

Communique – Meeting 18 and 19 November 2013, Sydney

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) met in Sydney on 18 and 19 November 2013.

The ACCG aims to promote children's rights and participation and ensure the best interests of children are considered in public policy and program development across Australia.

Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People

ACCG members welcomed the new Victorian Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, Andrew Jackomos. Mr Jackomos, who is a Victorian Koori, informed the meeting that he was appointed in July 2013 for a 5 year term.

Mr Jackomos also sits on the Victorian Child Death Review Committee, the Aboriginal Justice Forum, and the Victorian indigenous Family Violence Partnership Forum.

National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children

ACCG noted that the National Framework Implementation Working Group (NFIWG) and the ACCG have agreed to work together on information-sharing mechanisms in relation to issues of interest to the ACCG. In doing so, ACCG members will identify particular areas of the Framework for future consultation.

ARACY National Plan for Young Australians

The ACCG congratulates the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People (ARACY) on the launch of a National Action Plan for Young Australians.

The NSW and NT Commissioners will continue to liaise with ARACY on the implementation of the Plan.

Charter of Rights: Young People in Youth Justice Detention

The ACCG considered a draft ACCG Model Charter of Rights for Young People in Youth Justice Detention. It is anticipated that the Charter will be completed in early 2014 and will assist the development of charters in States and Territories.

Children and Young People in Immigration and Community detention

The ACCG agreed to review the work that has been done across jurisdictions to monitor conditions for children and young people in immigration and community detention and identify opportunities for further strategic work.

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture

The ACCG agreed to continue to monitor progress in implementing the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture, which provides for international monitoring of conditions for all people who are in detention and important rights and protections for children and young people who are detained.

Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People in Out of Home Care

The ACCG discussed and noted similar outcomes for children and young people in Out of Home Care in each State and Territory and agreed to continue to monitor trends.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

The ACCG welcomed Rod Best, General Counsel to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and Pia Vandezandt, Director of Counselling and Support, who gave a presentation on the work of the Royal Commission.

The presenters sought the assistance of Commissioners and Guardians in relation to the Royal Commission's future consultations with children and young people on what makes them feel safe. ACCG acknowledged the comprehensive scope of the work of the Royal Commission.

Child Safe Organisations

The ACCG made a submission to the Royal Commission on the Principles of Child Safe Organisations and discussed the critical importance of a wide range of measures to keep children safe. These include Working with Children Checks, hearing from children and young people and strong participation of children and young people in the development of policy and procedures.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ACCG will be held in Melbourne on 19 and 20 May 2014.

For further information on the ACCG and the work of the Children's Commissioners and Guardians from across Australia, please contact the ACCG National Convenor, Bernie Geary, (03) 86015886.