



"I want  
to have a  
future"

A REPORT ON  
YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOPES  
FOR THE ENVIRONMENT  
IN THE ACT



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT

### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



1. I want people to be more aware of our earth & what they can do to save it.



2. I want more native trees planted & more native plants planted.



3. I want it to be easier to recycle their soft plastics.



Your First Name Elvie  
Your School North Ainslie Primary Age 12



### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



Your First Name Sage  
Your School Telopea park school Age 10



### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



For everyone to love and cherish the Earth and the environment..

Your First Name Dolma  
Your School Merici College Age 16



### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



Your First Name Fran Man / Francis  
Your School North Ainslie Primary School Age 12



### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



I hope that in 10 years there will still be a world to live on.

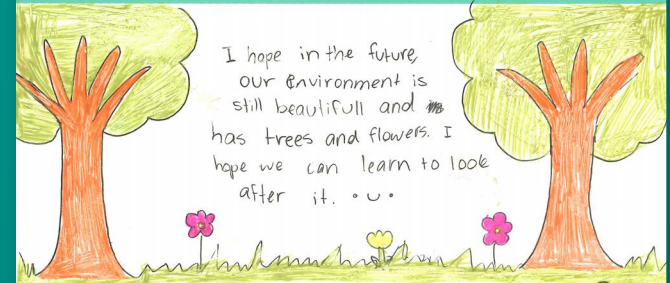


Your First Name Lily  
Your School Merici Age 13



### What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



I hope in the future our environment is still beautiful and has trees and flowers. I hope we can learn to look after it...

Your First Name Celeste  
Your School Merici Colledge Age 14



# Contents

<b>The project</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Key findings – Overview</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Key themes</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Protecting plants and animals</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Ending pollution</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Reducing waste</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Creating sustainable cities</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Stopping climate change</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Thank you</b>	<b>20</b>

# The project

## INTRODUCTION

**Across the world, young people care deeply about the future of the environment.**

Through events like school climate strikes, young people are calling for change to protect their future and the future of generations yet to come.

In a national 2022 Youth Survey, 'environment' was ranked as the most important issue for young people in Australia.<sup>1</sup> In the ACT, young people ranked concern for the environment higher than any other state or territory.

Across the years, surveys show that this concern is growing.<sup>2</sup>

Young people want to have a say about issues that matter to them – but few feel their voices are being heard by decision makers. According to the 2020 Our World Our Say survey, only 13% of young Australians feel that their views are listened to by leaders in government.<sup>3</sup>

***This needs to change.***



<sup>1</sup> You can read more about this survey here: [www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2618-youth-survey-2022-report/file](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2618-youth-survey-2022-report/file)

<sup>2</sup> You can view the survey results from 2020 and 2021 here: [www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/1717-mission-australia-youth-survey-report-2020/file](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/1717-mission-australia-youth-survey-report-2020/file), [www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2087-mission-australia-youth-survey-report-2021/file](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications/youth-survey/2087-mission-australia-youth-survey-report-2021/file)

<sup>3</sup> You can read more about this survey here: [www.worldvision.com.au/docs/default-source/advocacy/youth-survey-report\\_2020-08-12\\_v1-2.pdf](http://www.worldvision.com.au/docs/default-source/advocacy/youth-survey-report_2020-08-12_v1-2.pdf)

## ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Dr Sophie Lewis is the current Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment. Her role is to act as a voice for nature in the ACT and to work with the community to protect the environment and make Canberra a more sustainable place.

## THE PROJECT

In early 2023, the Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment (OCSE) sent out postcards to schools across the ACT asking students to respond to the following question:

***What are your hopes for the environment?***

The Office wanted to better understand young people's views on environmental issues, both in the ACT and on a larger scale.

A total of 683 postcards came back to us from young people ranging from 4 to 18 years old.

This report highlights some key insights from young people's responses. It also gives a set of recommendations about our environment as voiced by young people in the ACT.



Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Ellie, age 12

I want the butterflies back.



Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Vatey, age 7

I hope that the cost of electric cars go down so it's easier to buy.

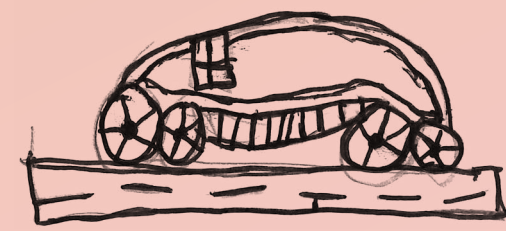


Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Kade, age 11

I hope we have more plants in our houses



Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Tommy, age 10

For us to learn to protect the environment / live alongside it.



Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Aryana, age 16

Reduce driving in non-electronic vehicles to stop climate change.



