

# Australia – 2018

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Mr. Amos Washington

## UN Youth Delegate Programme

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Youth Delegate Search: <https://youthdelegatesearch.org/australia-2018/>

86. **Mr. Washington** (Australia), speaking as a youth delegate, said that he wished to reflect on a few key ideas that had emerged during his nationwide listening tour across Australia. He had asked young Australians from diverse backgrounds for their views on what the country would look like if they had had a greater say. Young people must be viewed as participating members of society and it was a misconception to consider that they were waiting in the wings, yet to experience the real world. However, the issues young people had raised with him were relevant to all ages and among the many issues that the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development sought to address. He had spoken to culturally diverse young people, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, members of the oldest continuing culture in the world and subject to enduring racial prejudice; young people who had experienced discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity; persons living with disabilities, and those who wanted safe and affordable housing, secure employment, a fair and equitable justice system, a healthy environment; an education system that encouraged young people to thrive; and better support for those suffering from substance abuse. The young people he met advocated for a kinder society, free from bullying and harassment.

87. Young people were clearly concerned about the well-being of their generation. Young Australians in educational institutions, community groups and juvenile detention centres considered mental health to be at a crisis point. They saw the interconnections between mental health and other community issues. The education system should emphasize the importance of mental health and support services should bear in mind the diversity of young people. Young people needed to feel valued. Their well-being impacted on the rest of the community and when they succeeded, everyone benefited.

88. As visionaries with nuanced solutions to offer, young people must be included in policymaking. Their potential must be embraced to help shape a better future for all. In short, if young people had a greater say in decision-making and setting the policy agenda, the world would be kinder, safer, healthier and more united.

