

RIGHTS IN ACTION

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



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What's new?

- The winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. This year it happened on 21 June. After that day, each evening, it will stay light a little longer, and the days will slowly start to get longer again.

Did you know...

- In the last year, 1 in 2 LGBTIQ+ young people had people say hurtful things or shout at them because of their identity.
- 1 in 10 LGBTIQ+ young people experienced physical violence from others in the past year because of negative attitudes toward LGBTIQ+ people.

National Youth Survey conducted by Minus18 minus18.org.au/national-survey-2025/

Yuma! Welcome to our June edition of Rights in ACTION. This month, we explore your right to come together with others who share your interests, ideas, or beliefs.

We are also celebrating Pride Month. As a member of the rainbow community, I know firsthand that many LGBTIQ+ children and young people experience bullying, however this month is an opportunity to celebrate our individuality and make sure everyone feels valued.

We also share some fun activities and there is a letter template to tell me what matters to you. I always enjoy hearing your ideas about what is important and how we can make Canberra better for children and young people. I hope you enjoy this edition!



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Jodie

You have the right to meet with other people who share your beliefs or interests. You can start or join groups or join other people for a common purpose, such as a peaceful protest.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 15

Being able to meet with other people who share your ideas, interests, or beliefs is important. This right means you can work together with others to reach a shared goal or peacefully speak up about things you care about.

Working as a group can help communities and governments listen and make real change. For example, people working together have:

- advanced women's rights
- demanded that people of all skin colours are treated equally by the law
- pushed governments to take action on climate change, and
- supported the rights of LGBTIQ+ people.

There are many children and young people around the world who are meeting together about things that matter to them and working to make positive changes. We have provided three examples below. Is there something you would want to change? Who would you work with to get it done?



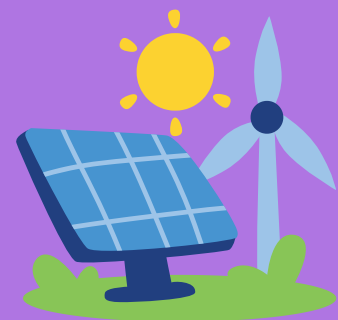
Young Influencer Network



The Young Influencer Network is a network of young people in the ACT who want to make the ACT better for children and young people. They help the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner by sharing their ideas and feedback on her work. Jodie uses what she hears to influence decision-making by government.

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC)

The Australian Youth Climate Coalition is a group of passionate young people who want to help fix climate change. They work to encourage the use of clean energy, like solar and wind power, instead of polluting energy. Their ideas and actions have helped make real changes, including influencing government decisions.



Make it 16



The Make it 16 campaign is run by young people who want to change the law so that 16 and 17 year olds can vote in Australia. They believe younger people should have a say in choosing who leads the country, because they will live with the decisions the longest.

Celebrating International Pride Month

June is recognised around the world as Pride Month, commemorating the New York Stonewall riots in 1969, a turning point in the fight for LGBTIQ+ rights.

In Australia, similar calls for fairness and equality happened in 1978, when the LGBTIQ+ community came together to protest discrimination. These moments show how important it is that people, including children and young people, are able to come together, speak up about what matters to them, and stand together to create positive change.

While progress has been made, many young LGBTIQ+ people still experience bullying and harassment. We need to keep working together to make sure every child and young person feels safe, respected, and included in our community.

Wearing a rainbow or ally accessory is a simple yet powerful way to show support and inclusion. In Minus 18's national survey, 86% of young people said it helps them feel safer and like they belong.

This Pride Month, why not find your own creative way to share rainbows in the places you go, like school, sporting activities, or clubs. You could use beads, stickers, or even coloured stitching.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- make a rainbow wristband or friendship bracelet,
- stitch or draw a rainbow onto your pencil case or backpack,
- stick a rainbow sticker on your water bottle or Chromebook.

Always remember to check with a parent or carer if you are going to make a permanent change, such as stitching or colouring fabric.

Minus18 minus18.org.au/national-survey-2025/



The Rainbow Shoelace Project

When she was 12 years old, Abbie Jane started the Rainbow Shoelace Project.

