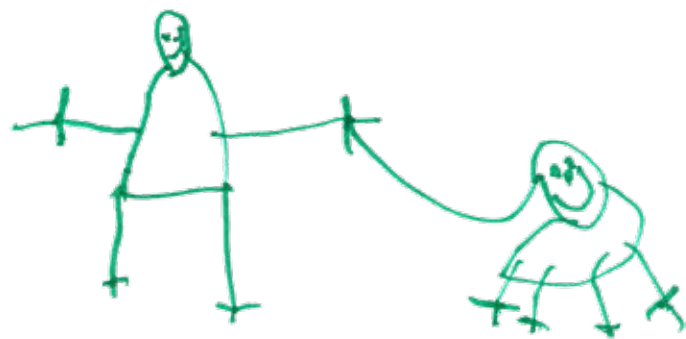


A watercolor illustration of the Earth, showing blue oceans and green continents. On the top edge of the Earth, five simple stick figures with pink outlines are standing. To the right of the Earth, a yellow, irregularly shaped sign is tilted upwards. The background is a soft, blended wash of purple and blue colors.

# THE VOICES OF MALLEE CHILDREN



In 2019, a group of adults realised that to make where they lived a better place for everyone, they needed to hear the voices of the children who lived there. So they set out, with the help of friends, 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.

This storybook has been produced using the thoughts and illustrations of children who participated and gave us permission to share their creativity with you.

We would like to thank the children who patiently shared their stories with the adults, and the places that helped them:

De Garis Kindergarten  
Irymple Kindergarten  
Loose Parts Playground  
Little Day Out  
Playalong  
Managatang Kindergarten  
Merbein P - 10 College  
Mildura Specialist School  
Murrayville Kindergarten  
Ouyen Kindergarten  
Ranfurly Primary School  
Underbool Kindergarten



we want them to know we are listening, and are ready to make change.

***We hope you are too.***



I AM A CHILD OF THE NORTHERN MALLEE,  
HERE TO TELL YOU ABOUT ME.  
THE THINGS I LIKE, THE THINGS I DON'T,  
THE THINGS I WANT TO DO AND SEE.





There are around 4,400 children ages 3-8 living in the Mildura LGA

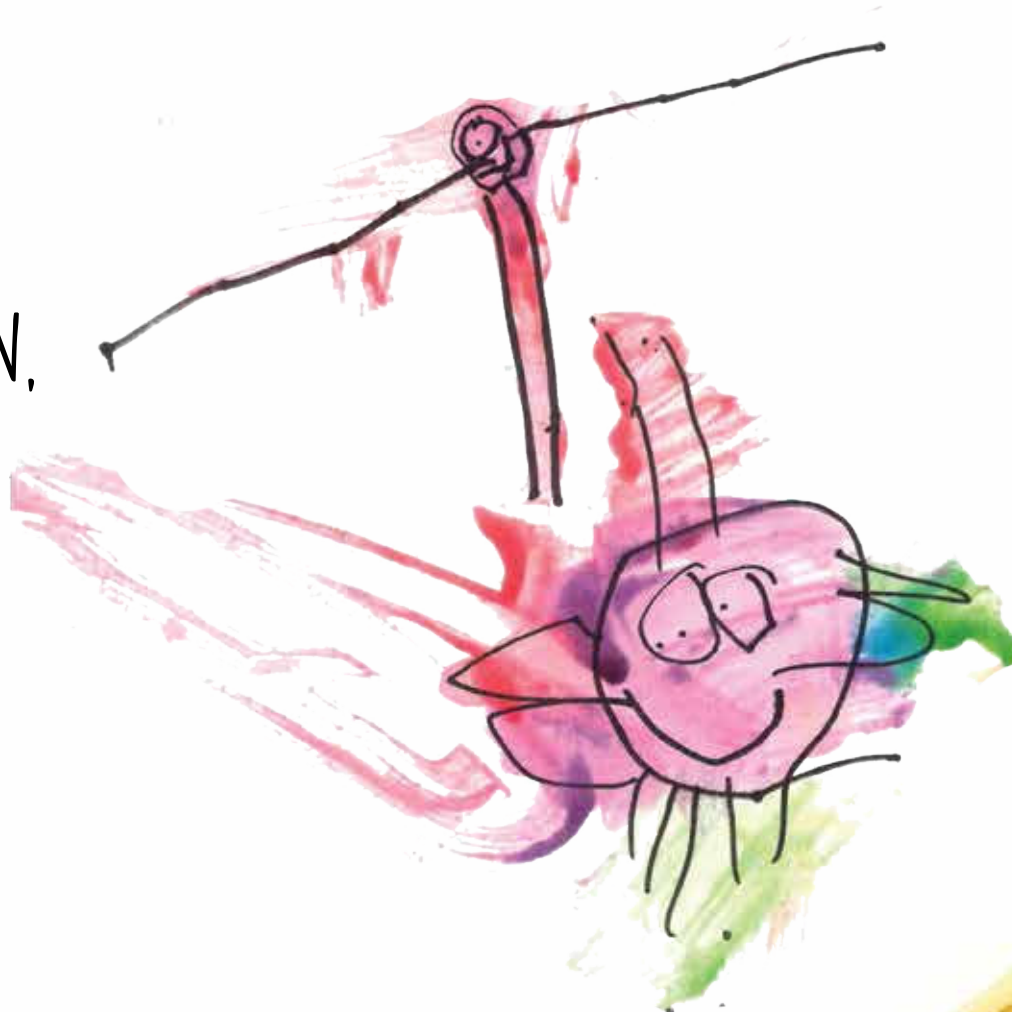
The Voices of Children project aimed to hear from 375 children

