



10th June 2016

Media Release

VALUING CHILDREN INITIATIVE SUPPORTS THE RECOMMENDATION FOR A MINISTER FOR CHILDREN AND CALLS FOR THE INCLUSION OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Valuing Children Initiative (VCI) welcomes the recommendation following the release of the *CRC25-Australian Child Rights Progress Report* for a Minister for Children, which echoes the call the Valuing Children Initiative made recently for a Ministerial Portfolio for Children in Future Generations. (See Media Release of 1 June 2016).

The VCI believes that a Ministerial position must also include Future Generations, to counter and reduce the focus on the short term, and the resulting bias against future generations that can occur simply because they are born tomorrow and not today.

The tendency to focus on the short term characterises much of modern politics, and has been identified as damaging to economic reform as well as efforts to address issues such as climate change. The detrimental impact of short termism on the nation's children receives far less attention, despite the fact there is only one chance at childhood and this influences so much of a person's future.

The VCI's Convenor, Linda Savage, said it was time for decision makers to actively consider the impact of policy decisions on children, young people and future generations. She urged political leaders to heed the voices of children, as well as those who advocate on their behalf during the federal election campaign.

On the 27th of May 2016, The VCI wrote to Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten and Greens Leader Richard Di Natale asking them to commit to:

- 1) The creation of a Ministerial portfolio for Children and Future Generations.
- 2) The convening of at least one meeting per year of Federal, State and Territory Ministers to discuss policy development across portfolios for children and future generations.
- 3) The establishment of a set of measurable outcomes to guide policy development, determined by independent experts, in consultation with children where appropriate.
- 4) The instigation of a rigorous and transparent process to ensure that legislative and decision making processes consider the impact on children and future generations. This process should include the views of children whenever possible; risk analysis for particularly vulnerable children; and be evaluated and reported on.
- 5) Funding community raising activities to inspire Australians to value all children, understand that a child's wellbeing is the responsibility of the entire community and ensure children are at the forefront of our considerations.

The VCI is calling on party leaders to put their differences aside, and make this commitment in the interests of children today, as well as future generations of children.

Across the world, governments and communities are looking at new ways to ensure children and future generation's needs and interests are explicitly taken into account, notwithstanding their lack of political or economic influence. Ms Savage cited the work of the Oxford Martin Commission for Future Generations at Oxford University and the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*.

Mr Tony Pietropiccolo, Director of Centrecare who established the Valuing Children Initiative with Basil Hanna CEO of Parkerville Children and Youth Care, said that Australia's children are incredibly precious, they deserve every opportunity to flourish, and party leaders can help promote a greater focus on valuing children. Mr Hanna said, this is a unique and wonderful opportunity to unite all our nation's leaders towards one cause, our nation's children.

Media Inquiries

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The Valuing Children Initiative is an ambitious project that seeks to inspire Australians to value all children, understand that a child's wellbeing is the responsibility of the entire community, and ensure children are at the forefront of our considerations. It was established by Centrecare (Inc.) and Parkerville Child and Youth Care (Inc.) in January 2016. Copies of the Valuing Children Foundation Paper are available by emailing: eking@centrecare.com.au
