



Included
accepted
valued

Words can
hurt, so make
your words
kind.

Every-
one
Belongs



Save our
Outdoor
Pool We need
Both 😊

Respect the
Land we live on

We are in
it together

Feel Safer^u
on bus.
😊

Better
Access
to Theatre
(watch + be involved)



A Mountain of Voices: The Story

Content warning

A Mountain of Voices: The Story is a powerful collection of messages from young Tasmanians. Their words are addressed to adults, especially those who make decisions that affect them.

Some messages are about problems young people have experienced. These include struggles with health, mental health, safety, and wellbeing. Readers might find some content upsetting. The services listed below can be contacted for support.

Kids Helpline | Anyone under 25 can contact the Kids Helpline 24-7 on 1800 55 1800. They also have a webchat and online tips at www.kidshelpline.com.au.

A Tasmanian Lifeline | People of all ages can contact A Tasmanian Lifeline on 1800 98 44 34 for local support (8am – 8pm every day of the year).

Lifeline | For crisis support anyone can contact lifeline 24-7 on 13 11 14.

To learn about other support options, go to www.tellsomeone.tas.gov.au.

Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas) 2025. *A Mountain of Voices: The Story*.

© Crown in right of the State of Tasmania (Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania), 2025.

Any questions regarding this report or the work of Tasmania's Commissioner for Children and Young People more generally may be directed to the Commissioner by emailing childcomm@childcomm.tas.gov.au or by telephoning +61 3 6166 1366.

For more information, visit: www.childcomm.tas.gov.au.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People acknowledges and pays respect to all Palawa of Lutruwita as the original and ongoing custodians of this land and for the more than 40,000 years they have cared for their Country and their children.

Other acknowledgements

The Mountain was only possible because of the young people who took part. Thank you to every one of you who has helped with the project, from the initial planning through to writing and recording of messages. We acknowledge the value of every one of your thoughts, views and insights. This book is for you.

We thank the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Tasmanian Government for supporting the tour of the Mountain.

Thanks also to the Department for Education, Children and Young People, as well as the schools that welcomed the Mountain and supported students to participate in workshops and events.

Further, we extend our appreciation to Terrapin, the Tasmanian arts organisation, that was engaged to co-design and facilitate workshops and school events for the Mountain and produce the enduring artwork. You worked tirelessly to turn thoughts and ideas into art, making the tour possible.

Lastly, we wish to thank the decision-makers who showed support for the Mountain by attending school events. You helped young people to believe that their voice matters.



A VTY member (top) shares their Power Statement through The Mountain with a decision-maker guest (right).
Photo credit: Terrapin / Hannah Todd

Contents

Introduction	1
Who was involved?	3
The Mountain Base	5
How was the Mountain created?	5
The Mountain went to Schools	7
A Mountain of Voices events	8
Children and Young People's Rights	9
The Map	10
Special messages from each region	12
New Norfolk High School	13
Cosgrove High School	14
Port Dalrymple School	15
Ulverstone Secondary College	16
Messages shared at every school	18
Places to go and things to do	19
Hear us, respect us	20
Health and wellbeing	21
Living essentials	23
Opportunities for the future	25
Feeling safe and being safe	27
The view	29
The summit	31

Introduction

A Mountain of Voices (the Mountain) is an interactive public artwork. The Mountain installation travelled to 4 Tasmanian schools between March and May in 2025.

240 young people engaged with the Mountain artwork by sharing messages about what they wanted decision-makers to know and act on.

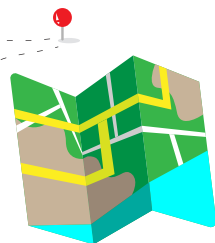
The story of the Mountain is like a trek, or journey, from the base of a mountain, all the way to its summit.

In this book, the story of this journey is set out in 5 sections.



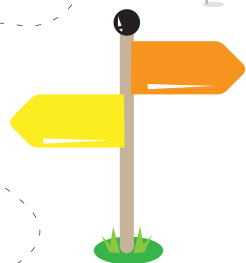
The Mountain Base: Every mountain trek starts at a base.

Here you will learn about how the Mountain artwork came to be and why the journey to the summit matters.



