



ACYP Annual Report



Office of the
Advocate for Children
and Young People

acyp.

2017/18

reference

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Report	ACYP Annual Report
Date	September 2018
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We wish to pay our respects to Aboriginal elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role of Aboriginal people and culture within the NSW community. ACYP advises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers this report may contain images of people who may have passed away.

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The Hon John Ajaka MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Hon Shelly Hancock MP
Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

In accordance with section 32 of the *Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014* (the Act) I am pleased to present the Advocate for Children and Young People's Annual Report for 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

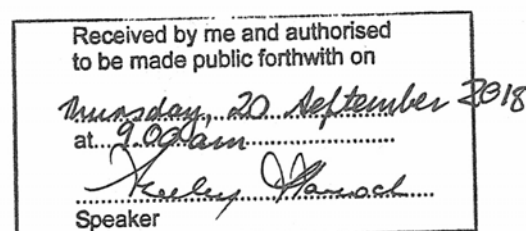
The report includes: a description of the Advocate's activities during the year in relation to each of the Advocate's functions; an evaluation of the response of relevant authorities to the recommendations of the Advocate; and any recommendations for changes in the laws of the State, or for administrative action, that the Advocate considers should be made as a result of the exercise of the Advocate's functions.

As provided by section 32 of the Act, I ask that you now make this report publicly available at the determined time.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Johnson
Advocate for Children and Young People
20 September 2018



The Hon John Ajaka MLC
President
Legislative Council
Parliament House
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SYDNEY NSW 2000

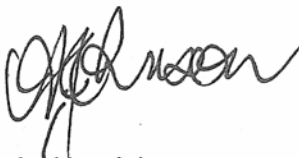
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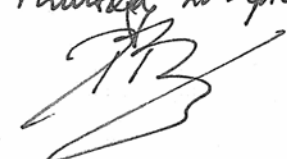
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Yours sincerely



Andrew Johnson
Advocate for Children and Young People
20 September 2018

*Received at 9:00am
Thursday 20 September 2018*


President

at

Received by me and authorised
to be made public forthwith on



advocate's foreword

Andrew Johnson **Advocate for Children and** **Young People**

It is my pleasure to present the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People's (ACYP) Annual Report for the reporting period of 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018.

This report details the relevant work undertaken by ACYP under each of the functions of the Advocate for Children and Young People as set out in the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014.

Firstly, I would like to thank the 5,151 children and young people in NSW who I have been privileged to hear feedback from in this reporting period. I thank them for being so generous with their time and for giving such constructive feedback.

I would also like to thank the many government and non-government organisations who have generously worked with us and supported our work throughout the reporting period to achieve a shared goal of improving the lives of all children and young people in NSW.

Further, I extend my gratitude to the Minister responsible for Youth, the Hon. Ray Williams MP for his ongoing support of the work of the office and to the Members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People for their continued encouragement and advice throughout the reporting period.

Throughout the year I have heard feedback from children and young people on a broad range of topics including mental health, education, Aboriginal and cultural matters, violence against children and various NSW Government programs

and services. This included listening to children and young people experiencing disadvantage, those who were socially excluded and individuals currently within Juvenile Justice Centres.

During our consultations, children and young people provided their views and recommendations on many issues. These included, but were not limited to, increased life skills programs, greater connection to culture and Aboriginal owned and controlled services directed toward children and young people, better and more affordable transport options and more services and activities in local areas which operate at more appropriate times, that there should be better alternatives to long school suspensions and that they are informed and included in the decisions that NGOs and government make about their lives. This led to a significant ongoing piece of work about how to systematise the voices of children and young people across the OOHC, justice and service systems.

The reporting year began with the Ending Violence against Children – International Perspectives Conference in July 2017. This event brought together more than 120 leaders of government and non-government organisations to hear from international experts who are dedicated to working towards a global aim to end violence against children. This conference sought to challenge the social norms, attitudes and behaviours that perpetuate violence against children in our society.

On the same day, 100 children and young people from across NSW gathered at the same venue to listen to the same international experts. The children and young people worked together to create recommendations and solutions on how to end violence against children. Those who attended the children and young people's conference were then invited to address the adult conference and present their ideas directly to decision makers.



Work on ending violence against children and young people led to the December launch of the 'Now and Forever' campaign.

Children's Week 2017 was celebrated from 21-29 October with events occurring across NSW. This year, ACYP partnered with YMCA to hold Children's Parliament at NSW Parliament House. The event was held over two days with 93 children from across the state participating free of charge. ACYP also held a Children's Week Design Competition with competition winners having the opportunity to meet the NSW Premier, the Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP in her office and showcase their work to her personally.

ACYP was fortunate to have the opportunity to work with the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) during the year to develop My Metropolis. My Metropolis is a new App providing young people an opportunity to share their voice in creating an environment where they feel safe and respected. The App was designed with the assistance and input of children and young people.

Children's Week once again provided an opportunity for us all to take time out of our busy day, eat a healthy recess and participate in some enjoyable, light-hearted activities. As a result of The Biggest Recess 2017, over 1 million people in NSW were reminded that they are role models for the children and young people in their lives and the importance of promoting healthy behaviours.

During ACYP's homelessness consultations, children and young people told us they wanted to increase general community awareness and understanding of the lived experience of homelessness. As a result of this feedback, ACYP collaborated with the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) to develop a play based on the real experiences of children and young people experiencing or at risk of youth homelessness.

In April, over 150 young people from across NSW

gathered at NSW Parliament House to participate in the 2018 NSW Youth Week Forum. Participants spent the afternoon working together to give feedback on questions from NSW Government Departments responsible for health, education, juvenile justice, policing, planning, environment, the arts and many more.

ACYP continued to prepare reports, papers and submissions relating to children and young people in NSW. This included submissions and appearances to five NSW Parliamentary Committee inquiries.

ACYP continued to provide training on how to involve children and young people in the decisions that affect them, child rights and child rights programming. Over the reporting period we have run training sessions and made keynote addresses about these issues to over 4,000 people.

Work has also continued on the programs and initiatives ACYP has carriage of within the NSW Government's Strategic Plan for Children and Young People.

ACYP continues to employ, test and develop various methodologies to engage with children and young people including but not limited to face to face consultations, survey work, quantitative polling and School Pools.

Finally, I sincerely acknowledge the staff of ACYP; I am fortunate to work with a team who are so committed to and believe in improving the lives of children and young people in NSW.

Andrew Johnson

Advocate for Children and Young People



about the office

governance and functions

The Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People is established under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 (the Act). The Advocate is an independent statutory appointment oversights by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People.

The Office opened on 9 January 2015.

