

Sexism Experiences of SA School Students

By David Knuckey

SA's Commissioner for Children and Young People has called for changes in our schools, based on a new report into stereotypes and sexism experienced by the state's school children.

The report was drawn from consultation with the state's public and private school students.

The Consultation

Participants: 365

Sessions: 18

Gender Breakdown: 161 male, 175 female, 24 gender-diverse young people

Age: 11 to 19 year-olds

Location: Metropolitan Adelaide

Session information:

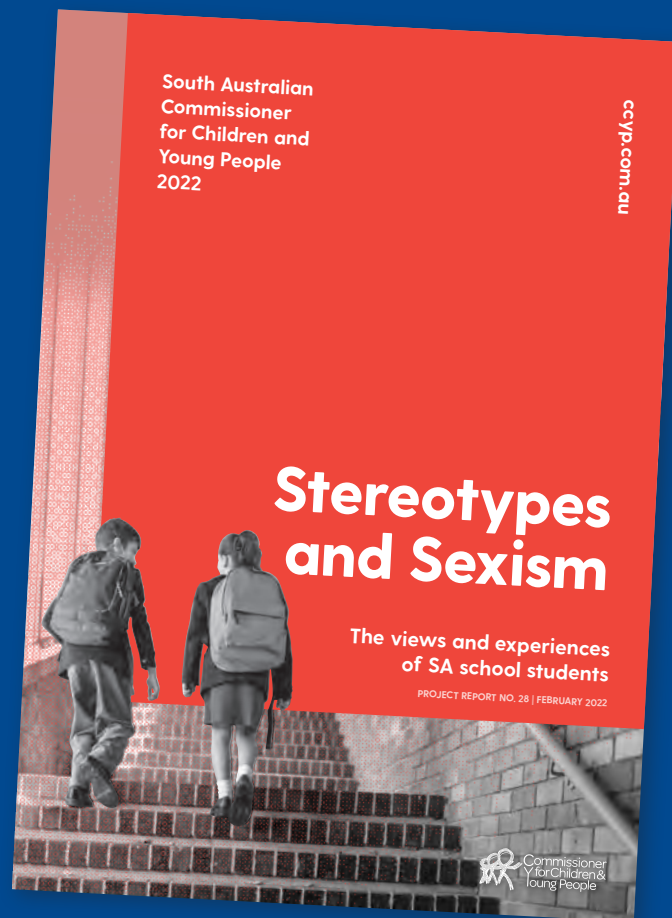
- Schools: 14
- Non-Government Organisations: 4
- Same Sex Female: 8 sessions
- Same Sex Male: 5 sessions
- Mixed: 5 sessions

Key Messages From Students

1. Sexism, gendered norms, and stereotyping impacts on the wellbeing, participation, and experience of schooling for all children and young people.
2. Identity and gender underpin significant peer to peer bullying in high school.
3. Sexism is considered a normal part of school culture and is not generally reported due to a belief that nothing can or will be done about it.
4. School based anti-sexism strategies that involve student input and active participation are rare.
5. Sexist language and gender stereotypes in the classroom and school grounds are not appropriately addressed.

Commissioner's Recommendations

1. All South Australian schools review existing relationship and sexual health, education and bullying materials to ensure they specifically address sexism, sexual harassment and gender-based bully.



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2. Pre-service and practising teachers are supported through access to ongoing training in relation to the prevention of sexism, sexual harassment and stereotyping in the classroom.
3. All schools review existing procedures for reporting and resolving incidents of sexism and gender based bullying and sexual harassment against the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

According to the 2020 per capita report on Gender Equality in Australia, the earlier a child can identify gender differences, the more likely they are to adhere to gender stereotypes. This in turn correlates to a higher probability of perpetration, an experience of violence. ■

Source: *Stereotypes and Sexism: The views and experiences of SA school students. Project Report No. 28 | February 2022*