Illustration adapted from postcard submitted by Layla, age 11

# Key findings – Overview

683

POSTCARDS RECEIVED



4-18

AGE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS

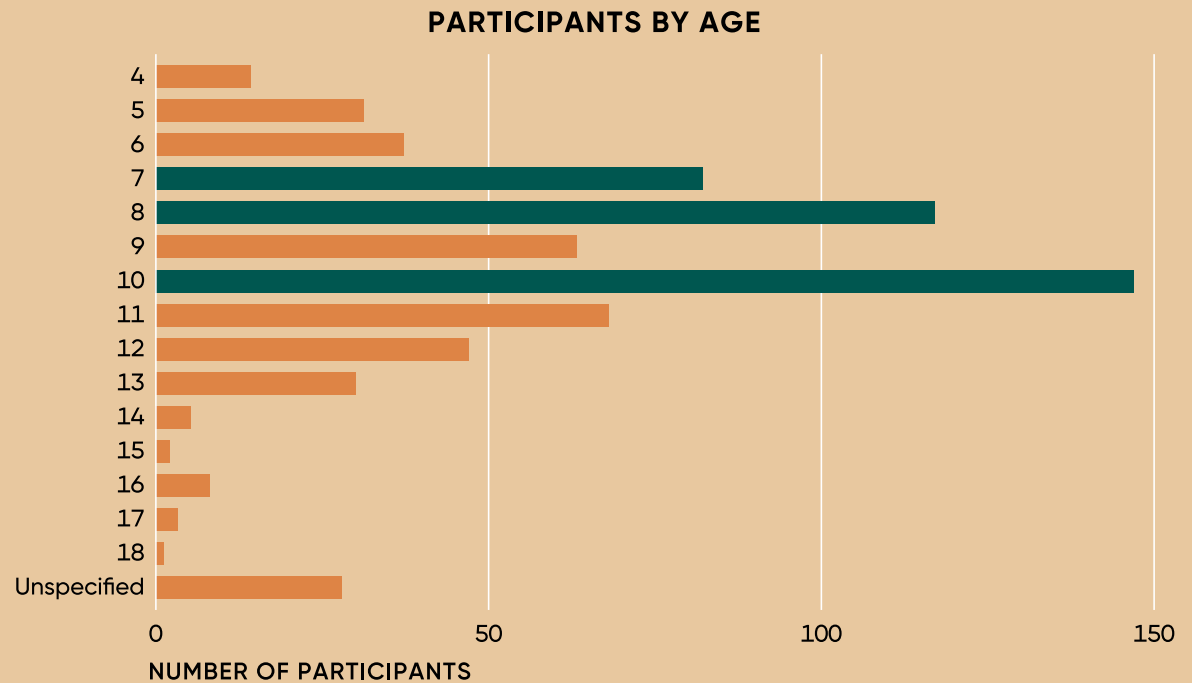


10

SCHOOLS ACROSS THE ACT



OCSE RECEIVED POSTCARDS ACROSS A WIDE AGE RANGE. THIS GRAPH SHOWS THE AGES OF PARTICIPANTS. 80% OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS WERE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, WHICH IS WHY THERE ARE LOTS OF POSTCARDS FROM KIDS AGED 12 AND UNDER, AND NOT AS MANY POSTCARDS FROM OLDER STUDENTS.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOPES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT COVERED LOTS OF DIFFERENT TOPICS. THE TOP 20 MOST POPULAR TOPICS ARE SHOWN IN THE WORD CLOUD BELOW.





# Key themes

BY GROUPING SIMILAR TOPICS TOGETHER, SOME KEY THEMES EMERGED. THE TOP FIVE THEMES WERE:

