

THE VOICES OF MALLEE CHILDREN

DEEP DIVES



HANDS UP MALLEE

WHAT IS THE VOICES OF CHILDREN PROJECT?

In 2019, Hands Up Mallee and the Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) Early Years Planning Team, with the help of Early Years Educators and friends, set out to ask children aged 3-8, who live in the Northern Mallee, what they did and didn't like, and what they wanted for their future.

The project aimed to hear from at least 375 children aged 3-8 Years, who live in the Mildura LGA. The project reached over 450 children, with 375 giving us their consent to use their thoughts and creative works to help shape our community into a better place for everyone.

The work has been used to create these Deep Dives, Listening - A parent's guide to the voices of children, The Voices of Mallee Children - a storybook based on what the children have told us, to inform systems mapping for Best Start to Life, and will inform the MRCC Municipal Early Years Plan, and be shared back to children and the broader community.



WHAT ARE DEEP DIVES?

Deep Dives, (for the purpose of gathering community knowledge, preferences and aspirations) are the result of the collation and theming of the data gathered. Theming groups the responses (in this case of local children aged 3-8 years) into like or thematic areas to assist in identifying patterns in what children do or don't like to do, where they do or don't like to go and where they would like to go in the future, and their aspirations for the future.

WHO ARE THE DEEP DIVES FOR?

This book has been created for community, education centres, businesses, services and government, to better understand what the children in our community want now and in the future. It has also been created to ensure we fulfil our obligation to take into account what local children have said when making decisions that affect them.

HOW DO I USE THE DEEP DIVES?

The Deep Dives are intended for you to refer to in order to better understand the needs and aspirations of local children and to then apply this knowledge when making decisions that affect them. This is our obligation as adults under article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child.

You can also use the Deep Dives and other Voices of Children publications as guides for incorporating children's voices in day to day decision making and helping foster their agency within our community.

WHAT I LIKE TO DO

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

"I LOVE DANCING, IT MAKES ME SO HAPPY"

Children love the challenges of climbing high, jumping off things, sliding, swinging, splashing water, playing with mud and swimming. They like playing hide and seek or hunting bears in the bushes. They also like to become skilled in a sport and like to see people winning, some children like watching the scoreboard.

CREATIVITY

They like to develop their creativity and problem solving through imaginative play. They like to make rainbow paintings and use the building blocks at Caterpillars, colour, make music, play with their toys and watch cartoons.

EXPERIENCES AND ACTIVITIES

"I LIKE TO SEE BIRDS, I LIKE WATCHING THE BIRDS FLY"

Popular activities include:

Fishing

Walking the dog

Jumping in puddles

Making muddy pies

Feeding the ducks

Helping poppy round up the sheep

"I WENT CAMPING AND SLEPT IN A REAL TENT"

They like eating treats and especially cooking a sausage over the fire

They like to see friends and play together all day

Playing Pokémon or Ninjas

LEARNING FROM OLDER CHILDREN

"I LIKE MY SISTER HELPING ME TO DO MAKE-UP"

Children like to learn from big kids about how to do tricks, spin around on rollerskates, dancing, doing front and back flips.

PLACES

Many children find jumping castles and Inflatable World fun. They like having a turn of mini-golf at Putt Putt, Laserforce, video and arcade games and playing in the maze.

FAMILY

"I LIKE TO RIDE MY BIKE FAST DOWN THE STREET WITH MUM"

Children love family time, when dad tells stories about the bush or lets them help with the farm machinery. They love visiting their grandparents and relatives.