The project heard from over 400 and 375 gave us permission to share their thoughts

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING  
THE MALLEE

I FLY  
ON MY

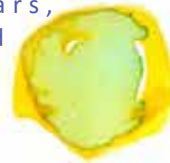
IMAGINATION,



# TO PARKS AND OUTSIDE SPACES.



Football, soccer,  
the oval, tennis, basketball,  
Canoeing, collecting treasure,  
speedway, golf, ball games,  
bike, riding motorbikes, jump-  
ing, climbing, swinging, the  
monkey-bars,  
backflips and  
skateboard  
tricks,  
roller-  
skates,  
trampoline  
feeding ducks, monster  
trucks, fishing, playing in  
mud, puddles, camping  
air balloons



The garden of hope, the  
farmer's market, football, cricket, dog  
park, mud  
kitchen, jumping in  
puddles, big forest,  
mowing the lawns,  
of nowhere,  
Fairyland, Apex park,  
putt putt, camping with my family,  
watching animals, bushes and trees



# BY THE WATER WITH MY FAMILY, FRIENDS,

play in the water

I like to splash with my brother

I like walking my dogs. Horse riding

Fishing at the river

I like living with my mum

visit Dad's Grandma's house. Playing with my brother





AND PETS ARE SOME

Rockpools Fishing at the river

Aqua-coaster, waves

Swimming pool, splash park

Lakes, beaches, the river

FAVOURITE PLACES.

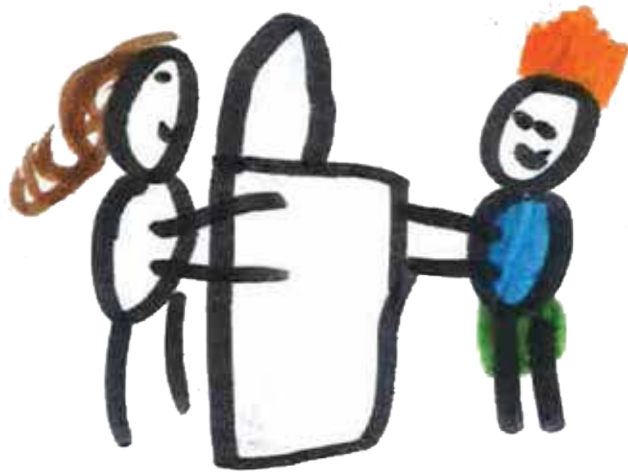
Paddlesteamer on the train, or a bus

Jumping castle, bowling

Inflatable world, Rollerama, Laser-force, Cinema



# I DON'T ALWAYS ENJOY SHOPPING.



It's  
too cold! My legs are  
tired. Kmart, Coles, Aldi are  
boring. There are no toilets. I don't  
like going to shops that have no  
toys. I don't like central or the  
mall, they are not my favour-  
ites.



