

From voice to action: Safe and meaningful youth engagement across all ages and stages

NCPW 2026
Funded by the Australian
Government Department
of Social Services

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 10:00 AM

EVERY CONVERSATION MATTERS

SHIFTING CONVERSATION TO ACTION

From Voice to Action: Safe and Meaningful Youth Engagement Across All Ages and Stages

Presenters:

- Ruby Curnow-Grieve Youth Advocate, NAPCAN Youth Speak Out - moderator
- Bridget Isichei Director, Northern Rivers Preschool
- Genevieve Hernandez Cardinia Communities for Children Program, Anglicare Victoria
- Jodie Griffiths-Cook ACT Children and Young People Commissioner, Human Rights Commission
- Krushnadevsinh (Kano) Ravalji Founder and CEO, Third Culture Australia

In this webinar on **Friday 11 September 2026** the speakers discussed:

- **From listening to genuine influence** - Moving beyond simply asking children and young people for their views to involving them in shaping decisions, solutions and outcomes.
- **Participation across ages and stages** - Recognising that children communicate in different ways, including through play, behaviour, creativity and non-verbal communication.
- **Trust, safety and shared power** - Creating environments where children and young people feel respected, included and confident that what they say genuinely matters.
- **Accountability and closing the feedback loop** - Showing children and young people what was heard, what changed, what didn't change and why.

Overview

This webinar explored what safe and meaningful participation looks like across childhood, from the early years through to youth leadership, and how children and young people can genuinely influence the decisions, services and systems that affect them. The discussion highlighted the difference between simply listening or consulting and creating opportunities for children and young people to help shape the agenda, contribute to solutions and see how their input has made a difference.

Panellists discussed how meaningful engagement needs to reflect children's age, communication style, culture and individual needs, including recognising play, behaviour, creativity and non-verbal communication as valid forms of participation. They also explored the importance of trust, safety, belonging, shared power and creating environments where children and young people feel respected and confident that what they say matters.

A strong theme throughout the webinar was accountability - listening must be followed by action, feedback and transparency. Children and young people need to know what was heard, what changed, what did not change and why, so participation becomes genuine influence rather than a tokenistic exercise.

Speaker quotes

- "I think number one is to recognise that it's not the community's fault... it's us as an organisation that we can't provide for them... So looking at what we could do rather than blaming the community." - **Kano Ravalji**
- "Belonging is not a space... it's a feeling. You walk into a space, you feel like you can be yourself. You feel like you don't have to perform, you feel like you don't have to put up a front." - **Kano Ravalji**
- "Accountability starts with a feedback loop, because too often, children, young people contribute their time, they contribute their energy, their expertise. But then they hear nothing further." - **Jodie Griffiths-Cook**
- "If we can't adopt a particular recommendation, idea, suggestion that children, young people have put forward, they deserve an honest explanation, respectful disagreement is very different from ignoring them altogether." - **Jodie Griffiths-Cook**
- "Take young children really seriously and believe in their competence rather than stopping too soon." - **Bridget Isichei**
- "Children deserve and need to be connected to the community right from birth." - **Bridget Isichei**
- "Responding with empathy, compassion, curiosity and genuine undivided interest will feed back to the child... that you are a trustworthy adult and you are a safe person." - **Genevieve Hernandez**
- "Say what you do, do what you say." - **Genevieve Hernandez**

Theme

The theme for National Child Protection Week (6 - 12 September 2026) is

Every Conversation Matters: Shifting Conversation to Action

The following sheet provides links to resources and topics that were mentioned in the above webinar, to help us **shift this conversation into action**.



Recordings & Resource Sheets for the National Child Protection Week 2026 webinars will all be available on the [NAPCAN website](https://www.napcan.org.au).

Social media tiles from the webinar are available on our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/napcan), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/napcan) or [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/napcan)

For more information, contact:

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Thank you for your commitment to ensuring every child in every community has a fair go.

Child Protection Week 2026, 6-12 September

National Child Protection Week is funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services