



**THE SENATE  
SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE  
REFERENCES COMMITTEE**

**Inquiry into the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)  
Public Hearing –Monday, 29 October 2018  
Questions Taken on Notice  
Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) Australia, New Zealand  
and Pacific**

---

**1 HANSARD, p. 13**

---

**Senator McGRATH:** I suppose in our region, especially the Pacific, we do want to push parliamentary democracy in terms of empowering those nation-states. I know all these goals are as important as the others, but I think democracy would come first in terms of many of the issues that have been raised. You talked about participation. Once people turn 18 they are able to participate in terms of having a vote as such. In the statement you read out—and I can't remember the person's name, sorry—they made a comment about the young generation being more politically active. Are you able to, on notice, get evidence of that as such? I'm sure that there are reports and things like that that can reference that. That would be quite interesting to see in terms of another inquiry I'm involved with.

**Ms Kestin:** I'll do that.

**Senator McGRATH:** Cool, thank you.

**Ms Kestin:** I don't think I mentioned her name. Her name is Michelle Huang and she is the SDSN Youth representative for our region. I'll take that on notice.

**Senator McGRATH:** Thank you.

---

**ANSWER**

---

Evidence of greater youth political participation was provided in The Commonwealth Youth Programme's 2016 Australian Youth Development Index, which SDSN Youth cited in our submission to the Committee. The report looked at Australia's performance across the five domains of youth development: Civic Participation, Education, Employment and Opportunity, Health and Wellbeing and Political Participation. Political participation refers not only to voter enrollment, but political organization, reflected by the proportion of youth

on Student Representative Councils. Examining the trends between 2010-2015, the largest improvements nation-wide came in the Civic and Political Participation domains, which increased by 10 and 7.5 per cent respectively, (The Commonwealth Youth Programme 2016, page 9) indicating a greater extent to which young people are empowered and engaged in the political and civic process. The Youth Development Index also found that political participation dramatically increased in almost every state between 2005 and 2015 (The Commonwealth Youth Programme 2016, pages 13-20) which demonstrates that the level of youth partaking in the democratic processes of Australia is generally on the rise.

**Reference:** The Commonwealth Youth Programme, [\*Australian Youth Development Index\*](#), 2016.