WHERE I LIKE TO GO

- 21 - Sport
- 109 - Active Play
- 1 - Constructive Play
- 9 - Imaginative Play
- 35 - Entertainment & Events
- 58 - Natural Environment
- 26 - Built Environment
- 19 - Agricultural Environment
- 63 - Shopping
- 25 - Eateries
- 6 - Healthy Food
- 18 - Treats
- 14 - Education & Libraries
- 4 - Health Services
- 12 - Home Inside
- 7 - Home Outside
- 7 - Travel
- 25 - Parent / Carer
- 14 - Siblings
- 11 - Relatives
- 10 - Friends
- 10 - Pets



WHERE I LIKE TO GO

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

"SLIDING ON THE SLIDE IS FUN, GOING ON THE CLIMBER EQUIPMENT, SWINGING ON THE SWING, HAVING ROOM TO GO CRAZY, LOTS OF GRASS AND HILLS TO ROLL ON"

Children love active play.

Their favourite places to go to for active play include Jaycee Park, the mall to play table tennis, skate park, swimming pool, the water play park, Wave Pool, the sandpit and digging, swings, climbing trees, Woodsie's Maze, the Worker's playground, and riding around on motorbikes.

Their favourite sporting activities include football, basketball, soccer, netball, gymnastics and dance classes.

EXPERIENCES, ACTIVITIES AND PLACES

"THE EASTER EGG HUNT AT THE RIVER WHERE MY MUM TOOK ME... YOU HAD TO FIND THEM AND SHARE THEM WITH PEOPLE WHO MISSED OUT"

They also like amusements and events. The following activities and places are popular:

Rollerskating, Jumping castle, Ten Pin Bowling, Caterpillars, Inflatable World, Putt Putt, Aqua-coaster, Paddle Steamer, Laserforce, Cinema, Ice-skating, Monster Truck show, Easter Egg Hunt, Mildura Show, Hot Air Balloons, Speedway. They like trains and buses and walking up the highway to see trucks. Visiting the chook, strawberry and blueberry farms are popular and so is riding a tractor. They also like to go to school and libraries

Children like visiting a range of eateries that include:

48 Flavours, KFC, McDonald's, Mildura Bistro, Shippy's to have cold chocolate drinks, the lolly shop, pizza shop, the pub at Murrayville, Red Rooster and picnics.

Some children like to go shopping (but others don't). Favourite shops include:

Target, supermarkets, Smiggle, Woodsie's, EB Games, JB Hi-fi, Bunnings, Kmart, Post Office, hair dressers, toy shops, remote control car shop, and the Farmer's Market.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

"I LOVE THE RIVER BECAUSE OF THE FISH, BUT THE RUBBISH IS DISGUSTING... MORE BINS SO PEOPLE DON'T POLLUTE THE RIVER"

The environment matters to children.

