



AUSTRALIAN
CHILD RIGHTS
TASKFORCE

Revised Submission
to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child
On the List of Issues Prior to Reporting

In Preparation for the Seventh Periodic Report of Australia
On Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

August 2026

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Introduction

1. **The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child** (the Committee) will soon provide its List of Issues Prior to Reporting to the Australian Government in anticipation of the seventh periodic report under **the Convention on the Rights of the Child** (the Convention).
2. **The Australian Child Rights Taskforce** (the Taskforce) offers this submission to support a better understanding of children's rights in Australia and to enhance constructive dialogue between the Committee and the Australian Government. The Taskforce is the key civil society body for child rights reporting in Australia, holding Government to account through the views and evidence of children and civil society.
3. This submission draws on the most recent research and evidence, including the views and experiences of children. It replaces the Taskforce's previous submission provided in December 2025 to meet the previous deadline (now extended).

Ongoing Areas of Concern and Recommendations

3. In previous Concluding Observations¹, the Committee has drawn Australia's particular attention to the need for urgent measures in protection from violence, alternative care, mental health, climate change, asylum-seeking, refugee, and migrant children, and administration of justice.
4. These remain priority issues for children and civil society. We also address the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children, poverty and homelessness and the digital environment.
5. The Committee has also drawn attention to the need for a national plan of action for implementing the Convention, with sufficient human, technical and financial resources, and with attention to data and monitoring. We address these and related General Measures of Implementation in the final section of this submission.

Preliminary Note on Powers and Responsibilities

6. The Australian Government has previously stated to the Committee on its powers and responsibilities: "[M]atters such as education, child protection, healthcare and youth justice fall predominantly within the constitutional responsibility of the States and Territories".²
7. The Taskforce has obtained a constitutional legal opinion that challenges this assertion. It states:

*"The Australian Government has as much legislative power to regulate child rights as it wants to have. It could pass valid legislation implementing every single one of its international human rights obligations, including the entirety of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, into justiciable and enforceable domestic law."*³
8. This opinion has been reinforced in the context of the Australian Government's power to legislate to raise the age of criminal responsibility and to establish national standards in youth justice.⁴
9. In the Taskforce's view, there is no constitutional barrier to the Australian Government providing leadership in implementing the Convention.

¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Australia*, CRC/C/AUS/CO/5-6, para 4.

² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports submitted by Australia under article 44 of the Convention*, CRC/C/AUS/5-6, para 18.

³ Clark, S., Keyzer, P., and Goff, C., [Opinion: The Constitutional Powers of the Commonwealth with respect to Child Rights](#), 2023.

⁴ Justice and Equity Centre, [Explainer: Calling for Australian Government action to protect children](#), 2025.

Violence Against Children

10. The Committee has remained concerned over several reporting cycles at high rates of violence against children, including at home; the support provided to child victims of domestic, family and sexual violence; the disproportionate impacts on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and the limited involvement of their communities in solutions; the greater vulnerability of children with disabilities, and limited data on violence against children in remote areas, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and LGBTQIA+ children.
11. Since the last reporting cycle, the first **Australian Child Maltreatment Study**⁵ has produced findings which reinforce the Committee's concerns. This study found 62.2% of Australians aged 16 and over had experienced one or more types of abuse⁶ during childhood, 39.4% had experienced more than 1 type of abuse and 23.3% had experienced 3 to 5 types of abuse.⁷ Results revealed worrying generational trends; the youngest cohort (16-24) reported higher rates of emotional abuse and domestic violence exposure in childhood than the overall sample, while there was no reduction in sexual violence against girls. Data indicate limited progress regarding child protection outcomes over time⁸. The number of children in out-of-home care has remained high, indicating ongoing systemic issues within the child protection system.⁹ Preventive investment to reduce the need for removal from family remains lacking. Reported increase in online violence against children¹⁰ has further complicated the landscape.
12. The Committee has called for the review of relevant national policy initiatives to prioritise key prevention measures and responses to violence against children, including sexual violence, and violence against girls, children with disabilities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. This should include monitoring at a state and territory level to ensure a consistent approach to data and measurement of incidence and outcomes.
13. The Committee has encouraged community-based programmes to address violence in all its forms against children in remote areas, children in communities with a culturally and linguistically diverse background, and LGBTQIA+ children.
14. A review of **The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020**¹¹ found that it largely fell short of its objectives. It noted “the National Framework was not supported by a robust logic model or evaluation framework which limited its ability to measure its effectiveness”.
15. **Safe and Supported: National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021–2031** is now in place and has an expressed focus on groups experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability. However, in 2026, a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy remains ‘in development’.¹²
16. The new **Children and Family Support (CaFS) Program** (effective 1 July 2027) will include a focus on prevention and early intervention; but key details remain unclear, including, how it will strengthen implementation and jurisdictional accountability to **Safe and Supported**, how existing data limitations will be addressed to support evidence-informed, needs-based funding decisions, and what proportion will go to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs).

QUESTION: How will the CaFS Program and the Framework monitor and measure reductions in violence and protections for children?

QUESTION: How will progress be monitored consistently across jurisdictions? What funding is being provided to support measurements, monitoring and regular public reporting?

⁵ Haslam, D., et al., *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia: Findings from the Australian Child Maltreatment Study: Brief Report*, 2023.

⁶ The types are physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and exposure to domestic violence.

⁷ Haslam et al., *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia*, pp. 3, 14.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Child protection Australia 2023–25*, 2026; Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2025: Child Protection*, 2026, Part F, Section 16.

⁹ AIHW, *Child protection Australia 2023–24: Insights*, data table T1.

¹⁰ eSafety Commissioner, *40% jump in child bullying reports to eSafety*, 2024.

¹¹ Department of Social Services (DSS)/PwC, *Evaluation of the National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020*, 2020.

¹² DSS, *Safe and Supported reporting*, 2025.

QUESTION: Given the intent of the National Framework to address disadvantage in preventing harm, what are the measures to address the social determinants of violence against children and lack of access to tailored family support? How will results be monitored and reported?

QUESTION: What support will be provided to local organisations and ACCOs to collect and analyse data on children's needs and service access? How will this inform needs-based service development and address gaps in services to children and families?

