





Hi!

I'm Megan Mitchell, the National Children's Commissioner.

My job is to protect the rights of all children and young people in Australia and make sure that adults help children and young people grow up healthy and strong.

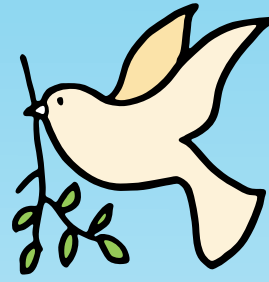
Every year I write a report to the Australian Government telling them how I think we can better look out for all children and young people.

This is my second report.

I am going to talk about the human rights of children and young people and the main things in my report.



# Did you know that all children and young people in Australia (and the world) have human rights?



Everyone under 18 is a child. Some of the rights children have are:

- ☆ to be treated fairly no matter what
- ☆ to have a say about decisions affecting you
- ☆ to live and grow up healthy
- ☆ be safe no matter where you are
- ☆ be cared for and have a home
- ☆ to get an education
- ☆ to play and have fun!

Children's rights are written down in an agreement called the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Australian Government has promised to make sure all children and young people get these things.





There is also a special group of people called the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child who try to make things better for children and young people all over the world.

They looked at what life is like for children and young people in Australia and told the Australian Government what it could do to make things better.

They said that Australia does a lot of good things for children and young people. BUT they said that many children and young people are having a hard time, like:

- ☆ being treated unfairly
- ☆ being bullied and hit
- ☆ not getting the education they need
- ☆ not being able to live with their parents
- ☆ not being as happy or as healthy as they could be
- ☆ not having a home
- ☆ getting in trouble with the law and needing help
- ☆ getting locked up.

Australia needs to listen to children and young people and work harder to help them.



# In 2013 I went around Australia listening to children and young people.

I met over 1000 children and young people. About 1400 children and young people also filled in surveys and sent me postcards.

I asked them what was important to them and what would make life better.

I heard stories from adults who work with children and young people too.

After I had listened to all the great things that children, young people and adults had to say, I came up with five main ideas. These ideas are helping me do my work.

## 1. The right to be heard!

We need to make sure that adults listen to children and young people and take their views seriously.

## 2. Freedom from violence, abuse and neglect

We need to make sure that all children and young people are safe.

## 3. The opportunity to thrive

All children and young people need to grow up strong, healthy and happy. We need to help children and young people who are having a really hard time right from the start, not waiting until the problems get really bad.

## 4. Engaged Citizenship

We should help children and young people get involved in their schools and communities – to be citizens! They need to know about their rights!

## 5. Action and accountability

We need to know all about how children and young people are doing in Australia. Then we need to make sure that the Australian Government makes laws and rules which help all children and young people.





## This year I paid special attention to the human rights of young children who are in early education and care.

I worked with a group called Early Childhood Australia. We thought about my five main ideas and agreed to use them to make sure that everyone knows about children's rights.

We worked out what young children and people working with them could do to support the rights of children.

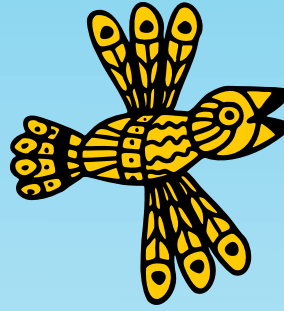
It's important to make sure that children know about their rights as early as possible.

Children can use their rights to tell someone if they don't feel safe and to have a say about things that matter to them.

People working with young children should listen to young children and help them to learn about their rights and to have all the things they need to do well.



## I also spoke to children and young people about privacy.



All children and young people have the right to privacy and in Australia there are rules about this.

Privacy rules can be broken when someone goes into your home without being asked, when you are being watched without you knowing, or when someone uses information without you agreeing.

Here are some of the things children and young people said when I spoke to them:

Privacy means that you should be worrying about your stuff, not other people's... I believe that home is the best for your privacy

I think privacy means that you can do things, talk to other people and go to other places without people listening or watching

Not being put on chat sites without permission, not having photos taken of you

After I spoke to children and young people about privacy rules, I shared what they said with adults working to make better privacy rules.