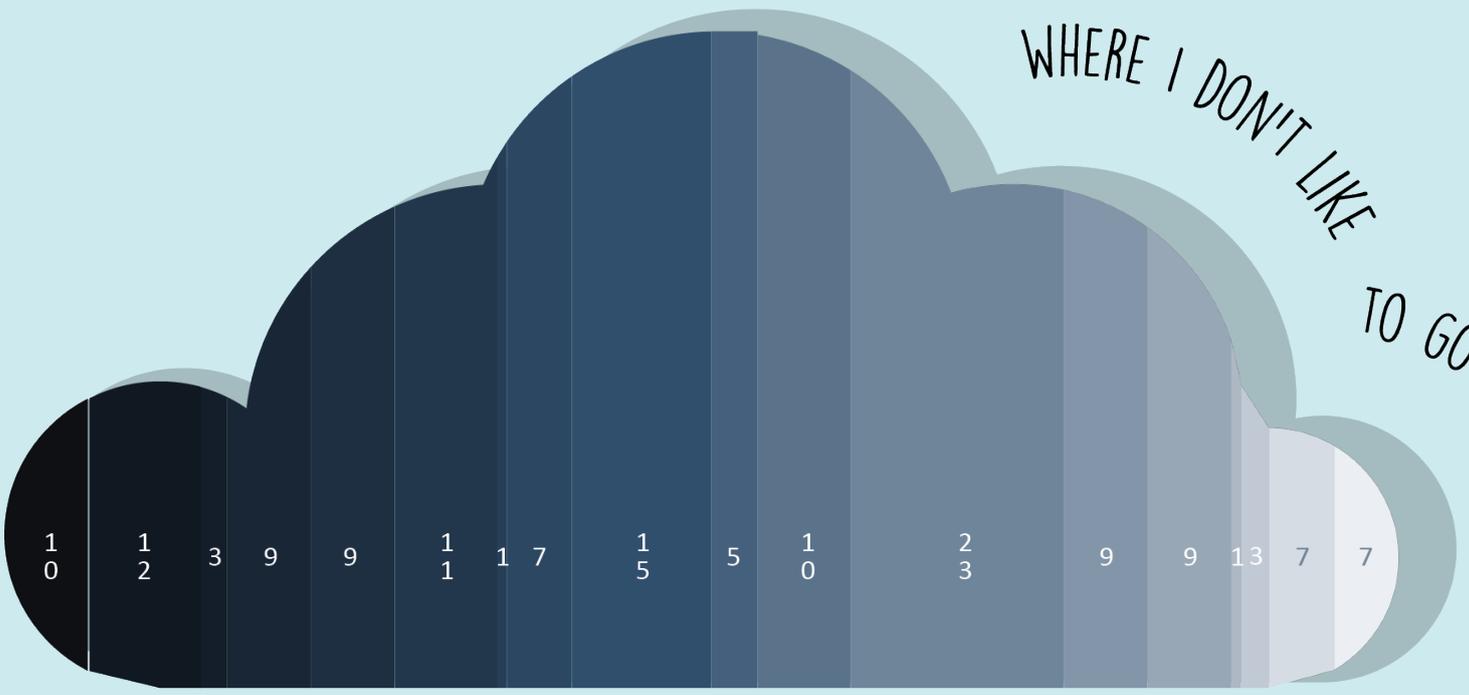
The natural environment is popular. Children love to go camping and fishing at the river. They like visiting lakes, the beach and rockpools. They like to climb and play in the trees, and visit beautiful gardens like the Garden of Hope. Playing in mud is fun and so is pig hunting in the bush. They like to feed the ducks and pelicans. They like to see and pat animals.

FAMILY

"I LIKE TO PLAY AT MY HOUSE BECAUSE THERE IS A SWING AND A RAINBOW..."

Children also like time at home with family or visiting friends and relatives. They also enjoy having pets and helping dad in his shed.

WHERE I DON'T LIKE TO GO



Sport

Active play

Imaginative play

Experiences &

Natural Environment

Built Environment

Agricultural Environment

Challenging

Shopping

Eateries

Education & Libraries

Health Services

Home Inside

Travel

Parent/Career

Siblings

Relatives

Other people



WHERE I DON'T LIKE TO GO

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

"I DON'T LIKE TO GO TO CRICKET TRAINING BECAUSE I DON'T GET TO DO IT"

Some children don't like swimming, gymnastics, tennis, soccer, basketball or football.

PLACES

"I DON'T LIKE TO GO TO THE SHOPS BECAUSE MY LEGS GET TIRED"

Some children don't like the McDonald's playground or the train park, because it bores them.

Some don't like the new park near the bridge or hot sand at Apex Park.

Some children are afraid of the Wave Pool "I DON'T WANT DAD TO LET ME GO AND DROWN". And some don't like noisy places like Inflatable World, the Aqua-coaster, the motorbike dirt race track or the cinema when it has scary dinosaur movies. Some don't like being on the roof because it is scary.

Others don't like the bathroom at school, the pine tree house public toilets, and Aldi because it has no toilets.

Some do not like shopping at particular places: Supermarkets, Reject Shop, shops that don't have toys. Central or the mall. McDonald's or Fasta Pasta because the food is yuck, they also don't like going out for lasagne or to the golf club.

Some children don't like church or the cemetery, the doctors, hospital or the dentist, or the bush nurse "BECAUSE OF GETTING INJECTIONS".