17. **The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022** has concluded with a key criticism that it lacked measures to track progress.¹³
18. The new **National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children (2022-2032)** is now in place. Its First Action Plan (2023-2027) contains only one child specific commitment: to develop and implement age-appropriate programs, that are culturally safe, to intervene early to address violence and support recovery and healing from trauma. A recent report from the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence (DFSV) Commissioner¹⁴, sharing insights from its first children and young people's roundtable, highlighted significant gaps and exclusions in services and programs especially for older adolescents and unaccompanied children. The Plan has no detailed reference to preventing violence against children with disabilities, in particular prohibiting the sterilisation of girls with disabilities without their consent.
19. The Outcomes Framework for the Plan includes Outcome 5 - Children and young people are safe in all settings and are effectively supported by systems and services. No detail of programs, funding or strategies have yet been provided.

Our Ways–Strong Ways–Our Voices: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Plan to End Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence was launched in early 2026.

QUESTION: What are the programs or strategies under the National Plan 2022-2032 to prevent and respond to violence against children? How will they be measured and reported?

QUESTION: What programs and strategies will be funded to address violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and how will they be measured and reported?

20. The Committee welcomed the report of the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017)**, whose recommendations were monitored publicly until 2022. Since then, there has been no coordinated comprehensive reporting on implementation, particularly by State and Territory Governments.
21. The Committee welcomed the establishment of a National Redress Scheme as recommended by the Royal Commission. This began in 2018 and will run through to 2028.
22. A key Royal Commission recommendation was the introduction and monitoring of nationally consistent child safe standards (which were agreed by all Governments), reportable conduct schemes and working with children checks.

QUESTION: Since 2022, how is progress in implementation of the recommendations of the Royal Commission being monitored and by whom? Is this information available publicly?

QUESTION: What progress has been made in establishing coordinated national child safety monitoring across jurisdictions and sectors and with what information available publicly?

QUESTION: What is the current and projected progress in the National Redress Scheme?

QUESTION: What is the progress in the implementation of the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse? What funding has been provided? How is progress being monitored and reported publicly?

¹³ Fitz-Gibbon, K. *et al.*, [The government has released its action plans to end violence against women and children. Will they be enough?](#), 2023.

¹⁴ DFSV Commission, [Children and Young People Roundtable](#), 2025, p.3.

23. The physical punishment of children in schools is currently prohibited, except in Queensland and Western Australia. Australian law does not consistently prohibit corporal punishment in other settings, permitting it in the home, alternative care and detention in various states and territories¹⁵.
24. The Committee has recommended that Australia explicitly prohibits corporal punishment in law in all settings and conduct a public health campaign to promote alternative forms of discipline.
25. The Committee has also recommended that Australia strengthen its measures to limit child marriage; prohibit coerced sterilisation, unnecessary medical or surgical treatment; and guarantee bodily integrity and autonomy to intersex children, and support to their families.

QUESTION: What steps has the Australian Government taken to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, promote alternative discipline, and prohibit these other practices?

¹⁵ End Corporal Punishment, [Corporal punishment of children in Australia](#), 2023.

Systems Reforms (alternative care and child justice)

Children deprived of a family environment

26. The Committee has recommended that Australia provide the necessary resources to family support services for children and their families, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, to prevent violence, abuse, and neglect.
27. The Committee has remained concerned over several reporting cycles at the continuing over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in alternative care, often outside their communities; the lack of national data on removal and placement decisions; inadequate resources, placements and interventions; and limited access to mental health and therapeutic services.
28. The Committee has recommended that Australia increase investment in prevention measures for children and their families to avoid child removal and, when this is a necessary measure, limit it to the shortest time possible, ensure participation of children, their families and communities in decision-making, and guarantee an individualised and community-sensitive approach, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. *See also Violence Against Children.*
29. The Committee has recommended over previous reporting cycles that Australia more effectively address the high rates of homelessness among children, particularly for children leaving alternative care, and for children under 12 years. *See also Poverty and Homelessness*
30. The renewed **National Agreement on Closing the Gap** has a new Target (12) to reduce by 2031 the rate of over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system by 45%. Data indicates this rate is worsening and the Target is not on track.¹⁶
31. In 2023-24, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children nationwide were 4.9 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be reported to child protection authorities, 9.8 times more likely to be subject to a child protection order and 9.6 times more likely to be in out-of-home care.¹⁷ Although data is not published across all jurisdictions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unborn babies are reported to child protection at high rates in every jurisdiction where data exists.¹⁸
32. Consistent with Committee recommendations, SNAICC's 2025 *Family Matters Report* recommended a dedicated funding model and program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled integrated early years services and for increased investment in reunification services. It recommended the establishment of Commissioners for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children in every state and territory, empowered and resourced by legislation.¹⁹ A National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children was appointed in January 2025, and in July 2026, established by statute with powers and independence.
33. South Australia, Victoria and the ACT have appointed Commissioners for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The six-year term of the first Queensland Commissioner ended in May 2026, and the Queensland Government has not confirmed that it will retain the role. Not all roles are guaranteed independence, statutory backing or proper resources.

¹⁶ The Productivity Commission, [Closing the Gap Information Repository: Socio-economic outcomes area 12](#), accessed July 2026.

¹⁷ SNAICC, *Family Matters Report 2025*, 2025, p.17.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.7-9.

34. The Committee has recommended that the Australian Government:

- Conduct regular assessments of the impact of investments for children and to address disparities, paying attention to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
- Strengthen its support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, through capacity-building, increased resource allocation, and priority as service providers.
- Invest in measures to prevent the placement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care, provide support and facilitate reintegration into families and communities; and
- Invest more in improving education at the early childhood, primary and secondary levels, paying particular attention to, *inter alia*, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

QUESTION: What are the measures to address these recommendations and what are the budgetary allocations to these measures by all Governments?

QUESTION: What action is being taken to implement a dedicated funding model and program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and with what resourcing?

35. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle is a key tool to address the over-representation of their children in the child protection system. The Principle consists of five elements - prevention, partnership, placement, participation and connection, with a hierarchy of placement options to ensure connection to family, community, culture and country is maintained.²⁰

36. In 2023, 26.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were placed with non-Indigenous, non-relative carers. On average, around one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in out-of-home care live with Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander relatives or kin.²¹ Connection to relatives and kin remains critical to their identity, culture and community.

37. Since 2018, SNAICC **National Voice for our Children** has undertaken annual compliance reviews of the Principle for each jurisdiction. These reviews identified a lack of full implementation.²²

QUESTION: What measures are in place to monitor and implement the consistent use of the Child Placement Principle by child protection authorities nationally and how effective are these measures?

