

Media release

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Increased powers to Children's Commissioner the way forward

"The safety of children and young people in Victoria can be better protected by increasing the powers of our Child Safety Commissioner" said Georgie Ferrari, CEO of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic).

YACVic has long called for an Independent Children and Young People's Commission, similar to that in operation in New South Wales.

"While we were pleased with the steps that the former Minister for Community Services Sheryl Garbutt took in announcing and appointing the role of the Child Safety Commissioner for Victoria, we see scope for that role to be extended particularly in light of recent developments in Victoria highlighting the shortcomings of the child protection system" said Ms Ferrari.

"The types of independent powers for a Children Commission called for by the Shadow Community Services Minister Mary Wooldridge, would significantly strengthen the capacity of the Child Safety Commissioner to advocate for the needs of children and young people in this State" Ms Ferrari said.

"Victoria's vulnerable children and young people would benefit from a Commissioner with statutory obligations to report to Parliament directly and to initiate independent reviews into issues that concern the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Victoria" said Ms Ferrari.

Advocates in the child protection sector has been reporting that the child protection system has been over stretched and at breaking point for a number of years. The child protection workforce is severely stressed and under-resourced.

"There need to be an overhaul of the system in Victoria with the implementation of a set of quality standards to ensure our most vulnerable children and young people are not let down by the State when it assumes the role of guardian" Ms Ferrari said.

End

For comments, please contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO YACVic, on 0411 484 428.