1

## PROTECTING PLANTS AND ANIMALS

61% of postcards



2

## ENDING POLLUTION

34% of postcards



3

## REDUCING WASTE

29% of postcards



4

## CREATING SUSTAINABLE CITIES

24% of postcards



5

## STOPPING CLIMATE CHANGE

17% of postcards



# Protecting plants and animals

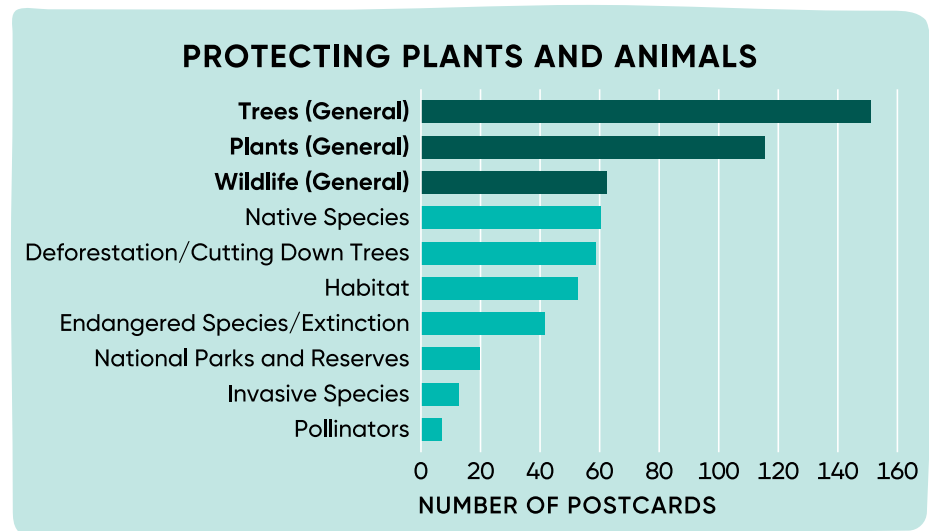


**61%** OF POSTCARDS MENTIONED PLANTS AND ANIMALS

*Young people care about wildlife and want animals and plants to be given the chance to thrive into the future.*

Lots of children described their personal love of animals, and expressed hope that future generations will be able to experience the joys of nature in the same way they have.

The graph below shows the most popular topics mentioned within the theme of 'protecting plants and animals'.



Young people understand that habitat loss is a big threat to animals – especially endangered species. What's more, they know that most habitat loss is caused by human activities, like cutting down trees to make space for new houses. Since humans are the problem, young people recognise that it is also up to us to be the solution – as Charlotte wrote, "[animals] are counting on everyone."

Some solutions young people suggested include:

- ⇒ creating more protected areas for plants and animals like national parks,
- ⇒ introducing stricter laws to stop people cutting down trees, and
- ⇒ making human places safer for animals (for example, by building wildlife bridges over roads).

**HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR HOPES FOR PLANTS AND ANIMALS:**

"I want to be able to show my children the same animals I saw growing up. I want to start with the ACT. Preserve our natural wildlife and everything living."  
SESADI, AGE 15

"Every animal and every habitat to be happy and healthy."  
CHARLIE, AGE 8

"I want to see elephants and penguins before they all die. I want my family to know what trees are in 100 years."  
JONATHAN, AGE 7

"I hope that we stop deforestation."  
CODA, AGE 12

"Dear Sophie, I want to protect the birds, because I like them singing to me."  
HARPER, AGE 5

"I want the koalas back because I never see them in the gum trees I only see them in the zoo."  
GENEVIEVE, AGE 7

"Australia having less endangered species."  
HANNAH, AGE 9

"Dear Doctor Sophie, I wish that we all could stop hurting nature to build homes and factories for people."  
FELIX, AGE 10

"My hopes for the environment are gang-gangs everywhere."  
LILIANA, AGE 8

"My hopes for the environment are more hollows and hills because there will be more habitat and less chance for animals to be extinct."  
SOPHIA, AGE 8

"Protecting the wildlife plants that are endangered in Canberra and animals are a big deal because if plants and animals didn't exist we would be in trouble. Now close your eyes and imagine no plants and animals. It's pretty lonely [...] We should treat animals like they're family."  
YASMIN, AGE 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I want safe environments for all animals and bridges so that animals don't suffer habitat loss and don't get squashed by cars.

Your First Name Meredith  
Your School Majura Primary Age 7

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I Hope That There are more Bees in The Future TO pollinate Flowers SO THAT we can Have Fruit

Your First Name GEORGE  
Your School ainslie Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope for less deforestation and more protected natural parks. I also hope for more electric vechiles and things and for national parks for endangered species.

Your First Name Nima Cooper  
Your School North Ainslie Primary School Age 11

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I want to see the butterflies back in the creeks and grasslands.

Your First Name Francesca  
Your School magdold primary Age 7

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

More habitats so Koalas can come back to live in Canberra again.

Your First Name Kanata  
Your School Majura P.S Age 7

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

My hopes for my School enviroment is to have a bee hive so that we can help our garden thrive (and so we can get honey). I also want to plant native plants and help people have a better understanding of the natural enviroment and what we can do to help it.