38. The **National Out of Home Care Standards** fail to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's cultural rights and self-determination and provide no oversight, accountability or remedy.

QUESTION: What steps will be taken to ensure the Out of Home Care Standards comply with child rights principles and provide accountability to children, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children?

²⁰ SNAICC, [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Placement Principle](#), 2026.

²¹ SNAICC, [Family Matters Report 2024 Data Snapshot](#), 2024.

²² SNAICC, *Family Matters Report 2025*, p.22.

Administration of child justice

39. The Committee has recommended over previous reporting cycles that Australia:
- Bring its child justice system fully into line with the Convention.
 - Raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility and repeal mandatory sentences.
 - Address the high rate of Indigenous incarceration.
 - Prohibit the use of isolation and force, including physical restraints, investigate all cases of abuse in detention, and adequately sanction perpetrators.
 - Promote non-judicial measures, such as diversion, mediation, counselling, non-custodial sentences, for children who have committed criminal offences.
 - Where detention is unavoidable, ensure that children are detained in separate facilities.
 - Ensure that children with disabilities are not detained indefinitely without conviction and their detention is regularly reviewed; and
 - Provide children with information about their rights and how to report abuses.
40. Child justice systems in Australia are characterised by extensive non-compliance with international youth justice principles.²³ No binding national standards exist to enforce compliance.
41. The minimum age of criminal responsibility remains at 10 years in most jurisdictions. Limited progress includes:
- The ACT has raised its minimum age to 14, with some exceptions.²⁴
 - Victoria has raised its minimum age to 12 years.²⁵
42. A Working Group established by Australian Attorneys-General recommended that all Governments raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14, without exception.²⁶ A further report outlined considerations in developing supports and services for children.²⁷ Australia has not implemented the recommendations.
43. Australia has set a Closing the Gap target to cut the rate of Indigenous young people (10-17 years) in detention by at least 30% by 2031. In 2021, the Australian Government established the **Justice Policy Partnership** as a shared decision-making mechanism to reduce Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander incarceration. Yet in 2024-25, Indigenous children were still about 23 times more likely to be incarcerated than non-Indigenous children.²⁸
44. Use of isolation and force has not been explicitly prohibited. Cruel, inhuman and degrading practices continue to be widely used. Cases of undisclosed and unremedied abuse and maltreatment of children in detention are regularly reported.²⁹ In practice, detention is not a measure of last resort, either before or after sentencing. Detention rates remain high, including a growing proportion of unsentenced detention.³⁰
45. Bail laws across jurisdictions have become more punitive:
- In 2021, the Northern Territory legislated measures, including automatic revocation of bail and reducing access to diversion.³¹ In April 2025, the requirement to treat detention as a last resort for children was removed.³²
 - In 2021, Queensland reversed the presumption of bail for children in some circumstances; in 2023, it created a criminal offence for breach of bail by children; in 2024, it removed the principle of detention as a last resort, restorative justice as a sentencing option, and imposed longer probation periods.³³
 - Victoria has removed detention as a last resort for children and applied harsher bail tests for a range of offences.³⁴
 - In 2024, New South Wales introduced harsher bail laws for young people aged from 14

²³ Save the Children and 54 Reason, [Putting children first: A rights respecting approach to youth justice in Australia](#), 2023, pp. 6–9, 15–16, 29–48.

²⁴ ACT Government, [Justice \(Age of Criminal Responsibility\) Legislation Amendment Act 2023](#).

²⁵ Victoria Government, [Youth Justice Act 2024](#).

²⁶ [Draft Report 2020](#), 2022.

²⁷ [Age of Criminal Responsibility Working Group Report](#), 2023, p. 72.

²⁸ Productivity Commission, [Closing the Gap Information Repository: Socio-economic outcome area 11](#), 2026.

²⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission, [‘Help way Earlier!’](#), 2024.

³⁰ McGlade and Davis, [“Urgent complaint to the United Nations on Australia’s youth justice failures”](#), pp. 10-11, 24-25, 28; AIHW, [Youth detention population in Australia 2024](#), 2024.

³¹ [Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2021](#).

³² [Bail and Youth Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2025](#).

³³ [Making Queensland Safer Act 2024](#).

³⁴ [Bail Amendment Bill 2025](#).

years charged with certain offences while on bail for another offence of that type.³⁵

46. Sentencing laws have become more punitive. Since 2024, Queensland has enacted applying adult penalties to children for a wide range of offences.³⁶ Victoria enacted similar laws in 2026.³⁷
47. Children are regularly detained in adult facilities, before and after sentencing. Police ‘watchhouses’ and cells designed to hold adults are used as informal remand centres for children across several States and Territories.³⁸
48. In Western Australia, children have been detained in a unit of an adult prison after transfer from a youth detention centre in 2022. In October 2023, an Indigenous child died after being found unresponsive while in the unit.³⁹
49. Mandatory sentencing legislation applying to children continues to operate in the state of Western Australia.⁴⁰ The Northern Territory removed mandatory sentencing for certain offences in 2022.⁴¹
50. The **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability** made recommendations to address the detention of children and young people including screening for disability and prohibiting solitary confinement.⁴²
51. Recommendations of the **2017 NT Royal Commission** have not been implemented, including the closure of the Don Dale Detention Centre.⁴³

QUESTION: What action is being taken to establish national youth justice standards consistent with international principles, and to ensure their application across all jurisdictions?

QUESTION: What progress has been made towards an Implementation Roadmap for the Justice Policy Partnership? What is the plan to progress national youth justice reform, including raising the age of criminal responsibility?

QUESTION: Why does the Australian Government not use its external affairs power to raise the age of criminal responsibility or establish national youth justice standards?

QUESTION: Why is isolation in youth detention still permitted and widely used?

QUESTION: What active steps is Australia taking to ensure that children are never detained with adults or in adult facilities, except where it is in their best interests?

QUESTION: What progress has been made towards screening for disability for children in justice settings?

QUESTION: Why has progress towards reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in detention been so limited, and what steps, resourcing commitments, and accountability mechanisms are in place to ensure measurable change across jurisdictions?

³⁵ [Bail and Crimes Amendment Act 2024 No 18](#).

³⁶ [Adult Crime, Adult Time](#), 2025.

³⁷ [Adult Time for Violent Crime](#), 2026.

³⁸ Save the Children and 54 reasons, [Putting children first](#), p.43.

