

AYAC REPORT LAUNCH

Tuesday 17 March, 2026

A new report keeps young people's rights on the agenda, as Australia approaches UN reporting.

A new report released by the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) examines the benefits of taking a rights-based approach to engaging and consulting with young people in Australia. The report: *A shared understanding of rights-based youth engagement? A Conversation Starter on Challenges and Opportunities*, will be launched on Thursday 19 March 2026.

The report's release is of critical timing, with the Australian Government due to report to the United Nations on their obligations under the Conventions of the Rights Child (CRC), following its previous submission in 2019.

Drawing on a national roundtable, youth consultation and interviews with sector professionals, the report highlights the need to keep the rights of young people on the national agenda. The report explores how young people and sector professionals understand and practice rights-based youth engagement in Australia, and how this approach improves outcomes for young people. Facilitating an environment that promotes rights-based youth engagement not only enhances the experience for young people, but also strengthens their capacity to make meaningful contributions to policymaking.

The report recognises a growing emphasis on youth engagement across government in recent years, as evidenced by the Office for Youth's, *Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make*. This marks a welcome advance in the Australian Government's efforts to embed youth voice in policymaking and deliver on commitments set out in Article 12 of the CRC.

Through discussing the building blocks of rights-based youth engagement, the report examines how to advance a more coordinated approach to this work in Australia. It argues that this can be achieved by forming a more shared understanding of what is rights-based engagement through greater discussion.

Joanna Rostami, AYAC CEO, said that, "This report should encourage decision-makers to be active in their consultations with young people ahead of the Australian Government's national reporting to the UN."

"Australia has taken some notable steps in ensuring the voices of young Australians are heard. However, much more can be done to ensure that the needs, aspirations and rights of young people are upheld and advanced."

Dr Dean Farquhar, National Youth Engagement Lead and report author, said that, "The report shows that although frameworks for rights-based youth engagement can be misunderstood and contested, a more shared understanding is possible."

"By listening to young people and sector professionals, we find some common ground that we can build on to better coordinate approaches."

"We invite policymakers, practitioners, and young people to continue the conversation on building rights into engagement with young Australians – let's keep working together."

For further information:

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About AYAC:

AYAC is the national peak body, representing the 4.7 million Australian young people, aged 12-26 years. AYAC has over two thousand members nationally, and works to improve outcomes for all young Australians.