Your First Name Sabine  
Your School North Ainslie Age 12

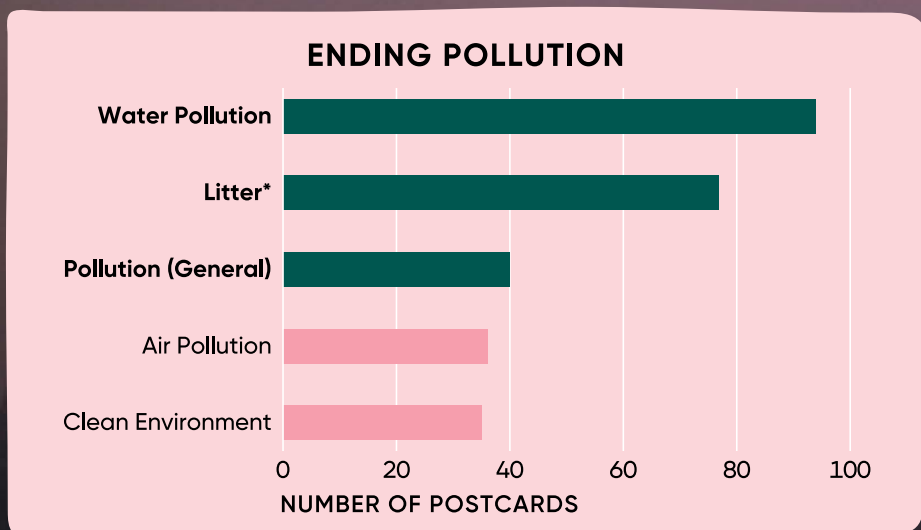
# Ending pollution



**34%** OF POSTCARDS MENTIONED POLLUTION

*Young people want to live in a clean environment and are deeply concerned about pollution – both in terms of the impact it has on the environment as well as the impact it has on people’s health.*

The graph below shows the most popular topics mentioned within the theme of ‘ending pollution’.



\*Excluding litter in waterways. Litter in waterways is included in water pollution.

Water pollution was mentioned many times in the postcards (it was the 4th most popular topic overall). Lots of young people are worried about litter entering the ocean and harming sea life like turtles, fish and dolphins. Others described pollution from factories flowing into rivers and impacting aquatic ecosystems.

Young people are also concerned about the health impacts of pollution on humans – particularly air pollution. Some remember the thick smoke that covered Canberra during the Black Summer Bushfires in 2019 and 2020. Young people are not just concerned for their own health, but for the health of people in the future. For example, Gaby wrote about how she is *“worried that future generations won’t be able to breathe clean air.”* Meanwhile, Bridie thinks of clean air as a human right: *“our planet will be green, healthy and bright with fresh air to breathe – this is our right.”*

Some postcards suggested that we could discourage pollution by introducing bigger fines for polluting the environment. However, young people understand that on a larger scale the main way to end pollution is by reducing the amount of rubbish we create, making our cities more sustainable, and switching to renewable energy instead of using polluting substances like coal. These topics are discussed more later in this report.

Air pollution over Lake Burley Griffin from bushfire smoke. Credit: Stacey Semiklit

**HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR HOPES RELATING TO POLLUTION:**

"I think everybody deserves a non-polluted earth to learn, play, thrive and grow on."

LOLA, AGE 9

"No pollution so we have more life on planet earth."

HECTOR, AGE 8

"I'm worried about pollution and how dangerous it can be/become."

MIKI, AGE 11

"Healthy plants and atmosphere and clean breathing air. A beautiful calm environment."

GRACE, AGE 13

"I hope that in the future the ocean is less polluted and animals can stop being killed because of it."

ELODIE, AGE 12

"I want no litter in the ocean so that turtles can live peacefully."

ZOE, AGE 7

"I want people to be able to be outside and not smell smoke or pollution. I want people to stop and breathe fresh air."

KITTY, AGE 10

"My hope is that in the future everyone will have clean water to drink and won't have to walk three hours to find it."

MARILYN, AGE 10

"I'm worried that people won't have clean water."

LILY, 12

"Dear Dr Sophie, I think that our drains and waterways should be more highly maintained. For example when I went to Dickson shops one day, I saw that a drain was blocked stuffed full with rubbish."

NARA, AGE 11

"I hope the environment will have clean air."

MIA, AGE 8

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name Abbey  
Your School Telopea park school Age 10 1/2

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope to have a clean and healthy environment where we can thrive in. I want to see more green and wildlife and less rubbish and pollution.

Your First Name Eva-rose  
Your School Merici College Age 12

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name Harry Palmer  
Your School duffy primary school Age 8

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name James  
Your School Ma Julia Primary Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

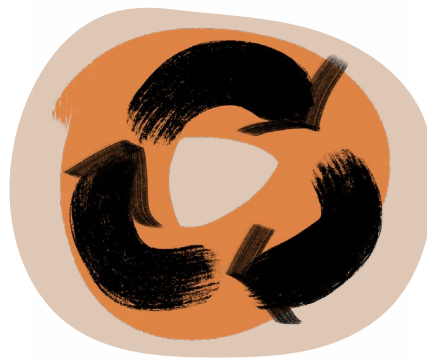
Your First Name Shreya  
Your School Girialang primary school Age 11

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Reduce pollution so all living things will be healthy

