

RIGHTS IN ACTION

A newsletter for ACT children and young people about their rights, safety, and wellbeing



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What's new?

- On Saturday 3 May 2025, Australia will be voting for who will lead the Australian Government for the next three years. Find out more on page 2.
- Can you see smoke in the hills? The ACT government is doing controlled burns to help keep us safe from bushfires. You can find out where they are doing them at [Parks ACT](#).

Did you know...

- No country in the world allows people under 16 years old to vote, but there are a few who allow voting for 16-and-17-year-olds. [Here is a list of those countries.](#)
- This year will be Australia's biggest Federal Election so far, with more people enrolled to vote than ever before!

Yuma! Welcome to April Rights in ACTION. This month we are exploring your right to take part in public life. For adults, voting is one way they experience this right, but taking part in public life is your right too! Learn more about what you can do to be heard by the Government on page 2.

There are also some fun activities and tips for looking after your wellbeing during term 2 that college students, Lily and Claudia, put together while they were with us for work experience.

As always you can let me know what you would like in this newsletter. I would love to hear from you!!



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Your right to take part in public life

You have the right to take part in public life. When you are 18 years or older you can vote in elections, have your say on community issues, be elected into the Government, and be considered for a job in the Government.


Section 17 ACT Human Rights Act 2004

The Australian Federal Election will be held on Saturday 3 May 2025. An election is how Australians choose who will lead the Government.


In Australia every citizen who is 18 years or older has the right to vote. Many people think that the voting age should be lowered to 16 years and are trying to make this happen. You can learn about what they are doing at [Make it 16](#).

Even when you are too young to vote, there are still things you can do to have your views and ideas considered too.


Share your views




Talk to the adults in your family about what you think the Government should do and why you think this is important.




Tell Jodie, your Children and Young People Commissioner what you think is important. You can write her an email, call her, or let her know your thoughts through the CYPC's Young Thinker Forum.



Write a letter to your local politician to tell them what you think is important for children and young people in Australia.




You have the right to join other people in groups that take action on an issue or make your views heard. This includes peaceful protest.




You can join organisations that work on issues that are important to you. You can volunteer or support them to write letters to decision makers.


How it could change things




This can help adults understand more about the issues and challenges children and young people face. Knowing about your experiences may help us be better informed when we vote.




When Jodie knows about the issues that are important to you and other children and young people, she can tell the Government how to make the ACT better for you and your peers.



When politicians know what is important to you, it means they can consider this when they are making decisions.



When people publicly protest, it draws attention to an issue and tells the government that a lot of people care about it.



Organisations that have expert knowledge on specific issues can have a big impact by showing how many people support them about that issue.

Tricky words

Citizen: A person who is recognised by law to belong to a country.

Election: A time when people vote to choose members of our Government.

Politician: A person who was chosen by voters to be a member of the Parliament.

Why is voting compulsory in Australia?

If you are an Australian citizen and old enough to vote, the law says you need to put your name on the electoral roll and vote in elections. You have to vote unless there is a good reason that stops you (like a natural disaster) and you can only vote once.

This is to make sure that everyone has a say about who should govern our country. Before this law was introduced, there was an election when only 60 per cent of people enrolled to vote, actually voted. That meant 40 per cent of voters did not have their say on who should make decisions that affect us all.

Some people think voting should be optional because if you do not want to vote for any of the people running in the election, you should not have to. What do you think?



What would you stand for?

If you could form your own political party and run in the election, what would your party stand up for? If you won an election and became part of the Government, is there an issue you think other people would want you to fix?

Design the ad for your political party! Tell us what the main issues you want to work on are and how you think you can fix them. Convince us to vote for you!

This worksheet will give you some ideas about how to do this. You can also look at this factsheet to find out more about how elections work.

Time to protest

Not interested in working in the government?
Why not raise an issue instead?

To create your issues poster:

- * State your key messages.
- * Say why this is important to you or others.

Tell us what issue you think the Government should be paying attention to.

Send your election ad or poster to us so we know what issues are important to you. Email actkids@act.gov.au



Orange Chocolate Chip Cookies

Do you have left over Easter eggs? This recipe is a fun way to use them up! You can break them and use them instead of chocolate chips. No Easter eggs? No problem! Just use chocolate chips instead.

Ingredients

125g butter
¼ cup of white sugar
½ cup of brown sugar
1 egg
2 cups of self-raising flour
Rind from 1 orange
200g packet of milk chocolate chips (or broken Easter eggs)



Method

- Preheat oven to 190 degrees.
- Grease a baking tray (this means wipe some butter over the whole thing)
- Mix the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar together and beat until smooth.
- Add the egg and beat the mixture until fully mixed together.
- Add the flour to the mixture, one large scoop at a time, and stir in. Once mixed, the mixture should roll easily into smooth round balls. If crumbly, add some milk (up to a tablespoon) a little bit at a time until the mix holds together.
- Mix in the orange rind and chocolate chips.
- Roll the mixture into ping-pong sized balls, place on a greased baking tray, and press with fork prongs.
- Bake for 10 minutes or until lightly golden.



Autumn Activities in Canberra

Our recent work experience students came up with ideas for you to do on Autumn days. Canberra is beautiful in Autumn; you can be outside in the sun and then do warm activities inside when it gets cold. Here are a few ideas. Thanks Lily and Claudia!

Canberra Arboretum

A trip to the Canberra Arboretum is an exciting adventure! You can explore and play in the giant forests and nature themed playgrounds.

Leaf art

Leaf art is where you use fallen leaves to make beautiful, nature-inspired designs, whether through pressing, painting, or arranging them into pictures. Collect them on a walk and then let your creativity soar!

Read a book

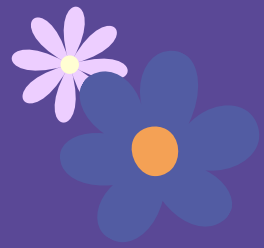
Cuddle up in a cosy blanket on a crisp autumn day, with the sound of rustling leaves around you, and let a great book take you on an unforgettable adventure!

Signature hot chocolate

Create your own hot chocolate recipe, start with a basic hot chocolate (warm milk and chocolate powder) then add your personal touch – add cinnamon, or marshmallows, whipped cream, or orange essence. Get an adult to help you find some ingredients.



Wellbeing Matters



5 tips to balance your wellbeing

The holidays are over, and the school term is starting again. It is a good time to think of ways you will look after yourself over the winter term. Our work experience students, Lily and Claudia, thought of some easy ways to look after your mental health. Write to us or send through a picture to let us know some of the things you do.




Tip #1 Be kind!

Being kind to yourself and those around you helps everyone feel happier and more supported. Do not be too hard on yourself — mistakes are part of learning! Try your best and be proud of how far you have come.

Tip #2: Good sleep

Sleep is super important because it helps your body rest, your brain get stronger, and your feelings to stay balanced. When you sleep well, you wake up with more energy, ready to learn and play!




Tip #3 Routine

Having a routine makes your day feel easier and calmer. Doing things like waking up, eating, and going to bed at the same time every day can help your body and mind feel happy!

Tip #4: Be active

Get moving with your friends and family, whether it is running, jumping, or playing games. Being active helps keep your body strong, boosts your mood, and makes you feel happy and healthy every day!



Tip #5: Healthy relationships

Connect with your family and friends, talk to people about how you are feeling and let them know what is going on in your life!

**MENTAL
HEALTH**



first!