As a young queer person, she sometimes felt lonely and isolated, and wanted to help others in the LGBTIQ+ community find safe people they could talk to. She came up with the idea of adding rainbow beads to her shoelaces and, with her friend Max Dawnn, began sharing free beads with people in their hometown so they could wear them too.

This simple act of kindness quickly spread around the world. The Rainbow Shoelace Project has now given away more than 350,000 beads across more than six countries, helping people feel more connected, supported, and safe.

Watch Abbie's story on Behind the News by scanning the QR code below or order your own beads at rainbowshoelace.com.au.



Warm Winter Apple Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups self-raising flour
- ½ cup plain flour
- 185 grams of butter
- ¾ cup caster sugar
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- ⅓ cup milk
- 1 cup of apples (peeled, cored, and sliced into small even pieces)
- 1 generous pinch of cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons of golden syrup
- Vanilla ice cream (to serve)



Instructions:

1. Preheat your oven to 180 degrees celsius
2. Grease a 23cm round cake tin with butter then line it with baking paper
3. Peel, core, and cut the apples into small even slices
4. Put the self-raising and plain flour in a large bowl and make a small well in the middle of the flour
5. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg and milk together
6. Place the butter and sugar in a small saucepan
7. Stir over low heat until the sugar has completely dissolved (be careful, this gets very hot and can be sticky)
8. Pour the egg mixture and the butter mixture into the flour
9. Stir gently until just combined (do not overmix)
10. Pour half the mixture into the cake tin
11. Add the apples on top, then sprinkle with cinnamon and drizzle with golden syrup
12. Pour the rest of the mixture over the apples and smooth the top so the apples are completely covered
13. Place in the oven and bake for 50-60 minutes
14. You can tell it is cooked when a skewer comes out clean from the centre
15. Serve while warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream

Source:

Murdoch Magazines (Firm). (2000). The complete quick short recipe collection. Sydney : Murdoch Books, p 277.



Do you have something you want to say?

Your Children and Young People Commissioner is listening! Use this letter template to tell Jodie what issues are important to you! Include a return email address if you want to hear back from Jodie.

Dear Jodie,

I love living in Canberra because.....

.....

Grown-ups should listen to kids more about.....

.....

Canberra would be better for kids if.....

.....

I want grown-ups to know that.....

.....

From.....



To: Jodie Griffiths-Cook
Children and Young People Commissioner
ACT Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 158
Canberra, ACT, 2601

How to send your message to Jodie



Take a photo of your letter and email it to actkids@act.gov.au



Take a photo of your letter and upload it to the Young Thinker Forum
hrc.act.gov.au/ytf



Put it in an envelope with a stamp and post it to the address above.

Dates to look out for this July

2026 JULY						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NAIDOC Week - 6 July to 13 July

This year marks the 50th anniversary of NAIDOC Week. NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate and recognise the history, culture, and amazing contributions of First Nations peoples.

The 2026 theme, '50 Years of Deadly,' celebrates the many achievements over the past 50 years and recognises the ongoing work to support the rights of First Nations peoples. It also celebrates the special contributions they make to our communities and the world.

National Pyjama Day - 17 July

National Pyjama Day is a fun day where people wear their pyjamas all day. It raises money and awareness for kids in out-of-home care, who can sometimes find school more challenging.

The Love of Learning program helps children in out-of-home care by giving them extra support with their learning. Volunteers in this program spend time helping students do their best at school. On National Pyjama Day, people wear their favourite pyjamas to show they care and to help raise money for this important cause.



Schools Tree Day - 25 July

Schools Tree Day is an event that happens across Australia and is a way to give students the opportunity to learn about caring for the environment.

Students can get involved in caring for it through activities like planting trees, shrubs, and grasses, creating art or writing about the environment.

You can learn more about the benefits of planting trees at Behind the News 'Tree Day' episode: [abc.net.au/btn/classroom/tree-day/10526148](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/classroom/tree-day/10526148)

International Day of Friendship - 30 July

The International Day of Friendship began in 2011 to help people around the world feel more connected. It reminds us that friendships can help bring peace between countries, cultures, and communities. Friendship is a special bond we share with others. It helps us show kindness, learn from each other, and understand people who may have different backgrounds or beliefs.

Why not use the International Day of Friendship to do something special for a friend, like inviting them over to play a game, making them a card, or even trying to make a new friend?