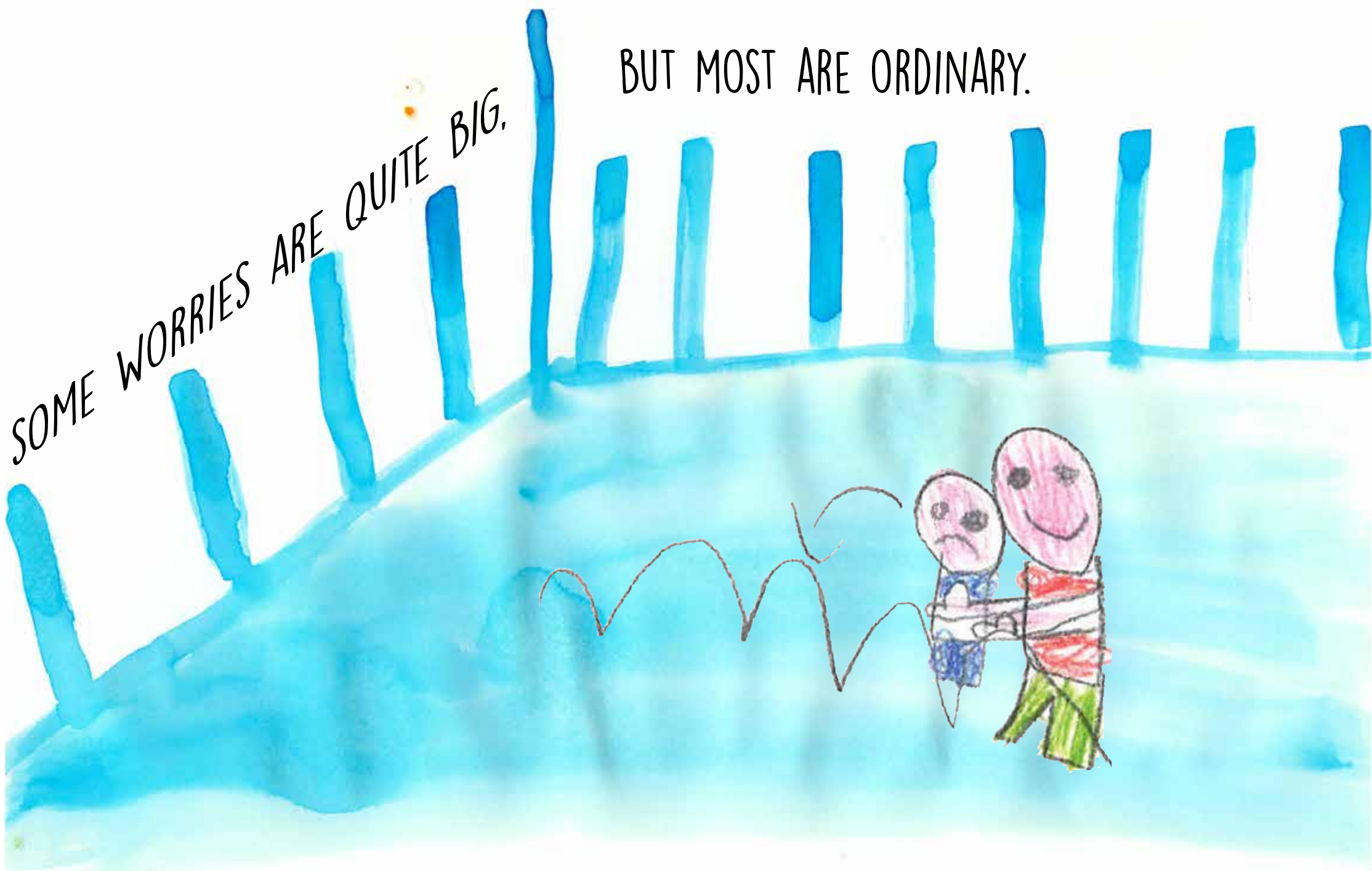


BUT HELPING  
YOU MAKE  
VEGETABLES?  
OR ICE-CREAM?  
CHOICES,

IS  
MORE IMPORTANT  
THAN IT SEEMS.

SOME WORRIES ARE QUITE BIG.

BUT MOST ARE ORDINARY.





I DON'T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE GET ROUGH OR MEAN.



when people are sad  
or people get hurt  
or are mean  
I don't like when people leave rubbish  
or going to space  
on the train  
sometimes I don't like to go dancing  
when people don't have a house  
or don't have enough money  
Scary dinosaur movies at the cinema  
The train park is boring  
Wave pool  
I don't like to go dancing  
McDonald's playground  
hot sand at river  
flies are smooching  
that's enough toys!  
dad saying 'the farm  
the pine tree house  
spiders  
jungle that have tigers and leopards  
when my house is dirty  
grandpa's house has  
spiders  
outside  
going on long drives  
on the plane  
church  
sometimes I don't like to go dancing  
I don't like my room  
I don't like to go dancing

AND THINK SPIDERS ARE TOO SCARY!

THE THINGS I'D LIKE TO SEE RIGHT NOW, NEED CHANGES SMALL AND BIG.



RAIN FOR RAINBOWS,  
FLOWERS, AND MUD,  
ARE ALL HIGH ON MY LIST.



I WANT TO TRAVEL ON THE TRAIN.



relax  
d o  
monk  
e y  
bars



AND RIDE A UNICORN.



Ballet, football, soccer, rider motorbikes, bird watching, walk by the river with my pet dogs, look after baby leopards, cheetahs and jaguars, go to high-school, walk to school and home by myself, get a massage, stay at home when I feel sick, fossil digger, create a dinosaur, babysitting, get married, have kids, adopt babies, have another sister, move to a bigger house, take out the bins, look after babies, clean rooms, do the dishes, park my motorbike on my bed,

go  
shopping,  
play switch,  
play with  
friends

w e a r  
clothes to bed,  
be an artist,  
be a dad

do  
back-flips,  
I imagine riding  
a unicorn

own pets,  
eat all my  
veggies, mid-  
w i f e



WHILE I AM

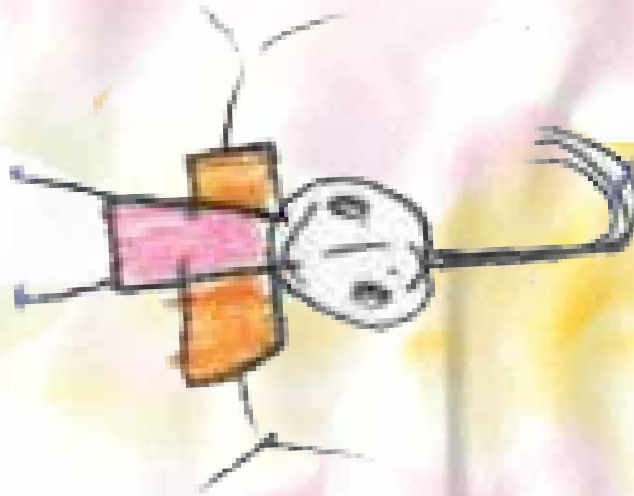
GROWING

BIGGER.