Some don't like when their mum leaves them at parties, being at Day Care or preschool.

Others don't like the salt lake because there are no rainbow flowers, or being in a small town. They also don't like spiders or anywhere there are flies.

TRAVEL

"I DON'T LIKE IT THAT MY GRANDMA LIVES A LONG LONG WAY.
I DON'T LIKE TO DRIVE A LONG, LONG WAY."

Some children don't like to travel far: To Melbourne on the plane, Melbourne long drives, Hamilton "BECAUSE IT IS TOO LONG OF A DRIVE".

FAMILY

Some children don't like going to grandparent's places, or homes that are dirty, or their brother's bedrooms that are "ALWAYS MESSY", or going to church with Gran.

OTHER PEOPLE

"I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN PEOPLE ARE ANGRY AND HURT OTHER PEOPLE"
"I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN PEOPLE ARE SAD, WHEN THEY HAVEN'T GOT A HOUSE OR ENOUGH MONEY"
"I DON'T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE ARE SAD OR MEAN"

WHEN I GROW UP I WILL WORK IN



WHEN I GROW UP I WILL WORK IN OCCUPATIONS

"I WANT TO WORK IN THE GARDEN LIKE MY DAD AND GROW CARROTS AND BANANAS"

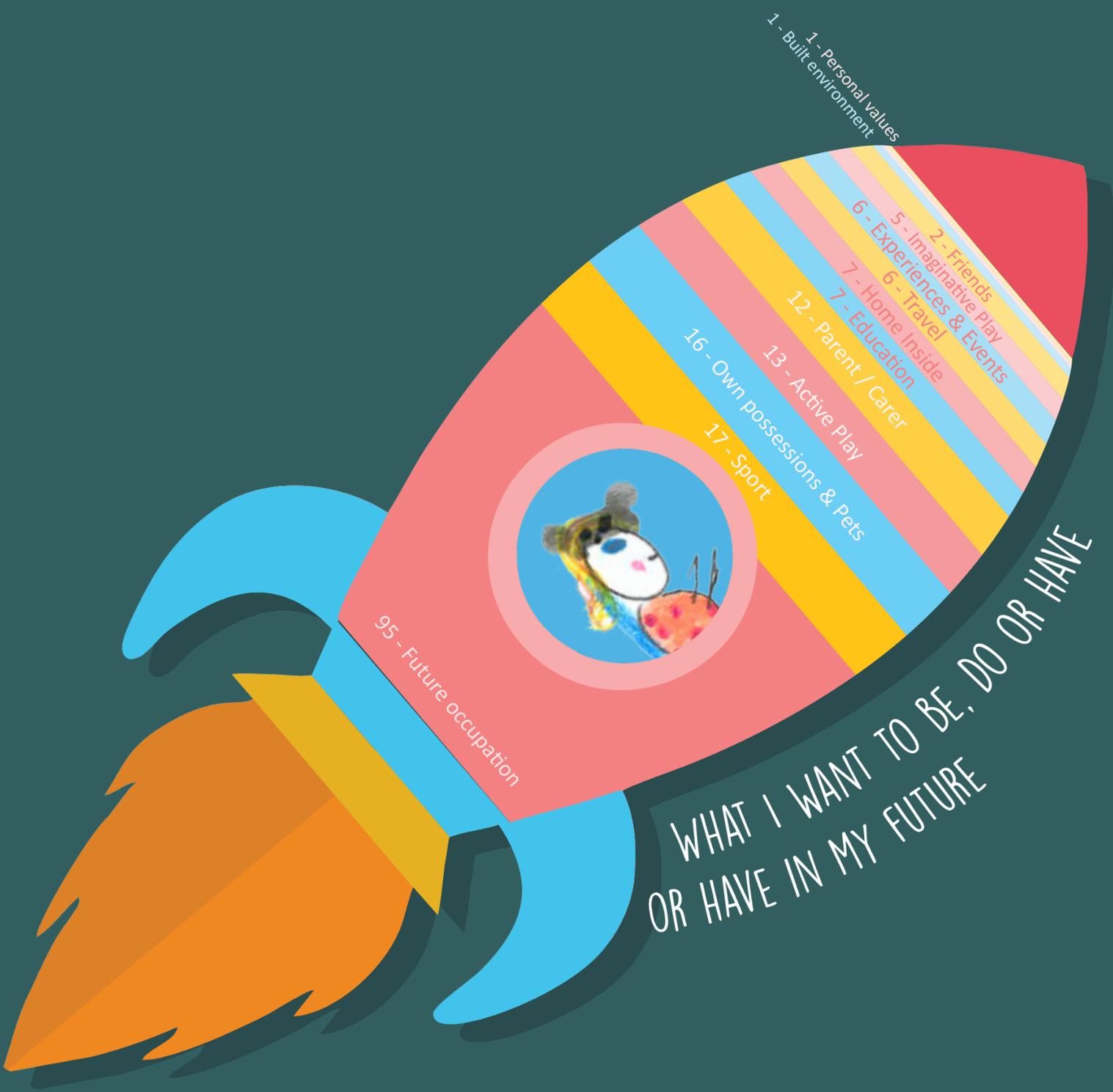
Local children aspire to a broad range of occupations, they would like to be:

