

ANZCCGA MEETING COMMUNIQUE

7 August 2026

On 7 August 2026, Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates (ANZCCGA) met virtually to discuss emerging issues affecting children and young people in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. Co-chair Sue-Anne Hunter, National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People opened the meeting by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which members work and recognised First Nations peoples' continuing connection to lands, waters and sky. ANZCCGA members pay deep respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori Elders, past and present, and recognise First Nations children and young people in their emerging capacity as leaders and knowledge holders.

Through the meeting, members endorsed strategic priorities for the year ahead, and progressed governance and operational arrangements following recent changes to the Secretariat. Members reaffirmed their shared commitment to promoting and protecting the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people across all jurisdictions.

Members welcomed Dallas Widdicombe, Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (VIC), Roslyn Cornish, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People (TAS), Bronwyn Haack, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People (NT) and Sue Macdonald, Acting Guardian (SA) and acknowledged the significant contributions of outgoing members Dr Clare Achmad (NZ), Natalie Lewis (QLD), Shona Reid (SA) and Shahleena Musk (NT) in advancing the rights, safety, and wellbeing of children and young people across Australia and New Zealand.

Endorsement of Strategic Priorities

Members formally endorsed ANZCCGA's Key Priorities for 2026 – 2027, establishing a framework for collective advocacy, engagement and collaboration across jurisdictions. In doing so, members reaffirmed the importance of maintaining a strong and nationally consistent voice on issues affecting children and young people while recognising the diverse legislative, policy and operational contexts in which members work.

The endorsed priorities will now be progressed for collective action through ANZCCGA's Policy Officers Group. To support delivery of these strategic priorities, members agreed that further work on the Communications Strategy is needed to facilitate a coordinated approach to collective messaging across jurisdictions and endorsed a proposal to have the Policy Officers and Communications Officers Groups lead this work.

Governance and Operating Model

Members endorsed ANZCCGA's Operating Model as a living document that will continue to evolve to support the ANZCCGA's collaborative work and the implementation of new Secretariat arrangements. Discussion emphasised the importance of practical, efficient, and responsive governance arrangements that strengthen continuity and collaboration across jurisdictions.

Members also welcomed the establishment of a dedicated secretariat to support governance, communications, information management and member engagement.

Insights from across jurisdictions

Members received jurisdictional updates that reinforced the value of ANZCCGA as a forum for sharing learnings, identifying common challenges and opportunities, and discussing emerging policy, legislative and practice developments affecting children and young people across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

A key area of discussion was implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to the standard of active efforts. Members noted ongoing challenges in translating legislative requirements into consistent practice and emphasised the need for greater clarity to ensure effective implementation and accountability, and culturally safe outcomes. Discussion highlighted the importance of centring the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, strengthening the role of Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and developing practical guidance to enhance workforce capability.

Members noted collective advocacy undertaken through the Australian Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates (ACCGA), including correspondence to the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) calling for strengthened national leadership on child safety reforms. The letter high-lighted the importance of maintaining nationally consistent child safeguarding frameworks, upholding Closing the Gap commitments, and supporting implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle to the standard of Active Efforts.

Members also noted papers provided by Commissioner Luke Twyford on recent child safeguarding and child protection reforms in Queensland.

Future Work

Members agreed to continue pursuing opportunities for national collaboration on key reform priorities (including implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle), collective advocacy on issues of national significance, and the promotion of children's rights-based approaches across policy, service delivery and decision-making.

Next Meeting

The next ANZCCGA meeting will be hosted by the South Australian jurisdiction in November 2026.

Further information

Enquiries relating to matters raised in this communique can be sought from ANZCCGA Co-Chairs:

- Sue-Anne Hunter, National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People ([Contact us | National Commission for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People](#))
- Jodie Griffiths-Cook, ACT Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner ([Contact Jodie - HRC](#))

Communique signatories:

- Deb Tsorbaris, National Children's Commissioner
- Barbara Causon, Acting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)
- Katherine McKernan, Advocate for Children and Young People (VIC)
- Rachael Ward, Children's Guardian (NSW)
- Bianca Duffy, Deputy Children's Guardian (NSW)
- Shayna Smith, Public Guardian (QLD)
- Luke Twyford, Commissioner Children and Young People (QLD)
- Sue MacDonald, Acting Guardian for Children and Young People (SA)
- Dale Aguis, Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)
- Dr Kylie Keneker, Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)
- Roslyn Cornish, Interim Commissioner for Children and Young People (TAS)
- Tracy Beaton, Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People (VIC)
- Dallas Widdicombe, Commissioner for Aboriginal and Children and Young People
- Bronwyn Haack, Acting Children's Commissioner (NT)

Not in attendance:

- **Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA)**
- **Julie Inman-Grant, eSafety Commissioner**
- **Jane Searle, Children's Commissioner Aotearoa New Zealand**

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