The functions of the Advocate as set out in the Act are:

- a.** to advocate for and promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-24 years,
- b.** to promote the participation of children and young people in the making of decisions that affect their lives and to encourage government and non-government agencies to seek the participation of children and young people appropriate to their age and maturity,
- c.** to conduct special inquiries into issues affecting children and young people,
- d.** to make recommendations to government and non-government agencies on legislation, reports, policies, practices, procedures and services affecting children and young people,
- e.** to conduct, promote and monitor research into issues affecting children and young people,
- f.** to promote the provision of information and advice to assist children and young people,
- g.** to prepare, in consultation with the Minister, a three year Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in the State.

The Act also establishes the NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC) of which the Advocate is an ex officio member. The Advocate is also responsible for providing secretariat support to the YAC.

In undertaking these functions the Advocate is to focus on systemic issues affecting children and young people and to give priority to the interests of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people.

The Act requires the Advocate to prepare an annual report to Parliament on the Advocate's activities during that year in relation to each of the Advocate's functions.

year in review

1 July 2017 - 30 June 2018



promoting the participation of children and young people in the decisions that affect their lives

One of the functions of the Advocate under the Act is to promote the participation of children and young people in the making of decisions that affect their lives.

This core function is executed through the undertaking of a broad range of activities including face to face consultations with children and young people across NSW on a wide range of subjects that affect them, conducting attitudinal polling, and creating programs and competitions that engage children and young people directly in the work of the office.

consulting with children and young people

The Advocate for children and young people has consulted with 5,151 children and young people throughout the reporting period, over 2,000 of which were face to face consultations conducted by the Advocate and the ACYP team.

ACYP employs a broad range of methodologies to ensure that a wide range of children and young people across the state are provided with an opportunity to have their say on the issues that matter to them. This includes children and young people from metropolitan and regional areas of NSW, individuals from diverse backgrounds and from varied life experiences.

The methodologies used by ACYP to consult with children and young people include:



**face to face
consultations**



**the ACYP Pools
Program**



**online
surveys**



**organising events such as the
Youth Week Forum and others**



**attending events such as
Schools Spectacular and
Nations of Origin**

consultations

Throughout the year, ACYP worked with both government and non-government stakeholders to conduct targeted consultations with children and young people across NSW on issues that affect them. In the reporting period:

- children and young people participated in consultations about mental health
- children and young people in juvenile justice centres participated in consultations about what help they needed before and after detention
- children and young people who participated in the NSW Youth Week Forum took part in consultations about NSW Government programs and services
- children and young people participated in two general attitudinal online surveys
- children and young people participated in consultations at the 2017 Schools Spectacular event
- participants of the Nations of Origin tournaments took part in face to face consultations
- children and young people participated in a survey about student voice through the ACYP School Pools program
- children and young people who participated in Children's Week Parliament took part in a consultation about planning
- Greater Sydney Commission consultations on design and planning of the Greater Sydney region



attitudinal surveys

ACYP commissions Galaxy Research to conduct quantitative polling to compliment the qualitative research collected by ACYP directly from children and young people across the state.

ACYP undertook three surveys in the reporting year, two hearing from children and young people, between the ages of 12 and 24, on important issues that affect them and one survey canvassing the opinions of the parents of children and young people aged 0-24 living in NSW.

This information is shared with a range of government departments as a way of informing them about children and young people as beneficiaries and users of their services. By sharing this information with key decision makers, information from children and young people helps to inform the development of new policies and practices.

Attitudinal polling was conducted on topics including but not limited to health, mental health and wellbeing, current affairs, online behaviours and internet usage. Polling topics and questions often result from face to face consultations directly with children and young people. Polling allows ACYP to gain an understanding of certain issues raised by children and young people from a quantitative perspective, to compliment qualitative methodologies. At various times ACYP consults with other NSW government departments to collaborate on polling questions.

pools project

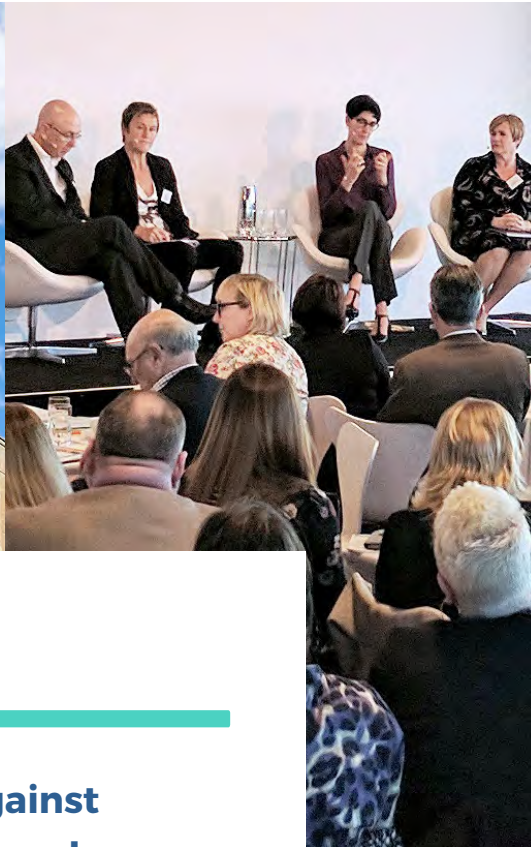
ACYP and the Department of Education continued to work together throughout the reporting period on the Pools project.

Pools present an opportunity to take an in-depth look into the views of children and young people throughout NSW on important issues that affect them.

The purpose of pooling is to:

- provide a mechanism for the participation of children and young people in policy decisions
- enable the Advocate and NSW Government departments to involve a broad range of children and young people in policy decisions
- extend the experience of participation to a large group of children and young people, including those that may not readily participate through other mechanisms

In November 2017, a survey on student voice was conducted with over 150 students taking the opportunity to have their voices heard.



events

Ending Violence Against Children – International Perspectives Conference

On July 28, 2017, ACYP held an Ending Violence Against Children – International Perspectives Conference with more than 120 leaders from government and the non-government sector. Importantly, 100 children and young people from across NSW participated in a concurrent workshop within the same conference centre.

At this one day conference, attendees had the opportunity to listen to international speakers who have played a key role in the global response to violence against children. Attendees also had the first opportunity to view the 'end violence against children now, be a part of changing the world forever' campaign and be amongst the first to sign the Pledge.

The conference opened with a Welcome to Country by Uncle Chika Madden, followed by presentations from the speakers listed on the right.

The children and young people heard from the same speakers as those attending the adult conference, they then had the opportunity to work together in groups to create recommendations to address violence against children and young people in NSW.

In the afternoon the attendees of the children's conference addressed the adult conference and presented their recommendations directly to the many leaders from government and non-government organisations present.



