

# Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People

## Strategic Plan

2022-2025

# Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People acknowledges and pays respect to the Aboriginal people who are the traditional owners of South Australia, and their Elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs, and relationship with their land and acknowledge that they are of continuing importance today.



## Our commitment to Reconciliation

The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People is strongly committed to Reconciliation and supports the Vision of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation for a united Australia which respects this land of ours, values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all.

We believe that Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility. We commit to developing a Reconciliation Action Plan by July 2023 that is reviewed and reinvigorated regularly to ensure that it is a living document that promotes action, not just words on paper.



# About us

The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People supports and encompasses two independent roles established by legislation:

- the Guardian for Children and Young People; and
- the Training Centre Visitor

The Guardian promotes and advocates for the rights and best interests of children and young people 'in care' (under the guardianship or in the custody of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection).

The Training Centre Visitor promotes and advocates for the rights and best interests of children and young people in youth detention (currently in Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre). The Training Centre Visitor is also the Youth Treatment Orders Visitor.

Our stakeholders include children and young people in care and detention, government and non-government service providers, community groups and the South Australian government, parliament and public.

# Our purpose

## We exist to

Champion the rights and best interests of children and young people in care and detention, ensuring their voices are heard and they are empowered to engage with, challenge and influence change in the systems that affect their lives.



# Our vision

## By 2025 we want to see

A safer, more inclusive society for children and young people in care and detention, that honours their voices and respects their rights.



# Our values

In our thoughts, interactions and actions we will be guided by the following:

## Commitment

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This means we:

- Are caring and tenacious in our advocacy for children and young people.
- Place the best interests of children and young people at the very centre of our work.
- Ensure that our work is always informed by the voice of children and young people and encourage others to take the same approach.

## Courage

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This means we:

- Take strength from the responsibility, independence and reach of our office.
- Notice and name system failures without fear or favour.
- Act ethically and decisively and seek timely action and accountability from others.
- Remain optimistic that we can influence change for children and young people.



## Respect

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This means we:

- Create safe and trustworthy spaces for children and young people to be heard.
- Listen carefully and respect their voices as experts in their own lives.
- Respect the unique perspectives and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and continue to grow our understanding of our shared history.
- Take active steps towards true reconciliation and consider how to achieve cultural safety in everything we do.
- Embrace diversity and listen with curiosity to alternative perspectives.
- Remain respectful of our colleagues and the challenges they face working in the system.

# Our key priorities for 2022-2025

Aligned with our purpose, and in pursuit of our vision, over the next three years, the Office for the Guardian for Children and Young People will be focusing on:



**1**

**Influencing change  
for the most  
vulnerable children  
and young people**

**2**

**Enriching our child  
and youth  
engagement**

**3**

**Increasing our  
systems advocacy**

**4**

**Responding to new  
challenges and  
growth**

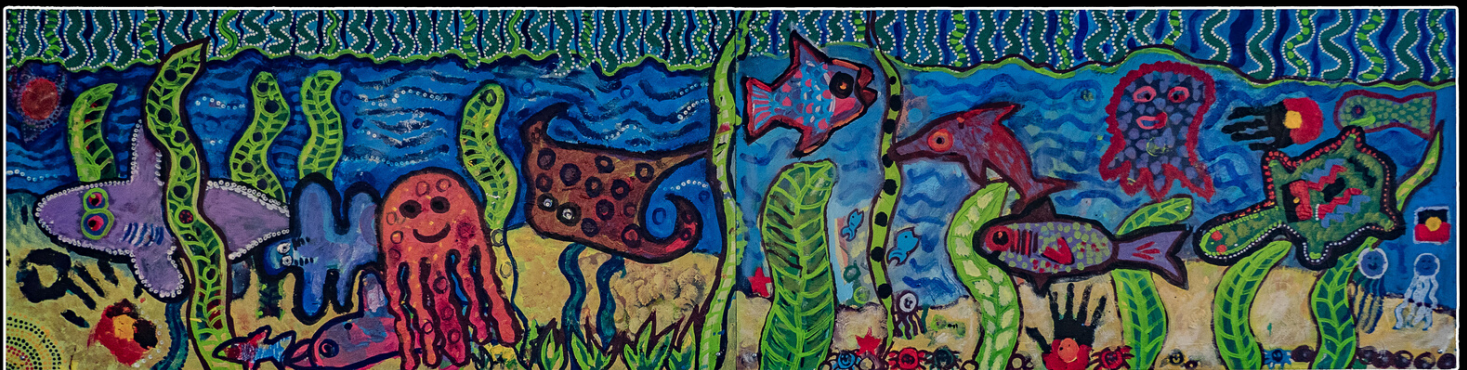
# Key priorities

## 1. Influencing change for the most vulnerable children and young people

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**We will strive to influence change for all children and young people in care and detention, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable by:**

