



# State Govt appoints first Aboriginal children's commissioner

## NEWS

The State Government has appointed prominent Aboriginal education leader April Lawrie as the inaugural Commissioner for Aboriginal Children and Young people.



Aboriginal education leader April Lawrie has been appointed the inaugural Aboriginal Children's Commissioner. Photo: Facebook

Lawrie, who has been leading the development of the Education Department's new Aboriginal education strategy, will be tasked with developing health, education, child protection and justice policies to improve the lives of Aboriginal young people.

The appointment follows a request made by Aboriginal organisations in their submissions to the Nyland Royal Commission into South Australia's child protection systems, where Aboriginal children remain grossly overrepresented.

Lawrie will work with the Commissioner for Children and Young People, Helen Connolly, to monitor, advise and advocate for issues specifically relating to Aboriginal young people.

“The priority is not just closing the gap but preventing it from emerging in the first place,” Lawrie said.

“If we are to improve services and outcomes we need to recognise the solutions coming from out Aboriginal communities, families and leaders and act upon them in a meaningful way.

“That requires a much more highly responsive and culturally relevant service design which takes the time to understand why families and systems are in distress and draws the solutions from within communities.”

The Liberal Party announced the new role as an election commitment earlier this year.

Premier Steven Marshall, who holds the Aboriginal Affairs portfolio, said Lawrie would be a “highly visible and powerful champion for a segment of our community which has been consistently underrepresented in the past”.

“By almost any measure the outcomes of Aboriginal children fall below those of the general population and not enough has been done to close the gap,” he said.

Get InDaily in your inbox. Daily. The best local news every workday at lunch time.

Email address

Name

Post code

This site is protected by reCAPTCHA and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.

I accept the terms & conditions

**SUBSCRIBE**

“Ms Lawrie will be an effective and fearless advocate on behalf of Aboriginal children and young people.”

Education Minister John Gardner said Lawrie had an “outstanding” track record of policy development and strong connections with the state’s Aboriginal communities and organisations.

“She has devoted her time and skills over the last 28 years to Aboriginal issues across government and at the community level, contributing to the formation of Aboriginal policy at the state and national level,” he said.

“I look forward to working closely with Ms Lawrie into the future to ensure that our policies and practices are sensitive to the needs of Aboriginal young people and effective in their implementation.”