Sarah Stevenson

Senior Advisor to the Global Partnership to End Violence against Children



Dr Alexander Butchart

World Health Organisation (WHO) Prevention of Violence Team (PVL)



Dr Felipe Cala Buendia

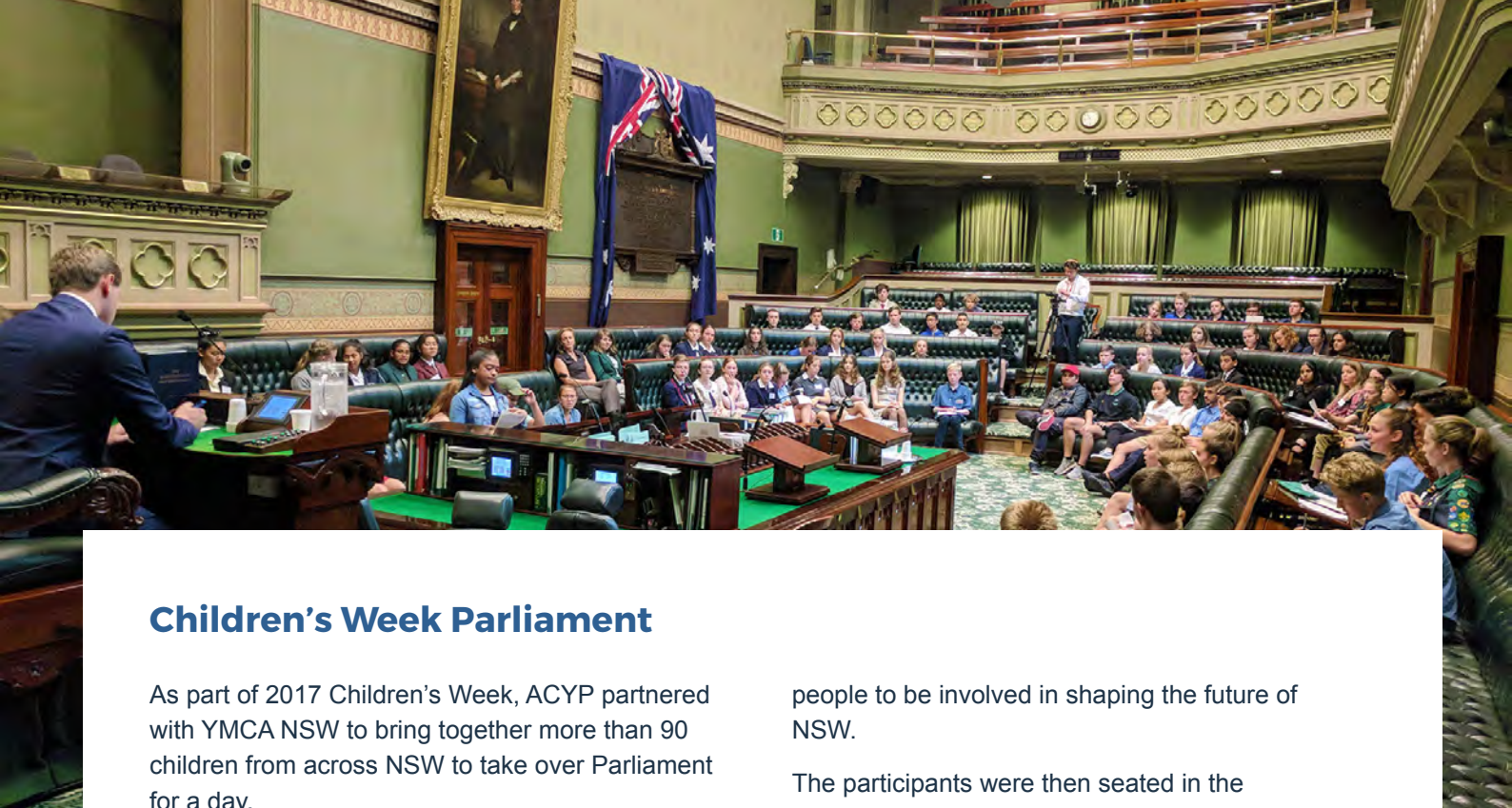
Latin America Program at Open Society Foundations



Andrew Johnson

NSW Advocate for Children and Young People





Children's Week Parliament

As part of 2017 Children's Week, ACYP partnered with YMCA NSW to bring together more than 90 children from across NSW to take over Parliament for a day.

Children came from all regions of NSW including Broken Hill, Dubbo, Tamworth, Armidale, Cooma and Wollongong to represent their communities in Children's Parliament.

This two-day program was offered free of charge to children in years 7-9 from a diverse range of backgrounds, life experiences and locations, giving them the opportunity to share their voice on what is important to them.

Participants took part in a one day event at the ACYP office on Wednesday 25 October where they received training to assist them in making their statements in Parliament.

Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull AO along with Chief Executive Officer Sarah Hill of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) met with children and young people from Children's Parliament.

On Thursday 26 October the children and young people took over the Legislative Assembly Chamber for the day. The event began with an opening ceremony in the Jubilee Room. Ms Yvonne Weldon, Chairperson of the Sydney Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council commenced the opening ceremony with a Welcome to Country followed by opening speeches by Leisa Hart, CEO of YMCA NSW and the Advocate.

The Hon. Taylor Martin MLC addressed the audience speaking about how, at just 26 years old, he became a Member of the Legislative Council and why it is important for children and young

people to be involved in shaping the future of NSW.

The participants were then seated in the Chamber where the Hon. Trevor Khan MLC, Deputy President addressed the group about Parliamentary etiquette. He encouraged those present to remain engaged in issues they believe are important and to continue to play a role in making NSW a great State for all children and young people.

Each participant had an opportunity to address the Chamber and discuss the issues that are important not only to them but to all children and young people in NSW. Participants spoke about mental health, voice, bullying, inclusion and racism, climate change and drugs and alcohol.

The Hon. Justin Field MLC acted as Speaker and presided over the environment and education topics before addressing the group. He encouraged all participants to remain as passionate advocates for their chosen topics.

At lunch time Mr Jihad Dib, MP, Member for Lakemba, Shadow Minister for Education spoke to participants about inclusion in NSW and its importance in creating a respectful society.

Children's Parliament was closed by the Hon. John Ajaka MLC, President of the Legislative Council who said he felt encouraged to see children participating in Parliament and working towards improving the lives of all children and young people in NSW.

We thank all of the schools and youth organisations who worked with us to open this opportunity up to participants. We also thank the Members of Parliament who took time out of their schedules to support the event.



Schools Spectacular

ACYP once again attended the Department of Education's Schools Spectacular event, setting up a consultation tent in the 'Wellbeing Zone' at Sydney Olympic Park. The theme for the two day 2017 Schools Spectacular was 'Own the Moment'.

At the ACYP tent hundreds of children and young people took advantage of the opportunity to engage with the office and participate in having their voices heard by decision makers. Participants could participate in all four activities or one or two of their choosing.

At the ACYP tent children and young people had the opportunity to:

- take part in a video interview answering questions about being in the moment and what they would like to achieve in the next year
- participate in a survey about their digital and social media habits
- take a photo and add a quote to the ACYP App
- take a photo with their friends and receive a print-out copy to take home
- those who just wanted to relax in a safe place had an opportunity to do so on the bean bags in the 'Chill-out Zone'.

