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**ALHR CONGRATULATES ATTORNEY-GENERAL ROXON ON CREATION OF CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER POSITION**

"Australian Lawyers for Human Rights ('ALHR') welcomes the announcement of the creation of a National Children's Commissioner." Stephen Keim, President of ALHR, said today. "This announcement is timely given Australia's looming appearance before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in June" said Mr. Keim. "We believe a National Children's Commissioner will go a long way to strengthening the protection and promotion of child rights in Australia."

The Attorney-General's announcement is available at: <http://www.attorneygeneral.gov.au/Media-releases/Pages/2012/Second%20Quarter/29-April-2012---Gillard-Government-to-establish-National-Childrens-Commissioner.aspx>.

Mr Keim noted that "the Government has announced that the Commissioner's role will encompass advocacy, research, education, consultation with children and the monitoring of legislation and policies relating to children." He said: "The proposal is broadly in line with the powers that NGO groups have been advocating for, for some time. See for example the excellent report *Listen to the Children* released last year and available at http://www.childrights.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/14405/Listening-to-children-Report-2011-colour.pdf.

"ALHR looks forward to further details on the Commissioner's mandate which should be based on the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) and the other relevant human rights instruments and ensure that the Commissioner is accessible to all children within all the various law jurisdictions in Australia" said Mr. Keim. "This should include those children who come to Australia as unaccompanied minors seeking asylum."

Mr. Keim said that ALHR had also renewed the call to create a position of a National Children's Commissioner, recently, in its submission urging the government to ratify the [Third Optional Protocol](#) to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. That submission is available on the Attorney-General's Department website at <http://www.ag.gov.au/Humanrightsandantidiscrimination/Pages/Humanrights.aspx#convention>.

“As part of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Commissioner will have the power to act as intervener on behalf of children in legal proceedings alleging breaches of their rights and access to powers to initiate inquiries into breaches of child rights” Mr Keim said. “The Government must ensure that adequate funding is available for this vital role.”

Mr Keim stated: “ALHR sees this announcement as a positive step for the protection of Children’s rights in Australia and it will assist in providing accessible remedies for human rights breaches to one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.”

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