Guardian for Children and Young People

Role Description

Role Title:	Advocate
Classification:	ASO6
Reports to:	Principal or Senior Advocate
Number of direct reports:	Nil
Approved by delegate:	 Sue Macdonald, Acting Guardian for Children and Young People **Date:** October 2026

Organisational Context

The Guardian for Children and Young People (the Guardian) is an independent statutory officer that promotes and advocates for the rights and best interests of children and young people who are under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the chief executive of the Department for Child Protection (DCP). The functions and powers of the Guardian are set out in section 26 of the Children and Young People (Oversight and Advocacy Bodies) Act 2016.

The role of Child and Young Person's Visitor (CYP Visitor) is held by the Guardian, ex-officio, and has responsibility for regular visiting and inspection of residential care facilities to monitor the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, in accordance with the functions set out in section 118 of the Child and Young Person (Safety) Act 2017.

The Guardian also holds the role of Training Centre Visitor (TCV) under the Youth Justice Administration Act 2016 in relation to children and young people detained in Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre (the Centre) and exercises similar functions in respect of that role.

Role Summary

The Advocate is a role within the OGCYP and is accountable to a Principal Advocate for:

- contributing to meeting the statutory functions of the Guardian, with a key focus on engaging with children and young people in care and/or youth detention, assessing matters and advocating on their behalf
- providing a specialist advocacy service on behalf of individual children to resolve serious issues
- visit and inspect residential care facilities and the Kurlana Tapa Youth Justice Centre
- respond to queries from children and young people within the Guardian's broader mandate and undertaking individual and systemic advocacy, when required
- maintaining accurate and up-to-date case notes and records
- contributing to reporting and monitoring requirements in the office
- working with other staff on projects and policy work that address systemic issues.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection panel will assess applications against the capabilities set out below, taking into consideration the context of the role and any specific abilities that have been identified as being relevant/necessary for the role.

In their application, applicants are requested to specifically address the key capabilities and provide real evidence through examples. Their application should tell the reader about authentic situations which demonstrate their capabilities, and the outcomes they achieved.

Key capabilities

- Proven ability to develop trusting and supportive relationships, and communicate effectively, with children and young people of diverse cultural and social backgrounds and differing abilities and ages (including those with disabilities, health issues, and/or communication challenges).
- Demonstrated ability to operate in a manner that is culturally responsive to the particular needs of Aboriginal children, young people and their families, noting the impact of colonisation and the over representation of Aboriginal children and young people in care and youth detention.
- Comprehensive understanding of the concept of 'best interests' in relation to a child or young person, and how to represent this concept.
- Experience in an advocacy role, providing advice and assistance on sensitive and complex matters, particularly relating to children and young people in care and/or youth detention.
- Highly developed verbal and written communication skills and experience in producing reports and case records.
- Highly developed conflict resolution and negotiation skills that foster interaction and cooperation, defuse and resolve conflict and win trust.
- Ability to interpret, apply and explain relevant policy, legislation, principles, children's rights frameworks and practice that apply to children and young people living in out-of-home care, youth detention facilities and the communities and systems with which they interact.
- Demonstrated ability to work autonomously, effectively and manage time, including under broad direction, when under pressure and set goals and priorities to meet deadlines.

Qualifications

Essential: Nil

Desirable: An appropriate degree or relevant tertiary qualification.

Key outcomes

- providing a high-quality client service to children and young people, including promoting their best interests, providing them with information about their rights and arranging and/or undertaking advocacy on their behalf
- modelling sound professional and ethical practice, including maintaining high standards in relation to complying with the statutory responsibilities of the Office
- encouraging young people to express their views and giving proper weight to those views
- making appropriate provision for children and young people who may require particular attention, including those who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, those who have been (or may have been) sexually abused and those who have a physical, a disability
- When required, participate in inter-agency meetings

- providing professional advice to the Senior Advocate, Principal Advocate, Director of Operational Oversight and/or the Guardian regarding the circumstances of children and young people living in residential care houses and relevant facilities, and systemic issues identified in the course of duties
- contributing to the establishment, analysis and review of data received by the OGCYP and collected through advocacy and visiting activities, including monitoring individual cases to identify patterns, trends and systemic issues
- contributing to a safe and healthy work environment by taking personal accountability for identifying and reporting incidents, hazards and injuries in accordance with relevant policies & procedures and cooperating and complying with reasonable instructions of line management and WHS Officers.

Key relationships / interactions

- Children and young people in care and/or youth detention
- The Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People staff
- Government and non-government organisations, the community and other entities that are involved with or provide services to these children and young people.

Key challenges

- Developing trusting and supportive relationships with children and young people with complex needs, from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and/or in diverse circumstances.
- Working autonomously in potentially challenging environments.
- Having the courage to undertake principled advocacy in the face of opposing viewpoints, particularly when adult perspectives are challenging a child-centred focus.
- Developing and maintaining professional relationships with a diverse range of staff and organisations in a challenging environment.
- Obtaining and using information from a variety of sources to understand children and young people's enquiries and perspectives.
- Effectively promoting the experiences and stories of individual children and young people while observing confidentiality and protecting their privacy.
- Contributing to development of policies, procedures and processes in a changing organisational context.

Recruitment values

OGCYP aims to build a high performing workplace by believing in and valuing the contribution of children and young people's voices in matters that impact them, and -

- placing children and young people at the centre of our decision making
- encouraging and supporting creativity and innovation
- acting ethically, mindful of the responsibility and independence of our office.

Corporate responsibilities

Responsible for:

- Keeping accurate and complete records of business activities in accordance with the *State Records Act 1997*.

- Maintaining a commitment to ethical conduct and the legislative requirements of the *Public Sector Act 2009* and *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*.
- Supporting and advocating Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and diversity in the workplace in accordance with EEO legislation. Maintaining a commitment to promote an inclusive workplace in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and other under-represented groups.

Special conditions

- The successful applicant is required to gain a Department for Human Services child-related employment screening (Working with Children Check) prior to being employed, which is required to be renewed every five years before expiry.
- The incumbent will be required to undertake the Safe Environments for Children and Young People 'Through their eyes' training course and update as necessary.
- A flexible approach to the taking of leave is required.
- Out of hours work may be required.
- Inter and Intra-state travel will be required.
- A current driver's licence and the willingness to drive is a requirement.
- The incumbent will be required to achieve mutually agreed performance targets.

Eligibility

Australian residency or current work permit (responsibility of applicant to provide evidence of a current work permit).

Pursuant to Section 56(2) and 65 of the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 only people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent may apply for this role.