

The theme of Children's Week 2019 is the right of every child to good health and wellbeing.

As Australia's National Children's Commissioner, I am keen to ensure that all children and adults know about and support this fundamental right.

Article 24 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children are entitled to "the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health". The right to health is particularly important for children, because their developing brains and bodies can make them more vulnerable to certain health conditions. If they are not healthy, children face barriers to claiming many other basic rights – like being able to learn, play and reach their full potential, as they grow into adults.

Children's right to health is also what is referred to as an 'inclusive right', because it extends to more than just access to health care services, to include a wide range of other rights that can affect a child's health – such as the right to non-discrimination and the right to access health-related education and information. In order for children to be healthy, they also need access to the underlying pre-conditions for good health: such as clean water and air, safe care and housing, and nutritious food.

Importantly, Article 24 also protects children's right to good mental health. During my term as National Children's Commissioner, children have told me just what an important issue this is for them. Providing children with the services and support they need to enjoy good mental health needs to become a top priority for Australian governments.

We must all work together to find better ways to support children to be healthy and thrive: both physically and mentally. Children's Week is a wonderful way to raise awareness about children's right to good health!