



Australian  
Human Rights  
Commission

# What does the Children's Rights Report 2013 say?

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER



Child-friendly version



Hi!

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

My job is to protect the rights of all children in Australia and make sure that adults are helping all of you 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.

This is my first Report.

I am going to talk about the main things I said in my Report.



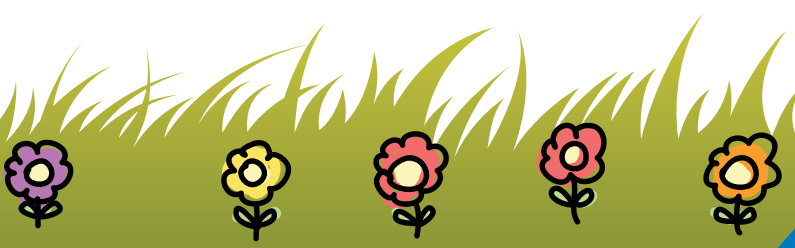
# Did you know that all children in Australia (and the world) have human rights?

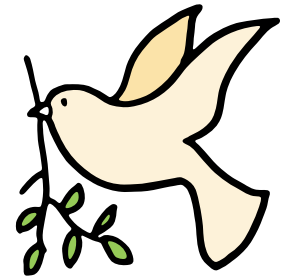
Some rights are

- ☆ 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
- ☆ education
- ☆ play!

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 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 all over the world.

They looked at what life is like for children 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. BUT they said that many children are having a hard time.

- ☆ Some children are being treated unfairly.
- ☆ Some children are being bullied and hit.
- ☆ Some children are not getting the education they need.
- ☆ Some children can't live with their parents.
- ☆ Some children are not as happy or as healthy as they could be.
- ☆ Some children do not have homes.
- ☆ Some children are in trouble with the law and need help.
- ☆ Some children are locked up.



**Australia needs to listen to children and work harder to help them.**

# Australia has lots of ways it can make things better for children.

We can collect information about children so we know how to help them better.

We can listen to children about what they need, and take their ideas seriously.

We can have good plans which show exactly which children need help and how to do it, all over Australia, not just in some places.

We can make sure that the Australian Government makes laws which help children, and don't hurt them.





## Last year I went around Australia listening to children.

I called this trip The Big Banter.


I met over 1000 children. I also got surveys and postcards from about 1400 more children of all ages.


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


They told me some amazing stories and had lots of good ideas.

I also heard stories from adults who work with children.




- 
- ☆ seeing my friends and family happy
  - ☆ I have my family around me
  - ☆ other people are happy
  - ☆ I'm playing with my friends
  - ☆ I'm playing with my friends at school
  - ☆ my family is happy and healthy
  - ☆ I'm with my family and friends
  - ☆ I'm spending time with my parents
  - ☆ I'm living happily with the people I love

- ☆ I'm around friends, family and having fun
  - ☆ I'm helping other people
  - ☆ I'm reading, writing and laughing
  - ☆ I have downtime with my family
  - ☆ I'm doing art and craft
  - ☆ I dance, act, sing, play piano and paint
  - ☆ I'm at pre-school and have a nice teacher
  - ☆ I'm playing with my little brother
- 



Some things that  
children said made  
them happy ...



Primary school children in Perth, Western Australia (15 August 2013)



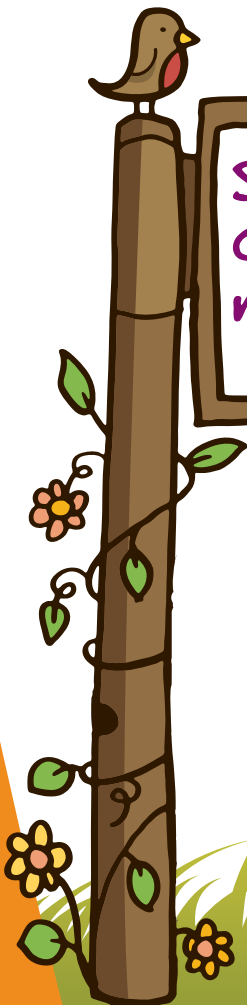
- ☆ there were no bullies
- ☆ kids were involved in political life
- ☆ everyone had supportive parents
- ☆ everyone could be themselves
- ☆ there was equal access to education
- ☆ there was no physical violence
- ☆ all different cultures were involved
- ☆ we have freedom to choose
- ☆ we all feel safe no matter where we are



- ☆ there was peace
- ☆ everyone gets a voice
- ☆ all kids are treated fairly
- ☆ everyone had a family
- ☆ everyone was safe
- ☆ there was housing for everyone
- ☆ if we weren't stereotyped



Some things that  
children said would  
make life better ...