Firefighter "AND SAVE A BURNING HOUSE WITH A PERSON IN IT"
Delivery driver (food)
The Army
Police Officer "IF THEY ARE NAUGHTY WE PUT THEM IN JAIL"
A Veterinarian / Vet Nurse
A Doctor
A Midwife
A Nurse (like my mum)
Hairdresser
Sales Assistant "SERVING PEOPLE AT THE REGISTER"
A Shopkeeper
A Teacher
A Train Driver
Dance Teacher
Engineer / Robotics Engineer
Fisherman
Mechanic
Farmer / Chicken Farmer
Electrician
Archaeologist
A Scientist "I WILL MIX TWO DIFFERENT DNAs TOGETHER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS"
Businessman / Officeman "LIKE DAD"
An Agent
Play Footy
Garbageman
Pilot
Gardener
An Artist
A Musician / Singer / Dancer
A Youtuber
A Ninja-Warrior

WORKPLACES

Local children want to work in a variety of places:

Woodsie's Gem Shop
The Wave Pool
At Disneyland
A toy shop in the city
Pet shop / Pets Domain
The mines "WITH DAD"
An Arcade
Morellos
Winery
Rebel sport



1 - Personal values
1 - Built environment

2 - Friends
5 - Imaginative Play
6 - Experiences & Events
6 - Travel

7 - Home Inside
7 - Education
12 - Parent / Carer

13 - Active Play
16 - Own possessions & Pets
17 - Sport

95 - Future occupation

WHAT I WANT TO BE, DO OR HAVE
OR HAVE IN MY FUTURE

WHAT I WANT TO BE, DO OR HAVE IN MY FUTURE

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Play soccer, football, AFL, ballet, basketball, cricket, karate, ride horses, ride motorbikes, race cars, Life-guard, Ice-skating, do the monkey bars, bird-watching, Walk by the river with my pet dogs, do backflips, play with my friends on the monkey bars.

EDUCATION

"I HAVE TO GROW UP BY EATING ALL MY VEGGIES, THEN I'LL GO TO SCHOOL"

Learn languages, go to High School, go to School "AND WALK HOME BY MYSELF".

HEALTH

Have a massage
Stay at home and "NOT GO TO SCHOOL WHEN I FEEL SICK"
Relax

FAMILY

Get married, be a dad, have kids, adopt babies, have another sister, look after babies, give money to parents and pop.

