

# A CULTURE CHANGE CAMPAIGN

CREATING AN AUSTRALIA  
WHERE ALL CHILDREN THRIVE



Valuing Children

— INITIATIVE —



# VALUING CHILDREN CAMPAIGN

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## WHAT IS THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE?

At the Valuing Children Initiative we believe that every child deserves a happy, healthy and safe childhood. We recognise that children have no choice about the circumstances of their birth, or their childhood, and consider the wellbeing of children to be everyone's responsibility. We know that childhood experiences shape adulthood so it's important that we nurture, protect and listen to our youngest citizens.

Driven by a passion for children's wellbeing, the Valuing Children Initiative strives to ensure that children and young people are prioritised. As individuals, and as a community, it's important that we reflect on how we value children. After all, adult attitudes inform behaviour towards children and sit behind policies, programs and services that directly and indirectly impact children.

Australia is a wealthy country with the capacity to ensure that all children are given the support and opportunities required to reach their full potential. However, outcomes for Australian children are unacceptably poor across a number of domains. One explanation for this is that the wellbeing of **all** children is not a high enough priority for many Australian adults. The Valuing Children Initiative seeks to change this.

Babies, children and young people rely on adults to care about their wellbeing. The Valuing Children Initiative invites you to advocate with and for kids to ensure that they are valued, prioritised and heard.

**Together we can build a society that truly values all children**

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*History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children*

-  
Nelson Mandela

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## WHY DO WE NEED A CAMPAIGN?

Many Australians will tell you that they value children but what they really mean is that they value their children or children known to them. If Australian society truly valued children then we would be all outraged by these statistics:

**1 in 6**  **Girls**

Australian children experience sexual abuse before 15 years old

**1 in 9**  **Boys**

**25%** Australian children are overweight

**20%**

Australian children are not school-ready when they commence their education and many of these children will never catch up

**1 in 2**

children living in the most disadvantaged areas are developmentally vulnerable in at least two domains

In September 2020 Australian children **RANKED 32/38**  amongst OECD countries for child wellbeing outcomes across the core domains of mental wellbeing, physical health, social skills and academic outcomes

Australia has the **5<sup>TH</sup>** highest OECD suicide rate for young people aged 15-19 years

**1 940 000**

children aged 0-14 years were homeless at the last census

**1 in 7** 

children/young people experience mental health issues



**1 in 6**

Australian children live below the poverty line

**36%**

of children reach the age of 15 without basic reading or mathematics skills.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are 10.9 x more likely to enter out-of-home care and 26 x more likely to enter youth detention



**BY 13-16 YEARS**

of age 93% of boys and 61% of girls have been exposed to pornography

**65%**

of women experiencing domestic violence report that their children have seen or heard the violence

**1 580 000**

children received child protection services in 2017-18

\*Data references available on campaign website

“ It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults

-  
Frederick Douglass

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**Help us** to call on state, territory and federal governments, education, justice, health, community and disability sectors, parents and the broader community to achieve:

**1. Valuing Children Campaign** to raise public awareness about children's needs, issues and wellbeing.

**Why?** A mindset where children are valued should be the norm, not the exception. Poor child wellbeing statistics indicate Australian kids are not prioritised enough by adults.

**Current status:** Ongoing. The Valuing Children Campaign was launched in July 2020 and will evolve in response to feedback and progress. Attitudinal shifts are difficult to measure however, progress is being made. Leaders increasingly use language of 'valuing children' and the importance of attitudinal change is starting to be recognised.

**2. Children as citizens**

**Why?** Just like adults, every child has rights. Children and young people have the same general human rights as adults, as well as specific rights that recognise their unique needs as children. Even though every child has rights, there are barriers that stop all children from understanding and using their rights; kids rely on adults to ensure their rights are upheld.

**Current status:** In progress. Australia is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, however, Australian adults, including politicians, can do more to protect and uphold children's rights. We can all do more to ensure all children are safe, treated fairly and given opportunities to thrive.

**3. Minister for Children and Youth in every Australian state and territory and a federal Minister for Children and Youth (cabinet position)**

**Why?** Ministerial portfolios and the relative seniority of ministers is a reflection of government and community priorities. Therefore the appointment of Ministers for Children and Youth in all states, territories, and federally, sends a signal by governments to the broader community that the needs and wellbeing of children and young people are important. Government policies directly affect children and young people and it is essential that their voices and needs are represented at all levels of government.

**Current status:** Not achieved. Only one Australian state or territory has a Minister for Children and a Minister for Youth (NT). WA, NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT each have a Minister for Youth (but not children). Tasmania and South Australia have neither. At the federal level there is an Assistant Minister for Children and Families.



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**4. Child wellbeing data that includes the voices of children and young people** and the establishment of **aspirational targets for Australian children**. This includes a legislated requirement for governments to use a standard, nationally recognised Child Impact Statement process.

