

Discussion paper question	NSW Department of Education feedback
<p>1. What do you think about the principles of the Advocate? (see paragraph 2.2 of discussion paper)</p>	<p>The principles are clear. The complaints system and employment screening now sit far better in other areas and seem to be functioning well with the Ombudsman and Children’s Guardian respectively.</p> <p>The second principle could reflect an active seeking out of children and young people’s views and opinions rather than just consideration. Suggest:</p> <p>“The views and opinions of children and young people must be actively sought and seriously considered”</p> <p>Third principle: Agree with the collaborative stance</p>
<p>2. What do you think about the responsibilities of the Advocate? (see paragraph 2.3 of discussion paper)</p>	<p>The responsibilities could also include self-determination and agency – not just being involved in decisions that affect their lives.</p> <p>Would be strengthened through a reference to minority groups and vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>How does the Advocate make sure children and young people get important information?</p>
<p>3. Are there other things the Advocate should consider when performing its responsibilities?</p>	<p>Actively consider children and young people with disability and or mental health issues.</p> <p>Ensure mental health is a focus.</p> <p>Promote ACYP to be more involved in policy that affect students.</p>
<p>4. What do you think about the set-up of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC), e.g. number of members, age limits, etc?</p>	<p>It is difficult to ensure all minority groups of young people can be represented in 12 members.</p>

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	<p>12 members does not seem like a wide enough representation. 6 of these members must be under 24. Potentially only 6 children and young people are on the YAC.</p> <p>More members are needed with greater ability to respond to and affect change.</p> <p>Particular consideration should be given to culture, gender, and location.</p>
<p>5. What do you think about the functions and responsibilities of the YAC? Should they be doing more / less?</p>	<p>The YAC should have more members that can contribute to policy and other issues.</p>
<p>6. Do you have any other comments about the YAC?</p>	<p>It is good that the YAC organises meetings to discuss matters, however, it would seem that they could be few and far between if the YAC chooses it to be this way. If there were more members within the council, more issues could be raised and acted upon, lightening the load for the few and giving the YAC a little more power to influence. The YAC have additional or rolling membership to include wider representation of young people.</p>
<p>7. What do you think about the special inquiry function? Do you think it is necessary to retain the ability for the responsible Ministers to require a special inquiry?</p>	<p>NIL</p>
<p>8. Should there be any changes to the way in which the Advocate is able to run a special inquiry?</p>	<p>A hearing could be private in all instances where the young person or child is involved, not only at the request of that child.</p> <p>Children or the YAC could also have the power to identify a line of special inquiry (and not just the Minister).</p> <p>Is the YAC involved in matters around special inquiries?</p>

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9. What do you think about the annual reports the ACYP has developed? Do you think there are any other issues of importance to children and young people that should be reported on?	Educational attainment impacts on children and young people could be represented.
10. Do you think it is a good idea that Parliament monitors the work of the Advocate? Why or why not?	Yes, it is good to have the work monitored as it makes the Advocate more accountable for action.
11. Do you have any comments about the Act that you would like raise?	<p>Although the Advocate may already know, it is often the loudest voices that are heard and many children and young people may only 'open up' to those they know and trust.</p> <p>At times schools and other settings can provide an environment of trust and safety and can help facilitate open conversations between the Advocate and less outspoken (and possibly more representative, that is young people who may not usually put themselves forward as they feel confident to contribute at school as they are in a 'safe' space. Otherwise, contact may only be from those with confidence to contribute) children and young people.</p>