

Australian and
New Zealand Children's
COMMISSIONERS
AND **GUARDIANS**

19 September 2019

Dr Brian Babington
Families Australia
PO Box 4386
Kingston ACT 2604
Via email to: Brian.Babington@FamiliesAustralia.org.au

Dear Dr. Babington,

Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians Meeting – May 2019

We write to thank you for your presentation on the 4th Action Plan under the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2018 – 2020 at the May 2019 meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ANZCCG). We appreciate you, Stella and Marian making time to discuss the work of Families Australia and enquiring into our views about the future of the national strategy after the National Framework ends in 2020.

ANZCCG members wish to lend their support and advocacy for the Framework and its underlying action plans, and extend an offer to continue working with you in the interests of ensuring the current Framework and its successor plan achieve the intended benefits for our children and young people.

ANZCCG

As you know, the aim of the Australian and New Zealand Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ANZCCG) is to promote and protect the safety, well-being and rights of children and young people in Australia, and ensure that the best interests of children and young people are considered in public policy and program development across Australia.

Currently, the ANZCCG are focusing their work on the following key priorities:

1. Achieving better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori children and young people
2. Promoting young people's engagement and participation
3. Upholding the rights of children and young people in contact with the youth justice system
4. Improving the safety of children and young people in organisations
5. Ending violence against children and young people
6. Promoting children and young people's safety and wellbeing

The next national plan

The ANZCCG understands that Families Australia has begun hosting workshops to discuss and design key elements of a national child and family wellbeing plan. We would appreciate you providing us with notice of workshops in our respective jurisdictions to enable us to contribute to this work in support of ensuring the successor plan appropriately supports the participation and protection of children and young people.

As Families Australia looks to develop this new national child and family wellbeing plan, we consider that a number of issues discussed at our meeting in May remain important to the successful design and implementation of the next national plan.

ANZCCG members reaffirm the importance of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership throughout all levels of government and community. ANZCCG have concerns that community voices are currently undermined in regards to child wellbeing and capturing these voices is crucial to developing an effective national plan that will achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

During our discussion, we also raised our concerns that a shift to family wellbeing may risk a reduced focus on children's safety and wellbeing. We support a national plan that retains a central focus on children's safety and wellbeing and that ensures children and young people are provided with opportunities to participate in the development of the plan.

ANZCCG members are committed to supporting the implementation of initiatives that facilitate improved outcomes for our children and young people. To this end, we encourage Families Australia to develop, maintain or strengthen linkages with the Commissioners and Guardians in each state and territory as needed so that we can promote investment and commitment by state and territory governments in achieving the aim of improving child safety and wellbeing.

Yours sincerely,

 Jodie Griffiths-Cook Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT)	 Megan Mitchell National Children's Commissioner
 Andrew Johnson Advocate for Children and Young People (NSW)	 Janet Schorer PSM Children's Guardian (NSW)
 Colleen Gwynne Children's Commissioner (NT)	 Natalie Siegel-Brown Public Guardian (QLD)

 <p>Cheryl Vardon Principal Commissioner, Queensland Family and Child Commission</p>	 <p>Philip Brooks Commissioner, Queensland Family and Child Commission</p>
 <p>Helen Connolly Commissioner for Children and Young People (SA)</p>	 <p>April Lawrie Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (SA)</p>
 <p>Penny Wright Guardian for Children and Young People and Training Centre Visitor (SA)</p>	 <p>Leanne McLean Commissioner for Children and Young People (Tas)</p>
 <p>Liana Buchanan Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People (Vic)</p>	 <p>Justin Mohamed Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People (Vic)</p>
 <p>Colin Pettit Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA)</p>	 <p>Judge Andrew Becroft Children's Commissioner (NZ)</p>