

Released 21 August 2024

Meeting Communiqué – 5 August 2024

On 5 August 2024, the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates (ANZCCGA) came together virtually. Members acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which they work and recognised First Nations peoples' continuing connection to lands, waters and sky. The ANZCCGA pay their deep respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori Elders, past and present, and children and young people.

Throughout the meeting, members shared their jurisdictional activities in respect of promoting and advocating for the best interests of children and young people, and progressing collective action to improve outcomes for First Nations children and young people in alignment with the [ANZCCGA's 11 Advocacy Priorities](#). The following matters were also a key focus of discussion for this meeting:

Child Justice Statutory Report

The National Children's Commissioner provided an update on her project which is exploring reforms in youth justice systems across Australia, focusing on evidence-based approaches and human rights protection.

Australia Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA)

An overview of the Australian Child and Youth Wellbeing Atlas (ACYWA) australianchildatlas.com was presented by A/Prof Rebecca Glauert (University of Western Australia) and Marketa Reeves (Project Manager). The ACYWA is a crucial data resource that maps health and wellbeing information for Australians aged 0 to 24, allowing for the visualisation, analysis, and monitoring of metrics across communities. It aims to foster better outcomes for children by providing equitable access to this data, and includes domains such as safety, learning, material basics, participation, health, and identity.

Implementation of Child Safe Standards

ANZCCGA is concerned about the inconsistent progress and slow implementation of recommendations from the *Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse*, especially regarding the Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme in some jurisdictions. ANZCCGA advocates for greater consistency across jurisdictions by aligning key messages and expectations as well as establishing a national evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of child safety measures for children and young people.

Final Report of the Inquiry 'Holding on to Our Future'

ANZCCGA were briefed by South Australia (SA) Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People - April Lawrie on her Inquiry 'Holding on to Our Future'. The two-year inquiry reviewed the application of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle with Aboriginal child removals in South Australia. The full report was tabled in the South Australian parliament 5th June 2024 providing 48 findings and 32 recommendations, inclusive of proposed amendments to the child protection legislation, the call for Aboriginal Kinship Care Legislation and a health service model of care for unborn child concerns. The crisis of Aboriginal child removals was also raised by

Aboriginal rights advocates involving Commissioner Lawrie at the UN Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (EMRIP) 17th Session in Geneva in July 2024. The importance of Aboriginal self-determination in addressing the crisis of Aboriginal child removals became one of the EMRIP proposals to the UN Human Rights Council. Full report on [CACYP-Inquiry_Final-Report_14052024.pdf](#) and <https://cacyp.com.au/global-call-for-action-on-aboriginal-child-removals-in-australia/>

Moving Cage to Cage

The New South Wales (NSW) Advocate for Children and Young People, Zoe Robinson, briefed ANZCCGA on her *Special Inquiry into Children and Young People in Alternative Care Arrangements* (ACAs). Report highlights that ACAs (which include hotels, motels, and other emergency out-of-home care (OOHC) placements) are not suitable for children and young people and recommends creating a strategy to eliminate their use and provide appropriate support for those affected. Full report on <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/special-inquiry>

2022 School Can't Inquiry by Senate Education and Employment Committees

In December 2022, [ANZCCGA jointly submitted to the Senate Inquiry](#), advocating for suitable channels for children and young people to participate. So far, there has been no evidence that such mechanisms were established. ANZCCGA calls on efforts and research to address school refusal in a manner that is child-focused and protects the rights of those affected.

Social Media Ban for children and young people under 16 years

The ANZCCGA highlighted the necessity of incorporating children and young people and their perspectives on all matters affecting them including the proposed social media ban. Members also discussed the importance of an educative approach that is tailored to the different ages and stages of children and young people's development.

Anti-Poverty Week

ANZCCGA is highly concerned about the continued increase in children living in poverty and agreed to support Anti- Poverty Week and the call for a National Child Poverty Reduction Bill.

Further information about matters raised in this communique can be sought from the ANZCCGA Chair: Jacqueline McGowan-Jones | WA Commissioner for Children and Young People (www.cryp.wa.gov.au)

Communique signatories – 5 August 2024

- **Anne Hollonds, National Children's Commissioner**
- **Claire Achmad, Chief Children's Commissioner (NZ)**
- **Isabelle Crompton, Acting- Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas)**
- **Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)**
- **Jodie Griffiths-Cook, Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)**
- **Zoe Robinson, Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW)**
- **Steve Kinmond OAM, NSW Children's Guardian**
- **Shahleena Musk, Children's Commissioner (NT)**
- **Luke Twyford, Commissioner (Qld)**
- **Natalie Lewis, Commissioner (Qld)**
- **April Lawrie, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (SA)**
- **Shona Reid, Guardian for Children and Young People (SA)**
- **Helen Connolly, Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)**
- **Liana Buchanan, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People (Vic)**
- **Meena Singh, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (Vic)**
- **Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA)**

NOTE: Specific ANZCCGA Communiques are endorsed by individual members as indicated.