

1 June 2012

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

To Whom It May Concern,

**Submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission  
Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012**

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission to the Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012.

A key goal of the APS is to actively contribute psychological knowledge for the promotion and enhancement of community wellbeing. Psychology in the Public Interest is the section of the APS dedicated to the communication and application of psychological knowledge to enhance community wellbeing and promote equitable and just treatment of all segments of society.

The APS recognises the important relationship between human rights and mental health and wellbeing. In addition, research and practice in the area of child development is a major focus of Psychology, with a great many psychologists working to enhance the mental health and wellbeing of children, adolescents and families.

The APS therefore would welcome the establishment of a National Commissioner for Children and Young People as an important step in monitoring and improving Australia's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of all Australian children.

We are particularly keen to see the Commissioner playing a key role in ensuring that vulnerable children are protected, such as Indigenous

children, children in out-of-home care, and those subject to immigration detention.

Engagement of all stakeholders, including children, young people, parents, families and communities will be critical to the effectiveness of the Commissioner role, and the APS encourages mechanisms for this involvement to be developed as a matter of priority.

The APS therefore endorses the Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012.

The APS has no interests or affiliations relating to the subject of the consultation and the representations submitted, other than our concern that the Australian Government be well-informed and effective in its strategies.

For further information about our submission please contact me on

Yours sincerely,

Heather Gridley  
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Australian Psychological Society