Congratulations to the 2017 Schools Spectacular team and to all participating performers for putting on an incredible show.





NSW Youth Week Forum

On Thursday 12 April, over 150 young people from across NSW gathered at NSW Parliament House to participate in the 2018 NSW Youth Week Forum.

The program of this year's NSW Youth Week Forum was co-designed with the members of the NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC) and featured a panel of young people who came to the event to share their inspiring stories.

NSW Youth Advisory Council Chair, Isaiah Dawe, who brought his experience of setting up his own NGO, ID Know Yourself which focuses on mentoring Aboriginal young people who are in the foster care system. Sandy Al-Aweik, a young Muslim Australian currently works as a Program Producer/Presenter and Youth Volunteer Coordinator at Sydney based community radio station 2MFM, the Muslim Community Radio. Brothers Daniel and William Clarke completed the panel. Daniel, who lives with Cerebral Palsy and his brother William, have raised over \$845,000 to protect orangutans from extinction, sponsoring 101,500 acres of habitat and spoke about conservation.

The Minister responsible for Youth, the Hon. Ray Williams MP joined the event to speak with participants about the importance of having their voice heard, not just as part of the YAC but in everyday life to improve the lives of all children and young people in NSW.

Participants spent the afternoon working together to give feedback on questions from NSW Government Departments responsible for health, education, juvenile justice, policing, planning, environment, the arts and many more. During this session children and young people gave their views on topics such as cultural and community programs, diversity in the healthcare system, mental health, strategies on how to avoid accruing fines and ideas on how to help build better life skills.

This feedback was then provided directly to decision makers to help improve service delivery to children and young people in NSW.





internships program

The Advocate offers internship opportunities to young people under the age of 24 as one way of ensuring that young people are involved in the daily work of the Office and have an opportunity to participate in decision making processes.

This internship program is a remunerated position which allows a young person to get broad experience of working in a NSW State Government office. This gives them exposure to all teams in the Office including policy, media and communications, digital communications, and participation and research.

The intern also has an opportunity to work closely with and receive mentoring from the Advocate and to participate in, and inform, the work of the Office. ACYP makes sure that each year at least one young person who identifies as an Aboriginal person is employed in the office as an intern.

work experience program

Now in its third year, the ACYP Work Experience Program offers Year 10 students a five day placement in which they receive advocacy training and mentoring directly from the Advocate. They are also involved in developing their own advocacy project. During the program, the students get to experience time working the different units in the office, including the Participation, Policy and Research, Media and Communications units.

In the reporting year, eight children and young people participated in the ACYP Work Experience Program which involved students from Merrylands High School, Fort St High School, Randwick Girls High School, and Beverley Hills Girls High.

This program is open to all Year 10 students from across NSW.



NSW Youth Advisory Council

The NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is another way that children and young people can have a direct say on the work of NSW Government.

The twelve member YAC is recruited annually. All children and young people living in NSW between the ages of 12 and 24 years may apply. Council members sit on the Council for one calendar year and provide advice to the Minister responsible for Youth, and the Advocate for Children and Young People.

The functions of the YAC are under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 are:

- to advise the Minister and the Advocate on the planning, development, integration and implementation of government policies and programs concerning young persons
- to consult with young persons, community groups and government agencies on issues and policies concerning young persons
- to monitor and evaluate legislation and government policies and programs concerning young persons and to recommend changes if required
- to conduct forums, approved by the Minister, on issues of interest to young persons
- to collect, analyse and provide the Minister and the Advocate with information on issues and policies concerning young persons.





recruitment for the 2018 YAC

- ACYP conducted the recruitment process for the 2018 YAC. ACYP received the largest ever number of applications from children and young people during this year's recruitment
- The application phase was heavily promoted through advertising in metropolitan newspapers and a selection of regional newspapers and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) publications. Promotion also took place through the ACYP newsletter and social media accounts
- The recruitment of the 2018 YAC received strong support from stakeholders such as the Department of Education and many NGOs who promoted nominations through their networks
- Shortlisted applicants were invited to a one day recruitment event at NSW Parliament House in Sydney's CBD where the Advocate conducted advocacy training and attendees took part in a citizens jury relating to volunteering
- Following the recruitment event the Advocate presented recommendations to the Minister for his review and concurrence. Recommended Council members were then presented to Cabinet who gave approval in early 2018.

Secretariat support for the YAC

- ACYP provides the secretariat support for the YAC and also provides training to YAC members on policy processes and government relations
- From 30 June 2017 to 1 July 2018, ACYP organised and provided support for eight YAC meetings
- ACYP also prepared briefs requested by the YAC themselves to assist them with their work. The topics discussed included, but were not limited to:
 - Sexualisation and children and young people
 - Gonski 2.0
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder
 - Medical procedures for intersex and transgender children and young people
 - Sexual assault and harassment at Australian universities
 - Young People in Detention
 - Bullying in Schools
 - Aboriginal children and young people



NSW Children's Week 2017

Children's Week is marked annually on the third week of October and is an opportunity to celebrate a child's right to enjoy childhood.

The Advocate was invited to be the Ambassador for NSW Children's Week in 2017 by the NSW Children's Week Committee.

ACYP supported NSW Children's Week in a variety of ways including continuing to host and update the NSW Children's Week website and supporting events and initiatives aimed at increasing participation in NSW Children's Week across the State. One such event included Children's Week Parliament as detailed earlier in the report.

The national theme for Children's Week is selected by the National Children's Week Council. In 2017 the chosen theme was the UNCRC Article 29 "Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their cultures and other cultures."



2017 Children's Week – ACYP initiatives

design competition

Through the Children's Week Design Competition ACYP encouraged children and young people across NSW to engage their creative side and design an artwork inspired by the themes of the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People (the Plan).

In consultations, more than 4,000 children and young people told the Advocate what is important to them, this informed the six themes of the Plan for Children and Young People – Safe, Connect, Respect, Opportunity, Wellbeing and Voice.

Thanks to the help of the many organisations

who promoted the competition through their networks. More than 600 children and young people submitted designs that brought to life the themes of the Plan.

The winning designs were transferred onto ties and scarves. Each category winner was invited to present their scarf to the NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian during Children's Week.

Congratulations to everyone who took the time to express their creative side with an entry and thank you for participating in the competition.



Anglicare NSW South and ACT Googong Early Learning Centre won the 0-5 year old category for their collection of Wellbeing artworks.



Sixteen year-old William Hazzard won the 12-18 year old category for his Connection inspired artwork.



Seven year-old Taylor Crowe and ten year-old Mequynne Logan were joint winners in the 6-11 year old category. Taylor's artwork was inspired by the theme Respect and Mequynne created two artworks inspired by the theme of Connection.





