

Submission

No 96

INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 9-14 YEARS IN NSW

Organisation: Hebersham Public School

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Jaime

Good morning we are from Hebersham Public School. My name is Jaime and with me today are Taone, Katrina and Byron.

Our school is on the outskirts of Mt Druitt. It has 610 students and 55 staff. We come from a very happy school that cares for us and is helping us become the best we can. The teachers at our school work very hard to teach us and to offer us many different experiences in lots of different areas. Our school has children from many cultures and backgrounds and we learn about these different cultures all the time. The school values are about learning, respect and safety.

We feel very privileged to be able to come here today and talk to you about being young people from the western suburbs.

As young people in the present society we see the following aspects as vital for us to become useful adults in the community.

The first aspect we feel is very important is being confident and having high self-esteem. This would allow us to take on what life brings. It allow us to be able to handle all aspects of our life, as we get older. For example as we get older we know we will be tempted by drugs and other harmful things but if we are confident we will be able to ignore peer pressure and make good decisions for ourselves. We need the ability to say NO. Self-esteem gives you the ability to take on new challenges and try to achieve a useful and productive life.

We also feel it is important for young people to be goal oriented to have a successful life. We must learn to set goals and to have the chance to actually achieve goals from a young age.

Katrina

One other aspect that is very important is to have a good education. In the western suburbs we sometimes feel that we are at a disadvantage because we need to travel to have some educational experiences such as going to the beach, museums and special attractions that are centered in the city. For instance today it took us an hour to get into the city to come here. It would be wonderful if we had facilities closer to us so we didn't need to spend so much money or time travelling.

Young people need to be encouraged to stay at school and get a good education. School must be exciting and prepare us for our future in the world. Schools and the community need to prepare us to be able to live in an ever changing world that is full of technology. We need to learn to use technology to help better our lives.

School gives us a good foundation for our future. School allows children to gain experiences that they might not be able to get from their families. Education allows young people a chance to get their foot in the door in the real world.

We start thinking about going to university and getting a good job earlier and earlier. We need to know that we have libraries, Internet connection and specialised subject areas that

will assist us in getting the jobs we want in the future. We don't all have Internet access at home so we need to be able to go to public areas where we can study and get the information we need for our learning. Lifelong learning is the focus at our school.

Taone

Another aspect is equal opportunity. We need to have the same equal opportunities as other children from different socio-economic status. If we are richer or poorer, male or female it doesn't matter, we should all be treated equally.

Children our age need to be able to become resilient to things that might happen in our lives. Bullying is happening all the time so we need to learn how to deal with bullies and how to make them understand that we will not put up with it. We need guidance from our teachers and families members to know how to handle bullies and how to be safe. This too is a fundamental value we learn at our school.

Sometimes in our lives things might happen like family members getting sick or much worse we need to have someone to go to and talk to. We need to learn strategies that will help us cope with these things. At schools and community centres we need to have someone to talk to about our concerns and fears.

We need to be supported and encouraged by our peers, friends, parents and teachers in our lives. It is important for our local media like newspapers to write stories about the good things we do as we grow up as it allows us to gain confidence and achieve more. It also helps us look up to others and support us to know we can achieve whatever we want to.

Byron

All children need to have activities that allow them to grow and develop.

In the western suburbs children really need a range of things to do to relax and have fun. We need sporting centres, dance groups, discos, social clubs, facilities for hobbies and community centres where we can learn new things and just be together, meet new people or talk to someone that can help with concerns and problems.

All children need to be part of groups such a sporting group. It would be great if sporting facilities could be built around the Mt Druitt area that our parents could afford to send us to. We need sporting groups that are a little different from the normal footy team or netball team.

We also think that it is important to have someone to talk to when things are difficult such as a guidance officer at school or in the community. This will help us to know that we are not the only ones going through difficult times as we grow up. Church support is also important to some children.

As we grow up we need to feel supported, understood, heard and more importantly valued as members of the community. We want to succeed and develop into worthwhile adults who respect each others culture and values. Be respectful is part of our school belief system.

Thank you for listening to our ideas. We know one day we will be able to help our community as adults.