Your First Name Jaden  
Your School GPS Age 8-9

# Reducing waste

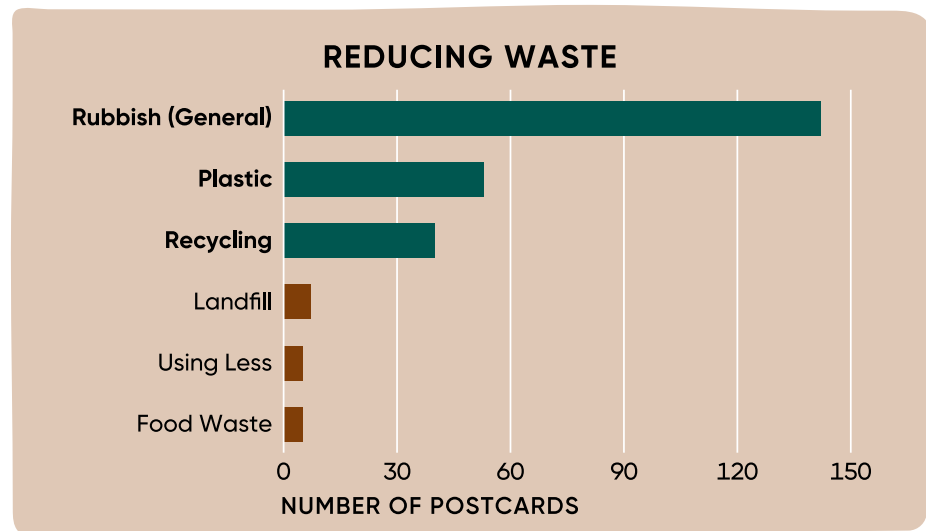


**29%** OF POSTCARDS MENTIONED WASTE

**Young people are concerned about the amount of waste humans are creating and the impact it is having on the environment.**

Some recognise the damage rubbish can do to the earth both in landfill as well as when it ends up in places it shouldn't – like rivers and the ocean.

The graph below shows the most popular topics mentioned within the theme of 'reducing waste'.



Plastic is a particularly harmful type of rubbish because it can take hundreds of years to decompose when we throw it away. In the future, young people hope that we will stop using plastic and switch to biodegradable materials instead (materials that break down easily).



*Piles of plastic bottles at the Discovery Hub. Credit: OCSE*

Several postcards raised concerns about single-use plastics specifically (plastics that we only use one time before throwing away, such as food packaging, straws and soft drink bottles). A key solution young people suggested to tackle this issue was to ban all single-use items.



Lots of young people also hope that improvements will be made to recycling. Young people want recycling to be easier, more efficient, and more common. Multiple postcards mentioned soft plastic recycling and called for programs like 'REDcycle' to be reintroduced so that soft plastics don't end up in landfill.

Young people also hope we can reduce food waste at home, at school and in supermarkets.

**HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR HOPES RELATING TO WASTE:**

"I hope that the amount of landfill going into the earth drops immensely by the year 2030!!! Banning single-use plastics will play a huge role in this."

WILLIAM, AGE 10

"Dear Sophie Lewis, my hopes for the environment are that we use less plastic in Canberra, like food packaging and wrappers."

BRUNO, AGE 10

"Find new ways to recycle all waste."

HENRY, AGE 12

"Reintroduce REDcycle programs."

TAMSIN, AGE 14

"I want it to be easier [for people] to recycle their soft plastics."

ELVIE, AGE 12

"I think that we should try to further reduce waste and pollution within Australia. I also think supermarkets should ease on the criteria of what fruit and vegetables should look like so there is less food waste."

ABBY, AGE 13

"Use less single-use plastic."

KAZUKI, AGE 11

"Reduce plastic by using more biodegradable packaging."

ASH, AGE 11

"I hope that we can start properly recycling plastics and turning them into everyday items and hopefully start re-using plastic for facilities and roads."

RUBY, AGE 14

"More single-use things banned."

HANNAH, AGE 9

"I hope that we will create biodegradable plastics so that if people litter it will biodegrade instead of going into our waterways."

ISLA, AGE 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name Matilda  
Your School quairading primary school Age 8

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Start simple, use the bins correctly.

Your First Name Eve  
Your School Duffy Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope that my children can have what I have in the natural world, as did my parents and grand parents.  
I would like the government to capitalise on the high level of community engagement for the collection of soft plastics by taking over the scheme to reduce waste to landfill and create jobs.

Your First Name Mia  
Your School Narrabundah College Age 17

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope that we can recycle more items and donate old things we don't need. I hope we can reduce plastic bags and other rubbish like foam.

Your First Name Josie  
Your School Majura primary Age \_\_\_\_\_

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Recycle plastic not put it on the floor or in rivers.

Your First Name Roxanne  
Your School Manu Bai Age 9

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope that we can stop covering our general waste and have less garbage underground.

