



CAFNEWS

2nd Edition - October 2002

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1. REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Thank you to those who were able to attend our CAFWAA Annual General Meeting in Sydney on the 3rd September and participate not only in the proceedings of the meeting but to engage in discussion with the Federal Shadow Minister for Children and Youth, Nicola Roxon. Nicola provided an overview of the Labour platform including a national plan for children and young people and the proposal to establish a National Commissioner. A copy of the Shadow Minister's presentation to the CAFWAA Annual General Meeting is available on the new CAFWAA website (www.acwa.asn.au/cafwaa/).

By now all CAFWAA members should have received a copy of 'A Time to Invest' and picked up on some of the key themes through the extensive media coverage following the report's release. The CAFWAA Board have been developing a strategy for pursuing some of the major recommendations of the report – further details are contained in the body of CAFNEWS. The more support we can gather from our membership in pushing the main messages around quality and standards, enhanced early intervention services, improved recognition and compensation of carers etc., the more likely we are to succeed. Please contact your state representatives on the CAFWAA Board or your state peak to find out more about the strategies being deployed by CAFWAA.

An electronic version of 'A Time to Invest' is also available on the CAFWAA website or, together with the full list of Appendices on the Families Australia website (www.familiesaustralia.org.au/publications).

You will note in this issue of CAFNEWS that CAFWAA will be running another practice symposium for members towards the middle of 2003. A number of topics for the symposium were considered by the Board and further input from our membership is welcome to ensure we prioritise the most critical contemporary practice issues.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by all Board members who carry considerable additional responsibilities in ensuring CAFWAA can operate strategically and effectively. You will note that we have welcomed a new member from Queensland, Lisa Hillan who works for Save the Children. As of the 1st July the secretariat functions for CAFWAA transferred from CWAV in Melbourne to ACWA in Sydney. I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by CWAV over the past few years and in particular to Ken Patterson who provided service 'above and beyond the call of duty'.

Simon Schrapel – Chair, CAFWAA

2. REPORT FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2002 BOARD MEETING

Board Changes

- Lisa Hillan (Save the Children-Queensland) was elected to the Board.

Issues Discussed

The main issue discussed at the Board meeting was the “Time to Invest” policy document and how best to progress priority areas.

The 3 priority areas were identified as: Quality, Early Intervention and Education and Training for Kids in Care, and a number of strategies were proposed to progress these.

Secretariat Change-Over

The Board expressed its appreciation for the terrific job done by CWAV, especially Ken Patterson, over the past 7 years in providing Secretariat for CAFWAA and thanked ACWA for taking on the role.

CAFWAA Seminars

There are a number of suggestions about possible topics for CAFWAA seminars. We are seeking your feedback. Refer to the attached covering letter.

Jane Hague will convene a group to plan for a workshop on young people with complex needs. If you are interested in being involved, contact Jane on janeh@ucaqld.com.au.

Workshops

Arrangements have been made by the Thomas Wright Institute for Larry to be in Melbourne on 11 – 13 November, Adelaide on 14 & 15 November, Brisbane 18 & 19 November, Sydney 20 – 22 November, Perth 25 & 26 November. Contact Howard Bath for further information on hbath@twi.org.au or 02 6295 6255.

Families Australia Update

Sue Tregeagle and Sandie de Wolf provided an update on Families Australia, which now has 22 general members and more than 280 Associate Members. The first Annual General Meeting will be held on 27 November, as part of the ACOSS Congress in Tasmania.

The Role of For Profits in Child Welfare

This will be the main topic for our CAFWAA Board meeting in March 2003. If anyone has any information, please send it to Coleen Clare

(CWAV) or Howard Bath (Thomas Wright Institute), who are co-ordinating discussion.

Next Board Meeting

Thursday, 20 March 2003 and Friday, 21 March 2003 at 3.00pm.

