



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE

# Strategic Plan

2022–2025



## Our Vision

That children and young people in Victoria are supported to live safely and thrive, and their rights are respected and upheld.





## Our legislation

Our objectives, functions and powers are outlined in the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012* and the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*.

Other Victorian and international laws and conventions guide our day-to-day work. These include the following:

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Health Records Act 2001*
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture

The Commission for Children and Young People is an independent statutory body that promotes improvement in policies and practices affecting the safety and wellbeing of Victorian children and young people.

We have a particular focus on Aboriginal children and young people and all children and young people in the out-of-home care and youth justice systems.



# What we do

- We promote the rights, safety and wellbeing of children and young people.
- We provide independent scrutiny and oversight of services for children and young people, particularly those in the out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice systems.
- We advocate for best-practice policy, program and service responses to meet the needs of children and young people.
- We promote the views and experiences of children and young people to increase the awareness of government and the community.
- We support and regulate organisations that work with children and young people to prevent abuse, respond appropriately to allegations of child abuse, and make sure these organisations have child safe practices.

# Our values

- We put the rights of children and young people at the centre of everything we do.
- We are strong, fearless and determined.
- We are transparent and accountable.
- We know diversity of people, experiences and perspectives makes our work stronger.
- We accomplish more as we are a united team.

## Reading our strategic priorities

- The five outcomes described on the following pages describe what we want to achieve for children and young people.
- 'How we will know if we are achieving it' describes what we will see when we are achieving our outcomes.
- The strategies describe what we will do to achieve our outcomes.

OUTCOME

1

Impacts for children and young people are understood and prioritised when government designs services, makes decisions and creates new laws

## How will we know if we are achieving this?

- Government decisions more frequently understand, take into account and respond to issues that affect children and young people
- Government decisions are informed by children and young people's lived experience and expertise

## Strategies

- Advocate for government to develop more ways to hear from and involve children and young people
- Raise awareness within government of the need to assess impacts on children and take these into account when making policy decisions or changing the law
- Prioritise monitoring of Child Safe Standard 3 among government agencies to drive children and young people's participation in decision-making
- Advise government on changes to laws and policies that have serious impacts on children and young people
- Contribute to mental health reforms to ensure they deliver for children and young people
- Continue to advocate for improved responses to children and young people as victims of family violence in their own right

OUTCOME

# 2

The Commission leads by example in ensuring the views and lived experiences of children and young people are sought, heard and acted on

## How will we know if we are achieving this?

- Children and young people are involved in shaping and delivering the Commission's workplan
- The Commission is seen as a leader in child and youth engagement and supports other organisations' child and youth engagement efforts
- Services and organisations hear from, and are accountable to, children and young people

## Strategies

- Expand and strengthen the Commission Youth Council and Network, including through partnerships with youth-focused organisations.
- Create ways to have children and young people at the table when the Commission is involved in advocacy and providing advice
- Advocate for the creation of a Youth Commissioner to join the Commission for Children and Young People
- Promote the value of child and youth participation and encourage youth participation in other agencies through advocacy and guidance

OUTCOME

3

Organisations keep children and young people safe, well and free from child abuse

## How will we know if we are achieving this?

- Organisations understand and prioritise their legal obligations to act and keep children and young people safe from abuse
- Organisations are focused on preventing, responding to and investigating grooming and sexual misconduct
- Children and young people with disability are supported to participate in systems that keep children safe
- Organisations that pose a risk to children and young people's safety are held to account
- Children and young people are informed about safety in organisations and empowered to act on safety concerns.
- The highest risk organisations consistently deliver good quality investigations and responses to child abuse

## Strategies

- Apply a data-informed and risk-based approach to target regulation to where it will have the greatest impact
- Support organisations to implement and embed the amended Child Safe Standards through guidance and support to ensure they are understood and applied
- Implement amended Child Safe Standards legislation and the Commission's new approach to regulating the Standards
- Hold organisations to account for their obligation to rigorously investigate, and keep children and young people safe from, grooming and sexual misconduct
- Require organisations to include children with disability in systems that keep children safe, including reportable conduct processes
- Increase children and young people's awareness of their rights in organisations through targeted communications
- Develop guidance for organisations on how to support children and young people to know their rights and feel confident to raise safety concerns



OUTCOME

4

Children and young people live free from systemic and institutional racism

## How will we know if we are achieving this?

- Aboriginal children and young people are no longer over-represented in out-of-home care and youth justice
- Over-representation of children and young people from specific cultural communities in youth justice is reduced
- Systemic racism in service systems affecting children and young people is called out and addressed
- Organisations are aware of their obligations and take action to create cultural safety and tackle racism
- Children and young people are more consistently supported to call out instances of racism in organisations

## Strategies

- Report on the Victorian Government's progress against Closing the Gap Target 12 to reduce over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care
- Advocate for full adoption of the recommendations in the Our youth our way inquiry and monitor the progress of implementation
- Identify, call out and address systemic racism whenever we see it, including in our monitoring of child protection, youth justice and education services
- Advocate to have the Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young People's role and powers set out in the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2012*
- Identify and recommend measures to address over-representation of particular communities in youth justice, including through working with the South Sudanese Australian Expert Working Group
- Develop guidance for Child Safe Standard 1 to support Aboriginal cultural safety and engage with organisations about their obligations to support children from all backgrounds to feel culturally safe

OUTCOME

5

There are fewer children and young people in out-of-home care and youth justice, and those in contact with these systems have their rights upheld

## How will we know if we are achieving this?

- There are fewer children and young people in out-of-home care and in youth justice custody
- More children and young people and their families receive early and effective support when first brought to the attention of Child Protection
- Children and young people in contact with child protection, out-of-home care and youth justice have access to meaningful supports to help them feel healthy, safe, secure and well
- Children and young people in out-of-home care and youth justice custody know their rights and feel able and empowered to advocate for themselves
- Substantial reforms to the out-of-home care system have been implemented so children and young people get the support, safety and stability they need
- Every child and young person in out-of-home care is engaged in education, training and employment opportunities that suit their needs and aspirations

## Strategies

- Support children and young people in out-of-home care, child protection and youth justice to know and assert their rights
- Advocate for the establishment of a new function enabling the Commission to advocate for individual children and young people in out-of-home care and child protection
- Increase visibility and accountability over the implementation of the Commission's recommendations, including our past recommendations to enhance early intervention and reform the care system
- Complete the inquiry into access to education for children in out-of-home care, and advocate for action on its recommendations
- Inquire and advise government on improved responses to children and young people with disability who are known to Child Protection or the out-of-home care system
- Use our monitoring, advice and inquiry powers to reduce young people's experience of violence in youth justice custody



# Continue to build an effective, healthy and high-impact Commission

## Over 2022–25 we will:

- Continue to strengthen wellbeing supports for staff, recognising the difficult and confronting nature of our work.
- Support reasonable workloads through effective planning and streamlined processes and changes to how we do our work.
- Implement a Reconciliation Action Plan, which creates accountability over commitments to embed Aboriginal cultural safety and voice across all areas of the Commission
- Develop and maintain strategic relationships and partnerships across government, the community, business and media to achieve our strategic priorities.
- Nurture a diverse, inclusive and respectful workplace and invest in our staff capability to maintain a high performing and engaged workforce.
- Develop the Commission's communications channels to engage in more targeted ways with those who are impacted by our work including children and young people.



COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN  
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