth sector organisations and government departments, including the Department for Education and Child Development and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, will work together and contribute their expertise.

Best practice youth engagement models from around the world will be investigated and assessed for their applicability to South Australia.

To ensure that a wide range of people can contribute their views, meetings will be held in metropolitan and regional communities. There will also be opportunities to participate in an online survey and other social media forums.

Central to developing this model will be young South Australians. This model will then give them a voice for future directions.

Alysha’s story

How does a high school drop-out and teenage single parent become a leader in the community? Alysha is proof that the right support can break the cycle and transform the life of a young person. Once struggling to make the transition towards positive life choices, Alysha is nowadays a proud parent, a theatre practitioner, community builder and dedicated volunteer.

She was also the 2011 South Australian Young Citizen of the Year. She is currently completing a Teaching/Arts degree and is the key speaker for the 20th anniversary Youth Parliament event in 2015.

Feedback

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