



CAFNEWS

6th Edition – April 2005

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2. Report from the Chairperson

Child Protection and Out of Home Care issues continue to feature prominently in the media and public discourse. The focus is probably unparalleled in recent Australian history and to varying degrees every State and Territory government has reacted by introducing systems reforms and new investments in services.

Whether these changes have yet resulted in real and sustainable improvements to the wellbeing of children and young people at risk is debatable. What it does highlight though is that we have possibly never been in a stronger position to help drive enhancements that will result in better quality care for children and young people and support for families. Central to achieving improved quality is an assurance that the services and interventions being delivered are based on the best available evidence and that the staff who deliver them are equipped with contemporary competencies and knowledge.

To this end, CAFWAA is engaged in two important developments:

- (1) Audit of Australian Out of Home Care Research: commissioned by ACWA and CAFWAA and undertaken by Judy Cashmore and Frank Ainsworth, the audit was released in October last year. The audit identified ninety-four research projects produced over the past decade and called for a renewed investment in areas such as Kinship care, permanency planning, young people in care, access to education and best practice for indigenous children.

These and other areas should be underpinned by a national research agenda for Out of Home Care. CAFWAA is currently negotiating with the Australian Government, Australian Institute of Family Studies and the CSMAC Working Group on Out of Home Care to conduct a workshop to begin planning for the agenda and a national, co-ordinated and strategic approach to building practice wisdom across the sector.

- (2) In mid October, CAFWAA, in conjunction with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare will hold the 3rd CAFWAA Practice Symposium in Victoria. Further details of the program are contained in this issue of Cafnews and we are encouraging member organisations to promote and support managers and staff to attend the Symposium. Previous events have been voted an outstanding success by participants seeking an opportunity to hear and learn from specialists in the Out of Home Care field.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the Symposium and on updating you on developments with the national research agenda.



Simon Schrapel
Chair, April 2005

2. AROUND THE STATES

New South Wales

Out-Of-Home Care Expressions of Interest

In February 2004 The Department of Community Services (DoCS) called for expressions of interest (EOIs) from organisations to provide care for children and young people with high and complex needs. After a closing date in March 2004 there was a long period of silence and then around October it was announced that eight agencies had been selected to provide 225 places. Since that time various factors have reduced that to four and possibly six agencies that will proceed to contract. As yet no placements have been made with this money which was the first roll-out of funding for non-government service provision.

Costing Manual

A major DoCS project, commenced in November 2004, is the development of a Costing Manual. The Manual aims to assist DoCS and external service providers to:

- Improve understanding of cost structures and cost drivers in child and family services
- Develop agreed costing principles and approaches to support funding of new and existing programs
- Enable greater accuracy and consistency in costing, valid costs comparisons and better cost management.

A Working Group which comprises ACWA, Aboriginal Secretariat, NCOSS, NSW Family Services and a children's service representatives along with numerous DoCS personnel has met three times to discuss the project, technical papers and the first draft of the Costing Manual which is in an early stage of development. In order to gain sector input at this early stage, a series of workshops will be held in Sydney in April, May and June to test assumptions and aim to put realistic figures into costing tables for various types of child and family services. The first priority of the costing manual is out-of-home care services, with early intervention and family support services to follow. An important point agreed by the Working Group is that the manual will apply to both DoCS and non-government services. It is not intended to be prescriptive, rather it is to be used as a guide to financial planning.

Early Intervention Expressions of Interest Anticipated

DoCS will shortly be calling for expressions of interest (EOIs) from organisations to provide early intervention services in areas throughout the State. This presents important new opportunities for agencies to develop and provide services that support vulnerable families and reduce risks for children. Advertisements calling for EOIs are expected in metropolitan and regional newspapers at the end of April with proposals to be submitted by the middle of June 2005.

Funding for new Early Intervention Services as part of the DoCS Funding Package began in 2003/04. DoCS report that \$13 million has been distributed to date. Funding for 'external services' is planned to roll out as follows:

2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	Totals
\$7.9m	\$14.57m	\$29.9m	\$48m	\$48m	\$148.37m

DoCS are also expanding their early intervention capacity with the recruitment of additional caseworkers to work with vulnerable families and in conjunction with funded services.

Agencies that are submitting EOIs will need to consider how they will provide or arrange an *integrated service* including all of the service components: case management, home visiting, quality child care, parenting programs and brokerage. Alliances, formal partnerships and joint proposals from agencies may be indicated.