³⁹ Western Australian Corruption and Crime Commission, [An investigation into allegations of serious misconduct following the death of a young detainee in Unit 18 Casuarina Prison](#), 2024, p.1.

⁴⁰ [Criminal Code Act 1913](#), ss 297, 318, 401(4).

⁴¹ [Sentencing and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2022](#).

⁴² Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, [Final Report](#), 2023.

⁴³ Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory, [Final Report](#), 2017, Recommendation 10.2, p.102.

Justice and Legal Process for Children

52. The Committee has recommended that Australia put in place child-sensitive, child-friendly complaint mechanisms, online and offline, with particular attention to alternative care and detention facilities, and locations for asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children; and to ensure that the National Preventive Mechanism has access to all places where children are held.
53. The **United Nations Committee Against Torture**⁴⁴ and the **United Nations Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture**⁴⁵ have made recommendations on justice for children that align with the recommendations of the Committee. Of particular concern to these Committees has been the inadequate implementation of the National Preventive Mechanism under the **Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture**.
54. The Sub-Committee noted concern “about the fragmentation of the mandate and the ability of bodies ... in their emerging national preventive mechanism structure to adequately visit all places of deprivation of liberty.”⁴⁶ This includes facilities in which children are detained.

QUESTION: How does Australia measure and ensure access to justice for children? What mechanisms are in place across decision-making processes for children? How are children provided with information and support to enforce their rights?

QUESTION: How do Australian justice and complaints systems provide child-friendly mechanisms to challenge decision making? What funding is provided in each jurisdiction and nationally to provide access to justice for children?

QUESTION: How will Australia address the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture’s concerns about fragmented mandates?

QUESTION: Why has Australia not ratified the 3rd Optional Protocol to the Convention?

⁴⁴ UN Committee against Torture, *Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Australia*, CAT/C/AUS/CO/6, Dec 2022, paras. 37–38.

⁴⁵ UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture, *Visit to Australia undertaken from 16 to 23 October 2022: recommendations and observations addressed to the State party*, CAT/OP/AUS/ROSP/1, 20 December 2023, paras. 98-103.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 19.

Poverty and Homelessness

55. The Committee noted with appreciation in 2012, Australia’s measures to address child poverty including subsidies, tax rebates and other support for lower income families. Since then, child poverty has remained high in Australia, with approximately one in six children under the age of fifteen years living in income poverty.⁴⁷ Australia has made little progress in reducing child poverty over the past three decades.⁴⁸
56. Recent reforms to child support, Medicare, school funding, and taxation are likely to foster greater equity, but levels of government benefits for families with children remain low. This contributes to high rates of child poverty, particularly among sole parent families.
57. The Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee Report (2024) on ‘The Extent and Nature of Poverty in Australia’ recommended that the Australian Government take urgent action on poverty, including the adequacy of payments, the efficacy of the income support system, and prioritising action to reduce child poverty.⁴⁹
58. Measures directed to low-income families are rarely child centred. Children’s experiences of poverty are neglected and poorly understood, preventing appropriate action.⁵⁰
59. Strict conditionality, framed as mutual obligation, applies to a range of government benefits for low-income families and undermines a universal right to adequate welfare support. The 2024 Report recommended reform of the mutual obligation regime.

QUESTION: What direct actions have been taken to reduce the number of children living in income poverty and uphold children’s right to an adequate standard of living?

QUESTION: What actions have been taken to ensure that the children of families reliant on government benefits are not living in poverty?

QUESTION: How are children’s experiences of poverty reflected in poverty reduction efforts?

60. Australian does not currently have an official definition or measure of child poverty, which undermines efforts to uphold children’s right to an adequate standard of living, track progress over time, and identify the groups most at risk.⁵¹

QUESTION: What steps have been taken to develop a child-centred definition and measure of multidimensional poverty? How are children’s views on their experiences incorporated?

61. Australia does not have a national commitment or plan of action to uphold children’s right to an adequate standard of living and reduce child poverty. Existing plans fail to adequately address child poverty.

QUESTION: What measures are included in national plans to reduce child poverty?

62. The Committee has recommended in its previous reporting cycle that Australia address the rate of homelessness among children, particularly for children leaving alternative care. Recent reports highlight the extent of housing stress and homelessness and the devastating impacts on children.⁵²

QUESTION: What actions have been taken to uphold children’s right to housing, and to address child homelessness?

QUESTION: What actions have been taken to provide services and support to children who are experiencing homelessness unaccompanied by an adult?

⁴⁷ Australian Council of Social Service and UNSW Sydney, *Poverty in Australia 2025*, 2025.

⁴⁸ Borland, J., “Labour market dynamics and unemployment: Structural change and policy responses”, *Economic Record*, vol. 101, no. 324, August 2025.

⁴⁹ Bessell, S., “[Taking Action to Reduce Child Poverty: Patching, Reforming or Transforming?](#)” (2025) *Social Alternatives*, 43(2).

⁵⁰ Bessell, S. and O’Sullivan, C., *More for Children: Children’s Experiences of Poverty in Australia*, 2024.

⁵¹ Borland, “Labour market dynamics and unemployment”.

⁵² Bessell, S. and O’Sullivan, C., *More for Children: Issues Paper 2 – Housing*, 2024; Forbes, R., *Secure foundations: How housing shapes childhood in Tasmania*, Anglicare Tasmania, 2026; Robinson, C. *et al.*, *Better futures: Supported accommodation for unaccompanied children and young people experiencing homelessness*, 2026.

Mental Health

63. Suicide is the main cause of death for younger Australians. In 2023, nearly one-third of deaths among Australians aged 15-24 years were due to suicide.⁵³
64. Children in Australia continue to identify mental health and wellbeing as a key concern for themselves. In 2025, 29% of young people aged 15-19 identified mental health problems as their biggest personal challenge.⁵⁴ Despite an increase in mental health services, children still have limited access to services, particularly those under 14 years.
65. The Committee has recommended over previous reporting cycles that Australia invest in addressing the underlying causes of children's suicide and poor mental health, improve mental health literacy for children and access to support services, and ensure that planning includes children. The Committee has recommended priority in services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, and other children in situations of vulnerability (see *Violence Against Children* above). It recommends the prescription of psychostimulant drugs to children with ADHD as a measure of last resort; increase in online mental health services and making in-person mental health services child-friendly and accessible to children.
66. The **National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People (2020–2030)** aims for children and young people to be “healthy, safe and thriving”, including mental health as a key outcome. The Plan emphasises equity, early intervention and whole-of-government approach.⁵⁵
67. In 2021, the National Mental Health Commission published Australia's first **National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy**, focusing on children 0-12 years.⁵⁶ Funding has been announced for specific, limited programs. The proportion of all children and young people who received Medicare subsidised primary mental health care services increased over the past 10 years, from 5.6% in 2012-13 to 10% in 2021-22.⁵⁷ This may be an indicator of improved access to care, but also of increased prevalence of mental illness. The **National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035**⁵⁸ emphasises that early life experiences strongly shape later suicide risk, and that prevention must begin in childhood and adolescence.