From Jasmine

Your First Name Jasmine R  
Your School Merici College Age 12

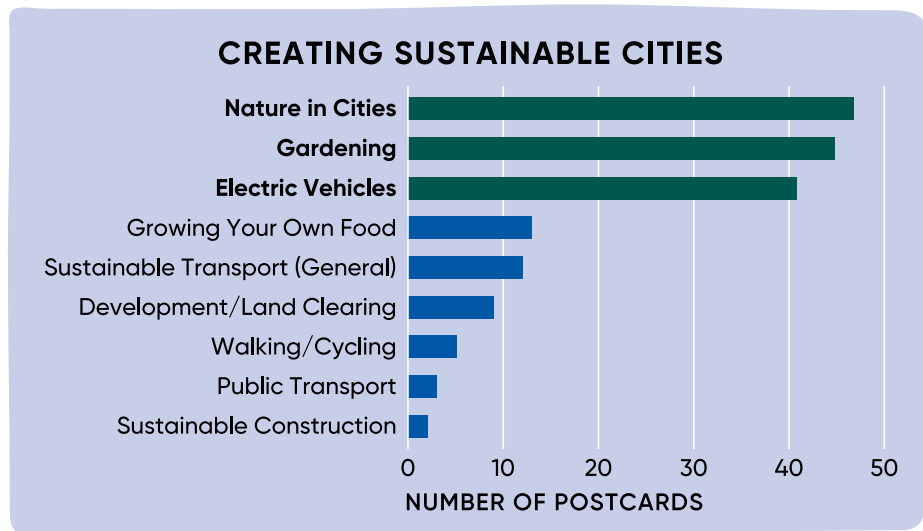
# Creating sustainable cities



**24%** OF POSTCARDS RELATED TO MAKING CITIES MORE SUSTAINABLE

*Young people have a vision that cities in the future will be more environmentally friendly – full of green space, electric cars and people who garden and grow their own food.*

The graph below shows the most popular topics mentioned within the theme of 'creating sustainable cities'.



Young people want to see more nature in our cities so that people, plants and animals can live alongside each other. They imagine buildings with plants growing on their rooftops, trees lining every street and neighbourhoods full of native plants and flowers that will attract pollinators like bees. Young people also want to see more open green spaces in cities where they can run, climb and play in nature – like parks.

Electric vehicles were another popular topic. Many young people are excited by the idea of switching from petrol to electric cars. Several postcards voiced hope that electric cars will become cheaper soon so that everybody can afford to buy one. Young people also hope that in the future people will walk and ride their bike more, as well as have better access to public transport options like buses and the light rail.

Kids are also keen to see more people gardening and growing their own food in cities. Some postcards expressed the idea that gardening is important because it's a hands-on way for people to learn how to care for the environment themselves.

A final idea that was raised in this theme was development. Making our cities bigger can have negative impacts on the environment because it often involves cutting down trees or clearing habitat to make room for new houses as our population grows. This is an important challenge that needs to be addressed if we want our cities to be sustainable into the future.



**HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR HOPES FOR CITIES:**

"My hopes: plants on building roofs, electric cars only, a lot more green places like parks."

AMIRA, AGE 12

"Dear Doctor Sophie, I think we should create area in cities for animals and plants by transforming dirty, black cities into large, green areas where animals and humans live in cooperation."

HANAIEI, AGE 8

"Electric cars' price should lower so everyone can afford them to reduce carbon emissions."

SOPHIA, AGE 11

"My hopes for the environment is for more nature in Canberra."

MARCUS, AGE 8

"I think that we can improve on how much land we are using and how much we actually need. A reason why I think this is because if you compare now to back then you will see a big difference in the natural environment."

ALEXIS, AGE 9

"I want everyone to have a worm farm."

FINN, AGE 7

"More people using public transport or walking/riding."

TEARIA, NO AGE

"Sustainable housing."

SI-ANNE, AGE 13

"Around Canberra I have noticed there are less native trees than I feel like there should be. [...] I think more trees should be planted in parks and along the sides of the road."

NICHOLAS, AGE 10

"I hope for a world where society can co-exist with nature and human development doesn't have a detrimental impact upon the environment."

MATILDA, AGE 16



What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name Alois  
Your School TPS Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I hope that humans and the environment can co-exist together

Your First Name Trinity  
Your School Messia College Age 13

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

More Electric Cars

Your First Name Caetano  
Your School Giralang Primary School Age 9

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Move micro-food forests.  
Feeds Pass

Your First Name YUKI  
Your School Giralang PS Age 7

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Turning plan old apartments into a green tower of plants and a small garden on top with rails

# more plants on buildings

Save the Earth

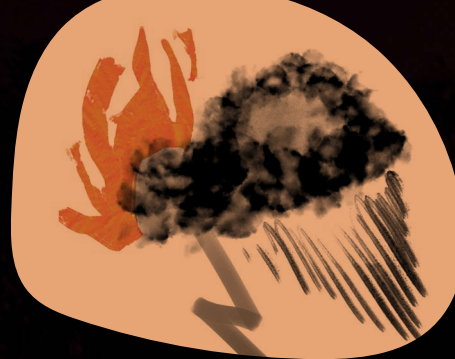
Your First Name Rue hana  
Your School Majura primary school Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

For people to stop destroying nature, trees and animal habitats for land developments.