HOME / EVERYDAY LIFE

"WHEN I AM BIGGER I AM GOING TO PARK MY MOTORBIKE IN MY ROOM ON MY BED"

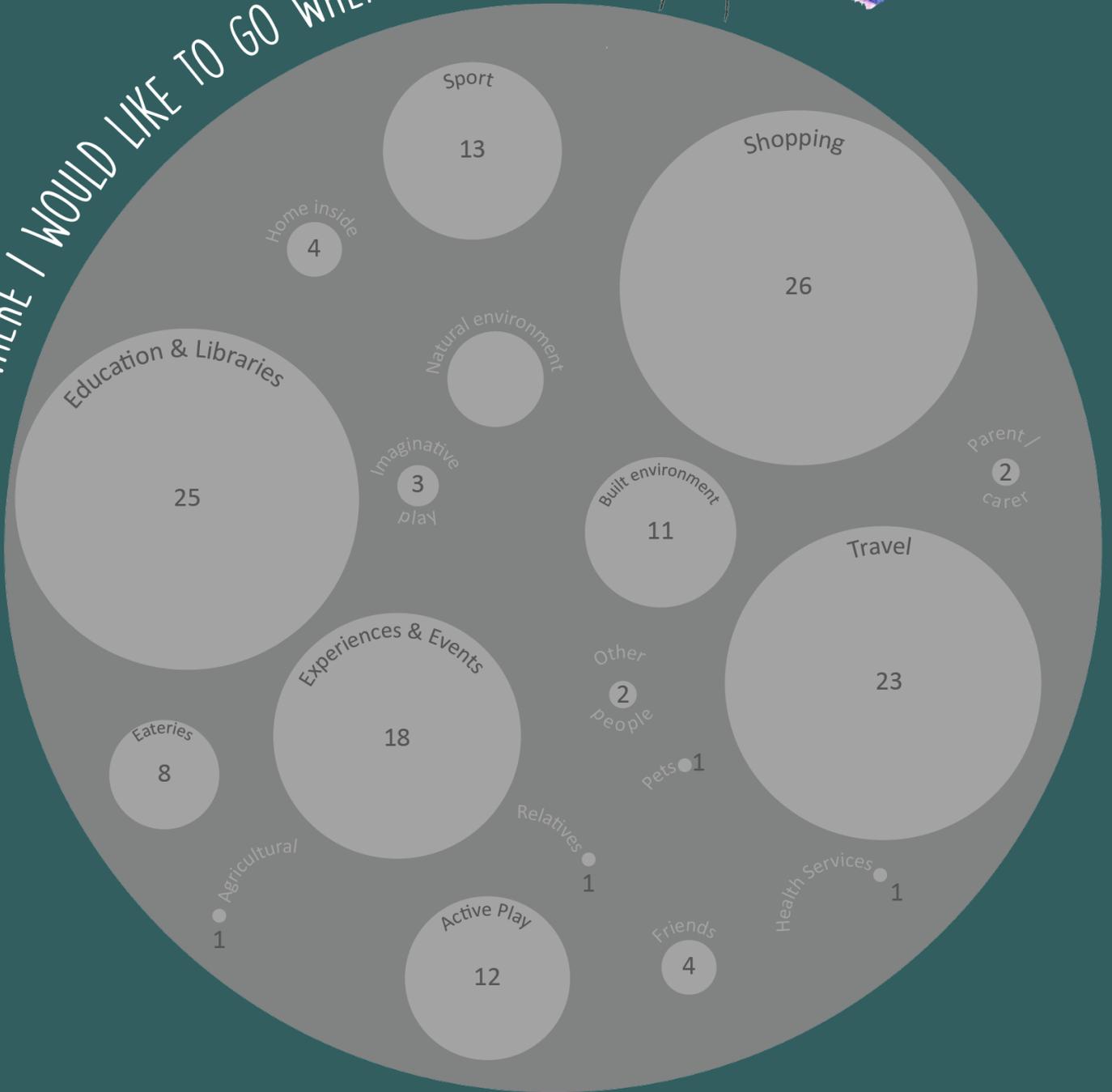
Have a bigger house
Take out the bins
Clean rooms
Do the dishes
Wear clothes to bed
Go shopping
Play Switch