QUESTION: How will the Government fund, implement and monitor the Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025–2035?

QUESTION: What evidence is available to measure the progress in improving mental health literacy and access to support services for children?

68. On the prescription of psychostimulant drugs, the Australian ADHD Professionals Association have created an evidence-based clinical practice guideline for ADHD.

QUESTION: What are the Government measures that address increased prescription?

⁵³ AIHW, [Deaths in Australia](#), 2026.

⁵⁴ Mission Australia, [Youth Survey 2025](#), 2025.

⁵⁵ Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, [National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People 2020-2030](#), 2019.

⁵⁶ [The National Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), 2021.

⁵⁷ Productivity Commission, [Report on Government Services 2025: Services for Mental Health](#), Part E, Section 13.

⁵⁸ National Mental Health Commission, [National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2025-2035](#), 2025.

69. The 2023 Australian Child Maltreatment Study found young people who experienced maltreatment were 2.9 times more likely to have a mental disorder compared to young people who had not experienced abuse.⁵⁹

QUESTION - Given the findings of the Australian Child Maltreatment Study, and the links with mental health problems, how is the Australian Government addressing child maltreatment and the links to mental health outcomes?

70. Children should be consulted and involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of mental health promotion and healthcare initiatives that relate to them.

QUESTION: What efforts are made to ensure that children are consulted in the design of services and initiatives to improve mental health services and outcomes.

71. Recent inquiries⁶⁰ have called for greater investment and coordination in evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategies, within and across sectors, to modify risk and protective factors, increase mental health literacy, reduce stigma, encourage early help-seeking and reduce psychological distress and mental health problems in young people.

QUESTION: What funding, strategies and monitoring is committed to increase and coordinate action and investment in mental health wellbeing promotion and care for children.

72. The Productivity Commission's Review of the National School Reform Agreement recommended the introduction of measures and monitoring of student wellbeing in education settings.⁶¹

QUESTION: What funding, strategies and monitoring is committed to mental health promotion and support and suicide prevention programs in education settings.

QUESTION: What funding, strategies and monitoring is committed to strengthen Primary Care services for prevention, early intervention and management of mental health issues and suicide prevention for children?

73. Children face barriers to accessing care, including cost, transport and requirements for parental consent, with marginalised groups experiencing additional challenges such as stigma, racism and discrimination that can affect mental wellbeing. Services should be co-designed with children to improve accessibility, while health and education systems should build children's skills to independently navigate health and community supports.⁶²

QUESTION: What measures are underway or proposed to increase access to information, services and support through community settings and to address these barriers?

⁵⁹ Haslam et al., *The prevalence and impact of child maltreatment in Australia*, p.4.

⁶⁰ Productivity Commission, [Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement Review: Inquiry Report](#), No.108, 2025; Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, [Final Report](#), 2021.

⁶¹ Productivity Commission, [Report on National School Reform Agreement](#), 2023, p.2.

⁶² Robards, F et al, "Health care equity and access for marginalised young people: a longitudinal qualitative study exploring health system navigation in Australia", *International Journal for Equity in Health*, vol. 18, No. 1, 2019, p.41.

Climate Change

74. The Committee has recommended that children’s views be considered in developing policies and programmes addressing climate change, environment and disaster risk management, and increasing children’s awareness and preparedness for climate change and disasters. It has called for urgent emissions reductions, timelines to phase out coal use and export, and a faster transition to 100% renewable electricity.
75. Australia has taken steps towards emissions reduction, including legislating a reduction target of 43% by 2030, between 62 to 70% by 2035 and net-zero by 2050.⁶³ It has also committed to an 82% national renewable electricity target by 2030.
76. Despite this, experts warn that Australia’s reduction targets are not ambitious enough to prevent the worst impacts of climate change,⁶⁴ and that current policies will not see Australia achieve its targets.⁶⁵
77. Children and young people are calling for an ambitious, immediate and just transition to mitigate the intersectional risks posed by the climate crisis.⁶⁶ 82% of young Australians surveyed in 2021 said they are extremely, very or moderately worried about climate change, with almost a third feeling it was affecting their daily functioning.⁶⁷
78. Eight Australian children successfully argued in the Federal Court that the Minister for Environment had a duty of care to protect Australian children from climate change harm when deciding whether to approve a coal mine extension.⁶⁸ The ruling was overturned on appeal.
79. In 2024, a Bill was introduced to the Australian Parliament to amend the *Climate Change Act 2022* to require decision makers to consider the wellbeing of children when making decisions likely to contribute to climate change, including decisions that will increase emissions. The Bill was not passed and was not supported by the two main political parties.⁶⁹
80. Australia’s first National Climate Risk Assessment, released in 2025, acknowledges that climate change is harming children’s health and wellbeing. However, the National Adaptation Plan does not explicitly identify children as a distinct group requiring targeted adaptation measures, instead that support for children and young people will be a “future priority” for health and social sectors.
81. Children are also facing the impacts of climate change through exposure to increased disasters, such as floods, bushfires and storms. One in six children and young people are impacted by disasters in an average year, impacting children’s education, employment, mental health and safety.⁷⁰ Risks are greater for children from rural, remote and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and low socioeconomic backgrounds, and children with disabilities.⁷¹
82. There remains no cohesive national policy statement or framework on children and climate change, and no national framework to protect children before, during and after disasters.

⁶³ Australian Government, *Australia’s 2035 Nationally Determined Contribution*, 2025, p.8.

⁶⁴ Climate Analytics, *Australia’s insufficient target “baffling” in light of its climate risk assessment*, 2025.

⁶⁵ Climate Change Authority, *Emissions dropping but pace must quicken*, 2025.

⁶⁶ *National Child and Youth Statement on Climate Change: Australia LCOY 2025 National Statement*, 2025.