The Map: It's always a good idea to check a map before beginning a journey.

In this section you will find a map showing the places the Mountain visited.



The Trek: Along the trek, signposts point to important information young people shared about:

- How adults can make life better for children and young people in **their local communities**, and
- How adults can make life better for children and young people **across Tasmania**.



The View: As you climb further up a mountain, you start to see the bigger picture.

This section shows the vision young people shared through their messages. It reveals their hopes and dreams, and how they imagine a better Tasmania for themselves and others.

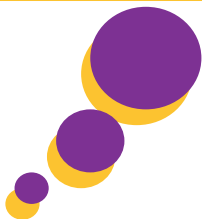


The Summit: The summit is where young people can see decision-makers listening and acting on their messages.

In this section, you will find ideas about how adults can take action to make sure young people's rights are upheld.

Practical idea bubbles

After each visit of the Mountain, the Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People returned to schools. Young people talked more about what they think needs to happen to make life better for them and others. They shared some practical ideas for change. You will read about some of their ideas in bubbles like this throughout the story.



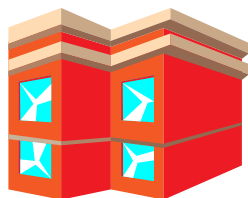
Who was involved?

As with every story, this one features special characters.



The Voices for Tasmanian Youth:

You can find out more about the Voices for Tasmanian Youth (VTY) at www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/vty.



The Office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Interim Commissioner, Issy:

You can find out more about the Commissioner's job at www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/young-people/meet-the-commissioner.



Terrapin:

A Tasmanian arts organisation. You can learn more about Terrapin at www.terrapin.org.au.



Young People:

The young people who participated in the Mountain installation and events at their schools:

- New Norfolk High School (60 young people)
- Cosgrove High School (44 young people)
- Port Dalrymple School (46 young people)
- Ulverstone Secondary College (90 young people).



Decision-makers:

The 27 adults who participated in the Mountain events. Young people invited adults they considered important to them and their school communities. These people included police, members of parliament, mayors, councillors, shopping centre managers, school principals, bus company managers and more!



The Listeners:

Everyone enjoying this story - hey, that's **you!**



The Mountain Base

How was the Mountain created?



In 2024, the Commissioner for Children and Young People brought together a group of 19 children and young people as a consultative council. This council was set up so that children and young people could have a voice in creating a safer Tasmania including by influencing the government's work to create a strategy or 'big plan' to protect children and young people from child sexual abuse.¹



The group named themselves the Voices for Tasmanian Youth (VTY).



The VTY wanted to create an artwork that could help young people to share important messages with adult decision-makers, and for adult decision-makers to listen, and take action.

1. Tasmanian Government Department of Premier and Cabinet - Keeping Children Safe, 'Change for Children' (website <www.keepingchildrensafe.tas.gov.au/change-for-children-strategy>)



The team at Terrapin joined in, and through a series of creative workshops, helped make the VTY's ideas come to life... *A Mountain of Voices* was created!



The Mountain was revealed during a special event on 12 July 2024 in Launceston. You can read more about the event here: www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/vty.



The VTY wanted the Mountain to travel around Tasmania, so more children and young people could share their important messages.



The Mountain went to Schools

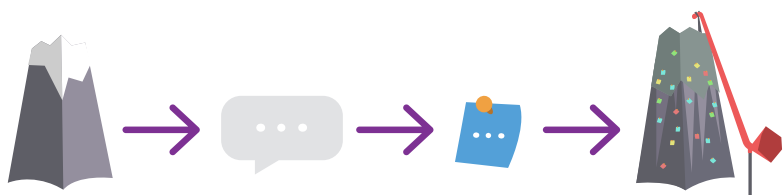
With help from Terrapin and the Tasmanian Government, the Mountain travelled to 4 schools in different parts of Tasmania.

A total of 240 young people took part in the Mountain artwork. They were from grades 8, 9 and 10.

During workshops, young people talked about and answered questions, like:

- How does it feel when adults *don't* listen to you?
- How does it feel when adults *do* listen to you?
- What would you want to say *if adults were listening*?

After talking together, each young person thought about the things they wanted adult decision-makers to know. They created short messages to help adults understand what it's like growing up in their community.



