

# Special Inquiry: Children and Young People in Alternative Care Arrangements (ACAs)

Office of the Advocate for  
Children and Young People

**acyp.**



Special Inquiry into the experiences of children and young people in alternative care arrangements (ACAs) in New South Wales.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

In accordance with Part 5 of the [Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#) the Advocate for Children and Young People (**ACYP**) made a request to establish a Special Inquiry (**Inquiry**) on 19 September 2023, which was approved by the NSW Minister for Youth, the Hon Rose Jackson MLC.

ACYP is conducting an Inquiry into the experiences of children and young people in NSW in alternative care arrangements (often referred to as ACAs or “high-cost emergency placements”), which includes the use of hotels, motels, caravan parks, serviced apartments and other similar settings as emergency accommodation.

The Inquiry will have a particular focus on hearing from children and young people about their experiences.

The Inquiry will be examining and seeking views from interested parties on the issues and areas of focus set out below:

- a) The pathways, trajectory and factors relating to:
  - children or young people being placed in an **ACA**, including factors such as complex needs, disability, neurodivergence, psycho-social behaviour and experiences of trauma; and
  - transitions between placements, including different types of emergency care arrangements.
  
- b) The decision-making process through which a child or young person is placed in an **ACA**, including:
  - the participation of the child or young person in the placement process and their ongoing case and placement plan;
  - the information given to the child or young person;
  - measures to ensure that the safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child or young person is maintained through the transfer of responsibility; and

- the decision-making process under which a child or young person is removed from an ACA.
- c) The treatment of children and young people whilst in an **ACA**, including:
  - the suitability of the placement, including its facilities and condition, and the standard of care provided;
  - the availability, access to and adequacy of provision of education, recreation, health, psychological supports, and other services;
  - the appropriateness of the location for the child or young person; and
  - follow-up support and care after being placed in an ACA.
- d) The short, medium and long-term impacts of **ACAs** on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people, including:
  - the social, emotional, psycho-social and physical health impacts;
  - connection to family, friends, community, culture and supports; and
  - other impacts experienced by children and young people.
- e) The cost effectiveness of **ACAs**.
- f) Alternative approaches to **the use of ACAs**, including any local or global examples, and the social or economic benefits of such alternatives.
- g) Any other related matter.

The Advocate intends to deliver the Report from the Inquiry to the Minister in early 2024.

### **Submissions**

ACYP will be calling for submissions to the Inquiry from interested parties. ACYP will particularly seek to hear the views and experiences of children and young people who are currently in an ACA in NSW, and anyone who has been in an ACA in NSW in the last 10 years.

For more information see: <https://www.acyp.nsw.gov.au/special-inquiry>

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Advocate for Children and Young People

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