- 1.1 Prioritising and remaining responsive to the advocacy needs of the most vulnerable children and young people, including Aboriginal children and young people and those who are involved in both the child protection and youth justice systems (ie 'dual involved'), have experienced sexual abuse, live in residential care and/or have a disability
- 1.2 Ensuring the OGCYP staff structure maximises our responsiveness to children and young people's needs as well as changes in the sector
- 1.3 Dedicating resources to advocacy for children and young people who have or are alleged to have suffered sexual abuse in care
- 1.4 Seeking opportunities to undertake work focusing on sexual health matters and safe and respectful relationships for children and young people in care and detention
- 1.5 Advocating for improvements at Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre to support a more therapeutic, reintegrative, compassionate approach that results in reduced recidivism;
- 1.6 Partnering with peak bodies and working together with the Commissioners' Offices and service organisations to maximise shared power to influence change
- 1.7 Revising and implementing a comprehensive OGCYP Communications Plan to ensure we maximise engagement with key stakeholders and allies.



# Key priorities



## 2. Enriching our child and youth engagement

**We will focus on encouraging and empowering more children and young people to speak up for themselves while striving for continuous improvement in our engagement with children and young people by:**

- 2.1 Remaining informed about and integrating best-practice approaches to child and youth engagement into the work of the OGCYP
- 2.2 Reviewing and implementing a revised Youth Engagement Strategy
- 2.3 Strengthening our processes to ensure the participation of children and young people in strategic, policy and systemic practice development or review in OGCYP
- 2.4 Formalising a database of children and young people who want to participate in OGCYP projects and consultation
- 2.5 Establishing and maintaining links, and consulting, with existing Youth Advisory Groups for children and young people in care
- 2.6 Building children and young people's capacity and confidence to advocate for themselves through skill-building, resource development and education
- 2.7 Developing and implementing mechanisms for virtual youth engagement via our website
- 2.8 Refreshing Charter of Rights materials and undertaking a comprehensive awareness raising initiative, including reinvigorating and promoting the Charter Champions program
- 2.9. Renewing the Charter of Rights for children in detention
- 2.10 Advocating for improvement of, and accessibility to, feedback and complaints processes across the child protection and youth justice systems.

# Key priorities



## 3. Increasing systems advocacy

**We will endeavour to increase our capacity to impact and influence broader systems by:**

- 3.1 Developing specific goals, a framework and a strategy for identified system changes we are seeking
- 3.2 Advocating for better identification of, and data collation about, vulnerable cohorts of children and young people across government systems
- 3.3 Strengthening relationships and seeking opportunities to work collaboratively on identified issues and themes of concern with key stakeholders who have the capacity to influence systemic change, including:
  - The SA Ombudsman
  - The Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People
  - The Commissioner for Children and Young People, the Child Development Council and/or the Serious Injury and Child Death Review Committee, as the case may be
  - The Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians
  - Department for Child Protection disability co-ordinators and the disability sector
  - The Chief Psychiatrist and other SA Health stakeholders responsible for addressing mental health and wellbeing issues with a focus on children and young people
  - SACOSS, and Child and Family Focus SA (CAFFSA)
  - Australian Human Rights Commission
  - Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement.



## 4. Responding to new challenges and growth

**We will respond to new challenges and growth by:**

- 4.1 Upgrading, improving and investing in our internal systems and processes to better identify and respond to emerging trends, issues and challenges across the work of the Office
- 4.2 Developing and consistently advancing a business case that meets service growth and needs
- 4.3 Establishing the Child and Youth Visitor role and scheme
- 4.4 Implementing the Youth Treatment Order Visitor role
- 4.5 Responding to, and implementing, OPCAT NPM obligations.