Young people wrote their messages on paper squares and nailed them to the Mountain.

Many young people also recorded themselves reading their message or the message of a friend, so their voices could be a part of an 'enduring artwork' (an artwork made to last a really long time). The enduring artwork is called *On the Record*. See page 33.



A VTY member nails their paper square to the Mountain.
Photo credit: Terrapin / Hannah Todd

A Mountain of Voices events

Young people worked with Terrapin to make a list of people in their community who were responsible for making important decisions that affected their lives. These decision-makers were invited to a special event and included police officers, politicians, mayors, council members, shopping centre managers, school principals, bus company managers and other people from a range of services in each school community.

At each event, young people shared their messages with decision-makers in 2 ways:

1. Their written messages were displayed on the Mountain
2. Some young people spoke their messages through a big megaphone at the top of the Mountain, so that decision-makers at the bottom of the Mountain could hear.

Decision-makers read the messages, listened and spoke with young people about their messages. Importantly, some decision-makers talked about what they could do about the things they heard from the young people.



Children and Young People's Rights

The Mountain is all about children and young people's right to have a say, be listened to, and for adults to take their views and ideas seriously.

Rights are special protections that help everyone live a happy and healthy life.

All children and young people have 54 rights of their own.

You can read these rights in an agreement called the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*³, often called 'the Convention'. Each right in the Convention is called an 'Article'.

Australia and many, many other countries have agreed to the Convention.

The Mountain is all about children's rights, especially Articles 12 and 13:



Article 12 of the Convention says that children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.



Article 13 of the Convention says that children have the right to share freely with others what they learn, think and feel, by talking, drawing, writing or in any other way unless it harms other people.

2. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 'Convention on the Rights of the Child - Children's version' (website <www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text-childrens-version>)

Schools and other organisations in Tasmania that work with children and young people must also follow the Child and Youth Safe Standards which can be found at www.oir.tas.gov.au/about/child-and-youth-safe-standards.

Standard 2 of the Child and Youth Safe Standards, says:

*"Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously."*⁴

The Mountain workshops and events helped young people use their rights to share their ideas and opinions and have their voices heard by decision-makers.

3. Tasmanian Government Office of the Independent Regulator, Child and Youth Safe Standards (website <www.oir.tas.gov.au/about/child-and-youth-safe-standards>)



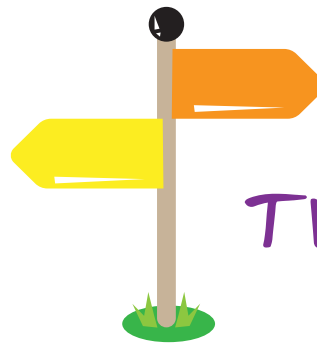


The Map

Here are all the places the Mountain visited!

This fun journey around Tasmania ended with a special celebration event at Government House, where children and young people shared their messages with Her Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania, and other decision-makers.





The Trek

Now that you've read about how the Mountain came to be and why it matters, it's time to look at the messages young people shared.

At every school the Mountain visited, young people shared important messages.

On the following pages, some of the messages from each school are shown.

Altogether, 240 young people shared 565 messages!

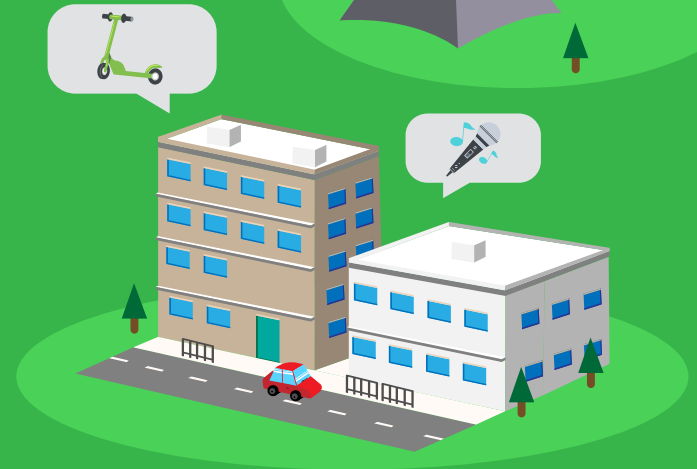
All of their messages connect to their rights, as children and young people, to share their views and ideas, be listened to, and taken seriously (their Article 12 and Article 13 rights).