**Why?** The voices of children and young people are often missing from child wellbeing data. A positive vision for all children and measurable aspirational targets in education, health, justice, housing and social support are essential. Mandatory Child Impact Statements will ensure that children's needs and voices are taken into account by governments when decisions affecting children are made.

**Current status:** In progress. Adults sometimes ask children about their wellbeing or what they think about policies and services that affect them. For example, in WA, the voices of 5000 children are captured in the Speaking Out Survey and important data about children is recorded in the Wellbeing Framework both published by the office of the Commissioner for Children and Young People WA. There are many other examples of good practice at state and federal levels too. However, at a macro level there is a lack of vision for Australian kids; we are not measuring progress against clear targets and there is no legislative requirement to ask children and young people what they think about policies and services that affect them.

**5. Valuing Children's Alliance** is a collective of dedicated individuals and organisations who work together to get better outcomes for children. We advocate with and for children to ensure decision makers are well informed.

**Why?** A collective voice is more persuasive than a lone voice. By bringing together the right people from government, academia, health, education, justice, disability and the community sector we can achieve more. We seek to partner with recognised experts and leaders in child wellbeing.

**Current status:** In progress. The Valuing Children Initiative has made some important partnerships and is well supported by high profile ambassadors. We recognise existing collectives in the child wellbeing space and seek to work collaboratively with them.

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*According to the submission from the Valuing Children Initiative, without strategies to highlight children's 'inherent value to both individual families and society,' efforts to improve child safety through implementing structural tools like child safe standards will 'always only be a partial response.'*

*The Committee supports this view, noting evidence that children are more at risk of abuse and neglect when they lack status, dignity and respect.*

**Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People (WA) report 5, 2020**

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## Valuing Children Initiative Ambassadors



**COLIN PETTIT**  
Commissioner For Children and  
Young People WA



**DR SUE PACKER AM**  
Community Paediatrician and  
Senior Australian of the Year 2019



**BELLA BURGEMEISTER**  
Youth Advocate, Author &  
Presenter Bella's Challenge, Co-  
president of Millennium Kids



**DR BRIAN BABINGTON**  
CEO, Families Australia



**CLAIRE ORANGE**  
Author, speaker, Director of BEST  
Programs 4 Kids & DiGii Social



**ADJ. PROF. ANITA GHOSE**  
Partner, Deloitte



**DR SANDY CHONG**  
President, United Nations  
Association of Australia (WA  
Division)

“

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## HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE AND CAMPAIGN?

**Share:** Raising awareness is something everyone can do and it is essential to driving cultural change. Please help spread the Valuing Children Initiative messages far and wide. You can download this **campaign document** and a range of **FREE resources** and **social media tiles** from our website <http://valuingchildreninitiative.com.au/>

You can also **follow, like and share** on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#).

**Sign up:** [Register for our newsletter](#) to get the latest news. [Contact us](#) if you would like to join the Valuing Children Alliance. If you are a child or young person we would really love to hear from you to chat about how you can get involved!

**Partner:** Whether you are an individual, organisation, school or sporting club the Valuing Children Initiative would love to hear from you to discuss partnership opportunities. Previous & current partnerships have included; Perth Heat Baseball Club (Valuing Children's Day), ChildSafe Australia (resources), St Benedict's Primary (Child Ambassadors & research), Guildford Grammar (research, events), Curtin University (research), City of Belmont (event sponsor) and City of Cockburn (event sponsor) and many more.

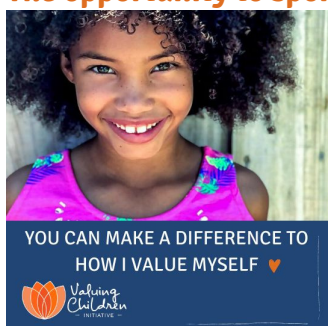
**Events:** Our events are informative and fun, a chance to meet new, like-minded people, and a unique opportunity to hear from interesting speakers and gain insights. If you would like to host an event with the Valuing Children Initiative we would love to hear from you!

**Volunteer:** If you are passionate about children's wellbeing, we have a range of fun and rewarding volunteer opportunities from events and social media management, to photoshoots and content creation that you can get involved in. If you are a student at UWA, check out the McCusker Centre for Citizenship- we regularly have interns from their program!

**Donate or fundraise:** Help make an impact by contributing financially to the Valuing Children Initiative. Your contribution will be used to progress the Valuing Children Initiative via education, research and advocacy. If you would like some fundraising ideas please get in touch. We have lots of fun and creative ideas for schools, workplaces and individuals. Donations are tax deductible.

**Sponsor:** Your business or organisation can contribute to better outcomes for children by driving societal change. Sponsorship is a great way for businesses to meet corporate social responsibility targets. We can tailor a sponsorship package to suit your business or organisation.

**The opportunity to sponsor an event is also available.**







[W- valuingchildreninitiative.com.au](http://valuingchildreninitiative.com.au)

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Campaign supported by:

