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## From the President

23 June 2023

Ms Anne Hollands  
National Childrens Commissioner  
GPO Box 5218  
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Via Email: [youthjusticereform@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:youthjusticereform@humanrights.gov.au)

Dear Ms Hollands

### **Opportunities to reform youth justice and related systems across Australia**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on the project investigating opportunities to reform youth justice and related systems across Australia.

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians (RACP) connects, trains and represents over 30,000 medical physicians and trainees from 33 different specialties, across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The RACP is the lead representative body supporting paediatricians in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand and we represent over 3,660 paediatricians and paediatric trainees in Australia.

The RACP is committed to advocating for and promoting better health outcomes for children and young people involved in the youth justice system – as outlined in our policy position statement on the [Health and Wellbeing of Incarcerated Adolescents](#). We are also strongly committed to addressing health inequalities in children and First Nations children, as outlined in our policy position statements [Inequities in Child Health](#) and [Indigenous child health in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand](#).

The RACP is also a member of the National Steering Committee for the [Raise the Age Campaign](#), which advocates across Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years, without exception or carve outs.

We also acknowledge the connection between children and young people involved with care and protection services with the youth justice system and have recently published our new policy position statement [Health Care of Children in Care and Protection Services](#). This new document considers current evidence and proposes strategies and recommendations to deliver effective health care to children and young people who are at risk of entering out-of-home care, are in out-of-home care, or are in contact with care and protection services across Australia. We were so pleased you were able to join us in Canberra for the launch of this document on 21 June.

RACP members from the Paediatrics and Child Health Division, Adolescents and Young Adult Medicine and Community Child Health, would welcome the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Australian Human Rights Commission to discuss the clinical aspects associated with youth justice reform and provide input to support the project.

For further information and to arrange a meeting to discuss the project with our physicians, please contact [REDACTED], Executive General Manager, Policy and Advocacy, via [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

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Dr Jacqueline Small