Your First Name Zaira  
Your School N.A.P.s Age 11

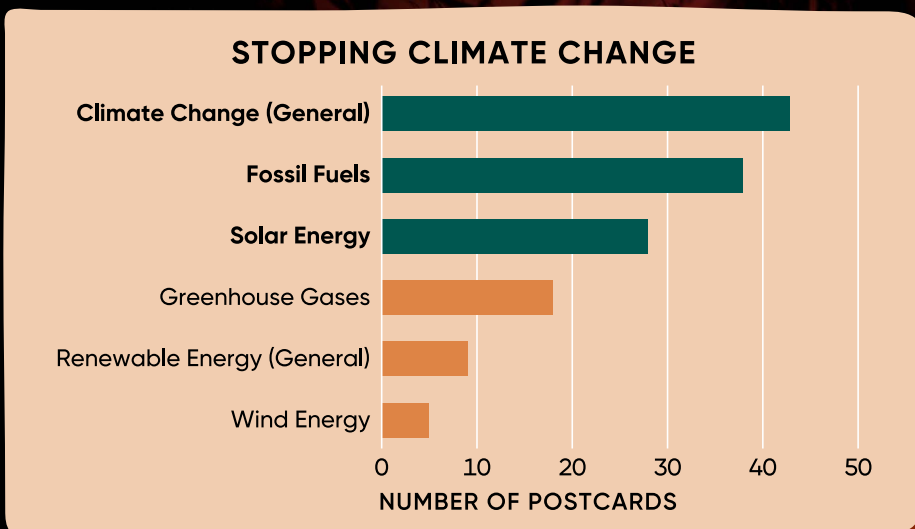
# Stopping climate change



**17%** OF POSTCARDS MENTIONED CLIMATE CHANGE & ENERGY

*Young people hope that communities across the world will work together to stop climate change so that everyone can have a future. Changing how we get our energy is one way we can do this.*

The graph below shows the most popular topics mentioned within the theme of 'stopping climate change.'



Young people want there to be greater awareness about climate change, and more urgent action to stop it before it is too late.

The postcards identified energy as an important issue that we need to address in order to stop climate change. Young people know that a key way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to switch from fossil fuels like coal and gas to renewable energy sources like solar and wind power.

Interestingly, the terms 'climate change' and 'global warming' were used nearly the same amount in the postcards. Global warming is just one aspect of climate change, which is a broader term that includes other climate effects too. Young people were more likely to mention rising sea levels than other climate impacts like extreme weather events becoming more common (for example, bushfires and floods).

Most of all, postcards in this category were a call to action. There was a sense of urgency to their pleas – as Tamsin wrote, *"I want to have a future."*

Red sky during the Black Summer bushfires. Credit: David Lee

**HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE HAD TO SAY ABOUT THEIR HOPES RELATING TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY:**

"I hope that everyone starts believing in climate change."

SOPHIE, AGE 11

"More action to fight climate change."

JAZARA, AGE 13

"That Australia will be net-zero by 2050. We need to change how we care for the environment. Global warming needs to be fixed. There's no planet B!"

EVELYN, AGE 12

"No more fossil fuel."

VIOLET, AGE 11

"Hello Dr Sophie, my wish for the environment is that global warming will stop."

AI, AGE 10

"Worried about climate change."

PAAVANI, AGE 12

"I'm worried that water levels will continue rising from global warming. I hope that we will be able to solve this problem by being sustainable."

THERESE, NO AGE

"Less coal mining, more solar power. More ACTION!!"

TARA AND JAZARA, AGES 12 & 13

"More solar panels to reduce global warming."

HUGO, AGE 8

"My hopes for the environment and the future of sustainability in Australia is for the collaboration of a finance and environmental team to develop a realistic and achievable plan for accessible clean energy and stricter policies on general environmental health."

MINH-THU, AGE 16

"I'm scared for the future of this earth."

ESTHER, AGE 11

"Climate action!"

HARPER, AGE 13

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Your First Name Aden  
Your School Talavera Park School Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Net Zero Emissions By 2030  
Plant More Trees And Plants  
Have the poles stay frozen  
Climate Change Reversed By 2050

Your First Name Matthew  
Your School C.P.S. Age 1

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Stable climate

Your First Name Oscar  
Your School Wirralang Age 8

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

I wish that in the future we will stop climate change.

Dear Dr Sophie

Your First Name tom  
Your School MPS Age 10

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

Hello Dr Sophie, my wish for the environment is that global warming will stop.

