



RIGHTS IN ACTION

A newsletter for kids in the ACT about your rights and wellbeing



What's new?

It's well and truly winter, and with the school holidays beginning, our *What's New* section is going to be about *What's On!*



Try ice skating in Civic Square! There's lots to see and do around the skating rink, so you don't even have to get on the ice to have fun - ice sculptures, hot chocolate and toasting marshmallows are all on offer.



There's going to be lots of snow, not far from Canberra, this winter. When there's been some snow, you might like to ask your adults to take a drive to Corin Forest. There's places to walk and explore or you can have a snow ball fight or build a snow man. Don't forget to dress in warm clothes!



Give me S'mores! Roasted marshmallows and melted chocolate sandwiched between two plain biscuits! It's an American campfire tradition, but you can make it in the oven or microwave, make sure you ask an adult for help if needed.



Visit the Botanic Gardens to meet some Australian Megafauna that roamed this land long, long ago...



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- YOUNG THINKERS AT WORK
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Hi everyone,

This month I am co-editing the newsletter with our work experience students, Mars and Aine! We've dedicated this edition to cultural rights in the lead up to NAIDOC week and we got Mars and Aine to do some research about what this means in the ACT.

NAIDOC week is an important time to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures but we can all learn to act in more culturally safe ways at any time. There are a few tips in Aine's article about cultural rights. You can also read about the Human Rights Commission's new art work by Wiradjuri woman, Jessika Spencer, in Mars' article on page 3.

Mars has also provided some information about our *Young Thinkers at Work* program and Aine has written our animal of the month profile! This time it's one associated with Canberra...

As always, we would love to hear from you, so feel free to get in touch using the contact information below.



Jodie



02 6205 2222



ACTKids_CYPC



ACTKids@act.gov.au



Young Thinker Forum
actkids.act.gov.au



'Nautilus' by Lynnice Keen

What are Cultural Rights?

by Aine - year 10 work
experience student

Cultural rights are rights that have been put in place to protect those who want to express themselves through religion, culture, family background, and language. These rights allow them to express themselves, their culture and their way of life. Everyone has the right to use their own language, culture and religion.

These rights fall under the ACT Human Rights Act of 2004, specifically section 27. It's also in Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Cultural rights in the ACT allow for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to safely practice and develop their cultural heritage and spiritual practices, observances, beliefs, teachings, languages and knowledge. If you would like to know more about this, please feel free to go to the HRC website.

What is the ACT doing to protect these rights?

One way the ACT is trying to move forward and expand these rights is through a group called the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. This group, who are all Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, helps with decisions and plans that revolve around them and their culture to make sure we respect them, how they live and their traditions. This group is picked by other Indigenous people throughout the ACT every three years. They help make sure that we are doing our best to help Indigenous people in the ACT and are giving the best support we can to those in need.

What are some ways you can respect people's cultural rights?

One way you can respect someone's cultural rights is to make sure you don't offend or make fun of their culture and traditions. Another way is you can join in on some of these traditions, with permission. Remember it's okay to ask questions! If you are curious about why someone expresses themselves in a certain way or don't understand something, you can ask them about it (as long as you do it respectfully). Most people are happy to answer your questions.

Why is this topic important to me?

This is an important topic to me because it shows that we as a nation are growing to be more accepting of people and who they are and it allows everyone to feel more comfortable with expressing themselves within our communities. These rights are especially important for Indigenous Peoples as it allows them to express their culture and heritage.

Walumarra

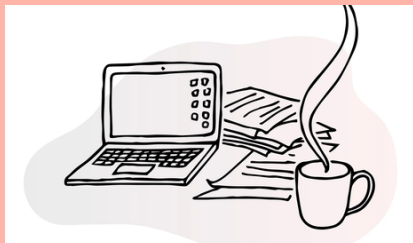
by Mars - year 10 work
experience student

This welcome wall hanging was made by Jessika Spencer. The piece is called "Walumarra" which is a Wiradjuri word for "protect". The name reflects on the ACT Human Rights Commission protecting First Nations peoples' rights.

It was made by weaving Raffia and Emu feathers together to create a mat. This wall hanging was made for First Nations people so that when they arrive on the site, they feel welcomed.

The colours used are inspired by the Commission's shell logo, which was designed using Lynnice Keen's 'Nautilus', pictured on the previous page. The greens and blues used in the middle of the weaving are a great example of this.

Since Jessika wanted to make the piece sustainable, all of the materials used in this piece are sustainably sourced and hand-dyed.



Young Thinkers at work

(Student Work Experience with the CYPC) also by Mars

The time spent at work experience with the CYPC was both informative and fun. We were able to experience what working with the ACT Children and Young People Commissioner looks like without having to fully commit to the job for the rest of our lives.

We enjoyed participating in many fun activities such as planning for the CYPC's Instagram page, attending meetings and diving deeper into different children's rights. When learning about these topics, they were put into a way that was clear and easy to understand. The staff were nice and able to answer any questions or inquiries we had. These activities broadened our perspective on the CYPC and what they really do.

I would recommend coming to the ACT Children and Young people Commissioner for anyone looking to participate in Work Experience as the three days spent at CYPC were a blast for everyone.

NAIDOC WEEK CELEBRATIONS



GET UP!
STAND UP!
SHOW UP!
3-10 JULY 2022

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year. You have probably taken part in celebrations at your school. The week celebrates and recognises the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It is an opportunity to learn about the cultures and histories of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

You can support and get to know the local Aboriginal communities through activities and events held in Canberra. [Find out more here.](#)

You can also take part at home, by [exploring the messages in this poster](#), while you colour it in!



WEDGE-TAILED EAGLE

Mulleun - in Ngunnawal
Malian - in Ngambri



Our animal of the month is the Wedge-tailed Eagle. Wedge-tailed Eagles are a totem of First Nations peoples in the ACT (named *Mulleun* in Ngunnawal and *Malian* in Ngambri). Totems are an important part of Aboriginal culture and ensure the protection of plants or animals by different groups of Aboriginal people.

They are massive birds with a wingspan of 2.3 metres and the biggest one ever recorded was 2.8 metres! They are the 6th largest bird in the world.

They have very long wedge-shaped tails that help them fly and change directions while in the air. Wedge-tailed eagles' feathers change and get darker as they age and usually start at a light reddish brown that fades into a deep brown, almost black.

Wedge-tailed Eagles mate for life. This means they only have one partner during their lifetime. They only have 2-3 chicks at a time.

Wedge-tailed Eagles can also live for up to 20 years.

You can find Wedge-tailed Eagles in wooded, forested land and open country. You may even find them in parts of Tasmania and New Guinea.



also by Aine

THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE COMMISSIONER IS

LISTENING!

Share your thoughts on racism

This year we are partnering with Curijo and the Multicultural Hub to talk to children and young people in the ACT about their views on and experiences of racism.

It can be difficult to talk about racism, but silence allows it to keep happening so it's really important for us to create safe spaces to discuss the impact racism has, and ways to address it.

How can you take part?

You can send us an email, PM us on Insta, or use our Young Thinker Forum to tell us what you want us to know.



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LET US KNOW:

- What do adults need to know about racism in the ACT?
- What is working and what is not working to reduce racism in the ACT?
- What is needed for our community to be free from racism?



CHILDREN & YOUNG
PEOPLE COMMISSIONER
ACT Human Rights Commission