# Critical enablers

We will support the achievement of these priorities by paying attention to and continuing to work on the following:



Embedding cultural business into every aspect of our work

Enhancing collaboration to maximise all available resources, skills and strengths within our team

Strong partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders and allies, including the media, by maintaining commitment to regular communication and engagement that is aligned to our strategic priorities

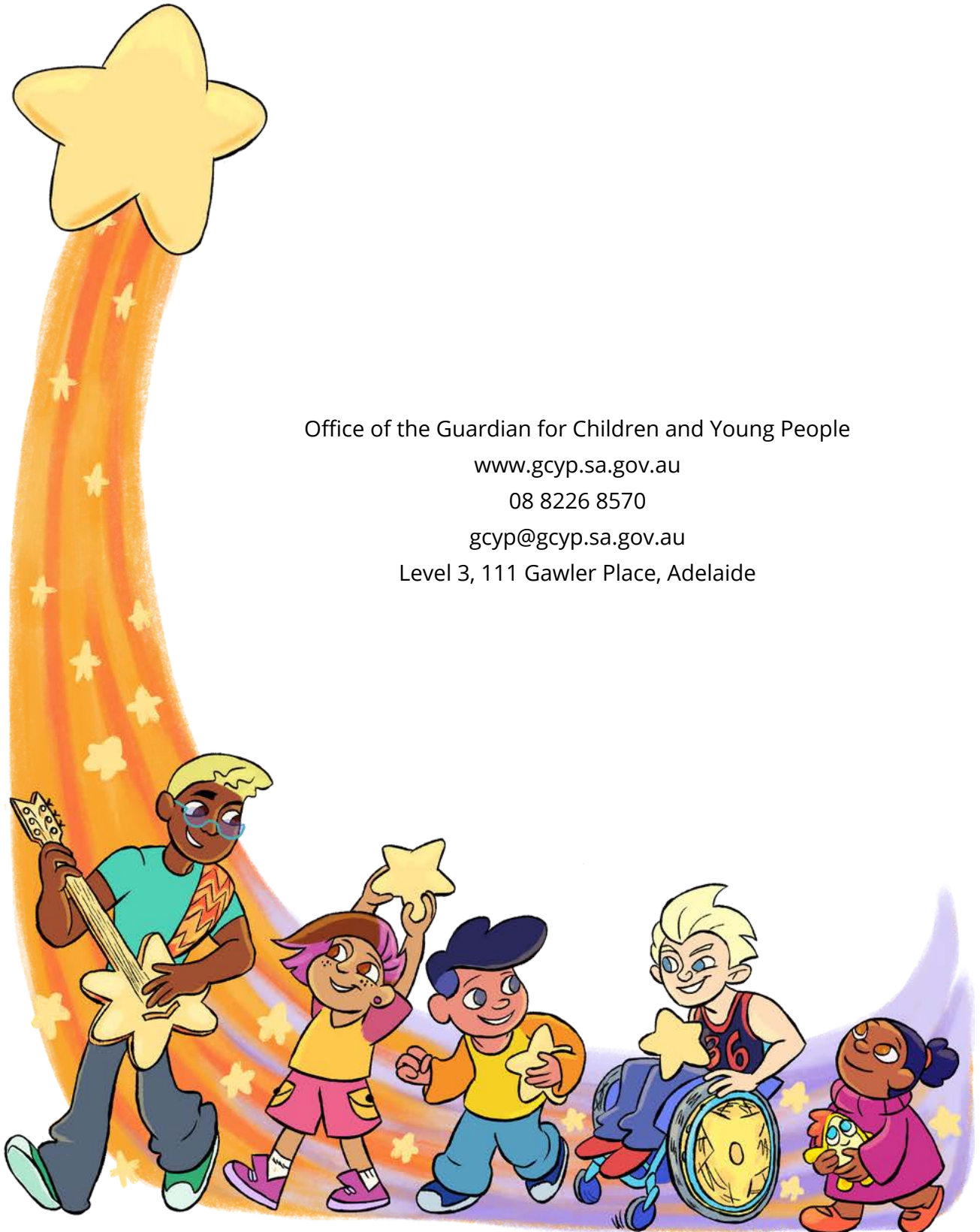
Improved systems and processes for data capture, analysis and management



**Guardian**  
for Children and  
Young People



**Training  
Centre**  
Visitor



Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People

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