

14 February 2024

## Media statement

### **Appointment of a National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people sends powerful message to families and communities.**

Yesterday's announcement by the Federal Government of a new National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People is a turning point for children and families across Australia.

The appointment has been championed by the Australian Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates (ACCGA), a collective group dedicated to safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of children and young people across the nation.

Key supporters were SNAICC and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Safe and Supported Leadership Group, many of whom are First Nations Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates, spearheaded the campaign to establish the role.

Speaking on behalf of the group, WA Commissioner for Children and Young People, Jacqueline McGowan-Jones, highlighted the significance of the announcement.

"The National Commissioner will have the power to advocate for policy change and drive much-needed discussion and engagement around issues that impact First Nations children and young people.

"Too many of our children and young people suffer from overrepresentation in the youth justice and out of home care systems, are disengaged from education or facing significant health and mental health challenges.

"It is critical that we reverse this appalling situation before we lose another generation.

"This appointment will ensure First Nations children and young people are better supported to live the life they deserve and that families are strengthened by solutions designed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

"So much work has gone on behind the scenes to make this appointment a reality and I would like to thank my ACCGA colleagues for continuing to campaign for change that will benefit our children and young people now and for future generations."

"We are thrilled the Federal Government has listened to our calls for the establishment of this critical role."

**Endorsed by the Australian Children's Commissioners Guardians and Advocates**

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**About Australia's children's commissioners, guardians and advocates:**

Australia's children's commissioners, guardians and advocates are a collective group dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights and wellbeing of children and young people across the nation. Comprising experts and leaders in child advocacy, they collaborate on initiatives that empower and support children and young people in Australia.



OFFICE FOR ACT ABORIGINAL  
& TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER  
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

KEEPING OUR KIDS STRONG IN FAMILY & CULTURE

**Barbara Causon**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait  
Islander Children and Young People  
Advocate,  
Australian Capital Territory



**Jodie Griffiths-Cook**

Children and Young People  
Commissioner,  
Australian Capital Territory



**Shahleena Musk**

Children's Commissioner, Northern  
Territory



COMMISSIONER FOR  
ABORIGINAL CHILDREN  
& YOUNG PEOPLE

**April Lawrie**

Commissioner for Aboriginal  
Children and Young People,  
South Australia



**Helen Connolly**

Commissioner for Children and  
Young People, South Australia



**Guardian**  
for Children and  
Young People

**Shona Reid**

Guardian for Children and Young  
People, South Australia



**Leanne McLean**

Commissioner for Children and  
Young People, Tasmania

**Anne Hollands**

Australian National Children's  
Commissioner

**Shayna Smith**

Office of the Public Guardian  
Queensland



Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



Queensland  
**Family & Child**  
Commission



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

**Luke Twyford**

Principal Commissioner,  
Queensland Family and Child  
Commission

**Natalie Lewis**

Commissioner,  
Queensland Family and Child  
Commission

**Liana Buchanan**

Principal Commissioner for Children  
and Young People Victoria



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Children's Guardian

Office of the  
Advocate for Children  
and Young People

**acyp.**

**Meenah Singh**  
Commissioner for Aboriginal  
Children and Young People Victoria

**Steve Kinmond**  
Children's Guardian  
News South Wales

**Zoë Robinson**  
Advocate for Children and Young  
People  
New South Wales



Commissioner for  
Children and Young People  
Western Australia

**Jacqueline McGowan-Jones**  
Commissioner for Children and  
Young People, Western Australia

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