My Metropolis App - Children and Young People Designing the Future

In response to children and young people telling the Advocate that they want to have a voice in creating environments that meet their needs, ACYP worked with the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) to develop My Metropolis.

The Greater Sydney Commission is a lead agency in metropolitan planning to make Greater Sydney more productive, sustainable and liveable. During the consultation and development of The Greater Sydney Regional Plan, A Metropolis of Three Cities, GSC approached ACYP to assist with their consultation with children and young people. Through this partnership, ACYP consulted with close to 300 children and young people to hear their views about planning, the environment and the future of Greater Sydney.

Part of this consultation included the development of the My Metropolis App, which actively engages children and young people in town planning and urban design, ensuring that children and young people have an opportunity to share their voice in creating an environment where they feel safe and respected. The App was designed with the assistance and input of children and young people.



On 25 October as part of NSW Children's Week 2017, Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull AO along with Chief Executive Officer Sarah Hill of the Greater Sydney Commission (GSC) together with the Advocate launched My Metropolis at the ACYP office.

The participants of Children's Parliament were the first group invited to use and test the My Metropolis App providing feedback directly to the Chief Commissioner on what characteristics make an environment suitable for children and young people.

The My Metropolis App is available free of charge through the Apple and Android App stores.





Follow Me Home Play

In the 2016/17 reporting period ACYP released a report detailing the results of consultations the Advocate conducted with 60 children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in NSW.

One of the themes identified by consultation participants was the need to increase general community awareness and understanding of the lived experiences for children and young people, and break the common stereotypes and myths that are associated with youth homelessness.

To address this recommendation, ACYP collaborated with the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) late in the 2016/17 reporting period, to develop a play based on the real experiences of children and young people experiencing or at risk of youth homelessness. The key themes shared by children and young people during a workshop became the subject matter of the play.

These include:

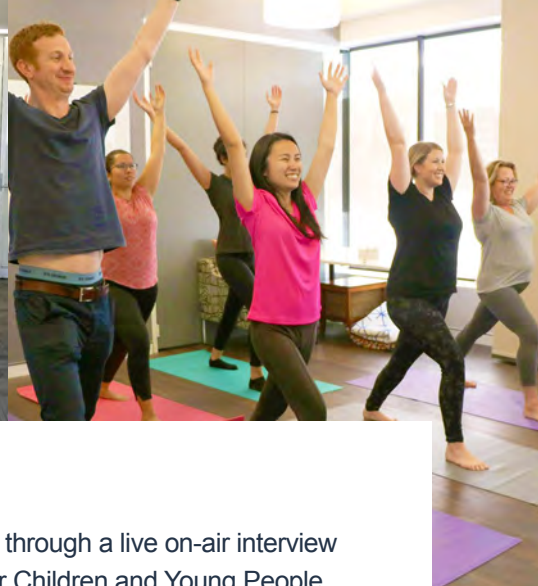
- homelessness is not a choice for children and young people
- some people believe that children and young people are trouble makers and deserve to be homeless
- children and young people who experience homelessness encounter difficulties going to school and getting a job

- the importance of stability, how hard stability is to achieve when you're experiencing homelessness and how much it is craved by those experiencing homelessness
- poor mental health
- the lack of access to adequate and timely support

The play, 'Follow me Home' debuted with a one-off showing at ATYP on 19 October as part of 2017 Children's Week. You can see photos and a video of the event by visiting the ACYP website at www.acyp.nsw.gov.au.

Bringing the voices of children and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to the forefront would not have been possible without the help of the services who work with children and young people and the team at ATYP.





Biggest Recess

Biggest Recess was first brought to life in 2016. The inaugural campaign focused on building awareness of the positive impact of healthy and active role modelling for children and young people.

Biggest Recess is an aligned effort towards addressing the Premier's Priority to reduce overweight and obesity rates of children by 5% over 10 years and the theme of Wellbeing in the first three-year whole of government Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in NSW.

Through consultations and polling, children and young people told the Advocate who they look up to. Thirty-three per cent of children and young people said their parents/guardians are their heroes. This assists in shining a light on the importance of adults being positive role models.

Biggest Recess is a light hearted and interactive event that centres on role modelling for adults, parents and guardians to promote healthy behaviours to the children and young people in their lives.

Highlights of the 2017 Biggest Recess campaign included:

- 550,000 audience impressions were achieved through the Biggest Recess social media campaign
- Dual Olympian heptathlon and Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist Jane Flemming OAM was the 2017 Biggest Recess ambassador
- Close to 250,000 people watched Jane Flemming talk about Biggest Recess on The Daily Edition on Channel 7
- An additional estimated 120,000 people listened to the Advocate for Children and Young People speak about Biggest Recess on ABC Mornings
- Biggest Recess featured on the ABC Radio State-

wide Drive show through a live on-air interview with Advocate for Children and Young People

- Biggest Recess featured in the Sydney Morning Herald paper as part of a special Children's Week series reaching a further 100,000 people
- The recipe inspiration page of the Biggest Recess website was expanded to include healthy recipes from The Minister responsible for Youth, the Hon Ray Williams MP, Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People, Ms Melanie Gibbons, the Advocate for Children and Young People, Mr Andrew Johnson, Biggest Recess Ambassador Jane Flemming along with athlete Pat Farmer and Rugby legend Nathan Hindmarsh
- Targeted messaging was disseminated electronically to a list of non-government organisations and civil society
- While many people took part in events across the State, close to 150 organisations took the extra step of registering their events online.

As a result of Biggest Recess 2017, over 1 million people in NSW were reminded that they are role models for the children and young people in their lives and the importance of promoting healthy behaviours.





NSW Youth Week 2018

In this reporting period, Youth Week was marked from Friday 13 April to Sunday 22 April 2018. The Advocate for Children and Young People, together with the Department of Family and Community Services and local councils, play a lead role in promoting, supporting and administering Youth Week in NSW. A key component of Youth Week are the hundreds of local events across NSW which are designed, led and implemented by children and young people. Facilitated by councils and supported by a NSW government Youth Week grant program, these events are an opportunity for young people to share ideas, attend live events, showcase their talents and have their voices heard on issues that concern them.

The theme for NSW Youth Week 2018, as chosen by the NSW Youth Advisory Council, was *Unity Through Diversity*. This theme was carried through ACYP's NSW Youth Week initiatives including the NSW Youth Week t-shirt design competition and the NSW Youth Week Forum held in Parliament House, which is detailed earlier in this report.

During the reporting period, ACYP enhanced the functionality of the Youth Week website, allowing greater access to information about events which were listed and searchable by postcode.



Support for Local Councils

In 2018 ACYP also supported NSW Youth Week events throughout the State by producing and supplying participating Local Councils with NSW Youth Week branded merchandise for use at their NSW Youth Week events.





