

Implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

Case Study: Valuing Children Initiative



The Valuing Children Initiative is a project of Centrecare and was established in 2016. The Valuing Children Initiative is dedicated to changing societal attitudes so that all children and young people are valued and their needs are the first priority for every Australian. We stand up for children's rights, voices and their place in decision-making as standard practice in community, government, business and the corporate sector.

We do this through advocacy, research, workshops and training, campaigning and partnerships to effect meaningful change. We collaborate with stakeholders, policymakers, and like-minded organisations to create a collective positive impact on child well-being.

This project was part of our core child voice work at the Valuing Children Initiative. We offer facilitated workshops and opportunities for children and young people to articulate their views, opinions and experiences and ensure adults consider those views when making decisions that affect children.

Centrecare is a well-established not-for-profit organisation assisting individuals/families in the community across 11 locations in Metropolitan Perth, Kalgoorlie, Leonora, Esperance and Bunbury.

Centrecare is committed to the 10 National Principles for Child Safe Organisations in all of its service provision, and in all levels of the organisation.

The Valuing Children Initiative seeks to educate the wider community about the importance of valuing children, including, but not limited to, education about the National Principles.

Project in brief – Perth Airport Project

As part of our mission to change adults' attitudes towards children, we actively look for spaces where children are present, but are not designed for them.

Perth Airport is one such place, where children spend many hours, but have a limited ability to influence their experience. With the announcement of the new terminal, we are delighted that Perth Airport embraced this opportunity to partner with the Valuing Children Initiative to become leaders in honouring the rights of children and genuinely hearing their voices.

An Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate in child advisory workshops was sent out via Perth Airport social media, with over 1,300 EOIs being submitted. From this, 21 children and young people ranging in ages from 9 months to 17 years and their parents attended three workshops in February 2025 in age groups 0-5, 6-11 and 12-17 years old.

The groups included Aboriginal children and families, children and families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds, children with physical disabilities and children who are neurodivergent. All families resided in the Perth metropolitan area or Peel region.

We ran a follow up survey with questions based on ideas gathered at the workshops, which had 1005 responses.

The project outcome is strongly aligned to:

- National Principle 2 - Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

How we did it

We use the Child Rights Model of Participation, developed by Professor Laura Lundy from Queens University in Belfast, widely known as the Lundy model. It gives decision makers a clear framework to give children a voice, it has four elements, in this order:

SPACE – children and young people must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to express their views.

- Information was sent to families beforehand so children knew what to expect.
- We asked about access requirements beforehand so we could plan accordingly.
- We had floor and table seating options in the workshops.
- Fidget toys were available.
- Dual consent forms with the children completing the children's consent form first, after thorough explanation with us, with the support of their parents.
- Parents participated so the children had a trusted caregiver with them.
- We had a plan, but were OK with not sticking to it.
- Breaks for food/drink and active play was incorporated.



VOICE – children and young people must be supported to give their views

- We instructed parents that their role was to support their child's voice to be heard.
- We supplied written and drawing options for those not comfortable to speak in a group.
- We offered options to work individually or in small groups.
- We had a team of facilitators that worked together, so if we noticed some people weren't participating, we spoke with them.
- We reminded children and young people often they could stop participating at any time.
- Children and young people were given thank you bags, certificates and vouchers.
- Children and young people were identified by everyone as the experts in the room with hi vis vests, saying, 'I'm a Child Expert. Ask Me!'.

AUDIENCE – their views must be listened to

- Children lead the conversation, and we followed up with open, curious questions (closed questions only if we needed to clarify).
- When adults offered ideas, we asked the children what they thought.
- We physically positioned children in the inner layer rather than outer when we were doing circle work.
- We showed a video of the airport redevelopment project beforehand, so they had the whole concept in mind first.
- We had airport staff with us as well.
- The follow up survey open to all was based on feedback from the workshops
- We produced a professional report detailing feedback to the airport, as well as all the raw data.
- We have asked the airport to collect data and let us know who has read the report and for what purpose.

INFLUENCE – the views must be acted upon as appropriate

- In the development phase of the project, we kept asking how we would demonstrate influence for the children.
- We asked "will the children have influence over that?"
- One example was the airport suggested the children give feedback on the check in computers, however, the airlines own those (not the airport) and we couldn't track whether or not the feedback would have influence, so we didn't ask it.
- The new terminal isn't opening until 2031, when these children will be at a different stage of development. We hope they will see their ideas in use then, but we were open and transparent with them about the timeline.

The journey

The process was person centred and flexible, it involved communication with caregivers before the workshops to discuss any specific needs. Children and families were asked if they identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on the expression of interest. Workshops began with an acknowledgement of country, they allowed time for rapport building conversation, they utilised circle work, and facilitators skilfully asked open ended, curious questions, allowing for a casual flow of conversation.

This project was designed by adults with children front of mind. Every consideration was taken to prioritise children and young people in the consent forms, the workshops, the walk-through activities, the food provided, how the information would be collected and how we would thank and provide information back to everyone. Throughout the workshops, children were given space to speak their minds and at the end verbally through writing and drawing. Parents were contacted after the workshops and invited to provide written feedback, was which overwhelmingly positive.

Outcomes

From across both the survey and the workshops, clear themes emerged:

- Play – more opportunities for different types of play and entertainment at every step of the journey;
- Efficiency – more family priority areas and more clarity about processes and accessibility;
- Food – more child-friendly, allergy friendly and affordable food options; and
- Comfort and practicality - spaces and processes designed with families in mind and opportunities for low sensory experiences.

Sharing the learning

More information is available on the [Valuing Children Initiative website](#) and the team are available to speak about our learnings.

A more detailed report was given to the Perth Airport project delivery team and Lead Design Consultant, who will consider the children's ideas and views and the needs of families with data instead of assumptions to shape the spaces accordingly.

Next steps

A children's version of the report will be sent to the children and young people and the airport will update us, and the children, on how their feedback was included in the current airport and the new design.

Last updated: 17 October 2025

