



ACCG Meeting Communique

**25-26th May 2016
Brisbane, Queensland**

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) comprises national, state and territory children and young people commissioners, guardians and advocates.

The ACCG aims to promote and protect the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people in Australia. The ACCG strives to ensure the best interests of children and young people are considered in public policy and program development across Australia.

The ACCG met in Brisbane on the 25th and 26th May 2016.

Welcome to new member agencies and representatives.

The ACCG welcomed Julia Duffy, Public Guardian, Office of the Public Guardian, Queensland and Simon Schrapel, Chair, Council of the Care for Children, South Australia as new members of the ACCG. Both new member agencies are working in their respective states to improve the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and bring a wealth of experience to the group.

The ACCG also welcomes newly appointed representatives Liana Buchanan (Victoria), Tammy Williams (Queensland), Amanda Shaw (South Australia) and Jodie Griffiths-Cook (Australian Capital Territory).

Child Safe Organisations

The ACCG acknowledged the importance of the public health approach to child safety and wellbeing as reflected in the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children.

Each ACCG member has committed to work within their jurisdictions to promote and advocate for a cross government recognition of everyone's responsibility for promoting general wellbeing and protecting the safety of all children and young people. Additionally, members will work together to build cross-jurisdictional partnerships to drive recognition at a national level in particular through the National Framework. The group noted important links to the *National plan to reduce violence against women and their children*.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), Family Matters

The ACCG received a briefing from Gerry Moore, Chief Executive Officer and the SNAICC team regarding the *Family Matters: Kids Safe in Culture, Not in Care* campaign. Family Matters is a national campaign to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people grow up safe and cared for in their family, community and culture. SNAICC is currently in the process of meeting with agencies across Australia to share the principles and goals of Family Matters and to draw on the expertise, strengths and passions of individuals and organisations.

Nationally, in 2014, 35% of all children in out of home care identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, despite representing only 6% of Australian children. The ACCG has made a

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commitment to working to address the issue of overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care.

The ACCG members have committed to working with SNAICC to determine future involvement and support.

National Sorry Day

The ACCG acknowledge the anniversary of the apology from Prime Minister Rudd in 2013 and acknowledge the babies, children and young people who were removed from their families' care. We also acknowledge their siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and community and the loss they experienced and continue to experience.

The ACCG also wishes to acknowledge the impact of the previous policies on all Australians as we come to terms with our shared history, learn from our past and move towards the future together.

Youth Justice

The ACCG members remain concerned about the ongoing use of restraints, disciplinary regimes and other practices in youth detention facilities across Australia. Young people within youth detention are one of the most vulnerable cohorts and are in need of special protections. Behaviour management planning and responses in youth detention facilities across Australia need to uphold with respect to the rights and dignity of young people.

The ACCG will continue to drive policy change and advocate for improved mechanisms for managing the behaviour of young people in detention, and noted the recent paper developed by the ACCG which documented the current practices around Australia.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the ACCG will be held in Canberra, in November 2016.