⁶⁷ Marks, E. *et al.*, “Young people’s voices on climate anxiety, government betrayal and moral injury: A global phenomenon”, *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 5(12), e863–e873, 2021.

⁶⁸ Gilbert + Tobin, *No ‘Duty of Care’ but risks of climate litigation continue to grow – insights from the Sharma decision*, 2022.

⁶⁹ *Duty of Care: Release of Senate Inquiry Report*, 2024.

⁷⁰ UNICEF Australia, *The Economic and Social Impact of Disasters on Children and Young People: Policy Brief*, 2025

⁷¹ Orygen, *Climate Change and Global Events*, 2024.

83. Children do not believe that decision-makers are listening to their views on climate change, with a survey of young Australians finding that only 13% felt that they were listened to by political leaders on climate change issues.⁷² 41% of young people called for opportunities to contribute to policymaking and problem solving about climate change in a 2025 survey.⁷³
84. In a poll of 1,700 young people, 90% agreed that they have a right to a healthy environment.⁷⁴ Yet, the ACT Government is the only Australian jurisdiction to provide for this right.

QUESTION: What steps is Australia taking to exceed its 43% emissions reduction target by 2030 and reach net-zero as soon as practicably possible?

QUESTION: Will Australia recognise its legal duty to protect children from climate-related harms and enshrine a child's right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in law?

QUESTION: What measures is Australia taking to address children in disaster and emergency response, child-focused disaster recovery and resilience plans and policies?

QUESTION: What measures is Australia taking to build the skills, knowledge, capacity and practical resilience of children to survive and thrive in response to worsening climate impacts?

QUESTION: What measures is Australia taking to further empower children as agents of climate action through meaningful participation in decision-making and policy development, as well as participation in international policy-making forums like the Conference of Parties?

QUESTION: What measures is Australia taking to uphold Torres Strait Islander children's rights to life, survival and development, identity and culture, health, education and an adequate standard of living in the face of the impacts of climate change?

⁷² Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience, *Our World Our Say*, 2020, p.9.

⁷³ O'Connell, M., et al., *The State of Australia's Children 2025*, ARACY and UNICEF Australia, 2025, p.155.

⁷⁴ Australian Conservation Foundation, *Children's Right to a Healthy Environment: An Australian Perspective*, 2023, p.70.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

85. The Committee recommended in its previous reporting cycle that Australia ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their communities are meaningfully involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of policies concerning them; and that the collaboration between Governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People on Closing the Gap has a clear mandate and the resources necessary to function effectively.
86. The Committee has highlighted disparities in outcomes and access to services for Indigenous children, the situations of vulnerability they experience, the need to strengthen support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations (see sections on *Violence Against Children*, *Systems Reform*, *Mental health and Climate Change*).
87. In 2020, all Australian Governments committed to the renewed **National Agreement on Closing the Gap**, which seeks to overcome entrenched inequalities and achieve equal life outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The **National Agreement** is built around four **Priority Reforms** to transform the way governments work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, organisations, and people across the country:
- Formal Partnerships and Shared Decision Making
 - Building the Community Controlled Sector
 - Transforming Government Organisations
 - Shared Access to Data and Information at a Regional Level.⁷⁵

The National Agreement contains 19 social and economic targets and 15 supporting indicators.

88. The **Productivity Commission** maintains a “**Closing the Gap Dashboard**”.⁷⁶ The Dashboard shows that “there is no nationally agreed process to determine the relevant contributions required from each state and territory towards the targets”.⁷⁷
89. In 2025, the **Productivity Commission** released the fifth **Closing the Gap** Annual Data Report, which measures progress towards the targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children:⁷⁸
- **Worsening progress and not on track:**
 - Target 4 to increase the proportion of Indigenous children developmentally on track
 - Target 12 to reduce the over-representation of Indigenous children in out of home care
 - Target 14 a significant and sustained reduction in suicide of Indigenous people
 - **No change from the baseline and therefore not on track:**
 - Target 11 to reduce the number of young people in detention
 - **Improving but not on track:**
 - Target 2 to increase the proportion of Indigenous babies with a healthy birthweight to 91%
 - Target 5 to increase the proportion of Indigenous children attaining year 12 education qualification
 - Target 5 to increase the proportion of Indigenous young people in education or employment
 - Target 9A to increase the proportion of Indigenous people living in appropriate housing
 - **On track:**
 - Target 3 to increase the proportion of children enrolled in preschool.

90. In 2023, a referendum was held to establish an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament and Government. The proposal did not succeed, and the referendum debate contributed to disinformation and experiences of racism for Indigenous communities, who had overwhelmingly voted yes in the referendum.
91. In 2022, a Private Members Bill was introduced to the Australian Parliament to establish a

⁷⁵ [Closing the Gap Priority Reforms](#), 2020.

⁷⁶ [Closing the Gap Information Repository](#).

⁷⁷ Productivity Commission, [New Closing the Gap data – March 2025](#), 2025.

⁷⁸ Productivity Commission, [Closing the Gap: Annual Data Compilation Report](#), 2025.

framework for the implementation of the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**. In 2023, the Australian Parliament voted not to pass the legislation.

QUESTION: What steps are being taken by the Australian Government to implement the National Agreement Priority Reforms and what resourcing is attached to these actions?

QUESTION: What action is being taken to support and build the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector and what resourcing is attached to these actions?

QUESTION: What steps is the Australian Government taking to continue the implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart with respect to truth-telling and treaty and to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's voices are heard?

QUESTION: What steps are being taken to ensure the implementation of UNDRIP in Australia particularly in relation to Closing the Gap initiatives, a National Action Plan and education? What are the budgetary allocations to support the implementation of UNDRIP?

92. The Committee has recommended the establishment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioners. Where they exist, their legislation, structure, resourcing and powers vary significantly across jurisdictions.
93. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates met as a caucus in January 2023⁷⁹ and identified 11 advocacy priorities. Effective collaboration requires commensurate resourcing and legislative powers for dedicated Commissioners for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in each jurisdiction.
94. The **National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People** should be supported to provide accountability at a national level for Australian Governments' responsibilities to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Gaps remain particularly at a state and territory level that require leadership from the Australian Government.
95. Better collaboration and coordination are needed to build accountability, monitor progress of reforms and address failures to protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

QUESTION: What steps are being taken to support the National Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and to establish equivalent and complementary roles for Commissioners for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in each jurisdiction?