3. REPORT FROM CAFWAA AGM – SEPTEMBER 2002

32 people joined us for the Annual General Meeting, held during the ACWA Conference in Sydney in September 2002.

Guest Speaker

Nicola Roxon, MP, Shadow Minister for Children and Youth spoke about the importance of investing in children and young people and called for a bipartisan approach to the development of the National Plan for Children. The Labour Party has committed to a National Children's Commissioner and is looking at the possibility of a National Code.

Board Changes

Organisational Representatives were elected as follows:

- Sue Ash – Wanslea Family Services (WA)
- Howard Bath – Thomas Wright Institute (ACT)
- Margaret Matters – Anglicare Victoria (VIC)
- Sue Tregeagle – Barnardos Australia (ACT)
- Lisa Hillan – Save the Children (QLD)

State Peak Representatives were elected as follows:

- Simon Schrapel (SA)
- Jane Hague (QLD)
- Marion Rainsford (TAS)
- Francis Lynch (WA)
- Graham Jackson (NSW)
- Sue Medson (VIC)
- Sue Mickleburgh (ACT)
- SNAICC (Muriel Cadd)
- CREATE Foundation (Michelle Townsend)

There is currently one vacancy for State Peak Reps on the Board – NT. Attached is a revised Board Contact List.

4. AROUND THE STATES

NEW SOUTH WALES

Research News from NCFWRC (National Child and Family Welfare Research Coalition)

Out-of-Home Care: Building a National Research Agenda

The recent Association of Children's Welfare Agencies, Child and Family Welfare Association of Australia and National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect Australia conference 'Evidence Based Practice in Child and Family Services: What Works?' in Sydney (Sept 2-4) included a workshop convened by Judy Cashmore and Frank Ainsworth (NCFWRC coordinators) on building a research agenda for out-of-home care. The workshop benefited from the experience and expertise of Prof. Peter Pecora, the Senior Research Director from the Casey Family Programs in Seattle, and keynote speaker at the conference. Amazingly the workshop that had been expected to attract about 25 people instead had an enrolment of 103.

The focus of the workshop was on:

- Identifying key policy and practice issues in out-of-home care
- Devising a sequenced ten-year knowledge-building research timetable
- Promoting individual and collaborative research projects.

An intended outcome was a draft national research agenda for out-of-home care.

Peter Pecora started the workshop by outlining the current Casey research projects and other US agenda building initiatives. He highlighted some of the difficulties that had been encountered and how these had been addressed. He also offered counsel, using overseas research, about selecting topics about which little is known and avoiding wasting resources by simply replicating studies that have already been done.

The workshop participants, from both government and non-government agencies, generated a list of 61 topics that they saw as important and needed areas for research. These topics were then grouped and ordered using a rationed red spot participation exercise. This provided a highly visible pattern of views and considerable consensus about which topics should receive early attention. Not surprisingly, the issue of foster care recruitment and retention and training was 'top of the list' along with benchmarking, indicators of quality of care and preventing entry into care.

The workshop concluded with an open session where issues of inter-agency research collaboration and the way forward for NCFWRC were discussed. Judy and Frank agreed to write up the outcomes of the workshop for distribution via e-mail to the workshop participants. In addition they agreed to try to get agreement from the editor of a well-known journal for a special edition about out-of-home care research. If this is successful, they will write up the workshop as the first article for this journal edition. A call for other papers about out-of-home care research will also be made.

You can send e-mail messages to all those involved with NCFWRC at cf-welfare@aifs.gov.au You can also subscribe to this list by sending a message to majordomo@aifs.gov.au and typing in the body of the message – subscribe c-fwelfare.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Rob Foggo, Chair - CAFWA SA

During the last six months CAFWA S.A. has been heavily involved in the process of reviewing the Alternative Care system in South Australia. The Review of Alternative Care In South Australia by Des Semple and Associates was released in March 2002. CAFWA S.A. members contributed significantly to the information that was used to form the recommendations as outlined in the final report.