At some schools, other rights were reflected in the messages that were shared and these are also highlighted on the following pages.



Special messages from each region

Some of the messages young people shared were
unique to the places they live.



New Norfolk High School

At New Norfolk, 141 messages were shared by 60 young people.

One big signpost from New Norfolk High pointed to the young people's wishes to be heard and respected. More than a quarter of their messages (36 in total) were about this.

Other signposts at New Norfolk High were about wearing hoodies at school, better access to fast-food restaurants, and the need for better roads.

Rights highlights:



Article 2 of the Convention says that all children are equal, have the same rights, and should be treated fairly.



Article 31 of the Convention says that children have the right to have fun, rest and play, and to join in age appropriate cultural and artistic activities.

Included
accepted
valued

Younger People
need Safe
Roads too

KFC!

LET
US WEAR
HOODIES
!!

Insight: At the New Norfolk event, a young person was asked by an adult why fast-food outlets are important to them. They explained it was about having somewhere comfortable and safe to hang out with friends, charge their phones, and get some tasty, affordable food.

Words can hurt, so make your words kind.

We are in it together

Everyone Belongs

Let's Live in Harmony!

Insight: Young people at Cosgrove shared a lot of messages that showed how much they care about diversity, and their desire for everyone to be treated fairly and to belong.

Cosgrove High School

At Cosgrove, a total of 103 messages were written by 44 young people.

Cosgrove High also had a big signpost that pointed to the importance of being heard and respected - more than a third of their messages (39 in total) were about this. Cosgrove students also shared 16 inspiring messages, like “we are in it together” and “everyone belongs”.

At Cosgrove, young people’s messages focused on the need to be heard, valued, and for the whole community to show respect for each other.

Rights highlights:



Article 2 of the Convention says that all children are equal, have the same rights, and should be treated fairly.



Article 23 of the Convention says that every child with a disability should have respect, care, and support.



Article 29 of the Convention says children’s education should help them to thrive, understand their own rights, and respect other people’s rights, cultures and differences.

Port Dalrymple School

At Port Dalrymple School in George Town, 185 messages were shared by 46 young people.

These signposts point to young people's messages about wanting more places to go and things to do (41 messages) and better access to sports and hobbies (15 messages).

Some young people also advocated to keep the town pool. The local council has shared plans for a new indoor aquatic health and wellbeing centre to replace the current outdoor pool. Young people pointed to a need for both.

Young people also highlighted the need for better access to services, like transport, a vet, and shops for living essentials.

Rights highlights:



Article 27 of the Convention says that children have a right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way.



Article 31 of the Convention says that children have the right to have fun, rest and play, and to join in age appropriate cultural and artistic activities.

Save our
Outdoor
Pool We need
Both 😊

We have to
Travel so
far. Just for
things we
need.

Kmart
more access to
clothing, School
Supplies and
other necessities

Vet to save
our pets

Insight: George Town's only veterinary clinic closed in 2021. Young people told us that since then, residents have needed to travel to Launceston for their pet's health needs. Many young people said it's important to them to have access to a vet in George Town for their pets.

Better
Access
to Theatre
(Watch + be involved)

Help
Lower
Housing
Prices

Use the
Sound
Shell
more

Feel Safer
on bus.
😊

Insight: Of all the schools the Mountain visited, young people at Ulverstone shared the largest number of messages about the need for 'living essentials' (29 messages).

Ulverstone Secondary College

At Ulverstone Secondary College, 136 messages were shared by 90 young people.

These signposts point to the need for more places to go and things to do (35 messages), and sports and hobbies (13 messages). Part of this included a message about feeling safer on buses. Young people in Ulverstone also want more opportunities to attend and join in theatre productions. They suggested the Ulverstone Sound Shell could be used more often.

Critically, young people at Ulverstone also highlighted the need for better access to the essential things they need to live - like a safe home, food, money and transport.

Rights highlights:



Article 19 of the Convention says that children have a right to being protected from being hurt or badly treated.



Article 27 of the Convention says that children have a right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way.



