



 The Children's Party's Tara, Rose, Allegra, Mungo, Clifford, Mirai and Monique. Picture: Jason Edwards

NEWS

Melbourne kids form The Children's Party to take on Canberra

Catherine Lambert, Herald Sun

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THE need to be heard has become official for a group of Melbourne kids who have established the first child-led political party in Australia.

The Children's Party comprises 12 kids, aged 9-12, and they have policies on marriage equality, gender equality, use of plastic bags and religious tolerance.

Member Mirai Sastradipradja-Pollock, 10, of St Kilda, is so inspired she is already thinking about a career in politics once she finishes school.

"We don't want to wait until we're 18 to tell people what we think when all of our good ideas will have vanished and we have become boring and just go with the crowd," Mirai said.

"We have all come up with policies on things that are most important to us right now. I'm considering a career in politics because I see it as a way to make a change

and have an input on what goes on in the world.”



📷 The Children's Party has policies on marriage equality, gender equality, use of plastic bags and religious tolerance. Picture: Jason Edwards

Fellow member Rose Beattie, 12, of Fairfield, is keen for adult politicians to think more about the 20 per cent of Australians under the age of 18.

“Even though we haven’t gone through school, it doesn’t mean we’re dumb at politics and know less about the world,” Rose said.

“Adults are able to share their ideas but we want children to have a say as well.

“We read a lot and watch a lot of things so we know what’s going on. I really worry about plastic bags and, in Fairfield there is a ban on them so we all know to bring our own bag when we shop or buy a paper bag. We never get any plastic bags.”

The other issue all members are passionate about is marriage equality. Most members of the party know people in same sex relationships who want to marry legally in Australia.

“We all talk about how different parties support (same sex marriage) and some people don’t but I definitely do,” Rose said.

“People should be able to marry who they love. It’s horrible to think they can’t.

“It’s probably hard for them to see other people get married when they have a dream of being married themselves but can’t do it. No-one can stop loving the person they love.”

Mirai is just as passionate about gender equality and religious intolerance.

“I really don’t like people yelling at other people just because of their religion, particularly Muslims, so I want that to stop,” she said.

The first step for the party to attract attention. They hope to collect 500 signatures to register as an official political party.

The group is being co-ordinated by Alex Walker, a teacher at House of Muchness drama school, which uses arts as a way for kids to express their ideas.

“These kids are incredibly tapped into their personal politics as in their values and beliefs and they’re very articulate and eloquent,” Ms Walker said.

“Their sense of humanity and social justice is outstanding. They offer a unique perspective. They’re reminded daily about their behaviours such as respect, putting up their hands to speak, sharing, being kind and taking turns.

“So they’re pretty horrified by what they see in question time at Parliament.”

The convention will be held at Arts House in North Melbourne on September 24 at 4pm.



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