The Review identified that the working relationship between the Department of Human Services and the Alternative Care Service Providers had deteriorated significantly over the last four years. Initiatives to 're-establish relationships, recognise respective roles and build on mutual respect' were encouraged. To this end CAFWA S.A. facilitated meetings between the Service Providers and representatives from the DHS Alternative Care Unit and also the Executive Director of the Country and Disability Service Division of DHS. While there were occasions when the stresses of the past surfaced during these meetings, they provided an excellent opportunity to commence the healing process so desperately required.

A change of government and the appointment of a new Minister in South Australia initially slowed the timing of progressing the Review recommendations. However by June a Pre-Implementation Steering Group was convened under the following Terms of Reference:

- Provide advice to the Minister of Social Justice on collated feedback on the review recommendations.
- Engage the Service Sector in the development of an implementation plan.
- Develop an implementation plan for the Minister's consideration, detailing priorities, time-frames and cost implications.

CAFWA S.A. was one of 14 organisations represented on this Steering Group. All members have a strong interest in the successful operation of the Alternative Care System in South Australia.

The Steering Group has already met for two of its scheduled three 2 hour meetings. Concerns have been raised by CAFWA that there has not been enough time allocated to the Group, to enable it to successfully complete its Terms of Reference. The last of the scheduled meetings has a lot of information to consider, before the members can complete the task. The next stage of the process, once approved by the Minister, will be the appointment of an Alternative Care Advisory Body whose role it will be to oversee the implementation of the Plan.

In the spirit of consultation and collaboration, the involvement of all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a plan to progress the recommendations of the Alternative Care Review is extremely important. What is equally important is to ensure that the process provides enough opportunities for those stakeholders to contribute in a meaningful way, otherwise there is a danger that the consultation can be viewed as token. This is something that we all must be vigilant in withstanding.

Of concern to CAFWA S.A. is that one of our member organisations – SAFECARE – has gone into recess. The members of SAFECARE felt that they can no longer manage the workload associated with truly acting as a lobby and support group for fellow foster carers, without additional resources. Through the Review process, CAFWA S.A. is advocating strongly that new money is directed towards SAFECARE.

I suspect that the next six months will be spent implementing the recommendations of the Alternative Care Review. Paramount in this will be ongoing work necessary to improve the working relationship between the Department of Human Services and the Alternative Care Service Providers.

VICTORIA

Coleen Clare - Children's Welfare Association of Victoria

Over the past six months significant developments that have been the focus for energy in child, adolescent and family welfare have included:

Partnership Development

- The community sector peak bodies have worked together to develop a draft Partnership Compact for the government /community sector relationship. This draft has been submitted to Premier Bracks and further work is about to begin.

- The joint-peak bodies group has also been negotiating a Partnership Framework with DHS (Department of Human Services). This Framework will have three elements:
 - A formal Partnership Agreement between DHS and the CSOs (community service organisations) that DHS funds,
 - A bi-annual joint-consultation Forum where community sector representatives will meet with the Secretary and other Directors of DHS to review the sector/DHS relationship, and
 - An annual survey of all CSOs to ascertain their satisfaction with the degree of partnership in the DHS/CSO working relationships.

Placement and Support Services

- In early 2002, CSOs and the Government had become so concerned about the situation of the out-of-home care system that Premier Bracks convened a meeting of the Ministers for Health (John Thwaites) and Community Services (Bronwyn Pike) together with the CEOs of the service provider organisations. This attention from the highest levels of Government was welcomed by the sector. A "Premier's Working Group", involving sector representatives together with senior DHS staff, has been established from that meeting to review the out-of-home care system and focus on capacity-building in this area. In a further development from the meeting with the Premier and following an audit of the clients in home-based care, an inter-Departmental Committee is overseeing a major review of the home-based care system and its role and capability within the spectrum of out-of-home care options. This Review is now underway and includes supply issues such as how to improve caregiver recruitment and retention, and demand issues such as the changing nature of the client population being referred for home-based care. This Review is expected to report by the end of 2002, in time for any resource needs to be submitted for the 2003 State Budget.
- Key State Budget initiatives this year have included funds to begin the implementation of the Looking After Children Framework in Victoria as well as funds for the development of models for Intensive Therapeutic Services for children and young people. Following the sector's advocacy for these initiatives through CWAV, CSOs are pleased to see these developments getting underway.
- New Residential care Service Standards are now in place and CWAV has developed a series of templates for policies and procedures that CSOs will need to have in place in full implementation of the standards.

