



Policy Position Statement: **Child Protection**

Principles

The Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006 (WA) establishes that the Commissioner's paramount concern must be the best interests of children and young people in Western Australia (WA). The Commissioner undertakes research with children and young people to ensure their voices inform the activities and priorities of the Commissioner.

Children and young people must be informed of their rights, and their views should be given serious consideration when making decisions that affect them. Significant international evidence demonstrates the value of integrating lived experience into the development of policy, programs and services.

The Commissioner advocates to uphold the United Nations (UN) Conventions on the Rights of the Child (CRC); the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); the Rights of Indigenous People (DRIP); the UN International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (UN ICERD), and the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy 2021-2030 which is dedicated to safeguarding every child from violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

Position

The Commissioner strongly advocates for a child protection system that prioritises children's wellbeing in every decision and action that affects their lives. The Commissioner believes in empowering children by involving them in choices about their own lives, using evidence-based methods, and staying ahead of emerging challenges.

The ongoing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in out-of-home care (OOHC) in WA remains a critical and unresolved issue within our child protection system.

In line with national and international evidence, the Commissioner advocates for child protection approaches to be focused on the following seven priorities:

- Early intervention and family support strategies.
- Stability and connection planning.
- Improving wellbeing and health outcomes.
- Support for young people leaving OOHC.
- Support for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) children in OOHC.
- Addressing the cross-over from child protection to youth justice.
- Independent advocacy for children and young people in the child protection system.

The Commissioner will prioritise additional issues of concern to provide evidence-informed recommendations to Government as needs arise.

