



## Update

*February 2014*

### UNCROC reporting work

The government is due to present its 5<sup>th</sup> periodic report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in May 2015. The Office of the Children's Commissioner convenes the UNCROC Monitoring Group. ACYA is a member of the monitoring group, which meets annually with Deputy Chief Executives of the state sector.

On 30 January, the Ministry of Social Development hosted an all day workshop on UNCROC. The workshop was attended by members of the UNCROC monitoring group and officials from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Justice, Te Puna Kokiri, Ministry of Youth Development and other relevant government departments. The meeting involved detailed and wide-ranging discussions of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's concluding observations from 2011 and the extent to which these are being actioned. The meeting suggests that UNCROC is firmly on the government's agenda. We all need to make sure it stays there!

ACYA has now produced the first two position papers on policy areas to be addressed by our shadow report. These papers are on:

- Youth justice (articles 37, 40)
- Education (articles 28, 29)

The papers are being sent to "cluster group" members for comment this month. We welcome comments from anyone with an interest in these policy areas. The papers are also on our website <http://www.acya.org.nz> - click "projects", then "ACYA report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2015".

### Law and legislation

ACYA lodged our submissions to the Human Rights Amendment Bill in December 2013. The Bill introduces a mandatory consultative role for the Minister of Justice in determining the Human Rights Commission's work areas. This proposed interference by the Executive in the work of the Commission breaches international standards for independent human rights institutions.

The Bill also proposes to abolish all three specialised commissioners for race relations, equal employment and disabilities. The diminished ability of the Commission to address these areas with sufficient expertise may detrimentally affect the rights of the many children and young people affected by these issues.

ACYA gives oral evidence on the Bill to the Justice and Electoral Committee on 19 February 2014.

## YouthLaw Forum: Education Rights

### **SAFE. IN SCHOOL. ON TRACK. OUT OF JAIL.**

Youth Law Forum

Thursday 6 March, 10am – 4pm

University of Auckland Law School

Building 810, Level 2, Room 225, 1-11 Short Street, Auckland

**S20 attendance fee. Contact [KAREN@YOUTHLAW.CO.NZ](mailto:KAREN@YOUTHLAW.CO.NZ)**

## Inquiry into improving child health outcomes

The report of the Health Select Committee on improving child health outcomes and preventing child abuse was released in November 2013. The report stated that evidence showed very strongly that the greatest gains and cost savings will come from effective, early intervention. The report highlighted very concerning disparities in children's health in different parts of the country. It recommended urgent increased investment in health services for the very early years. The report can be accessed at <http://www.parliament.nz>

## Kids Missing Out

UNICEF New Zealand launched the report "Kids Missing Out" on 9 December 2013. The report is a stock-take of Aotearoa New Zealand's progress in implementing UNCROC. It highlights the extent of child poverty, increases in children's infectious diseases and high rates of child maltreatment. The report is an important and timely reminder of the inequalities experienced by our children and young people and the urgent need for action on UNCROC implementation.

UNICEF New Zealand and ACYA intend to hold seminars during 2014, on the key messages from the "Kids Missing Out" report. The report can be downloaded from <http://www.unicef.org.nz>

## OCC Child Poverty Monitor

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) released Aotearoa New Zealand's first child poverty monitor on 9 December 2013. The Child Poverty Monitor is a joint project by OCC, J R McKenzie Trust and Otago University's NZ Child and Youth Epidemiology service. The monitor looks at 4 measures of poverty: income poverty; material hardship; severe poverty; and persistent poverty. The 2013 monitor showed that 1:4 children are growing up in income poverty and that 1:6 children are going without basic essentials, such as a warm home, visits to the doctor and fresh fruit and vegetables. The Child Poverty Monitor can be accessed at [www.childpoverty.co.nz](http://www.childpoverty.co.nz)

## Te Ara Whakapiki Taitamariki: Youth'12 The Health and Wellbeing of Māori New Zealand Secondary School Students in 2012

This report was launched on 18 December 2013. The research is carried out by the Adolescent Health Research Group at the University of Auckland. The report showed some encouraging improvements in health compromising behaviours, such as substance abuse and also improvements in students' confidence and engagement in school. The report also carried important information about Māori students engagement with school: half of those surveyed liked school a lot and over 98% said that it was important or very important that they go to school. Disappointingly, however, only 25% thought that their schools cared about them a lot and only half thought their teachers had high expectations of them. The report can be accessed at [www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz)

### Universal Periodic Review

On 27 January 2014, Aotearoa New Zealand went through its 2<sup>nd</sup> Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. The NZ Human Rights Commission presented material from non-government organisations to members of the UN UPR working group before the hearing. A short video from ACYA on children's rights in Aotearoa New Zealand was included in the presentation. The video can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OQaIUuLSAbc>

Many issues relating to the human rights of children and young people in Aotearoa were raised in the UPR review. Several countries referred to the challenges in educational outcomes for Māori children and young people and to the over-representation of young Māori in the criminal justice system. Child poverty was a key theme, with questions regarding tools for monitoring child poverty and assessing poverty reduction policies.

### Getting in Touch with ACYA

Officers' contact details are as follows:

Alison Cleland      [alison.cleland@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:alison.cleland@auckland.ac.nz)  
(Chair)

Golriz Ghahraman      [Golriz.ghahraman@acya.org.nz](mailto:Golriz.ghahraman@acya.org.nz)  
(policy officer)

Naomi Green      [naomi.c.green@gmail.com](mailto:naomi.c.green@gmail.com)  
(Secretary)

Adele Brady      [adele.b@officeprofessionals.biz](mailto:adele.b@officeprofessionals.biz)  
(Treasurer)      (for all invoices, membership fees and financial matters)