

RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



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Thank you!




Children & Young People Commissioner
ACT Human Rights Commission

We have a new logo and new brand colours! And you helped us choose them. Thank you for answering our survey and having your say on our new look. We love the colours and cannot wait to show you all the new things we are creating!

Did you know...

 11.2 million Australians watched the Matildas play England in the Women's World Cup semi-final, that's 43% of the population!


 July was the hottest month ever recorded on earth. Scientists say greenhouse gasses are to blame. [Read more in Kids News.](#)

 A crocodile cannot stick its tongue out! And tigers have striped skin!



Yuma! This edition of Rights in ACTION is all about the environment and your rights! Children's rights to a healthy environment are being recognised internationally and in the ACT. To celebrate, you can learn more about your environmental rights, what people are doing in the ACT, and how you can join in!

Contact me:  ACTKids@act.gov.au

 Young Thinker Forum
actkids.act.gov.au




THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT




The Convention on the Rights of the Child says children have the right to clean water and a clean environment so you can stay healthy. There are a lot of people around the world who are bringing more attention to the right to a healthy environment. Here are a few things happening.


International

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- Around 155 countries out of 195 recognise the right to a healthy environment.
 - The United Nations (UN) is listening to the millions of children and young people around the world who are demanding that governments do more to protect the environment.
 - They are creating a guideline on how risks to the environment impact children's rights and what governments must do to combat climate change to protect children's rights.
 - This guideline is being shaped by children and young people the UN consulted with in 2022 and the beginning of 2023.
 - [You can find out more by looking at a comic the UN made about it.](#)

Australia

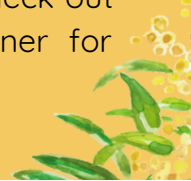
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- At the UN, Australia voted in favour of recognising the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, but...
 - There is no national law in Australia that recognises the right to a healthy and sustainable environment and only one state or territory has committed to creating a law...do you know which one?

The ACT

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- The ACT will be the first state or territory in Australia to recognise the right to a healthy environment in its laws.
 - In 2022, the ACT Government talked to Canberrans about whether we want the right to a healthy environment written into our laws.
 - There was strong support for that to happen so the ACT is planning to change the Human Rights Act to include the right to a healthy environment.
 - This means every law in the ACT will be checked to make sure it supports the right to a healthy environment.

There is a lot of work to do to make sure your right to a healthy environment is protected in the ACT, in Australia and throughout the world. But recognising it **is** your right is an important step.

Adults in the ACT are listening to children's concerns and hopes for our environment. Check out the **[I want to have a future](#)** report from our friend Sophie, the ACT Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment to learn more.



SUSTAINABILITY WITH MISS GABBY AND HER CHICKENS



Our friend Miss Gabby teaches children about nature and sustainability. We talked to her about sustainability, the environment and your rights:

Why is it important for children to get out into nature?

Children's access to nature is something that grown-ups control a lot of the time. I think grown-ups may have forgotten the joys of digging in the dirt or turning over a log to discover roly pollies and worms.

It's important that grown-ups advocate for children's rights to a safe, clean, healthy environment. That environment should be fun too.

What is the best thing about your job?

It's different depending on the season. On a beautiful sunny day, with bare feet on the grass, I love that. I feel happy when I get to be outside with the chickens and the ducks. I love this time of year too because all the bulbs that children planted in 2020 come up again each year. I love that each generation benefits from the efforts of children who came before them. I wish more people knew how capable children are at making the world more beautiful.



Can you tell us a little bit about chickens?

There's something about watching chickens that helps calm children and grown-ups. They are great contributors to sustainability. We put their poop into our compost. We use this compost to grow corn in summer. The children eat the corn and give the scraps to the chickens, who give us eggs and more poop for the compost. Nothing is wasted and everything has something to contribute to the environment if we use it in the right way and at the right time. [Here is a video we made about that.](#)

What is your favourite plant or animal?

My favourite animal is the Muscovy Duck. They are very interested in following me and the children when we dig in the gardens because they eat all the worms and grubs that we find. [Here is a video we made with our ducklings.](#)



What is your advice to children who want to be sustainable?

Being sustainable is actually a very creative act. It is imagining what else something could be good for. It is also understanding that we have a right to a healthy environment, and we also have a responsibility to contribute to a healthy environment.

Sustainability is also a way to be smart and care about the land, animals and people. In doing this we are respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's ways of knowing and being. Sustainability appreciates that we benefit from all who have gone before and we play our part in making sure that we make the world better. Small acts, over time, have a big impact. You matter, your choices matter!





WATER BOTTLE BIRD FEEDERS

Our work experience student Blayre has come up with a way to be sustainable and bird friendly. Check out how to create a bird feeder out of rubbish.

This is one of the easiest and most rewarding recycling projects. Not only do you make use of empty plastic bottles, but you also invite a variety of wildlife into your garden. You might also like to try these craft ideas from [Brightly Eco!](#)

MATERIALS:

- 2-litre plastic bottle
- Twine, string or yarn
- Scissors
- Birdseed

METHOD:

- Cut a large hole in the side of an empty plastic bottle, about 5 centimeters up from the bottom.
- Tie yarn around the top to create a hanger.
- Fill the bottle with birdseeds
- Now have fun decorating the outside of the bottle!



What else can you make out of things we would usually throw away? We would love to see your creations! Send a photo to actkids@act.gov.au or upload it to the [Young Thinker Forum](#).



WILD AT ART 2023

Wild At Art is Australia's biggest wildlife art competition for children aged 5-12. Create an artwork of one of Australia's threatened species, and submit it by Threatened Species Day on **Thursday 7 September**. More competition details are on the [Australian Conversation Foundation's website](#).



EMAILS TO JODIE

I love getting emails or Young Thinker Forum submissions from you. I also like to share what you have said, but only if you say I can. It is really important that adults listen so we know what it is like to be a child or young person in the ACT, and can make decisions that are informed by what you think is important.

I recently heard from Zaria, who is 9. She sent me a video she made to teach people about ocean animals. She's passionate about saving animals from climate change and has started a group with her friends at school. Here are some screen shots of the video and her letter.

If you want to tell me about things that matter to you, please email or use the [Young Thinker Forum](#) to get in touch!

LET ME KNOW



CONTACT US 

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hrc.act.gov.au/ytf



Dear Jodie,

This is my creation about ocean creatures. I did this because of my little group, called Project Planet. We are working on spreading awareness about how the environment is getting destroyed and the impact it has on animals and us. So, I thought I could start here by sending this to you. Only other kids will listen, the grown ups listen to us but they don't do anything.

Mum just explained the right to a healthy environment to me. This is a big opportunity for Project Planet to start really helping animals. Thank you for listening,

From Zaria