Melbourne, North Pole, Queensland, Sydney, South America, Merbein, Bendigo, Horsham  
South America, Mt Everest, Tasmania, New Zealand, Canada, Around the world  
Flying around Australia, Aquariums, Harley shops

train stations, police stations, national museums  
ride a motorbike through a big forest

To my friend's house, riding a horse, Ninja training  
Disneyland, Swan Hill to get my face-painted





MY DREAMS

Gymnastics, watching race-cars on the track, Legoland  
Werrimul to be with Nan, go on a big holiday

ARE

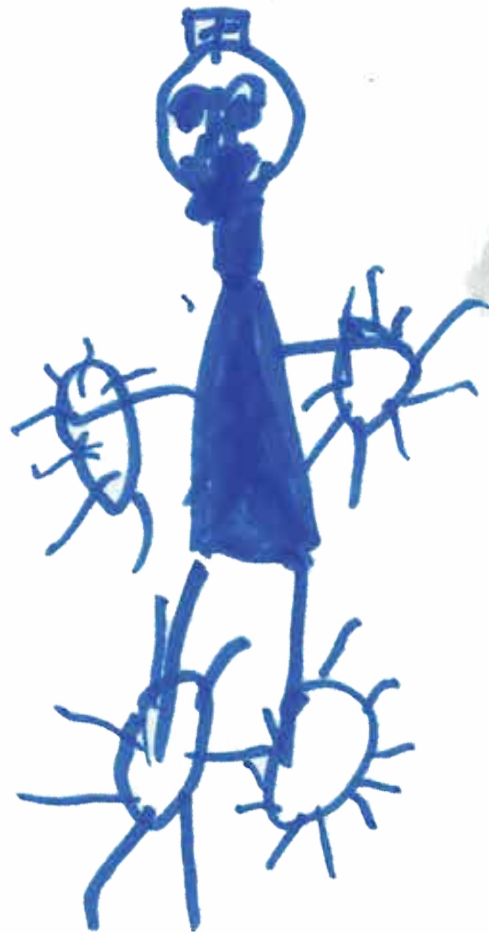
Build my house in the trees  
or on the moon

GROWING TOO.

A fashion show  
Ferris wheel



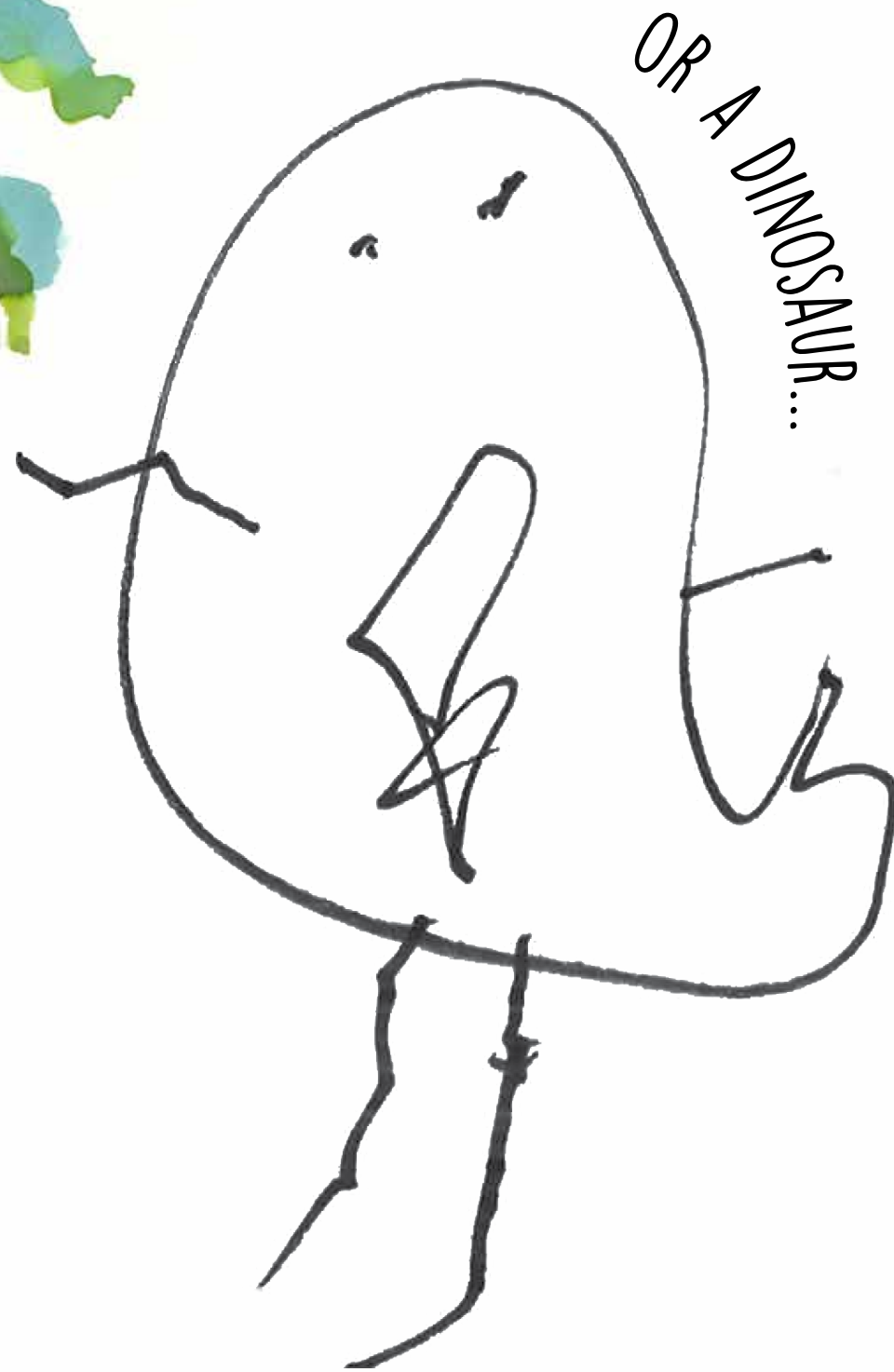
I THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE, THE THINGS THAT I WILL BE AND DO.



