

Australian Children's COMMISSIONERS AND GUARDIANS

ACCG Meeting communiqué

**16-17 November 2016
Sydney, New South Wales**

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) comprises national, state and territory children and young people commissioners, guardians and advocates.

The ACCG aims to promote and protect the safety, wellbeing and rights of children and young people in Australia. The ACCG strives to ensure the best interests of children and young people are considered in public policy and program development across Australia.

The ACCG met in Sydney on 16 and 17 November 2016.

Members of the Policy Officers Network which works to support the ACCG held a concurrent meeting on day one and joined the meeting with ACCG members on day two.

Information sharing

Members shared updates from their jurisdictions and highlighted key issues with potential for bilateral or national collaboration.

Terms of reference

The ACCG reviewed the terms of reference for the ACCG and for the Officers' network. Changes will be made to clarify membership requirements for the ACCG and to support the future operation of the Officers' Network (formerly the Policy Officers' Network).

Strategic planning

The ACCG acknowledged that historical priority areas for the ACCG have shifted over recent times and discussed a broad range of issues across jurisdictions. Priority areas identified for joint work include alternative models of care with a therapeutic focus, youth justice, and children and young people's experience of violence.

The ACCG discussed ways of working together to maximise influence on issues, particularly where there are common interests or implications across jurisdictions or at a national level. Methods discussed included developing joint positions, papers and principles, more joined up communications, and a shared environment to host online content.

Arts and disadvantaged children and young people

Fraser Corfield, Artistic Director for the Australian Theatre for Young People, spoke on the importance of the arts for the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people. Theatre provides a way to tell stories that are significant to young people and builds

understanding and empathy. Programs running in youth detention centres have been successful in developing a sense of pride for those involved.

NSW Youth Koori Court pilot

Magistrate Sue Duncombe and Daniel Daylight, Aboriginal Community Officer at the Parramatta Children’s Court, briefed the ACCG on the pilot of the NSW Youth Koori Court in Parramatta. The model has built upon the Victorian Youth Koori Court and has been well received during its pilot by young people accessing the service and the results have been very positive.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

Jenny Mason (General Manager, Policy and Research), Pia van de Zandt (General Manager, Engagement and Support), and Tarina Russell (Manager, Policy) updated members on the latest work of the Royal Commission. The Commission facilitated a session on the implications of their research and the next steps, including developing practical and implementable recommendations. Members of the Commission would like to meet with the ACCG again prior to the end of the Commission.

Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre

Rhett Burraston, Aboriginal Education Officer at Dorchester Education and Training Unit in the Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre, briefed members on the development of Wiridjiribin Nura – a garden and multi-purpose learning space within the centre that provides young people with an understanding of the importance of Aboriginal culture.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the ACCG will be held in Tasmania on Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24, and Thursday 25 May 2017.