2018 NSW Youth Week – ACYP initiatives

NSW Youth Week T-Shirt Design Competition

Hundreds of young people across NSW submitted designs for the NSW Youth Week t-shirt design competition in the hope of having their design printed on a NSW Youth Week 2018 t-shirt.

Young people were invited to create a design inspired by the NSW Youth Week 2018 theme Unity through Diversity. Submissions were of such a high standard that judging the competition was a difficult task for the Advocate and members of the NSW Youth Advisory Council.

Congratulations to 15 year-old Georgia Curnow from Gladesville who won the competition for her design titled 'Diverse this Universe'.

Georgia attended NSW Parliament House on Thursday 12 April where the Minister responsible for Youth, the Hon. Ray Williams MP, presented Georgia with twenty NSW Youth Week t-shirts with her design printed on them along with a GoPro.





participation training and resources

ACYP provides training, mentoring and online resources to children and young people and to organisations seeking to engage children and young people in decision making.

training

ACYP provided training to children and young people on understanding the policy process and government relations. Training sessions were held with the YAC, those who applied for the YAC, and with children and young people in regional NSW.

The Advocate provided tailored face to face training with several organisations throughout the reporting year on engaging with children and young people, child rights and child rights programming.

The Advocate has also provided training for government and the non-government sector about the role of children and young people in decision making. This includes how to involve children and young people in decisions that affect them as well as child rights perspectives and considerations. Over the reporting period ACYP have run training sessions and made keynote addresses about these issues to over 4,000 people.

online Resources

The ACYP website continues to host a rich source of information and tools to assist organisations in engaging children and young people in decision making. Resources and information can be found on the ACYP website. These resources include guides and information on the following areas:

- Understanding and Supporting Children and Young People's Participation

- Currently developing child rights training modules for individuals, government and NGO's on how to include children in the decision making processes, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights programming
- Ethical considerations
- Consent
- Participatory rights
- Checklist for planning participation
- Evaluation
- How children and young people benefit through participation
- How organisations benefit through children and young people's participation
- Top ten tips for children and young people's participation

Video cases studies

- Coonamble High School
- Touched by Olivia Foundation
- Uniting Care Burnside
- YMCA Youth Parliament
- The Bright Minds Project
- Top Blokes Foundation
- Wake-Up – Change starts with you

ACYP also publishes videos of ACYP events to highlight methods of participation in practice for example, Children's Parliament, Youth Week Forum, YAC recruitment and Schools Spectacular.

promote the provision of information and advice to assist children and young people

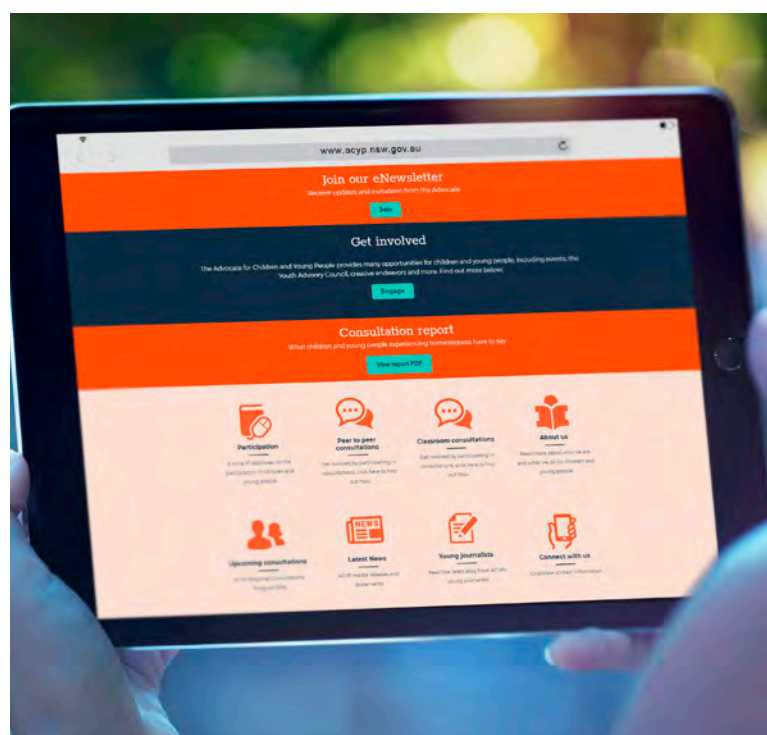
ACYP website

The ACYP website is continuously updated to reflect ACYP initiatives. In the reporting year improvements were made to enhance user experience. This included developing new modules for the Engage and the Plan section of the website.

In response to feedback from children and young people the current key initiatives are featured at the top of the home page to allow for easy access for site users.

The website features three key navigation areas:

1. **Engage:** In this section users will find ten ways to participate with the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People
2. **The Plan:** Information and updates on the development of the three-year whole-of-government Strategic Plan can be located in this section
3. **Info:** Contains a diverse range of information including publications and useful links



making recommendations on legislation, reports, policies, practices, procedures and services affecting children and young people

ACYP prepares reports, papers and submissions relating to children and young people in NSW, including approximately 15 submissions a month through the E-Cabinet process.

In the reporting year ACYP made submissions to the following inquiries:

1. Inquiry into the Prevention of Youth Suicide in NSW for the Committee on Children and Young People
 - a. Submission made 8th September 2017
 - b. The Advocate appeared before a hearing: 12th February 2018
2. Inquiry into Support for New Parents and Babies in NSW for the Committee on Community Services
 - a. Submission made: 20th December 2017
 - b. The Advocate appeared before a hearing: 29th May 2018
3. Inquiry into the Adequacy of Youth Diversionary Programs in NSW for the Committee on Law and Safety
 - a. Submission made: 9th February 2018
 - b. The Advocate appeared before a hearing: 8th May 2018
4. 2018 Review of the Annual Report of the Advocate for Children and Young People and Functions of the Children's Guardian for the Committee on Children and Young People
 - a. The Advocate appeared before a hearing: 30th April 2018
5. Inquiry into the Adequacy and Scope of Special Care Offences for the Standing Committee on Law and Justice
 - a. Submission made: 1st June 2018
 - b. The Advocate appeared before a hearing: 27th June 2018

other legislation

1. Crimes (High Risk Offenders) Amendment Bill 2017
2. Child (Detention Centre) Amendment (Parole) Bill 2017
3. Regulations Supporting Parole and Sentencing Reform
4. Strengthening Child Sexual Abuse Laws in NSW Discussion Paper for the Department of Justice
5. Statutory Review of Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002 for the Department of Justice
6. OPCAT In Australia Consultation Paper for Australian Human Rights Commission 21st July 2017
7. Early Appropriate Guilty Plea Reform for the Department of Justice 12th January 2018
8. School Safety Guidelines for the Department of Education 17th January 2018
9. Revised School Safety Guidelines for the Department of Education 28th February 2018

conduct, promote and monitor research into issues affecting children and young people

ACYP is involved in a number of research initiatives. These include surveys and focus groups aimed at understanding the attitudes, thoughts and experiences of children and young people in contemporary NSW that are described elsewhere in this report. It also includes the development of info graphics aimed at presenting a wide range of statistical information relating to children and young people in a clear and dynamic way.

