



## Meeting Communiqué: 24-25 November 2025

*(released 1 December 2025)*

Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians, and Advocates (ANZCCGA) acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which they work, recognising First Nations peoples' continuing connection to Country and culture and its importance in bringing strength and meaning to the lives of First Nations children and young people. ANZCCGA members pay deep respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori Elders, past and present, and to the emerging leadership capacity of First Nations children and young people.

The ANZCCGA met face-to-face on Ngunnawal Country in Canberra from 24-25 November 2025. The meeting was co-chaired by Zoë Robinson, Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW) and Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA).

The meeting reaffirmed the ANZCCGA's shared commitment to upholding the rights, safety, and wellbeing of all children and young people across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand, with a particular focus on those experiencing systemic disadvantage.

The group expressed gratitude to Auntie Violet Sheridan for her heartfelt Welcome to Country and to the Yukembruk Ngunnawal Dance Academy for their moving cultural performance.

Members also expressed their deepest thanks to outgoing Commissioner Singh and Advocate Robinson for their exceptional contributions to improving the lives of children and young people across their jurisdictions. A warm welcome was extended to new Commissioners, who communicated their enthusiasm for joining the ANZCCGA and contributing to its efforts.

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. More specific matters covered during the meeting are presented below.

### **Engagement with federal Members of Parliament:**

ANZCCGA members were pleased to have secured the opportunity to meet with Attorney-General Rowland and Minister McCarthy to discuss key issues affecting children and young people. This marks an important first step in engaging collectively with our federal Members of Parliament.

### **Perceptions of children and young people**

Members expressed frustration at the continuing negative narrative of children and young people as being problematic, especially in the context of youth crime, reflecting on how this is being experienced by children and young people themselves and how it reinforces inaccurate perceptions and stereotyping. It is imperative that as a society we value our children and young people and promote opportunities to share positive narratives and reflections on their contributions to society. Members emphasised the importance of hearing and amplifying the views and perspectives of children and young people in discussions and decision-making about matters that impact their lives.

### **UN Youth Representative Listening Tour:**

Members reflected on the powerful insights shared by the UN Youth Representative following her Listening Tour. In Satara's own words, her recently released report "aims to present 'the world through the eyes of young people', capturing the living experiences, hopes and concerns of over 5000 young Australians, from all states and territories." The issues raised by Australia's children and young people include the care-to-prison pipeline, climate displacement, lack of safe spaces, and systemic exclusion of young people with disability and refugee backgrounds. Members committed to amplifying youth voices and incorporating these recommendations into collective advocacy.

### **Youth justice reform**

The group reiterated its strong position on raising the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) to at least 14 years of age, and advancing holistic, therapeutic responses. Members commended the ACT Government's Therapeutic Support Panel as an innovative model for early intervention and wraparound support. Ongoing advocacy will be furthered through a joint submission (led by the ACT) to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's youth justice and incarceration system with members welcoming the revised Terms of Reference and their focus on children's rights and Australia's international treaty obligations.

### **Concerns about child sexual exploitation and harmful behaviour:**

Members expressed deep concern about the growing prevalence of sexual exploitation of children (particularly those in care), and the criminalisation of harmful sexual behaviour without fully understanding the broader context surrounding the systemic vulnerabilities that enable harm. The discussion emphasised trauma-informed approaches, collaboration with law enforcement and industry, and the need for national consistency in prevention and response.

### **Presentation by UNICEF, the Child Rights taskforce, and 54 Reasons:**

Members heard from the Child Rights Taskforce, UNICEF, and 54 Reasons who discussed the State of Australia's Children report, the proposed Blueprint for a National Children's Plan, much-needed youth justice reform, and upcoming UNCRC reporting processes. Opportunities for collective advocacy were discussed, and members reaffirmed their commitment to coordinated, rights-based approaches and to strengthening accountability across jurisdictions. A media release has been issued by ANZCCGA members welcoming the release of the State of Australia's Children Report, albeit while flagging concerns about the findings and calling for urgent action to address the intersectional factors contributing to compounding disadvantage.

### **Social media legislation**

Members acknowledged the leadership of the eSafety Commissioner in implementing the social media delay legislation and discussed strategies to support children and young people themselves, (as well as parents, educators, and communities) in navigating digital safety. Members remain committed to sharing resources and engaging Youth Advisory Councils in ongoing policy development.

***Further information*** about matters raised in this communique can be sought from ANZCCGA's newly appointed co-chairs:

- Sue-Anne Hunter, National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People (<https://www.ncatsicyp.gov.au/contact-us>)
- Jodie Griffiths-Cook, ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner ([Contact Jodie - HRC](#))

**Communique signatories:**

- *Deb Tsorbaris, National Children's Commissioner*
- *Sue-Anne Hunter, National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People*
- *Julie Inman-Grant, Australian eSafety Commissioner*
- *Jodie Griffiths-Cook, Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)*
- *Barbara Causon, Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)*
- *Zoë Robinson, Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW)*
- *Rachael Ward, Acting Children's Guardian (NSW)*
- *Shahleena Musk, Children's Commissioner (NT)*
- *Luke Twyford, Principal Commissioner (QLD)*
- *Shayna Smith, Public Guardian (QLD)*
- *Shona Reid, Guardian for Children and Young People, and Training Centre Visitor (SA)*
- *Dale Agius, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (SA)*
- *Dr. Kylie Heneker, Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)*
- *Isabelle Crompton, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People (TAS)*
- *Meena Singh, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (VIC)*
- *Argiri Alisandratos, Acting Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People (VIC)*
- *Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA)*

**Not in attendance:**

- *Dr Claire Achmad, New Zealand Children's Commissioner*
- *Natalie Lewis, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioner (QLD)*
- *Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)*

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