ONE DAY I'LL BE A DOCTOR,

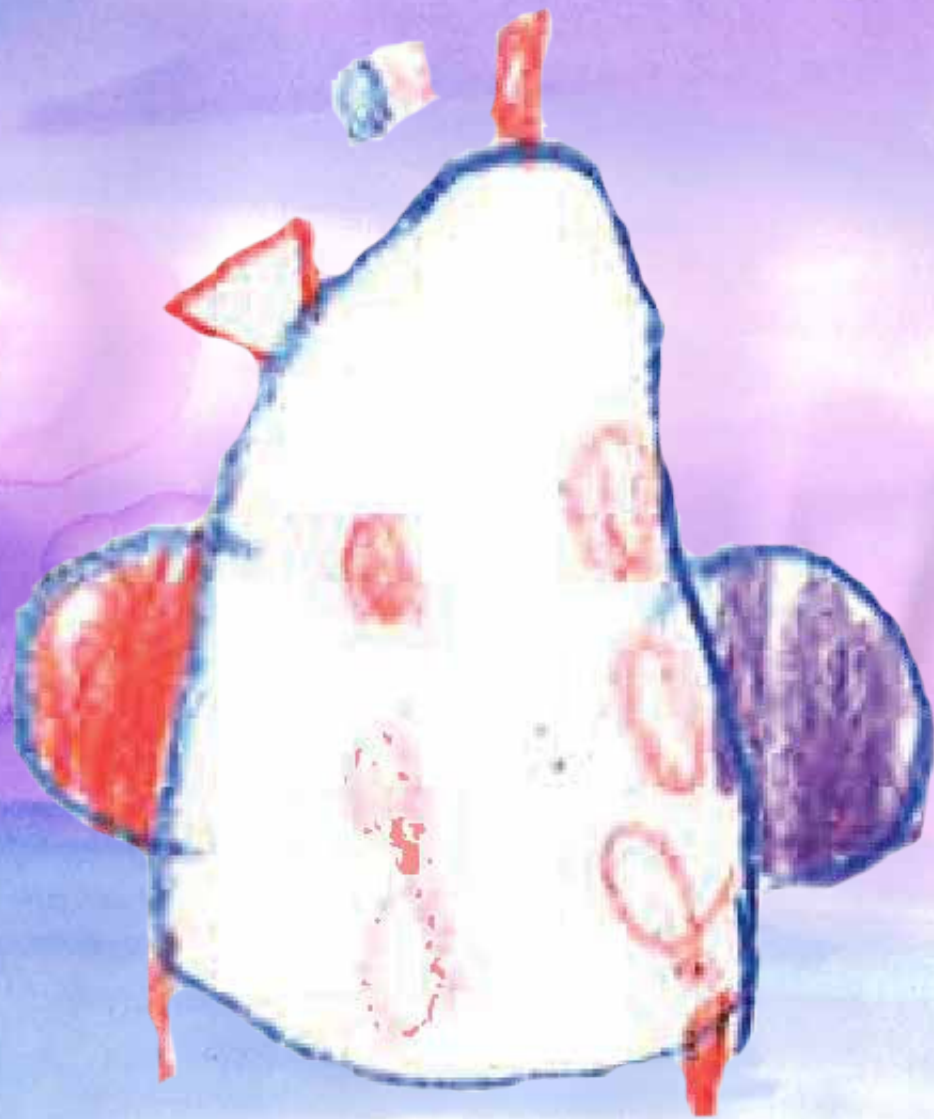
A scientist, driver, delivering food, firefighter, army, police officer, veterinarian, hairdresser, serving people at the register, teacher, train driver, builder, work at the wave pool, at Disneyland, Woodsie's gem shop, shopkeeper, dance teacher, engineer, toy-shop, pet shop, fisherman and mechanic, run a farm, electrician, robotics engineer, business man, sports agent, play AFL footy, winery, nurse, work in the mines, chook farmer, nurse sick animals, billion-arcade, be an office man like dad, drive machines and work at Morellos, garbage man, look after babies, work in the garden, fly a plane, in the NBA, cricket player, karate, horse rider, life guard, ice-skater, learn languages, mix two different DNAs together, archaeologist, rich, pow-erful, gamer, y o u t u b e r







I WANT TO DANCE, LEARN LANGUAGES, BUILD A HOME UP ON THE MOON.





BUT FOR ME TO HAVE THE FUTURE I SEE. I NEED

YOUR HELP TO

MAKE CHANGE

HAPPEN

SOON.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING  
THE WIDE WORLD



# ABOUT THE VOICES OF CHILDREN PROJECT

## Purpose

The Voices of Children Project 2019 aimed to hear the voices of at least 375 children from the Northern Mallee region, aged 3-8 years, to discover what children do and don't like where they live, learn and play, and what they imagine for their future.

The project has been used to create this storybook, and inform the Best Start to Life Systems Map, and will be used in developing the MRCC Municipal Early Years Plan, and shared back to our community.

What children said, wrote and created has been collated, coded and summarised in order to be used in creating useful tools for our community to use to create change. The following is a brief summary of the project findings and graphs developed using the coded counts of what Northern Mallee children told us.

## Summary

Active play, the river and natural environment, certain shops, entertainment, parks, places to eat and time with family are the most popular places for children to go.

Some children don't like sport, entertainment or retail places that are noisy, or seeing rubbish in the natural environment. They don't like long shopping trips because their legs get tired and there are no seats. Some are anxious about visiting health services and the Waves pool. They don't like being places where people are angry and hurt other people. Some don't like long car trips.

