NEW REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello has released a report, capturing the views of hundreds of children and young people, NGOs and youth policy experts, which will inform a new model for child and youth advocacy in NSW.

The Commission for Children and Young People, established in 1999 to make recommendations to Parliament on the interests of children and young people, conducted 34 classroom consultations, two community roundtables and online surveys as part of the Speak Up! consultation.

The ‘Strengthening advocacy for children and young people in NSW’ report includes feedback from 916 children and young people and input from over 40 organisations including Uniting Care Children Young People and Families, Youth Justice Coalition and the Council of Social Services NSW.

“This report represents the most comprehensive consultation on child and youth advocacy undertaken by CCYP since its inception 14 years ago.

“It provides an important insight into the issues that matter most to the children and young people of today and considers different advocacy models to ensure their ideas are heard and their interests are represented in the policy making process,” Mr Dominello said.

The report reveals bullying (especially online), community safety, the misuse of alcohol and drugs and mental health issues are among the leading concerns for children and young people aged 10 to 17.

Consultation participants were also concerned about the young people who miss out on a good education or who face homelessness.

“The NSW Government has initiatives to prevent or reduce the impact of these issues but we are keen to work more collaboratively with non-government agencies to help improve outcomes for children,” Mr Dominello said.

“The report also acknowledges that not all children and young people have an equal opportunity to contribute their views and ideas. Those who face isolation and neglect are among the most likely to miss out, but are also the most in need of an advocate to champion their rights.

“The NSW Government will now consider the report in detail and an announcement regarding youth advocacy will be made in the 2014,” he said.

The Strengthening Advocacy report can be found at http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/