Provided by the Association of Childrens Welfare Agencies

South Australia

The membership of CAFWA [SA] has expanded over the last 6 months and now includes all organisations that provide an Alternative Care service in South Australia. It is timely now for the Association to have a Planning Day at which both the role of CAFWA [SA] will be reviewed and plans made for the ensuing year.

Alternative Care Services

A handbook is being developed for Child, Youth & Family Services [CYFS] workers and Alternative Care stakeholders. The aim of the handbook is to:

- Increase a shared understanding of the roles and responsibilities of alternative care services and stakeholders and those involved in the provision of Alternative Care Services
- Provide Alternative Care Service providers, CYFS and other stakeholders with an operational context for the Alternative Care Standards [currently under development, read below]
- Provide guidance on procedures.

CAFWA [SA] will be consulted during the development of the handbook.

The provision of Aboriginal Alternative Care services in the Northern Country Region of SA has been under review. Current contracts have been extended by 12 months, with new models of service delivery to be implemented during that time. As yet information about the new models has not been released.

Alternative Care Program Standards are currently under development and will be implemented by the end of 2005. The standards will promote a shared understanding and consistency regarding the provision of quality care to children and young people, including levels of support to foster carers. CAFWA [SA] members were involved in the early development of the Standards.

Office of the Guardian for Children & Young People

The Office of the Guardian of Children and Young People was announced in early June 2004 as part of the child protection reform program. The Office commenced in late August 2004.

The Office has three core responsibilities:

- Provide independent monitoring of the circumstances of children and young people in out-of-home care, including a trouble-shooting role on individual matters.

- Assess the quality of their care.
- Advise the Minister, as the statutory Guardian, on whether the needs of children in his care and guardianship are being met, particularly on systemic issues affecting the quality of their care.

As part of its role, the Office has developed a profile of children and young people under Guardianship. The profile includes:

- There were 1,362 children under Guardianship or custody of the Minister as at June 2004
- 18.7% of them were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and young people
- 48.5% were girls
- 5.5% [75 children] had significant intellectual or physical disabilities and were receiving disability services
- In mid-2004 78% were in foster care [national average is 53%], 16% with relatives or kin [national average 40%], and 1% in other home-based care [same as national average]. Only 4% were in residential care with the national average also at 4%.
- Across Australia, 38% stated that they had been suspended or excluded from school. Fifteen per cent were achieving above average or well above average in school.

CAFWA [SA] has been consulted a number of times by the Office. The Association is currently assisting in the process of developing a Charter of Rights for Children and Young People in Care plus is involved in the review of the Office and its progress over the last 12 months. The Office and CAFWA [SA] are also together developing a formal protocol relating to access to information.

Family Support Service Association [SA]

Negotiations are continuing regarding the amalgamation of the FSS [SA] Association and CAFWA [SA]. Proposed changes to the CAFWA [SA] Constitution have been drafted to accommodate the objectives of the FSS Association. Support has been forthcoming from the Department for Families & Communities with the Minister currently considering transferring funding for training of the Family Support sector across to CAFWA [SA]. The process should be completed prior to our 2005 AGM.

Provided by the Child, Adolescent And Family Welfare Association Of South Association

Victoria

Important things afoot in Victoria

Victoria is in a period of significant change. In December 2004, the Premier, Steve Bracks announced that Minister Sherryl Garbutt would take on the responsibility of Minister for Children as well as Minister for Community Services and that a new Office for Children would be formed. The Director of the office is Gill Callister. The Premier further announced that a new Child Safety Commissioner would be appointed, reporting to Parliament through Minister Garbutt and a new Victorian Children's Council will be established.

An Exposure Draft of the changes to the *Children and Young Persons Act 1989* is expected around June for targeted consultation with the new legislation expected to

be introduced to Parliament in Spring 2005. The proposed changes to the Act are aimed at:

- Establishing a more robust legislative framework for quality assurance by enabling the Minister to establish standards for all child and family services;
- Improving earlier intervention and the role of community service organisations intake and assessment;
- Improving children's stability through establishing timeframes for DHS Child Protection to develop stability plans, differentiated according to the child's age.

There are also a cluster of proposed changes that have been discussed with the Aboriginal community to facilitate Aboriginal self management and culturally appropriate approaches to children's stability.

New Initiatives

The Minister for Children, Sherryl Garbutt announced the purchase of a 33 hectare farm to provide a live-in intensive therapeutic treatment for at-risk young people. Young people on the farm will also have access to the Take Two Service, which treats young people who have suffered abuse and neglect. The Victorian Government has provided funding for the initial purchase, set up and operation of the farm program. An experienced community service organisation will be chosen to manage the program.