Article 31 of the Convention says that children have the right to have fun, rest and play, and to join in age appropriate cultural and artistic activities.



A VTY member writes their message on a paper square.
Photo credit: Terrapin / Hannah Todd

Messages shared at every school

Some of the messages young people shared were heard at every school the Mountain visited.

Lots of these messages were about the 6 biggest themes.

Each theme highlights messages that young people shared many times, and their hopes for change.



Places to go and things to do

Young people at all the schools the Mountain visited expressed the need for more events, activities, and places to go in their communities. This includes more places to hang out with friends, better shops, and more places to grab an affordable meal. They also asked for improved access to sports and hobbies - like sports grounds, places to skate, and places to play games like Dungeons and Dragons. Together, these messages made up over a quarter of all messages shared across the 4 schools (141 messages in total).

Rights highlights:



Article 15 of the Convention says that children can start or join groups and socialise with others.



Article 31 of the Convention says that children have the right to have fun, rest and play, and to join in age appropriate cultural and artistic activities.

Practical idea: Make transport free or cheaper for young people

Young people said bus trips between Ulverstone and Hobart are long and include lots of stops. They said that more buses travelling directly between Ulverstone and Hobart would make it easier to go to Hobart to watch sport, see bands, go shopping, and take part in events.





Hear us, respect us

Young people at each school the Mountain visited shared messages about listening to the voices of children and young people, and treating children and young people with fairness, kindness, and respect. Young people shared 105 messages on this topic.

Together, these messages urge everyone to stop and think about how young people are treated by adults, and by one another.

Young people want their communities to know they are all equal - no matter who they are and where they come from. The examples on this page demonstrate how strong and important their messages are.

Rights highlights:



Article 2 of the Convention says that all children are equal, have the same rights, and should be treated fairly.



Article 19 of the Convention says that children have a right to being protected from being hurt or badly treated.



Article 29 of the Convention says children's education should help them to thrive, understand their own rights, and respect other people's rights, cultures and differences.

Health and wellbeing

Young people at every school the Mountain visited shared messages about what helps children and young people feel healthy and happy. Altogether, students from the 4 schools shared 66 messages about this topic.

Many young people shared messages saying they, or their friends, are dealing with physical and mental health challenges.

Others shared messages about how hard it can be to see a doctor or get the right medicine, especially in smaller towns.

Their messages make it clear that many young people aren't getting the supports they need.

Practical idea: Better medical services after hours

A young person in George Town shared that they had to travel to Launceston and wait 5 hours for medical help because there was none available closer when support was needed.

More access to medications that typically require you to drive out of town or order it online.

Our mental health MATTERS!!!

Better Health care Physically and mentally.

More support for children w/ disabilities.

Mental health resources should be cheaper and easier to access.

WE STRUGGLE
WITH MENTAL
HEALTH TOO!

More doctors
that are easy
to access

More
Mental health
help availability

we need
more
sites!

Rights highlights:



Article 6 of the Convention says every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.



Article 23 of the Convention says that every child with a disability should have respect, care, and support.



Article 24 of the Convention says children and young people have the right to healthcare (this includes mental health), healthy food, clean water, and a clean environment. It is up to adult decision-makers to make sure this happens.



Article 39 of the Convention says that children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, or treated badly.

Practical idea: More supports, research, and prevention are needed

These things can help young people manage their mental health, especially in rural areas. Young people made it clear that there are too many young people are having a really hard time.

Living essentials

Many messages from young people pointed to the basic needs for everyday living - like a safe place to live, enough food, money to get by, and ways to get around. There were 66 messages about these living essentials.

Housing is also a big priority for young people. 25 messages were about the need for an affordable place to live, or to better help people who don't have safe homes.

Rights highlight:



Article 27 of the Convention says that children have a right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way.





A young participant adds their Power Statement to the Mountain during a school workshop.

Opportunities for the future

Practical idea: Help to get jobs

Help young people with their resumes and finding ways to get into the workforce. One idea was to create an online magazine that lists jobs available for young people.

Young people shared messages about their dreams and goals for now, and for later. 55 messages (about 1 in 10) were about jobs, study, and young people having a say in issues that affect them.

