



5 June 2017

Ms Megan Mitchell
National Children's Commissioner
Australian Human Rights Commission
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Megan,

Young Parents and their Children

Thank you for your letter of 24 March 2017, which announced the topic of your upcoming *Child Rights Report* for 2017. I am following the progress of your inquiry with interest, as the rights, needs and wellbeing of young parents and their children is an important subject for discussion.

Your letter summarised the risk factors and poor life outcomes frequently associated with young parenthood and it is important that Australian governments invest in early intervention programs to prevent or address these risks at a population level. In your conversations with young parents, I anticipate you will also capture and report the positive personal experiences for individual young people who become mothers and fathers at a young age. Young parents need support to challenge negative stereotypes and see themselves as proud, capable caregivers.

Unfortunately on this occasion I will not be able to participate in the national roundtables that you have scheduled, but trust these will be productive forums.

I understand that you have also been consulting directly with young parents and other stakeholders in different jurisdictions including the ACT. I would be interested in any briefings or summary reports available from the ACT consultations. Should you be following up further in the ACT, I would be happy to facilitate meetings with relevant service providers, partner with you in consultation activities, and/or otherwise participate in the consultations to ensure that the views expressed by participants directly inform my work and enable me to further the issues relevant to the ACT jurisdiction.

As a community, we want young people to live in circumstances that allow them to have control over their reproductive choices, and make fully informed choices about their lives. Your published research and recommendations will help focus and coordinate efforts across jurisdictions in this area of policy and service provision. I look forward to reading the outcomes of your report.

Please contact me if I can provide assistance, or alternatively your colleagues may contact Brianna McGill or Lisa Fenn in my office on 6205 2222 or via email to ACTkids@act.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Jodie Griffiths-Cook
Public Advocate and Children and Young People Commissioner
ACT Human Rights Commission