FANTASY

"I IMAGINE THAT DINOSAURS COME THROUGH THE PORTAL TO VISIT US, THEY ARE FRIENDLY"

I imagine riding a unicorn
When I grow up I am going to be a Dinosaur

WHERE I WOULD LIKE TO GO WHEN I AM OLDER



WHERE I WOULD LIKE TO GO WHEN I AM OLDER

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Play basketball, soccer, footy and cricket.

EXPERIENCES AND ACTIVITIES

Watch race cars drive around the track, watch gymnastics, a motorbike show, ballet, a fashion show, and their friends places. A disco, on a bush discovery, a place where you can paint with mud, jump in muddy puddles with boots, ride a motorbike through a big forest.

PLACES

The Wave Pool, the skate park, the water play park, a dog water park, and a mud kitchen at the park. Hot House. A rollercoaster, the Aqua-coaster, Rollerama, Ten Pin Bowling, Ferris Wheel, Adventure Parks, Inflat-able World, and the Cinema. The river, visit train stations and the Police Station. The National Museum, a Museum, the Aquarium, Legoland, Disneyland, Fairyland, and a Ninja training place.

Shopping at: the Harley shop, Supermarkets, Bunnings, EB Games.

TRAVEL

"SWAN HILL TO GET MY FACE PAINTED"

The places out of town that they imagine they will go include:

The middle of nowhere
taking a flight around Australia
Melbourne
The North Pole
Queensland
Sydney
South America
Merbein
Bendigo
Horsham
Adelaide
Around the World
Mt Everest
Tasmania
New Zealand
Canada
and beaches in another country

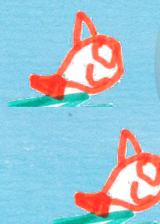
WHAT CHILDREN WANT FOR THEIR COMMUNITY NOW

MILDURA

- We need trains a very fast train to go to Melbourne
- Two storey mansions
- Better, more futuristic technology
- More pools and more grassed areas
- I would like a car to drive to the hospital to visit my mum

RIVER

- We can clean up plastic by having more bins
- We need trains a very fast train to go to Melbourne
- Better fishing spots
- More toilets near the river
- Down the river there needs to be playgrounds in the favourite spots and more bins



MERBEIN

- Upgrade the goals and benches at the soccer field
- Better football oval at Merbein, I don't like playing on that oval
- We need more netball courts
- I wish there were more toys that don't cost money. I wish there was a toy library and book store at my school
- I love playing basketball. We need more basketball courts in Merbein
- The hoops at the basketball courts could be smaller for little people like me
- I wish there was a McDonald's at Merbein

MURRAYVILLE

- I wish we had a bike track
- I wish Murrayville had dinosaurs
- I wish we had a zoo and more birds
- I wish Murrayville had a restaurant
- I wish we Murrayville had a cinema or theatre
- I wish it was a bigger town and had lots of people and I had neighbours

POOLS

A place to make music

We want a Ferris Wheel

More special dog parks, a water dog park

A permanent rock climbing wall that is decorated

A dugout at the Hot House where the under 10s can play

PARKS

Waterslides, make a large slide, I would like a curly slide

I would like a pool on top of a mountain

Lots of tunnels to play in

AND

I would like a trampoline at the park

A train to ride on

A place to chase butterflies

A skate park mountain

I want to paint with mud

A castle or fort for playing and hiding

Bushes would be good for hide & seek and hunting bears

Dinosaur park

A mud kitchen at the park



FANTASY

I wish we had a Pokémon world

I would like to have some ninjas in Mildura

I would like Mildura to have a fairy house

I wish we had a Unicorn world

I would like a rocket to fly up in the sky

I would like to meet a talking rock



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