These messages are reminders that young people are the adults of tomorrow, and they want to be part of decisions that affect their lives, both now and in the future.

Young people want to talk about job opportunities, career pathways, study options, and to share their views on politics.

Practical idea

Make creative jobs available for children.

This is
MY
FUTURE

Free
TAKE

More college
options
Not everyone
can get into
one college
and travelling
can be difficult

Let us have
more control
over our
futures.

We need to
Learn how
to make money
at school

Adolescents
should voice
their opinions
on politics too

More
Professionals
& teaching
adolescents
potential
pathways

we need
to know
how and
were to get
a job at

What is the
future
without
US?

Practical idea: More information

Share straight forward information about jobs and what specific roles require. Make sure workplace processes are clear.

Rights highlights:



Article 27 of the Convention says that children have a right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way.



Article 28 of the Convention says children have the right to an education. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest possible level.



Article 29 of the Convention says children's education should help them to thrive, understand their own rights, and respect other people's rights, cultures and differences.

Feeling safe and being safe

Young people shared messages about the importance of feeling safe and being safe. There were 37 messages were about this.

Young people made it clear that they want to see an end to child abuse, bullying, and violence. As one young person wrote, we need to aim for “safety in EVERY environment for EVERY person.” This means feeling welcome and safe at school, at home, at work, and in public places. Some young people also said that better security and more adult supervision in places like bus stops would help them feel safer.

Practical idea: Safe bathrooms

School bathrooms need to feel safe and be safe for young people of all genders and abilities. When bathrooms feel unsafe, some students avoid them by not drinking water at school. Bathrooms need working locks on doors, and stalls that are private. Some young people indicated that vaping in school bathrooms is a problem too. The best solution is to build self-contained toilet rooms.

Protect Young
VULNERABLE
people.

Safety in EVERY
environment for
EVERY person.

More
Security &
Police presence
in town

feel safe
at home

Social
SAFETY!!!
it matters too.

No More
bullying or
Violence

Unban phones
in schools
They're for our
safety

Bullying is
never OKAY!

Prevent
Violence
Against
us!

Rights highlights:



Article 6 of the Convention says every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.



Article 16 of the Convention explains that children and young people have a right to privacy.



Article 19 of the Convention says that children have a right to being protected from being hurt or badly treated.



Article 34 of the Convention says the government should protect children from sexual exploitation (being taken advantage of) and sexual abuse.



Article 39 of the Convention says that children have the right to get help if they have been hurt, neglected, or treated badly.



The view

The view is the 'big picture' or collective vision young people shared through their messages.

The view is the hopes and dreams young people have for their school, communities, and for Tasmania.

Through the Mountain, 240 young people around Tasmania spoke up about what they wanted adults to know and act on.

Young people have a clear vision for Tasmania!

Young people's vision is of a Tasmania where:



Young people can be social and explore their interests. They can take part in activities they enjoy in their local communities and beyond. This not only supports their health and wellbeing but also helps them to develop life skills and identity.



Everyone treats children and young people with fairness and respect. Children and young people are free to share their thoughts, views and opinions. When they do, they are taken seriously and acted on.



Everyone, from every background, can access free or affordable healthcare to support their physical and mental health. When young people need extra support, adults recognise the signs. And young people feel safe enough to speak up.



Everyone has a safe place to live and sleep, nutritious food, and warm clothing. Public transport, and jobs or financial support help young people to access what they need.



Adults involve young people in decisions that affect them, now and in the future. Adults also give young people learning and work opportunities that match their goals and strengths.



Children and young people feel safe and are safe everywhere. This includes physical and emotional safety in their homes, schools, communities and online environments.

Insight: This project is an amazing example of what can happen when the views and ideas of children and young people are listened to and acted on. The VTY had a vision, and adults worked with them to help make it happen. As a result, this has enabled many more young people to learn about their rights and share their own views and ideas. That's great!



The summit

The summit is at the very top of the Mountain.

It's where Article 12 and 13 of the Convention, and Standard 2 of the Child and Youth Safe Standards come to life.

It's where young people can freely share their thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Here, adults listen, take them seriously, and do what they can to help.