Your First Name AI  
Your School Mafura Age 10 years

What are your hopes for the environment?  
Write or draw your answer below

- For everyone to be more aware about climate change & fossil fuels
- For more people to own electric cars & solar panels

Your First Name Amisha  
Your School North Ainslie Primary School Age 11

# Recommendations

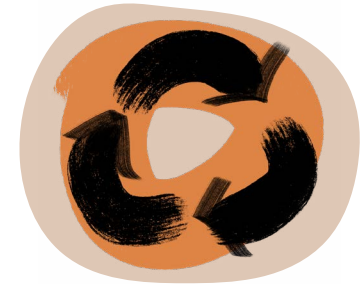
BASED ON THE POSTCARDS WE RECEIVED,  
HERE ARE FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE  
TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT THRIVE:



**PROTECT MORE HABITATS  
SO THAT NATIVE ANIMALS DON'T  
GO EXTINCT.**



**REDUCE POLLUTION IN OUR  
AIR AND WATERWAYS SO  
THAT EVERYONE CAN LIVE IN  
A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT.**



**MAKE IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO  
RECYCLE THEIR SOFT PLASTICS.**



**CREATE MORE GREEN SPACE  
IN OUR CITY WHERE PEOPLE  
AND ANIMALS CAN LIVE IN  
COOPERATION.**



**ENSURE THAT ALL OF OUR  
ENERGY IS RENEWABLE TO HELP  
STOP CLIMATE CHANGE.**

# Conclusion

*It is clear from this project that ACT's young people know what the big issues are when it comes to the environment.*

The five most popular postcard themes – plants and animals, pollution, waste, sustainable cities and climate change – closely match up with the topics Dr Sophie and her team write about every four years for the ACT State of the Environment Report.<sup>4</sup>



While young people are concerned about the future of the environment, they are also hopeful. What's more, they are bursting with ideas about things we can do to help our environment thrive.

There is great value in listening to the voices of young people. Kids often see the world through a very personal lens – wanting to preserve trees because they enjoy climbing them, or to protect birds because they like

listening to them sing. However, the postcards also show that young people see the big picture, and care about issues beyond their day-to-day lives and experiences.

Kids want to be heard and are grateful when adults ask them for their thoughts and opinions. Many postcards expressed this:

*"Hello leaders, thank you for giving us a voice in your [...] decisions."*

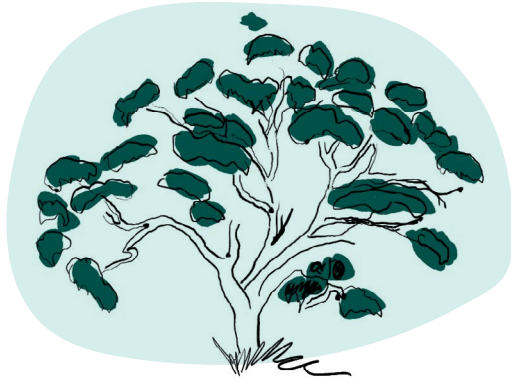
ELSA, AGE 10

*"Dear Dr Sophie, thank you for giving us a chance to write to you."*

SIERRA, AGE 10

Young people will inherit the world we leave them, and the decisions governments make now will have a big impact on what kind of world this will be. It is crucial that we act now to protect our planet so that young people's hopes for the environment can be realised.

<sup>4</sup> We wrote some special versions of our State of the Environment Report just for young people. You can read the report for primary school students here: [www.environmentforkids.com.au](http://www.environmentforkids.com.au) or for high school students here: [www.environmentforyouth.com.au](http://www.environmentforyouth.com.au)



# Thank you

OCSE would like to thank young people from the following schools for their participation in this project:

- ↻ Ainslie School
- ↻ Duffy Primary School
- ↻ Giralang Primary School
- ↻ Majura Primary School
- ↻ St Matthews Primary School
- ↻ Merici College
- ↻ Narrabundah College
- ↻ North Ainslie Primary School
- ↻ O'Connor Cooperative School
- ↻ Telopea Park School

What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



I think we need more trees, and more plants to support our animals, and our environment! I also think we need more paper bags and more things that can be easily recycled.



Your First Name Reenie  
Your School Majura primary Age 10



What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



Your First Name Noe  
Your School Telopea Park School Age 10



What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



Your First Name Abbey, Juliette  
Your School Telopea park school Age 10 1/2

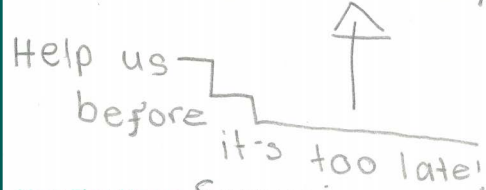


What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



I hope that young people have some clarity about the future.



Your First Name Samsaci  
Your School Merici College Age 12



What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



I hope for a world to live in  
Your First Name Carmel  
Your School Merici Age 13



What are your hopes for the environment?

Write or draw your answer below



"Leave the Earth a better place than what it was when you arrived"



Your First Name Aimal Bahiit  
Your School Merici college Age 13





OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND  
THE ENVIRONMENT