The Office is also involved in a number of longer term research projects which are outlined below.

research projects

improving Wellbeing through student participation at school

ACYP continued to be a research partner in the Australian Research Council (ARC) study focusing on Improving Wellbeing through Student Participation.

Led by the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University, this Australian Research Council funded study involved over 2,000 students in a total of 24 government and Catholic high schools across NSW, as well as Principals, teachers and policymakers. ACYP was an official partner of the report.

This research provides strong evidence about how to build school cultures that are more authentically student-centred, characterised by care, respect and valuing of every student. The findings point not only to the ways in which student participation is positively associated with wellbeing, but also to how we view and engage every child and young person in our schools.

The report was in its final stages of drafting at the end of this reporting period. Further information can be found on the ACYP website.

deprivation and Exclusion among Young People

ACYP was a partner on the *Material Deprivation and Social Exclusion among Young People: A Child-Focused Approach* Australian Research Council (ARC) project, which aims to better understand the different ways that young people experience poverty and other forms of social disadvantage. Headed by the Social Policy Research Centre within the University of NSW, ACYP joined the Department of Education and The Smith Family on the project, which concluded in 2018. The study asked young people about their overall well-being and life satisfaction, including asking about some basic information about themselves, their family and friends, their neighbourhood and social networks. Young people were also asked about the items they have, and – if they don't have certain items – whether or not they would like to have them; this information will be used to develop indicators of deprivation and exclusion that are relevant to children and young people.



conduct special inquiries under Part 5 into issues affecting children and young people

No special inquiries were conducted in the reporting period.

committees and advisory groups

Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People

Under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014, one of the core functions of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People is to monitor and review the exercise by the Advocate of the Advocate's functions.

The members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Children and Young People are:

- Chair, Ms Melanie Gibbons (Lib, LA Member)
- Deputy Chair, Mr Damien Tudehope (Lib, LA Member)
- The Hon. Greg Donnelly (ALP, LC Member)
- The Hon. Paul Green (CDP, LC Member)
- The Hon. Wes Fang (Nat, LC Member)
- Ms Jodie Harrison (ALP, LA Member)
- Mr Michael Johnsen (Nat, LA Member)

The Advocate or an ACYP delegate holds membership or provides council to a number of government and non-government entities, some of which are listed below.

Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians

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.

Care and Crime Working Group

The purpose of this working group is to address issues for children in the care jurisdiction who are vulnerable to crossing over into the criminal justice system, by identifying systemic problems and solutions.

Child Death Review Team (CDRT)

The NSW Child Death Review Team (CDRT) reviews the deaths of children in NSW. The purpose of the CDRT is to prevent and reduce child deaths. The group comprises senior health experts and children's advocates.

Child Rights Taskforce

The Australian Child Rights Taskforce is the peak body for child rights in Australia. Membership is made up of advocates, service providers, individuals and experts, speaking with a united voice to promote and realise the rights of Australian children.

Healthy Eating Active Living Senior Officers Group (HEALSOG)

Cross Governmental group working to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in NSW.

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

The Committee advises JJNSW on evidence-based interventions, programs and services to support and rehabilitate children and young people who are involved in the juvenile justice system.



Law Society of NSW – Children’s Legal Issues Committee

The Law Society’s committees are established as a source of expert advice and assistance to the Council, the Society and the profession.

NCOSS Children Young People and Families Alliance

This is an information sharing interest group that evolved from the Steering Group for NCOSS’s 1 in 7 (children in poverty) campaign.

NESA’s Board Endorsed Alternative Education Panel

The Panel reviews applications for Alternative Education Programs for young people.

NSW Family Matters Collective

The NSW Family Matters Collective represents a group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organisations that recognise the need to do more to protect the rights of Aboriginal children and families, empowering communities and driving more effective approaches to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal children, their families and communities.

Our Local Steering Committee

Continued to facilitate and develop the Our Local project. This inter-governmental steering committee and technical advisory group is made up of representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, the Department of Transport and the Department, the Department of Planning and Services, NSW Ministry of Health, and NSW Treasury.

Social Innovation Council

The Social Innovation Council is a strategic partnership between the NSW Government and the Forum of Non-Government Agencies. It aims to accelerate innovation in the way human services are designed, delivered and measured, and to improve human services outcomes.

Steering Committee for the Joint Protocol to reduce the contact of young people in residential out-of-home care with the criminal justice system

ACYP convenes the Youth Working Group of the committee. The role of the working group is to engage with young people in residential care affected by the joint protocol.

Violence against Children Advisory Committee

The committee is guiding the development of the VAC campaign. The committee is made up of experts from NSW peak agencies, leading NGO’s, a representative from the Ministers Office and a Senior Health expert.

Youth Justice Coalition

The YJC is a network of youth workers, children’s lawyers, academics and policy workers who promote the rights of children and young people in NSW and across Australia.



engaging with stakeholders and children and young people

The Advocate regularly holds and attends meetings to establish and deepen working relationships with the many government, non-government and civil society organisations who help protect and promote the rights and interests of children and young people.

The Advocate also conducts face to face consultations with children and young people across NSW on the issues that affect them.

During the reporting year, the Advocate attended or held over 350 meetings, forums, seminars and related events.

responses of authorities to recommendations made by the Advocate

No recommendations were made in the reporting period.

Advocate's recommendations for changes in the laws of the State, or for administrative action

No independent recommendations were made in the reporting period outside of ACYP's usual government consultation processes.



office structure and administration

staffing

The Advocate is an independent statutory officer supported by a small team of staff.

The Advocate's budget is part of the FACS operating budget and is reported as part of that department's Annual Report.