Here are some final thoughts from the summit:

To adults



- What will do you in response to what you have read?
- What do you understand the rights of children and young people as set out in the Convention? (To learn more, go to www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention.)
- How can you support children and young people's rights to share their views and ideas, and be taken seriously?



To children and young people

- It's your right to speak up for yourself or others, and to be heard.
- You can learn more about your rights at www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/young-people/your-rights.

To everyone

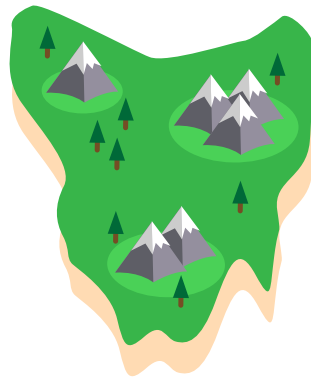
To hear about more opportunities for Tasmanian children and young people under 18 to share their voices, sign up for Your Engagement Place (YEP!).

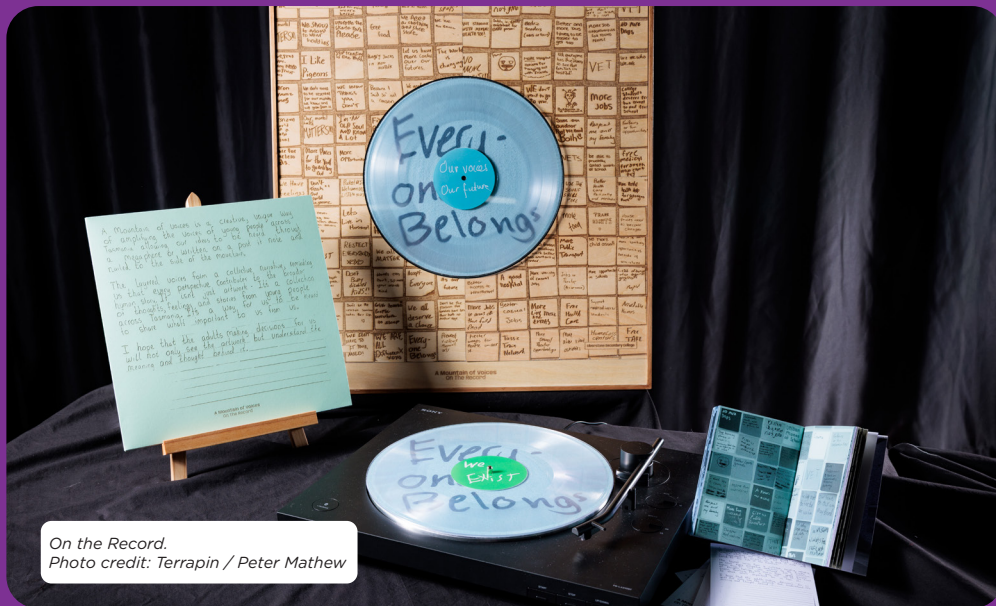
YEP! will keep you up to date about opportunities for children and young people to share their views and ideas. Opportunities include surveys, creative competitions, advisory groups, award nominations, and more. Children and young people and adults can subscribe for YEP! updates at wwwchildcomm.tas.gov.au/young-people/yep.

Thank you for coming on this journey!

People like you can help to make a positive difference for children and young people in Tasmania.

To see all the messages and hear the voices of young people who participated in A Mountain of Voices, visit www.childcomm.tas.gov.au/VTY.





On the Record

Terrapin has worked to make a new artwork titled On the Record, which you can learn about, and listen to, at ccyp.me/record.

On the Record makes the messages shared by young people during the Mountain tour accessible to everyone. *On the Record* will also be preserved in Tasmania's State Archives. You can learn about the Archives of Tasmania at www.libraries.tas.gov.au/about-us/#statelibrary.

Tell us what you think about this book

If you are a child or young person, we want to hear what you think about this book.

We will use what you tell us to keep improving our books and publications into the future.

Have your say by completing a short survey at ccyp.me/TheStory.



*The Mountain at Government House.
Photo credit: Terrapin / Peter Mathew*



Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas)

1/119 Macquarie Street Hobart TAS 7000

GPO Box 708 Hobart TAS 7001

(03) 6166 1366

www.childcomm.tas.gov.au