Family Support Services

- CWAV representatives have continued to meet with DHS in the "Supports for Families Advisory Group", working on the refinement of the "Strategic Framework for Family Services". This strategic framework is due for launch late this year. A new funding framework

has also been developed for Family Services which gives better recognition to the range of family circumstances and levels of complexity that Family Services programs currently work with.

- Of the 38,000 notifications to the DHS Child Protection Service in 2001, approximately 61% were re-notifications of children already known to the Service. As part of the strategy to reduce this level of re-notification demand upon the child protection service, the Government allocated \$3.7M in the 2002 State Budget (\$14.8M over 4 years) for the development of family service program initiatives in high-demand areas to enable a better diversionary, early intervention response for these families and children. The pilots will be mainly in rural areas. Proposals are to be submitted to DHS by early October, for project start-up from November 2002.
- There has been continuing frustration from CSOs about the lack of recognition of the resource needs and the early intervention / secondary prevention potential of Family Support services. CWAV has now commissioned a Family Support Case Studies project to examine the nature of the unmet need for support for families and the downstream costs on the tertiary service system of the failure to adequately invest in prevention / early intervention.

ABEF Quality Initiative Training

- CWAV has continued rollout of the training program for CSO's adoption of the Australian Business Excellence Framework as the basis for their strategy for continuous quality improvement. DHS will now be recognising the ABEF Framework for the purposes of the quality improvement plans required under the contracts for DHS funding.

“Productivity Dividend” Funding Cuts

- During the 1990's the Victorian Government began expecting “Productivity Dividend savings” of all government departments. These funding reductions were passed on to the Community Care programs for the first time in 2001/02 and again in the establishment of funding levels for 2002/03. Following extensive protests, the Minister for Community Services has commissioned a major review of the capacity of the CSOs to achieve the expected productivity savings in a climate where there is no commitment to full-cost funding from government.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Francis Lynch - CYFAA Vice Chairperson & Sue Ash

There have been a number of significant issues that have been dealt with by CYFAA during 2002. The following is a snapshot of these events and issues:

Funding Renegotiation

The Department for Community Development (DCD) instituted a renegotiation process in September 2001 aimed to achieve new contracts (in placement services, placement prevention and reunification services) by September 2002. CYFAA had three nominees on the Steering Committee for this process but the committee had little influence on the direction of the consultation. The current ALP government has a stated agenda for consultation and participation, but DCD has found it difficult to put these concepts into reality. The first nine months of the project completed very little as the project officer conducted a stakeholder review, individually with each provider and others, rather than holding collective sessions. The outcome of this was a list of nine “issues” that the project officer wanted the sector to workshop over a period of six weeks. These issues included discussing fundamental changes to models of service delivery, funding arrangements and amount of funding.

Despite many agencies and CYFAA stating that this time frame was too short to discuss the scope of the issues involved the process continued. The process was supposed to involve key staff from DCD – but this did not really eventuate – therefore the process was lacking a broad range of views. The resultant Report was very weak drawing on virtually no comparative literature and barely drawing on the input of the agencies involved. It proposed a range of changes to service delivery that does not appear to improve the overall level of service delivery.

It also only became clear at this fairly late stage what all the non-negotiables of DCD are. We knew that DCD were not putting any new funding in the pot, and that no new players were to be considered. However, we were not aware of the extent to which the dept wanted to improve the funding levels to Aboriginal agencies and to provide new services to these agencies.