Children at a remote primary school in Darwin, Northern Territory (7 August 2013)



Children said it was important for them to have a say and for their views to be taken seriously.

They said people should be treated fairly, no matter what.

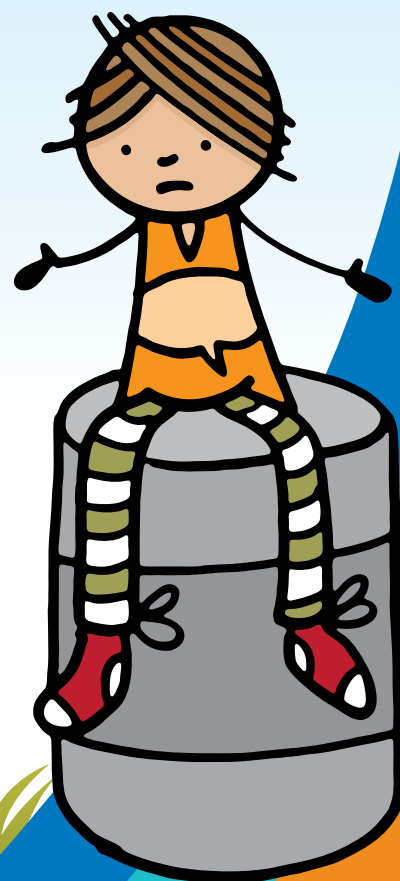
The most important things to children were home and family and feeling safe. They also said that being healthy, having friends and playing, going to school and learning and having a say were important.

Some children told me that they worry about violence and bullying. They want to live somewhere where there are no drugs, alcohol and smoking.

They worry that some children might not have enough money to do all things they would like.

They want adults to help them, respect them, and care for them when they need it.

They want adults to take action to make things better.





After I had listened to all the great things children and adults had to say, I thought about what they told me.

Then I wrote down five main ideas that I think are important for making life better for children in Australia.

### **1. Children's right to be heard!**

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

### **2. Freedom from violence, abuse and neglect**

We need to make sure that all children are safe.

### **3. The opportunity to thrive**

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

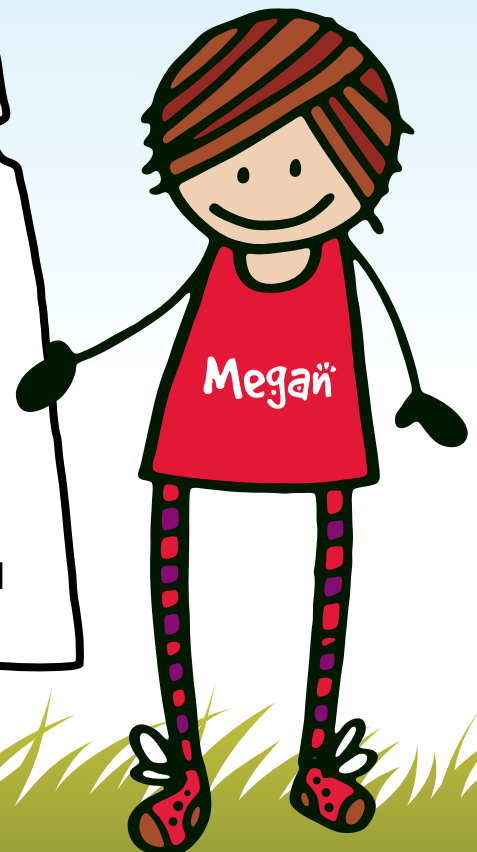
### **4. Engaged Citizenship**

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



## What will I do now?

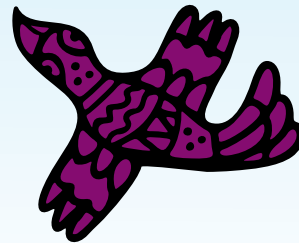
Every year I make a report like this, telling the Australian Government what they have to do to make life better for children.

I will also let everyone know about the five main ideas for making things better.

## 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)





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#### Contact details

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Drawings shown above were lovingly created by children at Bourke Primary School in NSW.