⁷⁹ [Statement from the Australian First Nations Children's Commissioners, Guardians and Advocates – 10 and 11 January 2023](#), 2023.

Digital Environment

96. There have been several policy initiatives around the digital environment impacting on children's rights.
97. The *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024*⁸⁰ was rushed through the Australian Parliament in the final days before the most recent Federal election was called, as a measure to reduce online harms for young people. It places obligations on social media platforms to prevent children under 16 years of age from holding an account (but not from using a platform *per se*).
98. Key concerns remain around:
- The lack of consultation with children about the age restrictions and alternative approaches.
 - The sufficiency of online spaces that remain available to children and young people and if, what remains accessible, is supportive of their right to access information and to participation, and their right to leisure and play.
 - Implementation issues, such as requirements for age assurance with implications for policy efficacy and children's privacy.
 - An inadequate focus on digital literacy and user empowerment, around the age restrictions.
 - A failure to 'protect' children from online risks more broadly. Restricting access to social media platforms does not serve to reduce risks in other online spaces, such as online games and AI services.⁸¹

QUESTION: What steps is the Australian Government taking to ensure that children's rights in the broader digital world are protected and supported, beyond age restrictions?

99. The introduction of an Online Privacy Code for Children⁸² is anticipated though its protections for children remain unclear. Broader reforms to the *Privacy Act 1988* have been delayed.⁸³ These could modernise the definition of personal data in Australia to capture metadata, introduce a fair and reasonable test for data processing, and prohibit targeted advertising to children.

QUESTION: What are the timetable and commitments from the Australian Government to the recommended and proposed reforms to privacy for the benefit of children.

100. A more powerful, systemic approach to online safety - a Digital Duty of Care⁸⁴ has bipartisan support across the Australian Parliament but has not been advanced. It could shift Australia's Online Safety framework away from reactive content take down measures towards proactive obligations on platforms to keep end users, especially children, safe. Its design should draw on children's perspectives, unlike the process for the social media ban.

QUESTION: What is the timetable for the online safety and privacy reforms and how will children be involved in their development and implementation.

⁸⁰ *Online Safety Amendment (Social Media Minimum Age) Act 2024 (Cth)*, Act No. 127 of 2024.

⁸¹ Australian Child Rights Taskforce, "[Open Letter on Social Media Bans](#)", 2024.

⁸² Office of the Australian Information Commissioner, [Children's Online Privacy Code](#), last updated 21 July 2026.

⁸³ Privacy World, [Australian Privacy Law Reforms: On Pause or Something Entirely New Altogether?](#), 2025.

⁸⁴ Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Australia), [Digital Duty of Care](#), 2026.

Asylum-Seeking, Refugees and Migrant Children

101. The Committee has noted over previous reporting cycles that Australia continues to authorise the detention of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children and that disability remains a basis for rejecting an immigration request. The Committee has recommended over previous reporting cycles that Australia: amend its legislation to comply with international law; establish an independent guardian for unaccompanied children; prohibit detention of asylum seekers, refugee and migrant children; respect non-*refoulement* obligations; make the best interests of the child a primary consideration in all related decisions on children; remove disability as a criterion for immigration decisions; support refugee and migrant children's rehabilitation, reintegration and resettlement; and monitor the wellbeing of children in asylum, refugee and migration processes.
102. There has been no progress to create an independent guardian for unaccompanied children.
103. There has been no progress in Australia amending its legislation to comply with international law on refugees and asylum seekers; in prohibiting the detention of asylum seekers, refugee and migrant children (including in regional processing countries) or in respecting non-*refoulement* obligations. The Human Rights Committee has found Australia's detention of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers on Nauru violated Article 9(1) and 9(4) of the ICCPR, and called on Australia to provide compensation and take steps to prevent recurrence.⁸⁵
104. There has been no progress to ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in all decisions on asylum-seeking, refugee or migrant children.
105. There has been no progress to withdraw disability as a criterion for immigration decisions – a change also recommended by the Disability Royal Commission.
106. Settlement services for migrants and new arrivals are delivered under the National Settlement Framework, a 'high level structural blueprint for the three tiers of government... to support the settlement of migrants and new arrivals in Australia'. It is designed for adults.⁸⁶ There is no specific framework for children.
107. There has been limited progress in providing support for all refugee and migrant children (including those to be dealt with in the future in regional processing countries) to ensure their early rehabilitation, reintegration and sustainable resettlement; and introduce adequate mechanisms for monitoring the wellbeing of children involved in asylum, refugee and migration processes. Despite the evidence of psycho-social problems amongst children, the Australian Government does not fund specific mental health services to support asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children.
108. Recent Australian research also highlights the impact on children of a parent or caregiver's immigration detention or removal/deportation, including in cases unrelated to protection claims. A 2026 study found that children experience family separation, emotional distress, financial hardship and disrupted schooling, and are at risk of mental ill health, substance use and behaviour challenges without adequate support.⁸⁷

QUESTION: What steps is the Government taking to implement these previous recommendations of the Committee and the Human Rights Committee for asylum seeking, refugee and migrant children?

QUESTION: How does the Government reconcile its lack of commitment to the key principles of international law with respect to refugees and asylum seekers with its commitment to human rights as foundational to international relations?

QUESTION: What steps is the Government taking to ensure that settlement arrangements for asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children meet human rights requirements?

QUESTION: Why does the Government not prohibit the detention of asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children?

QUESTION: How does the Government ensure that the best interests of the child are considered in decisions to cancel a parent's visa, detain, remove or deport them, and what

⁸⁵ *M.I. et al. v Australia*, Human Rights Committee, Communication No. 2749/2016, UN Doc CCPR/C/142/D/2749/2016 (published 9 January 2025).

⁸⁶ *The National Settlement Framework*, 2016.

⁸⁷ Australian Human Rights Commission, *A ripple effect of suffering*, 2026.

mechanisms currently exist for children's own views and wishes to be sought and heard in these decisions?

QUESTION: Why has the Government not developed a national settlement framework for children?

General Measures of Implementation

Reservations

109. The Committee has recommended the withdrawal of Australia's reservation regarding article 37(c) of the Convention in three previous reporting cycles. The failure to do so should be considered alongside Australia's failure to effectively establish the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, and ongoing concerns about youth justice.

QUESTION: Why has Australia maintained its reservation to article 37(c)?