Playing in local parks and pools, enjoying the river and bush, playing with mud, doing things together with family, enjoying places with games and entertainment, and having treats are favourite things that children like to do.

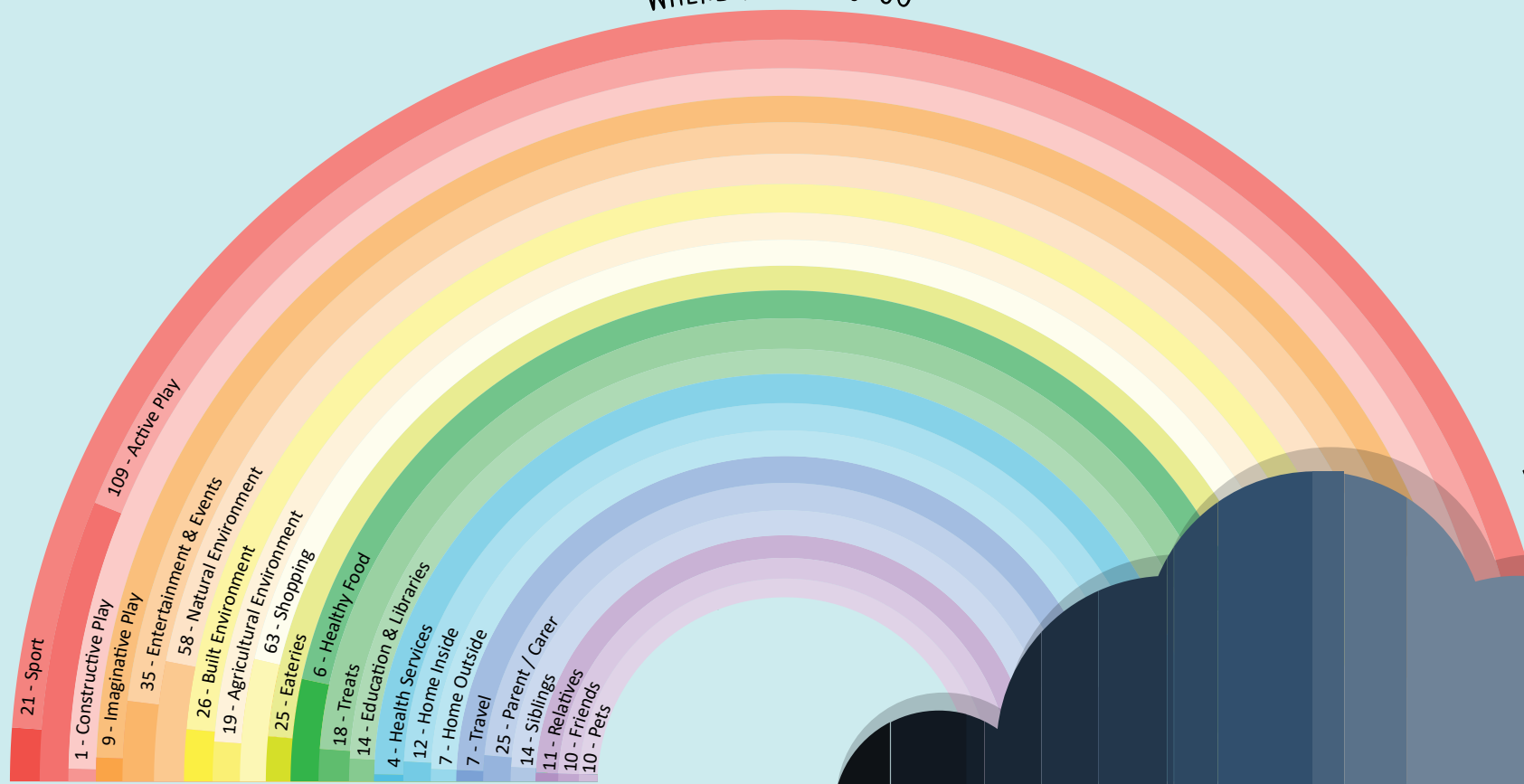
Children aspire to become skilled at sport, engage in active and imaginative play, going to school, have their own ipad, iphone or computer and own a pet. They also aspire to have an occupation

Children's aspiration for an occupation covered a wide range with sport and fitness being the most popular, followed by retail, caring for animals, transport, police and emergency services, raising a family, and fantasy.

Children look forward, when they are older, to be able to go to school, go shopping, visit parks and pools, traveling to different parts of the country and overseas. They also look forward to going to places for sport and entertainment, museums, and places like Disneyland and Legoland.



