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Meeting Communiqué – 12 February 2025

The Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates (ANZCCGA) acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which they work and recognised First Nations peoples' continuing connection to culture. 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 children and young people.

The following matters were also a key focus of discussion for this meeting:

Welcome to Acting National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People – Lil Gordon

The Acting National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, Lil Gordon, was formally welcomed to ANZCCGA. Commissioner Gordon is a Ngemba woman from Brewarrina, NSW and has extensive experience in Government, and non-government sectors.

Review of the 11 Key priorities for ACCGA

Members agreed that the current 11 priorities will be reviewed and discussed in detail during the next meeting. This review aims to assess progress and identify areas for further focus and improvement in addressing the needs of Australia children and young people. In particular, the members noted the need to include the issues relating to the significant breaches of Children Rights and approaches for collaborative action into the future.

Call for Royal Commission into child sexual abuse

Members raised concerns about the call for a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people. There is a need for an equitable approach to addressing the needs of all Australia children and young people. Over the past 12 years, more than 2,000 recommendations have been made across multiple commissions and inquiries – see report [Improving the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children | Australian Institute of Family Studies](#). Members believe the focus should shift towards action on these recommendations and that resources for such an inquiry would be better spent on implementing the recommendations from previous inquiries and supporting children and young people in more direct, meaningful ways.

IVY Study (Intimate Partner Violence in Young People)

Elena Campbell, Associate Director of Research, Advocacy, and Policy at RMIT, presented to members the research project into intimate partner violence among young people.

Youth justice and incarceration

Members of the Australian Children’s Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates (ACCGA) prepared a joint submission to the Inquiry into Australia’s youth justice and incarceration system. The Senate Legal Constitutional Affairs committee subsequently invited ACCGA to provide evidence at a public hearing on Monday, 3 February 2025. Full session online - [Inquiry into Australia’s youth justice and incarceration system - YouTube](#). Members in attendance are also finalising responses to questions taken on notice.

Update on human rights advocacy in response to recent legislative changes

The National Children’s Commissioner provided an update on the joint approach taken for the inquiry into youth justice, which has gained significant media attention and advanced a strong human rights advocacy strategy for children. A key aspect of this effort involved engaging with various UN committees, including a meeting with the Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in Geneva. The Commissioner called for national leadership and reform, with a focus on creating lasting systemic change.

Overview on social media restriction bill implementation

An update was provided on the overview of the interlocking and complex elements of the social media restriction bill implementation by the e-Safety Commission. The Commission outlined the process for stakeholder engagement, which will be the next step towards implementation.

Update on the Child Rights Report

Commissioner Lewis presented an update on the review of Queensland Child Rights Report “*Every Child. Every Right. Every Time*”. The process involved a number of expert contributors, with the final report incorporating independent chapters from the UNCRC committee. A key focus of the consultation was on understanding the enjoyment of rights by children, highlighting the importance of collecting and speaking directly to children to ensure their voices are heard in the process of advancing Child Rights.

Jurisdictional Discussions

Members provided updates on key activities and concerns in their respective jurisdictions. All members are highly concerned about ongoing breaches of human rights of children and young people in both Australia and New Zealand.

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

Communique signatories – 12 February 2025

- **Anne Hollonds, National Children's Commissioner**
- **Claire Achmad, Chief Children's Commissioner (NZ)**
- **Isabelle Crompton, Acting- Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas)**
- **Jodie Griffiths-Cook, Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)**
- **Zoe Robinson, Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW)**
- **Shahleena Musk, Children's Commissioner (NT)**
- **Luke Twyford, Commissioner (Qld)**
- **Natalie Lewis, Commissioner (Qld)**
- **Shayna Smith, Public Guardian (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.