CAFWAA and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare will host a National Symposium at the Victorian Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre in October. See page 9

Provided by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare

Tasmania

The Tasmanian Ombudsman's report, 'Review of Claims of Abuse from Adults in State Care as Children', was released in November 2004. The Ombudsman's office has continued to accept claims and up to 8.4.2005 had received 422 phone enquiries, 388 cases were open, 5 closed and 80 claimants were receiving counseling.

The Tasmanian Division of Child and Family along with the non government providers of care for children, have begun implementing 'Step by Step' (ACWA, NSWDoCs) as the basis for assessing potential foster carers. Training was conducted by the CCWT in March 2005.

A working group consisting of young people in care, Create, non-government and Child and Family representatives are developing a Leaving Care package/resource designed to assist young people in moving from care into independent living.

Provided by the Child & Family Welfare Association of Tasmania

Northern Territory

In consultation with the National Chair, Simon Schrapel and Board Member, Lisa Hillan initial steps are being taken to establish a CAFWAA NT.

The Northern Territory Government through the Family and Children's Services (FACS) program is actively promoting and sponsoring the establishment; including the contribution of \$5,000 approved in late 2004 by Minister Marion Scrymgour.

To date there have been two meetings, attracting up to 12 Non-Government Organisations with either direct involvement or an interest in the Child Welfare System. This has included representatives from Central Australia and more broadly an uptake of organisational membership since the first meeting.

The NT is in a period of reform in both its Child Protection and Out of Home Care Systems. This is likely to result in an enhanced and more involved role for the Non-Government Sector.

The Government acknowledges that quickly establishing a child welfare peak may take time before it becomes "more meaningful" for the sector itself. This is being addressed in further dialogue and correspondence with a view to maintaining the momentum achieved to date. Given the above the FACS Program has primary carriage of CAFWAA NT in these early days but looks forward to handing over full responsibility to the sector in due course.

Further local information can be obtained from the FACS Service System Improvement Unit on (08) 89227 089.

Provided by: David Richardson, Senior Manager, Service System Improvement Unit, Family and Children's Services

ACT

Not available at this time

Western Australia

Not available at this time

Queensland

Not available at this time

3. 2002/005 CAFWAA Board Members

At the 2004 AGM the following people were elected or nominated to the CAFWAA Board to serve until the 2005 AGM:

Chairperson: Simon Schrapel, Anglicare, SA

Vice Chairpersons: Graham Jackson, (then) Marist Youth Care NSW
and Marion Rainsford, Clarendon, TAS

Treasurer: Francis Lynch, CYFAA, WA

Secretary: Sandie de Wolf, Berry St, VIC

Nominated State Representatives

Anne Condon, MacKillop Family Services, VIC

Tony O'Hare, Community Care Inc., QLD

Annette Kelly-Egerton, CYFAACT, ACT

Ordinary Members:

Lisa Hillan, Save the Children Fund QLD

Tricia Lee, Wanslea W.A.

Sue Treggeagle, Barnardos ACT

Sue Sarlos, Wesley Dalmar NSW

Margaret Matters, Anglicare VIC

Sandy Graham, Anglicare NT

CREATE nominated member: Michelle Townsend

SNAICC nominated member: Garry Matthews (now Steve Larkins, Hunter
Aboriginal Children's Service, NSW).

The Board comprises up to a total of sixteen members

4. 2005 CAFWAA Symposium

10, 11 & 12 OCTOBER 2005

'Their Lives, Our Work: Critical questions for practice in child, youth and family services'

CAFWAA and the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare will host a National Symposium at the Victorian Darebin Arts and Entertainment Centre in Preston, showcasing the practical approaches that assist in responding to, and supporting children, young people and families with complex needs. The program will focus on developing the skills and knowledge of professionals working with young people with complex needs. Papers are being sought by invitation only and will cover five very important issues for our sector:

- Young people with sexually offending behaviours;
- Children and young people with trauma, attachment and mental health issues;
- Children and young people with Drug and alcohol issues;
- Educational issues for children and young people in the secondary services and out of home care sector;
- The impact and issues for children, young people and their families with disabilities within secondary services and out of home care service.

Speakers and sessions are currently being planned and it is expected that two international speakers will attend to respectively address issues of reunification and providing 'sanctuary' for young people in residential care who have experienced trauma. A program will be provided in the near future. In the meantime, please put these dates in your diary and promote this important event amongst your colleagues.

See www.cafwaa.org.au/Symposium2005/html