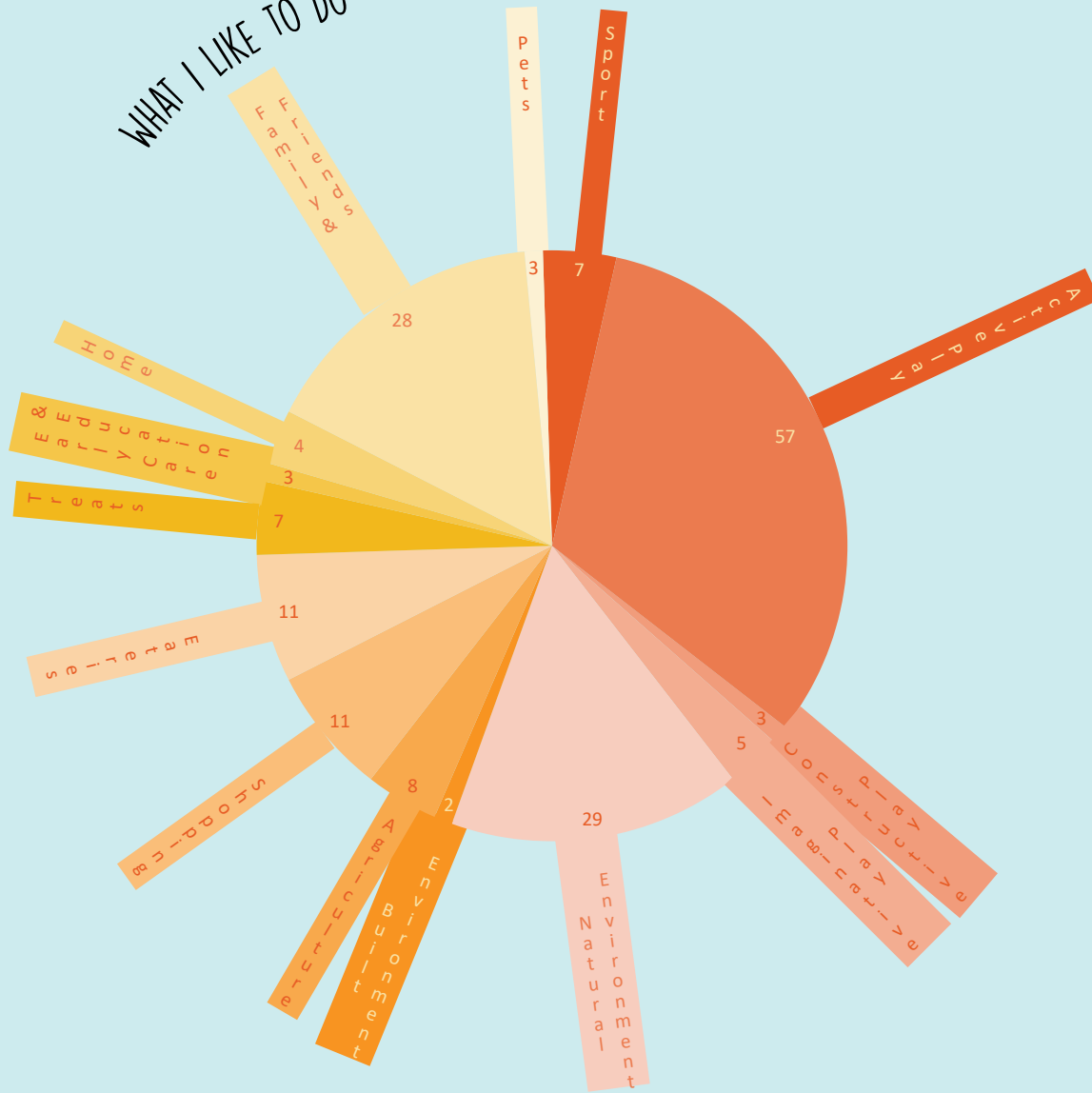
WHERE I LIKE TO GO



WHERE I DON'T LIKE TO GO



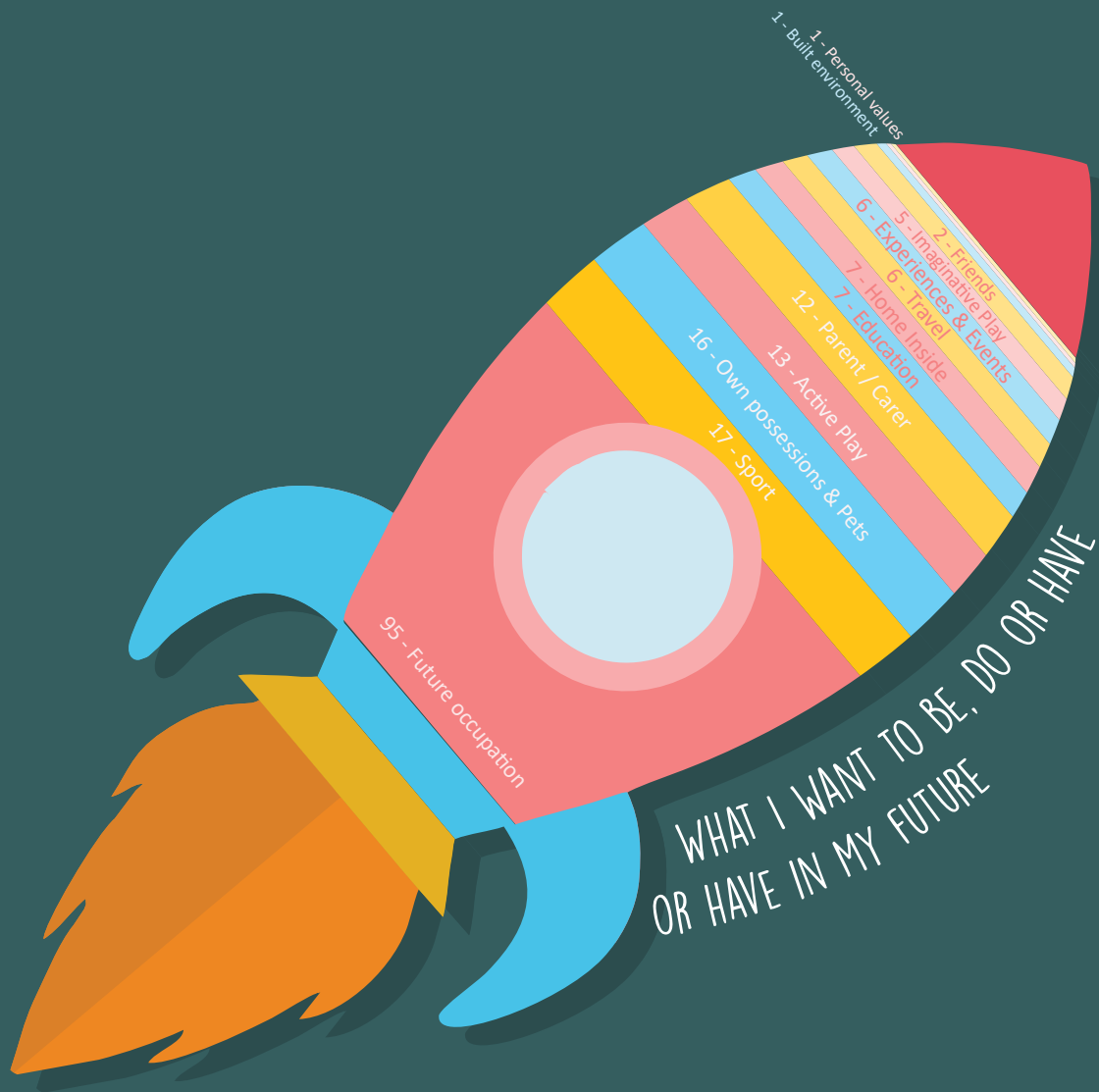
## WHAT I LIKE TO DO



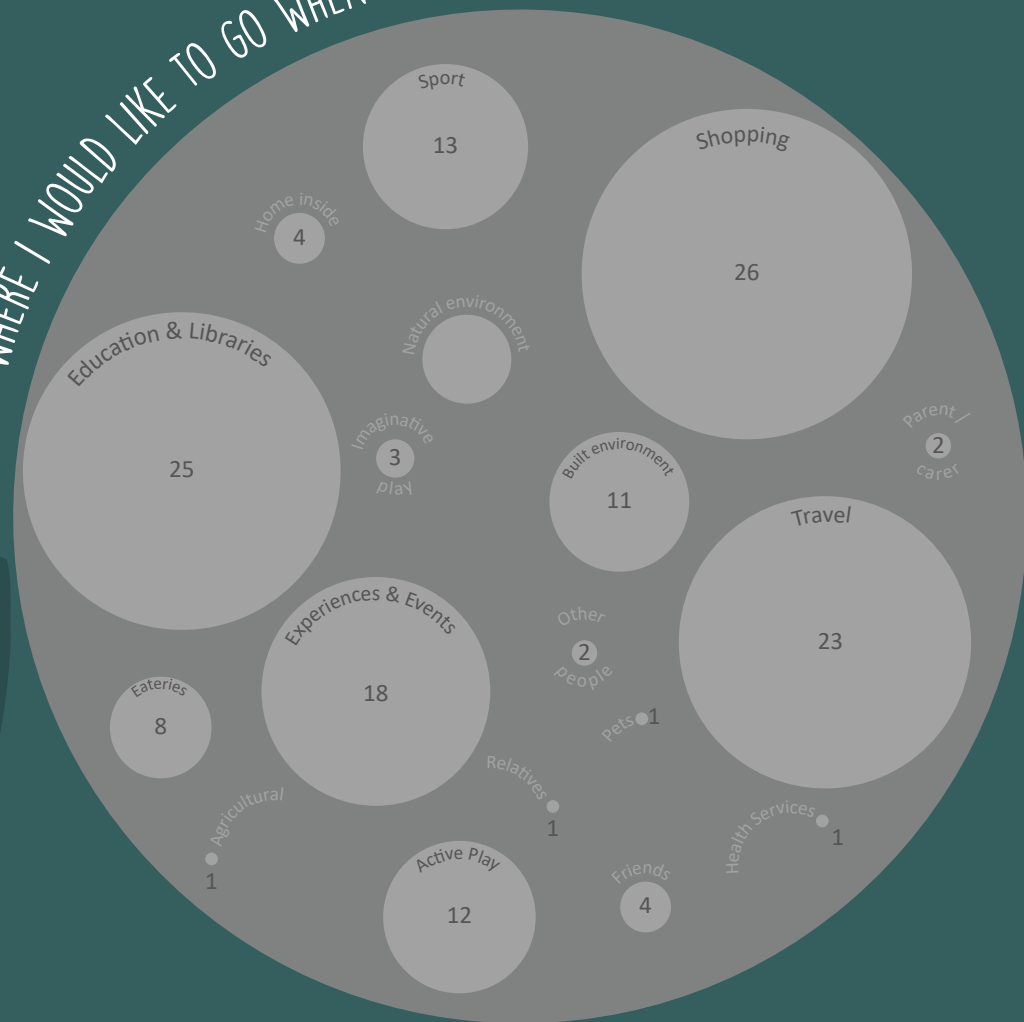
## WHEN I GROW UP I WILL WORK IN







## WHERE I WOULD LIKE TO GO WHEN I AM OLDER



This book was created for our community by Hands Up Mallee using images and information created by local children aged 3-8 years during the Voices of Children Project, and the support of Local Early Childhood Educators and Primary School Teachers.

The Voices of Children Action Team:

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Samantha Dodds

Data from the Voices of Children Theme Team:

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Kelly Naess  
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Rhonda Smith  
Samantha Dodds

and background illustrations and words inspired by the Voices of children by Lila Wolff





**HANDS UP MALLEE**