

# NEWS RELEASE



**The Hon. Graham West MP**  
Minister for Juvenile Justice  
Minister for Youth  
Minister for Volunteering  
Member for Campbelltown

**Wednesday 22 October 2008**

## **Nine-year-old student becomes NSW Children's Commissioner for a day**

NSW Minister for Youth, Graham West, today announced the appointment of nine-year-old Ruby Smith to the position of Children's Commissioner for NSW.

The Scone Primary School student today met with Mr West, as well as Minister for Health, John Della Bosca, and her local Member of Parliament, George Souris.

Mr West said Ruby was the winner in the 'Be the Children's Commissioner for a Day Competition' - which was designed to promote children and young people's participation in decision making and to engage their interest in current affairs.

"The NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People, Gillian Calvert, has today handed over her job to nine-year-old Ruby Smith to celebrate International Children's Day," Mr West said.

In her entry to the 'Be the Children's Commissioner for a Day Competition', Ruby said she wants to give the children of NSW a voice.

"We hear all the time that children are the future. How often do we actually ask kids what scares them, what they love and what environment they want to grow up in? As Commissioner I would invite children from across NSW, especially those living in the country, to a special meeting," Ruby Smith said.

"At the meeting we would talk about what kids think we should be doing to make their lives better and what they think about the future. I would let everyone know that no matter what they think they should speak up.

"I would ask all the television stations to come and listen to what they have to say," Ruby Smith added.

Mr West said Ruby Smith was a great advocate for young people – adding that the NSW Government was identifying ways to increase opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making.

"The NSW Youth Advisory Council provides important advice to the Government about issues of concern to young people," Mr West said.

"Getting young people involved in Government decision-making and community participation are key elements of the NSW Youth Action Plan released in December 2006.

"We have created a website at [www.youth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au) so young people can give their opinions on a range of issues including government policy and youth services.

“And in partnership with the University of NSW, the Rees Government is using web-based technologies to further reach out to young people in our consultations. This is initially occurring in the Central Coast and North Coast, before being rolled out across the state.

“The Government is also implementing the Youth Mental Health Service Model to provide a seamless, multi-disciplinary service for young people aged 14 - 24 years of age with mental health problems,” Mr West said.

Mr West thanked Ruby Smith for making sure the voices of young people were heard in Parliament today.

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