



1st June 2012

The Secretary
Senate and Legal Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra, ACT, 2600
Legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

**Re: Inquiry into the Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment
(National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012**

Further to our submission in December 2011 on *A National Children's Commissioner Discussion Paper 2011*, the Australian Association for Maternal Child and Family Health Nurses (AAMCFHN) would like to offer our strongest support for the ratification of the Australian Government's *Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012* (the Bill).

The Australian Association of Maternal Child and Family Health Nurses (AAMCFHN) is the peak professional body in Australia for nurses working with parents of children from birth to five years of age. As such our mandate is to advocate for all children, in particular those most at risk, to ensure that they experience safe, equitable and sustainable health care.

The AAMCFHN strongly supports the provisions of the *Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012* (the Bill) to promote and protect the human rights of children and young people in Australia. We hope that the position of the National Children's Commissioner is well resourced to ensure that children who are marginalised or vulnerable due to issues of culture, ethnicity, disability, poverty or violence, will receive particular attention through explicitly targeted strategies.

The AAMCFHN agrees that the Commissioner should provide leadership at a national level and not duplicate the work of existing Commonwealth bodies or the work of State/Territory Children's Commissioners and Guardians. The AAMCFHN notes that South Australia is currently the only state without a Commissioner for Children. This may pose challenges for the National Children's Commissioner in ensuring that that children and young people in SA experience equitable advocacy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission into the parliamentary inquiry regarding the Australian Human Rights Commission Amendment (National Children's Commissioner) Bill 2012. We believe that implementation of this Bill is consistent with current evidence for early investment in the lives of children and young people to ensure the future of a healthy and productive society.

sincerely,

Dr Julián Grant
President, AAMCFHN