As at 30 June 2018, there were a maximum of 12 full time staff and 4 part time staff, employed against a staff establishment of 20 positions.

principal officers

As at 30 June 2018, our senior management team was:

Andrew Johnson, BA LLB MSW
Advocate for Children and Young People

Mr Michael Shaw, B. Comms, PGCertSS, PGCertPP
Director

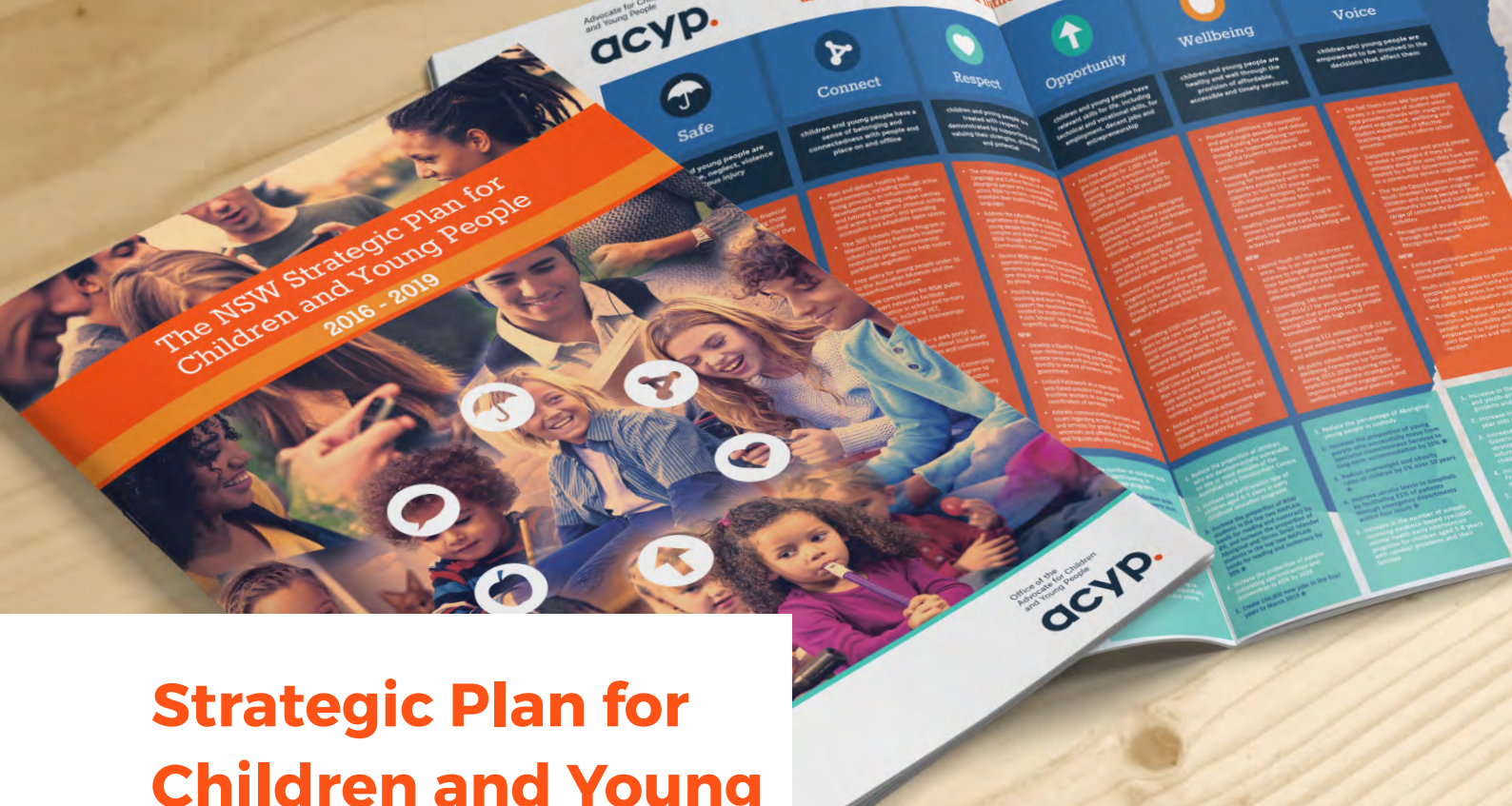
publications

Publications by the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People released throughout the reporting year:

- End Violence against Children – Adult's Report
- End Violence against Children – Children's Report

sponsorships

ACYP supported NSW Police Legacy – Child Safety Handbook.



Strategic Plan for Children and Young People in NSW

progress review

The three-year whole of government NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People (the Plan) launched in July 2016, provides a set of agreed common objectives and indicators which align to NSW Government policies and services for children and young people.

The Plan was drafted by ACYP following consultation with over 4,000 children and young people across NSW, before it was endorsed and adopted by Government. The Plan outlines six guiding principles that inform its implementation, they are: Innovation; Localisation; Collaboration; Prevention; Transitions; and Addressing Disadvantage, all of which lead the way for better outcomes for children and young people.

The Plan is organised under six themes which, through consultations, were informed by children and young people from across NSW.

The themes of the Plan are:



Under the six themes of the Plan are 42 key initiatives and 30 indicators. ACYP has partial or full responsibility for five of the key initiatives. Processes are in place to monitor all initiatives and indicators, including those outside of ACYP's responsibility. In the period from July 2017 to June 2018, ACYP has actively progressed the following key initiatives for which it has responsibility:



developing 'Our Local'

Our Local will bring together information about local opportunities in NSW for children and young people in an easy to access and use digital platform. This technology will allow children and young people to search opportunities relating to their interests in their suburb or area.

Children and young people's ongoing input in the co-design of Our Local has been facilitated through a series of ongoing consultations with children and young people and polling.

To facilitate the development of Our Local, an inter-governmental steering committee and technical advisory group made up of representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Justice, the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, the Department of Transport and the Department, the Department of Planning and Services, NSW Ministry of Health, and NSW Treasury has continued to guide the development of the project.

Significant development occurred during the reporting period and is scheduled to be launched late 2018.





Artwork by: Taylor Crowe

developing a quality assessors program

The Children and Young People Inspectors (C.Y.P.I) is a program that ACYP is trialling which trains children and young people to assess how services engage with and meet the needs of children and young people. This program may expand and will be open to all government agencies, non-government organisations and corporations who want to learn more about meaningful engagement with children and young people.

benefits:

- C.Y.P.I will provide organisations with individualised recommendations and feedback about their services for children and young people. This is a unique opportunity for these organisations to respond to the needs of their clients and improve outcomes for children and young people
- Participating in the C.Y.P.I program demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that children and young people are safe, connected, respected, have opportunities to thrive, are well and that their voices are taken into account
- Children and young people are empowered to make a positive contribution to their community.

Children and young people interested in participating in the C.Y.P.I trial program online are invited to register through the ACYP website.

In the reporting period, 11 young people were trained as inspectors and two NSW services were visited as part of the trial period.

Feedback from the inspectors was given to the services who voluntarily participated in the program to assist them in continuing to improve their engagement with children and young people.

enhance government and non-government training when dealing with children and young people

Under the theme 'Respect' is an indicator which aims to enhance government and non-government service provider skills to proactively and respectfully engage with children and young people through targeted training. The Advocate offers targeted training to both government and non-government organisations to assist them in developing skills to proactively and respectfully engage with children and young people.

In addition to structured training programs conducted by ACYP, in the reporting period the Advocate spoke at 47 events which included elements of child rights and participation training with stakeholders and children and young people. This included information on how to involve children and young people in decisions that affect them as well as child rights perspectives and considerations and information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Over the reporting period ACYP have run training sessions and made keynote addresses about these issues to over 4,000 people.



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and Young People

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