## Everyone gets worried and upset sometimes. Children and young people have a right to life and health, and help if they need it.

This year I learned a lot about what worries and upsets children and young people. Some children and young people get so upset that they hurt themselves. I spoke to young people and adults about how we can make sure children and young people get better help.

Children and young people have some very important human rights to help them be healthy and get help, like the right:

- ☆ to be alive
- ☆ to not be hurt or mistreated
- ☆ to special education and care if you have a disability
- ☆ to good health care, safe drinking water, healthy food, a clean and safe environment, and information to help you stay well
- ☆ to be looked after
- ☆ to food, clothing, and a safe place to live
- ☆ to protection from harmful drugs
- ☆ not to be punished in a cruel way
- ☆ to help if you've been hurt or badly treated
- ☆ to be respected and listened to.







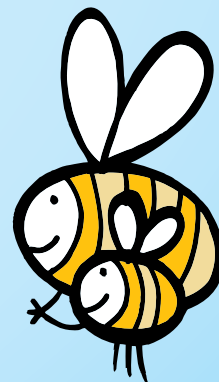
## What if you were worried or upset? Would you know where to get help?

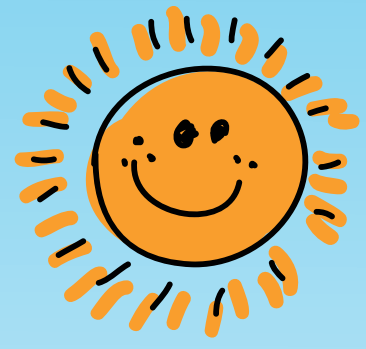
There are lots of ways that children and young people can get help for things that they are worried or upset by. You can talk to your parents, your family, friends and teachers.

If you wanted to **talk to someone on the phone**, you could call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

You could **talk to someone face-to-face** at a headspace centre and **or online** at [www.eheadspace.org.au](http://www.eheadspace.org.au) or **on the phone** on 1800 650 890.

There are also places to **find mental health information online**, such as ReachOut at <http://au.reachout.com>.





## What will I do now?

Every year I make a report like this, and make suggestions about how the Australian Government can make life better for children and young people.

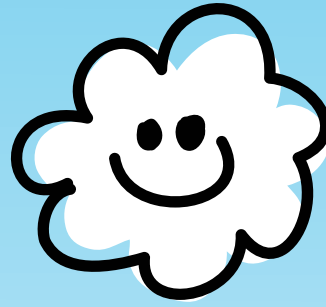
I will also keep finding ways to help children and young people learn about their rights.

## What can you do now?

You can also have your say about your rights, anytime!

You can email me on [kids@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:kids@humanrights.gov.au).





# Find your rights!

- 1. Human rights
- 2. Protection
- 3. Heard
- 4. Home
- 5. Equality
- 6. Alive
- 7. Identity
- 8. Choice
- 9. Privacy
- 10. Information
- 11. Health
- 12. Education
- 13. Culture
- 14. Play
- 15. Safe
- 16. Help

s u x w p o b m k j g a e r i  
 h f d c v n p o i y z a q u x  
 i w h u m a n r i g h t s c p  
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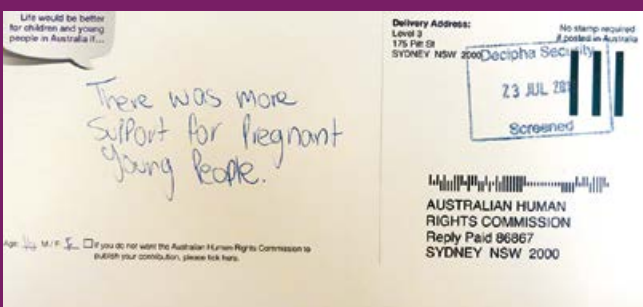
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Postcards received from Children (top to bottom):  
17 old girl; 5 year old boy from NSW; 3 1/2 year old girl from SA; 16 year old girl; 5 year old boy from Vic.