



2012 CHILDREN'S LAW AWARDS

Promoting the Rights of Children and Young People

RECOGNISING THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILD RIGHTS ADVOCACY – 2012 CHILDREN'S LAW AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 2012 Children's Law Awards have been announced, acknowledging the importance of promoting and advocating children's legal rights in Australia.

Presented by the National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC) and King & Wood Mallesons with the support of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, the awards recognise the achievements and commitment of individuals and organisations who advance the legal rights and interests of children and young people across the country.

The 2012 winners are:

The National Award for Outstanding Legal Representation of the Rights and Interests of Children and Young People went to the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC), Legal Aid NSW, Public Interest Law Clearing House NSW (PILCH NSW) and Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.

This group launched the Children in Detention Advocacy Project (CIDnAP) in 2005 which runs civil cases on behalf of young people subject to unlawful arrest, detention, injury or searches by police due to a systemic problem with the NSW police computer system. As a result of the work initiated through the CIDnAP, the PIAC and Maurice Blackburn Lawyers launched a class action in the Supreme Court in June 2011 on behalf of the young victims of the defective police computer.

The National Award for outstanding Contribution to Policy of Law Reform to Advance the Legal Rights and Interests of Children and Young People went to Anoushka Jeronimus and Victoria Legal Aid.

Anoushka, a senior lawyer at the Youth Legal Service at Victoria Legal Aid, led a small team to make submissions to the inquest into the death of Tyler Cassidy, who was shot during a confrontation with police at Northcote skate park in December 2008 (held in the Victorian Coroner's Court). It was the first time since the Victorian Coroners Court Act 2008 that the State Coroner allowed the participation of an 'interested party' on a 'public interest' basis in a coronial inquest.

The National Award for Youth in Advancing the Legal Rights and Interests of Children and Young People went to Chris Varney.

Chris was the youngest member of the Child Rights Taskforce Steering Committee, and contributed to the preparation, delivery, promotion and dissemination of the 2011 NGO Report, *Listen to Children*, which was delivered to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child at Australia's NGO pre-session hearing in Geneva in October 2011. The Report include 40 testimonies from his book *Dear Kevin*, which was the product of letters written by almost 800 children on a range of issues confronting children and young people.

King & Wood Mallesons partner and Chair of 'Mallesons in the Community' Chris Wheeler said: "The calibre of our winners and finalists is a sound reflection of the outstanding work that is done to advance the legal rights of children in our country. It's important work, and we're proud to be a part of it."

Director of the NCYLC Matthew Keeley said: "In 2012, a year which has seen the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child review Australia's implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and find it seriously wanting, I am delighted that our finalists have been recognised for their work in those areas that the Committee is so concerned about."

Andrew McGregor, Sarah Westwood and Victoria Legal Aid, Lisa O'Neill, Loki Ball and Timothy Braund all received honourable mentions.

To coincide with the 2012 Children's Law Awards, a special edition of the Human Rights Law Resource Centre bulletin has been released. The bulletin, which can be found [here](#), contains articles that consider a number of human rights and legal issues affecting children and young people in Australia.

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For more information, please contact:

Sue Ashe, Head of Communications, King & Wood Mallesons T +61 2 9296 3716

Matthew Keeley, Director, National Children's and Youth Law Centre T +61 2 9385 9585

Editor's notes:

National Children's and Youth Law Centre (NCYLC)

The NCYLC is a community legal centre that focuses on addressing the human and legal rights issues confronting children and young people. The NCYLC aims to provide advice and information to children and young people about their legal rights and responsibilities; support test cases on behalf of children and young people to clarify or further their legal rights; bring about changes to laws, policies and practices to advance the rights of children and young people; and promote the implementation in Australia of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The NCYLC provides invaluable legal education and information to children through online programs such as "[Lawstuff](#)" and "[Lawmail](#)", an email advice, information and referral service.

King & Wood Mallesons

On 1 March 2012, Mallesons Stephen Jaques combined with China's King & Wood to create King & Wood Mallesons – a legal powerhouse for the Asian century.

King & Wood Mallesons has approximately 385 partners and 1,705 lawyers. It is one of the largest law firms in Asia, the largest firm in the world headquartered outside of the US and UK, and is the market leader in three of the world's most dynamic economies: Mainland China, Australia and Hong Kong.

Since 2001, King & Wood Mallesons has formalised its contribution to the community through the 'Mallesons in the Community' program. The NCYLC is one of King & Wood Mallesons' key community partners. With a partnership spanning over a decade, King & Wood Mallesons and the NCYLC have worked together to promote the individual and collective legal rights of children and young people within Australia.