



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSIONER



Consulting with Children & Young People

Children and young people live in Canberra, they go to school in Canberra, they use public transport, they shop, and they play in Canberra. Children and young people are just as much a part of Canberra as the adults who also live here, and the the Children & Young People Commissioner (CYPC) believes that it is important for children and young people to have their say on issues that affect them.

This view is supported by a number of ACT Government policy commitments.

For example, one of the key goals of the ACT Young People's Plan 2009-2014 is to 'encourage and support young people to participate in building our community', with the Plan also 'ensuring that young people have a say about issues that affect them'.

The ACT Children's Plan 2004-2014 notes the Government's commitment to 'communities that encourage and enable children to participate and contribute to community life', and the Plan aims to make sure that 'everyone knows that children are important and that we listen to what children say'.

The ACT Government Community Engagement Manual notes that 'community engagement is more equitable and effective if it includes diverse groups and reaches those who find it difficult to connect with government, such as young people'.

The involvement of children and young people in decision making is also supported by ACT and International law.

Specifically, Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that children and young people should be consulted on issues which affect them, and that their views should be seriously considered.

The UNCRC is incorporated into the ACT legislative framework by the ACT *Human Rights Act 2004*, which states that, as far as possible, a Territory law must be interpreted in a way which is consistent with human rights, and that international law may be considered in interpreting a human right. Under the Human Rights Act, there is also a positive obligation on public authorities within the ACT to act consistently with human rights.

More importantly, however, the CYPC consults with children and young people because of the strong belief that children and young people know the most about what is important to them, and that it is children and young people who frequently have the best ideas, the newest ideas, about how to change things and make things better for children and young people.

For further information, please phone the CYPC on 6205 2222, or email at ACTkids@act.gov.au.



ACT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
Australian Capital Territory

THE ACT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSIONER IS ONE OF THREE COMMISSIONERS WITHIN THE ACT HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

To contact the Children & Young People Commissioner:

- + visit Level 4 12 Moore Street Canberra City
- + phone 6205 2222
- + email ACTkids@act.gov.au
- + web ACTkids.act.gov.au