



**Child &
Family Welfare
Association of
Australia Inc.**

ABN 65 962 251 319

Annual Report 2007/2008

Report from the Chairperson

CAFWAA last year highlighted the growing crisis across our nation of the 35% increase of children in out of home care across our country in the last 5 years. In media releases and interviews undertaken at the time of the release of our policy paper we highlighted the fact that if there had of been this increase in unemployment that there would have been a national outcry and significant dollars invested to address these issues immediately. Unfortunately a national outcry did not occur and it is for this reason that the state peaks for child protection and CAFWAA have such a pertinent place in our social system in elevating the voice and rights of vulnerable children, young people and families where it relates to issues of protection.

2007/2008 has been a busy year for CAFWAA, with the election of the Rudd government has come many opportunities for us as an organisation to contribute to the development of a new social agenda. No more so has this been the case than our involvement in the National Strategy on Child Protection. This has been on the CAFWAA agenda for many years and was part of the basis of our "A call to Action for Australia's Children". Commonwealth leadership and development in providing for the well-being of our children across the spectrum of their health, and their development is essential if we are to reduce the numbers of children entering the care system.

The National Strategy on Child Protection has provided the sector with a unique opportunity to work with the Commonwealth and the States on creating a system that will enable us in a united way to address many of the issues that have contributed to the doubling of notifications across Australia in less than 5 years. It is evident that a joined up response working at multi-levels is an opportunity to provide interventions that focus on prevention and reduce the numbers of children in care. However, the sectors voice and place at this table is equally important.

It has been pleasing to see the Commonwealth working with the National Coalition to progress this initiative, however it is imperative that the Commonwealth and the States value the NGO sector as an equal partner given our wealth of experience in the area and the responsibilities that NGO's hold working to provide services for vulnerable children and families across our country. This will no doubt be a central challenge for the coming time period and I thank all of the CAFWAA Board members who have participated in this process and continue to do so as we work to ensure that the development of any strategy is one that is truly tripartite so that the implementation of the strategy can be one that promotes the strength of our society and be embraced by all.

CAFWAA provided additional material to the National Strategy on Child Protection through a response paper highlighting our key points. It was also pleasing to see the Commonwealth utilise the "A call to Action" in their preparation of the discussion paper and a great compliment to the many hours of work that went in from across the country in the preparation of this document.

Whilst participating in the historic apology to the Stolen Generations was a significant moment for many of us the continued challenges of redressing disadvantage and ensuring appropriate opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and their families to ensure that we can move beyond rhetoric to real action that will ensure change. CAFWAA was pleased to write to the Prime Minister and the Minister for Families, Communities, Housing and Indigenous Affairs to congratulate them on their renewed commitment to this area.

CAFWAA sees the development of Indigenous agencies and communities as critical in this regard and believe that services for Aboriginal children, young people, families and communities should be delivered through Indigenous agencies. This will be a continued area of development for our organisation and one that we have committed ourselves to working with SNAICC on. In this regard a discussion paper was prepared that enabled CAFWAA to clarify its position and provide feedback to our members.

Keeping our members and the broader public aware of our efforts has had a renewed focus in the last 12 months with more material now available on our website and publication of email news that can ensure that our developed and published material is readily available to members across the country. Thanks to ACWA for their continued work in this area especially Sylvia that has ensured the updating of the website.

None of these efforts can be achieved without the assistance of a hardworking board and the support of our secretariat ACWA. It has been my pleasure to be the chair of CAFWAA in the last 12 months. All CAFWAA Board members hold down very busy jobs and their contribution to the struggle to ensure that children, young people and their families are enabled to live free from abuse is not only commendable but essential to creating a society that is just. I thank all the Board for their efforts in the last 12 months and thank them for the additional time they have provided to CAFWAA to further our mission.

It is a true honour to work alongside Australia's leading human services personnel in this effort. The coming 12 months promises to be one for CAFWAA where we will continue to raise the importance of providing a robust child protection system for children and their families that goes beyond punitive action and moves to strengthening families and communities to provide nurturing and consistent care. Whilst gains have been made in the last 12 months there is still further to go in ensuring that children, young people, families and communities have access to the types of services and resources needed to halt the increases of families coming into contact with the child protection system.

This will include elevating the importance of the non-government sector in this process. CAFWAA will continue to advocate for a true partnership with government in the arena of child protection and early intervention promoting the importance of the sector and our place in the building of the fabric of our nation.

Lisa Hillan
Chairperson

Treasurer's Report

The 2007-08 financial year represented a very low level of activity for CAFWAA. One face to face meeting was held with airfares being averaged across the participants who submitted claims and the cost of teleconferences were the only expenditure items apart from our accountability requirements to ACWA and the audit process. Membership fees were largely received in the previous financial year and are shown in the balance sheet. These along with this years' income have met the fixed costs of the Association.
The Association remains in a healthy position.

Tricia Lee
Treasurer