DCD visited the agencies over the last month discussing possible funding levels – many of the agencies are stating that the proposed levels are non-viable – and the service expectations are unrealistic.

CYFAA has managed to involve/engage the A/Director General of DCD on a number of occasions and this has recently borne fruit. In a couple of meetings with the DG and the Minister’s adviser we have an assurance that DCD is going back to basics and will not attempt such radical changes. However, we still appear to be on the same timeframe to conclude negotiations by the end of the calendar year.

As a result of CYFAA’s efforts DCD has now gone back to the drawing board and is offering a proposal that is far less aggressive and is much closer to the service mix that is currently in place. Whilst at one level this is preferable to what was initially being offered – it does not address the expressed desire of the sector for change to occur. Some of the agencies

actually want to change their service mix and want to work with the dept to achieve this – but the opportunity at this time may be limited. CYFAA will need to work with the govt and the dept to ensure that issues of service change and development can be achieved mid-funding round rather than leaving it to a rush at the next renegotiation period in three years time.

Care for Children Strategic Framework

In the last three months the sector has been asked to comment on a draft of a Care for Children Strategic Framework. This has come out of nowhere and has been totally driven from within the dept. Given the situation with the funding renegotiation it has not been afforded much time by CYFAA and the agencies.

The framework does not appear to be significantly based in literature. It has apparently been instituted as a strategy to convince Treasury that the dept has its house in order and knows what it planning to do to minimise the placement of children in care.

Legislation

Sue Ash and Francis Lynch have been members of a consultation group that has been reviewing a draft Community Development Bill. This bill will incorporate child protection and care for children matters. There has been an effort to include CREATE in the process and include “children’s voice” provisions.

The bill has been delayed getting to parliament and it appears that an Adoption Amendment Bill has been skipped ahead of it at present. Hopefully the bill goes to the house in the next sitting of parliament.

Looking After Children

The introduction of LAC has been progressing over the last year. There a number of implementation committees in place that have representation of the CYFAA members. The overall implementation has been patchy. It appears that the departmental restructure that has been occurring over the last year has certainly impacted on the LAC uptake.

Children and Young People in Care Advisory Committee

An advisory committee to the DG finished its 3 year term in March 2002. A refashioned advisory committee has started over the last couple of months and has 2 sector members. This committee has a greater focus on the needs of young people than the previous committee. It also will have a formal role to input to the annual review of the Care for Children Strategic Framework.

Young Person Sponsored to F2F

For the first time CYFAA worked with CREATE to sponsor a young person to attend the F2F meeting in Adelaide. Hopefully this collaboration will be the start of a new era in WA.

Records of Children in Care Project

This is a project attempting to find and index all the records of children in care in WA since 1920. This involves searching out and recording all the agencies that have provided care in this period (no mean feat). The current agencies are intending to approach the Lotteries Commission to get funding to have a consistent database in place for the records in each agency. The overall purpose of this project is to streamline the process for people trying to track down their records.

Agency Management Changes

Mofflyn has appointed a new Director. Patrick Higgins commenced with Mofflyn mid August. Djooraminda (formerly Centrecare Children's Homes) has been taken over by Centrecare. The issue of service provision for Indigenous Children is beginning to be contentious. The Department for Community Development seems to be unsure as to whether services need to be provided by Aboriginal people or managed and provided by Aboriginal people.

TASMANIA

To be provided in the next edition.

QUEENSLAND

To be provided in the next edition.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

To be provided in the next edition.

6. PUBLICATIONS

"Time to Invest", the CAFWAA policy document, is available on the CAFWAA or Families Australia websites -www.acwa.asn.au/cafwaa/ or www.familiesaustralia.org.au or for purchase from ACWA for \$15.00.

7. GENERAL

All membership enquiries should be directed to Eric Scott at ACWA on 02 92818822 or eric@acwa.asn.au.