

Submission

No 94

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

Organisation: Castle Hill High School

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Inquiry into Children and Young People 9-14 Years

My name is Tom and I am here today from Castle Hill High School which is a public co-ed comprehensive high school in a relatively middle class socioeconomic community. Castle Hill High School is found in the north-west of Sydney.

Today we will present what young people believe are their needs in society today. We will also explain how their needs vary depending on their gender and socioeconomic status which Eliza and Lachlan will discuss.

Sofie will present how our needs have changed from the age of nine to the age we are now. She will also conclude our results and make recommendations to you about what young people believe the government needs to fix or provide more of to improve our quality of our life.

To collect our data we surveyed one hundred and four people aged twelve to fourteen years of age in Years 7 and 8 at our school. In our survey we asked them about their important needs, whether the community satisfies these needs and whether boys and girls have equal opportunities in our area. We also asked them how their needs changed from the age of nine to fourteen and how money affects their ability to satisfy their needs. This survey allowed us to successfully conclude our results.

Looking at the graph, you can see that education is important to males aged twelve to fourteen years old and that they articulate its importance.

The other three most important needs for males aged twelve to fourteen are entertainment, sporting fields and technology. These three examples are an indication that as we move through our teenage years we are searching for activities that create or provide us with greater independence in a safe environment.

Although 78% of males believe that our local community satisfies their needs 22% of the males needs aren't met. The majority of the reasons for their needs not being met were that there was inadequate transport in our area and that the majority of the sports grounds are of poor quality. Some people also said that more footpaths are required on the sides of roads or in open areas for our safety when walking.

If you look at this next graph you will see the vast majority of the males, according to our survey, believe that boys and girls have equal opportunities in the 'Hills Area" but sixteen percent still believe that they don't. The main reasons given are that during sport some boys ignore girls and that there is only single gender sport teams in certain sports such as football, AFL and netball.

When compared with the girls results of whether the community satisfies their needs everything was very similar. The only need that wasn't satisfied and differed greatly from the boys was that girls believed that there is not enough transport in the Hills area.

94% of males surveyed believed that money does affect their ability to satisfy their needs. Reasons for this usually had something to do with the fact that most needs require money to satisfy. For example needs such as food, entertainment, sport and education all require money.

Compared with the results for the girls about the same question the results were pretty much identical with 93% of girls saying that money affects their ability to satisfy their needs in the same ways that the boys mentioned.

Almost every boy we surveyed believes that their needs have changed since they were 9 years old. The general consensus was that as you get older you become more independent and are searching for a fun and safe environment to be with your friends. Also our data showed that as you get older you want your own money and to be able to spend it how you want.

The final question in our survey was "What community facilities could the NSW state government provide more of to improve you quality of life?" The suggestions that males made were that: better transportation, such as buses and trains, are required, more recreational areas and parks so kids our age can go and be kids and the final suggestion made regularly was that the majority of sports fields in our area are of poor quality and are in desperate need of some maintenance as well as the fact that many sport fields need more lights for training.

The girls shared similar views but would like more swimming centres and other relaxing places to go with friends.

Referring to the graphs, we can state that the results of the male and female answers were quite similar. The top 4 needs were most commonly answered for females were entertainment at 15%, Technology, Sport Fields and Education all at 13%.

The results for the male's were much like the females with the top 4 needs being Entertainment at 18%, Technology and Sporting Fields at 15% and Education at 13%. This shows that Male and Females in this age group share similar opinions on what they believe are the most important needs for our age group in society today.

Majority of females at 72%, believe that our local community satisfies all of these needs. However, those who believe that the community does not satisfy these needs were asked to specify which needs were not met. Some of the needs that they thought were not being met were sporting fields, retail outlets, recreational areas, transport, clean environments and the quality of public transport.

83% of the girls stated that boys and girls have equal opportunities. Again, the answers for male and female were very similar with only a 1% difference. Where we asked 'what do you believe are the most important needs in society today?', in the instances where boys and girls didn't have equal opportunities, respondents were asked to specify which ones e.g. sports. The collated results were most sporting teams only have boys teams, judges or coaches are sexist, there are more sports that boys can play as people think that girls can only do sports like netball or dancing, and there are too many single-gendered teams. 84% of the boys stated that boys and girls do have equal opportunities, and the boys who didn't, were asked to specify why. Their answers were that there aren't as many girls' sports as boy sports, there are no boy's netball teams and no girl's rugby league, AFL etc. teams etc. and that some coaches are sexist. Both male and females that we surveyed shared similar answers for why boys and girls don't have equal opportunities in the Hills Area.

93% of the girls stated that money affected our ability to satisfy our needs. The reason's for this were that money affects everything in our lives, we need money to socialise with friends and to buy the things we need for transportation, education, sport etc, if you don't have money for food and that you need money for extra-curricular activities.

Almost all of the female's at 94%, answered "do you think your needs have changed since you were 9 years old?" with a yes. The female's reasons were that they don't need their parent's as much anymore, being interested in different things because they are older, wanting more entertainment, they use technology more, need more money, clothes etc., wanting to socialise more with friends, the transportation is better, body has changed, they are allowed to go out along and go out more, they're more active and have become more mature. The respondents that didn't think they had changed

since they were 9 stated that they are interested in the same things and they needed the same things. The boy's answers were very much like the girls with all the reasons being basically the same.

Finally, we asked "what community facilities could the NSW state government provide more of to improve your quality of life?" The suggestions that were made by the females were that their need to be more tuck shops at parks, more sporting opportunities, local parks and recreational areas, swimming centres, libraries, cheaper prices, more shops and entertainment, gyms for exercising, places for performing arts, quality of our environment, horse riding facilities, places where you can hang out with your friends, more places of worship, more arcades, more transportation and a better education.

Through the results that we have obtained from our survey, we can conclude that on the whole, the most important needs for 12- 14 year olds surveyed in our school are entertainment, education, sporting fields and technology. However, in our survey we also found that 26% of people believe that our local community does not satisfy their needs. We would advise that when considering our presentation, you to take the following recommendations into consideration.

93% of the people we surveyed stated that their needs have changed since they were 9 years old and 7% stated that their needs haven't changed. Of this 93%, many people made comments about their increased need of money and recreational areas to go out with friends. This is because they have grown in independence as they've got older and are less reliant on their parents to provide supervision and entertainment for them.

To improve the lifestyle of the 12- 14 year olds in our local area, you may consider improving the condition of sporting fields as many of the fields in our area are of poor quality and can be a risk to the player's safety because of reasons such as poor lighting.

Another important need for 12 to 14 year olds in our school is education. Education is crucial for our future and it is the foundation of our life. Some ways to improve the education of people in the age bracket of 12- 14 years is to provide more funding for high schools so they can improve their classrooms, teaching resources and technology. Technology is very important in today's society, with 14% of people voting that they believe that technology is a very important need. However, 4% of people thought that the need of technology wasn't met in our community. Most of the comments that we received from participants in our survey in relation to the

lack of good technology were in our libraries and schools. Some examples of these comments are not enough or up-to-date computers and no or not enough colour printers and photocopiers.

Several young people commented on the need for more counselling services in our schools and the local community to help young people when they are confronted with traumatic experiences in their life. Also, youth centres are seen as places for recreation and support- there are not enough of these in the Hills area.

If you follow our suggestions you would be eliminating the 26% or at least reducing the number of people who do not believe the government satisfies their needs.

In conclusion, entertainment, sporting fields and technology are the most important needs for young people in society today but education is the key to our success.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for listening to our presentation. We hope that you will take our recommendations into consideration and that we were helpful in giving you an insight into what young people believe their needs are in our community today.