EMBARGO Thursday, 22 August 2013

YOUTH ADVOCATES *Speak Up!* AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Close to 50 representatives of key non-government organisations that work closely with children and young people attended a roundtable meeting at Parliament House to discuss the future of youth advocacy in NSW.

The stakeholder meeting, coordinated by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, was hosted by Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello as part of a state-wide consultation project, *Speak Up!*.

Organisations attending yesterday’s roundtable included Barnardos, PCYC, Youth Action, Scouts NSW, P&C Federation and The Benevolent Society.

“This roundtable was a key element of a NSW Government consultation initiative that aims to identify ways we can strengthen the voice for children and young people within government and across the community,” Mr Dominello said.

“The NSW Government is committed to strong advocacy that promotes the interests of children and young people. As Minister responsible for Youth Affairs I want to ensure we get a broad cross section of opinions and advice about the best ways children can have their views heard.”

Mr Dominello said a wide variety of opinions and suggestions were canvassed at the meeting.

“The clear message from these stakeholders is they want a future advocate to be a real champion for young people. They said children want someone to consult with them and be a strong voice for them so they can contribute to community debate on decisions that may impact their lives.

“*Speak Up!* will help us understand what is important to children and young people in contemporary NSW,” Mr Dominello said.

The Commission will accept submissions until the close of business on 28 August.

A Discussion Paper and online survey is located on the NSW Government’s Have Your Say portal at [www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au](http://www.haveyoursay.nsw.gov.au)

There is a link to a child-friendly survey on the *Your Space* section of the Commission for Children and Young People’s website at [www.kids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au)

A final report will be handed to the NSW Government in September 2013.

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