Legislation

110. The Committee has recommended in previous reporting cycles the enactment of comprehensive national child rights legislation incorporating the Convention and guidelines for its consistent and direct application throughout states and territories.
111. Australia has made no significant progress towards this recommendation. Existing national legislation relating to children is piecemeal and incomplete, and the limited references to the Convention in individual laws fall well short of comprehensive incorporation. Australia also lacks a national Human Rights Act.

QUESTION: Why has Australia taken no steps towards comprehensively incorporating the Convention through legislation, despite the significant gaps in current legislation?

National Plan of Action

112. The Committee has recommended in two previous reporting cycles that Australia adopt a national comprehensive policy and strategy on children that encompasses all areas of the Convention, with sufficient human, technical and financial resources for implementation.
113. Australia has made no significant progress towards this recommendation. Existing national policies and strategies relating to children:
- Are not coordinated
 - Are far from comprehensive, even when considered as a whole
 - Are inadequately resourced
 - Give insufficient emphasis to preventive and early intervention measures
 - Give insufficient emphasis to children's participatory rights.
114. UNICEF Australia, 54 Reasons (part of Save the Children Australia) and the Australian Child Rights Taskforce has produced a Blueprint for a National Children's Plan⁸⁸ which sets out a pathway towards the full and effective implementation of the Convention in Australia. It would build on current plans and reforms and with appropriate leadership, coordination, monitoring and resources would address the Committee's recommendations.

QUESTION: Why has Australia not developed a comprehensive National Children's Plan, despite significant gaps in current arrangements?

⁸⁸ Australian Child Rights Taskforce, [A Blueprint for a National Children's Plan](#).

Coordination

115. The Committee has recommended in previous reporting cycles that Australia provide to an appropriate body a clear mandate, sufficient authority, and resources to coordinate all activities to implement the Convention at cross-sectoral, federal, state, territory, and local levels.
116. Australia has made no significant progress towards this recommendation. No appropriate body or other mechanism exists to coordinate implementation of the Convention.
117. There is no Cabinet-level Minister for Children responsible for coordinating implementation of the Convention; responsibility is distributed across multiple Ministers with no effective coordination. The **National Office of Child Safety** has been transferred out of the **Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet** with no monitoring and coordination powers across Government and jurisdictions.
118. In June 2026, the Australian Government ceased funding for the peak advocacy body for young people, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition.

QUESTION: Why is there no Cabinet-level Minister for Children to coordinate responsibility for children; and why has funding for the peak advocacy body for young people ceased?

QUESTION: What steps has the Australian Government taken to ensure that the views of children and young people are considered in all decision making that affects them?

Allocation of resources

119. The Committee has recommended in previous reporting cycles that Australia allocate adequate budget resources for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies, programmes, and legislative measures for children.
120. Australia has made no significant progress towards this recommendation. Implementation of policies, programmes and legislative measures for children is inadequately resourced, not systematically monitored and evaluated, and not systematically directed at realising child rights.

Data collection

121. The Committee has recommended that Australia ensure data on children's rights covers all areas of the Convention — particularly violence, alternative care, natural disasters and children in conflict with the law — and is disaggregated by age, sex, disability, location, ethnicity and socioeconomic background, identifying those in situations of vulnerability.
122. Australia has made no significant progress with this recommendation. Significant data gaps remain.
123. There is no overarching framework or nationally agreed set of indicators for monitoring implementation of the Convention in Australia, no national body tasked with coordinating and collecting the required data, and no support provided to the National Children's Commissioner or civil society to apply available data sets to reporting.
124. Key indicators that are not collected through national consistent data sets of measures include:
 - Attendance in education settings to monitor the universal provision of school education.
 - Participation and wellbeing measures for children in school and childcare settings.
 - Consistent data on the reasons for removal of children from family and placement in care.
 - Records of instances and experiences of abuse and violence of children across settings and institutions (that build on the evidence in the **Australian Child Maltreatment Study**).
 - Data of experiences of poverty for children that supports measures to address disadvantage.

QUESTION: What plan does the Australian Government have to improve the collection and availability of data to inform policy and programs across sectors and jurisdictions and to support national monitoring?

QUESTION: What funding is provided for data collection on outcomes for children?

Independent monitoring

125. The Committee has recommended that Australia ensure that the **National Children's Commissioner** (the Commissioner) has adequate and sufficient human, technical and financial resources to implement and monitor the application of the Convention.
126. Australia has made no significant progress towards this recommendation. The Commissioner does not have adequate resources to perform its role. During the establishment of the office in 2012-2013, it was recommended by Parliamentary Review Committee that its funding be reviewed once it was operational.⁸⁹ This has not occurred.

QUESTION: Why has the National Children's Commissioner's funding not been reviewed since establishment?

QUESTION: Why is the National Children's Commissioner not adequately resourced to perform functions under the Convention?

QUESTION: What is the total ongoing annual funding provided directly to the National Children's Commissioner, excluding time-limited funding for specific projects?

127. There are a range of national plans and strategies that are sometimes consistent with the recommendations of the Committee and could support over time the more effective implementation of the Convention in Australia. These include:
- **The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children (2021-2031)**
 - **The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children (2022-2032)**
 - The recommendations of the **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse** including the implementation of Child Safe standards
 - The recommendations of the **Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability**⁹⁰
 - **Closing the Gap** targets that relate to First Nations children and their communities.
128. Monitoring of these plans is variable and uncoordinated across the plans and across jurisdictions. A properly resourced comprehensive National Plan for Children (as discussed above) should include the coordination of monitoring to guide implementation and evaluation.

QUESTION: What is the Australian Government's strategy for monitoring outcomes for children and for the coordinated monitoring of plans and strategies for children?

QUESTION: What is the funding provided for monitoring of outcomes for children?

Dissemination, awareness-raising, and training

129. The Committee has recommended that Australia strengthen awareness-raising on the Convention and include mandatory human rights modules in the school curriculum and in training for professionals working with or for children.
130. Australia has made no significant progress in addressing this recommendation. There is no commitment to human rights education in the curriculum, nor to a consistent national approach to training professionals who work with children. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights has recommended ongoing funding for human rights education.⁹¹

QUESTION: What steps are being taken to embed human rights and child rights education in the national school curriculum and in training for all professionals working with children? What resources have been committed to human rights and child rights education at a national level?

⁸⁹ Standing Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs, [Report on the National Children's Commissioner Bill 2012](#), 2012.

⁹⁰ Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, [Final Report](#), 2023,

⁹¹ Parliament of Australia, [Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework](#), 2024.