

14 February 2023

Media statement

Appointment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people sends powerful message to families and communities.

Yesterday's announcement by the Federal Government of a new National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People is a turning point for children and families across Australia.

The appointment has been championed by the Australian Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates (ACCGA), a collective group dedicated to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of children and young people across the nation.

Key supporters were SNAICC and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safe and Supported Leadership Group, many of whom are First Nations Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates, spearheaded the campaign to establish the role.

Speaking on behalf of the group, WA Commissioner for Children and Young People, Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, highlighted the significance of the announcement.

"The National Commissioner will have the power to advocate for policy change and drive much-needed discussion and engagement around issues that impact First Nations children and young people.

"Too many of our children and young people suffer from overrepresentation in the youth justice and out of home care systems, are disengaged from education or facing significant health and mental health challenges.

"It is critical that we reverse this appalling situation before we lose another generation.

"This appointment will ensure First Nations children and young people are better supported to live the life they deserve and that families are strengthened by solutions designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"So much work has gone on behind the scenes to make this appointment a reality and I would like to thank my ACCGA colleagues for continuing to campaign for change that will benefit our children and young people now and for future generations."

"We are thrilled the Federal Government has listened to our calls for the establishment of this critical role."

Endorsed by the Australian Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates

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About Australia's children's commissioners, guardians and advocates:

Australia's children's commissioners, guardians and advocates are a collective group dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people across the nation. Comprising experts and leaders in child advocacy, they collaborate on initiatives that empower and support children and young people in Australia.



Barbara Causon

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Advocate, Australian Capital Territory

Jodie Griffiths-Cook

Children and Young People Commissioner, Australian Capital Territory

Shahleena Musk

Children's Commissioner, Northern Territory



COMMISSIONER FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



April Lawrie

Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People, South Australia

Helen Connolly

Commissioner for Children and Young People, South Australia

Shona Reid

Guardian for Children and Young People, South Australia



Leanne McLean

Commissioner for Children and Young People, Tasmania

Anne Hollands

Australian National Children's Commissioner

Shayna Smith

Office of the Public Guardian Queensland



Luke Twyford

Principal Commissioner, Queensland Family and Child Commission

Natalie Lewis

Commissioner, Queensland Family and Child Commission

Liana Buchanan

Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People Victoria



Office of the
Children's Guardian

Office of the
Advocate for Children
and Young People

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Meenah Singh
Commissioner for Aboriginal
Children and Young People Victoria

Steve Kinmond
Children's Guardian
News South Wales

Zoë Robinson
Advocate for Children and Young
People
New South Wales



Commissioner for
Children and Young People
Western Australia

Jacqueline McGowan-Jones
Commissioner for Children and
Young People, Western Australia

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